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IMMEDIATE REACTIONS IN OTAGO TO THE MOVEMENT
FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
1874 – 1876

by

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A long essay submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirement for the Postgraduate
Diploma in Arts at the University of Otago.

October 1972
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INTRODUCTION

On 14 July 1874, during a discussion in the House of the Forests Bill, Sir Julius Vogel, the Premier, said that he hoped soon to abolish the North Island Provinces. In all probability he intended, if successful in this project, to abolish the South Island Provinces also. The Provinces had thwarted his will too often, and threatened his desire to foster rapid economic growth.

To pass this off as an action of spite would be erroneous. Vogel was quite justifiably angry at having necessary legislation defeated. But many other reasons had been leading Vogel to consider abolition. The most important of these was the poverty of the North Island provinces. Although each province had been given all money raised by the sale of land within its frontiers, in the North Island the Maori wars had rapidly exhausted this. Especially in the provinces created in 1858, the land was not sufficiently fertile to be profitable, and the population was too small and poor to be able to maintain a provincial government. Loans were prevented by the public works scheme of 1870. Thus when Vogel proposed

1 N.Z.P.D., Vol. XVI, page 423
2 R.M. Burdon, The Life and Times of Sir Julius Vogel (Christchurch, 1943) p.187
abolition, he was enthusiastically supported in all areas of the North Island except where Sir George Grey dominated popular opinion.\(^1\) 

In the South Island the situation was different. The West Coast and Nelson provinces were poor and therefore, the abolition proposals were greeted eagerly. The reception of the Bill by Otago and Canterbury, the wealthiest provinces in New Zealand was distinctly hostile. Having prospered under the gold rushes and through land sales, these provinces had been able to extend their public works and immigration policies. They feared that, if abolition was extended to the South Island, they would lose their land revenues and their superior standard of living.\(^2\) This fear had been present for many years prior to the Abolition Bill, fostered both by the Maori wars and agitation from Australian miners. Ironically, it was Julius Vogel who, in 1865, gave it form in the Southern Separation League which demanded separation from the North Island as a means of retaining prosperity. The movement fluctuated in strength, but only once entered politics directly, and then without success. Despite this the movement continued to


have a small backing in Dunedin.\footnote{A.H. McLintock, The History of Otago, (Dunedin, 1949) pp. 555-627} Thus, any scheme which could possibly deprive the Otago colonists of their land revenues was bound to be opposed.

Vogel was well aware of the limitations of the Provincial Councils. When they were first instituted, difficulty of communication and the individual nature of the settlements had made them necessary. Now that a telegraph service and railway system were operational, a double system of government proved cumbersome and expensive. Provincial Councils were inefficient, being dominated in most instances by personality conflicts and petty squabbles. Vogel's public works scheme had diminished the scope of the Provincial Government's power so that, by 1874 its function was mainly administrative and of less importance than in former times.

In the opinion of Vogel and most of the northern provinces the abolition of the North Island provinces was desirable, and necessary if local government was to continue. In Otago, reactions to the Abolition Bill were at first wary and then openly hostile as the announcement for full abolition in the present session was made in July 1875.
This opposition grew in intensity until, by the end of 1875 it dominated public opinion throughout Otago except in a few small areas.

This essay attempts to show what the immediate reactions to the abolition movement were, from the time when it was first raised in the House of Representatives to the final protest meeting held in Otago after the Bill had become law. The strong suspicion of the Ministry that public opinion in Otago supported the Abolition Bill despite the protestations of James Macandrew, the Otago Superintendent, leads one to ask what, in fact, the people of Otago did think about the abolition of their provincial government? The essay will, through a study of the reactions of Otago members of the House of Representatives, the Otago Provincial Council, newspaper editorials, election results letters and reports of public meetings, trace the movement of public opinion in the Dunedin region and the more outlying areas. The role of the separation movement and Otago's political leaders in whipping up opposition to abolition will be investigated, for despite the Ministry's claims, by election-day 1875, Otago had rejected abolition.

1 A.J.H.R. 1876, A 7, No.3 (Encl.), Normanby/Macandrew
CHAPTER ONE

REACTIONS TO PROPOSALS FOR THE ABOLITION
OF PROVINCES IN THE NORTH ISLAND

On 14 July 1874 Sir Julius Vogel outlined the provisions of the State Forests Bill at its second reading. He considered that for adequate conservation and replacement of forests it was necessary to launch a colonial scheme, whereby the state would have complete control over lands given by the Provinces to serve the function of a State Forest. For this purpose the Provinces would be required to hand over to the state 3% of the whole of their land. The proposed bill led to conflict in the House. W.A. Murray, M.H.R. for Bruce summed up the opinion of the Otago members of the House of Representatives when he said,

"The Provincial Councils or Local Boards would be better qualified to have charge of the forests than any head of a department sitting in his office in Wellington, however scientific he might be." ¹

Vogel replied that the provinces were incapable of carrying out the terms of the Act because of their lack of finance, and that while the Central Government had spent £2,387,777 in the North Island provinces in the past three years, the

total land revenue raised was £448,849.

"And when, in view of these figures, we are told that the establishment of a system of State forests in the North is inconsistent with the maintenance of provincialism, it seems to me that there can be but one reply, 'Abolish the provinces in the North Island'."

On 13 August 1874 Vogel proposed a motion for the abolition of the provincial form of government in the North Island which also made provision for the continuation of Wellington as the seat of government and the localisation in each province of revenue earned through the sale of provincial land. Vogel assured the Provincial Governments of the Middle Island that his proposals, far from posing a threat, in fact safeguarded their local revenue.

"We should", he said, "at the same time (as enabling the North Island to prosper) and the feverish impatience which the larger provinces of the Middle Island now show, to put their land revenue and their landed estate beyond the reach of any possible political contingency."

Despite Vogel's insistence that the Abolition Bill was in their best interests, the initial response of Otago Members of the House of Representatives to it was mixed. Donald Reid, M.H.R. for Taieri predicted:

1. Ibid., p.423
2. Ibid., p.581
"The person to whom the change seems now so acceptable, may one day wake up to find that they have got something which they do not want, and that they have lost what they will regret, but which they may never be able to replace." 1

Macandrew representing Port Chalmers opposed any constitutional changes but proposed the establishment of one province in each island with a convention to control federal matters. On the other hand Reynolds M.H.R. for Dunedin and Murray, M.H.R. for Bruce endorsed the Abolition Act, assuring the House of the security of the land fund. Mc Clashan of Roslyn also proposed that abolition should proceed, drawing attention to the strength given to Germany and Italy by unification and describing New Zealand as "a united Britain of the South."2

Shepherd, M.H.R. for Dunstan, saw it as "the greatest boon" that could be granted by the House to the people of the North Island. Thus although the majority of the Otago representatives spoke out in favour of abolition, the opposition of such influential men as Macandrew and Reid was certain to arouse doubts about such an action in the minds of many Otago colonists.

1. Ibid., p.672
2. Ibid., p.750
The people of Otago, when they first heard of the proposed abolition of the North Island provinces, looked for a lead from their representatives in the House as to the attitude they should take. Before they heard, however, their reaction was not hostile. The abolition of the North Island provinces was generally seen as desirable since all were poor and some in the Central North Island were bankrupt. Educational and gaol facilities were difficult to finance and the Otago settlers had no objection to the Central Government taking action here.\(^1\) It was also pointed out that in all provinces lawmakers wasted much of their time in petty rivalry, and that if the Central Government took over from the Provincial Councils, it would have so much to do that the Members of the House of Representatives would have no time to get into mischief, and they would be able to provide a strong government.\(^2\) Yet there were some who were suspicious of the change. For instance, the Otago Daily Times warned that -

"... we must see something better coming in the place of Provincialism before we can see a change." \(^3\)

When their representatives in the House had made their attitudes to the Bill clear, many people changed their

1. Otago Daily Times, 18 September 1874. (The Otago Daily Times was the only 1874 newspaper available for research.)
2. Ibid., 2 November 1874
3. Ibid., 17 August 1874
opinions. Macandrew's opposition was endorsed by the people of Port Chalmers on 21 August 1874, an action which should be seen almost entirely as a vote of confidence in a man rather than a sudden swing on an issue. Stout, likewise, was supported by the people of Mornington when on 17 September he voiced his fears concerning the security of the Middle Island land fund.

The attitude of their most influential members in the House of Representatives certainly served to make the people of Dunedin if not Otago increasingly wary of the proposed Abolition Bill. Hence on 5 November the Otago Daily Times complained —

"To introduce an important constitutional change at the very last session of an expiring Parliament is pushing the habit rather too far, and we hope the country will protest in an unmistakable way against the matter being decided before the next general election."

While a realisation of the importance of the abolition issue and a corresponding desire not to act hastily developed in Dunedin, in outlying areas, such as North Otago and the goldfields, tremendous enthusiasm

1. Ibid., 22 August 1874
2. Ibid., 18 September 1874
3. Ibid., 5 November 1874
4. Ibid., 13 November 1874
was evinced for the proposed changes. At a meeting in Oamaru, addressed by W.J. Steward, M.H.R. for Waitaki, a resolution that abolition should take place in the North Island and be extended to the Middle Island as soon as practicable was passed unanimously.

Despite the caution of Dunedin residents, people throughout the Province had been aware for some time of the drawbacks of Provincial Government and had little sympathy for Sir George Grey whom they saw as making a last stand to defend his Constitution. Improved transport and communication had made Provincial Government an expensive encumbrance which was now outmoded, and many people were aware of this. W.H. Reynolds, at his meeting on 8 December, declared himself in favour of abolition provided that the land fund was retained within the Province, and gained a fair hearing, more than he was to get the following year.

1. *Ibid.*, 5 December 1874
2. *Otago Daily Times Supplement*, 9 December 1874
At the beginning of 1875 public opinion, as expressed by Otago newspapers, was generally favourable to the abolition of the North Island provinces. Most, recognising that the Abolition Act would in all probability be extended to include the South Island provinces also, were not averse to this if Otago secured her own land fund. The Editor of the Tuapeka Times wrote,

"There can be no doubt that the measure as sketched by Mr Vogel for the North Island only will have to undergo modification, so as to include the Middle Island as well — only we must be on our guard that our land revenues are not taken from us, but devoted to public works and opening up of the country, whence such revenues are drawn". 1

Similarly, although more cautiously, in the Otago Daily Times one reads,

"Whatever political changes become necessary in the future, we are sure that the last thing to be handed over to the Central Government should be our railways." 2

The attitude of the Otago members of the House of Representatives was at this stage generally vague, apart from Macandrew and Reid, who maintained a determined opposition to the Abolition Bill. The Otago Daily Times reported in January a suggestion from W.H. Reynolds, M.H.R.

