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A REJECTION OF BONDAGE:

A comparative study of the labour content of Wakefield's scheme of systematic colonisation and labour in the first years of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in History

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Abstract

Wakefield’s theory of systematic colonisation contained within it various ideas relating to labour and labour relations. This thesis considers, in two parts, the impact of these ideas on the establishment and the early years of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements. In the first part, it examines Wakefield’s theory. A principal focus of the theory was the issue of how labour should be supplied to and controlled in the colonial labour market. Wakefield strongly rejected all traditional forms of forced labour and proposed the adoption of systematic colonisation. The two features of this scheme were the sale of land at a high price to ensure that labourers remained in the labour market for several years and the use of the revenue from land sales to assist labourers to emigrate to the colonies. In addition, the emigrants were given guarantees of work in the proposed settlements. The second part of this thesis looks at the application of Wakefield’s ideas to the New Zealand settlements. It also looks at how the attitudes and behaviour of the early emigrants to these settlements may have reflected Wakefield’s ideas. In general, these ideas had a varied impact on the settlements and the settlers. The colonising agencies sold land at a high price and used the revenue to assist emigrants to the settlements. These ideas also persisted beyond the early settlement period. But the agencies never exercised any effective control over the labour market or labour. The agencies also provided work when needed, but only for relatively short period. Moreover, the main legacy from this particular experience may have been an aversion on the part of the colonial elite to the further provision of relief. Wakefield and his settlements also provided two enduring triumphs for labour. The better known of these is the eight hour day. Perhaps the more fundamental triumph, however, was labour’s general freedom from the legal enforcement of specific service. The settlers reflected in this achievement Wakefield’s rejection of all the traditional forms of labour bondage.
Preface

This thesis on Wakefield and labour developed out of research which was initially focused on the question of why we have a statutory minimum wage in New Zealand. The main basis for this particular interest in the minimum wage was the political pressure in New Zealand during the early 1990s for its elimination. It seemed to me at the time that there was a considerable amount of talk about removing the minimum wage based on its supposed effects on the economy, with little attention being paid to why it had been originally adopted. Principally, this initial work comprised of research into the origins and development of the ideas of the just wage and just price, and the evolution of labour regulations from the time of the Black Death.

My shift from this question to the present subject of this thesis occurred when I began to consider contemporary ideas in the first half of the nineteenth century in Britain relating to the minimum wage, and the transfer of these ideas to early colonial New Zealand. At this point a connection to Wakefield was made as a result of the discovery of references which indicated the possible adoption of a type of ‘minimum wage’ in the early years of the Wakefield settlements. ¹ Crucially, in following up this possible link, I found that Wakefield’s written work on his scheme of systematic colonisation revealed a number of important implications for labour, but ironically, little to explain the interest in the settlements in the minimum wage. These implications related to the general and individual control of servants by their masters; the indirect control of wages and other conditions of work; and the creation of a labour force with a strong identity of interest with ‘employers’. For a number of reasons, Wakefield’s ideas on these subjects and the lack of a direct link to the

¹ New Zealand Journal, 2 January 1841; J.D. Salmond, 'The Struggle for the Eight Hours’ System', J.D. Salmond Papers; Otago News, 7 February 1849.
minimum wage offered the prospect of some intriguing research, which quickly became compelling.

Of these reasons, the first to occur to me was that, if ideas relating to labour were important parts of Wakefield’s general idea of systematic colonisation, a study of these ideas and their impact on New Zealand might provide a fruitful way of at least looking in part at labour in New Zealand in the nineteenth century. As I had been aware since writing my first thesis in the early 1980s, the activity of labour before the substantial growth of unions in the late 1880s was still very much a matter of mystery. Furthermore, I felt that our recent experience of the Employment Contracts Act, 1991 (repealed in 2000), provided an opportunity to apply a new perspective to nineteenth century labour relations which was not largely preoccupied with identifying and examining union organisation and strike activity. In essence, the Employment Contracts Act brought individual relationships and action more into the centre of the labour relations stage and reduced the significance of collective organisation and action. It was also apparent on the same basis that a study touching on individual labour relationships in the nineteenth century would bring to light a part of our early experience of what was now recognisable as an important theme in today’s labour relations. In addition, the study provided an opportunity to continue to at least partly explore the development of the minimum wage in New Zealand. Wakefield’s work still left me with the question of why the Wakefield settlements might have adopted a ‘minimum wage’ when it was apparently not included in his argument and plans for systematic colonisation. This particular question was also linked to another issue relating to minimum employment conditions: the eight hour day. The Wakefield settlements have long been strongly associated with the eight hour day but, again, this was not a development explained in Wakefield’s works. As if this was not enough, later, with the publication of Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the Colonial Dream in 1997, it became clear that this thesis also had a contribution to make to a
renewed debate which was directly concerned with Wakefield and the extent of his possible influence on New Zealand.²

The final form of this thesis, which has developed out of these concerns and interests, has two main parts. The first seeks to fully clarify Wakefield’s ideas on labour in relation to his scheme of systematic colonisation by examining in detail the content of his early written works from 1829 to 1833. The second considers how the establishment of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements and the activity and behaviour of the early colonists in these settlements reflected these ideas.

The clarification of Wakefield’s ideas includes an analysis of the labour content of Wakefield’s first published work, A Letter from Sydney; an assessment of the originality of this work; an analysis of Wakefield’s subsequent works which have a bearing on his ideas on labour and changes in these ideas; and an outline of related developments with respect to the colonisation of South Australia. This clarification is intended to provide a platform from which to compare subsequent events and activities. The subsequent events and activities include Wakefield’s own deviations from this basic platform, at least where they can be disentangled from those of the colonising agencies with which he was associated, in particular the New Zealand Company and the Canterbury Association.

