

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

‘Yet we are told that Australians do not sympathise with
Ireland’

A study of South Australian support for Irish Home Rule,
1883 to 1912

Fidelma E. M. Breen

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the degree of Master of Philosophy by Research in the Faculty of
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List of abbreviations

HACBS	Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society
INA	Irish National Association
INF	Irish National Federation
INL	Irish National League
IPP	Irish Parliamentary Party
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
LOISA	Loyal Orange Institution of South Australia
LOL	Loyal Orange Lodge
MLA	Member of the South Australian Legislative Assembly
MLC	Member of the South Australian Legislative Council
PDA	Protestant Defence Association
SALL	South Australian Land League
SAPDA	South Australian Protestant Defence Association
SLSA	State Library of South Australia
UIA	United Irish Association
UIL	United Irish League

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution in my name and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Abstract

Although a small cohort, often deemed insignificant, the Irish in South Australia developed an extensive network of social, business and political connections with the wider colonial society which aided them in their support of the long constitutional struggle for self-government taking place in Ireland during the four decades from 1870. Through the lens of the colonial press and an investigation of the support given to Irish nationalists this study shows the extent to which that small cohort extended its influence to the wider South Australian community to the benefit of the Home Rule movement. This was no mean feat considering the established view of scholars that the group faced the 'unquestionable primacy of Anglo-Scottish colonisation'.¹ Looking at the visits of the envoys of the Irish Parliamentary Party which took place between 1883 and 1912, this study, through a consideration of fundraising, the reputation of the Irish in the colony, the colonial press' treatment of Irish issues and a lack of Orange opposition to Home Rule, investigates the impact and reach of this small Irish community during the years of Ireland's foremost constitutional political movement. In its conclusion the research shows that underlying the long assumed quiet assimilation of this ethnic group into the general 'Britishness' of the colony, the Irish, from the outset, were aware of and consistently

¹ Eric Richards. "Irish Life and Progress in Colonial South Australia " *Irish Historical Studies* 27, no. 107 (1991): 21

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maintained a separate cultural identity and, during the period under consideration, this was augmented by an increased politicisation amongst the group – a world development which affected the Irish at both the macro and micro level. This thesis further reveals that in South Australia the Irish Home Rule movement garnered strong support in a colony where the majority of the inhabitants were neither Irish nor Catholic and this was due to a number of factors. Amongst these were factors which contrast sharply with characteristics of the Irish and the Home Rule movement in other Australian colonies, particularly the size, unity and nature of South Australian Irish nationalists, the lack of a structured opposition to Home Rule, the colony's natural affinity with the notion of self-government and the fraternal bonds which came about through the issue of land ownership and control. While fundraising was the prime object of a series of visits to Australia by Irish MPs between 1883 and 1912, acceptance of the Irish claim for Home Rule amongst Australians in general proved equally important. Despite the small community of Irish people residing in South Australia during the most active years of the movement the colony subscribed generously to the cause. While the loyalty and support of the Irish-born and perhaps even the next generation might be expected more surprising is the widespread involvement of the non-Irish and non-Catholic citizens of the colony.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In terms of population the community of Irish people in colonial South Australia was never large.² Even at its most numerous it did not exceed 14% of the total. In fact, its relative smallness has been the reason academic attention given to it has been modest. Its participation in one of Ireland's foremost political movements, the crusade for Irish Home Rule, has been overlooked by scholars yet it is the very smallness of the group that makes their participation in the movement such a notable case study of Irish identity and influence in diasporic communities. Through the lens of the colonial press this thesis examines the support given to the Home Rule movement in South Australia, in particular the surprising level of general community interest in it. What this examination reveals is an unexpectedly high participation from the wider non-Irish community in both Home Rule and Irish issues more generally in the colony. Despite being small, the Irish community, through a formation of social, business and political networks, attracted wealthy, influential, non-Irish support to their cause, thereby becoming disproportionately significant in the Australian contribution to the Home Rule movement. Being small made for unity and this factor made the group a more effective actor in the South Australian arena. The

² For the purposes of this study, the term 'colonial' refers to the period between 1836 and 1901 when South Australia functioned as a British colony.

following chapters will demonstrate how the characteristics and temperament of the Irish in South Australia managed to engage some of the settlement's richest non-Irish men and the general colonial society in a long-term commitment of activity and fundraising towards specifically Irish issues.

The questions this research seeks to answer are 'Why did colonial South Australians support the Irish Home Rule movement?' and 'How did that support manifest itself?' The answers are multi-faceted and vary over time. Fundamentally, support was given in cash but the fundraising was aided by other elements of South Australia's socio-political nature: the colony was relatively young and had a natural affinity with the issue of self-government; the press was rather more liberal than that in other colonies and provided an intellectual and generally even-handed treatment of Irish political and social issues; South Australian Irish organisations and their committeemen were steady, industrious, sober types far removed from the Irish stereotype, thus posing little of its perceived threat; and finally, the colony's Orange Order was less concerned with Home Rule than its Victorian and New South Wales counterparts and offered little resistance to either the hype created by each envoy visit or the long-term nationalist organisations.³ The Order's response, evidenced by occasional letters to the press from individual members, rather than an official organisational doctrine, was to highlight the points of religious danger it envisaged in a Home Rule settlement of Ireland. Other voices occasionally

³ The Orange Order was formed in County Armagh in 1795 as a Protestant defence organization.

appear in opposition but as we will see these were defined by aspects of a class division rather than anything else – the long-running antagonism between the Hon. Samuel Tomkinson and well-established Irishman Michael Kenny (described later) is perhaps the best example of this. The colonial response to each delegation differed and, in the main, improved over time. This was partly to do with the developing sophistication of the Home Rule argument and the fortunes of the Irish Parliamentary Party in Britain, but the reputation and behaviour of Irishmen in the colony also played an integral part to the movement's success in the local context.

In many respects colonial support of the Irish Home Rule movement was a matter of being in the right place at the right time. This is particularly true of the Irish demography of the colony at the start of the 1880s but the social and political context of the time must be considered as imparting some agency to the people being studied. For the Irish of Adelaide and its surrounds and, in most respects, every ordinary, working class man and woman during the years 1872 to 1912, the world stage was changing as was their place upon it. The era was characterised by rising awareness of the connectedness of geographically disparate places, largely due to technological improvements in transport and communication as well as mobile labour forces; a consequence of unprecedented economic development emanating from the metropolitan centre of the British Empire. Critical to Irish nationalism was the liberalism characterised by the breakdown of the old order and Victorian barriers of class and birth right. The increased democratisation that universal suffrage and the

rise of trade unionism encouraged went a fair way to removing the monopoly of political activity from the hands of the aristocracy. The perceived lack of British societal structure in the Australian colonies is also a factor but as will be shown later, until the lower classes actually took up the franchise, colonial politics were still the preserve of the wealthy. A titled peerage may not have existed but the large pastoralists and mining magnates took their place at the apex of power in the working man's paradise.

Place too, is central to this study. South Australia as a colony, planned and free from convicts, at least officially, and characterised by its small Irish and Catholic cohorts, might have seemed the least likely colony to support Irish political efforts yet the Orange Order was strong there and, paradoxically, Adelaide spawned the world's first Irish Famine Relief Fund outside Britain. The liberalism of the colony allowed free worship and this was long seen as one of the distinctive features of its foundation but as John Hirst remarks in *'South Australia and Australia: Reflections on their Histories'*, 'Adelaide was not a city of church and chapel-goers; it was simply a city of churches. Religious dissent lost all meaning.'⁴ His point is illustrated by the Return for South Australia of 1845 which shows that a population of almost 20,000 people had an average religious attendance figure of 3,030.⁵ Though the majority of churches and attendant

⁴ In R. Foster and P. Sendziuk (eds), *Turning points: chapters in South Australian history*. Adelaide, Wakefield Press: 2012, p.118

⁵ *South Australian*, 11 February 1845, p.3

ministers were situated in the city and its closest suburbs, leaving almost 13,000 country residents with few religious resources, the figures show that less than half of those with good access to religious instruction availed themselves of it. While the colony may be viewed as relatively free of religious dissension, the Irish Catholics there were not totally freed from sectarianism and periodically events occurred which raised their profile - the attempted assassination of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, in 1868, animosities over the Education question and, later, the Conscription Crisis, all turned a negative focus on the Irish Catholic population of the antipodes. However in the intervening years their efforts to receive political emissaries, raise money and awareness of the plight of the people of Ireland and play out some battles which truly belonged on Irish soil makes for an interesting study of their 'clout'.

The purpose of the visits of Irish parliamentarians to Australia in the interests of Home Rule were two-fold: to raise awareness of the state of Ireland under English government and to raise money for both evicted Irish tenants and the upkeep of members of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster who were without a personal income. The Irish are generally accepted in Australian historical literature as being positioned within the lower ranks of the social classes, and therefore without much material wealth and so the enormous contributions made by the colonies to the various Irish appeals beg the questions "Who gave the money and why?" In South Australia the question is all the more interesting since the Irish population, which one might reasonably assume to be the main contributor, was small. Private wealth in the colonies was

amongst the highest in the developed world and the cost of living was to be envied.⁶ When viewing the private wealth of Australasia against the principal European countries and the United States, the colonies appeared extremely well off indeed (See Table 1) a fact which would give rise to an understanding of the Irish Party's desire to fundraise there even without the prior example of the Irish Famine Relief Fund of 1879 described below.

Wealth of Principal Countries

Country	Private wealth	Wealth per head
	Millions	£
Australasia	£1,129	300
United Kingdom	8,720	249
France	8,060	218
Germany	6,323	140
Russia	4,343	53
Austria	3,613	95
Italy	2,351	82
United States	9,495	180
Canada	630	148

Table 1: Wealth of Australasia ranked in comparison with principal countries of Europe and United States.⁷

However, when the colonial total is broken down, South Australia is seen to be less wealthy than most of its neighbours (see Table 2 below) which could lead one to expect less success in fundraising there. On occasion this was, in fact, the case. Private wealth in South Australia stood at £182 per head during the

⁶ T. A. Coghlan and New South Wales Statistician's Office. "A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia." Sydney: Charles Potter, Government Printer, Phillip St, 1890. pp. 69-77

⁷ Edited table from Coghlan, *ibid.* p.85

1889 tour of Dillon, Deasy and Esmonde compared with £371 per head in New South Wales and this showed in the fundraising. The 1889 collection in South Australia raised just £1,500 for the Irish cause. At other times, however, the funds raised in South Australian were disproportionately high.

Private Wealth -Total and per Inhabitant in each Colony of Australasia for 1889

Colony	Private Wealth	
	Total	Per Inhabitant
	Million £	£
New South Wales	410	371
Victoria	386	350
Queensland	106	266
South Australia	57	182
Tasmania	26	180
New Zealand	145	235
West Australia	6	144
Total, Australasia	1,136	300

Table 2: Comparative wealth of the colonies, 1889⁸

Despite its comparative lack of wealth, by 1888 the colony derived less of its income from personal taxation than any of the other colonies thereby alleviating some of the strain on incomes.⁹ South Australia also had the greatest number of bank depositors per capita and exceeded the average of Australasian bank deposit amounts by almost £3.¹⁰ A consideration of these facts reveals the

⁸ Ibid. p.86

⁹ *Advertiser*, 12 March 1889, p 4.

¹⁰ Coghlan, *ibid.* p.100

potential of some South Australians to contribute to philanthropic causes even during times of depression.

Yet within the colony itself wealth distribution was uneven despite the picture of it as a place of great opportunity conveyed through the medium of contemporary immigration literature. The structure of British society had been firmly established in the principles of the colony's foundation by men who were influenced by the rise of economic and political liberalism in Britain in the 1830s. On the surface, and by reputation, the colony was indeed a working man's paradise – there was opportunity which combined with hard work, luck and forbearance could give a man a space to call his own. This 'tourism brochure' view of the colony sat in stark contrast to the reality of colonial society which almost seemed to be ignored by its inhabitants. There was a very visible gentry class which participated in debutante balls and fox hunts, some of whom frequented the Adelaide Club.¹¹ In a study of some pastoral families Eleanore Williams claims that what appeared 'paradoxical in a society which has been described as wholly middle class, egalitarian, and affected little, if at all, by class differences, was the considerable social and political influence wielded by the owners of . . . large estates . . . Their attitudes and mode of living helped to reproduce the British class structure in South Australia . . . consciously

¹¹ See J. B. Hirst. *Adelaide and the Country, 1870-1917: Their Social and Political Relationship*. Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1973, pp.42-45 for a description of life as an English country gentleman in Adelaide in the 1870s.

hierarchical and definitely not egalitarian.¹² In his study of succession-duty records Michael Shanahan also provides data to dispute the comparative equality of South Australia's society. 'By 1911 ... land ownership had become a source of great wealth for select members of society, as well as the foundation for the local gentry's culture'.¹³ South Australia's egalitarianism did not represent equality but socialism of a diluted kind – a central authority over health, public works, education and the destitute represented a genuine effort to provide a uniformity of benefits to all but the central control was held by large pastoralists and gentlemen. William Rounsevell, Assembly Member for both Burra and Port Adelaide and one of Irish Home Rule's long-term supporters in South Australia, once stated that he did not wish the colony to be 'entirely democratic' indicating that a certain boundary was placed on social equality in the minds of men of his standing.¹⁴ A paradise of dissent perhaps, but Utopia South Australia was not. Yet the southern colony's affinity for self-government and the good example given by its Irish residents, Catholic and Protestant together, was often offered as proof of what Ireland could be like under a Home Rule arrangement.

What was the Home Rule Movement?

¹² Eleanore Williams. *A Way of Life: The Pastoral Families of the Central Hill Country of South Australia*. Adelaide: Adelaide University Union Press, 1980. p.2

¹³ Martin Shanahan. "Personal Wealth in South Australia." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32:1 (2001). p.79

¹⁴ G. L. Fischer, 'Rounsevell, William Benjamin (1843–1923)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rounsevell-william-benjamin-8281/text14511>, accessed 20 October 2012.

A constitutional murmuring for self-government emerged in Ireland in 1870 when Protestant lawyer, Isaac Butt, formed the Irish Home Government Association. Militant republicanism, from the 1798 rebellion of the United Irishmen through to the Young Irelanders insurrection of 1848 and the Fenian Rising of 1867, had failed to secure release from English government or any improvement in Ireland's living standards. From the enactment of the Act of Union on 1 January 1801 the Irish had lost their parliament which had sat at College Green, Dublin and from this date had been governed by direct rule from Westminster. Dublin Castle became the seat of English administration in Ireland and the Catholic Irish were heavily punished by Penal Laws which prohibited the practice of their religion, their ownership of land and their participation in government. Daniel O'Connell, known as the Great Emancipator, led the Repeal of the Union movement and gained some concessions for the Catholic Irish but the effect of penal law and the Anglicisation of Irish society meant that by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Irish language was devastated, Irish Catholics were mostly agrarian labourers or tenant farmers on unsustainably small holdings and Irish land was owned by an Anglo-Irish gentry which comprised a high number of absentee landlords. The Irish Land Question, as it became known, revolved around issues of unfair rents (rack-renting), evictions for non-payment of rent even in cases of extreme hardship, boycotting of those who paid rents when directed not to, and insecurity of tenure. The poor condition of the Irish peasantry and the plague of landlord absenteeism brought about the formation of the Irish National Land League – the brainchild of Michael

Davitt, an evictee from County Mayo who had spent most of his life in the industrial towns of England before spending seven years in gaol on a charge of treason felony as a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.¹⁵ The Land League, whose first demonstration occurred in April 1879 at Irishtown, County Mayo, fought for the 3 F's: Fair Rent, Fixity of Tenure and Free Sale, and above all, advocated the ownership of Irish land by the Irish people. Its official formation at Castlebar in October that year brought together republicans, land league activists and Protestant Irish gentry under the presidency of Charles Stewart Parnell. Parnell would combine emotive support for Irish peasants with the demand for dominion status and make the Irish Parliamentary Party's push for Home Rule one of the prime forces of British politics for the next forty years.

Butt's formation of the Irish Home Government Association in 1870 and the growth of its successor, the Home Rule League Party, represented the first constitutional foot in the British parliamentary door since O'Connell's movement decades earlier. The Home Rule League Party was renamed by Parnell in 1882 and it was the new Irish Parliamentary Party which took up the cause of Irish self-government with a renewed vigour, employing a policy of obstructionism in the Commons and garnering support through Parnell's cult-like following. Liberal and Conservative candidates were steadily replaced in Ireland by Irish Parliamentary Party nominees. In the General Election of 1880 Irish nationalists

¹⁵ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, www.oldbaileyonline.org, 18 April 1870, trial of John Wilson (43) and Michael Davitt (25)

secured sixty three seats. Five years later the Irish Parliamentary Party held 85 of the 103 Irish seats and the balance of power in the Commons.¹⁶

Parnell was a charismatic leader. His brief liaison with the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a militant revolutionary group, led to the New Departure of 1879 but following the suppression of the Land League, of which, by this time, Parnell was leader, and his imprisonment for having attempted to sabotage the Irish Land Act of 1881 by recommending a rent strike, he returned to the constitutional straight and narrow. The Land League, having been proscribed, was reformed in 1882 under the name the Irish National League after Parnell's release from prison which had been secured by the negotiation of the Kilmainham Treaty. The League harnessed all the power of the agrarian agitation to a combined push for Home Rule and land reform. Parnell's authority over the members was total. In 1884 he initiated the party pledge ensuring that the members voted *en bloc* and his employment of a party whip and formal structure came to be emulated by other political parties of the day. While personal affairs later spelt his downfall and threatened to split the movement irreparably, his foresight and political acumen had bound the critical mass of support to the advancing issue of Home Rule. Imprisonment gave Parnell the national hero status he enjoyed but the effect of his gaoling and negotiated release was further reaching than that: the elevation of a constitutionally motivated freedom seeker to national popularity forced militant republicanism

¹⁶ F. S. L. Lyons. *Ireland since the Famine*. 2nd revised ed. London: Fontana, 1973. p.180

out of the arena of Irish politics for the next three decades. A number of Home Rule Bills were formulated which, if passed into legislation, would have reinstated the Dublin parliament with limited devolved powers over purely Irish matters. Imperial concerns such as defence were to remain the jurisdiction of Westminster. The first Home Rule Bill was introduced in 1886, the second in 1893 and the third in 1912. After the removal of the House of Lords veto the third bill would have been enacted as the Government of Ireland Act 1914 but for the outbreak of the Great War which caused its suspension.¹⁷ The sea-change from militancy to constitutional political participation aided the acceptance of the Irish cause in South Australia as did the gentlemanly dispositions and oratory skills of some of the Party's delegates, particularly John Redmond, the party's first envoy to Australia.

Irish identity had two facets: the nationalist and invariably Catholic group often termed the Green; and the loyalist, unionist and usually Protestant cohort sometimes entwined with membership of the Orange Order, hence the name Orange. While Irish nationalists sought the return of an Irish Parliament to Dublin, Irish Protestant loyalists, particularly concentrated in the northern province of Ulster, were concerned about the possible influence of the Catholic

¹⁷ The Easter Rising in 1916 reintroduced republicanism into the arena and represented the death knell of moderation in Irish political claims. A fourth bill, which became the Government of Ireland Act 1920, was enacted despite the commencement of the Anglo-Irish War of Independence and was replaced by the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Full treatment of the development of Home Rule in Ireland and subsequent political developments can be found in Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800-2000*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. See especially chapters four to six.

Church upon state administration and their position as a minority religion in a self-governing Irish dominion. Excepting the brief flirtation with militant republicanism in 1879 the Home Rule movement was largely constitutionalist and moderate in its demands. While the English Liberal leader Gladstone committed to the idea of Home Rule and facilitated the introduction of the first Home Rule Bill in 1886, subsequent Conservative governments attempted to 'kill Home Rule with kindness' passing a number of Acts designed to conciliate Irish demands without weakening the connection to England. Also known as 'constructive unionism', this policy excluded the possibility of a Dublin parliament. A constant theme of speeches made in South Australia in support of Home Rule was the happiness of the people of the colonies where self-government had been granted. The leadership and good example shown by the colony's Irishmen, whether in business, political or social circles assisted the notion that the Irish would prosper under the governmental conditions sought for Ireland by the new breed of constitutional nationalists in the Irish Parliamentary Party.

The changing nature of Irish nationalism in these years had an effect on the response to the movement by colonial South Australians. Home Rule activity both ended the armed rebellion which had for so long characterised the face of Irish agitation against domination by England, and ironically, prompted its first major demonstration in the twentieth century. The Easter Rising of 1916 was fuelled by republicanism and the romanticism evident in the Gaelic Revival, a vision for Ireland which did not include any Irish subservience to the British

Empire whatsoever. The postponement of Home Rule and Redmond's support for Irish conscription to the British war effort combined with this new element of intellectual agitation to change the political landscape of Ireland. However, up until World War One, the fight taking place in the parliamentary arena provided a respectable alternative to Ireland's tradition of armed insurrection. The move away from militancy towards constitutionality in the last quarter of the nineteenth century allowed high-profile, non-Irish South Australian men to lend the local Home Rule movement credence, their presence inducing confidence, credibility and respectability for the wider population.

The support of these non-Irish South Australians combined with the organisation of local Irishmen to provide a vigorous support base for Irish Home Rule in the colony. Against the established academic view of the colonial Irish as a small and disunited portion of society, this study shows that as a group the Irish were more confident of, and used to their advantage, their collective identity more than has previously been considered. The explanation for the previous conclusion lies in the fact that this story has never been told in its entirety. Existing studies focus on the early-arriving Anglo-Irish elite, the women of the Irish Orphan scheme or specific Irish locales taking us to the 1870s at the latest.¹⁸ Focusing on later periods, articles have been written about the evolution

¹⁸ Ann Herraman has investigated the effect of the Irish Orphan Girls' arrival on the Adelaide Hills town of Mount Barker – Ann Herraman. "'a Certain Shade of Green': Aspects of Irish Settlement in Nineteenth-Century Colonial South Australia." in *Echoes of Irish Australia :Rebellion to Republic: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Jeff Brownrigg, Cheryl Mongan and Richard Reid, 135-

of the St Patrick's Day parade in Adelaide and the Irish effect on the Conscription referenda of the war years but the years of the Home Rule movement, an important period of increasing Irish confidence and the development of a worldwide diasporic identity, has been overlooked.¹⁹ The evolution of a strong communal ethnic identity appears as the Irish become a 'public' group in South Australia during this period when Irish Members of the House of Commons toured the colonies and held mass public meetings to enlist sympathy for their cause. The politics of Ireland could be seen as the definition of the Irish abroad. Without the public conversation surrounding Irish issues, the Irish in South Australia, because of a lack of critical mass, were just another migrant group. Home Rule provided an overarching and unifying umbrella of identity and meaning.

In an effort to raise both awareness of the Home Rule cause and money the Irish Parliamentary Party arranged a number of missions to Australasia and the United States. Irish parliamentarians and associated nationalist activists visited the colonies on several occasions - brothers John & William (Willie) Redmond (the Members for New Ross and Wexford respectively) came in 1883 followed by John Dillon (MP for Tipperary), John Deasy (MP for West Mayo) and Sir Thomas Esmonde (11th Baronet and MP for South Dublin) in 1889, by which

44. Galong, NSW: St. Clements, 2007; Marie Steiner investigates the scheme on a colony-wide level in *Servant Depots in Colonial South Australia*. Marie Steiner. *Servant Depots in Colonial South Australia*. Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2009.

¹⁹ Clement MacIntyre. "The Adelaide Irish and St Patrick's Day Politics 1900-1918." In *Irish Australian Studies*, 182-96.: Crossing Press, 1994; Alan Gilbert. "The Conscription Referenda, 1916-17: The Impact of the Irish Crisis." *Australian Historical Studies* 14, no. 53 (1969): 54-72

time the first Home Rule Bill had been introduced and defeated in the House of Commons at Westminster.²⁰ In 1895, two years after the rejection of the second Home Rule Bill by the House of Lords, the colonies received the renowned ‘Father of the Land League’, Michael Davitt, who toured to lecture and raise funds. Davitt’s visit differed from the others on a number of levels. Firstly, Davitt himself was an amalgam of republican gunrunner, parliamentarian, journalist, social activist and renowned labour identity. Secondly, his tour did not commence in aid of the Irish Parliamentary Party. He initially intended to use the visit to raise personal capital after suffering bankruptcy but the money raised went into the Irish Parliamentary Party campaign funds upon the announcement of a general election in Britain. In 1906 the MP for West Belfast, Joseph Devlin, accompanied by nationalist lawyer J.T. Donovan, visited a federated Australia. Five years later Donovan made a return visit, this time accompanying William Redmond Jnr. (Member for Tyrone East) and Richard Hazleton (Member for North Louth). Between these official delegations there were brief visits by other Irish nationalists, some of whom toured and collected funds and others who came on recuperative or leisure trips.²¹

The visitors brought first-hand accounts of the progress of Ireland’s constitutional movement for dominion status within the Empire to the Irish

²⁰ William was elected to the Wexford seat while in Australia. *Advertiser*, 19 July 1883, p.5

²¹ William O’Brien visited in 1901 but undertook no official engagements - *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 3 December 1901, p 4; Willie Redmond toured with his Australian wife in 1904 and made several appearances which brought funds to the IPP but his was not an official tour – *Advertiser*, 9 December 1904, p.5; *Advertiser*, 12 April 1905, p.4; *Register*, 21 April 1905, p.3.

diaspora in Australia. In the absence of regular news direct from Ireland these lecturing tours by nationalists played an important role in stimulating new interest in Irish affairs as well as maintaining existing momentum. It is important to note the nuances of the visits too: the men came as representatives of the Irish Parliamentary Party, not of the British Parliament. Although legitimately elected, the Party was, in the early years, largely looked upon as an interloper in the Commons and guilty by its association with the Land League of agrarian violence and separatist tendencies. Had the Irish parliamentarians visited the colonies as British MP's there is little doubt that they would have been universally welcomed with no voice raised in opposition to them. A look at this series of visits demonstrates the increasing acceptance of the legitimacy of the political concerns of the Irish community. From a refusal to allow use of municipal buildings to the first delegation, official cognizance and involvement progressed to the level of a telegram to the King in support of Irish Home Rule from the Commonwealth parliament in 1905 and luncheon at South Australia's Parliament House for the 1911 delegation.

As well as publicising the Irish nationalist cause the visitors were ostensibly touring to collect money. Funds were for two purposes. One was to assist with the maintenance of Party members at Westminster; the new Irish MP's were not all landed gentry and so attendance at the Commons meant they had no regular income. The second was to increase the money available to the

Land League to assist evicted Irish tenants. Reports of the amounts raised for the movement vary between £15,000 and £30,000 for the first mission alone.²² The particular prosperity of Australians as a reason for such financial support is confounded by the fact that throughout these years Australia, like much of the world, was in the throes of an economic depression. Like the London Dockworkers Aid given in 1889, that given to the politicians is believed to have saved the party from ruin.²³ Patrick O'Farrell's claims that giving money was 'a form of evasion', that 'salved Irish consciences' and 'purchased a warm glow without too deep a committal' appear churlish against Michael Davitt's description of the effects of those donations:

Australia ... contributed financial help ... and branches of the league were formed in all the chief cities in these colonies and in New Zealand. This continued encouragement from the exiled Irish was an important factor in creating the condition of things in Ireland which led to the overthrow of Forster and coercion. Our people felt they were not fighting without powerful allies, while Mr Gladstone saw clearly that this external help rendered the task

²² Today's equivalent of £15,000 is £724 650.00 (using Old Money To New calculator at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency>) which in turn equals AUD\$1.3 million (using currency converter <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic> accessed 02.07.10); O'Farrell, Patrick. *The Irish in Australia*. Kensington, N.S.W.: New South Wales University Press, 1986, p.229 claims £25,000 was donated; Tomás O'Riordan claims £30,000 was raised by the 1883 delegation: http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/John_Redmond accessed 30.08.10

²³ Donovan is convinced the money averted the collapse of the strike – See P.F. Donovan. "Australia and the Great London Dock Strike: 1889." *Labour History* 23(November, 1972): 17-26.

of putting down the league movement more difficult of execution.²⁴

He describes the Dillon, Deasy & Esmonde tour of Australia in 1889 in similar glowing terms.

Upward of £40,000 resulted from this tour - a truly munificent showing for the comparatively small population of Irish birth and parentage in these distant colonies. In fact, neither in America nor in Great Britain have the Irish race contributed as generously in their support of the Irish movement of the past quarter of a century, in proportion to numbers, as those who have encouraged the fight for land and liberty at home from these far-off regions.²⁵

These remarks further encouraged the undertaking of a detailed study of the Irish in Australia during this particular period as they show how important expatriate support was to the Irish at home. The contribution of South Australians and the effect the Irish Parliamentary Party visits had on the Irish community in the colony has never been examined in detail.