1. Tuapeka Times, 24 March 1875; see also Evening Star, 18 February, 1875

2. Otago Daily Times, 17 January 1875
for Dunedin, that all provinces except Otago and Canterbury be abolished. 1 Sir F.D. Bell, M.H.R. for Mataura and George McLean of Waitouaiti both held public meetings in April and expressed their support for the abolition movement. Bell saw finance as the decisive issue in making abolition necessary and while he favoured local retention of the land fund he thought it necessary to make provision for carrying on the public service in bankrupt provinces. McLean thought that abolition would have little effect on Otago if the land fund was secured but was less willing to commit himself, saying,

"He had a leaning towards the present Government, but would not support them in any measure he did not approve of". 2

Hence the vote of confidence carried at this meeting was one of confidence in McLean as an individual rather than in the issue he supported. E. McGlashan, M.H.R. for Roslyn, wrote to the Evening Star on 1 April 1875 in support of the abolition of the provincial governments:

1. Ibid., January 13 1875
2. Ibid., 14 April 1875
"I maintain that the work of the Provincial Councils can be equally well, if not better done by local bodies, now that the country is being opened by railways. In fact, a county system is what I consider desirable to take the place of the present Provincialism, which is becoming cumbersome and expensive, and I may also say obstructive, to the good Government of New Zealand as a whole." 1

The type of local government to be substituted for provincial governments was not made clear when the abolition movement was first broached in the House of Representatives. Hence, throughout 1875, men declared themselves either for or against abolition but within each faction the concept of local government held by members varied widely. The Otago Daily Times commented critically on this tendency to espouse the abolition movement without knowing the quality of the system of local government to be substituted for it and concluded cryptically:

"The devil we know is, prima facie, to to retained, rather than that we should throw ourselves into the arms of the fiend we know not." 2

The abolition question was brought to the fore in Dunedin when Robert Stout addressed the Roslyn constituents of his Provincial Council seat prior to the

1. Evening Star, 2 April 1875
2. Otago Daily Times 9 March 1875
meeting of the Council in May. He opposed the proposed Abolition Bill strongly, pointing out that after abolition the functions of the Provincial Councils would still have to be carried out from Wellington which would prove more expensive. Moreover, participation in government would from necessity and distance be the prerogative of the wealthy. He suggested that difficulties would ensue from the sale of land, and that while some works were appropriate to a Central Government, many which were formerly organised locally could not be adequately handled from Wellington. He concluded that

"He had not yet seen anything to show that the present Constitution Act was detrimental to the Colony, and until it was proved to be detrimental or until something better or as good was submitted, he would oppose the proposal to abolish the Provinces."

The editor of the *Evening Star* took issue with Stout, pointing out a major weakness in the present system of government:

"The is not a proposal for a railway, or a public improvement, that might not have engraved on its principal feature, "Erected by the Government in spite of the opposition of Messrs Jones, Brown and Robinson, who wanted it at Blind Man's Corner for the improvement of their own..."

1. Ibid., 10 April 1875
private property.'... Local administration has the advantage of knowing what is wanted but independent administration alone can do justice irrespective of individual interests."

Stout's arguments were, nevertheless, convincing to his audience.

The land question played an important part in influencing public opinion as many leases held by runholders were close to expiration. The runholders were strongly opposed to dividing runs for settlement. The policy of the Otago Provincial Council, strongly influenced by Donald Reid, was subdivision of land for settlement. This would enable new immigrants to be settled on the land and contribute to Otago's prosperity. It was feared in Otago that if abolition took place, then the large estates might be sold by the Central Government for the revenue they could bring in immediately, and Otago would not receive any benefit. Mr. F.D. Rich, speaking at Waikouaiti during his campaign for the General Assembly in April, outlined the issue by saying,

"Were he a squatter, and studied his own interests, he would be in favour of abolition, but being a freeholder, and directly interested in getting a large settled population to help him bear the heavy taxation which was looming in the distance, he was opposed to a sudden or

1. *Evening Star*, 10 April 1875
violent change, as he believed it would be a fatal blow to the future settlement of the country." 1

On May 3 1875, the Provincial Council met for what was to be the last time. The Superintendent, James Macandrew, in his opening address spoke out strongly against abolition of the provincial system in the North Island. He asserted that all provinces, not only those of the North, would be abolished, that the provincial revenue would be appropriated by the Colonial Government, and that revenue from the railways built with Otago funds would all go to the General Assembly while the Provincial Estate would be wrongly distributed. He suggested that New Zealand should be governed on a federal basis, each Province having control of its own revenue while contributing to the cost of the federal government and the payment of the national debt. The crux of the issue was, in Macandrew's view, financial:

"From first to last the Central Government has abstracted from Otago alone, two millions of money, not one farthing of which has been expended within the Province and it is because the Abolition of the North Island Provinces must, in my opinion, stereotype the continuance of, and render worse this state of things, that I express myself so strongly on the subject." 2

1. Ibid., 22 April 1875
2. Votes and proceedings of the Provincial Council of Otago, May 3 1875., p. 6
The reply to Macandrew's address from the Council was reserved, asking that the issue be given due deliberation and that some information about the new form of local government should be available before any decision was made.

The newspaper comments on Macandrew's address were far from complimentary. The Otago Daily Times wrote,

"... we think we shall grow bigger all the faster if those unhappy running ulcers in the North Island are abolished and thrown upon their own resources." 1

The Evening Star branded Macandrew a prophet in the light of his assurances that all the provinces would be abolished 2 while the Bruce Herald accused him of neglecting the outlying areas, writing,

"His whole cry is Otago, and unfortunately, Otago, which his school of politicians, too frequently means Dunedin." 3

A motion put to the Council by Wilson, representing Makarewa, proposing insular separation and a General Government on a federal basis aroused some discussion. On June 15 1875, the Council finally passed the resolution, 25 - 3:

1. Otago Daily Times, 4 May 1875
2. Evening Star, 3 May 1875
3. Bruce Herald, 7 May 1875
"That, in the opinion of this Council, it is undesirable that any organic change in the system of Government should be made by the General Assembly, without first submitting any such proposed change to the electors of the Colony, at a general election of representatives." 1

Macandrew, in proroguing the Council on 19 June, endorsed this resolution, saying that in his opinion if this course of action was followed, then the proposal to abolish the Provinces would find few supporters. It is difficult to discern any pattern in the voting 2, as the resolution appears to have satisfied the representatives of Dunedin and the outlying regions. Thereafter, the tension between Dunedin and the rest of the Province was lessened by the cry for South Island separatism and objection to abolition before an election.

This Council decision to seek to have abolition made an election issue appears to have been representative of the majority of people around Dunedin. 'Colonist' wrote endorsing Macandrew's stand, saying,

"If it is said, as is often stated, 'Union is strength', I ask what is to be gained by union with a lot of pauperised whites and Maoris and half-castes in the North? I can quite understand that, in certain cases, the maxim holds good - as in

2. See Appendix 1
Germany and Italy, threatened as they are with external enemies — but we already form an integral part of an Empire, the like of which the world has never seen”.¹

Two letters to the Evening Star praised Macandrew’s suggestion that Otago, not the South Island, be an independent colony, ‘Taxpayer’ seeing this as a way of abolishing the Customs House and reducing the price of most imported articles by about 20 per cent.²

The absence of the Premier, Julius Vogel, in Britain convinced many people that no action would be taken on the abolition question until the session of the House of Representatives in 1876.³ This fact must, in part, account for the lack of agitation in Otago at this stage. The Evening Star, commenting on a rumour they had heard that Vogel might resign the premiership, pointed out that having insisted on bringing the abolition issue to the country, the Provincial party could hardly force their opinions on the country, in the forthcoming session and fight the election on other issues.⁴

Outside Dunedin the enthusiasm for Provincialism was not so pronounced. The Bruce Herald,

1. Evening Star, 5 May 1875.
2. Ibid., 22 and 29 May 1875
3. Otago Daily Times, 7 June 1875
4. Evening Star, 8 June 1875
while upholding provincialism as an institution in Otago, recognised the necessity for abolition elsewhere. The North Otago Times was bitter:

"Otago is a mere name, as far as we are concerned, and if we are to 'persistently aim' at a change, Mr. Macandrew may be sure it will rather be in the direction of an appropriation of funds by the Colonial Legislature than of any increased control on the part of Dunedin. From the former the district has been able to obtain some justice, but from the latter it has simply been sucked dry and then ignored."

Early in June it was announced that the new session of the General Assembly would begin on July 21, and many of the Members of the House of Representatives in Otago called meetings of their constituents. The abolition question was discussed and opinions gained indicated support for provincialism in the Dunedin area with more opposition in outlying sections. The financial question and the lack of information about the local government to replace provincialism dominated discussion. Bradshaw, M.H.R. for Waikaia, roused a majority in favour of abolition at Teviot. Macandrew speaking at Port Chalmers, indicated a degree of personal indecision, affirming that the provincial form

1. Ibid., 7 May 1875
of government was not worthy of retention per se but adding,

"We in Otago have no idea whatever of spending our revenue in educating Auckland larrikins, or supporting indolent officials in Wellington."\(^1\)

However, there was clearly little expectation of any final decision being reached in the course of the parliamentary session. The Otago Daily Times predicted

"a consideration somewhat extended of the meaning and consequence of abolition, resulting in the deferring of the question altogether until after a general election."\(^2\)

The pronouncements of 21 July were therefore to come as a shock to the Otago settlers.

1. Otago Daily Times, 17 July 1875
2. Ibid., 20 July 1875.
CHAPTER TWO

FULL ABOLITION: THE BUILD UP OF RESISTANCE

On 21 July 1875 the Governor of New Zealand, Lord Normanby, opened the new session of the General Assembly. In his speech he announced that the Government had prepared the bill for the Abolition of the Provinces, in itself a bombshell for the Otago representatives. He then added that this would be extended to the whole of the Colony and that an attempt would be made to pass the bill in the present session. The people of Otago immediately showed increased hostility towards the bill, feeling that it was being foisted on to them, without giving them a voice in the matter through an election.¹ Nonetheless, there is clear evidence of dissatisfaction with the provincial system as it stood, and hence, the opposition was, in part, to the manner in which the abolition was being handled.² The Evening Star reported on July 26 that five Otago members had declared their intention to vote with the Opposition on this ground alone. The goldfields districts, however, were keen for any replacement for provincialism and they did

1. Otago Daily Times, 28 July 1875.
2. Bruce Herald, 23 July 1875
not mind how quickly it was implemented:

"...political parties are at one as to the necessity for a change. That the Bill has defects, we frankly admit, but these defects are not fatal to it as a measure. ...It is plain enough the days of Provincialism are numbered, and this is the only substitute we have got before us."!