The analysis of the labour content of Wakefield’s works is an almost entirely new exercise. There is, for example, very little substantive work on Wakefield’s ideas on the control of labour. Various texts provide merely simple acknowledgements of Wakefield’s opposition to the use of slave or convict labour in his proposed colonies.³

Irma O'Connor, one of his biographers, also notes that this opposition extended to the use of indentured labour. In addition, she paraphrased Wakefield’s perception of Australia’s labour problem as a ‘crying need’ for ‘free labour’.⁴ William Pember Reeves in The Long White Cloud similarly talked of Wakefield’s intention to recruit ‘free labour’ for his proposed colonies.⁵ But neither O’Connor, Reeves, nor other historians concerned with Wakefield or the Wakefield period, provide any detailed discussion as to the nature of this ‘free labour’. The object here is to fully explore Wakefield’s arguments opposing unfree labour, the possibility that he may have had a special notion of labour which was free even of the commonplace constraints of the master and servant law,⁶ and his plan to control labour indirectly through the manipulation of the supply of labour into and out of the labour market.

The analysis also extends to an examination of the intellectual context of Wakefield’s ideas and contemporary colonial developments including the establishment of South Australia. Certainly Wakefield was not one of the great political economists of his age. But he was sufficiently important to receive direct encouragement in his work from John Stuart Mill and to be directly acknowledged by Karl Marx in Das Kapital.⁷ He was also especially prominent in Britain during the 1830s and 1840s in the aggressive promotion of his scheme of systematic colonisation.⁸ The main task here is to see how far his ideas on labour, which are part of the exposition and structure of

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⁵ Reeves, p.169.
⁶ That this may have been the case is at least now indicated in Erik Olssen, ‘Mr Wakefield and New Zealand as an Experiment in Post-Enlightenment Experimental Practice’, New Zealand Journal of History, vol.31, no.2, Oct. 1997, p. 206.
⁸ The relative importance of Wakefield’s ideas on colonisation is also indicated by Semmel, chs 4 and 5; Winch, p. 2 and passim; Robbins, p.154f.
his scheme, co-existed with, reflected, and differed from the ideas, objects, and activity of others around him. In placing Wakefield within this context generally a number of secondary sources have been very useful. This literature includes James Jaffe’s recent study of early workplace bargaining in Britain, which includes a survey of ideas on the operation of the labour market in the fifty years after Waterloo, and Trygve Tholfsen’s study of working class radicalism over a similar period.\textsuperscript{9} It also includes S. Drescher and S.L. Engerman’s encyclopaedic reference on slavery, John Steinfield’s study of the development of American free labour in contrast to the persistence of legal restraints in Britain, and Christopher Tomlin’s study of the interrelationship between labour, law, and ideology in America, which adds to the explanation of how free labour in America developed.\textsuperscript{10} Particularly useful sources on Australian developments include A.G.L. Shaw’s history, \textit{Convicts and the Colonies}; Douglas Pike’s history of South Australia; and Adrian Merritt’s account of the persistence of master and servant law in Australia into the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{11} The extent to which master and servant law was applied in Britain is indicated in Daphne Simon’s article, ‘Master and Servant’, and more generally in Britain and its colonies by Douglas Hay and Paul Craven in ‘Master and Servant in England and Empire: A Comparative Study’.\textsuperscript{12}

The second part of this thesis considers how the establishment and the first years of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements and the activity and behaviour of the early


colonists, reflected the labour content of Wakefield's scheme and also other sources of ideas and concerns in Britain relating to relief work and to wages and hours. The main issues to be considered with respect to the establishment of these Wakefield settlements of Wellington, New Plymouth, Nelson, Otago, and Canterbury, are twofold. They are whether or not the colonisers adopted the principles of Wakefield's scheme of systematic colonisation, which were to provide the basis for the control of labour in the settlements, and, if so, the success of these measures. These principles included the sale of land at a relatively high set price, described by Wakefield as the 'sufficient price'; the establishment of an emigration fund from the revenue from these land sales, and the selection and the supply of labour to the New Zealand Wakefield settlements. The main issues in relation to the behaviour and activity of the first colonists in the settlements are their expressions of direct support or otherwise for Wakefield's scheme, the aspirations of the working emigrants and their actual conditions of work, the application of the guarantee of employment, and the basis for the application of master and servant law and the extent of its use in the settlements, and indeed New Zealand.

The primary sources that have been referred to in examining these issues include government papers, including the British Colonial Office papers and records from the New Zealand Justice Department; a wide range of pamphlets promoting colonisation by various authors; contemporary newspapers and journals; the New Zealand Company's papers; and publications by contemporary observers of, and participants in, the colonisation of New Zealand. A number of useful secondary sources have also provided both background and detail in relation to these issues. These sources include various regional studies, Peter Stuart's biography of Wakefield, which provides a helpful account of Wakefield's own attitude towards the application of his scheme during his first years in New Zealand, and Philip Temple's recent and
substantial history of Wakefield's family. Further useful studies with a more general interest in the operation of the New Zealand Company include J.S. Marais's history of the early colonisation of New Zealand, John Miller's study of early colonial society and race relations in New Zealand, and Michael Turnbull's and Patricia Burns's studies of the New Zealand Company. These general sources in particular demonstrate an interesting divergence of views on the merit and success of the Wakefield's scheme. Marais's study for example praised the selection policy of the Company and its transportation of its colonists, though recognising deficiencies in the number of workmen sent to the settlements. Turnbull and Burns, on the other hand, were much more hostile. To the deficiencies in the quantity of the labour supply, Turnbull and Burns added criticism of the motives of Wakefield and the Company, indicating that they were dishonest as well as incompetent and, naturally intertwined with this, that the principles and detail of systematic colonisation were not followed. The view that quality migrants had been successfully selected and sent to New Zealand was also contradicted. Most recently, however, Brooking's study of Otago in the Colonial Dream, illustrates a return to a more sympathetic view of Wakefield's scheme and its successes. While bearing in mind these differences, the intent here of course is to objectively draw my own conclusions on Wakefield's impact on the settlements founded in his name in New Zealand, from the evidence in both primary sources and the full range of available secondary sources.