²⁴O'Farrell, *'Irish in Australia'*. p.228; Michael Davitt. *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland*. London & New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1904. p.343.

²⁵ Ibid, p.629.

Review of the Literature

'Irish Australia' became a popular area of academic study in the 1980s and remains so to the extent illustrated by the success of the Irish Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand (ISAANZ) annual conference series. The literature has been dominated by individuals such as Patrick O'Farrell, Oliver MacDonagh, Malcolm Campbell and David Fitzpatrick and has, in the main, been broadly based, mainly focused on the Catholic Irish, and on the states of New South Wales and Victoria. Studies of the Irish in New Zealand have become more popular and the diversity of the topics under investigation by scholars widens each year.²⁶ While respecting the existing works, this thesis promotes the view that other geographical areas (South Australia), historical time periods (the years of the Home Rule movement) and politico-cultural aspects (the South Australian branches of Irish Nationalist organisations) of Irish Australia warrant closer inspection despite the apparently statistically insignificant Irish population of South Australia. A survey of the existing literature clearly indicates that South Australia's colonial Irish community has not yet been fully investigated, exposed or synthesized into the broader view of Irish Australia. In her contribution to a volume on the worldwide status of Irish Studies, Professor Elizabeth Malcolm

²⁶ For example, see the work of Brad Patterson and Patrick Coleman on the Orange Order in New Zealand as well as Lyndon Fraser's studies regarding Irish death rituals and mourning jewellery. More modern aspects of Irish studies are evident in the writings of Louise Ryan on contemporary Irish migrations. The programme of the 19th ISAANZ Conference '*Global Ireland*' demonstrates the diversity of research topics now being undertaken: <http://isaanz.org/conference/19th-australasian-irish-studies-conference-dunedin-2012>

appears to agree, stating that 'Some significant work is being done on the Irish in Victoria and Western Australia, but studies of Irish communities in other states are scarce'.²⁷ In an indictment of general works on Australian history and historiography she goes on to suggest that 'Irish-Australian history remains marginalised'.

The paucity of writing on the Irish in South Australia is patent. However, 2009 appeared to be a turning point as in this year two works were completed: James' thesis, 'Becoming South Australian? The Impact of the Irish on the County of Stanley, 1841- 1871' and Marie Steiner's book *Servant Depots in Colonial South Australia* appear to represent a renewed interest in the group.²⁸ In the context of this study, the value of the two most recent works lies in their methodology but neither addresses the timeframe nor the subject here undertaken.

The existing literature is limited in its scope to early (pre-1870) periods of immigration or later (post-1915) singular events or individual people.²⁹ Thus a

²⁷ Liam Harte and Yvonne Whelan, eds. *Ireland Beyond Boundaries: Mapping Irish Studies in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Pluto, 2007, p.43

²⁸ Stephanie James. "Becoming South Australian? The Impact of the Irish on the County of Stanley, 1841- 1871" Flinders University, 2009; Marie Steiner. *Servant Depots in Colonial South Australia*. Adelaide, Wakefield Press, 2009.

²⁹ For example: Eric Richards. "The Importance of Being Irish in Colonial South Australia" in *The Irish Emigrant Experience in Australia*, edited by John O'Brien and Pauric Travers, Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1991. p.93. P. Moore. *Half-Burnt Turf: Selling Emigration from Ireland to South Australia 1836-1845*. Irish-Australian Studies: Papers Delivered at the Sixth Irish-Australian Conference, Melbourne: La Trobe University, 1990; Pat Stretton. "The Conscription Issue in South Australia, 1916-1917." Thesis (BA(Hons)), University of Adelaide, 1959 ; and Clement McIntyre. "The Adelaide Irish and the Politics of St Patrick's Day 1900-1918." In *Irish Australian Studies: Papers Delivered at the Seventh Irish Australian Studies Conference*, edited by Rebecca Phelan, 182-96:

sizeable gap in the literature appears due to the absence of any investigation of South Australia's involvement in the Irish Home Rule movement. Given that the time period of this study represents one of the most important stages of Irish political development its findings will go some way toward filling the present void. The following examples of the sparse literature on the subject will demonstrate what is missing and how this study addresses the absence of investigation into the effect of a late-arriving cohort of Irish immigrants, the differences between the Irish in South Australia and other colonies and the changing nature and acceptance of Irish political ambition.

One of the earliest studies of the Irish in South Australia was Woodburn's 1974 thesis, 'The Irish in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, 1788-1880.' Its outstanding feature is that it was the first study to include South Australia in a comparison with other colonies but while it illuminated some of the experience of the Irish in the colony up to 1880 it did little to contest the image of the community as anything other than smaller and rather insignificant in relation to its neighbours and made few references to the differences which existed between the Irish in South Australia and the other two colonies even before the Home Rule period.³⁰ In its defence, the years immediately following 1880, the most energetic, both politically and socially, for the Irish cohort in South Australia, are clearly outside its timeframe. Woodburn's main argument,

Crossing Press, Sydney, 1994 as well as works on individuals such as Robert Torrens and George Kingston.

³⁰ Susan Woodburn (Pruul). "The Irish in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, 1788-1880." Masters Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1974.

that the Irish in the colony were small and unimportant, does not stand up for the later period. The work notes the increased numbers of Irish arriving towards the end of the 1870s but the significance of this factor, which became apparent just a few years later, has not been examined due to the fact that it was not within the scope of Woodburn's study. The numerical inferiority of the colony's Irish population cannot be disputed but size appears to have determined importance for the remaining works in this area. The development of the various nationalist organisations and the widespread support of the Home Rule movement in the colony combined with the dense social web of interaction between the Irish and the wider society that the present study reveals would suggest that as a community the Irish were more highly organised, connected and more complex than has been considered previously. Woodburn states that 'it was in South Australia where the Irish had always been a small and unimportant community, that the most lasting manifestation of (the) erosion of the Irish body first became apparent. This was the assimilation of the Irish character in the growth of Catholicism, the replacement of a distinct national identity by a religious affiliation'.³¹ Woodburn argues that the Irish during this time had little cognisance of their level of acceptance which presents a challenge for this study of identity and self-perception in the years that followed shortly thereafter. If, as she suggests, the Irish in South Australia only became aware of their ethnic difference during times of crisis, what other factors could have led to

³¹ Ibid. p. 301.

the strength of support for a specifically Irish political end amongst the non-Irish of the colony? This work challenges the concept of an Irish identity that was unsure of itself except when under duress or scrutiny.

In scholarly literature, the history of the Irish Home Rule Movement in South Australia does not exist outside fleeting mention in work now decades old. Greg Tobin's 'The Sea-Divided Gael: The Irish Home Rule Movement in Victoria and New South Wales 1880-1916', completed in 1969, was the first study to look at Home Rule across two states. It is considered by many to be a pioneering work. His introductory claim that the Irish have escaped the serious attention of historians was indisputable at the time of publication but since then a considerable body of research has emerged to illuminate some of the Irish experience. However it might be said that elements of the Irish as 'a group of secondary importance' remain.³² Although South Australia is not his prime focus, the study does provide some salient points for researchers considering the South Australian aspects of his subject. The dynamic of high levels of late assisted immigration amongst the Irish to South Australia gains significance with his statement that "well back in the eighties observers had noted the gradual disappearance of the Irish-born element" in the eastern states. The Irish-born declined in the southern-most colony too but this appears to have been off-set by both the arrival of new Irish and the support of the non-Irish which are

³² Gregory Tobin. "'Sea-Divided Gael: The Irish Home Rule Movement in Victoria and New South Wales 1880-1916'." unpublished MA thesis, Australian National University, 1969. p.1

considered here as contributing factors to the longevity of the Adelaide branches Tobin noted.³³

Louise Mazzaroli's 1979 PhD thesis, 'The Irish in New South Wales, 1884 to 1914; Some Aspects of the Irish Sub-Culture', is another study which encompasses the important years of the movement in Australia and provides a picture of its support in the first colony.³⁴ A student of O'Farrell's, she investigated the Irish in eastern Australia and echoed her mentor's conclusion that "Ireland was too far away and too remote from their daily lives and activities" for the majority of them to maintain interest in Irish affairs.³⁵ She argues that Irish organisations attracted little support and that membership was riven by divisions of class, politics and issues of identity and claims that the 'establishment' Irish had little to do with the various clubs, were more interested in assimilation than participation in Irish affairs and did not want to foster a specifically Irish identity because of the aspersions of character that inculcated.³⁶ She concludes that membership of the clubs, depending on the subscription rate, was generally working class but makes no mention of committee composition or the patronage or involvement of leading business or political figures in the organisations. Of the Home Rule movement she says support came

³³ Ibid. p.295

³⁴ Louise Ann Mazzaroli. "The Irish in New South Wales, 1884 to 1914; Some Aspects of the Irish Sub-Culture." University of New South Wales, 1979.

³⁵ Ibid, p.108

³⁶ Caricatures of the Irish as simian-featured, foolish, intemperate and disloyal were featured throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in both the British and Australian press. For example, see L.P. Curtis. *Apes and angels: the Irishman in Victorian caricature* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997

from two sections of society and for two different reasons: the 'establishment' Irish supported Home Rule because of its broadly appealing constitutional nature i.e. theirs was a rational decision; the working class however, frustrated by their economic and social position within colonial society, responded on a purely "emotional and nationalistic" basis.³⁷ Mazaroli attributes the success of the Home Rule movement in New South Wales to the support of the non-Irish in the colony but states that when "this support diminished, as it did after 1887, the Home Rule movement virtually collapsed."³⁸ This contrasts sharply with the 1892 statement by a visiting Irish delegate that the non-Irish support evident in South Australia was such as they had never before seen.³⁹ Such contrasts in the support and lifespan of the movement in the two colonies naturally invite comparison.

It should be noted that both Tobin's and Mazaroli's work predate the revisionism that struck Irish historiography during the 1980s when many of the previously accepted interpretations of groups such as Irish immigrants were reconsidered and reconfigured in light of new methodologies. These studies also preceded the international debate about the question of Irish identity in the diaspora and so they are limited to aspects of the relationship between imperialism, colonialism and nationalism, that is, they are missing the

³⁷ Mazaroli, p.174

³⁸ Mazaroli, p.175

³⁹ Sir Thomas Esmonde. *Round the World with the Irish Delegates*, Sealy, Bryers and Walker, Dublin, 1892. p.82

internationalism of Irish identity. What is sought now is a perspective on how colonial engagement with essentially Irish issues can help us understand the nature and strength of Irish identity in a global setting.

This study is not an example of the contribution history which largely characterises many of the earliest, and certainly the best-known work on Irish Australia, Patrick O’Farrell’s *The Irish in Australia*. Patrick O’Sullivan categorised early emigration work into three broad classifications: oppression history which focussed on the victim status of migrants (similar to the exile motif of Kerby Miller); compensation history which eulogised the high achievers within a migrant group (see for an example, J.F. Hogan’s 1888 publication, *The Irish in Australia*) and lastly, contribution history which, as the name suggests, highlights the contribution an ethnic group made to the host society in terms of nation building. Of the last there are two works which stand out: P.S. Cleary’s 1933 work *Australia’s Debt to the Irish Nation Builders*; and Patrick O’Farrell’s 1986 publication, *The Irish in Australia* which was, for decades, *the* monograph on the Irish in Australia. Viewed by many scholars as a good starting point for study in this field it has prompted challenge from younger historians. It has not entered mainstream historiography and Malcolm attributes this to its excessive flattery of the Irish and its sweeping statements regarding their essentiality to the development of an Australian national identity. Malcolm believes that this book actually contributed to the marginalisation of the subject in Australian

historiography.⁴⁰ In the context of this study *The Irish in Australia* provides the foil for the South Australian experience. Although purporting to represent the Irish experience on the continent as a whole, South Australia receives little space and, again, there is no recognition of the differences between it and other colonies with regard to the reception and support of the Home Rule movement and its delegates. This thesis contributes to the field by providing the in-depth study of Home Rule support in South Australia currently missing from the literature. In its consideration of the representative, cross-party support given there, it exemplifies a reversal of the 'contribution' history phenomenon. Rather than look at Irish contributions to South Australian society it seeks to understand colonial interest in Irish affairs. The last two volumes of the *Australasian Journal of Irish Studies* show that the focus of new works is moving away from the glorification of Irishness towards an understanding of how the Irish race fitted in colonial society.⁴¹

This study follows the advice given by Bob Reece in 'Writing about the Irish in Australia' which offers encouragement to the small-scale or locally focussed historian. While conceding that O'Farrell's work provided an enormous boost to the study of Irish Australia he is of the opinion that, rather than "going for broke" in the big national stakes as O'Farrell did, it makes more sense "to

⁴⁰ Malcolm, *ibid.*

⁴¹ The *Australasian Journal of Irish Studies* is the journal of the Irish Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand (ISAANZ). Recent issues show that the scope of investigation is widening with increased work on Irish-Australian literature, language and investigations of Irish women in Australia.

examine the Irish in a particular context in the light of such questions as demographic distribution, economic role, social status and mobility, political consciousness and retention of ethnicity".⁴² This thesis will examine these aspects of South Australia's Irish community with respect to how such a small ethnic cohort gained widespread support for their political aims.

This thesis does not attempt to portray the Irish as particularly outstanding in comparison with any other ethnic minority. It endeavours to reveal the activity and motivation of South Australia's Irish Home Rule supporters in order to produce more than a merely factual account of the development of an Irish nationalist movement in South Australia. Academics have researched early Irish immigration patterns, the importance of the Irish in the development of the Catholic Church and more recently important regional studies of Irish settlement in Mount Barker and Clare have appeared. Many of these early studies provide building blocks for this one as they offer the first pictures of the colonial Irish community. What remains hidden is a portrait of the Irish in South Australia in the years after the time periods covered by these studies and through one of the most important periods in Ireland's political development. The Home Rule movement squeezed every available resource from the global Irish community. Adelaide had the wherewithal to commence the world's first Famine Relief Fund outside Britain in 1879 and its support and

⁴² Bob Reece. "Writing About the Irish in Australia." in *The Irish Emigrant Experience in Australia*, p.239

involvement in Irish affairs from that date on did not wane until Home Rule as a movement was itself spent.

Methodology

This study has been approached using a methodology informed by the practices of both academic historians and family researchers. The records of the organisations themselves are no longer extant. Fragmentary pieces remain for the Loyal Orange Institution but no official records survive to tell the story of the nationalist movement in South Australia. The exposition of the progress of the nationalist movement and evidence of a communal Irish identity has been pieced together using the family notices section, Letters to the Editor and general press reports of South Australian newspapers, in the main *The Register* and *The Advertiser*.

The history of this movement, this community and its constituents has been hidden: no study of their communal life has been attempted – they are named in reports of various events and social functions and, in the case of the Orange Order, in organisational membership records but they exist only in disconnected parts. And so this exercise has been more akin to archaeology than history; it is a story in pieces, without a consistent, documentary source of narrative. Using census reports, newspapers, archdiocesan records, the Keain Index, the Biographical Index of South Australians, the Sands and MacDougall Directories, Boothby’s Almanac, and parliamentary records, the stories of publicly named individuals have been used to construct a profile of those

involved in Home Rule support in the colony. It is the ordinary, everyday occurrences, declarations and opinions expressed which, in the composite, give us an illustration of what Ireland, Home Rule, Unionism, nationalism, identity and loyalty meant to the people who participated in this transnational movement from the perspective of South Australia.

Rather than focus on the contents of self-categorised publications such as the Irish Catholic newspaper, the *Southern Cross*, or Protestant papers such as the *Protestant Advocate*, the main sources of evidence used are the secular mainstream daily Adelaide newspapers, the *Register* and the *Advertiser*. One reason for this is both the imbalance of source material available and its limited nature. Some editions of the *Southern Cross* are available but the Protestant equivalent is not. Dill Macky, ultra-Protestant preacher, established *The Watchman* in Sydney and in 1909 a South Australian edition of the publication was announced as being in existence. The new *Watchman* was to take over from *The Protestant Voice* as the mouthpiece of the Loyal Orange Institution of South Australia but no records of it remain.⁴³ *The Register* and *The Advertiser* were ‘general’ newspapers which, while carrying comprehensive coverage of Irish events and organisations which were of interest to the Irish community in South Australia, had a more open and widespread readership than, for example, specific Catholic papers. The opinions expressed through the public forum of Letters to the Editor in the *Register* and *Advertiser* were not confined to the two

⁴³ *Advertiser*, 5 March 1909, p.8

elements of the Irish community and proved valuable to this study. Non-Irish interest in and response to the Irish Question is of clear importance here given the wish to show how non-Irish support was attracted to Irish issues. These publications were less obviously biased. In addition, the competition between the two newspapers was no secret.

The infamous 'Irish Question', which moved through the issues of famine, poverty, landlordism and self-government, occupied a significant amount of column space in the dailies and weeklies that brought South Australians their news of the world. Both the famine and the burgeoning constitutional Home Rule movement were quite literally a world away and the compatriots of those suffering were a small and apparently insignificant portion of the South Australian population. In light of this one must ask how and why the Irish nationalist movement spread throughout South Australia. In this chapter I have suggested that, despite being a small minority in an overwhelmingly English and Protestant settlement, the nationalist Irish in South Australia corralled a significant amount of moral and financial backing from the non-Irish into support of Irish Home Rule and have also outlined what the Irish movement stood for. The second chapter gives the demography of the Irish community in South Australia and explains the class difference between the leading men of the earlier period and the later one. Irish involvement in colonial immigration, public debate about land distribution and the persistent vitriol of one particular South Australian public figure affords us a view of contemporary interaction between the Irish and colonial society. Chapter Three offers a brief account of the effect

of the changing circumstances of the Irish Parliamentary Party on the various missions before illustrating the points of difference South Australia offers as a contrast to existing accounts of the Irish in other diasporic communities. It also highlights the fact that the main anti-Irish incidents in South Australia's history from the late 1860s onwards had little to do with the Irish *per se* but were evidence of colonial worry regarding sectarianism and disloyalty. It demonstrates the changing nature of the Irish community through this period of Home Rule agitation. Lastly this chapter examines South Australian attitudes to the Irish community in terms of loyalty, size and respectability and reveals that the characteristics of the colony's leading Irishmen did much to encourage the non-Irish and non-Catholic support given to their cause which is explored in Chapter Five. Chapter Four discusses the blueprint provided for the delegates by the Irish Famine Relief Fund and illustrates the sympathetic press treatment of Irish issues first displayed during this episode. The final aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the press reported and influenced attitudes towards the visiting delegates. The visits provided Irish and non-Irish alike with the opportunity to show support for or protest against Home Rule. This is further developed in Chapter Five which will explore the themes and manifestations of support given to the visiting Irish parliamentary delegates in Australia. Here the influence of the press, the public receptions given to the delegates and increasing non-Irish and non-Catholic support are considered. Chapter Six details the lack of a structured resistance to Home Rule in South Australia, at least up until the early twentieth century. Opposition was largely facilitated by the

Orange Order in other colonies and was lacking in South Australia due to the Order's slow growth through the years during which the Home Rule movement secured the foundation of its support from 1879 onwards. Fundraising is the main focus of Chapter Seven. Whilst the money raised for the cause was the initial spark for this study, it appeared less of an indicator of support than first thought. Certainly it was fundamental to the movement's success but equally important was the moral support given and demonstrated during the delegates' public appearances in the City of Adelaide and the country towns of the colony. Finally, Chapter Eight will tender the study's conclusion by capturing the threads of the preceding chapters in a final summary which will offer decisive evidence of the strength of non-Irish colonial support for the Irish Home Rule movement in South Australia.

Chapter 2

This first part of this chapter will provide a brief overview of the Irish community of South Australia during the years 1883 to 1912 while the remainder describes those factors which help explain the support given to the Irish nationalist movement there. Amongst these were colonial attitudes towards the Irish community and the size and nature of that ethnic group. We will see that successful Irish settlers bridged the gap between the early colonial Irish elite and the predominantly working-class leaders of the Adelaide Irish community during the Home Rule period. We will also see how much of the anti-Irishism apparent in the colony was based largely in the vituperative public commentary of one man and how the issue of immigration in particular offers an insight into general colonial opinion of the Irish as a group. The nominated immigrants who came to work on the properties of men like County Clare-born Michael Kenny proved in the local context that, far from being lazy and ignorant, the Irish could be industrious and contented settlers. Tomkinson's slurs against them proved invaluable to this research because, just as every action has a reaction, every instance of castigation was met with a volley of support and explanation. Without this debate there would have been little public commentary and therefore little evidence of how the Irish were viewed in the colony and how they saw themselves.

What did it mean to be Irish in Adelaide from 1883 to 1912?

The comparatively small size of the South Australian Irish community did not exclude it from the visiting schedules of Irish parliamentary delegates. Despite its largely non-Irish population South Australia came second only to Queensland in raising funds for Irish famine relief on a per capita basis and reports of the later missions in support of Home Rule confirmed the colony as amongst the most generous of the antipodean communities.⁴⁴ Their early reputation for generosity may have been reason enough for the Irish fundraisers to visit the small Irish community but the ability of the group to foster social connections and encourage non-Irish support of their cause proved to be an additional incentive. The principles of the foundation of the colony, its demography and social structure and lack of Orange anti-Home Rule activity all played parts in the success of the Home Rule movement there.

Size, gender, religion and significance

Just prior to the first visit from the Irish envoys in the early 1880s the Irish-born in South Australia represented 6.52% of the colony's population compared with an average of 9.55% across Australasia.⁴⁵ They resided alongside the English who represented 21.14% of the total, Scots at 3.80% and Germans and Austrians at 3.21%, the remainder being mostly Australian-born (59.83%)

⁴⁴ See M.T. Montgomery's final report for the Irish Relief Fund: *Register*, 12 October 1880, p.1

⁴⁵ 1881 census

with small numbers of Chinese and French.⁴⁶ Thus as a group they were almost twice as big as the next two most sizeable ethnicities in the colony. In religious composition Catholics represented 15.21% of the colony's population. There is no method of linking ethnicity with religion in the earlier census figures yet Trevor McClaughlin states that by 1911 the ratio of Irish-born non-Catholics to the total number of Irish-born in the Commonwealth as a whole was 28.6% and it is generally accepted that the majority of the Irish were Catholic.⁴⁷ In the *Flinders History of South Australia*, David Hilliard states that "[The Catholic community] was predominantly Irish by birth or descent."⁴⁸

The use or abuse of the nomination system of immigration to South Australia registers some importance here as it facilitated the introduction of a large number of Irish immigrants in the late 1870s. This proved timely and opportune for the Home Rule movement. Immigration, whether free, assisted or nominated, and the Irish proportion of it, was a feature of parliamentary, press and public comment from the inception of the colony. Of most concern was the effect immigration had at times of economic sluggishness when labour outweighed employment opportunities as well as its potential ability to unbalance the ethnic and religious demography of the settlement. Irish immigration had been cause for comment in the press many times during the

⁴⁶ Coghlan. *Ibid.* p.15

⁴⁷ Trevor McClaughlin. "Protestant Irish in Australia." In *Echoes of Irish Australia: Rebellion to Republic*, edited by Brownrigg et al, Galong, NSW: St Clement's, 2007. p.89

⁴⁸ David Hilliard. "Religion" in Eric Richards. *The Flinders History of South Australia*. Social History. Netley, S. Aust.: Wakefield Press, 1986. p.212.

mid to late-nineteenth century. In December 1878 correspondence between the Agent-General, Sir Arthur Blyth, and J. Minton Connell of Dublin revealed that even before year-end figures had been calculated the Irish proceeding to Adelaide were 401 in excess of other nationalities from Britain.⁴⁹ Between 1876 and 1880 the Irish population was augmented by 4,000 new arrivals - most of them from Ulster.⁵⁰ This new influx from the most Protestant part of Ireland may have been the reason for the commencement of the reinvigoration of the Orange Order whose lodges increased from one to seven and spread outwards from Adelaide in the last half of this decade. One of the 1876 arrivals was Patrick Whelan, a draper from County Clare, who, starting with the famine relief fund in 1880, was to devote all of his remaining years in Australia to the Irish nationalist cause.

The Irish did not cluster in particular areas of the colony to any great extent. Though there were recognisably Irish areas such as the Clare Valley there were few places which did not have an Irish-born component as illustrated by Table 3 below. The figures given also show the decline, particularly between 1891 and 1901, of the Irish-born in the colony. While some areas maintained their levels of Irish-born inhabitants through this decade e.g. North Adelaide and East Torrens, some, like Yatala and Onkaparinga, even increased. The Yatala district encompassed the town of Auburn where a strong Orange Lodge emerged

⁴⁹ *Advertiser*, 22 March 1879, p.4-5

⁵⁰ Woodburn, p.317

from around 1874. Like this area, Wallaroo also had a noticeably smaller Catholic population and it too was an active Orange area suggesting that a good proportion of the Irish community here was Protestant. Between 1891 and 1901 areas such as Sturt and Gladstone saw an increase in their Irish-born populations but the majority demonstrated a steep decline as the colonial-born ratio, not surprisingly, began to exceed all foreign-born figures. Of course the nationalist movement also depended on the next generation of Irish Australians. In 1895 Davitt referred to his 30,000 fellow countrymen in South Australia including in this the offspring of the Irish-born and the delegates of the early years of the twentieth century also acknowledged the strong support of young Australians.

The colony's Irish-born population decreased by almost 22% from 14,369 in 1891 to just 11,243 in 1901. Ten years later and near the end of the study period, in a population of 408,558 people, the Irish-born had declined even further numbering just 7,997, less than 2% of the total, the majority of whom (6,760) had lived there for twenty years or more.⁵¹ Of these, 3,695 were male and 4,302 female. The Irish-born female cohort residing in Adelaide and its suburbs numbered 2,510 exceeded only by the Victorian-born (4,367), the English (8,705), and, of course, the South Australian-born (74,127).⁵² The number of males listing Ireland as their birthplace (1,720) was exceeded by those born in South Australia (64,779), England (9,563), Victoria (4,150), New South Wales

⁵¹ Section 52: Total population of the state of South Australia at the Census of 3rd April, 1911 p.212-213

⁵² Ibid. Section 93, p.294

(2,082) and Scotland (1,734).⁵³ Irish women outnumbered Irish men and also ranked fourth in the colony in terms of ethnicity amongst females yet, publicly at least, they had little to do with the Irish nationalist movement.

In past works the size of the group has been equated with influence and impact and this appears to have represented a barrier to a full investigation of the Irish in South Australia. Eric Richards argues that defining the importance of being Irish in colonial South Australia is problematic because the group never represented a statistically significant portion of the population. He holds the view that the stature of the Irish as a people in South Australian history is due only to their numbers at certain periods: Irish nominations for assisted passages rose from 9% of the colonial total in 1853 to 47% in 1858 and reached 67% in 1885.⁵⁴ High percentages in the last stages of assisted immigration suggest that for the South Australian Irish community chain migration was still an important part of kinship and diasporic ties to Ireland. Comparative figures for New South Wales were almost 40% for the period 1856-1860 and up to 75% during some years of the 1860s but in the 1880s less than 30% was usual.⁵⁵ Both Tobin and Mazaroli indicated that the loss of the old leadership and the lack of replacement stock was a factor in the decline of Irish organisations in Sydney and Melbourne and so this late Irish immigration presented a possible

⁵³ Ibid. Section 92, p.292

⁵⁴ Eric Richards. "The Importance of Being Irish in Colonial South Australia." In *The Irish Emigrant Experience in Australia*, edited by John O'Brien and Pauric Travers, 279. Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1991.

⁵⁵ O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia*. p.79-80

explanation for the survival and growth of nationalist support structures in Adelaide where there was only a small Irish population. The additional value of recent migrants lay in their reports of the current situation at home. As Tobin states, 'second-hand appraisals coming via the Irish press and the speeches of Irish parliamentarians were no real substitute for personal knowledge and contact'.⁵⁶ Previous scholars, by narrowly focusing on economic status or attempting a generalised, broad-view history, appear not to have recognised the galvanising effect the issue of Home Rule had on the Irish in South Australia during the 1880s and beyond. Concentrating solely on the fact that the Irish were a small group also ignores the fact that they were a much talked about people. The 'Irish Question' gave them identity in Australia and differentiated them from other migrant groups.