In the House of Representatives, two men from Dunedin, W.H. Reynolds, a member of Vogel's ministry, and Edward McGlashan supported the Bill. McGlashan wrote:

"This will be the great battlefield of the session, for the Provincialists, such as Sir George Grey and Mr Macandrew will be desperate. The attempt to stave it off by asking for an appeal to the new constituencies. is altogether a sham, and only Micawber-like hoping 'something may turn up'...... I wish the people of Otago would only look into the question more attentively, and not be led by the nose by one or two who desire to keep power in their hands as a divine right apparently".

Thus, although there were a few exceptions, people committed strongly either for or against the Bill, the predominant opinion in Dunedin was that the abolition issue warranted being the basis of an election and should be decided by a House of Representatives elected for that purpose.

1. Tuapeka Times, 11 August 1875
2. Evening Star, 22 July 1875
An accusation from Sir George Grey that the General Assembly did not have the power to abolish the provinces was refuted without causing any clamour in Otago. Later however, Macandrew was to claim that it was ultra vires of the General Assembly to abolish the Provincial Government in Otago without its consent.¹ Atkinson's Financial Statement providing for the localisation of land funds to the individual provinces, received close scrutiny and gained general approval.² Public opinion, committed neither strongly for or against the Bill, certainly moved towards favouring it at this time, for most agreed that the provincial institutions had had their day and localisation of the land fund was calculated to make any substitute fairly acceptable.³ The Local Government Bill, as circulated through the press, promising subsidies to road boards, gained a sceptical reception. Money to pay subsidies had to come from somewhere and the Otago land fund seemed to be the most likely place.

A large number of public meetings took place

1. Otago Daily Times, 30 July 1875
2. Ibid., 2 August 1875
3. Bruce Herald, 3 August 1875
following the declaration for full abolition. On 5 August 1875 the Lawrence Municipal Council endorsed the principles of the Bill and expressed the hope that it would be passed in the present session. At a meeting held by J.C. Brown, M.H.R. for Tuapeka, both the Abolition and Local Government Bills were approved providing that the land fund was localised. H.Manders M.H.R. for Wakatipu, speaking at the O'Connell Centenary Banquet and Ball in Queenstown was "approvingly cheered" when he expressed his opinion that the proposals should be submitted to the country. J.L. Gillies saw the need for abolition but advised his constituents to make close scrutiny of the new local government proposals to ensure that the replacement was better than the old provincial system. Meetings at Outram and South Molyneux favoured referring the issue to the country, while at Balclutha it was agreed, 50:5, that abolition was not within the power of the Assembly, that the local government bill was unsatisfactory, and that the Bill should be made an election issue. The report of the meeting notes that the audiences were small, unrepresentative, and lacking in enthusiasm, but this view reflects

1. Evening Star, 6 August 1875
2. Tuapeka Times, 11 September 1875
3. Evening Star, 6 August 1875
4. Bruce Herald, 20 August 1875
5. Ibid., August 24 1875
editorial bias. The railway linking Balclutha and Dunedin had recently been completed and this undoubtedly constituted a very strong bond in the Provincial ties. In Wallacetown, a delay in carrying out the Bill was sought,¹ and a similar opinion was voiced at Invercargill at the end of August.² The Invercargill meeting and one at Riverton on August 30, which declared for abolition by a small majority, were disrupted by an unruly champion of provincialism, Jock Graham, who reduced the Riverton meeting to violence. The Editor of The Sandfly attributed the Riverton's hostility to provincial institutions to the deprivation of the area while under the Southland Provincial Council.³ Two Central Otago meetings, one at Bannockburn and the other at Cromwell, voted in favour of delay. The reporter attributed the apathetic response of electors to the meetings to the strong impression abroad that the fate of Provincialism was already sealed. He also pointed out that those favouring delay were not necessarily opposed to abolition. A letter to the Otago Daily Times on September 1st asked for clarification of an assertion made at the Cromwell

1. Evening Star, 27 August 1875
2. Evening Star, 30 August 1875
3. The Sandfly, 26 September 1876
meeting,

"That all the district engineers were being drafted to Dunedin, in order that they might spend the moneys of the Province if the Abolition Bill did not become law during the present session of Parliament."1

This statement reflects a pervasive fear that the Provincial Government would spend the land fund recklessly rather than allow it to fall into the hands of the Central Government.

The only meeting referring to the abolition question in Dunedin at this stage was that held at Caversham when Robert Stout contested the seat in the House of Representatives which had become vacant on the death of Tolmie. Stout spoke out strongly against abolition and was endorsed by those at the meeting.2 He won the seat by a small majority, possibly reflecting diminishing public support for provincialism, for Caversham was a provincialist stronghold, but more probably revealing the good organisation of the opposition and the antagonism which Stout's religious views were wont to rouse.3

1. _Bruce Herald_, 14 September 1875
2. _Otago Daily Times_, 7 August 1875
The lack of public meetings in Dunedin on the abolition issue was responsible for a number of letters written to the newspapers deploiring the general apathy of the public when confronted with a vital issue. "Surely the dry bones shall yet be stirred and a demonstration made...", wrote 'Zepho'.\(^1\) 'Watchful' was moved to write for a second time to the *Evening Star* bemoaning the continued lack of public action,\(^2\) and as a result of a similar public demand, the Mayor called a meeting for August 31.\(^3\) The meeting was large with two hundred present at first, but increasing to six hundred by the end of the evening and causing the meeting to move from the Athenaeum to the Drill Hall. Although the meeting was unruly, a number of distinct opinions were voiced. Gillies, basing his argument on observation of public opinion throughout the Colony, put forward the view that all were agreed that abolition was needed and that the real issue to be decided was whether the Provincial Government should be abolished, and if so when was the right time to do it. Murray asserted that the Bill was being rushed through and that "...it was always better to bear the ills they had than to fly to others they knew not of."

1. *Otago Daily Times*, 9 August 1875
2. *Evening Star*, 10 & 19 August 1875
3. *Ibid.*, 30 August 1875
Thomas Birch thought government from Wellington would be superior while Ballenstein denoted centralist government as "class legislation". Finally the meeting resolved that "the members for Dunedin should have consulted their constituents before recording their votes for Abolition."¹

The meeting in Dunedin was followed by one at Portobello on September 5. The Peninsula residents spoke out strongly in favour of a delay, resolving,

"That it is the right and privilege of a free people to determine the form of the Constitution and Government under which they shall live, and no alteration shall be made therein without the consent of the people." ²

At this time a South Dunedin weekly paper, "The Sandfly", spoke out strongly against Lord Normanby's support for the Abolition Bill, asserting that because of the short period of time he had been in New Zealand he did not understand the issues fully and hence should not speak out. This opinion was endorsed by two letters which were possibly contrived, one being signed, 'Jona Wasp' and the other 'A Working Bee'.³

1. Otago Daily Times, 1 September 1875
2. The Sandfly, 14 September 1875
3. Ibid., 19 September 1875
In the debate on the Abolition issue in the House, the Otago representatives were divided. Vincent Pyke, M.H.R. for Wakatipu, was virulent in his condemnation of Provincialism\(^1\) as was T.L. Shepherd of Dunstan who even opposed retention of the land fund under provincial control.\(^2\) Reid of Taieri, however, opposed Shepherd strongly, speaking of the impartiality with which provincial funds were distributed. He placed great emphasis on the importance of local self-government as a place for training politicians and where local matters could be handled without having to refer them to Central Government. He appealed for abolition to be made an election issue, for thus the people themselves could decide the issue.\(^3\) Macandrew, while ready to admit that the Provincial system was not ideal, saw it as much superior to administration by the General Assembly which he felt was ignorant of the nature and extent of the business carried out by the Provincial Governments.\(^4\) Reynolds, M.H.R. for Dunedin, informed the House of the general enthusiasm of the Otago settlers for abolition, raising considerable anger in Dunedin.\(^5\) Stout, though newly elected, spoke strongly, warning the General

5. *Ibid.*, August 26, pp.636-642
Assembly that by abolishing provincial governments, people would come to rely on the Government in time of trouble rather than their own resources. Despite the strong speeches of some representatives from the Opposition, only four of eighteen Otago representatives – Reid, Macandrew, Stout and Thomson – voted against the Bill.

During the session of the House of Representatives public opinion became slowly but noticeably more wary of the proposed Abolition Bill. While the goldfields and outlying areas moved from complete support for abolition to a request for delay, the Dunedin residents moved to a more extremist position advocating insular separation or independence for Otago. The Abolition Bill was passed by the House of Representatives on 30 September 1875, but was not to become operative until the end of the 1876 session. Hence the new House of Representatives would be able to reverse it if desired and this was to make the elections of 1875 a decisive factor in the process of fighting the Bill.

1. Ibid., August 27, pp.669-679
CHAPTER THREE

THE GENERAL ELECTIONS 1875

The beginning of the election campaign and an outline of Provincialist party tactics was expected to take place at a banquet held in honour of Macandrew on his return from Wellington. The Editor of the Otago Daily Times wrote that

"We regard the banquet tonight as the opening scene of a new political campaign. We expect that the eminent men who are to speak are charged with the task of unfolding a policy not new indeed to Otago, but new to many of the present Otagan politicians, namely, the policy of Separation. It will have become plain to them that Provincialism, pure and simple, can never again be galvanised into life, and that the best the future can give us is separation of the two islands." 1

Invitations, sent throughout the province to local government officials were treated with suspicion in country districts where distrust of the old provincialism ran deep. The Mayor of Lawrence and his Council decided that if the banquet was to honour Macandrew, the man, they would come, but if its object was to honour the provincialist cause they would not. 2 Very few people

1. Otago Daily Times, 27 October 1875
2. Tuapeka Times, 20 October 1875
from outlying districts finally attended since the presence of Sir George Grey as well as that of Macandrew left no-one in doubt as to the political nature of the banquet, and the outlying areas still tended to favour abolition. The _Bruce Herald_ remarked:

"The death knell of Provincialism has been sounded, and we do not think that the Superintendent's 'wake' on Wednesday will put life into its dead body." 1

Those who expected an election programme to be presented at the banquet were sadly disappointed. The _Otago Daily Times_ suggested that the speakers

"had evidently agreed upon a policy of reticence and resolved to content themselves with glorifying the ancient might of Provincialism, and pointing out the success which had accompanied it in the past."2

while the _Evening Star_ was scathing, labelling the affair as "pretty speeches, well enough to listen to at purely social gathering, but utterly unworthy of men who assume to be leaders of a great political movement." 3

A topical joke portrayed Sir George Grey as having done well to eat, drink and be merry at the Dunedin banquet for his fate was inevitable.