16 Turnbull, pp.36; 48-49; Burns, ch. 22; and also W.J.Gardner, 'A Colonial Economy' in W.H.Oliver with B.R.Williams (eds), The Oxford History of New Zealand, Oxford, 1981, pp.60-61.
The task of completing the second part of this thesis has been substantial and has generally precluded a detailed consideration of whether these ideas were reflected more widely and over the longer term in New Zealand during the nineteenth century. This matter is nevertheless given some attention at the conclusion of this thesis. In this regard I have made particular use of John Martin’s various works on labour in the nineteenth century; Margaret Tennant’s and David Thomson’s conclusions with regard to the general provision of assistance to the poor in New Zealand; and the work of J.D. Salmond and Bert Roth on the early development of unions in New Zealand.\footnote{John E. Martin, *The Forgotten Worker*, Wellington, 1990; John E. Martin, ’’Waging War on the Labour Market’’, *The State and Wage Labour in Late Nineteenth-Century New Zealand*, *Turnbull Library Record*, vol.26, nos 1-2, 1993; John E. Martin, ’’Unemployment, Government and the Labour Market, 1860-1890’’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol.29, no.2, October 1995; John Martin, ’’A small nation on the move’’, in *Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the Colonial Dream*; Margaret Tennant, *Paupers and Providers*, Wellington, 1989; David Thomson, *A World Without Welfare*, Auckland, 1998; J. D. Salmond (ed. D. Crowley), *New Zealand Labour’s Pioneering Days*, Auckland, 1950; Herbert Roth, *Trade Unions in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1973; Herbert Roth, ’’Trade Unions’’, in John Howells, Noel S Woods, and F.J.L. Young, *Labour and Industrial Relations in New Zealand*, Carlton, 1974.}

During both the initial work on the minimum wage and my subsequent work on Wakefield and labour, I have of course incurred a number of debts. In this regard, I would like in particular to thank Professor Erik Olssen and Associate Professor Paul Roth, who have guided me with care and sensitivity, through difficult times, throughout the research and construction of my thesis. I would also like to express my special thanks to Rosemary Mercer for her wonderful help in reading and commenting on my drafts in full and her constant, generous encouragement; to Jen Wilson for listening and talking to me about Wakefield, systematic colonisation, employment law, and early colonial New Zealand with patience and good sense, and providing some last minute comments on the general content on this thesis; to my mother who made great sacrifices in very hard and painful times in London and
Auckland as I grew up with my three brothers, and helped me on my wandering way to this project; to Helen, Lynlee, Mary, Norm, Adrienne, and Walter for their special interest and kindnesses; and to my family of Marcus and Eun Jung, Chris and Marlene, Francis, David and Joan, Angela and Patrick, and Denis (sadly deceased) for all their support and encouragement. Finally, I have the greatest pleasure in dedicating this thesis to Josie and David.
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Part One:

Systematic Colonisation and Labour

to the Founding of South Australia
Chapter 1

A Letter from Sydney

Introduction

Wakefield wrote his first major work, A Letter from Sydney, in 1829. It was a work of imagination and research as Wakefield had not been to Australia. Generally, A Letter from Sydney is an argument for colonial development and the adoption of a new system of colonisation. Wakefield held that colonial development was far from being satisfactorily advanced under existing colonisation practices. What was needed, he argued, was the adoption of a new practice. In developing these themes, Wakefield's argument contained important ideas and implications for labour. Most notably, these included his opposition to unfree labour and his proposal to control labour by means of his scheme of systematic colonisation. The following looks at what Wakefield specifically had to say on these and other matters relating to labour within the framework of A Letter from Sydney. It also looks at how his ideas variously reflected, rejected, and moved away from traditional and contemporary conceptions and practices.

1 The work was written by Wakefield while imprisoned in Newgate for the abduction of Ellen Turner. The indictment against Wakefield for this crime records that he 'feloniously carried away one Ellen Turner, spinster, maid and heir-apparent unto her father, William Turner Esq., for the sake of the lucre of her substance and ... afterwards unlawfully and against her will married the said Ellen Turner.' Lloyd Prichard, p.10; Temple, chs.6, 8.
Ideas Relating to Labour in A Letter from Sydney

Wakefield commenced A Letter from Sydney with a preface which was drawn in its entirety from the London journal, the Quarterly Review, of April 1829. The Review provided in this excerpt an initial outline of two labour issues. The first of these issues was the problem of British unemployment. The second was the removal of the unemployed to the colonies where, it was claimed, more productive work awaited them.