Richards sided with O'Farrell regarding the impermanency of Irish concerns stating that 'even where the issue of Irishness obtruded into colonial debate, the effects were temporary and became virtually unidentifiable after a few years'.⁵⁷ O'Farrell was harsher still writing that the enthusiasm which greeted the Irish parliamentary envoys dissipated as soon as they left Australian shores but this stance does little to account for the persistence of the support structures long after the departure of the famous and fairly sweeps away the efforts of some of Irish Australia's long-serving committee men. Richards's later

⁵⁶ Tobin, *ibid.*, p.274

⁵⁷ Richards, *ibid.*, p.93

works go on to suggest that the Irish experience in South Australia was of no more importance than that of Cornish or Scottish immigrants. Malcolm Campbell appears to agree, quoting David Fitzpatrick's statement that the Irish in general were 'remarkable in their ordinariness'.⁵⁸ If one is measuring economic success then, bar a few individuals, there is little to be offered by way of counterargument. However, during the period of this study, the Irish were different from other migrant groups if only because everyone had an opinion on the political destiny of their homeland. Few other ethnic groups were the subject of the daily press. Neither was the group quite as small within the borders of the colony as previous scholarship would generally lead us to believe.

Although the Irish in South Australia had declined to a tiny 1.95% of the state's population by the end of the study period, colonial support for the Irish Home Rule movement did not decrease correspondingly. Regardless of the minority status of the colonial Irish, the political and social issues of their fellow countrymen had constantly featured in the South Australian press, and sometimes in its politics, during the decades from the 1880s through to the first decade of the twentieth century. Indeed with the 1916 Easter Rising, the Conscription Crisis of the war years, the Anglo-Irish War of Independence and the subsequent Irish Civil War they would continue to do so. The press coverage may not appear to warrant comment – after all, such developments as affected

⁵⁸ M. Campbell. *Ireland's New Worlds: immigrants, politics, and society in the United States and Australia, 1815-1922*. Madison, Wis., University of Wisconsin Press, 2007, p.88

Britain were of interest to the colonies especially where they related to issues of Empire – but the effect of the issues in local politics are another matter and South Australia, founded as it was on a principle of early self-government, held Home Rule up as an ideal and a right, perhaps more so than any other state.

1881					1891	1901				
Electoral District	Catholics	Irish born	Catholics as % of total pop of electoral district	Irish born as % of total of electoral district	Irish born in 1891	Electoral District	Catholics	Irish born	Catholics as % of total pop of electoral district	Irish born as % of total of electoral district
East Adelaide	2442	1260	14.94	8.38	1033	East Adelaide	2987	847	18.72	5.31
West Adelaide	3930	1814	25.44	11.74	1294	West Adelaide	4316	959	29.47	6.55
North Adelaide	1240	730	15.49	9.12	728	North Adelaide	1972	566	11.7	3.4
Walleroo	2255	860	9.71	3.7	350	Walleroo	1389	253	8.38	1.53
Port Adelaide	2039	768	13.09	4.93	637	Port Adelaide	3062	563	13.8	2.54
West Torrens	1947	839	14.38	6.2	743	West Torrens	3112	618	14.39	2.86
Yatala	615	283	10.49	4.83	338	Yatala	967	214	12.7	2.8
Gumeracha	555	257	7.56	3.5	197	Gumeracha	573	149	5.7	1.5
East Torrens	2348	1182	11.56	5.82	1173	East Torrens	3667	993	11.5	3.1
Sturt	1598	926	11.46	6.64	769	Sturt	3057	771	10.3	2.6
Noarlunga	678	305	11.8	5.31	202	Noarlunga	478	140	7.7	2.25
Mount Barker	1018	408	14.8	5.93	356	Mount Barker	1003	288	10.4	3
Onkaparinga	494	194	6.64	2.61	206	Onkaparinga	651	153	6.5	1.5
Encounter Bay	478	190	9.11	3.62	135	Encounter Bay	362	90	6.3	1.6
Barossa	801	322	7.63	3.07	253	Barossa	1025	210	7.9	1.6
Light	2568	969	20.83	7.86	565	Light	1705	399	13.99	3.3
					291	Yorke Peninsula	989	214	12.4	2.7
Victoria	2163	748	21.04	7.23	540	Victoria	2486	399	19.7	3.2
Albert	813	396	12.21	5.96	212	Albert	932	188	10.4	2.1
Burra	4677	1915	22.32	9.14	538	Burra	1712	367	15.9	3.4
Stanley	3768	1269	21.45	7.22	422	Stanley	1815	312	20.1	3.5
Wooroora	1682	624	16.6	6.16	374	Wooroora	1187	267	14.7	3.3
					553	Gladstone	3569	593	22	3.7
					835	Frome	3288	585	22.9	4
					802	Newcastle	3128	507	26.8	4.3
Flinders	4127	1730	19.78	8.29	463	Flinders	1830	369	17.7	3.6
NT		85		1.22	85	NT	299	49	7.3	1.2
Shipping	392	172	5.61	2.46	272	Shipping	632	180	14	4
	42628	18246			14366		52193	11243		

Table 3 : The Catholic and Irish percentages of population of each electoral district in 1881 and 1901. The Irish-born numbers for 1891 are also given to aid comparison.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Yorke Peninsula, Gladstone, Frome and Newcastle did not exist as electoral districts in 1881

The changing class of the colony's leading Irishmen

The existing studies give us some picture of the colony's early Irish community up to the 1870s and a look at the later group shows how the social or class balance evened out towards the end of the century. No longer represented by a Protestant Anglo-Irish elite, Adelaide's Irish nationalist community by the 1880s, increasingly like Ireland itself, had ordinary working men as its most prominent members and political and social leaders. While Home Rule provided a very public focal point for Irishness in the colony, the Irish as an ethnic group had maintained an identity through the formation of various organisations from the early years of settlement. One of the first of these was the St Patrick's Society which made its appearance in 1849. Its founding members were Anglo-Irish Protestant men of standing and wealth. Amongst them were its inaugural President, Major T.S. O'Halloran, his brother, Captain W.L. O'Halloran, George Strickland Kingston and Colonel Robert Torrens, all of whom played a significant part in the administration of the colony. C. B. Newenham, Sheriff of the Province, acted as Treasurer. The only Catholic on the committee of the Society was its Secretary, Dr Thomas Young Cotter, who was also South Australia's first Colonial Surgeon.⁶⁰ In contrast, the Home Rule movement was led by Irish men of a lower class who arrived long after the foundation of the colony and the extraordinary

⁶⁰*Register*, 11 July 1849, p.3 and 18 March 1851. p.3.

opportunities that formative stage presented for the accumulation of wealth and status. Men of the stature of O'Halloran and Kingston were not of the same class as the study's subjects – had the Irish instigators of Home Rule support in Adelaide been men of their ilk, there would be less curiosity regarding their ability to attract wealthy, non-Irish support to the cause.

What this early period reveals is the pattern of chain migration, social networking and political activism, in particular a use of the press to defend and arouse Irish interests, of men like Edward McEllister and Michael Kenny, which would be emulated and progressed in later decades. Researching this earlier period shows how the colony's most prominent Irish men moved from an Anglo-Irish colonial elite to a largely working class group well-connected to the higher levels of society. In examining the class elements of the South Australian movement a difference with New South Wales becomes apparent. Mazzaroli attributed the support of the lower classes for Home Rule to a frustration with their place in society but there is little of this evident in South Australia. Working class concern for the Irish situation becomes apparent in the fraternal feeling engendered by the Irish land question amongst ordinary South Australians at a time when there was public debate over the distribution of Crown Lands.⁶¹ While

⁶¹ Debate raged from the 1860s about the sale of Crown lands in the colony. This was principally about the method of payment (prepayment in cash), size of selections and the monopoly of pastoralists over crop growers. There were concerns about the purchase of large tracts of arable land by consortiums such as that which bought up land around Mount Barker with which the individual farmer couldn't compete. Strangways Act of 1868 went some way towards removing the monopoly of the pastoralists but the colonial small farmers' continuing difficulty of gaining

some of South Australia's Irishmen commented on aspects of class division, there is little sense of a feeling of frustration or helplessness. If anything, there is a sense of confidence and defiance about South Australia's Irish community. Michael Kenny, for example, castigated the Hon. Samuel Tomkinson MLC, one of Adelaide's most easily identifiable anti-Irish personalities, as belonging to 'a knot of aristocrats...land agents, speculators and millionaires of Adelaide' who attacked those working for land reform in groups such as the Light Farmers Club at Freeling of which he had been a founding member.⁶²

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Irish, though with a dwindling Irish-born element, were making progress in local and state government and, as an ethnic group, were looked to as a good example of national spirit in South Australia.⁶³ There was little of the antipathy shown to them in other colonies and a quiet respect for their unassuming and non-aggressive ambition was evident. In 1890 Sir William Robinson, former Governor of South Australia, said of the Irish element in Australia: 'whatever they might be in their own country no one denies that they make excellent citizens in the colonies. They are steady, thrifty, contented, and intelligently interested in public affairs.'⁶⁴ This description could readily be applied to the leading members of the Irish nationalist organisations of South Australia. As early as 1866 a tongue-in-cheek article had appeared in the *Register* alluding to the capability of Irishmen in colonial administration:

sustainable holdings large enough to allow for fallow periods and crop rotation engendered sympathy with the Irish land question.

⁶² *Register*, 23 May 1887, p.7

⁶³ Irish national spirit as opposed to exhibiting a colonial nationalism

⁶⁴ *Register*, 4 March 1890, p.6

The talk is that some such rule as that which regulates the admission of immigrants according to nationality might with advantage be adopted with reference to the occupants of public offices; that in the House of Assembly the Speaker and the two Clerks all hail from the Green Isle; that it is not correct to say the bungling which sometimes takes place arises from this fact; that in all public departments, however, a mixture of nationalities might work better; that Irish gentlemen have a wonderful faculty for 'edging themselves into some canny post,' as Burns sings, and may be found in all the Australian Colonies enjoying pleasant billets. The further talk is that if they occupy these positions it is because their talents and education fit them for public offices.⁶⁵

The situation was even more pronounced in 1897 when Kingston on a visit to Ireland said,

Irishmen occupied the leading positions in administrative affairs. Three of the six members of the Cabinet of his country were Irishmen. Formerly the life of a South Australian Government averaged only twelve months, but now they were in their fourth year of office, and the people were not tired of them yet.⁶⁶

⁶⁵*Register*, 5 March 1866, p.2

⁶⁶*Register*, 31 August 1897, p.5

Attitudes towards the Irish

A number of documented incidents reveal various colonial attitudes towards the Irish community. These centred on the themes of proportion, as seen through debate on immigration; patronage, demonstrated at the local level by people like Michael Kenny and on a higher scale by the colonial elite during the visits of Irish parliamentarians; loyalty, illustrated by the Fenian scare of 1868; and lastly, public demonstration, visible in the Slattery incident and the reception and meetings of the Irish delegates. Perceptions of the ethnic group had some influence on the success of the Home Rule movement in the colony and these varied between the consistent criticism of the Hon. Samuel Tomkinson, the support of socialists like Louis Berens, and the general promotion of the Irish nationalist cause by the colonial press. While most of these incidents initially appear as evidence of anti-Irish sentiment, further investigation reveals that they appear to be less about the Irish than about colonial fears regarding sectarianism, disloyalty and issues of class. In fact, most, excluding the Slattery riot, were simply made prominent by Tomkinson's public commentary. Samuel Tomkinson was a Welsh Protestant who was Manager of the Adelaide branch of the Bank of Australasia for almost thirty years. He retired in 1879 and in 1881 became the Member for Gumeracha, a constituency which contained one of the colony's lowest Catholic (7.5%) and Irish (3.5%) groupings. The most important conclusion drawn from these events was that the Irish were not a group that was feared.

The instances of public debate involving Tomkinson and the Irish from the 1880s onwards provides an insight into both how the community was viewed by others and how it viewed itself. The worth of attracting the Irish electorate and the high numbers of Irish immigrants and their usefulness were raised as social issues. On the whole, the debate about immigration and Irish participation in it was more about the skill of people being brought to the colony than the effect of their religion or nationality upon its composition. There were those who argued that bringing unskilled workers in times of agricultural depression did not just leave men wandering the streets but caused a huge social expense if public works had to be contrived to employ them adding further pressure to a depressed economy. Samuel Tomkinson, however, managed to make it seem an 'Irish' issue by his frequent public declarations against the group on the immigration platform. The nomination scheme did not bring the glut of Irish the colony had experienced during the Orphan Scheme of the 1850s but Tomkinson was to put himself in the firing line of the Irish community by drawing attention to their numbers in it. He first made reference to the high Irish proportion amongst assisted immigrants in parliament in 1883 causing Irish-born Patrick Boyce Coglein to accuse the member for Gumeracha of having 'a serious inherent and vehement antipathy to the Irish nation'.⁶⁷ Coglein

⁶⁷ *Advertiser*, 29 June 1883, p. 4. Coglein, a Catholic from County Sligo is conspicuously absent from the Irish Relief Fund movement and subsequent Irish nationalist groups. Links with W.K. Simms are evident both in the parliamentary arena – they both stood for West Adelaide in 1871– and in Coglein's long-term association with racing. He had retired from most of his business ventures by 1872 but continued a political career so his absence from the Irish movement is

might have appeared to be hypersensitive but for the fact that Tomkinson had, just two months prior, written to the press denouncing the Irish National Land League and more pertinently, the revered Michael Davitt. His letter invoked replies from several correspondents, all of whom accused Tomkinson of harbouring a 'genuine hatred of the Irish'.⁶⁸ He replied the next day that he certainly had nothing against his Irish fellow colonists and he had in fact assisted many if not more of them than English or Scotchmen, arguing that he would have pointed out the anomaly regardless of the nationality involved. The report of the Assembly in June 1883 stated that 'in reply to Mr Tomkinson (who referred to the disproportion of emigrants during 1882— Irish 603, English 441, Scotch 110— and asked whether a better proportion will be observed in future), 'that the natural effect of the present system of immigration will be to secure that result, that the disproportion will not be apparent in future, and that as a matter of fact the latest vessels have brought a large excess of English people over those of other nationalities'.⁶⁹ In 1883, the Irish dominance did appear to be receding: of the 4,132 arrivals, the majority (2,913) were English while the Irish numbered just 653.⁷⁰ However, the disproportion of the Irish amongst immigrants reasserted itself the following year: In 1884, of the 968 newcomers, there were 451 English (46.6%), 313 Irish (32%), 63 Scotch (6.5%), and 141

puzzling especially in light of the fact that his non-Irish and non-Catholic colleagues became involved.

⁶⁸ *Chronicle*, 21 April 1883, p.22.

⁶⁹ *Register*, 28 June 1883, p.4.

⁷⁰ *Register*, 19 June 1884, p.3s

foreigners (14.6%).⁷¹ Despite further controversy regarding the immigration system in mid-1885, during that year 196 Irish people arrived representing 67% of the total.⁷²

Tomkinson attracted further negative attention in various other episodes concerning the Irish with comments regarding Irish women during the Chinese Immigration Bill debate in 1885 and letters protesting against both the 1883 and 1889 Irish delegations.⁷³ A public slanging match between Tomkinson and William Dixon, President of the Irish National Federation, ensued when Dixon accused Tomkinson of viewing the Irish vote as something which could be bought by his self-publicised assistance to Irish individuals. The incident gave rise to accusations by Tomkinson of an electoral ploy hatched against his candidacy for the Legislative Council by the Irish nationalists because he had dared speak out against John Redmond's visit to the colony:

I believe that the real motive of Mr Dixon's hostility and desire to prevent my election is because I spoke and wrote against the object of the Redmonds' mission, and no right-minded man will blame me for doing so ... I claim the support of all loyal colonists, and especially that of the Irish Catholics, considering the great number whom I have obtained situations

⁷¹ *Chronicle*, 11 April 1885, p.4

⁷² Parliament voted to honour all nominations despite the depressed economy - *Register*, 30 June 1885, p.4 and 9 July 1885, p.4.; *Chronicle*, 12 June 1886, p.7.

⁷³ *Advertiser*, 25 June 1885, p.7; *Chronicle*, 20 June 1885, p.19; *Register*, 12 April 1889, p.7

for and helped in a variety of ways besides subscribing to their religious, educational, and charitable institutions.⁷⁴

Dixon's reply was unapologetic:

Mr Tomkinson boasts of the assistance he has rendered that community in obtaining situations and in subscribing to their various institutions, and on these grounds lays claim to the Irish vote, but he must disabuse himself of the idea that the Irish vote can be bartered for pounds, shillings, and pence.⁷⁵

Despite having some support Tomkinson's letters generally drew fire from both Irish and non-Irish readers.⁷⁶ Editors often voiced the opinion that he was not to be taken seriously as the standard bearer of colonial opinion, one even placing an addendum to this effect at the end of his submission.⁷⁷ As late as 1894 his candidacy meetings for the Legislative Council were still being peppered with snide comments about his opinion of Irish immigrants.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ *Chronicle*, 20 June 1885, p.19

⁷⁵ *Register*, 30 June 1885, p.6

⁷⁶ Support during the Chinese Immigration bill episode came from Thomas McEllister, son of Edward McEllister MP, who claimed that had his father still been alive he would have supported Tomkinson given the assistance Tomkinson rendered to some members of the Irish community. *Advertiser*, 20 June 1885, p.6 It is doubtful as to whether Edward McEllister would, in fact, have supported Tomkinson as his was the loudest voice in opposition to Captain Bagot when he referred in parliament to the over-representation of Irish amongst the colony's immigrants in 1859. *Register*, 21 June 1859, p.3

⁷⁷ *Register*, 11 April 1889, p.7

⁷⁸ *Border Watch*, 9 May 1894, p.2.

The main outcome of Tomkinson's anti-Irish outbursts was his higher public profile. When he stood for the Legislative Council in May 1885 he was defeated and it is perhaps significant that the correspondence between Tomkinson and Dixon appeared in the press the following month. The letters brought him increased publicity and the support of individuals who stood against the nationalist movement Dixon represented. In mid-June the *Register* reported that Tomkinson had the support of the people of Athelstone, among them John Farmer, an Irishman, and Malcolm Davis who had been a member of the Irish Famine Relief Fund until he had been sued for slander by the fund's secretary, M.T. Montgomery.⁷⁹ This former committee member of the Relief Fund was described by Dixon as 'a well-known hanger-on of Irish Benefit Societies' whose 'anti-Irishism' was also well known.⁸⁰ Davis, in particular, had an axe to grind and it is possible that his support of Tomkinson was, in reality, a chance to avenge his experience with the Irish nationalists. Farmer referred to Dixon as a 'political squibmonger' while Davis declared his letter to be a 'base machination of the political enemy'. After the by-election of July 1885 which saw him elected to the Council, Tomkinson claimed to have polled favourably amongst the Irish in Norwood and Kensington, though he thought perhaps he had suffered in Macclesfield where a large number of Irish resided. But he had received extra publicity throughout and regardless of whether it was good or bad his name was

⁷⁹ *Register*, 16 April 1880, p.2s

⁸⁰ *Register*, 24 June 1885, p.5; *Register*, 30 June 1885, p.6

more prominently before the electorate because of it.⁸¹ He continued to raise a voice in objection to all things Irish in the coming years but, while persistent, he remained virtually alone in his opposition.

Tomkinson's negative commentary on Irish immigrants left an opening for those primed to defend them. While there was general disgruntlement with the immigration system and Irish uptake of nominated passages in the 1880s, it appears there were also some useful aspects to Irish migrants. Close family and county ties and the comparatively low cost and general usefulness of Irish workers were some of those described by Clare-born Michael Kenny who was credited with having brought out over three hundred nominees by 1871.⁸² In the debate about the reintroduction of free immigration in the mid-1880s some argued that the system brought a lower class of worker and one that was prone to intercolonial movement therefore causing an expense to South Australia, the benefit of which was reaped by other colonies, particularly Victoria.⁸³ In support of nominated immigration was the bond that existed between the nominee and nominator which usually served to keep the new arrivals from wandering too far

⁸¹ *Register*, 14 July 1885, p.6

⁸² *Register*, 5 August 1871, p.7

⁸³ In the 1880s South Australia suffered the highest proportionate loss by migration of any of the colonies. In 1872 Solomon suggested in parliament that a sub-agent be sent to Victoria to encourage emigration to South Australia since, he argued, it was cheaper to bring immigrants at £3 from there than £14 from England. In addition he thought it only fair since Victoria had taken £750,000 worth of immigrants from the Land Fund of South Australia and many of them wanted to return but were unable to. His suggestion of subsidised steamships, along with the idea of a sub-Agent, was rejected on the grounds of being antagonistic towards the Victorian government which had not deliberately enticed anyone – men had simply followed high wage rates - Parliamentary Debates, House of Assembly, 7 November 1872.pp.2575-2576

and so Irish familial and county chain migration could be considered a positive element of the nomination system.⁸⁴ This was not how it was viewed by some though. In his 'Irish Immigration' speech of 1869 in the New South Wales Assembly Henry Parkes had railed against the numbers of Irish immigrants and the threat posed to the Protestant domination of that colony.⁸⁵ He also said nominated immigration brought settlers out under the motives of affection, that they were not selected by any rule as to their fitness for colonial life. While his views may have sat comfortably with some South Australian parliamentarians, the colony's Commissioner of Crown Lands, T. Reynolds, stated in parliament that 'they wanted people to come from any place so long as they made good citizens' and Mr Cottrell lamented the factional spirit which pervaded the discussion regarding parity of numbers of Irish immigrants saying some 'were afraid of the religious element coming'.⁸⁶ Mr Angas objected to Reynolds' assertion that his reinsertion of the nationality clause in the Immigration bill was 'more of a religious than a political question'.⁸⁷ Reynolds stated that 'the Irish appeared to be the only people who had friends at home, as he could fill up the

⁸⁴ *Register*, 31 August 1882, p.1-2. Coming out to Irish communities may also have increased the likelihood of successful settlement which would have affected decisions to stay in the colony rather than moving on.

⁸⁵ Irish immigration: speech of Henry Parkes delivered in the Legislative Assembly of NSW on the second reading of "A bill to authorise and regulate assisted immigration", Oct. 14th, 1869

⁸⁶ Parliamentary Debates, House of Assembly, 19 November 1872, p.2697 and p.2720

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Immigration was debated in parliament frequently and much discussion centred on the nationality of immigrants. The Irish were rightly assumed to be mostly Catholic and here Reynolds implies that Angas tried to use nationality limits as a means of controlling the non-Protestant quota in the intake.

vote very easily with them if he liked, but only a very small number of Scotch, English and Welsh sent for relatives.⁸⁸

Despite the fact that the population was being augmented at the expense of the nominator and not the colony, objection to Irish use of the nomination system continued. Regardless of Parkes' assertion that immigrants were chosen for emotive reasons the reality was that the nominator would bear the expense and inconvenience of an unsuitable colonist so was apt to choose wisely. The amenability of the Irish to taking whatever work was available even at low wages was stated many times as was their reputation for working hard.⁸⁹ Michael Kenny advised his nominees to refuse no sort of work and not to be too particular about wages.⁹⁰ He proved himself adept at using all available mechanisms to secure passages for Irish immigrants yet he was careful to appear to be considerate of the colony and its needs claiming in 1866 in a letter to the press that he brought out ten times as many males as females and vowed not to bring 'another woman unless the mother of a family, as long as I live', a reference to the overabundance of Irish females received in the colony during the Orphan Scheme.⁹¹

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p.2578.

⁸⁹ *Advertiser*, 29 December 1866, p.6

⁹⁰ *Advertiser*, 24 July 1866, p.3

⁹¹ *Advertiser*, 30 September 1861, p.3; *Advertiser*, 24 July 1866, p.3; Kenny talks of 'Irish Immigration Day' - *Chronicle*, 1 July 1865, p.8 contains advertisement placed by Strangways, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Immigration: 'NOTICE is hereby given that this office will be open on Tuesday, the 18th July, for the receipt of applications for Assisted Passage Certificates in favor of persons of the Irish Nationality.' *Chronicle*, 22 July 1865 (p.4) states that 'The number of

With nominees numbering hundreds it is not likely Kenny chose people from Ireland on the basis of affection. His own success in the colony could not have been sustained if he had borne the expense of unsuitable migrants. In a letter entitled "No Irish Need Apply", Kenny claimed that many men had come to him begging for food because there was no work. He replied that there was plenty of work but it was work the men could not do:

The poor fellows were as unfit for the colony as the colony was unfit for them. Now mark, Sir, while some of these men — not an Irishman among them — had come out quite recently and were starving, assisted Irish immigrants were in my field who had been earning good wages from the day they joined their friends who brought them out. But they were workmen fit for colonial life; regular two-handed fellows, with no 'can't' this and 'can't' that; and skilful too, not lubberly.⁹²

So the Irish immigrants, according to Kenny who was better acquainted with them than most, were, in general, hard-working and undemanding employees. Irish agricultural labourers depended on the patronage of men like Kenny for a start in the new world. It could be suggested that the public perception of this class of Irishmen in the colony as hardworking and contented contributed to support of Irish famine relief in the late 1870s since the local experience of Irishmen was that they were neither ignorant nor indolent. Kenny,

applications received was 816, and the total amount paid £3,930 18s.'; See Steiner, Marie, *Servant Depots* for further details on the Irish Orphan Scheme in South Australia.

⁹² *Chronicle*, 8 December 1866, p.1s

in both occupation and public life, was as much involved with land reform as with Irish political or religious issues. The sale of Crown lands by public auction which he described as 'one of the greatest monopolies known to English speaking persons since the days of the feudal laws of Great Britain and Ireland' was one of his prime interests and often the subject of debate between him and the anti-Irish Tomkinson.⁹³

The Irish peasant and the colonial Australian farmer had common interests. Land ownership and tenure was a shared issue of concern between many colonists and the Irish and so the combination of the Irish land question with the fight for self-government held appeal for both levels of society. Amongst the working class there was empathy for both the Irish tenant farmer and acknowledgement of the benefits of self-government; for the colony's elite, Home Rule, the founding principle of South Australia, was viewed as something other British colonies should strive for. Some non-Irish supporters, such as Birmingham-born jeweller Louis Berens, participated in the Irish movement because 'the cause of the people was the same in Ireland, England and Australia' and 'the monopoly of land by one class was the root cause of poverty and misery'.⁹⁴ Berens claimed to be no socialist – he did not advocate the state ownership of all the means of production - but he did expound the principles of land nationalisation. In the colony the Irish Land War and the activities of the

⁹³ *Advertiser*, 8 January 1889, p.6

⁹⁴ *Register*, 18 March 1889, p.2

Land League were widely covered by the local press. Although the association of the League with unfavourable methods of protest in Ireland was often denounced, terms such as rack-renting, eviction and boycotting became well-known in the colony and the general impression that land grievances were at the root of Ireland's troubles was consistently conveyed through this medium. Redmond's speech in the Adelaide Town Hall found one writer, 'Jones', 'wavering, and has decided me in favor of Ireland, so that I shall be ready when the time comes with my subscription, or even to go further and enrol myself as a member of the league'.⁹⁵ Redmond's speech gave South Australians a personal account of the state of the Irish people. 'Jones' claimed it was difficult to understand how an Irishman in Ireland could be as fiendish as he was reported when his compatriots residing in the colony were 'trustworthy, both in business and as friends'. In his opinion, the colonial reporting of Irish events – 'We see newspaper reports and telegrams of murders and assaults committed by the Irish peasantry, but we very seldom hear anything of the causes of such murders and assaults' – had not made widely known 'the different relations here and in Ireland existing between landlords and tenants' which needed to be explained in 'plain, and forcible language'. Redmond's speech did that for the 'nation of freeholders, who have got into the way of thinking that a man may do what he likes with his freehold, without question from anybody, get the best rent he can for it, and when the terms of the lease he has granted expires take all

⁹⁵ *Chronicle*, 17 February 1883, p.12

improvements as his own.⁹⁶ While the land problem was greatly improved by the time of their visits, when the Irish delegates lectured the colony's inhabitants, this example of misgovernment was used to reinforce the validity of the movement – it was a basis for seeking self-government as a means of restoring a modicum of self-determination to an oppressed and dispossessed nation.

So while only a small portion of South Australia's population, the Irish-born were the third largest national group in the colony. Moreover the Irish attracted public comment both in regard to their place in colonial society and the distresses of their homeland. Few other ethnic minorities did so on the scale evident during this period. The high Irish proportions in the immigration figures in this late period brought people who, far from strengthening the negative Irish stereotype, gave colonial South Australians a different experience of the Irish 'peasant' so often the feature of their newspaper reports. There were elements of electoral 'power play' evident in Tomkinson's acknowledgment of the Irish vote in certain areas in 1885, another indication of the reality of the Irish presence in the colony.⁹⁷ The Irish Question, based as it was on the issues of land control and self-government, found an audience in South Australia in part because of the close understanding South Australians had of those two issues

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ The apparent voting power of the Irish or, at least, the strength of feeling Irish issues evoked amongst the electorate, had been foreshadowed in the Adelaide municipal mayoral elections in December 1883 and would feature in the local council elections in Port Pirie in 1911 – See section headed 'Reception: welcome and protest' (on page 137 below).

but the characteristics of the Irish in the colony played their role too. The size of the community itself is where its significant features lie – its smallness made for unity and control, especially during the various crises the movement suffered, which, in turn, supported an image of respectability and cohesiveness not always evident in other antipodean Irish communities. As the next chapter will show, these characteristics combined with the lack of threat usually associated with the Irish element to allow support for the Irish Home Rule movement from the wider South Australian public.