1. _Bruce Herald_, 29 October 1875
2. _Otago Daily Times_, 29 October 1875
3. _Evening Star_, 29 October 1875
Despite the failure of the banquet to provide a party platform, at this stage people began to form definite opinions on the abolition issue. The Editor of the *Otago Daily Times* observed, "Rightly or wrongly, the feeling has got abroad that Sir George Grey and Mr Macandrew are fighting the people's battle..."1

the many sides to public opinion also became apparent. People supporting the Provincialist party included those wanting the continuation of the Provincial system per se, those seeking a federal system with each province being independent, those seeking insular separation with and without a federal government, and those wanting complete independence for Otago. Shades of opinion within the Abolitionist party were just as varied, including those who wanted the Provincial system replaced by the rule of the Central Government, those who sought its replacement by local boards such as the road boards, and those who wanted governments in both the North and South Islands with and without a federal government. Thus people ultimately seeking the same kind of government for their country could support

1. *Otago Daily Times*, 30 October 1875
opposite parties. The *Bruce Herald* commented wryly,

"What a happy family the Opposition are! Sir George Grey will defend the nine provinces created until he has shed his last drop of blood; Mr Macandrew goes in for insular separation; and Mr Stout wants the nine provinces converted into four or five." ¹

The growing demand for insular separation was simply a continuation of the movement which had been present in Otago since the 1860's. In fact, very few people were content with the Provincial Councils as they stood, and preferred separation to any other alternative.

The Macandrew banquet was followed by another at Balclutha following a ploughing match. Sir George Grey was present along with other officials of the district, including the Rev. William Bannerman. He put forward the view that the General Assembly had done wrong in assuming to abolish the Provinces while failing to tell the people what they intended to put in their place. As had been the case up till this time, the Balclutha people present supported the provincialist cause strongly.²

1. *Bruce Herald*, 9 November 1875
2. *Ibid.*, 2 November 1875
The financial motive was still dominant in the minds of the people of Otago. The land fund they saw as their property, earned by the resources of their province and hence they were unwilling to share it. Moreover they feared that their own standard of living and rate of progress might be lowered.

"We have yet to learn that it is wholesome or desirable that solvent members should render themselves paupers to reinstate the bankrupt man..."1

On the other hand, it was pointed out that the schemes of insular separation and provincial independence were scarcely feasible on the grounds that overseas loans and engagements had been entered into on the basis of New Zealand's colonial unity.2 The subsidies promised were seen as a major point in favour of the Local Government Bill but there was a strong suspicion abroad that the money could come only from the funds of the richer provinces and this destroyed the appeal of the Act. Hence financial reasons weighed heavily in favour of the retention of provincialism, although there were many, especially in outlying areas, who saw abolition and retention of the land fund as compatible.

1. Otago Daily Times, 12 November 1875
2. Evening Star, 1 November 1875
In response to the public demand for a statement of Provincialist Party policy, Macandrew produced on 16 November a pamphlet entitled an Address to the People of Otago. He pointed out Otago's prosperity under the Provincial system and the low cost of operating the Provincial Council when compared with the General Assembly. However, he did see some points in favour of the abolition of the provinces, the bankruptcy of the northern provinces being one. The only available answer seemed to be the use of resources obtained from wealthier provinces such as Otago, but since the cause of this bankruptcy was the absorption of funds by the Colonial Government, the answer to the problem was not abolition. Macandrew suggested two solutions; increased taxation in the Colony or reduction of unnecessary expenditure, but he saw no hope for reduced expenditure while the Legislature tried to control local affairs as well as those which concerned New Zealand as a whole. He proposed instead insular separation, each island providing for the maintenance of law and order in its own area and the Provincial Legislatures of each island having supreme control in
all other federal questions which would be assigned to the General Assembly.

"It surely stands to reason that fort-six men, all of who are elected by yourselves, assembled within the Province, can deal far more satisfactorily with your interests than can eight-four men assembled in the North Island, only one-fourth of whom are elected by you." 1

The address had a mixed reception in Otago. The Evening Star denied that it could be a platform of the Opposition since much of it would be unacceptable to other members and suggested that it showed the Opposition's inherent weakness. 2 The Otago Daily Times applauded the Address and claimed that

"...the Opposition of last Session have undertaken the task at last which the Ministerial party have declined - have declared a policy..." 3

The Taupena Times likewise approved of the indication of policy but suggested that acceptance of the basis of abolition rather than the retention of provincialism would provide a situation more easily adapted to separation. 4 The Bruce Herald condemned it as an "intensely provincial" document. However it did not underestimate the importance of the Address:

1. J. Macandrew, Address to the People of Otago. (Dunedin, 1875), p. 3
2. Evening Star, 24 November 1875
4. Taupena Times, 20 November 1875
"The views held by Mr Macandrew and Mr Stout on the great Constitutional question - at any rate, with regard to its settlement - are so much alike that we may now regard these two gentlemen as the leaders of what will probably be a tolerably strong party... We have now had something definite brought forward in opposition to the Abolition Bill, that has already been placed on the Statute Book..." 1

The round of pre-election meetings was begun on 5 November by Robert Stout. He alleged that the power of local self-government by the people would be reduced by the Local Government Bill, and that support for the Abolition Bill was synonymous with opposition to the division of the large estates. He saw the most satisfactory solution as being federalism, based on four or five provinces. Stout concluded his speech with an appeal to rationalism, Macandrew his Address with a plea (almost a threat) to God. The solution, it seems, was the same on both counts.2

Murray, M.H.R. for Bruce, met with his constituents on November 12, laying before them what the Bruce Herald claimed was a "vague account" of the constitutional changes about to take place.3 Murray mooted the idea of insular separation while strongly advocating

1. Bruce Herald, 23 November 1875
2. Evening Star, 6 November 1875
3. Bruce Herald, 16 November 1875
retention of the land fund. Overall, public opinion expressed at the meeting indicated support for the Abolition Bill while asking for delay so that certain changes could be made at the Committee stage.

Sir Francis Dillon Bell, speaking at Teihouaiti, opposed provincialism, even agreeing to use of Otago finance to help the North Island Provinces

("We will give those Northern Provinces assistance in carrying on their educational institutions etc., but we will not give them money which they may make ducks and drakes of."

and his views were endorsed by a majority of those present. However, Bell, while accepting the necessity for abolition, did not support the Local Government Bill. In his election advertising he wrote,

"Thanks to the delay we have always advocated, the people have had an opportunity of making up their mind, and they have almost unanimously agreed that Federalism is the form of government to suit a Colony like this."

1. Otago Daily Times, 13 November 1875
2. Bruce Herald, 16 November 1875
3. Otago Daily Times, 19 November 1875
4. Evening Star, 19 November 1875
5. Otago Daily Times, 26 November 1875
The endorsement received by George McLean at Waikouaiti suggests that it was based on the personal appeal of the man to the electorate.\(^1\) He denied that he was a centralist, expressing a desire to keep administration in the hands of the people. In the event of the land fund not being retained, he promised to join forces with the Provincialists.\(^2\)

The *Otago Daily Times* pointed out that the result of this election would be determined by non-political factors:

"The conditions of the Waikouaiti contest are these:-- Residents in his own district, i.e. Palmerston, will vote for Sir Dillon Bell. Residents in Waikouaiti, which with the charming affection usually shown by neighbouring villages, hates Palmerston worse than poison, will vote for Mr McLean. Local feeling in both places overrides political principle."\(^3\)

Election meetings were interrupted by yet another banquet, this time to honour Donald Reid, whose land policies had dominated the Provincial Council. No new opinions were expressed, although Reid declared himself in favour of insular separation. The *Bruce Herald* was anxious that this banquet should not be seen as

1. *Evening Star*, 6 December 1875
2. *Otago Daily Times*, 6 December 1875
3. *Ibid.*, 9 December 1875
expressing the views of Taieri settlers but rather as a persuasive appeal to them.¹

The festivities over, the Dunedin candidates now began in earnest to contest their seats. On 1 December, Reynolds and Wales, the Abolition party candidates for Dunedin, held a large meeting during which their opinions were treated with a large measure of scorn and at which the motion carried, by a substantial majority, read:

"That while the meeting thanks Mr Reynolds for his address, it regrets that as a member of the Government, he hurriedly passed the Abolition Bill without first taking the opinion of the electors." ²

Of the unfavourable reaction to Reynolds there can be no doubt and in view of the large numbers attending the meeting it is clear that many people felt strongly enough to wish to record an adverse opinion.

On 8 December the Anti-Centralist League was formed to back candidates for the Opposition during the election campaign. The title of the League is significant, indicating that all they had in common

1. Bruce Herald, 26 November 1875
2. Otago Daily Times, 3 December 1875
   Evening Star, 2 December 1875
was opposition to abolition and its replacement by centralist rule, and that they had no common policy with regard to the type of local government to supersede provincialism. But while the League had negative foundations, it did have considerable talent and finance behind it and organised backing for its candidates most effectively.

At the time of the formation of the Anti-Centralist League, Macandrew was asked to stand for Dunedin Central instead of his usual electorate, Port Chalmers. He refused and his decision was supported by a letter from John Drysdale:

"Mr Macandrew's election is certain and deservedly so; indeed, very many of the electors who differ from him toto coelo on the question of "Provincialism v. Centralism" would nevertheless vote for him as a man and as a friend to Port Chalmers, against all comers, Provincialist, Centralist, or Separationist; But it is, I think equally certain that the constituency as a body would never submit to be dictated to in their choice of a representative by the 'Anti-Centralist League' or any other body of men."