With regard to unemployment, the Review began by expressing deep concern with a perceived growth of unemployment particularly since the Napoleonic Wars. The Review stated that ‘Another evil aggravated, though certainly not engendered, by the miserable administration of our poor-laws, is our present redundancy of population. He must have been inattentive to what is visible in almost every town and hamlet throughout the kingdom, who does not perceive that population has, for at least fifteen or twenty years, been increasing at a rate for which no improvement in agriculture or manufactures could afford employment’. The Review added that unemployment affected all segments of the working population, not merely labourers. It stated that ‘All trades, pursuits and professions are becoming more and more overstocked; and multitudes of persons, of all degrees and ages, are moving about, without employment, useless to themselves, and a burden to the public.’

2 The vast proportion of British journal articles written before 1870 were published either anonymously or with pseudonyms. In the case of the Review article used by Wakefield in A Letter from Sydney, i.e. ‘On the State and Prospects of the Country’, this has been given a possible attribution to Robert Southey, who was a contributor of numerous articles to the Review. Alongside his work as a poet (he was appointed poet laureate in 1813), Southey wrote widely on subjects ‘from travels to Poor Laws, from biography to Catholic Emancipation, from politics in Portugal to researches in Polynesia.’ The Wellesley periodical index notes that while the Review was generally a conservative journal it was also prepared to provide an outlet for reforming ideas. These included ideas relating to factory reform, child labour, and schools for the poor. Walter E. Houghton (ed), The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824–1900, vol. 1, Toronto, 1966, xvi, xxi, pp.697-98, 701, 708. Cf. Temple, pp.127-28.
Having briefly described the problem, the *Review* argued that it should be alleviated by the promotion of colonisation. It stated that ‘No pains should be spared to teach the labouring classes to regard the colonies as the land of promise, which it should be their highest ambition to be able to reach.’ Further, the *Review* emphasised once more that this was an issue that affected not only labourers, but the whole community, and that the solution had to apply to all levels of society. It stated that ‘Nor does this matter concern the poorer orders among us alone; in the colonies, a large proportion of the children or grandchildren of the highest families in this land must be contented to fix their abode, unless they resolve to drag on a life of dependence and indigence here.’ The *Review* reinforced the point even further by noting ‘It is unfortunate that these establishments should so long have been regarded as fit only for the residence of convicts, labourers, mechanics, and desperate or needy men.’ The *Review* argued that ‘enterprising young men of rank and connections’ needed to become ‘accustomed to look to the colonies as the most certain means of obtaining a comfortable settlement’. And ‘the poor’, who lacked the private means to reach the colonies, needed to ‘be persuaded that it would be better for them to purchase a passage, by binding themselves to serve as bondsmen for a few years after their arrival in the colonies, than to wear out an abject and hopeless life at home’. The *Review* hoped that by this encouragement to self action, that ‘the country might be materially relieved of the useless population by which it is likely to be soon encumbered.’

In response to this opening, Wakefield presented his own more detailed argument relating to labour in the main text of *A Letter from Sydney* through the voice of a fictional figure representing a colonist and former landowner in New South Wales. Not surprisingly, Wakefield commented further; in this text, on both the issues of

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³ Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *A Letter from Sydney*, 1829, pp.99-100. All references in this thesis to Wakefield’s works are, unless otherwise stated, from Lloyd Prichard.
British unemployment and the general solution of the transfer of redundant labour to the colonies. Wakefield underlined his own specific concern over unemployment by stating that redundancy was the most serious problem Britain faced. The 'sole object' of 'an Englishmen who ardently desires the greatest good of his country', Wakefield stated, 'would be to put an end to that portion of crime and misery which in Britain is produced by an excess of people in proportion to territory'.

In addition, Wakefield referred to Malthus' famous principle of population. At the core of this principle were the ideas that improvements in the living conditions of the population, such as an increase in food production, stimulated population growth and that the capacity for population growth was always greater than the capacity of a nation to expand its food production. Malthus combined these ideas to generally argue that improvements in the conditions of the population led to a chain of mostly unfortunate events: it triggered population growth; produced, over time, labourers in excess of available employment; led to the reduction of wages of labourers (as they competed for scarce work) relative to the price of provisions; created great distress; and resulted ultimately in the reversal of the effect of the initial trigger of population growth. Malthus, in elaborating on the principle, accepted that 'the wealth of the nation' had 'been advancing with a quick pace', but reasoned that this was largely the result of the growth of manufactures and that this 'increasing wealth of the nation ... had little or no tendency to better the condition of the labouring poor.' More generally, the great import of Malthus' principle, in terms of its influence on state policy, was that it strongly suggested that little could or should be done to improve the conditions of the labouring poor. Any improvement in conditions brought about by external intervention would be rapidly offset by a larger increase in

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the population with the fatal consequences of increased unemployment, reduced wages, and increased distress. Action to improve conditions, in other words, only fuelled greater future distress.

The Review (in the preface to A Letter from Sydney) had implicitly acknowledged the substance of Malthus’ argument with regard to the growth of the population — the ‘population has ... been increasing at a rate for which no improvement in agriculture or manufactures could afford employment’ — but it ignored the important implication of Malthus’ argument with regard to the general futility of action. It simply referred to the occurrence of a greater increase in population relative to production and indicated that the problem was resolvable through the departure of the redundant elements of the population to the colonies. Wakefield reconciled the apparent contradiction. He accepted Malthus’ principle, but also added that by adopting an active policy of colonisation ‘we might avoid, for a time, the worst evils of which that eminent philosopher discovered the causes’, and perhaps in this time discover ‘a means of checking population otherwise than by sin and sorrow.’ Wakefield thus accepted the general thrust of Malthus’ argument but managed also to promote emigration by arguing that it bought not only time but also the opportunity for thinking about how the problem of overpopulation might be more effectively resolved in the future.