Chapter 3

Scandal and crises in Ireland and the effect in Australia

A number of factors unique to South Australia aided support of Irish nationalist aims amongst its inhabitants. Some of these were specific to the Irish of the colony, such as the group of immigrants who arrived late in the 1870s and served to bolster the Irish community there, while others were relevant to the non-Irish colonial population. There were also aspects of timing and change that proved fortuitous for the Home Rule movement. The first Adelaide visit, for example, took place before news of the Land League's alleged complicity in the Dublin murders of the Chief Secretary and the under-Secretary for Ireland reached Australia and so John Redmond received a hearing from the Adelaide public and press untarnished by scandal at home. But there were also circumstances which negated success. South Australian economic depression in the late 1880s hampered fundraising during the Dillon tour and the Parnell disgrace in Ireland threatened the stability of the whole movement. A look at the visits of the Irish Parliamentary Party delegates to South Australia demonstrates the differences which existed there in terms of the attitude of the press towards Irish issues, the nature of the public response to the delegates, the amount of money raised there and the involvement of public figures in the Home Rule movement but the global context of the movement had its own effect. The development of the Irish Party and events in Ireland and Westminster would both serve and hinder the South Australian effort.

One of those elements of timing came into play within days of the Redmonds' departure from Adelaide in February 1883. Telegrams announcing the allegations of the informer Carey which implicated the Land League in the Phoenix Park murders of Chief Secretary Lord Cavendish and Under-Secretary Burke in Dublin appeared, which had the effect of damaging colonial attitudes towards the Irish envoys and their mission. The warm reception and the open minds of the non-Irish audience demonstrated in Adelaide were not replicated in the other colonies. The flurry of correspondence to the local press gave vent to anti-Land League feeling although it was notable that most of those writing against the visitors declined to sign their names to their missives whilst supporters openly claimed their views. The cold reception the Redmonds experienced in other colonies would be more evident in South Australia when the delegation returned to Adelaide in November 1883 when both the Institute Hall in Gawler and the Adelaide Town Hall were refused as venues for the nationalists.⁹⁸

The aftermath of the Phoenix Park murders would linger to 1889 to colour the Dillon tour of Australia in that year. The delegation, consisting of John Dillon, John Deasy and Sir Thomas Esmonde, had arrived in the midst of the Parnell Commission which was instigated in September 1888 to investigate charges made against Charles Parnell and his party in the Piggott letters

⁹⁸ The trustees of the Gawler Institute refused the application on the ground that the Institute was a partly Government affair and Redmond's lectures were against the Imperial Government. *Bunyip*, 23 November 1883, p.3

published by *The Times* in 1887. The letters, supposedly written by Parnell, implicated the movement in, and implied that Parnell had condoned, the Phoenix Park murders, the aftermath of which had clouded the Redmond mission of 1883. In February 1889 Piggott had admitted the forgery and fled to Madrid where he committed suicide on 1 March. Although Parnell was exculpated at this point the movement still operated under a cloud of suspicion as the Commission, investigating its operations during the Land War and the Plan of Campaign, did not conclude until November 1889. Exoneration in the form of the Commission's report delivered in February 1890 did not come until almost a year after the commencement of the Dillon mission but the early news of Parnell's innocence affected the civic reception of the delegates.

The envoys were referred to from the outset as the 'distinguished visitors'.⁹⁹ The collapse of *The Times* case and the public reception afforded the envoys had an effect on the acceptability of the local nationalist organisations: a meeting of the John Mandeville Branch of the Irish National League in Hindmarsh reported that the Irish nationalist paper, *The Nation*, often deemed extremist and not usually welcome, was to be permitted on the tables of the local Institute, and the Cambrian Society of South Australia sent the Irish National League a letter early in April that read '[we] send our greetings to our Irish fellow-colonists, and express our sympathy with the national cause in Ireland, and congratulate the Irish leaders upon the sudden collapse of the Times

⁹⁹ *Register*, 16 April 1889, p4; *Chronicle*, 20 April 1889, p.15;

Commission. Please convey this to your fellow-countrymen.’ The League’s response was to send a letter of acknowledgement offering the Society’s President honorary membership of the Irish National League.¹⁰⁰

In addition to the positive outcome of *The Times* case, by the time of the Dillon visit, the Irish Parliamentary Party had succeeded in convincing Gladstone to introduce a Home Rule bill at Westminster and, although the 1886 bill had been defeated, the party had shown it was a serious constitutional political entity. Despite the Irish Parliamentary Party’s obstructionist methods in the Commons and the more fiery speeches of Dillon compared to those of Redmond, the treatment of the 1889 delegation was more civil than that meted out to the visitors of 1883. However, the movement’s relief from misfortune was short-lived. Before the *Times* case concluded, scandal erupted around the Party’s charismatic leader: Parnell was named as co-respondent in the divorce petition filed by Captain O’Shea in December 1889. Parnell did not contest the allegation so that he could marry Mrs O’Shea and his refusal to step down from the leadership of the Irish Party in the wake of public outrage caused the party to split into two groups: the minority Parnellite faction led by John Redmond in the Irish National League and a larger, anti-Parnellite group led by Justin McCarthy, and later John Dillon, in the Irish National Federation. Although Parnell died in 1891 it would be another decade before the two groups would reunite. The Australian branches of the Irish National League deplored the disunity and some

¹⁰⁰ *Advertiser*, 2 April 1889, p.4

fractured, forming splinter groups, but Adelaide remained focussed on the cause and did not partake in any factionalism as will be demonstrated below.

Amidst the divorce scandal, Australia received its next Irish MP, J.R. Cox, the Member for East Clare. He left Ireland in October 1889 after his release from Ennis prison and arrived in Tasmania in January 1890 with the object of collecting money for the Evicted Tenants Fund. While belonging to the McCarthyite section of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Cox came to Australia claiming to represent neither side of the Parnell controversy. He stated in an interview held on his return that most of Australia was against the Parnellites but that the universal concern was for reunification of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the continuation of work in the interests of Ireland. The disunity of the Party would plague it for most of the nineties. A second Home Rule Bill was defeated at Westminster in 1893 and Michael Davitt felt the state of affairs in Ireland negatively affected his lecturing tour of Australia in 1895.

The reunification of the party took place in 1900 when the two factions, the Irish National League and the Irish National Federation, amalgamated with William O'Brien's United Irish League formed in 1898. It would be another twelve years before the Third Home Rule bill was tabled in the House of Commons and during the first decade of the new century two IPP missions reached Australia. The tenacity and commitment of the Home Rulers and their allies was evident in the support provided to Devlin and Donovan in 1906 and the even greater sustenance, both financial and moral, given to Redmond Jnr, Hazleton and Donovan in 1911.

Distinctive features of the South Australian Irish community

The Irish community in South Australia differed from those in the eastern states in a number of ways. Its size made it both less threatening and paradoxically more unified; its demonstrated nature was conservative and moderate; Irish nationalist activity prompted no Orange backlash in the colony primarily because the Orange Order was not popular until the turn of the century and even with increased membership demonstrated little concern with Irish issues. This section will demonstrate the unique nature of the South Australian Irish community and analyse the effect of the embryonic support first shown in fundraising for famine relief.

Loyal and 'well-disposed towards the English Government'

The new political claim for Ireland of the Home Rule era was far removed from the separatist aim of the Fenians. Irish loyalty was a key component of the movement's acceptance in South Australia, a colony which, while immensely proud of its record of self-government, was also deeply loyalist and committed to the British Empire. The South Australian Irish community was given an early opportunity to demonstrate its loyalty to the Crown. The allegiance of the whole Irish community in Australia was under suspicion in 1868 during the Fenian scare prompted by Henry O'Farrell's attempt to assassinate Prince Albert, the Duke of Edinburgh, in Clontarf, Sydney in March of that year.

O'Farrell initially claimed to have been a Fenian but later renounced his confession and claimed to have worked alone in the shooting. Australia at large

denounced Fenianism in the wake of the event coming as it did less than a year after the 'Dynamite campaign' in England and the series of raids into Canada in 1867. The accusations of the wife of a local police officer instigated an enquiry into Fenian activity in the colony by George Hamilton, the Commissioner of Police. The result of the six week-long investigation showed that in a population of 170,000 people a mere 88 were suspected of having Fenian sympathies. The mustering of rebels rumoured to be taking place in the Clare Valley was, in fact, an isolated instance of 'tin-kettling' - 'the common and most objectionable practice in country places of serenading newly-married couples by a band whose musical instruments mainly consist of kerosene tins, cow horns, discarded frying pans, and other similar ear splitting and sleep-preventing contrivances'.¹⁰¹ While the report stated that 'in the vicinity of Clare and Kapunda and also in Adelaide Fenian principles are discussed openly in low public houses', the Police Commissioner believed that 'in general the Irish population here is well disposed towards the English Government'. Reassurance was given that the man suspected of being the movement's chief agitator in the colony had left for New York travelling via Sydney.¹⁰²

The Commissioner's report had the effect of keeping from the South Australian Irish the threat that their origin carried elsewhere in the country. It created a space where respectability and loyalty, temporarily questioned, was

¹⁰¹ *Northern Argus*, 2 July 1875, p.4

¹⁰² Report of the Police Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, 24 April 1868. State Records of SA, GRG 5/2/1868/556

restored to the group. The Town Hall meeting, arranged for the purposes of moving resolutions of sympathy and loyalty to the injured Duke, was peppered with exhortations to the colony's Irishmen to sign the address and indignation that O'Farrell had cast a slur on the national group. Nearly all those on the platform were Irish - 'He had no right to put blood on the page of my adopted country. (Continued applause) He had no right to make the people speak of the Irish with disgust and indignation. (Applause)'¹⁰³ Chief Justice Hanson stated that while the citizens felt 'the strongest indignation against the perpetrator of this act, we must take care to separate him from the country of which he is a member, and from the religion which he professes to believe.'¹⁰⁴

Small and united

The basic features of South Australia's Irish nationalist organisation and the peculiar characteristics of its Irish community served to differentiate them from their countrymen in other Australian colonies. Size alone made them less threatening and this, combined with their unity, steadiness and respectability helped to make South Australians in general more amenable to their cause.

¹⁰³ Vicar-General (Father Smyth), *Chronicle*, 21 March 1868, p.11

¹⁰⁴ Chief Justice R.D. Hanson, *ibid.*

Long-running involvement in colonial business, political, community and sporting affairs gave the working class Irishmen of the later period access to the wealthy and the powerful and provided a level of contact and familiarity that was more meaningful in the condensed sphere of Adelaide than perhaps would have been the case in a larger city.¹⁰⁵ Men such as Francis Keogh and James Broderick were involved in numerous committees – not just Irish or Catholic ones but literary societies, trade groups like the Licensed Victuallers Association, sports clubs and business concerns. This network of relationships and a more conservative and restrained 'Irishness' than was possible to exhibit in larger Irish populations are the two most notable features of Irish South Australia. While former studies have contended that the 'quietness' of Irishness in the colony smacked of assimilation and a weakening of Irish identity, there is little evidence of this. Rather elements such as the (ab)use of the nomination system and the economic success of earlier arrivals, who cannot be seen to have shelved their Irish identity in the process of chasing success, laid the groundwork for future Irish organisations by their ability to prove themselves loyal, capable and productive members of the young society.

The unity of Irish nationalists in the colony was perhaps more by accident than design and was another factor facilitated by their small number. The larger

¹⁰⁵ The research revealed a web of interaction between some of the colony's most powerful men and the Irish specifically in the realms of horse and dog racing, cricket and local politics which spanned the decades from the 1860s to the late 1880s. The Irish Famine Relief Fund brokered some of these relationships which were further consolidated in the support given to the Home Rule movement.

Irish communities suffered internecine rivalry in the absence of strong, effective leadership but Adelaide saw little of this – there simply was not the critical mass to generate such a situation. Rather the reverse seems to be true: when someone undertook a position in one of the colony's Irish organisations there appears to have been a tacit agreement that it was theirs until they resigned. James Vincent O'Loghlin, first editor of the *Southern Cross* and renowned South Australian statesman, constantly bemoaned the pressure of fulfilling the editor's role of the paper in conjunction with his parliamentary duties in a series of letters to his sister, Mary.¹⁰⁶ When Patrick Whelan tendered his resignation from the Secretaryship of the Irish National Federation in June 1895 because he was moving to Western Australia the members decided to vote him six months leave of absence instead in the hope that he would return.¹⁰⁷ Although William Dixon and former Famine Fund committee member Malcolm Davis demonstrated a mutual antagonism, there are few records of internal squabbling.

Adelaide's Irish nationalists are perhaps best understood when set in contrast to those in New South Wales. In 1904 R.C. Cruikshank, President of the United Irish League in Balmain, complained in a letter to John Redmond that the Sydney Irishmen were the 'worst specimens on God's earth' as far as energising national spirit went and cited a lack of cohesion – 'everyone wants to lead, everyone looks down on everyone else' – as the main cause of the problem.

¹⁰⁶ James Vincent O'Loghlin. "Papers of James Vincent O'Loghlin, 1874-1930" 1874.

¹⁰⁷ *Register*, 18 June 1895, p.5

Factional spirit existed between 'the two Catholic-Irish weeklies and between the three Catholic-Irish societies'.¹⁰⁸ There was only one 'Irish Catholic' paper in Adelaide – the *Southern Cross*. A letter from the Executive of the Irish Home Rule Fund of Sydney in 1902 reported to Redmond that the body represented 'all the Irish societies' but that the 'union is qualified by certain jealousies'.¹⁰⁹ In contrast to the eastern states, there was one 'Irish Nationalist' organisation in Adelaide at any one time bar the brief life of the United Irish Association described below. Such testimony serves to confirm Mazzaroli's thesis that the Irish in New South Wales were divided on a number of levels and that Ireland and the fight for Home Rule were not to the forefront of their concerns. Was this the case, as Cruikshank contends, more money would have been forthcoming to the Irish Parliamentary Party – 'There are several branches of the United Irish League in Sydney but they are not run for the cause of Ireland and Home Rule, if they were you should have got a lot of money by this time'.¹¹⁰ His despondency, at least regarding financial aid, was echoed around the country. A letter from the Irish National Federation in Adelaide in June 1901 cited the 'unsatisfactory state of affairs at home during the last few years' as being the cause for the small sum of £25 that it enclosed but said it gave them 'renewed hope and confidence to see the party once again united and demonstrative in their demand for justice for

¹⁰⁸ R Cruikshank to J.E. Redmond, 18 April 1904. Redmond, J.E. "*Correspondence, 1882-1919*". Canberra: National Library of Australia

¹⁰⁹ Irish Home Rule Fund Executive to John Redmond, 18 November 1902. Redmond, *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Cruikshank, *ibid.*

the old land'.¹¹¹ The Federation had continued to meet and recruit and there was no division evident during the years of the Parnell Split such as occurred in Melbourne.

The Irish community in South Australia was never large enough to sustain more than one nationalist body at a time. While an organisation called the United Irish Association appeared in 1882 and survived briefly until the following year, the group formed around the nationalist cause and modelled on and connected to the Irish parent organisation was the one which prospered. The United Irish Association was formed to facilitate political and literary discussion but not with a direct political purpose. It was not a satellite support mechanism for the Irish Parliamentary Party unlike the South Australian Irish Land League. The *Chronicle* reported that the Association proposed to,

cement the brotherhood by literary as well as political ties. The rules were to be as simple as possible, and the fees merely nominal. The chairman recognised the fact that many Irishmen held different opinions regarding Irish affairs and the monopoly of land, but few, he felt sure, would refuse to unite voluntarily for the defence of South Australia. The society was formed to gain the respect of fellow-colonists who were not Irishmen, and to show that such unity was possible. Politics and literary

¹¹¹ The group also enclosed £5.5s. to be forwarded to the Secretary of the T.D. Sullivan Memorial. Letter from Irish National Federation, Adelaide to J. Redmond MP, 3 June 1901. Redmond, *ibid.*

matters, it was explained, would be exclusively dealt with by the society which would be influenced by religious opinions of no kind.¹¹²

It would not gain the respect or unity it sought, primarily because of the personality of its chairman. Even at its foundation meeting reservations were expressed as to whether the organisation should be formed immediately or its operation postponed in order to permit undivided attention to the Adelaide Branch of the Land League. Although a show of hands decided that the United Irish Association should be inaugurated it later became clear that the organisation was incompatible with the general temperament of South Australia's Irish nationalists and their supporters. The Chairman, James Clements, at least, was more extreme and vocal in his views than the wider body of South Australian Irish nationalists.

The Association's foundation meeting held on 17 July 1882 at the Clarence Hotel prompted press reports and a comparison therein with the Caledonian Society brought forth a letter from its Acting Secretary and Treasurer, Mr A. J. McCallum, who, while wishing the Irish society every success in its efforts to assist its countrymen, deplored the inclusion of political discussion in its platform. In his opinion, 'no society can be national which includes politics.' Further, he thought it 'inconsistent to suggest joining in the defence of our beloved Queen's dominions in the same breath and supporting

¹¹² *Chronicle*, 22 July 1882, p.11

the present Land League movement’ disallowing Irish claims of a dual loyalty and providing evidence of the disdain the Irish nationalist movement attracted from some colonists at this time.¹¹³ The visit of the Redmond brothers the following year would go some way to changing this perception.

Clements gained a reputation for extremism and after publicly going head to head with both the more moderate leadership of the South Australian Land League and the *Advertiser*, came off second best due to the public ridicule his ‘excitable nature’ caused. At a meeting of the League, Clements accused the *Advertiser* of denigrating the Irish over the course of five months in its coverage of the Irish Land League and asked the meeting to formally censure the paper. He also attempted to move a resolution in support of the Grattan address which was sent to the Lord Mayor of Dublin by five members of the Victorian Legislature in June 1882 in support of Irish Home Rule and which denounced Britain as a ‘foreign despot’.¹¹⁴ The Chairman refused to permit either of Clement’s resolutions as they were not matters the meeting had come to consider. Clements’ comments were cheered and seemingly endorsed by part of the audience but the moderates, in the persons of Healy and the Chairman, John Hewitt, held sway.¹¹⁵ The *Advertiser* subsequently admitted that it would ‘not be fair to hold either the chairman or the audience on Friday evening responsible

¹¹³ *Chronicle*, 29 July 1882, p.13.

¹¹⁴ All five signatories - Toohey, Duffy, O’Callaghan, Longmore and Brophy – proclaimed their loyalty to the Queen and claimed their right to declare in favour of Home Rule in Ireland without violating their oaths of allegiance. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 June 1882, p.6

¹¹⁵ *Register*, 24 June 1882, p.6

for the buffoonery of Mr J. Clements, who gave an exhibition at once of uncontrolled excitement and crass stupidity not often equalled.'¹¹⁶ Clements proved antipathetic to the cause and was an embarrassment to Adelaide's Irish leaders. The United Irish Association appears to have floundered because of this, there being no further reports of activity from mid-1883.

The failure of the United Irish Association demonstrates how political intemperance fared in the colony. Of its named officers only Francis Bernard Keogh, Secretary at the Association's second meeting, appears to have been a long-term player on the South Australian Irish scene. Keogh was born in West Adelaide in 1861 and from the age of eighteen until his death in 1927 he was a committee member and sometimes auditor of various Irish and Catholic organisations. More than one report attests to his energy and likeability – no doubt strong factors in his success as a recruiter for organisations like the Hibernians, the Irish Rifle Corps and the United Irish League. In these organisations he worked alongside men such as future Attorney-General, W.J. Denny, James Broderick, Pierce Healey and Patrick Whelan. In his long career as a committee member, and as a city councillor and Member of the Assembly, Keogh traversed business, religious, sporting, economic, literary and political networks and was one of those responsible for the good reputation the Irish movement enjoyed locally from the 1880s onwards.

¹¹⁶ *Advertiser*, 26 June 1882, p.4

Along with fellow committee members, Keogh and Whelan, James Bernard Broderick was involved in every aspect of Irish interaction with the wider society.¹¹⁷ His life-long involvement with Catholic and Irish organisations commenced at the age of nineteen, his first duty being that of ticket seller for the Catholic Young Men’s Society Annual Picnic in 1869.¹¹⁸ He was programme organiser of the picnic in 1875 and Chairman of the first St Patrick’s Day celebration committee in 1878.¹¹⁹ The national festival had been celebrated in Adelaide for many years, a musical tribute in St Xavier’s Hall being the usual celebration, but 1878 was the first year St Patrick’s Day was marked by a procession and it was hailed a great success there being between five to six thousand people in attendance.¹²⁰ Broderick’s energy and commitment continued to be exerted towards Irish organisations and by 1881 he was President of the Hibernians Society which had been introduced into South Australia by Bishop Reynolds in 1873.¹²¹ He was an executive member of the

¹¹⁷ Broderick’s business catered for fete and event decorations and illuminations. Many of these were held in the grounds of the colony’s wealthiest homes and involved many business, community and charity organisations.

¹¹⁸ *Advertiser*, 15 March 1869, p.1. The CYMS commenced on 12 January 1860 at the Schoolroom in Franklin St with an attendance of over 100 brothers *Register*, 13 January 1860, p.3

¹¹⁹ *Advertiser*, 13 March 1915, p.7

¹²⁰ *Chronicle*, 23 March 1878, p.1. The first celebration of St Patrick’s Day was in 1840 when the Sons of Erin held a dinner at Fordham’s. *Register*, 21 March 1840, p.6. Later, more publicly inclusive events are advertised in the *Register*, 15 March 1845, p.2; a supper hosted by Thomas McEllester at the Irish Harp in Rundle St and a programme of events hosted by Mrs Wilkins at the Market House, Thebarton.

¹²¹ *Advertiser*, 30 November 1878, p.6.

Irish National League formed by John Redmond in Adelaide in 1883 and he became a Justice of the Peace in January 1894.¹²²

Steady and consistent men like these were to leave an imprint on Adelaide's Irish organisations in their restrained and conservative manner. It is likely that these traits were attractive to the non-Irish businessmen and political leaders of the colony. Quietly working against the Irish stereotype, the cluster of long-serving men emerging in the 1880s kept a steady hand on the public image of the Irish National League and its successor organisations. The sober demeanour of these known Irishmen was a far cry from the archetypal 'fightin' Irish' persona which even the upper class St Patrick's Society of the mid-century had failed to escape.¹²³

Adelaide did not experience the founding of rival organisations such as occurred elsewhere. Like its interstate counterparts, the colony's Irish Land League was disbanded by John Redmond and reformed as the Irish National League in keeping with organisational development in Ireland. The Irish National League later became the Irish National Federation and later still, the United Irish League. There was no significant public schism in South Australia over the Parnell affair or the subsequent leadership battle in Ireland between the Anti-Parnellites led by Justin McCarthy and Parnell's supporters headed by John Redmond. Rather Adelaide kept aloof and continued to work quietly to sustain the local

¹²² *Advertiser*, 1 May 1899, p.6.; *Advertiser*, 15 Feb 1899, p.6.; *Register*, 18 March 1878, p.5

¹²³ In May 1850 a St Patrick's Society dinner ended in a melee, the newly-erected St Patrick's Hall in Leigh St being wrecked in the fighting. *South Australian*, 3 May 1850, p.3

branches of the nationalist movement. Adelaide's League President J.V. O'Loghlin argued that the Irish Party should reunite after Parnell's death. His belief that 'they would as now there was really nothing for them to fight over' appears naïve in view of the fact that it would be another decade before the Irish Parliamentary Party's two factions would reunite.¹²⁴

In addition to its cohesiveness, Adelaide's nationalist movement benefited from a continuity of leadership not often emulated in other colonies. When Patrick Whelan left the colony for Western Australia in 1894 he was noted as having served the Irish community for fourteen years and he, along with Keogh and Broderick, remained a life-long worker for the cause. As the movement developed and expanded, a knot of committee men remained constant – names repeated year after year in the lists of various subcommittee members and supporters also. Whelan, Broderick and Keogh as much as Adelaide's more noted Irish men such as Glynn and O'Loghlin are the omnipresent figures. Their energy and persistence and the regularity of nationalist meetings in South Australia contrasts sharply with the conclusion of some scholars that the movement flagged in the absence of the Irish envoys. There is no doubt that the receptions of the Irish visitors were amongst the most enthusiastic public demonstrations ever seen in the colony. More than once the delegates reported that the scenes which greeted them may well have been an Irish crowd in an Irish town such was the excitement and fervour evident, but

¹²⁴ *Register*, 3 November 1891, p.5.

like any hype, this fever pitch was unsustainable. It was the effort and the machinery put in place by local Irishmen which enabled the success of the missions.

The situation was not entirely favourable. There were some factors which negatively influenced opinions of the Irish movement amongst colonists. Despite the widespread backing evident in the colony, supporters of Irish nationalism were sometimes the targets of cynicism and sectarianism – at times there were claims of fraud, financial mismanagement and downright gullibility on the part of those who contributed to the fundraising efforts of the Irish Land, National and United Irish Leagues. In 1882 when the final account of the South Australian Land League was offered it appeared that not all monies had been remitted to the treasurer, Patrick Egan, in Paris.¹²⁵ The opinions of doubters and opponents worsened considerably with news of the murders of Lord Cavendish and Edmund Burke in Dublin's Phoenix Park, purported as they were, to have been instigated by members of the Land League. The damning, though forged, Piggott letters to *The Times* left a stain on the nationalist party which only time would remove. A few years later the Home Rule movement fell foul of the Parnell scandal bearing out Michael Davitt's fear that the persona of Charles Parnell as the 'Uncrowned King of Ireland' was a dangerous foundation for the movement.¹²⁶ Through the

¹²⁵ *Register*, 14 April 1883, p.2

¹²⁶ The Irish National League was described by Davitt in 1903 as 'the complete eclipse, by a purely parliamentary substitute, of what had been a semi-revolutionary organisation ... the overthrow of a movement and the enthronement of a man' - http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/Michael_Davitt viewed 27.05.10

restrained and rather uninvolved approach taken by the South Australian branches of the League to the Irish leadership struggle following the Parnell split the movement survived the traumatic breach and maintained its strength in the colony. The Adelaide branch of the Irish National League acted in concert with interstate branches sending a telegram deploring the disarray of the Irish Parliamentary Party and requesting a swift resolution to the leadership issue so that damage to the cause in Australasia might be minimised but the South Australian group did not openly fissure like the Irish in Melbourne. The financial success of the later missions to Australia bears testimony to the fact that much of the collateral damage of these two major setbacks was repaired and the good opinion of the Irish Parliamentary Party restored. There is little evidence that these events affected the amenability of non-Irish leading men towards the nationalist cause in South Australia since the 1883 and 1889 delegations attracted widespread and representative support. It appears also that anti-Home Rulers did little to capitalise on these opportunities to discredit their rivals.

Chapter 4

What factors led to South Australian support for Irish Home Rule?

While the size and nature of the Irish community in South Australia had its own effect on the acceptability of the idea of Irish Home Rule, there were factors specific to the colony at large which played their part in generating non-Irish support for the movement. The first evidence of two of these factors – press amenability and non-Irish, non-Catholic support – was given during the Irish Famine Relief episode which took place between 1879 and 1882.

A blueprint for success

The South Australian Irish Famine Relief Fund of 1879, the first of its kind initiated outside Britain, was a precursor for the organisation of the colony's Irish Home Rule movement and was also the first illustration of some of the differences that existed in the colony which would later serve the Home Rule movement so well.¹²⁷ South Australia's Irish initially called upon fellow colonists for aid towards those starving after a third successive year of crop failure in Ireland. In the following years this humanitarian assistance would morph into support for the political demand for Irish self-government. The Fund was the

¹²⁷ The Irish Land League, the Marlborough Relief Fund, the New York Herald Fund and the Dublin Mansion House Relief Fund all bestowed charitable relief on the poor in Ireland. The Adelaide relief effort pre-dates the Mansion House Fund appearing in December 1879 around the same time as the Marlborough Fund. *Advertiser*, 15 December 1879, p.6

first significant public expression of concern for the Irish amongst South Australians and it introduced colonists to the agrarian and governmental problems of Ireland and made common knowledge the language of Irish political discontent. The general public in the colony was educated about and, therefore, enabled to form an opinion of Ireland as both part of the Empire and as a cultural entity in its own right through Adelaide press reports of Westminster and Dublin Castle policy and a parallel tendency to publish serials of detailed, and more importantly nationalist, accounts of Irish history.¹²⁸ The Adelaide press filtered and, through editorial comment, often neutralised reports from Britain, albeit unintentionally, thereby providing the public with a matter-of-fact perspective on what were deeply complicated and highly contentious issues. As a fundraising exercise the Relief Fund provided a blueprint for the visits of the Irish envoys through the years 1883 to 1912 which raised the equivalent of millions of dollars for the support of the candidates of the Irish Parliamentary Party and an Irish tenantry suffering from the ravages of Irish Coercion Acts, eviction and famine. At times during the fundraising campaigns the colonists themselves were the victims of economic depression but time and again the antipodean Irish were handed the begging bowl and they repeatedly filled it.