1. Ibid., 9 December 1875
2. Otago Daily Times Supplement, 11 December 1875
The correspondent was, indeed to be proved correct. Macandrew spoke at Port Chalmers on December 14, basing his argument mainly on finance and the advantages of local administration, suggesting that if work had to be found for professional politicians, then the Chatham Islands would be a location where they could do little harm. The day after making this address, however, Macandrew was persuaded to stand for Dunedin Central, along with Robert Stout who was deserting his own constituency, Caversham, and W.H. Larnach who, though he had but recently 'seen the Provincialist light', was, because of his undoubted ability in the field of finance, a valuable acquisition to the League.

Eight candidates put their names forward to the Nomination Meeting for the Dunedin Central seat on 15 December. J.S. Grant advocated insular separation with one purse and one law for each island. H.S. Fish also supported insular separation but saw this as following on from the abolition of the provinces, a policy with which Larnach still agreed at this stage. Stout declared his opposition to abolition without

1. Otago Daily Times, 15 December 1875
proposing any substitute form of local government, and Macandrew made no statement probably assuming that his "Address" made his position clear. W.H. Reynolds declared himself in favour of abolition on condition, that the land fund and the educational reserves were retained.\(^1\) James Macassay failed to declare his policy at the nomination meeting although, at his meeting the previous evening, he had advocated the provincialist cause,\(^2\) while J.P. Armstrong announced his status as independent, having at his meeting on 14 December declared for insular separation.\(^3\)

The nomination meeting for Caversham lacked enthusiasm, beginning with an audience of sixty which dwindled to a dozen. R.H. Leary espoused the Abolitionist cause, asking for insular separation while J. Seaton opposed it, still advocating a separationist policy.\(^4\)

The narrow distinction drawn between Abolitionists and Provincialists was brought out clearly by

1. Ibid., 17 December 1875
2. Ibid., 16 December 1875
3. Ibid.,
4. *Evening Star*, 17 December 1875
Larnach when he said,

"It is all very well to dub men Abolitionists or Provincialists—the names do not signify the relations of the two parties at all. We are all Abolitionists as far as the Provincial Councils are concerned, but we are all entirely at issue with those clauses of the Act which feebly attempt the new and unwonted work of construction." 1

The fact that, in reality, both parties, with a few exceptions, favoured the abolition of the Provincial Councils meant that people, in voting for the Provincialist candidates, were in fact voting for their own district and its continued progress and not for the type of government peculiar to it.

While at least one man, Edward McGlashan, was sufficiently forward looking to see the possibility of New Zealand becoming a nation not under the aegis of Great Britain2, the deciding factor in the elections, if issues rather than personalities were to be dominant, was financial.3 As long as electors were satisfied that the candidate would not be duped in business matters, they would support him.

1. Otaro Daily Times, 18 December 1875
2. Evening Star, 18 December 1875
3. Otaro Daily Times, 20 December 1875
The elections for Dunedin Central, the first to take place in the country, were held on 20 December and three Provincialists - Macandrew, Stout and Larnach - were elected, a victory for the Anti-Centralist League. Stout in particular was jubilant seeing their success as showing the North that the people of Otago could not be deprived of their local self-government. J.S. Grant, on the other hand, complained that he had withstood even being pelted by rotten eggs and all to no avail: 1 The Caversham election also returned a Provincialist, J. Seaton, E.D. Cargill his opponent attributing Seaton’s success in part to the "powerful political organisation" backing him. 2 By 24 December the election results stood as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dunedin City</th>
<th>Macandrew</th>
<th>P+</th>
<th>Stout</th>
<th>P+</th>
<th>Larnach</th>
<th>P+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caversham</td>
<td>J. Seaton</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timaru</td>
<td>J. Brown</td>
<td>P+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikouaiti</td>
<td>G. McLean</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>W.A. Murray</td>
<td>P+</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all the cases of re-election, especially in country districts, it is difficult not to suppose that

1. *Evening Star*, 21 December 1875
2. *Ibid.*, 22 December 1875
the vote was in large measure personal rather than the result of an issue.

The elections continued late into December and early January. Reynolds was elected by the Port Chalmers' voters by a considerable majority, although this was probably caused by hard feelings following Macandrew's desertion. At Dunstan, Vincent Pyke, an experienced politician, was elected on an abolitionist-separationist platform. Donald Reid was elected unanimously by the Taieri voters. He was a Provincialist although he undertook not to raise any factional opposition to the majority in the new Assembly. In the Otago Daily Times the report of the election at Camaru was treated with amazement:

"That Mr Shrimski should have beaten Mr Steward by over one hundred votes is nothing less than marvellous to all those who know the men and the district. Nothing but a very strong feeling that the constituency must be no longer misrepresented in the Assembly could have driven the electors to put in Messrs Mislop and Shrimski. Mr Steward's one crime was that he supported the Ministry: Mr Shrimski's one virtue, that he will oppose them tooth and nail. The Camaru election is the surest proof we have yet that the outlying districts,

1. Evening Star, 28 December 1875
2. Ibid., 29 December 1875
whatever just cause of jealousy they
may have with Dunedin, are of the
opinion that the Ministerial proposals
would leave them worse off and not
better than they were before." 1

On December 31st the Editor of the Otage Daily

Times reported,

"As regards Otage, every member but
one is in the ranks of the Opposition..." 2

The final result was to be only slightly less
enthusiastic, with three out of twenty-two
representatives opposing abolition. The election of
Vincent Pyke, M.H.R. for Dunstan and George McLean of
Taikouaiti appears to have been a personal endorsement,
rather than a show of enthusiastic support for abolition.
The only seat was won on an abolitionist platform in
Dunedin, at Port Chalmers where Macandrew's desertion
cause Reynolds' election. Otherwise the support of
Dunedin and the Clutha area for provincialism was in
line with opinions expressed at public meetings. The
Oamaru election is difficult to explain. Oamaru
residents, though strong in their opposition to the Bill,
instead of electing their representatives of some years
standing, W.J. Steward, chose two inexperienced men

1. *Otago Daily Times*, 12 January 1876
2. *Otago Daily Times*, 31 December 1875
whose only major platform was insular separation. The election of Ryke at Dunstan reflects the opposition of the goldfields area to the Otago Provincial Council. J.C. Brown, who was returned unopposed at Tuapeka, was thought to be a very shaky Provincialist and his personal support was such that he was unlikely to be beaten. At Mount Ida it appears that Macandrew's announcement that he would support the miners in their attempts to abolish gold duty brought support for the provincialists. Only then did the Mount Ida Chronicle tell its readers that,

"all who value the right to judge for themselves what is best for the future Government of the country will sympathise with the Dunedin movement" 1

At Wakatip, although support had tended to provincialism, Menders, the successful candidate, was able to use the issue of secular versus state education to good advantage. In Southland, although support for provincialism was fairly clear, there was at least one seat where the election of a Provincialist did not stand for support of the cause. At Riverton, E. McGillivray, the sitting member, had aroused

1. Mount Ida Chronicle, 23 October 1875
animosity because of his failure to bring public works into the area. Since both his opponents were Provincialists, the election of one of them, Hodgkinson, does not imply a sudden conversion.

There were certainly issues other than the Abolition Bill brought into the election campaign. The question of state aid to schools was important in securing the Catholic vote. A number of candidates proposed either an elective upper chamber or its abolition. The sub-division of the large sheep runs, a call for manhood suffrage and the relative virtues of income and property tax were all mentioned by a few of the aspiring representatives. The only issue on which all candidates made a stand was that of abolition, but since the people had specifically requested the opportunity of electing a new General Assembly to endorse or throw out the Abolition Bill, this is to be expected.

To what extent the election represented popular opinion on the abolition issue it is difficult to assess. Clearly, very few people would completely follow Macandrew’s advice to "eliminate the personal element as much as possible, and look to issues, not men." In most areas the election was not

1. *Otago Daily Times*, 22 November 1875
particularly representative. In fact, in Dunedin, the provincialist stronghold, only 50% of the voters exercised their right and in Roslyn only 33%. However, in no electorate did a Government supporter, campaigning on an abolition platform, defeat an Opposition candidate, and hence the election can be seen as a declaration against provincialism by the people of Otago.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE FAILURE OF THE SEPARATION RESOLUTIONS

At the beginning of 1876 the people of New Zealand began to look anxiously for the return of their premier, Sir Julius Vogel. Because of his support of the provincialist cause in Otago previously, some people hoped he would change the Government policy, while others saw him as the man to carry the abolitionist cause to victory. Some waxed lyrical over his return and the North Otago Times reprinted an historical ballad, "The Rival Knights", which included the following verse:

"Och! tare andouns! me thrusty squire,  
that varmint has come back,  
The fighting little huntsman of the Abolition pack,  
That thraitor loon, Sir Julius, has landed from the Say.  
Faix! we will bate him black and blue  
as sure as I am Grey." 1

The Otago Daily Times commented on such efforts:

"We should suppose that when the Sultan revisits some favourite Kiosk, after an absence of several months, the harem beauties sing little ballads in his honour of such the same kind as the believers have sung here in honour of Sir Julius Vogel, only a little less nauseous in sentiment." 2

1. North Otago Times, 18 February 1876
2. Otago Daily Times, 4 February 1876
Vogel, on his arrival in Wellington on 17 February was almost immediately plied with questions on the subject of abolition, which he parried by complaining of deafness.¹ He continued to avoid making any clear commitment until a banquet held in his honour at Wanganui on March 17, where he revealed his complete support for the policy of abolition and for the County system. He denied that it was practicable to have insular separation, two provinces in each island, or federalism, to the disgust of Otago provincialists. His views on education and railways seemed to threaten the security of two of Otago's more valuable assets. His exposition of the county system was apparently most lucid² and was received with great enthusiasm in the goldfields areas. The miners welcomed a scheme which gave them as much right to local control in their district as in agricultural or rural districts, and was not based on the premise that miners were in a different class from the rest of society.³ Thus, within Otago the reception to Vogel's policy ranged from extreme enthusiasm to disappointment that he did not again ally himself with the Provincialist cause.