While the issues of British unemployment and the general need to adopt colonisation as the means of dealing with this unemployment dominated the opening to A Letter from Sydney, they were prominent only briefly. The issues in fact were only the preamble to the main thrust of Wakefield’s argument relating to labour. This main thrust comprised three key themes. The first was the need to establish settlements

\[7\] Wakefield, A Letter from Sydney, p.164.
within distinct and limited physical boundaries which he described as concentrated settlements. Wakefield argued that the colonial population in general needed to be concentrated in order for the colony to speedily achieve the 'greatness' of not only a wealthy but a civilised, cultivated society (and thus become an attractive destination for migrants and obtain the capacity for absorbing new migrants). The second theme was that this greatness could not be effectively achieved using current methods of supplying and controlling colonial labour. The third theme was that concentration could be achieved instead through the adoption of his new scheme of systematic colonisation. In essence, the need to achieve the great object of concentration provided the basis for arguing for the need to change the modes of transferring labour from Britain to its colonies, and retaining this labour in the colonial labour market.

Wakefield’s view, firstly, of concentrated settlement, was that it was ‘in almost every thing ... the essence of power’ and the source of greatness.\(^8\) The form of settlement involved the establishment of colonies inside tight geographical boundaries within which labour was available in such proportion to land, and also to capital, as to ensure that the productive potential of the land was fully exploited. Wakefield also argued that as an adequate supply of labourers performed the tasks of labour, landowners achieved not only great wealth but were also freed from the drudgery of manual work to attend to the task of making ‘progress in the art of living’ including the development of ‘knowledge, skill, [and] taste’. In other words, when settlement was concentrated, the individual landowners and thus the settlement as a whole made both individual and collective progress towards achieving the mantle of greatness.\(^9\) Furthermore, Wakefield argued that a great colonial society would attract to it a

\(^8\) Ibid, p.155.
\(^9\) Ibid, p.151.
broad range of persons in Britain and, because it 'would, every day open new fields', it would also be able to readily absorb more labour 'from all over-peopled countries ... tempted to exchange starvation wages for ... ample wages'.

In support of his proposition that the settlement of colonies needed to be concentrated, Wakefield produced several arguments. In one, Wakefield cited the reluctance of the Australian Company to invest in land production where labour was not available in sufficient concentration. Asking, rhetorically, why the investment was not currently proceeding, he stated that it was 'Not for want either of capital, or of picked land, rent, tithe, and tax free, or of a favourable climate, or of ready markets; not even want of cheap labour, inasmuch as, under the peculiar circumstances, these commodities [see note] might be profitably produced, though wages should be high; - but simply, because, for any such purposes, which require the employment of many hands, there is an absolute want of hands at any rate of wages'. Labour had to be concentrated and thus available in a satisfactory proportion to available land and capital for development.

Wakefield also cited a number of opinions from prominent sources in support of concentration. Of these, Wakefield noted a comment from George Washington on the weakness of production where settlement was not concentrated. According to Washington, in a land such as America, where 'land is cheap and labour dear, men are fonder of cultivating much than cultivating well', and '[m]uch ground has been scratched, and none cultivated as it ought to be.' Wakefield elaborated further by reference to abbé de Raynal', a popular eighteenth century French historian.

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10 Ibid., pp. 161, 165-66.
11 According to Wakefield, the company was interested in the production of wine, olive oil, hemp, flax, silk, and opium, ibid., p. 112.
12 Guillaume-Thomas, abbé de Raynal’s history of European colonies in India and America was, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, extremely popular, 'going through 30 editions between 1772 and 1789', Britannica.com, 4 November 2000.
Raynal argued that ‘Louisiana would not, probably, have languished for so long a
time, had it not been for an original error adopted in granting land indiscriminately to
every person who applied for them, and in a manner in which he desired them.
Immense deserts would not have separated the colonists from each other.’ He
added, in specific support of concentration, that ‘Being brought near to a common
centre, they would have assisted each other, and would have enjoyed all the
advantages of a well-regulated society. As population increased, the lands would
have been cleared to a greater extent. Instead of a few hordes of [French] savages,
we should have seen a rising colony, which might in time have become a powerful
nation, and procured infinite advantages to France.’ In Alexander von Humboldt, the
German naturalist, Wakefield also found a critic of alternatively distributing land
through the assignment of land into great estates. Humboldt noted, with reference to
the great landowners situated on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, the negative
consequences of allowing such landowners the opportunity to merely sit on their
estates, which included the prevention and limitation of general economic
development. In addition, Wakefield referred to the Edinburgh Review which noted
that ‘the boundless extent of new and fertile land’ in America produced cheap land
and dear labour, and led to the persistence of slavery as a means of offsetting the
difficulty of obtaining reasonably priced labour.\footnote{13}

Further to citing these supporting arguments, Wakefield attacked the commentary in
Smith’s Wealth of Nations which spoke approvingly of a colonial population rapidly
expanding onto new land. In this commentary (which Wakefield quoted extensively),
Smith argued that the colonist had ‘every motive to render as great as possible a
produce’. He had no rent to pay and only trifling taxes. He also received more land
that he could ‘possibly cultivate’. What followed from this, according to Smith, was a
continuing cycle of prosperity. The landowner sought all the labour he could to