Some of the colony's most influential citizens were present at the inauguration of the Central Committee of the Relief Fund. Upon receiving

¹²⁸ Charles Gavan Duffy's *History of Ireland* chapters were published throughout 1880 and 1881. The *Burra Record* gave a lecture on Irish history extended space in 1886 because it was 'on such an important topic' - *Burra Record*, 9 November 1886, page 3

confirmation from Dublin of the urgent assistance required, the Committee, consisting of Adelaide Mayor, Edwin Thomas Smith (Chairman), Sir George Kingston (Treasurer), Michael Thomas Montgomery (Secretary), MP's John Cox Bray, William Knox Simms, both of English descent, Scottish-born Hugh Fraser, and prominent businessmen representing a cross section of the community, commenced its zealous efforts to collect money and wheat for the alleviation of the 'Irish distress'. The colonial government gave the organisers £25 worth of postage stamps and free railway passes to reduce the expenses of the movement.¹²⁹ Simms and Bray were noted as having personally canvassed the city for support while E.T. Smith was lauded as 'the heart and soul of the movement'.¹³⁰ Mr A. Grainger attributed the expected success of the Fund to the fact that South Australians were able to separate their political feelings regarding Ireland from a simple humanitarian question indicating the general distaste for Irish affairs, particularly the land agitation, at this time.¹³¹

It is here that we first see the practical involvement of non-Irish colonial citizens in Irish affairs of the later nineteenth century. Previously, 'interested observers' had commented through the press on the development of the Orange Order and the reluctance to acknowledge Irish animosities on Australian soil but the famine allowed many to contribute, support and comment on the state of

¹²⁹ Subsequent speeches give the impression that this assistance was freely forthcoming from the government but an article in the *Register* makes it clear that the request was made by the Central Committee of the Irish Relief Fund and was required to be put in writing before the Chief Secretary would consider it. *Register*, 24 December 1879, p.1

¹³⁰ *Register*, 23 January 1880, p.6

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

Ireland under the banner of benevolence and succour. The cause of Irish famine may have been politically contentious but the relief movement was a genuine expression of solidarity with those starving a world away and the colony raised a total of £8,876 4s.6d. With an average donation of 8½d per head, South Australians proved more generous than nearly every other colony coming second only to Queensland by the reckoning of the Fund's organiser, M.T. Montgomery.¹³² Sir Thomas Elder subscribed £100 and Mayor Smith and Hon Scott MLC both gave £50. Differences in the fortunes of Irishmen in the town and country were alluded to in Montgomery's statement at the St Patrick's Day concert of 1880. As the *Advertiser* recorded, he

repudiated the idea which he said had been raised in certain quarters that the Irishmen of the colony had not contributed to the fund so largely as colonists of other nationalities. He admitted that no doubt this might be so in the city, where the Irishmen were comparatively few in number and comparatively poor, but in the country districts they had contributed very generously; in fact the largest individual donation to the fund, namely £110, had been given by an Irishman, Mr J.M. McBride of the Burra.¹³³

¹³² *Register*, 12 October 1880, p.1

¹³³ Robert James Martin McBride, a Methodist, was born in Newry in the north of Ireland in 1831. His philanthropy was renowned and covered all manner of causes. In 1913 the *Advertiser* reported that he gave away an estimated £3000 per annum. On this occasion he had contributed £110 to the Irish Relief Fund, being £10 for each of his eleven children. - *Advertiser*, 31 January 1913, p.9

Despite a rumour regarding the misappropriation of funds the South Australian Irish Relief Fund met with a good measure of success.¹³⁴ Having imitated the good organisational strategy of the Indian Famine Fund of 1877 the Irish returned the favour by originating the novel idea of the 'Magic Bag of Flour' which was used in later Indian famine relief efforts.¹³⁵ Two particular aspects of the Irish Relief Fund episode in South Australia stand out: a continuity of involvement on the part of some of Adelaide's most notable personages, whether Irish or Catholic or not, between this humanitarianism and the more political Home Rule movement; and the fact that at times the gripe of the working man against landlordism in the colonial press echoed the language of the class struggle at the base of Ireland's woes.¹³⁶ The press coverage in the colony introduced readers to the language of the nationalist movement and since the agrarian and parliamentary aspects of Ireland's struggle converged under the leadership of Parnell, the plea for money to help the Irish Parliamentary Party and Ireland's evicted tenants presented as a natural progression from the famine relief movement.

¹³⁴ M.H. Davis, fellow committee member accused M.T. Montgomery of appropriating donated monies for his personal use. *Register*, 16 April 1880, p.2s. Montgomery did in fact receive £100 from the fund at the suggestion of a subcommittee. *Register*, 22 June 1880, p.6

¹³⁵ E. Plummer is credited with having brought to reality an idea of Mark Twain's from the book "*The Innocents at Home*" where a barrel of flour was sold and resold by a community to raise funds. Plummer's Magic Bag of Flour was 'sold' all over the colony and carted through the streets to raise awareness of the collection being made. Committees formed in 1877, 1897, 1900 and 1908 to raise funds for Indian Famine Relief.

¹³⁶ See for example a letter entitled '*Landlordism Doomed*' signed by 'Advance Australia' advocating a tax on the unimproved value of land and encouraging people to 'register, register, register' that they could employ their vote to secure men who would improve the lot of the working man. *Register*, 21 May 1889, p.7

Press influence

Much of the evidence of this study has come from the pages of the Adelaide press and it is the influence of this instrument of opinion which could have had a most detrimental effect on the success of the Irish missions to South Australia. Before the ideal of self-government became the issue, when the subsistence crisis was Ireland's main concern, South Australian papers such as the *Register* and the *Advertiser* gave sympathetic coverage of events in Ireland. The reporting of contemporary events and opinion was balanced. Letters of protest were given as much column space as those that supported the Irish movement although the practice of allowing anonymous writers space to slur the Irish race and Catholic religion induced the Chairman of the Irish National League to write in protest to the *Register*:

We Irish are accused of being impulsive and extreme in our views; but mark the contrast between the letters that have recently appeared in the Adelaide Press on our side of the question and against us. Most of the letters condemning the National League have been anonymous, and were replete with bitter taunts altogether foreign to the subject discussed; while the letters advocating our cause were as able as they were impartial, and contained the names and addresses of the writers.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ *Register*, 9 March 1883, p.6

There were times when condemnation was the order of the day. Reports of agrarian violence against estate managers and landlords in Ireland were abhorred and the Land League was vehemently denounced. In 1882 particularly there were many letters written to denounce the Irish Land League yet the papers reported favourably on Irish Land League activity in South Australia tracking Pierce Healey as he moved around the colony establishing branches of the League. Over the term of the movement, the Adelaide press was overall, and in comparison with that interstate, largely sympathetic to Irish nationalism. Technological improvement in communication brought more up-to-date news and reports not restricted to London-based press such as *The Times*.

In 1883 the Adelaide papers carried complete verbatim reports of John Redmond's arrival, reception and speeches. The apparent support evident at the commencement of the visit yielded to more acerbic opinions mid-way through the tour. By its end Redmond was condemning the coverage the mission was receiving and advising Irishmen to read Irish papers for true accounts of the situation at home. While press opposition may have been discomforting, editorial comment did not appear to taint the financial success of the mission since £15,000 was collected. The press response in South Australia to this visit was less consistent than that in other colonies; editorials against the Land League sat alongside long, serialised accounts of nationalist versions of Irish

history which lent the Irish movement a reasonable basis for existence.¹³⁸ Initially indifferent towards the visitors, as the tour progressed, the *Advertiser's* stance hardened. Six months after their arrival, in August, it claimed that the visit was only tolerated because Australians 'did not see very clearly how the Messrs. Redmond could be interfered with, and that interference would only have heightened their notoriety—and brought grist to their mill.'¹³⁹ It conceded that the resolutions agreed upon at the Redmonds' public meetings were moderate compared with 'the blood-and-thunder character marking so many of the harangues addressed to the inflammable and ignorant populace of the Emerald Isle', but argued that the Redmonds, knowing such a style would gain no sympathy in the colonies, had merely changed their tactics to suit the circumstances. During his last address in the colony in November Redmond condemned the Australian press in general and the Adelaide papers in particular as biased and one-sided in their reporting of Irish affairs, asserting that the colonial press was influenced by reports of *The Times*. By this time editorial comment was more stinging, claiming that the Irish-Australian convention held in Melbourne in support of Home Rule was nothing more than 'a meeting of nobodies', the absence of leading Irishmen pointing to the mission's failure.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Four Years of Irish History. 1845-1849. A Sequel to "Young Ireland" written by Charles Gavan Duffy ran in the *Advertiser* and the *Chronicle* throughout 1883. *Advertiser*, 24 February 1883 Supplement p.2; *Chronicle*, 20 January 1883, p.18

¹³⁹ *Advertiser*, 7 August 1883, p.4

¹⁴⁰ *Advertiser*, 17 November 1883, p.4 Pierce Healey wrote to refute this claim – *Advertiser*, 22 November 1883, p.15. Redmond admitted that most of his support came from the ordinary, working class; 'the Irish working men stood by me and, in fact, saved the situation'. D.R. Gwynn. *The Life of John Redmond*. London: George G. Harrap, 1932.p.53

Yet 'Home Ruler' writing to the *Advertiser* in November 1883 felt 'bound in justice to acknowledge a decided alteration, and that of a conciliatory and friendly character' which had marked the tone of the newspaper's articles on the Irish question.¹⁴¹

However confused the views of the colony's press appear, over the term of the visit it seems there was no adverse effect on the fiscal aim of the tour since fundraising appeared unaffected. What marks the Redmond mission in South Australia is the more liberal and accommodating tone of its reception in comparison with the other colonies, at least at the outset.

In contrast to the first Irish mission there was no meaningful protest in the press against the 1889 delegation either through letters from the public or editorial comment. In fact, Dillon, in his first speech in the colony, specifically excluded the South Australian press from his comments regarding the English-speaking press which, he said, were great weapons of misrepresentation that disseminated falsehoods about the Irish throughout the world.¹⁴² Editorial comment was generally open-minded. The *Chronicle* was certain that the envoys would:

receive a fair hearing from all sections of the community ... The natural bias of Australians is rather favorable than otherwise to any Home Rule movement...The extreme Conservative policy of dealing with Irish affairs

¹⁴¹ *Advertiser*, 21 November 1883, p.8

¹⁴² *Chronicle*, 20 April 1889, p.7

gains no approval here. Ireland cannot for all time be governed like a country in insurrection. As a permanent policy, coercion, however it may be warranted in an extremity, is quite a hopeless solution. Something must be done to remove legitimate causes of discontent, and to give Ireland a fair opportunity of becoming what she has never been yet — a happy and prosperous member in the Imperial union.¹⁴³

The *Register* went so far as to ridicule the sole voice of protest raised against the Dillon delegation. Samuel Tomkinson again appeared as the only protestor against the Irish visitors, voicing his opinion before the Irishmen even reached Australia. He wrote against the 'extensive preparations' being made to welcome the visitors claiming that 'a very limited section of our community' was interested in the envoys. However, the *Register's* addendum to his letter would have pacified anyone annoyed by Tomkinson's comments:

(People...should also know that Mr Tomkinson is not accepted by South Australians as their spokesman, although he delights to arrogate to himself that position. He is noted for his resistance to reforms, for his incapacity to perceive the direction and gauge the feeling of public opinion, and for his prejudiced views on all public questions.— Ed.)¹⁴⁴

There is no record of whether Tomkinson was horrified or gratified by his inclusion with the infamous Piggott during the speeches at the Dillon reception:

¹⁴³ *Chronicle*, 13 April 1889, p.4

¹⁴⁴ *Register*, 11 April 1889, p.7

We have been held up before the world as murderers and the accomplices of murderers — (cries of 'Fake')— accused by great newspapers— ('Piggott') — both here and in England— ('Piggott and Tomkinson', laughter)— of every kind of crime.¹⁴⁵ .

The visits of John Cox in 1890 and 1891 and Michael Davitt in 1895 attracted little odium from either press or public but none of these tours were specifically for the promotion of the Home Rule cause; Cox was in Australia to raise money for the Irish Evicted Tenants Fund while Davitt's was a personal tour. Davitt's reputation as a felon, gunrunner and Fenian might well have attracted some protest but the *Chronicle* did much to prompt favourable opinion in the days preceding his visit in 1895. Using excerpts from nationalists A.M. Sullivan's and T.P. O'Connor's writings the paper constructed an effusive and highly complimentary sketch of Davitt's life and career. The paper was sure the former Fenian would be given a warm welcome because he had 'done much towards breaking down the prejudices, both political and religious, existing between Ireland and England.'¹⁴⁶ Davitt was 'one of the most remarkable men of later years' and the article made much of the high personal regard in which he was held and which assisted his idea of combining 'all the existing elements of political force, Parliamentary and non-Parliamentary, Home Rule and non-Home Rule, Fenian and non-Fenian'. Davitt certainly had the strongest revolutionary

¹⁴⁵ *Chronicle*, 13 April 1889, p.22

¹⁴⁶ *Chronicle*, 11 May 1895, p.9

credentials of all the Irish delegates but his social justice tendencies and reputation as a strategist, parliamentarian and journalist outweighed his reputation as a Fenian and, as we will see below, his welcome was amongst the most enthusiastic given, all shades of political opinion being present and little opposition to his arrival being evident.

The generally favourable opinion of South Australians towards the notion of Irish Home Rule from 1889 onwards meant that there was little negativity demonstrated towards subsequent tours. The Adelaide press was wont to be conservative, non-sensationalist and even-handed in its treatment of the cause and its delegates. It was neither judgmental nor critical of the resident Irish community during those episodes which, on the surface, appeared to question its loyalty or patriotism. The later missions in 1906 and 1911 enjoyed fair treatment and wide coverage and by the end of the tours the Australian press was gaining the respect and public praise of the delegates.

Reception: welcome and protest

Overall the reception of each delegation in Adelaide was supportive. Reception committees usually formed from amongst the members of the Irish nationalist body excepting that of Michael Davitt's visit which attracted additional support from the colony's labour element. The participation of Adelaide's high-profile men in public displays of support for the movement developed from awaiting the arrival of the Irish visitors at a civic reception, to travelling out by steamer to greet them personally on the Orient liner and

culminated in the South Australian Premier moving a resolution of support of the Home Rule movement at the Town Hall meeting in 1911.

The first incidence of patronage and involvement by the colony's elite in South Australian efforts on behalf of the Irish people was the formation of the Relief Fund in 1879 described above. Philanthropy was a known trait of some of those involved and so the concern and activity itself at this time was perhaps unexceptional even if the amount raised was remarkable. The notable feature of the involvement was the continuation of support for the Irish when the humanitarian element was clearly superseded by a more overtly political one. General support from the non-Irish was encouraged by the presence of the colony's leading men. Tomkinson's lone voice of opposition did not equal that of Henry Parkes or the Reverend Dill Macky interstate.

The first Irish delegation consisted of John and William Redmond, the sons of respected Irish landowner and MP, William Archer Redmond, whose family heritage combined a Protestant and unionist lineage on their mother's side with their father's support of Butt's Home Rule Association. Their reception in Adelaide was the warmest of those experienced in all the Australian cities and so from the outset South Australia stood in contrast to the other colonies on the tour's itinerary. This, however, was partly due to the timing of their arrival since news of the alleged involvement of the Land League in the Phoenix Park murders did not reach Adelaide until after their departure.

On Sunday 5 February 1883 around 300 people boarded a steamer at Port Adelaide to go out to greet the RMS '*Siam*' which carried the young John Redmond towards the town. Amongst them were Adelaide's leading nationalist figures Dixon, Whelan, Montgomery and Healy, John W. Walshe representing the parent League, other members of the executive committee of the League and delegates from the country towns of Kapunda, Mintaro and Yarcowie. As the group sailed up the Port River a brass band played national airs in anticipation of the arrival of Parnell's lieutenant and the vessel carried the Irish flag on the bow and a Union Jack on the stern. Approximately one thousand people lined the shores at Glenelg waiting to glimpse the famed parliamentarian and cheer his arrival but as the day drew to a close the crowds dispersed, disappointed that the vessel had failed to show. The following morning the reception committee and band again travelled out to meet the Orient liner, this time with success. Upon meeting the Member for New Ross a patriotic address was read by the Secretary, Patrick Whelan, in the unavoidable absence of Hewitt, Chairman of the League. Not having realised that William Redmond was accompanying his brother, the committee had not prepared an address. M.T. Montgomery apologised for not having a similar present for him assuring William that a token of esteem would be forthcoming before the two left the colony.¹⁴⁷ The visitors responded warmly. In his reply John Redmond acknowledged the connection

¹⁴⁷ William had been in Naples for the sake of his health after the American mission. John had been expected in the colony aboard the RMS *Indus* by late January but stopped off to see his brother who then accompanied him on the onward journey. *Chronicle*, 27 January 1883, p.11

between the famine relief fund and his own visit by thanking the colonists for their generosity towards the famine relief, their 'subscriptions exceeding in amount those received from any other country.'¹⁴⁸

The Redmond brothers were only in South Australia for eleven days but in that short time the representative, cross-party support for their cause became evident. As well as political support, there was an element of curiosity about the visitors. The *Advertiser* stated that the audience present at the Town Hall were there to listen to a speaker of reputation, Redmond's eloquence considered a 'luxury of a high order.' In addition to his oratory skills, Redmond's passion was a drawcard and, according to the *Advertiser*, somewhat inspiring:

In South Australia we have no great questions that appeal to the heart of the people, and though there are important principles at stake in our legislation, few of our public men will struggle for them against all odds, or make any sacrifice worth mentioning for the sake of those principles. Most of them float with the stream, or are driven by any passing wind of popular opinion that does not drive them away from place, power, and pay.¹⁴⁹

The delegation took up quarters at the United Service Club Hotel and on 6 February received a number of public men, amongst whom was W. B. Rousevell who had first shown his concern for the Irish during the Famine relief

¹⁴⁸ *Advertiser*, 6 February 1883, p.6

¹⁴⁹ *Advertiser*, 10 February 1883, p.4

effort. The following day Redmond met with Dr Reynolds, the Catholic Bishop, who had expressed a desire to meet his young, successful fellow-countryman. Redmond received several other gentlemen, including the Crown Solicitor, Hon. C. Mann, QC, and J.H. Symon, MP. A Town Hall meeting took place on 9 February and was attended by over 1,700 people. C.C. Kingston, MP, presided, and there were also on the platform Dr Reynolds, G.W. Cotton, MLC (who, the following week, would chair the only meeting held in opposition to the Redmonds), MP's Henning, Ward and Gilbert, Dr Gunson, Ven. Archdeacon Russell, W.K. Simms, Henry Taylor, H. McConnell. E.W. O'Halloran, J.W. Walshe and others.¹⁵⁰ The subject of the lecture was 'The aims and objects of the Irish National League' and the speaker received a 'perfect ovation' upon rising. The address, which lasted an hour and a half and was reported verbatim in the papers, was applauded on numerous occasions. A subscription list opened at the meeting for the League raised approximately £125.¹⁵¹ The effect of the patronage of leading public figures did not go unnoticed. One writer to the *Chronicle* feared that 'the eloquence of the Irish visitors may lead some of our quiet and thriving fellow colonists of Irish nationality into recklessness, especially when the Messrs. Redmond are patronised by Dr. Reynolds, the Catholic bishop, members of Parliament, and prominent citizens.'¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Cotton was also head of the South Australian Protestant Association in the 1870s and a writer in 1883 said it should be no surprise if Irishmen still considered him to 'have a little of the bigotry of his younger days hanging on to his eyebrows' – *Register*, 21 February 1883, p.6

¹⁵¹ *Register*, 14 April 1883, p.2s

¹⁵² *Chronicle*, 17 February 1883, p.12

The following Monday another meeting took place to give effect to the resolution passed at the Town Hall to form an Adelaide branch of the Irish National League. Kingston was unanimously elected President but later declined the position claiming that while he agreed with many aspects of the published manifesto of the organisation, the role would require duties he could not undertake. On 13 February the Redmonds were presented with addresses from the Irishmen of South Australia prior to their departure for Melbourne.

Meetings held to establish branches of the Irish National League and collect subscriptions took place in many small towns throughout the colonies. Pierce Healey, in particular, had travelled throughout the colony establishing branches of the league from mid-1882 in preparation for the mission, visiting outlying areas such as Kapunda, Clare and Pekina.¹⁵³ Between June 1882 and May 1883 he covered the interior of the colony reaching as far north as Petersburg.¹⁵⁴ On 16 April he inaugurated a branch of the League and addressed the townspeople of Wilmington, 292 kilometres north of Adelaide.¹⁵⁵ Two days later he visited Hammond before moving on to Georgetown.¹⁵⁶

When the Redmonds returned to Adelaide in November two further lectures were held as well as trips to Gawler and Kapunda. It was in Kapunda that one of the few physical demonstrations against the touring delegates took

¹⁵³ *Argus*, 13 July 1882, p.8

¹⁵⁴ Several South Australian towns with Germanic names were renamed in 1917 and 1918. Petersburg was renamed Peterborough in 1918.

¹⁵⁵ *Register*, 17 April 1883, p.6

¹⁵⁶ *Register*, 20 April 1883, p.5; 26 May 1883, p.7

place. The reception committee had arranged for the Kapunda band to play music from the balcony of Crase's Hotel where the lecture was to be held. The Salvation Army band returned from their march through the town and instead of proceeding to their barracks, paraded up and down outside the hotel. The two bands competed with one another creating a fearful racket and attracting a crowd. The *Northern Argus* in reporting the incident stated that 'fortunately for the Salvationists the onlookers contented themselves by giving vent to their disgust in hoots and groans' and no further trouble ensued.¹⁵⁷ This was to be the last of Redmond's lectures in the colony and the meeting was described as enthusiastic and sympathetic though small – the last was attributed to both the short notice given and the stormy weather being experienced in the area.

The city lectures of the return trip in November were held in St Francis Xavier's Hall on Wakefield Street. J.B. Broderick had again requested use of the Town Hall but an announcement in the *Register* revealed that the request had been denied without discussion.¹⁵⁸ Mayor Fuller reasonably claimed that the Kennedy family, an entertainment troupe performing under the auspice of the Caledonian Society, had already engaged the venue and could not be moved but Broderick, in a public letter, claimed that the council had exhibited the partisan spirit so disliked in the colony and that Fuller, as its head, later paid the price at

¹⁵⁷ *Northern Argus*, 27 November 1883, p.3

¹⁵⁸ *Register*, 2 November 1883; *Advertiser*, 10 November 1883, p15

the polls.¹⁵⁹ The *Register* claimed that Fuller's defeat in the municipal election of December 1883 was not unexpected: the electorate had tired of Fuller and there was clear opposition to his having opposed Councillor Bunday who had graciously retired from the electoral race in his favour the year before. Nevertheless the displeasure of the Irish voters was cited as a contributing factor in his defeat. One man calling himself 'Ulster' and declaring himself to be 'an Irishman and a Protestant to boot' wrote to the *Advertiser* stating that 'The refusal of the Adelaide Town Hall to the Messrs. Redmond is an affront not only to them but to all Irishmen as well as to liberal-minded Englishmen who, while they are firm supporters of the throne, see nothing alarming in the idea of home rule for Ireland or anything disloyal in its advocacy.'¹⁶⁰ The *Register* reported that Redmond had declared that the Home Rule question

was the one above all others which held out most inducements for an Irish speaker to hold forth to the passions and sympathies of an Irish audience; but he intended merely to deal with the matter calmly, impartially, and logically to see whether, after all, the matter had not a substantial basis in merit and justice ... He assured his hearers that the remedy suggested was not a proposal for separation or a revolutionary or communistic proposal, and did not violate one single principle of the

¹⁵⁹ *Register*, 3 December 1883, p.5

¹⁶⁰ *Advertiser*, 14 November 1883, p.6

constitution. He urged that it was a reasonable one in theory, judged by the tests of common sense and political philosophy.¹⁶¹

Despite Redmond's temperate tone, the enthusiastic reception afforded the young parliamentarian in Adelaide in February was not repeated elsewhere. In fact, Redmond described his reception in Sydney as 'chilling'. Leading men who had promised support stayed away and every hall was denied to him. The opposition apparent on the return visit to Adelaide proved in the end to be trivial – there were no large or effective anti-Redmond demonstrations and fundraising appeared unaffected. Apart from the brief and unofficial visit of H.C. Molloy, member for King's County, in October 1887, it would be six years before Adelaidians would receive another Irish delegation.¹⁶²

The public enthusiasm which greeted John Dillon in 1889 was even greater than that which had met the Redmonds. John Deasy and Sir Thomas Esmonde had been in Australia for about four weeks when John Dillon arrived, having been welcomed to Sydney by the Mayor on 13 March 1889.¹⁶³ The pair had spent two months touring and raising funds in Africa en route to Australia and then hastened to the colonies unaware that Dillon's departure had been delayed by the arrest of William O'Brien in Ireland.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ *Register*, 14 February 1883, p.6

¹⁶² *Register*, 13 October 1887, p.6. Molloy had interests in gold mining and his trip was purely personal there being no official addresses given by Irish organisations.

¹⁶³ *Register*, 18 March 1889, p.3

¹⁶⁴ *Chronicle*, 13 April 1889, p.9

Although Adelaide expected an appearance from Dillon it seems he had no intention of leaving the vessel for any longer than the few hours it took to remove the mail. Letters between the Adelaide Irish National League and O'Donnell reveal Dillon's intention to commence his tour in Melbourne but the Victorians acquiesced to Adelaide's request to have the esteemed Home Ruler speak there first. Deasy and Esmonde, having already arrived in Adelaide, went out to the Semaphore to meet Dillon on 11 April 1889.

One of the most emotive descriptions of the arrival of the 1889 delegation is given by one of its members. In *Round the World with the Irish Delegates* Sir Thomas Esmonde gave an account of the arrival of John Dillon in Adelaide by the *Orient*. The new Governor of the colony, the Earl of Kintore, was a fellow passenger and Esmonde remarks that two steamboats come alongside to take the passengers to shore, 'one flying the Union Jack...the other carries the green flag of old Ireland ... A striking contrast are the vessels, and typical of our changing times: Monarchy and Democracy; the old order and the new ... The Governor and his escort depart first with due solemnity ... we follow soon after in a strict etiquette of historical and chronological precedence.'¹⁶⁵

Dillon had been in poor health and although the journey had much revived him, he was still unwell. Despite his intention to travel onwards to Melbourne he left the ship and accompanied his colleagues back into the city to

¹⁶⁵ Esmonde, *ibid.*, p.74

the Botanic Hotel, the journey described by the *Chronicle* as 'one long triumphal progress'.¹⁶⁶ After welcome greetings by the Mayors of Port Adelaide and Semaphore witnessed by hundreds of well-wishers, the delegation travelled to the city where addresses were presented to the three delegates. P.M. Glynn described that presented to Dillon as being 'not only from his own fellow countrymen, but from people embracing every creed and representing every nationality'; that given to Esmonde was from the members of the Irish National League in Adelaide which he said 'represented all nationalities and creeds' also.¹⁶⁷ The language and speeches of the day were war-like: Cleave, the Mayor of Port Adelaide, referred to the 'honourable warfare' the delegates were engaged in, wishing it every success; Deasy referred to himself as a mere 'soldier in the ranks of the Irish party' and used the arrival of the new colonial Governor to draw an analogy of the English ruler 'sent to oppress and tyrannise' over a colonial people, asking if Lord Kintore would have received the honourable welcome he had that day if his first act had been to send in the military to bayonet the crowd listening to the Irish visitors. The less than temperate nuances were offset by claims of bringing a logical and loyal argument for Irish Home Rule to the Australian people.