1. North Otago Times, 18 February 1876
2. Otago Daily Times, 19 February 1876
3. Tuapeka Times, 25 March 1876
In the first few months of the new year the people of Otago began to see more clearly the implications of the Abolition Act. Although they were promised retention of the land fund and their educational reserves, when Otago no longer existed, what organisation would there be to retain and administer them? Throughout the struggle against abolition, finance was a dominant factor, but at this stage, when the loss of the land fund seemed almost inevitable, the people of Otago were particularly conscious of the economic losses to the Province which would result from Abolition:

"To ourselves, the chief result of the impending change will be that many thousands per annum will be expended in Wellington instead of Otago. We do not say that this will be the only result, because we believe that another consequence will be that it will take a good deal more money to govern the country. ...But do not let us resolutely pretend very much indeed that we shall not miss the moneys we have formerly enjoyed. Otago will miss them and Dunedin will miss them most directly."  

Why, people asked, should they want to achieve a united New Zealand when this was cited as a desirable

1. Otago Daily Times, 4 April 1876
outcome of abolition? The Otago Daily Times, with tongue in cheek suggested it meant preparation either for war or for extensive borrowing,¹ and dismissed talk of the Britain of the South with the scorn it rightly deserved.² To the Otago people, conscious of a local rather than a national identity, such arguments appeared empty.

Apart from a few ardent provincialists, most supporters of the Anti-Centralist League had no desire to see provincial governments retained and looked for a form of government which was not so strongly centralist but provided a "middle way".³ Some saw a Board of Works, which took over the desirable features of Provincialism, as the best substitute form of local government, providing some continuity and therefore stability in the Colony. Outside Dunedin however, reactions to this proposal were hostile, for a Board of Works would be sure to have its offices in Dunedin and hence would provide preferential treatment for the town at the expense of the outlying areas.

1. Ibid., 25 March 1876
2. Ibid., 24 January 1876
3. Ibid., 20 January 1876
"The truth is the whole thing is a piece of gross selfishness on the part of the Provincial centres. They have hitherto enjoyed a certain preference, and they are loathe to part with it—hence the revival of this Board of Works proposal." 1

On 15 March six thousand town sections of Provincial land came up for sale, ostensibly to raise money for public works, while the Provincial Council was unable to meet and vote money for this purpose, but in fact to allow as little Otago land as was possible to fall into the hands of the General Assembly. The Otago Daily Times suggested that it should be advertised, "—positively must be cleared to make way for a new tenant." 2 This action, though a reverse of Reid's land policy, was supported by most Otagans, who were reluctant to see their public works fall behind because of delay on the part of the Central Government.

On 12 April there arrived in Dunedin three Commissioners, Messrs Gisborne, Seed and Knowles, who were despatched by Vogel for the purpose of making an estimate of finance required for governing the Colony in the following year, providing that the Abolition of the Provinces Bill was passed. 3 These men were

1. Tuapeka Times, 26 February 1876
2. Otago Daily Times, 15 March 1876
3. Ibid., 13 April 1876
preceded by a letter from Vogel, asking for the co-operation of Provincial Superintendents, to which Macandrew replied, refusing such help and protesting at Vogel's assumption that abolition would take place. He wrote,

"I feel persuaded that if a plebiscite were taken on this question a vast proportion of the votes would be on one side, and in favour of the province retaining its own revenues, distributing them on its own behalf, and working out its own destiny in its own way. ...You may rest assured that it is a grand mistake to suppose that the people of this province will tamely submit to have forced upon them a system of political communism from which they have everything to lose and nothing to gain." 1

This was to be the beginning of a lengthy correspondence between Macandrew and Vogel, which served nothing other than to show that the views of these two men could never be reconciled. 2 However, Macandrew's letters were read with great interest in Otago and were responsible for formulating public opinion, especially in Dunedin. The reaction to Macandrew's refusal to make Provincial records available to the Commissioners varied. There were many who gave Macandrew unquestioning support. Some, however, saw co-operation as a way of being able

1. A.J.H.R., A4, No.7 p.3 1876 Macandrew/Vogel
2. Otago Daily Times, 10 May 1876
to say in the General Assembly,

"We have given you every opportunity legal and illegal to understand all about us. Now we intend to stand firm on our legal rights."¹

The Tuapeka Times was very scathing of Macandrew's action, describing him as "a headstrong, political fanatic" and adding, "Evidently he is disposed to resist Abolition vi et armis, if he can get a sufficient number of fools to back him."² In the outlying areas it was feared that this failure to co-operate might, if the Abolition Bill was passed, cause Otago considerable harm. However, there were many who thought their Superintendent could do no wrong.

Vogel, in reply to Macandrew, attributed the Otagan's hostility to abolition to their misunderstanding of the Bill and challenged Macandrew's affirmation that this was the viewpoint of the people. He pointed to the complaints of people from outlying areas and cited these as grounds for abolition.³ The existence of the complaints cannot be denied: some districts, such as Lawrence, despite their election of a Provincialist,

1. Otago Daily Times, 14 April 1876
2. Tuapeka Times, 15 April 1876
3. A.J.H.R. 1876, A4, No. 7 p. 5, Vogel/Macandrew
were anxious for a better deal than they had received at the hands of the Provincialist Government. However, by far the greater part of the Otago colonists supported the Provincialist cause in one form or another and were in many cases tending to become more extremist.

Vogel was clearly worsted in the correspondence with Macandrew, being forced into several damaging admissions, while Macandrew was able to point out the corruption of the Central Government, comparing it with the blameless record of the Provincial Government.

"Now at last had Macandrew reason to feel exultant. Never before, in all the variations of his spectacular political life had he won such generous approbation from his province. ... All Otago rallied to his side." 1

Thus, in the period immediately prior to the new session of the General Assembly, public opinion on the side of Provincialism tended to become almost fanatical. In the city newspapers, editorials raised issues concerning abolition almost daily. Vogel's letters, denying the feasibility of either insular separation or independence for Otago, roused the ire of many Otago settlers. One wrote,

"Otago wants nothing but to be let very much alone indeed. We nurture a self-reliant spirit, that will do for us all that we require, and if we are but left alone to manage our own affairs we want no more".

while another claimed that Otago's independence would cause no more difficulty than that of Belgium and France and foresaw no problem in setting up a Customs House on the Waitaki. But more than simply expressing a desire for independence, it appears that the Otago colonists had managed to persuade themselves that their chances of obtaining this or at least insular separation were good. Thus, in the leader of the Otago Daily Times we read,

"We have no doubt whatever that the Centralists mean well. We can give them no other praise. In the not far off future we have no doubt whatever that they will come round to a very different way of thinking."

The publication in June of the despatch sent by the Governor, Lord Normanby, to the Colonial Office on 25 October 1875 recommending that the people be consulted before the Abolition Act was passed into law was seen as "very comforting" to the Opposition, who valued approval from such high quarters, and presumably needed bolstering up for the new session of the General Assembly.

The new parliament was, to a large extent, an unknown quantity. Many representatives were newly elected, as in Otago, and in the absence of defined parties the combinations which would be formed were as yet unknown. Hence it was impossible to gauge how much

1. Otago Daily Times, 5 June 1876
2. Ibid., 25 May 1876
3. Ibid., 6 June 1876
support the Opposition party could hope to secure. The length of the session was a vital factor for if, as rumour had it in Dunedin, Vogel prorogued Parliament after a few weeks, then the Abolition Act would become legal without the members of the Opposition having had the chance to reconsider the Act or introduce any substitute resolutions.¹ Although the Provincial Council was unable to meet, Macandrew called together its members and addressed them, surveying the achievements of Otago under the Provincial Government. Though impassioned, Macandrew's speech proved disappointing to many who hoped for an outline of the Opposition party's programme during the new session of the House. Macandrew was particularly bitter about the total disregard on the part of the Government for the opinion of the people of Otago expressed in the 1875 elections:

"It exhibits a very poor opinion indeed as to the intelligence of the people and their capacity to realise what is best for their own interest."²

Soon after this, Macandrew, along with the other Otago representatives, left the province for Wellington.

Meanwhile, in Dunedin scorn was heaped upon the Local Government Bill and its counties scheme and it did not gain unconditional support even in the

1. Ibid., 10 June 1876
2. Otago Daily Times, 13 June 1876
outlying areas where its promise of political and financial independence was welcomed. A county was seen by some as a miniature province incorporating its worst defects. The Otago Daily Times commented, somewhat maliciously,

"Imagine the distress that will fill the soul of Mr Manders when he sees his Lake district with Cromwell for its County town, and all the Queenstown folk having to treat the upstart Cromwell as their great centre." 1

In outlying districts the proposed county divisions were unpopular. No existing divisions or land forms were recognised, and counties even crossed provincial borders, the areas looking as if they had been divided up with ruler and set square. Opposition to such divisions was certainly justified.

The House of Representatives was opened in July and at first no major attacks were made by either the Government or the Opposition. Minor alterations were proposed to the Abolition bill, such as one demanding two per cent of the land fund to cover the cost of railways which proved unprofitable. The representatives of Otago, in their typically tight-fisted manner, professed their willingness to make up losses on their own railways, but not those of other provinces. 2 Proposals for education were also put

1. Ibid., 5 July 1876
2. Ibid., 7 July 1876
forward and general approval gained for these. The Opposition were faced with the not inconsiderable problem of having to decide how to attack. There were numerous alternatives open: they could propose a vote of no confidence, attack the Ministry on finance, oppose the Counties Bill, or put forward resolutions concerning separation. The Opposition opted for the latter course of action, although even here they were divided, for while Otago favoured financial separation for the South Island, the Canterbury representatives preferred insular separation. In Otago, public opinion was fearful that separation would not be obtained. The frequency of the meetings of the old Provincialist caucuses was seen in Dunedin as a warning that Provincialism might be retained in its present state. ¹ The Tuapeka Times, on the other hand, warned,

"The interests of the Colony as a whole have become too much bound together for the Separation idea to find favour in higher quarters, and of this we are certain, that it could not be gained by a bare majority of the House of Representatives." ²

Nevertheless, the Otago representatives proposed to fight on the basis of the Separation issue, knowing that the lack of unity among Separationists meant uncertainty in voting. The majority of the people

1. Otago Daily Times, 25 July 1876
2. Tuapeka Times, 22 July 1876
in Otago supported them enthusiastically:

"If it were likely to help the movement to success there would be separation meetings in every town in Otago in a week." 1

The Canterbury representatives however, formed a weak link, and hence it was suggested that if they would be willing to oust the present Ministry on the score of finance, then a Ministry pledged to introduce separation could take office in the following year.2 The degree of conviction that separation was the correct policy was amazing. In the leader of the Otago Daily Times one reads,

"As years go on, the demand for separation will grow because it is in accordance with the plan of nature, and is founded on the geographical, the climatic differences, and we may even now say, to a certain degree, the difference of inhabitants in the two Islands."3

Stout and Macandrew both spoke out forcibly in the Separation debate, Stout's speech being greeted as a translation of the mind of Dunedin into words.4 Even so this was not enough to swing the balance, and the defection of Pyke and Manders embittered the situation. Thus, on 16 August, when a division was called for on

1. Otago Daily times, 29 July 1876
2. Ibid., 2 August 1876
3. Ibid., 3 August 1876
4. Ibid., 12 August 1876
the question, "that there should be two local
governments, one for each island", the opposition
was defeated by forty-seven votes to thirty-two.¹
In fact, there was little doubt as to what the result
would be after the Canterbury members decided to
support the Government.