\footnote{13 Wakefield, A Letter from Sydney, pp.156-58.}
maximise production and, given that there was never enough labour, he paid ‘the
most liberal wages.’ The dependence of the capitalist and landowner on labour
obliged them, according to Smith, to treat labour ‘with more generosity and
humanity’ excepting where labour was ‘in a state of slavery.’ This generosity and
humanity, at least for labour which was not in a state of slavery, in turn, generated
the continuation of the cycle into a new phase by enabling the well paid labourers to
quickly became landlords themselves. The cycle continued as they, too, were
required to pay high wages. The payment of high wages, a vital factor in this cycle,
persisted, Smith argued, because labour would remain tight even with emigration
fuelled by the prospects of high wages and additional natural growth arising from the
new landlords marrying and having families sooner as a result of their prosperity.14

Smith also argued that this general pattern reflected the basis for the successful
colonies planted by the ancient Greeks.15 Wakefield’s criticism of Smith’s argument
was largely that Smith misunderstood the basis of this success. Wakefield’s own
analysis of Greek colonisation consisted of four main points. Firstly, Wakefield
argued that the Greek colonists had not been primarily labourers moving into land
ownership. Rather, the colonists had represented a cross section of the society of
‘the old State’ led by ‘men of the highest distinction’. Secondly, the colonies had not
been founded in places where extensive wastelands were available. Thus, the
population of the Greek colony had remained concentrated (i.e. the ‘limits of territory
in proportion to people’ were ‘narrow’). Thirdly, because the population was
concentrated, and because the Greeks had used slaves, labour was cheap, not dear.

14 The linkage of prosperity and population growth was of course an idea later reflected in Malthus’
principle, but also turned to a more depressing conclusion.
15 Wakefield, A Letter from Sydney, pp.153-54. In addition, as Lloyd Prichard indicates, Smith, like
Humboldt, was also critical of the engrossment of land in great estates. Although the point was similar
to Humboldt’s, Wakefield did not cite Smith’s view. It seems fair to assume that he was aware of the
argument but preferred to ignore it because of Smith’s overview that engrossment limited the
opportunity of others to find and farm their own land, and thus limited the ‘plenty and cheapness of
good land’ which were ‘the principal causes of the rapid prosperity of new colonies.’ Lloyd Prichard,
It was from this, therefore, that wealth had accumulated rapidly and the society of the new colony had been able to quickly rival 'their parent city' in terms of its civilised culture. And similarly, fourthly, as individual land owners accumulated wealth through rent as a result of concentrated settlement, these individuals possessed, either at once or very soon, the riches and the consequent leisure wherewith to cultivate "all the arts of refinement, philosophy, poetry and eloquence."\textsuperscript{16} From his view of the colonies of the ancient Greeks, Wakefield emphasised, in contrast to Smith, the value of colonisation by a cross section of the society of the old state led by men of the highest rank and of establishing and maintaining a concentrated settlement. Successful colonisation was not achieved as Smith had presented it, by the rapid expansion of colonists onto a vast and empty land and supplied with only a limited resource of dear labour which quickly removed itself into landownership.

Wakefield also disagreed with Smith's explanation for the weak economic development experienced in North America. America had, Wakefield noted, benefited to some degree from all the advantages which according to Smith were naturally those of colonisers from a civilised country settling in a relatively unpopulated land. These involved the transfer of the technological, social, administrative, and legal advantages of the parent state, and a relative freedom from tax and rent. Yet America had not, both in Smith's and Wakefield's view, advanced as one would have expected. For Smith, the explanation was maladministration by Britain which had imposed its own interests on the development of North America, rather than allow the North American colonies to follow their own best interests. This maladministration, according to Smith, contrasted to the independence of the Greek colonies from their mother cities and their 'liberty to manage their own affairs in the way that they judged was most suitable to their own interests.' To Wakefield, however, this argument was no longer viable fifty years on from the American Declaration of Independence. In

\textsuperscript{16} Wakefield, \textit{A Letter from Sydney}, pp.155-56 (quoting Adam Smith).
fact, he believed that the Americans had gone backwards since independence. Using the term ‘new people’ to pejoratively describe those lacking in civilisation and cultivation, he stated that ‘the United States’ Americans are a newer people now, in 1829, than they were in 1779.’\

In general, Wakefield agreed that given that labour was invariably short in the colonies, labourers were paid high wages and rapidly acquired land. Instead of this creating a positive cycle of development, however, he perceived that the rapid movement of labour into land ownership damaged development. The shift, as Wakefield saw it, reduced the supply of labour in the labour market and increased demand. This resulted in higher wages, left landowners unable to properly exploit their land holdings, and forced them to become immersed in the physical task of eking out a bare living from their land and to neglect other matters of civilisation and cultivation. Wakefield concluded that the Americans ‘must remain … an infant people, acquiring only the means of future wealth and greatness’, not because of a lack of independence to make their own decisions, but because of the lack of concentrated settlement.\

Looking generally at A Letter from Sydney, there are references throughout the text to the disadvantages of the dispersed nature of colonial settlement and, conversely, to the advantages of concentration. In summary, Wakefield highlighted the virtue and desirability of concentrated settlement by noting the deterrent effect on investment of a lack of labour, by reference to various prominent critics of dispersed settlement, and by his criticism of Smith’s comments on the virtue of the rapid expansion of colonists onto the land, particularly with respect to the colonisation of North America.

The second key theme of Wakefield’s argument was the rejection of slavery, and convict and indentured labour, as suitable means of providing labour in the colonies.

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17 Ibid, pp.151-56.
18 Ibid, pp.156.
both in general, and in sufficient numbers to meet the need to establish and maintain concentrated settlements.

In addressing the many and varied deficiencies of these means, Wakefield was briefest in his dismissal of slavery. While he noted, with reference to Adam Smith, that slavery entailed some economic advantage, he also dismissed it as unacceptable to Englishmen.