Esmonde's description of the meeting held in Adelaide the following night gives evidence of the representative support the visitors received on the

¹⁶⁶ *Chronicle*, 13 April 1889, p.22

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

occasion of their first public appearance.¹⁶⁸ As well as the Archbishop of Adelaide, members of both houses of the legislature graced the stage. In addition there were 'judges, magistrates, leading citizens of every nationality and of every religion.' The audience was largely composed of the visitors' kinsfolk and had 'in it all that is truest and most stirring and most devoted of Irish blood in South Australia.' People travelled hundreds of miles, 'utterly regardless of distance, of discomfort, and of sacrifice to see John Dillon, and to show their loyalty to the old land and to the old cause.' The press concurred with this description of the meeting at the Town Hall where 'a more representative gathering had never assembled' and the scene 'was the most enthusiastic ever witnessed in Adelaide'. As well as the Archbishop no less than six members of parliament accompanied the delegation to the stage.¹⁶⁹ Described as an impassioned, though less polished orator than Redmond, whose 'thought seemed to be at white heat all the time and whose words burn with a glow of feeling', Dillon was accepted as an Irish politician second only to Parnell whose personal contact with the Irish situation demanded a fair hearing: 'the extreme view that represents the acts of Mr. Dillon as those of a wicked and dangerous firebrand' was not likely to be accepted 'here among dispassionate observers of current events'.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p.75

¹⁶⁹ *Chronicle*, 20 April 1889, p.7

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p.5

The diverse character of this first meeting was the hallmark of the tour. Esmonde was to close the chapter about South Australia in this record of the 1889 visit with the statement that 'it may, perhaps, be worth placing this fact upon record – viz., that at every one of the nine or ten meetings I addressed in the country districts of the Colony the chair was taken by the Mayor or the leading magistrate, who in no instance was an Irishman. Yet we are told that Australians, other than of Irish blood, do not sympathise with Ireland.'¹⁷¹

The 1889 tour lasted almost seven months and had a heavy schedule. Deasy reported that the delegation had about one hundred places to visit in both NSW and Victoria, about fifty in Queensland and approximately a dozen in South Australia. He and Esmonde were fit and energetic and responsibility for touring the southern colony fell to them. Deasy was thirty three and Esmonde only twenty six years old and the youngest member of the House of Commons. On the weekend of their arrival in Adelaide the delegation was invited to the Caledonian Sports Day held at the Jubilee Oval where they met the new Governor and were honoured with champagne toasts. The Irish group split up that week: Deasy and Esmonde were to spend about a fortnight touring the colony while Dillon went to Tasmania to recuperate. Adelaide Irish nationalists Whelan and McConville had previously arranged the country itinerary. On 16 April Deasy was to lecture in Kapunda while Esmonde visited the Institute in Burra (see Figure 1). The two were then to go to Orroroo and Petersburg

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.82

respectively but increasingly inclement weather postponed that week's engagements. Deasy's lectures, scheduled for the following week at Port Augusta, Clare and Mount Gambier were also altered but Esmonde's tour of Broken Hill and Silverton proceeded. Esmonde returned to Burra and Deasy lectured in Kapunda on 24 April. In stark contrast to the experience of Redmond in Adelaide late in 1883, Esmonde gained the use of the Institute Hall at Burra despite it having been previously booked for a concert. Dillon's appearance at the Town Hall in mid-April was his only one in the colony. Cross-sectional support was evident both in the audiences at meetings and in the subscriptions received. At the Adelaide Irish National League meeting in May several letters received from sympathisers contained donations to the Irish Parliamentary Party fund – one was from Coopers Creek and another, from an Orangeman in Western Australia, contained a guinea – the latter raised a cheer.¹⁷²

¹⁷² *Register*, 8 May 1889, p.5

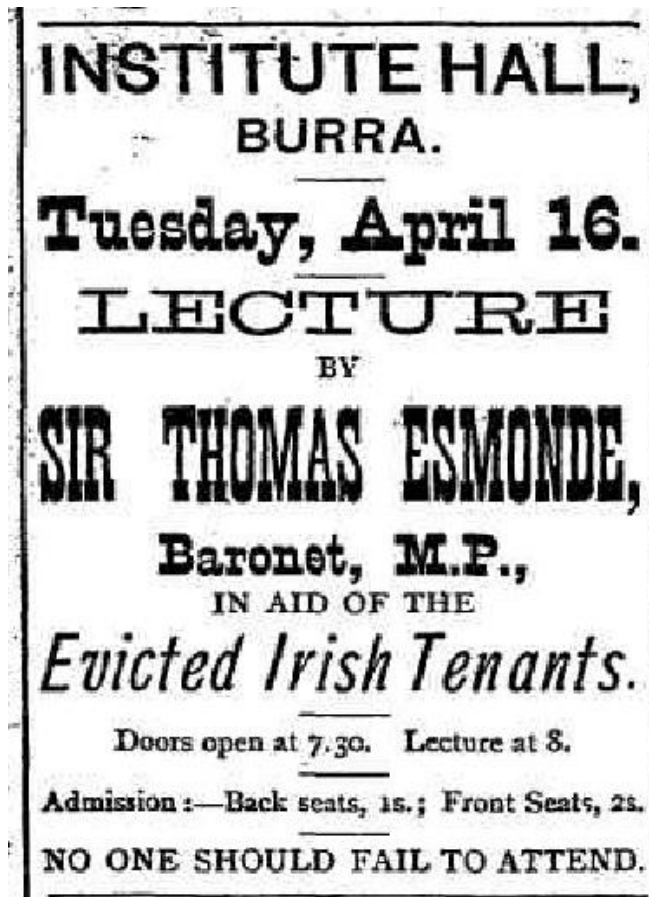


Figure 1: Advertisement of Esmonde's postponed Burra lecture - *Burra Record*, 16 April 1889, p.2

While in Adelaide, Dillon received a telegram from Archbishop Carr of Melbourne, welcoming him to Australia.¹⁷³ Other telegrams of welcome came from Bishop O'Reily in Port Augusta, J.B. Freehill of the Sydney League, and Irishmen in Castlemaine and Ballarat. Dillon's personal attributes came to the fore - his steel and passion were not doubted but his manner appealed; he was, according to the *Chronicle*, 'the very antithesis of the loud-mouthed, ranting

¹⁷³ *Chronicle*, 20 April 1889, p.12

demagogue'.¹⁷⁴ This description was given despite his first speech in Adelaide during which he acknowledged the League's Plan of Campaign; 'argue and reason in the House of Commons and you will get nothing; go to the hillside in Ireland, threaten, put on pressure, and you will get anything from fear'.¹⁷⁵ Tomkinson's ineffectual protest was the only one evident in South Australia.

There was some crossover between the Dillon mission and that conducted by Cox in the person of John Deasy who arrived with one and left with the other. Cox arrived by the Melbourne express train on 5 March 1890 and was described by the *Register* as 'one who has not only worked but has suffered for his beloved country'.¹⁷⁶ His visit to the colonies on this occasion was to raise funds on behalf of the evicted tenants but his Adelaide Town Hall address dealt with Home Rule. The lecturer kept a large and enthusiastic audience 'deeply interested for nearly two hours by his impassioned utterances upon the Irish question, and was heartily cheered at every stage.'¹⁷⁷ Cox steered clear of the leadership controversy concentrating on the 'prosperous condition of Ireland when she governed herself, her unhappy situation now, and the efforts made by her patriots to secure for her the privileges her people demanded.' The resolution of the meeting to pledge its sympathy to the Irish cause was moved and seconded

¹⁷⁴ *Chronicle*, 13 April 1889, p.4

¹⁷⁵ Dillon helped devise the Plan of Campaign whereby tenants refused to pay any rent if a landlord did not agree to accept a reduced rent in circumstances of hardship – the refused rents were collected by campaigners and banked to the credit of the National League and then used to assist evicted tenants. The Plan was implemented between 1886 and 1891. *Chronicle*, 20 April 1889, p.8

¹⁷⁶ *Register*, 17 March 1890, p.1

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

by MP's Glynn and Nash and carried unanimously. Despite the scandal attached to the Irish Party at the time, the visit attracted little opposition although Mayor Cohen's chairmanship of the Town Hall meeting raised questions in the Council from Tomkinson regarding the wisdom of presiding at such a partisan event. Cohen replied that he had been asked by a respected member of the Legislative Council and an equally respected member of the City Council to preside at that lecture and he did so sure that there would be nothing seditious or disloyal in the address given. At the Port Adelaide lecture, W.B. Rounsevell proposed that the meeting welcome Cox as a representative of the Irish people and declared that they were 'helping forward one of the grandest movements of the present time. Mr D.M. Charleston MLC seconded him in a vigorous speech and Mr J.N. Burke and Dr Bollen supported'.¹⁷⁸ G.F. Hopkins MP proposed the opening of a subscription list and £32 was subscribed.

John Deasy arrived the following day and later lectured in Port Adelaide and the north. Again the movement reached the far outlying townships of the colony: two meetings were held at Petersburg, while Wilmington, Carrieton, Georgetown, Jamestown, and Clare, and other towns were also visited, a considerable amount being collected¹⁷⁸ for the objects of the mission. A number of engagements at other places as well as a request to visit Western Australia were declined owing to a lack of time. Deasy took home with him several presents to prominent Home Rulers, including a handsomely-bound set of the 'Picturesque

¹⁷⁸ *Register*, 7 March 1890, p.5

Atlas of Australia,' sent to Parnell by Whelan, secretary of the Adelaide League. Both Deasy and Cox gave farewell addresses at the St. Patrick's Day festival on the Jubilee Oval, and afterwards proceeded to Largs to join the steamer. They left Adelaide on 17 March by the *Liguria*.

Just over a year later, in April 1891, Cox returned to Adelaide. At the first meeting of this second campaign which was chaired by Glynn, Cox was supported on the platform by MP's O'Loghlin, Gould and Brooker, as well as Alderman Ellery and Councillors Ware and Rooney. The speech in aid of the evicted tenants of Ireland was loudly cheered and applauded and the meeting collected £250 at its closure.¹⁷⁹ The Irish National League branches of Sydney and Melbourne had wired messages to Justin McCarthy in Dublin advising a postponement of the 1891 mission and subsequent events in New South Wales indicated that this may have been the best course to take. Though warmly received in South Australia, Cox's meeting in Sydney towards the end of April was postponed. While the reason given for the postponement was the fact that a general election was occurring simultaneously, it was rumoured that Cardinal Moran and the Sydney Irish National League objected to Cox on the basis that he was a supporter of McCarthy. According to the *Advertiser* the League opted to

maintain a policy of neutrality, recognising no party in the Irish difficulty, while Cardinal Moran was so opposed to any attempt being made to stir

¹⁷⁹ *Register*, 14 April 1891, p.6

up strife among Irishmen in the colonies that he threatened to issue a proclamation warning his people against attending meetings calculated to arouse a spirit of disunion and dissension among the Irish Catholics of his diocese. Archbishop Carr of Melbourne [who had sent a welcome message to Dillon in 1889] refused to give his support to Cox, all the Roman Catholic prelates of the colonies having signed a manifesto condemning the visits of delegates from Ireland while the leadership dispute remained unsettled.¹⁸⁰

Cox claimed the opposition he encountered in Sydney hampered the mission. The cause was more warmly taken up in Victoria, but it was only after the Cork election results were known to be in favour of the McCarthy nominee, Flavin, that the Victorian Executive appeared reunited and success really attached itself to his endeavours.¹⁸¹

The leadership dispute appeared to have had less effect in South Australia. While the members of the Adelaide Irish National Federation earnestly urged 'upon Irishmen at home the necessity of united action in view of the near approach of a general election' they did not refuse to host Cox who was shunned in other colonies.¹⁸² Cox's last appearance in Adelaide was at a banquet held in his honour at the Selbourne Hotel on Pirie St on 16 November at which J.V.

¹⁸⁰ *Advertiser*, 9 June 1891, p.5

¹⁸¹ John Redmond had applied for the Chiltern Hundreds in order to contest Parnell's seat in Cork. He was defeated by the McCarthy nominee, Flavin, who polled 3669 votes to Redmond's 2157 and Sarsfield's 1161 votes.

¹⁸² *Chronicle*, 7 November 1891, p.7

O'Loughlin presided. Increasing labour support for the cause was evident in the attendance of prominent trade unionists Andrew Kirkpatrick, MLC, David Charleston, MLC and Larry O'Loughlin, MP.¹⁸³

Cox had been travelling in New Zealand when the news of Parnell's death reached him. This, coupled with the death of his father-in-law who ran extensive business concerns, induced him to cut short the visit despite his previous intention to return to Melbourne. While the remuneration of this tour did not match the success of the 1883 mission Cox was of the opinion it had benefited the cause in other ways: colonial 'Irishmen and advocates of the Irish cause were very disorganised, but they have become more united'.¹⁸⁴ The old branches of the League were dissolved and those of the newly organised Irish National Federation had taken their place. Cox left Australia for the second and final time on 25 November 1891 by the *Orizaba* travelling to London.

Michael Davitt, a convicted felon and somewhat reluctant parliamentarian, was considered by many a giant of the international labour movement. A renowned journalist with a particular interest in socialist experiment his 1895 tour was fundamentally different from all of the others and was a self-education as much as anything else. The former IRB man toured the experimental River Murray labour camps, initiated in the early 1880s as a solution to the increasing unemployment in Adelaide, and wrote favourably of

¹⁸³ Kirkpatrick was born in London but his father was from the north of Ireland; Charleston was a Cornish marine engineer; Laurence O'Loughlin was South Australian born of Irish parents

¹⁸⁴ *Register*, 16 November 1892, p.6.

every aspect of South Australia. *Life and Progress in Australasia* which details his trip remains one of the best contemporary accounts of the colonies. Upon arrival he stated the reasons for the mission to be fourfold: 'First, I wish to see the country, then I seek to recover my health; thirdly, I shall fulfil some writing commissions about Australia; and, lastly, I hope by a few lectures to obtain sufficient money to cover all my expenses.'¹⁸⁵ Having received news at Colombo that his daughter Kathleen had died, he had considered returning to Ireland but was persuaded to continue on his lecturing tour to raise a personal income. However when a British general election was called, Davitt decided to contribute the funds raised to the Irish Parliamentary Party. The Home Rule cause was in poor shape at this time: two years previously the House of Lords had defeated the second Irish Home Rule Bill; and for the whole decade of the nineties the Irish Parliamentary Party was in a state of disunity which hampered fundraising efforts. In August Davitt wrote from Sydney to Richard McGhee that the factionalism of the party was causing him difficulty in fundraising.¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless he managed to cable £1,000 to Justin McCarthy in July that year. Having refused to become embroiled in the Irish leadership struggle the Adelaide Irish National Federation was still meeting regularly and maintaining the cause in

¹⁸⁵ *Register*, 15 May 1895, p.7

¹⁸⁶ Davitt to McGhee, 30 August 1895, in L. Marley. *Michael Davitt Freelance Radical and Frondeur*. Dublin :Four Courts Press, 2010, pp.205-206

South Australia. Communication between Adelaide and Melbourne regarding plans for Davitt's visit had commenced in August 1894.¹⁸⁷

The reception given to Davitt upon his arrival was the most ecumenical given thus far to an Irish delegate and was indicative of his wide appeal in the colonies as a nationalist and socialist figure despite his well-deserved reputation as a republican. Organisations such as the Single Tax League, the Trades and Labour Council and the Democratic Club sent officials to assist the Irish nationalists on the reception committee. When Davitt arrived on the *RMS Orotava* at Largs Bay on 14 May 1895, the committee that went out on the steamer to greet him was composed of the Irish nationalist luminaries of Adelaide and Melbourne including Davitt's cousin, J.W. Walshe. Not content with this, a second deputation went out on the *Yatala*. The *Register* reported that 'There was a very representative gathering, including several members of both Houses of the Legislature'.¹⁸⁸ This was in addition to the numerous representatives from the Hibernian branches, the Irish National Federation, the Single Tax League and many others representing various labour organizations and Catholic Societies.

The scene was similar to that of the arrival of Dillon six years earlier but Davitt's international reputation attracted a deeper involvement from a wider

¹⁸⁷ *Register*, 8 January 1894, p.6; *Advertiser*, 6 February 1895, p.7

¹⁸⁸ *Register*, 15 May 1895, p.7

cross-section of Adelaide society – on this occasion, South Australian parliamentarians actually travelled out to the Orient liner to greet Davitt rather than wait to meet him in Adelaide. The cosmopolitan appeal of Davitt, who was viewed as a humanitarian as much as an Irish parliamentarian, ensured that the composition of reception committees in many places reflected that in Adelaide.¹⁸⁹ Davitt received an official welcome from the Mayor of Port Adelaide, C.R. Morris, in the Town Hall there witnessed by hundreds of citizens and a second official welcome was extended to him in Adelaide at the Town Hall where the Mayor of Adelaide, Charles Tucker, welcomed him in the parlour. The address here was guarded, referring specifically to the non-political nature of Davitt's tour and this did not go unnoticed. Davitt, in reply, said,

I must say this, Mr Mayor, in reference to the kindly welcome you have given me to this city. I do not misunderstand or misinterpret the nature of that welcome. You extend to me civic hospitality not on account of any particular effort I may have made in any particular political direction, but because you recognise in me a fellow countryman of some 30,000 residents of Adelaide and South Australia who are interested in the development of this great country, and who are as enterprising and loyal as any other section of the community. In welcoming me to Adelaide, and inside this municipal palace, you are not committing yourself to any political opinion or action of mine, but simply showing my fellow-

¹⁸⁹ The Mount Gambier committee was similarly composed. *Border Watch*, 12 June 1895, p.2

countrymen here and throughout the world that those who represent the municipal life of Australia can occasionally rise above mere prejudices of party. (Loud applause) I am sure my fellow countrymen are animated by true patriotism for Australia— (Hear, hear) —and will long respect and remember your courtesy, courage, and kindness in taking part in this welcome.¹⁹⁰

Thus Davitt recognised that while his reputation preceded him, not all were in awe of it or his political ambition. He acknowledged that his tour was not to be conducted to solicit funds for the Irish Parliamentary Party stating that the Party was aware ‘that most of your colonies if not all, have recently passed through a severe financial crisis. In these circumstances it was thought wise by the Irish party not to invest my tour with any political character whatever’ though the visit did, in the end, entail political fundraising.¹⁹¹ The *Register* acknowledged the tact of all those present stating that ‘not even the most uncompromising and vindictive of anti-Fenians and opponents of Home Rule for Ireland could reasonably object to the character of yesterday's demonstration. The proceedings were unmistakably successful.’¹⁹²

Davitt's first lecture in the colonies was entitled ‘Parliamentary Photographs’ and, not being linked to Home Rule in this time of Irish Parliamentary Party discord, kept the subject neutral and ensured interest from

¹⁹⁰ *Register*, 15 May 1895, p.7

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.4

the general public. The illuminated address of welcome presented to him in Adelaide was noted at the meeting as 'being the most representative ever presented there' and was signed by no less than eleven societies; the Irish National Federation, Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, United Labour Party, Democratic Club, Trades and Labour Council, Single Tax League, Women's Land Reform League, Port Adelaide Trades and Labour Council, Eight Hours Celebration Union, Fabian Society and the Reception Committee, thus evidencing the wide appeal of the former Fenian to many elements of South Australia's population. Two days after his arrival Davitt was invited to lunch at Parliament House by the Premier, Charles Kingston, in the company of Glynn and Mayor Tucker. The following night he gave another lecture at the Town Hall entitled 'The trend of the labor movement in Great Britain'.¹⁹³

Davitt's tour of the colonies took almost seven months to complete and he travelled throughout South Australia taking in many of the country towns as well as the experimental labour camps along the Murray. He commenced by lecturing in Kapunda on 14 June on his way to Renmark and the River Murray settlements of Lyrup, Pyap, New Residence, Moorook and Kingston.¹⁹⁴ He returned to Adelaide briefly before departing for Petersburg where he was met by the Mayor, Dr Elliot, town councillors and a number of leading residents. At the evening lecture chaired by Fr. Norton, Petersburg's prominent citizens joined

¹⁹³ *Advertiser*, 17 May 1895, p.5

¹⁹⁴ *Chronicle*, 22 June 1895, p.9

Davitt on stage as he addressed a large and representative audience. The following day he visited Broken Hill where he was met with a similar enthusiastic reception. On 24 June, he gave a lecture at the Adelaide Town Hall entitled 'The Progress of the Home Rule Cause', the proceeds of which were given to the St Vincent de Paul Society. This was the only Adelaide lecture to focus on Home Rule but just that day Davitt had received news that Lord Rosebery had resigned which meant that the dissolution of the British Parliament was a distinct possibility. This in turn brought the possibility of Home Rule coming once more to the fore in British politics. The development also meant that Davitt could be recalled to assist in an impending election and had the effect of changing the object of his fundraising. He remained in Australia however and visited Tasmania and Melbourne before spending much of July and August touring New South Wales and Queensland. He made two further, though brief, visits to Adelaide before leaving Australia in November 1895.

Though Davitt's tour was not initially directly in aid of Home Rule, Davitt himself could not be separated from the Irish nationalist movement. He often praised the Irish in Australia remarking that,

Our Irish people here are the very best to be found in any part of the world. I have been surprised at the intensity of their feeling, though I have been aware for some time that they have been our most generous supporters. In proportion to population there is more active sympathy from the Irish in Australia than from the Irish in America. As far as I am

concerned myself I cannot speak too highly of the hospitable way I have been treated since I landed in Adelaide two months ago.¹⁹⁵

South Australia received favourable reports regarding its self-government – the municipal institutions, like the political, were 'fearlessly progressive'.¹⁹⁶ Davitt's tour attracted little odium despite the cool mayoral reception in Adelaide and the refusal by the mayor to give an official one given in Perth.¹⁹⁷

William Redmond, one of the first Irish envoys to Australia, returned there late in 1904 for the purposes of recouping his delicate health. Overall this visit was formulaic and unexciting. Like Davitt's trip, Redmond's was not specifically planned as a fundraising mission, although he was directed to give whatever assistance he could to the Australian end of the movement. Fortuitous timing played a part in the quiet nature of this visit. Redmond left the country just as Hugh Mahon was planning the introduction of the Home Rule resolution to the federal parliament. The vehement opposition to this stirred up by Victorian Orangemen may have impacted this trip had he been touring later in 1905.

William's appearance in Adelaide in April 1905 was brief and consisted of no more than a lecture at the Town Hall, a visit to the Christian Brothers College and attendance the Hibernian Biennial Conference before departure for Sydney

¹⁹⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, 20 July 1895, p.6

¹⁹⁶ *Chronicle*, 16 April 1898, p.36

¹⁹⁷ *Chronicle*, 11 May 1895, p.9; *Daily News*, 5 October 1895, p.5 and *Mercury*, 22 July 1895, p.4

on 26 April. Having been in Australia for some months before visiting Adelaide, there was no repeat of the scenes of his rapturous reception twenty two years before. William acknowledged the great change in feeling that had taken place since his initial visit: previously 'few men of what it is customary to call position and influence were willing to commit themselves to what was then looked upon as a great and radical departure, and, with here and there a notable exception, none but Irishmen and the descendants of Irishmen thought that Irish affairs were worth considering in the British colonies.'¹⁹⁸ South Australia had proven itself a notable exception to this state of affairs in 1883 and since. From the time of the early visits Home Rule for Ireland had come to be widely favoured in Australia. The Devlin delegation of 1906 however would be more defensive politically of the Home Rule movement than any before it. Between the departure of Redmond and the arrival of Devlin anti-Home Rule sentiment in Australia was vented as never before due to the Orange protest against the federal parliament's resolution in favour of Irish self-government. The next visit marked the transition from a rhetoric based in socialism and moral right to one emphasising the democracy and pan-working class appeal of the push for Irish Home Rule.

Joseph Devlin, the first nationalist MP for West Belfast, arrived with lawyer J.T. Donovan in Adelaide on 14 May 1906 and the welcome afforded the two Irishmen was as enthusiastic and representative as that given to Davitt

¹⁹⁸ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 5 April 1906, p.4

eleven years earlier. Devlin was welcomed by Mayor Sweeney of Port Adelaide as a representative of the British House of Parliament but was careful to respond that while 'he valued the kindly spirit which had moved the Mayor to welcome him as the representative of the British House of Commons, he was also the agent and delegated authority of 86 other members, representing Ireland in the Imperial Parliament.'¹⁹⁹ The delegation had been afforded a large and fervent welcome when the *RMS Ortona* arrived at Largs Bay. Several members of the legislature and numerous representatives of the city's Irish and Catholic groups travelled on the steamer to greet the envoys.²⁰⁰ Mayor Sweeney admitted to the audience in the Town Hall that several individuals had questioned his choice to host the civic reception of the delegates but he had assured them that 'he knew his duty and he knew too the wishes of the great majority of the people of Port Adelaide'.²⁰¹ The delegates responded saying that the month they had just spent in Western Australia had shown them that their visit, far from being representative of sect or class, 'had allayed differences, destroyed prejudice, and inspired a better understanding among men of all religious persuasions and, in fact, had made the Irish cause thoroughly understood, and therefore acceptable to the judgment and commonsense of Australians.'²⁰²

Devlin was much feted by the Australian press as the Irish Nationalist parliamentarian who had corralled the votes of Orange and Green, Catholic and

¹⁹⁹ *Register*, 15 May 1906, p.8

²⁰⁰ *Advertiser*, 15 May 1906, p.9

²⁰¹ *Register*, 15 May 1906, p.8

²⁰² *Ibid.*

Protestant alike in the northern Irish city of Belfast, the hotbed of Unionism and the Orange Order. After the Australia-wide Home Rule protest of the previous months it was likely a strategic manoeuvre that Devlin was the 'headline act' for this tour. The *Border Watch* recounted Donovan's speech at a banquet in Millicent in rural South Australia:

The Orangemen of the north, the Catholics of the west and south, and the democratic workers everywhere were rallying to the cause, and they would soon see a united Ireland. Mr Devlin owed his seat for West Belfast in the British House of Commons to the votes of his Protestant, Catholic, and Orange constituents, and he quoted other instances to demonstrate the strength of the wave of democracy and liberty that was sweeping over Ireland.²⁰³

While the anti-Home Rule meetings and petitions in Australia had been more concerned with the demarcation of authority of the Commonwealth Parliament than Irish Home Rule itself, the size of the protest could not be ignored and Devlin was a good candidate for a mission at this time. It is noteworthy that the labour element, increasingly prominent in Australian politics at this juncture, was included as a constituent in a Home Rule Ireland along with the two religious elements. The Irish Party's record of support and initiation of constitutional reform was exhaustively listed in Devlin's first speech

²⁰³ *Border Watch*, 30 May 1906, p.2

in Adelaide at the Town Hall. Amongst these were the abolition of flogging in the British Navy, the Workers' Compensation Act, the Eight Hour Day for miners, holidays for female textile workers and the re-establishment of the permanent power of trade unions. Here he claimed that the Irish Parliamentary Party represented not just the political aims of Irishmen but those of the English working classes who, up until the recent election, had had no voice in the Commons.²⁰⁴ Devlin's skills as an orator were well received also. The *Advertiser* reported that his speech at the social held on 16 May 'eclipsed his speech in the Town Hall the previous night, and [he] proved himself to be a speaker of singular power and intense convictions'.²⁰⁵ While the movement had experienced some negative attention in the wake of the 1905 parliamentary resolution in its favour, this visit attracted no protest in South Australia though Donovan's claim that 'The Orangemen had come to see that what the Nationalist party was fighting for was equal rights for all classes' was perhaps going a mite far.²⁰⁶ The Town Hall meeting was patronised by a great many of South Australia's leading citizens: apart from the Mayor who presided, there were present Premier Price, Chief Secretary Kirkpatrick, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, L. O'Loughlin, the Archbishop of Adelaide, members of both houses and a representative gathering of the Roman Catholic clergy and the Irish section of the community. Premier Price moved the support resolution at the Town Hall meeting and cross-party

²⁰⁴ *Advertiser*, 16 May 1906, p.6

²⁰⁵ *Advertiser*, 17 May 1906, p.6

²⁰⁶ *Advertiser*, 16 May 1906, p.6

patronage was evident at all subsequent meetings. The Commissioner of Crown Lands proposed that the resolution be forwarded to Lord Elgin, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, a move imitated at most of the subsequent regional meetings.