As it became clear to the people of Otago that
the separation resolution would be defeated, several
attitudes were taken. The confusion of the Opposition
left plans for future action uncertain and most Dunedin
people were content to leave the situation in the hands
of Macandrew, Stout and Reid whom they trusted to act
in the best interests of the Province.² Because of
the late stage of the session, it seemed unlikely to
some that the County system would be passed in the
present session and it was hoped that the Provincial
system might be given a year's respite.³ In the
outlying areas which had favoured abolition the hope
was expressed that local government might be rapidly
instated as the year's delay had caused the country to
suffer.⁴ However, the overriding sentiment was one
of horror that the Bill which they had fought and which
they had voted against in the election was soon to be
legal, their Province would be no more, and they were
powerless to do anything about it.

1. N.Z.P.D., 16 August 1876 p.377
2. Otago Daily Times, 23 August 1876
3. Ibid., 15 August 1876
4. Tuapeka Times, 23 August 1876
CHAPTER FIVE
THE FINAL STRUGGLE

Now that the separation movement had failed, public meetings were called throughout Otago to discuss further action. On 28 August six hundred Dunedin residents met in the Drill Hall and passed the resolution,

"That this meeting, while desirous of seeing the Provincial form of Government simplified in many of its details is yet strongly in the belief that it is the form of Government best suited to Otago under the existing circumstances; and feel assured it is also the form of Government best enabling the whole body of the people to closely watch, and take an intelligent interest in the administration of their own affairs." 1

On 6 September, five more meetings took place, mainly in the Dunedin area. One hundred people at Green Island declared their opposition to abolition and the Counties Act, coming out strongly in favour of separation. They asked that Macandrew might recall the Provincial Council on his own initiative. At Roslyn, opposition was declared to the Counties system, interference with the land fund and the railways, and to Vogel's appointment as Agent-General. 2 The North East Valley meeting was the first to advocate direct action with the Imperial Government.

1. Otago Daily Times, 29 August 1876
2. Vogel had handed over the premiership to H.A. Atkinson and had been appointed New Zealand's Agent General in Britain.
They passed the resolution,

"That in the event of the Assembly failing to agree to the resolutions prepared by Mr Macandrew, it will, in our opinion, be advisable for the representatives of Otago to waive all further discussion on this subject in the Assembly and take independent action for their constituents in bringing their grievances before the Imperial Parliament."

On the Peninsula and further south in Winton, the people were united in their view that New Zealand was unsuited to Centralism and that it was wrong to thrust majority rule on to the Otago minority.¹

These meetings must be seen as a powerful expression of public opinion. They were called in the absence of their usual leaders who were still sitting in the House. The movement's spontaneity shows a very strong and determined feeling for the retention of Provincialism. There were those in Dunedin, however, who opposed this continuing provincialist ardour and in a petition signed by about fifty Dunedin residents the members of the House of Representatives were asked to confine their attentions to getting as much for Otago as possible out of the new Counties Bill.² This action was strongly berated at the meeting at Mornington on 20 September.

1. Otago Daily Times, 7 September 1876
2. The Sandfly, 16 September 1876
Macandrew made a determined effort to delay the issue, pointing out to the House that with the exception of two seats Otago had shown a solid provincialist front in the 1875 elections, but met with little success. His request that the Provincial Council be allowed to conduct a plebiscite to confirm the opinions held by the Otagans, though denied by the House, was enthusiastically greeted in Otago where the chance to recall the Provincial Council on any pretext would have been welcomed. This opinion was endorsed by the largest meeting held in the course of the abolition struggle. Two thousand people passed the resolution

"That in the opinion of this meeting it is hopeless to expect anything like justice to Otago from the present House of Representatives, and that the Superintendent and the Executive be strongly urged forthwith to convene a meeting of the Provincial Council, with a view to the necessary legislative action being taken to obtain a plebiscitum of the people, so as to ascertain their wishes and opinions as to the form of local government best calculated to secure to the Province the exclusive enjoyment of its own affairs."

What seems to have been already a heated occasion was made more so by an enterprising lad who found occasion to distribute considerable quantities of pepper amongst the audience, causing coughing and spluttering around the hall.¹ Despite all efforts to "spice it up",

1. Otago Daily Times, 28 September 1876
this meeting showed with great force that the people of Dunedin were unquestionably still opposed to the abolition of the provincial government in Otago. The protest was, in fact, to no avail, for on 30 September the session of the House came to an end and on 1 October 1876 the Abolition of the Provinces Act became operational. It is important to note that protest of the ardent form shown at this meeting was centred only in the Dunedin area. In outlying areas, people were awaiting abolition, with more or less enthusiasm, but sure that is was inevitable.

Macandrew, acting promptly, sent to the Governor a despatch asking him to withhold the Queen's assent from the Abolition Bill. He asserted that, because of the strength of the opposition to the bill in Otago about which he believed the Governor had been misinformed, and because it was ultra vires of the General Assembly to abolish a local legislature without its consent, the Bill should not be passed into law.1 The Governor, Lord Normanby, replied

"after the model of a discreet and canny Governor, who was not such a fool as to be enticed into the midst of colonial politics, or to exercise his own discretion on such matters."2

However, he submitted Macandrew's telegram to the Ministry who replied strongly, pointing out that the Queen's assent had already been obtained for the bill

1. _A.J.H.R. 1876, A7, No.1_ Macandrew/Normanby
2. _Otago Daily Times, 6 October 1876_
in the previous session of the House. They regretted the strong feeling against abolition in Otago but attributed it in large part to the agitations of Macandrew, and refused to act on its basis.

"It is contrary to every principle of representation and parliamentary government to allow the temporary effect of local agitation to outweigh the deliberate decision of the people in Parliament assembled."

They added,

"Your Excellency's Advisers are also receiving urgent appeals from Otago, especially from the outlying districts, in a directly contrary sense to those relied on by the Superintendant, and they are satisfied that their endeavour to secure local self-government for all the districts in the country is welcomed by a large proportion of the Province of Otago, as it is by the Colony of New Zealand."  

The latter statement was scarcely justified, for while it was a fact that many of the outlying districts did find themselves neglected under the Provincial Government, there was little evidence of complaints to the General Assembly within the previous two years and those supporting the Abolition Act did most decidedly form a very small minority of the population of Otago.

Macandrew was quick to point this out to Normanby

1. A.J.H.R.1876, A7, No.3 (Encl.), Normanby/Macandrew
and to absolve himself from the responsibility for stirring up the people. The destruction of their province as an entity and the loss of the local revenues was quite sufficient to stir the Otagans to active opposition, in his opinion. He again stated that unless some action was taken to reverse the Abolition Act, Otago would declare her independence from the rest of New Zealand.¹

This was followed by a telegram sent direct to Lord Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies. Macandrew requested that the Act should be referred to the Attorney-General to assess whether it was legally valid and pleaded,

"Deep feeling of wrong pervades province."² Normanby, however, commented that the Ministry felt there was no reason to fear the consequences predicted, since the Counties Bill had been passed in the Lower House by a large majority.³ Carnarvon, relying on Normanby's judgement, replied that the Act was legal and could not be disallowed, trusting that the disturbances warned of by Macandrew would not occur.⁴

There was now little else that the people of Otago could do. Some recommended making the best of a bad job; others still wanted to fight. The Otago Daily Times took the former attitude:

1. A.J.H.R., 1876, A7, No. 4, Macandrew/Normanby.
2. A.J.H.R., 1876, A7, No. 6 (Encl.), Macandrew/Carnarvon.
"The telegram from Lord Carnarvon to the Governor has, in the eyes of all reasonable men, taken away the last hope of getting anything like justice for this part of the Colony, and the only thing that it is wise to do now, is to make the best of a bad job, and endeavour to render our loss as small as possible." 1

Even Robert Stout supported the latter policy, regretting the length of time spent on the separation resolutions which could have been devoted to ensuring Otago's financial security under the Counties Bill. 2 However, such an action was too much to expect of Macandrew, the fanatical Provincialist, who on 23 October called a meeting of all members of the House of Representatives and the Provincial Council, Mayors, and Chairmen of Road Boards and Education Committees in Otago

"to confer and determine as to the best means of extricating the Province of Otago from the evil results incurred in the Abolition of the Provinces Act". 3

An increasing number of people saw the futility of this meeting. In most outlying districts it was decided not to send a representative, for the only available means of protest now was to create Otago as an independent state or to resort to armed resistance, neither of which were practicable. 4 In areas which had wanted abolition, this action appeared

1. **Otago Daily Times**, 24 October 1876
2. **Ibid.**, 13 October 1876
3. **Ibid.**, 28 October 1876
4. **Tuapeka Times**, 1 November 1876
extremist, while even in areas which had supported insular separation, the majority of the people wanted rather to get as much as they could from the Counties Bill. The Otago Daily Times commented very realistically,

"That any practical good can come from the Convention, we do not think. If its deliberations merely result in dropping the funeral tear over the caput mortuum, we shall not grudge the ceremony — only it is a long way to go for so little."1

One hundred people were present at the Convention, but this was not representative of the whole province as nobody was sent to the meeting from Oamaru, Invercargill or Lawrence.2 No unity of opinion was gained over the secession of Otago, and it was finally decided to send Grey, Macandrew and Fraser to lay a petition before the Queen in person. However, it is dubious that the bulk of public opinion in Otago was behind this move. The interest of the people was taken up by Treasury Bills which were given to bankrupt provinces and financed by overseas loans. In the eyes of Otago, while they were not directly handing over their land fund to these provinces, it was inevitable that their land fund would be used to repay the loans eventually.3 It is significant surely that the Macandrew expedition to visit the Queen failed from lack of finance following the illness of Grey.