In his analysis of Adam Smith, Wakefield noted that the concentration of the Greek settlements, ‘together with the institution slavery, rendered labour cheap instead of dear.’ Wakefield also noted that in the West Indies, black slavery had allowed men, who would have otherwise been ‘little West Indian’ farmers, to become ‘rich, well-educated and agreeable’ gentlemen. Slavery therefore met at least part of the criteria for successful colonisation by contributing to the accumulation of capital and, thus, ultimately, the development of a civilised colonial society.

But Wakefield also stated simply that black slavery involved ‘damnable cruelties’ and was ‘far more unjust, and therefore more cruel’ than ‘white slavery’ which was not approved of by ‘the English nation’. As the enslavement of Englishmen was intolerable, so, and more so, according to Wakefield, was black enslavement.

The injustice of slavery itself was also presented as an additional reason for improving the method of colonisation. The existence of a labour shortage created pressure to use slaves. It therefore followed that the elimination of the shortage by any means other than slavery would not only generate greatness, but also achieve a

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21 Ibid, pp.110, 112.
moral end. Wakefield observed that 'It is wonderful, but true, that, notwithstanding the great exertions of the abolitionists, the number of slaves owned by Christians is increasing every day. But why should we wonder? What was the sole cause of the revival of slavery by Christians, but the discovery of waste countries, and the disproportion which has ever since existed in those countries between the demand and supply of labour'? \(^{23}\) The abolitionist movement, according to Wakefield, dealt with the effect. The elimination of the labour shortage would deal with the cause.

Wakefield's argument against the general use of convicts ranged widely and included the inefficiency of convict labour, its limited potential as a supply of labour, the moral offence of convict labour as a form of slavery, its detrimental effects on the development of cultivated society, and its dangers.

Wakefield conceded that, like black slaves, convict labour was a source of cheap labour. It therefore conferred the advantage of allowing capitalists to accumulate wealth, and thus to obtain leisure and consequently cultivation in terms of their person, mind, and manners. The colonial landowner and merchant needed to give to his 'convict labourers ... but just enough for their subsistence' and because of this obtained 'a large surplus produce'.\(^{24}\) Indeed, convict labour had the advantage over black slavery of being 'obtained without any prime cost' as the British Government underwrote the cost of passage.\(^{25}\) The convicts were 'criminal slaves', 'temporary slaves', of 'immense value' to the persons to whom the government bestowed temporary ownership.\(^{26}\) He also accepted that convict labour could serve a limited pioneering role in extending settlement.\(^{27}\)

\(^{23}\) Ibid, p.113.  
\(^{24}\) Ibid, p.126.  
\(^{25}\) Ibid, p.113.  
\(^{26}\) Ibid, p.116.  
\(^{27}\) Ibid, p.166.
Convict labour, however, was condemned as a ‘species of slave-labour’.\textsuperscript{28} As Wakefield observed, slavery was cruel in itself. Furthermore, while recognising that the convicts had economic value to some, Wakefield made it clear that this did not mean that the economic potential of the colony was fully exploited by the use of convict labour. Wakefield characterised the convicts, undoubtedly with some good reason, as unreliable, untrustworthy, and ultimately uncontrollable.\textsuperscript{29} They led the colonial landowner ‘the life of a dog’, and the landowner even became ‘the slave of ... slaves’.\textsuperscript{30} Although there were disadvantages in using non-convict labourers (particularly their propensity to quickly become landowners, an issue further discussed below), non-convicts were, by comparison with convicts, ‘very serviceable’ in the work that they undertook.\textsuperscript{31}

Besides this relative inefficiency, Wakefield noted the general inadequacy of the overall supply of convict labour to meet the demands of the colony. If, he speculated, there were ‘Twenty thousand convicts, divided amongst five hundred settlers’, this ‘would give to each settler forty pair of hands, wherewith to obtain for his wife a superb landau and plenty of gunpowder; but divide the same number of convicts amongst ten times the number of settlers and poverty, in respect to everything above mere subsistence, must be the lot of all.’ The supply of convict labour by itself, regardless of its other deficiencies, could not meet the growing needs of the colony. It could not be expected that ‘the increase in crime will keep pace with the spread of colonization’.\textsuperscript{32} Wakefield also specifically disputed the advantage of the selective assignment of convicts. Too few convicts would not create a general advantage to

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, p.113.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid, pp.105-06.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, p.107.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid, p.127.
the colony, and the unfair distribution ‘by favour ... to bestow upon a few persons
only the means of wealth ... would be injurious ... by causing furious ill-will amongst
the colonists.’\textsuperscript{33}

Wakefield also argued that ‘It follows that to domiciliate the criminals of Britain
amongst those British subjects not criminal, who reside in Australasia, is unjust and
wicked,’ and that ‘the system’ was ‘calculated to do the latter and their posterity [that
is, their children] a great moral injury.’ He added ‘That the system abounds with evil it
will not be difficult to establish.’\textsuperscript{34} He then ran through a series of these evils.