The South Australian tour began in earnest after the public receptions in Port Adelaide and Adelaide itself. Devlin and Donovan were warmly received in Port Pirie, Jamestown, Gawler, Seppeltsfield, Tanunda, Millicent and Mount Gambier between 23 and 29 May 1906. Devlin received news of the sudden death of his father in Dublin while in Port Pirie but, though deeply affected, his schedule continued uninterrupted. The delegation was greeted and toasted in the various rural centres by Labour leaders, local mayors, clergymen of both the Catholic and Methodist ministries and various MPs.²⁰⁷ Jamestown noted the arrival of people from the surrounding areas of Caltowie, Snalding, Georgetown, Gladstone, Port Pirie, Laura, Appila, Yarrowie, Ulooloo, and Yarcowie and took up a collection of £80. Millicent bore bunting in the main street featuring the words "Cead Mile Failte" and gave subscriptions amounting to £100.²⁰⁸ It was here that the delegates were welcomed 'in the name of the Irishmen of Millicent and of the sons and daughters of England, Scotland, Wales and Germany' and where Devlin said,

²⁰⁷ *Chronicle*, 2 June 1906, p.41

²⁰⁸ Irish for 'One hundred thousand welcomes' – a common Irish greeting

almost at the close of their tour of South Australia, their mission had been a triumphant success - not only from a national point of view, but also from the financial. The true aspects of the Irish question were now deeper in the hearts of the Australian people and higher in their estimation. They had been welcomed enthusiastically wherever they went, and they had attracted to their platform men of all shades of political and religious opinion.²⁰⁹

After touring the interior, and collecting £1,000 in the colony, the delegates proceeded to Melbourne where the Lord Mayor refused the delegation a public reception.²¹⁰ The South Australian tour was successful both in terms of fundraising and in relation to the desire to elicit a greater understanding of the aims of the Home Rule movement from non-Irish Australians. The continued support of the labour element and the various nationalities of the colony for Irish Home Rule were evident.

The final Irish tour of Australasia in aid of the Home Rule movement commenced in New Zealand where the delegates, William Redmond Jnr., Richard Hazleton and J.T. Donovan, addressed seventy three meetings and collected £10,000 for the Party.²¹¹ Arriving in Adelaide on Sunday 12 November, Redmond, Hazleton and Donovan were given a civic reception in the Town Hall by Mayor Cohen and that afternoon the Attorney-General, W.J. Denny, hosted a

²⁰⁹ *Border Watch*, 30 May 1906, p.2

²¹⁰ *Horsham Times*, 5 June 1906, p.2; *Register*, 1 June 1906, p.5

²¹¹ *Register*, 3 August 1911, p.8

luncheon in their honour at Parliament House. Amongst the invited guests were the Premier, the Chief Secretary, the Minister of Education, the Acting Speaker, MP's Harry Jackson, Reginald Blundell, Archibald Peake and Patrick Glynn, as well as Archbishop O'Reily, Fr. Hurley, Fr. Denny and the United Irish League reception committee.²¹² The same evening, at a meeting held in the Exhibition Building, the envoys spoke on Home Rule, a motion in favour of which was moved by Premier Verran and seconded by Peake, the Leader of the Opposition. Prior to the meeting a procession of societies in regalia had escorted the envoys to the building.

A tour of country South Australia commenced on 18 November when the delegates spoke at Jamestown, Arthurton and Kapunda while the meeting at Hammond was the largest ever seen there attracting visitors from the surrounding areas of Hawker, Cradock, Quorn, Wilmington, Carrieton, Bruce and Willowie.²¹³ However it was in Port Pirie that one of the most interesting episodes in connection with the visitors would occur.

In the municipal elections held there in 1911 Labour suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of a well-organised Liberal party. The *Register* asserted that 'the Socialists suffered to some extent owing to their action in refusing to

²¹² *Register*, 14 November 1911, p.8

²¹³ *Register*, 24 November 1911, p.8

acknowledge an invitation to be present at the welcome to the Irish envoys.'²¹⁴ It reported:

The secretary of the local branch of the Hibernian Society (W. Welch) recently wrote to the various unions asking their cooperation and assistance in connection with the approaching visit to Port Pirie of the Irish envoys. When the letter was placed before the unions a motion was carried that while they sympathized with home rule for Ireland, and supported the object of the visit of the envoys, they could not recognise any communication from a man who had shown himself to be antipathic towards unionism.²¹⁵

Apart from the missing trade unionists the reception committee otherwise demonstrated the same representative nature as that in other towns - Liberal councillors, Catholic and Methodist clergy and leading locals. Although the press reported that the incident was not the sole cause of the heavy Labour defeat in the elections, that it featured at all says something about the intersection of Irish and local issues. The labour faction paid a price for putting local trade union concerns above support for Irish Home Rule and correspondence, which served to illustrate the amalgam of religion, politics and ethnicity in the area, ensued from the incident and was published in local papers.

²¹⁴ *Register*, 4 December 1911, p.9

²¹⁵ *Register*, 24 November 1911, p.8

This return visit to South Australia was brief but included lunch at Parliament House hosted by the Speaker of the Assembly, Larry O'Loughlin, and the offer of the loan of a government car by Premier Peake.²¹⁶ Despite declaring himself a convert to Home Rule during this visit and appearing as an ardent supporter of the Irish nationalists on a trip to the UK, two years later Peake would refuse to attend a Home Rule demonstration citing the matter as being outside the scope of Australian legislation. In 1914 the issue was supported on party lines and Peake was accused of 'falling into line with all his "Liberal" friends in the other states who appear, as a matter of party politics, to have decided to join Sir Edward Carson's ranks.'²¹⁷



Figure 2: Advertisement for the Final Rally for Home Rule ²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Laurence O'Loughlin was born in Virginia in 1854 of Irish parents and was a Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1890 until 1918. He held various ministries and was Speaker of the Assembly from 1912 – 1915. Malcolm Saunders, 'O'Loughlin, Laurence Theodore (1854–1927)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, ANU, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/oloughlin-laurence-theodore-7906/text13749>, accessed 23 March 2013; *Advertiser*, 27 July 1912, p.19

²¹⁷ *Advertiser*, 4 June 1914, p.7

²¹⁸ *Advertiser*, 10 November 1911. p.2

This tour was advertised as the 'Final Rally' for Irish Home Rule in Australia (see [Figure 2](#)). The enactment of an Irish Home Rule Bill seemed certain given the removal of the House of Lords veto powers and the fact that the Irish Parliamentary Party held the balance of power in the House of Commons. However, Donovan's final sentiments in Adelaide were eerily prophetic. He said,

the outlook was never brighter. Unless some great national calamity such as a war occurs we can expect Ireland to have Home Rule within two years. It is now inevitable because the Liberal Party of Great Britain backed up by the strong public spirit of the democracy, are determined to carry the measure, and they will, despite what the Lords may do.²¹⁹

The Great War would indeed intervene in the fortunes of the movement and the shelving of the Third Home Rule Bill for its duration and the subsequent divisions caused by the Conscription issue in both Ireland and Australia and the Easter Rising tore asunder the Home Rule movement.

While Home Rule was still supported as a viable alternative until as late as 1921 by some Irish Australians, it is generally accepted as having lost its position as a prime panacea to the Irish in 1914 when the enactment of the Third Home Rule Bill was suspended. Redmond's support for conscription combined

²¹⁹ *Advertiser*, 26 July 1912, p.10

with the vehement opposition of Ulster Unionists and the emergence of a romantic nationalism fuelled by the Gaelic Revival and men such as Padraig Pearse diverted and divided support for what amounted to dominion status. The initial reaction to the 1916 Easter Rising in Australia was one of outrage but the execution of its leaders radicalised formerly innocuous opinions and fuelled national aspirations. Irish Australian support for republicanism was cautious but Sinn Fein's sweeping victory in the 1918 elections confirmed for many that Home Rule was finally dead.

Chapter 5

Non-Irish and non-Catholic patronage and support for Home Rule

The reception and welcome afforded each delegation demonstrated the extent of non-Irish and non-Catholic support for the envoys and the Irish cause generally. The diverse nature of the audiences and those who accompanied the delegates on the public platform attest to the increasing acceptance of the Home Rule movement in South Australia.

Esmonde notes the cosmopolitan nature of the colonial representatives at the first Dillon lecture and states that the audience was of differing nationalities and religions. In 1883 a Presbyterian minister was appointed to Clare in South Australia from a post in Gibraltar. Due to continuing failing health, the Rev A.C. Sutherland, a Scottish Highlander, moved to North Carlton, Victoria before accepting a position in Port Adelaide and returning to South Australia in 1891. During his fourteen-year ministry there he gained a reputation as 'one of the best known and most scholarly ministers of the South Australian Presbyterian Church.'²²⁰ Sutherland emerged as a great Protestant friend of the South Australian Irish Home Rule movement and his opposition to the 1899 Boer War as 'an unholy campaign' was echoed amongst many of the Irish. Recognised

²²⁰ *Register*, 17 October 1910, p.8

as one of the finest classical scholars in Australia, Sutherland was appointed as an examiner and was a member of the senate of the University of Adelaide in 1893. In July 1902 he wrote to Senator J.V. O'Loghlin claiming that 'if Irishmen be true to the best traditions of their race their demands for power to express their national peculiarities – their national genius – in their own way without harm to others, will as justice is only sleeping not dead, be granted. Then England will not be wedded to Ireland by force, but will have won the fair bride, to the infinite benefit and happiness of both.'²²¹ He signed the letter 'Slàn leat, Do Charaid', Scots Gaelic for 'Goodbye my friend' indicating both a personal closeness and a shared Celtic/Gaelic identity. In 1906, the *Register* stated that 'No Irish national gathering in Adelaide would be complete without the presence of the Rev. A.C. Sutherland.'²²² Fellow Protestant C.T. Hargraves was a supporter of the Irish nationalist cause in Adelaide too. Present at meetings from about 1882 the high-ranking civil servant, a member of the Anglican Church, was also an enthusiastic student of Gaelic.²²³

As non-Catholics and non-Irish men, Sutherland & Hargraves were not alone in supporting the Irish nationalist movement in South Australia. Many of the colony's wealthy and influential men gave the Home Rule organisations time, energy and money. Cynically, one must ask if these supporters had an agenda other than a moral stance on the self-determination of Ireland. The high

²²¹ Rev A C Sutherland to J V O'Loghlin, 21 July 1902. O'Loghlin, *ibid*.

²²² *Register*, 19 March 1906, p.4

²²³ *Southern Argus*, 27 April 1882, p.3

proportion of public figures – often Members of the Legislative Council or Assembly and very frequently Mayors and local councillors – on the platforms of the movement could lead one to view their participation as either a genuine belief in the morality of the movement or more subtly, as an attempt to trade on the social capital of the Irish in Adelaide and to raise their own local political profile. Some of the colony's richest men, for example, William Simms, brewing magnate and Member for West Adelaide from 1868, chaired meetings, were members of sub-committees of Irish nationalist organisations and were engaged in supporting them over a lengthy period of time. But in 1884 Simms admitted that after his defeat in the Upper House election of 1882 he had realised he 'was not so well known throughout the country as he had thought'.²²⁴ He had been engaged in the Famine Relief Fund and involvement with the Irish movement recommenced with the 1883 visit of the Redmond delegation – a much higher profile event.²²⁵ Simms was noted as having carried out a vigorous personal canvass of the city for subscriptions for the Irish Relief Fund and this effort suggests that his involvement was more than a public relations exercise. A number of other parliamentary figures such as W.J. Denny and W.B. Rounsevell, along with local councillors and businessmen such as Mayor Smith and J.B. Broderick frequently appear in the press as participants in the Adelaide Irish nationalist movement – some were Irish, some were Catholic, but many were neither. While the Irish Catholics amongst the higher profile supporters may

²²⁴ *Advertiser*, 4 February 1884, p.6

²²⁵ *Register*, 17 February 1883, p.1S

have remained involved regardless of the potential for damage, it is not likely that the others would have supported the political aims of the Irish community, particularly given the reputation of the Land League element, had it been to their detriment. As we have seen immoderation was not popular in South Australia.

Although the non-Irish and non-Catholic members of the South Australian parliament did not have a vested personal interest in the issue of Irish self-government, there were, for some of them, possible political benefits to being involved in the Home Rule movement. William Rounsevell was the Member for Burra from 1875-1890 and 1899-1906 and Port Adelaide between 1890 and 1893. His Burra constituency was one of the colony's foremost Catholic areas with a relatively large Irish-born component (9% in 1881), thus his support of the Home Rule movement could perhaps be viewed as much as a practical measure as a moral one. However it is not likely that a man of his nature would have entertained supporting any group that demonstrated extremist tendencies. The conservative nature of Adelaide's most prominent Irishmen perhaps dissolved any fear a radical such as James Clements could have instilled and enabled Rounsevell to appear publicly as a Home Rule supporter. He once said he did not wish South Australia to be 'entirely democratic' and so the limited demands of Irish Home Rule as a dominion within the Empire may have appealed to his sense of social justice without endangering his class-bound ideals

of power and control.²²⁶ Other non-Irish supporters such as Staffordshire-born Mayor Edwin Smith were zealous reformers, improvers and philanthropists and may well have had enough personal popularity to weather any criticism that involvement with the Home Rule movement could have brought.²²⁷

What has not heretofore been considered as a mechanism of communication and persuasion used to assist the Irish cause is the power of the social and business connections between the actors in South Australia. These proved all the more potent in the close proximity afforded by both Adelaide's position as a social and business centre for the state and its small population. The wealthiest non-Irish supporters of the Home Rule movement were all avid sportsmen and in addition to political and business ties, the Irish nationalists of the city found common social ground with these leading men on various sports fields. Indeed Patrick McMahon Glynn's biography states that 'his reputation as a sportsman contributed to his political success'.²²⁸ Missing from this arena are Irish loyalists; the lack of a polar opposite to the Home Rule movement will be discussed in the next section. Space and time were effectively bridged in South Australia: the compactness of Adelaide and the fact that the metropolitan area

²²⁶ G. L. Fischer, 'Rounsevell, William Benjamin (1843–1923)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rounsevell-william-benjamin-8281/text14511>, accessed 4 November 2012.

²²⁷ Smith's public life was marked by a zealous commitment to improving Adelaide and its surrounds and he known as the 'Grand Old Man' of South Australia. Upon his death he was remembered as a 'Prince of Philanthropists'. *Register*, 27 December 1919, p.2

²²⁸ Gerald O'Collins, 'Glynn, Patrick McMahon (Paddy) (1855–1931)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/glynn-patrick-mcmahon-paddy-6405/text10949>, accessed 6 February 2013

was very much the centre of the colony facilitated the making of connections – an element which would have been much harder in the larger metropolitan centres interstate where the Irish could cluster in certain suburbs and where insulation from the wider population was possible; a generation gap was bridged by earlier Irish figures such as McEllister and Coglin, who while not specifically involved in the Home Rule support movement in South Australia, linked the 'old colonists' group to this later period of activity lending the newer Irish the veneer of respectability they had established. The younger Irish men did little to tarnish this. In addition, some of the non-Irish supporters, such as Simms, also had long public careers which spanned both generations of Irishmen breeding a useful familiarity.

Chapter 6

A lack of opposition - South Australia's Orange Order

The Orange Order, an Irish organisation with a distinctly Protestant membership, spread throughout the colony despite the tiny number of Irish Protestants resident there. The imbalance of prominence given to the two Irish sides in the public arena in South Australia must be considered. A partial explanation may be present in the basically secretive nature of the Orange Order which hinders an investigation of its impact in South Australia. Speakers at Loyal Orange Institution meetings often claimed that most Protestants in the colony were unaware of the aims of the organisation and that many more would have been members if this were not the case. What an investigation of Orange involvement in the public debate shows is that the main concern of Orangemen was the encroachment of Rome in all areas of life, particularly politics, and not necessarily the self-determination of Irishmen.

The late development of the Orange Order in the colony should be considered also as one explanatory factor in the lack of an anti-Home Rule movement in South Australia; another was the colony's inherent religious liberalism and understanding of the principle of self-government. The appearance of the Order was not welcomed in South Australia.

The first reports of Orangeism in South Australia actually appeared in a Tasmanian paper in 1847.²²⁹ Yet there is no mention of the Order in the Adelaide papers until 1849. In July of that year, the *Register* reported:

We regret to announce the formation of an Orange Lodge in Adelaide. We had hoped, when we came to South Australia, that religious and political acerbities, perpetuated in the United Kingdom for unholy purposes, would have been allowed to subside here; but seeing there are spirits whose insatiate purpose cannot be accomplished without some demon of discord, we denounce their purpose, and solemnly warn our fellow colonists against the possibility of being trammelled by connection with a society which can answer no good end.²³⁰

The Order's Grand Chaplain, Reverend James Pollitt described an 1871 meeting of the Order as the second anniversary tea of the Loyal Orange Institution of South Australia, implying, as was the case in Tasmania, that the initial founding reported in the 1840s had been a false start.²³¹ Yet one writer calling himself "A True Protestant" wrote that the *Register*, which referenced its surprise and regret at the appearance of the organisation it described as 'a badge of faction and oppression' in its scathing account of the meeting, must

²²⁹ "Orange Lodges" *Colonial Times*, 23 November 1847, p.3.

²³⁰ "Local Intelligence: Orange Lodge Formed in Adelaide." *Register*, 18 July 1849, p.1.

²³¹ See Richard Davis. Orangeism in Tasmania, 1832-1967. *Papers and Proceedings: Tasmanian Historical Research Association*, Vol. 55, No. 3, Dec 2008: 145-159. Davis shows the formation of a lodge in Tasmania in August 1848 and he is able to follow newspaper reports of celebratory banquets until April 1851 when the movement appears to have petered out, not to be revived again until the Fenian Scare in 1868.

have been 'napping as this Society it deems so pernicious has existed at its very door for years'.²³² While the attempt on the life of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1868 did not have a lasting effect on the good reputation of the Catholic Irish in the colony, the thesis that the Order, having been established in the late 1840s, died away but revived in the wake of the fear of a possible Fenian presence is sound. In 1889 an Orangeman wrote a reply to a letter which deemed the Order to be a poisonous upas tree taking root in the colonies. As 'one of that noble band, who are banded together for God's right and man's liberty', he stated that,

previous to the attempt of the assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh, the Orange Lodge, although in existence then, was dormant, and it was through the action of that Fenian who shot the Duke that the Orange Lodges in the Southern Hemisphere number 100 in New Zealand, 100 in Victoria, 50 in Adelaide, 50 in Queensland, and 225 in New South Wales, and wherever Popery is rampant the orange and purple will and must take root - not as an upas tree, but as an antidote to Popery.²³³

Ill-informed he may have been as to the strength of the Order as even at its highest point South Australia did not have fifty Orange lodges but his explanation for the impetus for the society's revival makes sense. Despite the far geographical spread of the early lodges in the colony, that impetus appears to

²³² Orangeism in South Australia. *Register*, 7 November 1871, p.5; A True Protestant.

'Orangeism'. *Protestant Advocate*. 28 October 1871, p.6.

²³³ *Maitland Mercury*, 11 June 1889, p.6

have been relatively weak since it would be another three decades before the Order would achieve a dramatic increase in membership.²³⁴ In 1903 Grand Master James Johns revealed that Loyal Orange Institution of South Australia was organising a number of new lodges:

The order is progressing by leaps and bounds. When I took office four years ago the membership totalled 379; today we muster about 2,000 active members, and many new lodges have been opened.²³⁵

Johns' evidence offers some explanation for the lack of an Orange voice in the colony in the last quarter of the nineteenth century but despite a large and well-dispersed organisational network of an eventual total of thirty six lodges, the Order continued to do little to oppose later delegations or hamper colonial support for the Irish nationalist movement which had, by this time, a well-established support base.

In South Australia, Orange activity concerned itself primarily with religious and not political issues in the wider sense. Although there was localised concern about Catholic dominance of the civil service and the organisational power of that church when it came to elections in the colony, there were few

²³⁴ By 1877 the Grand Lodge had seven private lodges under its auspice. The far geographical spread of the Order is demonstrated by the location of lodges 3, 4 and 6: Derby Lodge No 1, Adelaide; Vernu Lodge No 2, Adelaide; Drumcalpin Lodge No 3 Rice's Creek (now Auburn, 120kms north of Adelaide); Diamond Lake Lodge No 4, Diamond Lake, near Honiton (240 kms south west of Adelaide); Enniskillen Lodge No 5, Norwood; Royal Bismarck No 6 Mount Gambier (435kms from Adelaide); and Duke of York No 7 Alberton.

²³⁵ *Advertiser*, 1 May 1903, p.3

demonstrations of a deep concern regarding Home Rule by South Australian Orangemen. The only protest given at the time of the Redmonds visit in 1883 was a lecture delivered by a young man on a pleasure tour of the colonies. Mr E. Riley claimed to be both an Irishman and a Catholic but doubts were expressed as to the former given the lack of a traceable Irish accent. The resolution of the meeting was not to denounce colonial Irishmen or even condemn the formation of the Irish National League in South Australia but 'to record its want of confidence in the proposed National Land League, and withhold its countenance and support from that organization until its objects are more clearly defined, and some guarantee is given that the money collected will be applied to the furtherance of some legitimate object'.²³⁶ The meeting, held the same day the Redmonds departed town, attracted about 300 people but 'excepting the presence of two members of the Adelaide Club and the Chairman (G.W. Cotton, MLC), Mr Riley had not any support on the platform'.²³⁷ There was no mention of the Orange Order as a particular opponent.

David Fitzpatrick asserts that the Order existed in South Australia as a fraternal and social organisation rather than one concerned with Ireland's, and particularly Ulster's, continued relationship with England.²³⁸ Details of Irish nationalist fundraising and the substantial sums collected from both the Irish

²³⁶ *Register*, 17 February 1883, page 1

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ David Fitzpatrick. "Exporting Brotherhood: Orangeism in South Australia" *Immigrants & Minorities* 23, no. 2-3 (2005): 34.

and the general colonial population will be given below but there was no corresponding structured anti-Home Rule movement dedicated to hosting Irish unionists or raising money for the Ulster loyalists. Sydney MP Francis Abigail appeared to be a lone voice when, in June 1890, he called for an Irish Unionist delegation to visit Australia as a counter action to the Dillon delegation, not having the support of Orange leaders in Ulster and no echo in Adelaide.²³⁹ The Protestant Defence Association was interested in the bogey effect of Home Rule as Rome Rule. The Orange Order as an organisation certainly did not devote much time or energy to protesting against the delegations of Irish nationalists although individual Orangemen wrote to the press denouncing the Home Rulers and their local Irish and non-Irish supporters. There are no public records of donations being made to the Ulster Volunteer Force which pledged to fight Home Rule apart from the small sums mentioned in the minutes of Lodge No 7 detailed below. And yet this could not have been due to pecuniary difficulties as some Orangemen could lend their own lodges substantial amounts for various reasons.²⁴⁰ The variation in economic status amongst Orangemen is indicated by the fact that while some had substantial reserves, many members were struck off the books for non-payment of dues, some were placed on 'Grand Lodge dues only' because of financial hardship and more still had money donated to them. In stark contrast to some brethren's generosity to their own lodges, and to the

²³⁹ *Register*, 14 June 1890, p.5

²⁴⁰ The records mention brethren who, on occasion, could afford to lend their lodge substantial sums of money ranging from £10,000 to £15,000 to get them out of financial difficulty or even to purchase an organ which indicates a reasonable amount of individual wealth amongst members

generosity of South Australians to the various Irish appeals, it must be of some significance that the only reference to a donation by a local Lodge in the minute books during the period refers to the sum of 4d which was donated from Lodge funds to make up to £2.2.0 the members' voluntary donation to the anti-home rule forces in July 1914.²⁴¹ The amount given to the Ulster Defence Fund, a force setting itself up to fight both Irish nationalism and the British parliament, appears all the more paltry when one considers that it represents merely twice what most lodges contributed to a down-at-heel brother.

Given that lodge records report little concern with the advancement of Home Rule, one might assume that the members were removed from events in Ireland. While most meetings record the presence of intra- and interstate brethren, there are only a few reports of international visitors. In 1903, the year of Johns' claims of increased membership, Orangemen from interstate, America and Ireland were noted as being present at the reopening of the Sir Colin Campbell lodge in Hindmarsh. In this year also, the North Adelaide lodge 'William Johnston' reopened and the South Australian Protestant Defence Association was formed at a meeting in the Tivoli Theatre on the motion of Rev Dill Macky of Sydney.²⁴² At a 1910 meeting the Worshipful Master of Loyal Orange Lodge No 7 welcomed Brother Currie from Tasmania and Brother Tasker

²⁴¹ State Library of South Australia, Adelaide, SRG/293, Box 3, Loyal Orange Institution of South Australia, Minutes of LOL 7, Port Adelaide, 6 July 1914

²⁴² *Advertiser*, 12 August 1903, p.3; *Advertiser*, 20 November 1903, p.7

of 'Belfast in Ireland'.²⁴³ The differences in support of and interest in events in Ireland between the Orange and Green Irish in South Australia were great.

While the 'Irish Question' could cause opinion clashes there were few instances of physical or mass confrontation around Irish issues in South Australia. A public meeting held on Wakefield St in June 1887 against Salisbury's Irish Crimes Bill (the 87th Coercion bill) led by MPs Solomon, Glynn, Nash, and Cohen attracted almost 600 people but passed peacefully.²⁴⁴ An anti-Home Rule meeting was held in Adelaide in April 1906 but the lectures of the ex-Priest Slattery and his wife, the 'Escaped Nun', occasioned the only incidence of a sectarian riot recorded in Adelaide up to 1900 and one of the first quasi-official appearances by the Orange Order. In June the Slatterys ran a series of public lectures on Catholicism. Orange support of the controversial lectures can be seen both by the presence of leading Orangemen on the Slattery platform and through the letter condemning an upsurge of 'larrikinism' in the city and rule by a 'mob ... composed of a single nationality'.²⁴⁵ One can safely infer that the Irish were the nationality referred to if similar occurrences interstate are taken account of: in Kalgoorlie the Slattery lecture was disrupted by 'hurleyites' and in Brisbane, Slattery himself named the Irish as the unruly crowd outside the

²⁴³ It is marginally possible that the notation "Belfast in Ireland" was required in 1910 to differentiate the northern Irish city from the town of Belfast in Victoria which was renamed Port Fairy in 1883.

²⁴⁴ *Chronicle*, 18 June 1887, p.7

²⁴⁵ Letter writer 'Orange' protested against the slurs cast on the character of Adelaide as one of the most law-abiding cities in the world, owing to unseemly disturbances created by an undisciplined mob. The mob, he states, was composed of a single nationality, and did not represent the citizens as a whole. *Advertiser*, 15 June 1900, p.6

hall.²⁴⁶ The *Barrier Miner* reported the Adelaide events stating that 'there was a large attendance, amongst whom were a number of Orangemen, who were avowedly present to help in keeping order.'²⁴⁷

The incident was quite a spectacular one for Adelaide. A crowd of 3000 people gathered in the narrow thoroughfare of Gawler Place in the city centre to view events at Victoria Hall where the Slatterys were to appear. Adelaide's entire police force was called into attendance after the invasion of the hall on the first night of the lecture series which resulted in the cancellation of the advertised address. The sensationalism of the occasion may be concluded from the fact that eleven magistrates sat to hear the case against two citizens on a charge of riotous behaviour.²⁴⁸ Both cases were dismissed but the proceedings drew spectacular public attention with over two hundred people cramming into the 'public freezing chamber' as the *Register* described the City Police Court.²⁴⁹

Reports of the lectures, letters from the public and the coverage of the court proceedings meant that the Slattery affair was a major topic of conversation at the time. While it was not about Home Rule it certainly involved the Irish because they formed the greater portion of the Catholic community which was the subject of the Slattery attack. The greatest danger the episode

²⁴⁶ *Register*, 26 September 1900, p.5

²⁴⁷ *Barrier Miner*, 13 June 1900, p.2

²⁴⁸ The two detainees were John O'Donohoe, son of Patrick O'Donohoe from County Longford, who was both a gardener at the city's Botanic Gardens and a special constable and Alfred John Adams, a schoolmaster.

²⁴⁹ *Register*, 14 June 1900, p.6

presented was its potential to affect colonial perception of the Irish at a time when the Home Rule movement in Ireland was unstable. Some letters, though not outspokenly supportive of the Slatterys, objected to the ruination of Adelaide's reputation as a fair place where freedom of speech was respected. The majority of letters to the press condemned the lecturers for calumniating the priest and nuns from whom a great portion of the community had received an education.²⁵⁰ Others argued that the lectures had awakened sectarianism and caused sentiments of bigotry to be aired in the city such as had never before been witnessed. The Slattery incident caused sectarian feeling to manifest in Adelaide and although the Irish were identified as the main stakeholders in the protest, the real division shown was that between Catholic and Protestant with less regard for the nationalities involved. The next non-nationalist demonstration in Adelaide to be concerned with the Irish Question, at least on the surface, occurred six years later.