1. Otago Daily Times, 2 November 1876
2. Taupéra Times, 15 November 1876
3. Otago Daily Times, 10 November 1876
For the people of Otago to part with their money the issue would have to be a burning one and clearly at this point Macandrew had gone further than the people of Otago were willing to go with him. The Otago Daily Times voiced the feelings of the majority when they wrote,

"There is a time for everything, and this seems to be the time to yield the point and to submit to an inevitable destiny."

1. *Ibid.*, 17 November 1876
CONCLUSION

The development of attitudes towards the Abolition of the Provinces Act was to some extent influenced by events of the past. The separation movement which had flourished in Otago in the 1860's, stimulated by the prosperity of the Province and its strong sense of Provincial identity, had prepared the way for political action in the event of any attack being made on the powers of local self-government and suggested the general pattern this would follow. The strong spirit of identity, especially on the part of settlers in the general vicinity of Dunedin, led people to think of Otago as an entity in itself, which was providing a reasonably high standard of living with adequate educational facilities, religious freedom, and opportunities for the future since the Province had plentiful resources to finance public works and develop her countryside. Hence the people were jealous of their Province and were not likely to find acceptable any efforts to link it with its struggling northern neighbours who would, they felt, attempt to divest them of their revenues and drag them down to a lower level.
Otago was fortunate in her wealth. Maori wars, mismanagement of funds, and the creation under the New Provinces Act 1858 of provinces which were not viable economic units had left the northern island bankrupt and very backward in development. However, in Otago and Canterbury, by dint of sound management, immigration schemes, careful land sales, and in Otago the prosperity surrounding and following the gold rushes, development had taken place rapidly, particularly in the areas around the Provincial towns, and considerable land funds had been amassed. The Otagans were jealous of this wealth. They considered that they had earned it by their own efforts and certainly felt no responsibility whatever to share it with their unfortunate neighbours.

This prosperity was identified to a large extent with the Provincial Government, although often the development had occurred in spite of, rather than because of the Council. Few people were foolish enough not to realise the glaring inadequacies of the Provincial Council, the stress on personalities to the exclusion of important issues, and the need to know the right man before any action could be taken. However,
when it became obvious that the days of the Provincial Council were numbered, a conviction grew among the people that no other organisation could look to the interests of Otago as it had. Hence, while the majority favoured a minor administrative overhaul within the Council, if the alternatives were the Provincial Council or government from Wellington, there were few in Otago who would have opted for the latter.

It would be wrong, however, to suppose that there were no supporters of the Abolition Bill in Otago. Such support was determined mainly by dissatisfaction over the work of the Provincial Council in outlying areas. It was clear that the nearer one lived to Dunedin, the more benefits one received at the hands of the Council. In the goldfields areas of Central Otago, especially round Lawrence, abolitionists were dominant, and in Camaru too, people believed that roads had been left unformed and development neglected for the benefit of Dunedin and gave their enthusiastic support to the abolitionist cause. Discontent in Southland, in the area of Riverton in particular dated back to the days of the Southland Provincial Council,
and although Southland received better treatment under the Otago Provincial Council than it had as a separate entity, it veered towards support for the Abolition Act. Southland was, however, able to be persuaded otherwise, but in Lawrence antagonism to the Provincial Council was so strong that any alternative would have been preferable. On the other hand, support of the Provincial Council can in some areas be interpreted as gratitude for works carried out. A classic example is that of Balclutha, where enthusiasm for provincialism could not be equalled after a railway was built between Balclutha and Dunedin.

In any movement of public opinion, the vital factor is leadership. However strong local feelings may be, unless leaders emerge who have the strength to enlist public support and carry it, then public opinion counts for very little. Without a doubt, James Macandrew was the dominant leader in the struggle against Abolition. As Superintendent of Otago he had brought the province through a period of prosperity and had gained the confidence of the Otago colonists. He was an astute man, understanding the people of his province and able to swing them to his
way of thinking. Although at first not anxious to alienate himself from the Vogel ministry, once having espoused the Provincialist cause, he became completely convinced of its rectitude and ardent in pursuing its success. His appeal to the people was emotional rather than factual and rational, and he succeeded in drawing people as much through his personal appeal as through his argument. His deep conviction, bordering almost on the fanatical at times, coupled with astuteness as a politician, made him a very powerful leader of the Provincialist party.

Robert Stout and Donald Reid were the other most notable leaders among the Otago provincialists. Stout, who made his parliamentary debut in the abolition debate and, after telling his constituents firmly that if the issue was defeated he would resign, went on to become Prime Minister of New Zealand, was a young man of outstanding intellectual ability. His logical arguments, though not swaying the crowds, went a long way towards persuading the Otago people of the justice of their cause. Stout, himself, was convinced that provincialism was vital to the retention of good government in New Zealand and succeeded in persuading
many others to think in a like manner, through the force and rationality of his argument. The dominant characteristic of Donald Reid, M.H.R. for the Taieri, seems to have been his eminently sensible nature. A politician of experience and stature, he joined the Provincialist Party in November 1875 and fought actively on its behalf until, in September 1876, it became clear to him that to do his best for Otago, he should abandon provincialism and strive to gain as much as possible from the Counties Bill.

When the abolition of the North Island provinces was first mooted, the leading Otago politicians did not immediately show their opposition. Macandrew and Reid warned against it, but other Representatives either gave the Bill their support or refused to adopt any definite attitude towards it. At first the people of Otago were inclined to support the measure, although they were quick to realise that only a very little adjustment would be required to extend the Bill to include the whole of New Zealand. From the very beginning, the retention of local finances was stressed. The Otagans were determined at all costs to retain control of their land fund and the management of their
railways. Just prior to the last meeting of the Provincial Council, the expression of public opinion opposing abolition increased and this attitude was strengthened a little, following Macandrew's speech at the opening of the Council. Proposals advocating insular separation and asking for a delay in carrying out abolition so that the people might be consulted, were raised at the Council, and in the papers, independence for Otago was suggested by correspondents. In Lawrence, Oamaru and similar anti-Provincialist areas, such suggestions were treated with scorn. To their minds, the sooner the provincial governments were abolished, the sooner they would have some chance of gaining capital for development in their own areas.

When the decision to abolish all the Provinces in the 1875 session was announced at the General Assembly, the people of Otago were immediately hostile. Natural suspicion was aroused by this attempt to force legislation through hurriedly, and thus opposition was fostered throughout Otago, giving rise to a spate of public meetings. These meetings indicated a slight movement of public opinion. Tuapeka and Lawrence remained firmly abolitionist, and Balclutha spoke out
against the Bill, as might have been expected, but in Southland opinion moved from supporting the Bill to requesting that the issue be referred to the public at the general election. When finally a meeting was held in Dunedin, the meeting veered towards opposition to the Abolition Bill, but was far from unanimous. Similarly, in the House the views of the Otago representatives were still not fixed, and hence in the division, only four out of eighteen representatives voted with the opposition.

What, then, occurred to bring about in the elections of December 1875, an almost complete victory for the Provincialists? Certainly, the return of the representatives from the House, along with Sir George Grey, the champion of provincialism, and the pageantry of the numerous banquets, served to bring the Provincialist cause to the eye of the public, although they were slow to announce what their policy was to be. But, for some reason not immediately apparent, people began to formulate their own opinions on the abolition issue, recognising it as the factor on which the election would be fought and hence multifarious shades of provincialist and abolitionist policy were brought to
the fore. The ardent Abolitionists stayed firm, but in the Dunedin area there were few who did not support Provincialism. One of the reasons for this was undoubtedly financial. The Provincialists were quick to see that under the Abolition Act the land fund would be rapidly absorbed, and this aroused antagonism. The danger that large blocks of land might be sold instead of being divided for settlement caused alarm and added to the general enthusiasm for the Anti-Centralist Party. Dunedin, particularly had prospered as the provincial capital and her residents were keen for this to continue. Thus when the election results came in, only two seats were held by Abolitionists and Otago's representation in Wellington was almost entirely Provincialist. This was not always an indication of support for the cause. It seems probable that George McLean would have been returned at Waikouaiti regardless of the party for which he stood, but nonetheless the Otago election results do reflect a great majority opposed to the abolition of the provinces.

Opposition to abolition did not, however, imply that the Otagans desired retention of the status quo and thus the people harked back to the movement of
former times, that of insular separation. The determination of the people to obtain this system of government and their conviction that this was right for Otago was strengthened by the opposition of Vogel, but, because of the failure of Canterbury to support Macandrew, was doomed to failure in the General Assembly. Public opinion was roused greatly by the correspondence between Macandrew and Vogel, reaching almost fanatical levels.

The failure of the separation resolutions brought two distinct reactions in Otago. One abandoned all hope of preventing abolition and determined to make the best of the facilities available. Macandrew and his supporters, rapidly diminishing in number, fought on to the bitter end.

It is clear that during the course of the struggle against the Abolition of the Provinces Act, the majority of the people of Otago was clearly opposed to the passing of the Act. That there was a minority who favoured abolition cannot be denied, but the Ministry were incorrect when they asserted that the Act would in fact be "welcomed by a large proportion of the Province of Otago."1

1. A.J.H.R. 1876, A7, No.3 (Encl.), Normanby/Macandrew
Appendix 1: Voting on the Resolution for
Insular Separation Put to the Otago Provincial
Council by Wilson Representing Makarewa on
15 June, 1875. 1.

FOR: Allan - Taieri
Armstrong - Mt. Ida
Clark - Waitahuna
Daniel - Riverton
Davie - Dunedin
Green - Blueskin
Hallenstein - The Lakes
Henderson - Clutha
Ireland - Mt. Bonger
Kinross - Otaramika
Lumsden - Invercargill
Mills - Waikouaiti
Mollison - Waihola
Moody - Moeraki
McDermid - Port Chalmers
McKellar - Kawarau
Mckenzie - Waihemo
McNeil - Clutha
Reeves - Dunedin
Sumpter - Waitaki
Turnbull - Dunedin
Wilson - Makarawa
Wood - Waihopai
Manders - The Lakes
Reid - Kaikorai

AGAINST: Brown - Tuapeka
Fish - Dunedin
Haggitt - Dunedin
McCluskan - North Harbour
Rogers - Oreti
Steward - Camaru

de Lautour -

Mt. Ida.

1. See p. 18 Votes and Proceedings of
the Provincial Council of Otago, 1875, p. 111
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