Adelaide's Anti-Home Rule demonstration

In 1905 the Commonwealth Parliament passed a resolution in favour of Irish Home Rule. In doing so it imitated the actions of the Canadian parliament which, between 1886 and 1903, issued no less than four resolutions supporting

²⁵⁰ 'There are thousands in and about Adelaide who have been educated under the gentle rule and holy example of our nuns and brothers.' *Register*, 16 June 1900, p.8.

modified self-government for Ireland.²⁵¹ Through savvy political manoeuvring Hugh Mahon, the Member for Coolgardie, former Land Leaguer and one of the organisers of the 1883 mission, managed to guide a Home Rule resolution through twelve hours of parliamentary debate although private bills were only allotted two hours discussion time. The motion had been sponsored by Henry Bourne Higgins, a Belfast-born Protestant, who had already proven himself a true friend of the movement having been one of the few prominent men to stand on a platform with the Redmonds when they were unpopular in the eyes of the electorate. Reaction to the resolution was fierce – by July 1906 over 75,000 signatures had been collected on the counter address. In general the resolution was opposed because the Australian parliament had dared interfere in what was seen by some as a domestic affair of Britain's. The fact that the resolution concerned Irish Home Rule was not the central matter. Higgins described the Orange anti-Home Rule petition meeting in Melbourne as a 'ticket mutiny' in a letter to John Redmond; 'every precaution was raised that there should be no dissenting voice'. It was 'noteworthy that they lay stress on interference in imperial matters rather than in the point that it is not expedient

²⁵¹ The 1903 resolution was for an address to be presented to the king as was the one of April 1882. Those of 7 May 1886 and 27 April 1887 were expressions of opinion to be forwarded to Salisbury, Gladstone and Parnell. Jeff Kildea. *"That a just measure of Home Rule may be granted to the people of Ireland": the 1905 resolutions of the Australian parliament*. Paper presented at the 19th ISAANZ Conference, New Zealand, November 2012.

to grant Ireland Home Rule – have had definite reports of children signing and tricks in getting signatures from adults.'²⁵²

Adelaide's participation in the anti-Home Rule protest took the form of a Town Hall meeting held on 10 April 1906 which was led by Victorian Orangemen.²⁵³ The 'large and enthusiastic attendance' included W.H Wilks, MHR, from the Loyal Orange Institution of Victoria, who along with Grand Master O.B. Snowball had initiated the counter-resolution that aimed to gather signatures on an address to the King condemning the actions of the federal parliament. Also in attendance were Dr Barlow (vice-chancellor of the University), Rev. Henry Gainsford, A.J. Clarke, A.T. Magarey and W.A. Magarey. It was clear that a portion, albeit small, of the audience were supporters of Home Rule judging from the interjections made against claims that Home Rule meant separation from England. When Wilks asked 'Was an army of Home Rulers in Australia desirable?' there were cried of "Yes" and "No". When he said 'Another point to be remembered was that a third of the population of Ireland did not want Home Rule', a voice replied "Your sort". Wilks moved that the meeting protest against the 'action of the Federal Legislature in passing a resolution in favor of granting Home Rule to Ireland, and wishes to place upon public record its disapproval of the resolution as being outside the scope of Federal politics'. This was seconded by Gainsford, chaplain of the Order, who 'ventured to say the Federal Parliament had not Australia behind it when it passed the resolution in

²⁵² HB Higgins to JE Redmond, 10 December 1905. Redmond, *ibid.*

²⁵³ *Advertiser*, 11 April 1906, p.9

favor of Home Rule. Ireland today was a seething centre of sedition and rebellion'. The Mayor requested that such a sentiment not be expressed as it 'was not fair to Ireland' and Gainsford acquiesced although 'he had not said a word that was not absolute fact' and resumed his seat to prolonged cheers. The motion was carried with six dissentients who were probably the interjectors. When A.T. Magarey proposed that the work of obtaining signatures for the address to the King be carried out energetically throughout South Australia, his motion was seconded by Brother J.M. Lambert, Worshipful Master of Duke of York Loyal Orange Lodge No. 7.

The groundwork for Magarey's proposal had in fact, already been laid. In February a committee had been formed to distribute the petition which consisted of Sir John Downer, MLC, Rev. A.J. Clarke, Dr W. Barlow, C.H. Angas and a number of Orangemen. In July the *Register* reported that over 20,000 signatures had been obtained in South Australia.²⁵⁴ Kildea states that when Wilks' petition was presented to the Governor General in July 1906 it contained 75,832 signatures.²⁵⁵ Given the fact that the Adelaide meeting took place in April most South Australians must have signed the petition started by the Victorian Orangemen and not the one initiated in Sydney on Empire Day, 24 May 1906, which contained 35,900 signatures and was presented in March 1907. Patrick O'Farrell claimed 'that 'the pressures to be Irish did not come only from the Irish

²⁵⁴ *Register*, 14 July 1906, p.6

²⁵⁵ Kildea, *ibid.*, p.8

delegates...Their visits provoked loyalist counter-demonstrations... provided a recurring stimulus and focal point for anti-Home Rule and anti-Irish Catholic forces. Each delegation had the effect of reviving moribund Irish Unionism and Orange energies within Australia and of providing them with the materials and occasions necessary for them to sustain their sense of outrage and the vigour of their attack' yet it was the actions of the Australian parliament which prompted the most vigorous anti-Home Rule demonstration in South Australia.²⁵⁶

Few political figures are recognisable as supporters or members of the Loyal Orange Order. At a meeting in 1906 the Grand Master himself admitted that few public men would stand on an Orange platform: 'The Orange Institution was not so fortunate in South Australia as in some of the States of getting public men to be present on the platform at its gatherings, the reason being that public men were afraid of the influence of the Roman Catholic vote. There were ministers of the Gospel in South Australia who feared to be seen on the platform'.²⁵⁷ Adelaide, then, sits in striking contrast with the position of the Orange Order in Canada for example, where, 'by the 1880s, over a fifth of state parliamentarians were brethren of the Orange Order'.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia*, p.233

²⁵⁷ *Advertiser*, 13 July 1906, p.6.

²⁵⁸ Patrick Ireland, *Only Distant Cousins: Irish Protestants and Politics in the U.S., Canada, and Australia*. Draft paper for DIT:

<http://www.dit.ie/media/documents/psai/PatrickIrelandPSAIPaper82.pdf>

Chapter 7

Raising Money

Fundraising was the practical object of the visits by the Irish delegates. When the Irish Parliamentary Party found itself in dire financial straits it sought relief in the pecuniary support of those who had left Ireland's shores. This was strongly encouraged on the Australian side and letters were frequently sent to the Irish Parliamentary Party requesting that a delegation be sent out. Moreover the writers often suggested who should be sent and when. The Australian branches of the Irish Land League communicated with each other but the majority of correspondence with Ireland appears to have been carried out by those in Melbourne, particularly Nicholas O'Donnell. Writing to leading Irish nationalist William O'Brien in 1902, O'Donnell said of the proposed delegates to the colony that 'one at least should be a man of world-wide fame, and personal magnetism will count for something in the final total subscribed.'²⁵⁹ The colony's donations fluctuated with its internal economic strength but overall the South Australian financial contribution to the Irish Home Rule movement was generous and disproportionately large.

Adelaide's first monetary donation to the Home Rule Movement was made at the public appearance of the Redmond brothers at the Adelaide Town

²⁵⁹ O'Donnell to William O'Brien, 2 June 1902 in Redmond, *ibid.*

Hall on 9 February 1883 where subscriptions amounting to £125 were given.²⁶⁰ The delegates were only in the colony for a matter of days but by early March they had remitted £2000 to Ireland and another £600 was in hand.²⁶¹ By April the amount had increased to £6000 and by October the delegates had delivered over 100 lectures and raised £12,000.²⁶² The Adelaide meeting therefore, as well as providing the warmest reception for this delegation, also met the average total of meetings despite the colony's small Irish contingent. A side tour of New Zealand, conducted chiefly by William Redmond and J.W. Walshe, raised another £2,000. John Redmond joined them briefly, delivering several lectures, and was back in Melbourne on 31 October in time for the Irish-Australian Convention. In the Treasurer's report given at the Convention Joseph Winter stated that £25,000 had been received for the Irish National League since J.W. Walshe's arrival in 1881. Between then and February 1883 when the Redmonds arrived, the sum of £6,130 had been given.²⁶³

Having travelled the eastern seaboard of Australia the Redmond brothers returned to Adelaide in November 1883 where they lectured in Gawler, Kapunda and Adelaide. The Gawler lecture was held in the Catholic schoolroom and every point made in the address was met with a cheer.²⁶⁴ At its conclusion Mr Callaghan remarked that anyone with hazy ideas about Home Rule would now

²⁶⁰ *Register*, 14 April 1883, p.2s

²⁶¹ *Northern Argus*, 6 April 1883, p.3

²⁶² *New Zealand Herald*, 5 October 1883, p.6

²⁶³ *Brisbane Courier*, 16 November 1883, p.2

²⁶⁴ *Chronicle*, 24 November 1883, p.21

think differently and although the attendance was described as moderate, a collection of £37 was taken up. Redmond announced during the Kapunda address that £15,000 had been raised for the cause from the time he and his brother had landed in Adelaide in February. Alderman Whelan in his final speech as Secretary of the Irish National Federation in Adelaide in 1894 claimed that ‘the Irishmen raised £24,000. South Australia, with its few scattered Irishmen and limited population, collected £3,800’ or almost 16% of the colonial total for this mission.²⁶⁵ Reports of the formal reception of the Redmonds at Queenstown in Cork by Davitt and other representatives of the Irish National League declared that 300 branches of the League were established in Australia during the trip and £20,000 remitted to Ireland.²⁶⁶ A definite sum and the proportion of it made by South Australians is difficult to define: at its worst the colony’s contribution was at least equal to the meeting average of the tour and at best, this small population contributed almost a fifth of the funds raised.

The 1889 delegation would not fare quite as well. This was not due to any discernible disinterest in the Irish cause nor an increase in opposition. The Dillon mission was quite the opposite of the Redmond one in terms of attracting less editorial criticism despite Dillon’s fairly unrestrained speeches but the economic fortune of the colony had taken a downturn and it showed in the amount collected. Esmonde’s personal delight in his time in the colony, which he

²⁶⁵ *Register*, 5 June 1894, p.7

²⁶⁶ *Chronicle*, 26 April 1884, p.6

describes in *Round the World with the Irish Delegates*, is clear despite the smaller collections made there. The final reported total of South Australian contributions to the fundraising was only £1,500.²⁶⁷ Table 2 above gives some indication of the wealth of South Australians at this time compared with other colonies so the smaller amount subscribed to this mission should not be taken at face value nor imply that South Australian support for Home Rule was weaker than on previous occasions or than that in the other colonies. As the table shows, the per capita wealth in New South Wales at this time was double that of South Australia and the fundraising clearly reflects this. What was received was all that could be expected. The papers reported that the mission had raised £26,270 before Dillon & Esmonde travelled to New Zealand and that the Australasian total was expected to reach £30,000.²⁶⁸

Whatever financial support may have been lacking at this time, while the Irish Parliamentary Party at home was united and showing purpose, moral support amongst Irish-Australians was freely given and this appears to have been emulated by the non-Irish of the colony during this tour. Just as they felt close enough and informed enough to support Home Rule, Parnell’s fall from grace and the ensuing Irish Parliamentary Party split had an effect on the diasporic Irish communities and some subsequent delegations would find events at home harmful to their efforts in Australia. The ‘Parnell Split’ appeared to hamper

²⁶⁷ *Register*, 7 September 1889, p.6; *Chronicle*, 22 March 1890, p.12

²⁶⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 October 1889, p.6

Davitt's 1895 visit but John Richard Cox who visited Adelaide in 1890 and again in 1891 collecting money for evicted Irish tenants, seemingly avoided the fallout from the Parnell affair attracting moderate success over his two visits. The overall total raised by Cox in Australia was far below the amount raised by the two previous missions but despite recent recession, South Australian donations exceeded those made in all the other colonies.

Cox had addressed 20 meetings in New South Wales before arriving in Adelaide on 5 March 1890 and had collected £1,200 for the Evicted Irish Tenants Fund by this time.²⁶⁹ His Town Hall The meeting raised £230 in subscriptions, a comparatively large donation given what was collected in the eastern states in the preceding weeks where the average was £120 per lecture.²⁷⁰ At the Port Adelaide meeting £32 was subscribed.²⁷¹ A considerable amount was collected in the outlying districts when Deasy and Cox spoke at Petersburg (£159), Wilmington (£50), Carrieton (£40), Georgetown, Jamestown, and Clare.²⁷² Similar success attached itself to Cox's second tour of the colony in 1891. At the first meeting of the second campaign, £250 was collected.²⁷³ In early May, Cox's appearance in Petersburg brought £80 to the fund. He left South Australia to tour the other colonies as well as New Zealand where he received the news of Parnell's death. He returned to Adelaide in November 1891 and his last

²⁶⁹ *Register*, 6 March 1890, p.6

²⁷⁰ *Register*, 17 March 1890, p.1

²⁷¹ *Register*, 7 March 1890, p.5

²⁷² *Register*, 17 March 1890, p.5

²⁷³ *Register*, 14 April 1891, p.6

appearance there was at a banquet held in his honour at the Selbourne Hotel, Pirie St on 16 November. He said the tour of New Zealand had been a successful one: 'in fact I was nearly as well received there as I was in South Australia, your colony responding to the appeals better than any of the others'.²⁷⁴ While the visit procured only £3,000 – at least 20% of which was raised in South Australia - Cox noted the benefit attained in unifying and reorganising the supporters of Irish Home Rule in the colonies.²⁷⁵

Raising the credibility of the Irish cause in Australian eyes was as important a task as emptying Australian purses. Michael Davitt's tour of Australasia, almost four years after Cox's departure, was credited by Thomas Hunt, the representative of South Australia and Victoria at the 1896 Irish Convention in Dublin, as being worth more than money. He declared that the issue of Irish Home Rule was better thought of in Australia since the visits of the various delegations but that Davitt's visit 'had a distinctly beneficial effect in this connection.'²⁷⁶

On his arrival Davitt had stated that the Irish party acknowledged the depressed Australian economy and money was not asked for. Though the object of his journey changed due to the resignation of Lord Rosebery and the possibility of a British general election, the greatest value of his visit was the

²⁷⁴ *Register*, 16 November 1891, p.6

²⁷⁵ The Adelaide Irish National Federation received a letter from the Evicted Tenants Fund, Dublin, thanking them for a donation of £600. *Register*, 7 October 1891, p.5

²⁷⁶ *Kilmore Free Press*, 15 October 1896, p.2

renewal of interest in the Irish cause and the consolidation of labour support for the movement that it precipitated. As his was not specifically a political fundraising tour from the outset and also occurred at a period of economic depression the amounts raised were small in comparison with previous tours. In September he reported an amount of £2,000 from the four colonies of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia although to this date the remittance from South Australia was only £75.²⁷⁷ His personal qualities, in particular his diplomatic reply to the cool reception of Adelaide’s mayor quoted above, must have gone some way to swaying the opinion of those undecided about the worthiness of Ireland’s claims for self-government to its favour. The one-armed, slight physical figure Davitt presented, the shrewd intelligence displayed and the reputation he enjoyed as a defender of workers and of human rights couldn’t have been farther from the spectacle of a Fenian insurgent some may have expected. Davitt remained in the colonies for seven months before returning to Ireland. It would be more than a decade before another party of envoys would seek Australian assistance once more for the Irish home rule movement.

The next official delegation consisted of Joseph Devlin and J.T. Donovan who arrived in the colony in May 1906. The funds raised during their two week tour amounted to £1,000 averaging just over £100 per meeting. After speaking in Adelaide and Port Adelaide, the two delegates toured the regional towns of

²⁷⁷ *Burra Record*, 18 September 1895, p.3

Port Pirie, Jamestown, Gawler, Seppeltsfield, Tanunda, Millicent and Mount Gambier between 23 and 29 May 1906. Jamestown and Millicent collected £80 and £100 respectively. Although the South Australian contributions seemed small in comparison to the donations made interstate, the delegates proclaimed their supporters in the colony generous, always careful to publicly declare their awareness of the size of the South Australian population. In addition to this they made a point of declaring the second aim of the exercise - the raising of awareness of the Irish cause – a greater and more important success than the first. Money was not everything.

This standpoint continued to be evident in the final tour of country South Australia which commenced on 18 November 1911 when William Redmond Jnr, Richard Hazleton and J.T. Donovan visited Jamestown and collected £150.²⁷⁸ Further amounts were collected in Arthurton (£100) and Kapunda (£120) while the meeting at Hammond was the largest ever seen there.²⁷⁹ After their tour of the north of the state the delegation returned to Adelaide where a farewell social was held on 27 November. Here Hazleton reported that 'He could safely say that South Australia made fair to exceed its former support by over 100 per cent. (Cheers, and a voice, "We'll give you more.")'.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ *Register*, 21 November 1911, p.6

²⁷⁹ *Register*, 24 November 1911, p.8

²⁸⁰ *Advertiser*, 28 November 1911, p.12

By January 1912 £22,000 had been collected and Western Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales had yet to be visited. The tour lasted twenty months and raised a total of £30,000. William Redmond said that 'South Australia, in proportion to population, had almost topped the States in subscribing £2,000: The success that had been achieved had been due not so much to the work of the envoys as to the noble and self-sacrificing efforts of the local secretaries and officers.'²⁸¹ Above all he desired to place on record the great debt of gratitude they owed to the Home Rule Committee in Adelaide. Donovan stated that 'the feature of this mission had been the support of the young Australians', that the blind and unreasoning prejudice against Home Rule of thirty years ago had been wiped out and the press were practically unanimous in their support of the movement.

Based on figures alone it sometimes appeared that the South Australian contribution to the Irish Home Rule movement paled in comparison to the funds raised in other parts of Australia but proportionally, the money collected there usually matched and sometimes exceeded that obtained in the other states. Fundraising was only one of the two main aims of the tours. In South Australia, itself a British colony, the influential coverage of the movement by the press, the patronage of the powerful and the warmth of the public combined to make the colony a fertile ground for the reception of the idea of Irish self-determination.

²⁸¹ *Advertiser*, 26 July 1912, p.10

Chapter 8

Conclusion

In attempting to define the nature and extent of the support for Irish Home Rule in South Australia, this investigation has shown that cross-party sympathy was largely engendered for the cause through the efforts of local Irish men, the nature of the colony and its press and the improving circumstances of the Irish Parliamentary Party. This sympathy manifested itself in physical, moral and financial support and ensured that the visiting Irish delegates were greeted with enthusiasm and openness in South Australia even when this was not the case in other Australian colonies. Their cordial receptions, supportive attendance at public meetings and the money given to the Home Rule movement was the result of a number of factors.

The very nature of Irishness was different in South Australia. Antagonistic personalities comparable to Henry Parkes in New South Wales and formidable Nationalist and Catholic names such as O'Donnell and Mannix did not exist there. Tomkinson was a consistent negative commentator but neither the press nor the majority of Adelaide's inhabitants took a great deal of notice of his opinion nor let it colour their view of the Irish. On the whole the Irish Home Rulers were moderate, conservative figures well-connected in society though not generally wealthy. The lack of factionalism on the part of Adelaide's nationalist Irish groups helped support the image of a cohesive, sensible, non-

inflammatory movement. Irish nationalism also lacked a specific opponent in the colony.

The appearance of the Orange Order in South Australia in the 1870s was not welcomed by the majority of colonists. Though large, the Order was not overly active in its anti-home rule demonstrations. Numerous occasions which could have been used to publicise the cause of their fellow brethren in Ulster were not availed of even when Irish nationalism was not fashionable. The Order demonstrated a higher concern with religious matters than with political ones. While it bemoaned the electoral organisation and reach of Catholics in the civil service, it did little to contest them other than exhort its members to be true to Protestantism and do their best to further membership of the order amongst fellow Protestants. The Order, viewed as having introduced sectarianism into an argument widely considered in the colonies to be one about democracy and freedom of colonial attachment to the Empire, only became popular in South Australia in the early years of the twentieth century. By this time, it had shown itself either incapable or unwilling to engage in an anti-Home Rule movement and was largely seen to be a fraternal organisation with developing Ladies lodges and juvenile branches. By the time the Loyal Orange Order had gained a credible membership in the state, support of Irish nationalism was well entrenched there.

The social and political comfort of settled Irish colonists in the colony was a factor in the high rate of assisted nominated passage take-up amongst those still in Ireland. The Irish arrivals came to a new life in a foreign land but cultural ease, in the form of Irish-led communities, smoothed the transition from the old

world to the new. Michael Kenny's patronage of St Patrick's Day festivities in the Burra provided a demonstration of national identity on that one day every year but the network of business contacts and migration worked ceaselessly throughout the year. Leadership of the Irish nationalist organisations was also particularly consistent with the same names reoccurring year after year. A fusion of older, successful, confident settlers with new Irish blood sustained both the Irish nationalist organisation and the fundraising efforts of the period. The geographical concentration of the Irish in South Australia may also have been a factor in this success. The other colonies were spatially larger. Therefore, while they had larger Irish communities, these were spread over a greater geographical expanse. It was the very 'smallness' of the South Australian Irish community, often cited by other scholars as a contributing factor in its relative unimportance in the bigger picture of the Irish in Australia, which concentrated the potency of Irish cultural capital and which facilitated the success of the Home Rule movement in a Protestant and British colony. The social capital of the ethno-religious community appeared all the more significant in this contained environment. Irish newcomers were not 'lost' as they may have been in the sprawling expanse of Sydney and Adelaide's position as a colonial metropole assisted this. Close connections between the Irish community leadership and the non-Irish representatives of the colony were evident in business, political and sporting links. These relationships flowed on through the wider Home Rule movement and high profile support of each Irish delegation. The ordinary Irishman was given an opportunity to simultaneously partake in a respectable

local event patronised by many of the colony's dignitaries and parliamentarians and support his fellow countrymen in Ireland. The plurality of offices held by the executive committee members no doubt aided recruitment to both the Catholic and the Irish groups. An extended social network existed, although at a lower social level, through organisations like the Hibernians, the Catholic Literary Society and the Young Men's Catholic Association. The general thesis is that this complicated network of connections is how the South Australian Irish 'competed' with intercolonial Irish communities which were numerically superior.

The general amenability and sympathy of the South Australian press to Irish nationalist concerns did much to elicit the favourable opinion of the broader population towards the movement. Unlike the battle between the sympathetic Melbourne *Argus* and the ultra-conservative Sydney *Age*, excerpts of which appeared in the Adelaide papers, there frequently appeared editorials in both the *Register* and the *Advertiser* supportive of the Home Rule movement and its local manifestations. These organs provided much of the background knowledge most South Australians held of Irish affairs. The *Advertiser* ran a serialised account of Irish history from the pen of Young Irelander, Charles Gavin Duffy, over many issues from 1880 through 1883. The majority of regional papers followed the lead of the metropolitan press in support of the fundraising missions and lecture series of the delegates. Opposition appeared infrequently and usually in the form of a letter to the editor from a member of the public.

Overall the conservative nature of Adelaide's Irish Home Rule movement made for its general acceptance amongst the wider colonial population.

The disunity which affected the Sydney Irish resulted in Cardinal Moran taking over Irish events in the town in the second decade of the new century in an attempt to reconsolidate the Irish position in mainstream community life by accentuating the loyalty of the community to Australia. His position would change later in the decade as his sympathy with the new Sinn Fein movement increased. However, the cohesiveness of the South Australian Irish, due to the compact nature of the community both geographically and numerically and to its conservative nature, meant that they had never strayed outside the mainstream of community life but coexisted rather peaceably alongside it. Home Rule provided a public umbrella over a small ethnic group and gave a national identity to a minority. Public affirmation of the Irish national character in Adelaide reaffirmed the identity as one worthy of having and displaying.

Despite the fact that both sides held annual demonstrations in honour of their 'national' traditions, reports of acrimony about these public displays were relatively infrequent. South Australians were more likely to complain of the Orange processions – which were usually church-based with occasional picnic-style outings – because the Order was not a popular organisation and rather offended Adelaidian sensibilities.²⁸² In comparison, the St Patrick's Day parade

²⁸² *Advertiser*, 16 July 1897, p.5

and associated events were feted as honourable displays of national fervour, something to be admired and encouraged. Press reports were usually complimentary and the national pride of the Irish deemed something to be emulated.²⁸³

The press has provided much of the information gleaned about South Australia's Home Rule supporters. Research has uncovered social links formed in sporting arenas such as horse and dog racing and cricket. Leading politicians joined with Irish nationalists on committees and sub groups outside the local political issues of the day. Business links are also clearly evident. So was it familiarity and perhaps even friendship that involved the non-Irish in the Home Rule movement? Was it the 'just' nature of the plea that Ireland be given a chance to enjoy the self-government that most of the colonies had had since the 1850s and that based on the societal progress of the Irish in the colonies in the later nineteenth century, they had proven capable of social advancement and civic engagement? It took no great leap to imagine that if an Irish resident of South Australia could win an election to local council or parliament and participate in the administration of the country that those of his race could do the same under similar governmental conditions in Ireland. What is clear is that the cause of nationalist Ireland appealed to a majority of the South Australian population. Commencing with the humanitarian plea for famine aid in the late 1870s Irish locals attracted high profile South Australians to the cause and their

²⁸³ *Advertiser*, 16 March 1912, p.18

support continued when the Irish Relief Fund became the organisational mechanism for the Home Rule movement there. Familiarity with local Irishmen through these support organisations, as well as common interests in business and sport, maintained the connections made and weathered the movement through some of its darkest times. As the Home Rule movement gathered momentum and increased in respectability, non-Irish and non-Catholic support grew. The constancy of executive officers in the nationalist organisations and their individual character traits only enhanced their image as being the complete opposite of the characteristics usually associated with the Irish. The fortunes of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the personal attributes of the visiting delegates affected the reception of each group but the background support of the local organisations maintained the momentum between tours.

Patrick O'Farrell asserts that the Australian Irish in the 1880s and 1890s were much more interested in affairs of the then emergent trade union and labour political movements than in Home Rule. He sweeps away the effects of the movement and the visits of Irish delegates as generally 'anachronistic, taking immigrants back to loyalties they were rapidly forgetting' and added that Orange antipathy 'firmed the resolve of the Irish Catholic forces to revive their own weakening Irishness and rally around a cause they believed in, though with dwindling enthusiasm' yet evidence for this in the South Australian case is

weak.²⁸⁴ The oratory of the delegates reinvigorated the local Irish and 'pulled in' the non-Irish of the colony but between missions the long-term leadership and constancy of Adelaide's Irish national groupings maintained a steady progress keeping Ireland in the public view and ensuring that each delegation did not have to start from scratch and had the machinery needed to fundraise efficiently.

Despite the conclusions of earlier works that the Irish had no firm group identity in the colony and were unaware of their place within the Irish diaspora this study has shown the steady, open progress of Irish groups which responded to Irish needs as demanded. This echoes Partington's conclusion that the Irish in Australia gained impetus more from events in Ireland than in Australia but South Australia provides examples of intersection between local and Irish national issues too. The Orange Order spread far and survived for many decades but the changing nature of the Irish Question had little effect on Orange activity in the colony. The Loyal Orange Institution of South Australia was primarily concerned with religious over political issues and the Home Rule movement hardly featured as an issue for the organisation as a whole though intermittently individual members and private lodges commented upon it. The Order developed from a solely male group to include female, mixed and juvenile lodges thereby forming a social aspect. Viewed from hindsight it appears insulated from the wider colonial society - certainly it did not actively or passively appeal to the general

²⁸⁴ O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia*, p.233

population nor attract support from the higher echelons of power and wealth. Irish nationalists on the other hand did both by forming a web of interaction on different levels which garnered both moral and financial support for the Irish Home Rule movement. They built on a foundation laid by the famine relief effort of the late 1870s and sustained good relationships with the benefactors of that age. In the last years of the movement many ministerial posts were filled by Irish-Australians such as Bill Denny, Senator O'Loghlin and Laurence O'Loughlin but non-Irish, non-Catholic support on the Home Rule platform continued with Protestant MP's such as Reginald Blundell, Harry Jackson and Senator Gregor McGregor, all of whom were also Labour men.²⁸⁵ Working alone the movement could not have been sustained by the Irish of South Australia due to their size but their capacity to exert influence and attract the non-Irish and non-Catholic to support the Home Rule movement showed that Australians, other than those of Irish blood, did indeed sympathise with Ireland.

²⁸⁵ Born in Scotland in 1848, McGregor moved to Tyrone at the age of six. He moved to South Australia in 1877 after working in England and Scotland for a number of years. G. Grainger, 'McGregor, Gregor (1848–1914)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mcgregor-gregor-7362/text12789>, accessed 24 March 2013.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Figure 3: South Australia's cadastral divisions 1893.....191



Figure 3: South Australia's cadastral divisions 1893 - the red line shows the main settlement areas of the Irish in the colony. The divisions of Adelaide, Light, adjacent Gawler, Stanley, Victoria and Dalhousie represented a vertical line from the metropolis to the mid-north of the most inhabited region of the state.