The first was the ‘insecurity of life and property’ including exposure to ‘burnings,
rapes and massacres’ in the outback, and the liability ‘to be murdered in a quiet way’
in the towns, and the cost of attempting protection against these kinds ‘of
depredation.’\textsuperscript{35}

Secondly, he stated that ‘The population not legally criminal, is corrupted by the
constant example of crime, and the frequent sight of bloody punishments.’ Children
were his main concern. ‘What sense of right’, he asked, ‘can children acquire, where
villainy is the rule, and honesty the exception; where they must needs associate
familiarly with depraved men and women, who use every art to convert them to vice;
where law has no moral force; where general opinion favours the criminal; where to
break the law is a merit, and to elude its grasp an honourable achievement; where,
above all, human beings are continually hanged in rows, as cattle are slaughtered in
the French abattoirs?’\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p.136.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
More specifically, he condemned convict labour for its adverse brutalising impact on the Englishmen sent out to administer the penal colony, who consequently acquired 'the sentiments and manners of gaolers and tumkeys' and were thus 'overbearing', 'peremptory', 'quick at taking offence', 'suspicious', and 'jealous of their almost boundless power', 'and yet fearful of the lawless body under their control, whom, at the same time, they despise[d].\textsuperscript{37} Besides the administrators of the colony, the masters of convicts and their children were also affected by the task. As the convict was 'a kind' of slave, the master was a kind of 'slave driver', and his children, 'little slave drivers'. In the case of convict labour, however, the detrimental effect on the character of the master of convict labour, and on his children, was even more severe than on the master of black slaves. From the premise that convicts had 'more rights and more reason than ... black slaves', he argued that black slaves would be treated as one would treat 'horses and dogs', that is, 'without cruelty'. Convicts, however, brought the worst out of the master. Having 'more rights and more intelligence', convicts tended to be more insubordinate, to complain at the slightest infraction of their rights, and to attempt to obtain legal redress for these infractions. Such behaviour, and a fear of the convicts, Wakefield expected, 'would make a devil of you in spite of your natural good temper.'\textsuperscript{38}

In addition, the convicts contributed to the corruption of the English language in the colony. '[M]odes and manners' in old countries flowed downwards from the higher classes according to Wakefield. In new countries they ascended 'from the lowest class.' This had to follow given that 'a great portion of the magnates of Australasia not only may, but necessarily must, have formed in their own persons, part of the dregs of society.' Convict labour provided a continuing supply of 'fresh corruption'.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, p.121.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, pp.136-37.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, p.137.
In the same way the convicts helped establish and sustain drunkenness in the colonies. Wakefield’s final word on the damage done to cultivated society was the disproportion of the sexes caused by transportation, with ten out of every eleven transported felons being male, and the consequent ‘naked, broad-day, prostitution’.  

There was also a political dimension. Ex-convicts who had ‘attained wealth and importance’ and ‘the children of convicts’ (as well as ‘certain free emigrants’) contributed passions which pressed for independence before the colony was ready. They were ‘rebels, every one of them, at heart; and nothing but a sense of weakness deters them from drawing the sword.’ A democratic independence would further lead, as in the case of ‘Republican France’ and of ‘Indepedent America’ to greater hostility to England. ‘Hence, and looking ... at the hatred of authority which has been imported, and is constantly maintained by criminal immigration,’ Wakefield concluded ‘that the Australians will hate their parent country more bitterly, and at an earlier period, than did the British Colonists in America, because they will have greater facilities for growing up poor, ignorant, and democrotical.’

Wakefield also criticised the use of indentured labour in the colonies, that is persons who agreed to serve for specific terms of service in return for the prior payment of passage to the colonies. As discussed above, the Quarterly Review argued (in the preface to A Letter from Sydney) that the poor should be encouraged to take up indentures, to become, as it described the status, ‘bondsmen’, in order to escape unemployment and distress in Britain. While in agreement on the issues of

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42 Indentured servitude involved the agreement of individual servants to serve specific masters for extended periods, sometimes ‘as long as ten or more years’, to repay the cost of passage to the colony. See S.Drescher and S.L.Engerman (eds), A Historical Guide to World Slavery, New York, 1998, p.241, and more generally, pp.239-42.
43 See p.4 above.
unemployment and the general need for colonisation to alleviate the problem of unemployment, Wakefield and the Review did not agree on the desirability of indentures.

Wakefield's argument was presented in the form of a cautionary tale which associated indentured labour with slavery and stressed the impracticalities of forcing labourers to work out set terms of employment.

In this simple tale, Tom, 'a free labourer', encouraged John, an 'indent ed emigrant', to break his bond. Tom's goal was to force masters to pay the going rate. He recognised that if the indenture 'held', it would reduce competition among masters of labour in the labour market and 'reduce the wages of free labourers.' John, Wakefield's indent ed labourer, at first resisted the approaches of Tom, but succumbed in the end when Tom called him 'a "negur slave"'. 'From that moment', Wakefield wrote, John determined 'to be free as soon as possible.'

Having raised the probability that indentures would be challenged in the colonies, Wakefield then proceeded to demolish three possible methods by which the master might seek to resist this challenge. Firstly, he suggested that the indentured labour be paid in money and land, with land granted only on good behaviour and the completion of the indenture. Secondly, he proposed that land not be granted to indentured labourers (independent of the terms of the indenture) unless the indentured labourer could show that he had completed the terms of his contract. The first restriction, Wakefield argued, failed because indentured labourers would be able to save enough even from a small sum of money to quickly purchase cheap land, and would be able to afford to forego the long term prospect of obtaining land at the

end of the term of the indenture. The second, he argued could easily be circumvented by using proxies to purchase land.\textsuperscript{45}

The third method outlined was the use of penal sanctions. Wakefield’s objections to these were again pragmatic, concentrating on the cost and inefficiency of retaining reluctant forced labour. To return to Wakefield’s illustration of Tom and John, as John the indentured servant became increasingly dissatisfied and neglected his duties, Wakefield argued as follows:

The master, let us suppose, sends him to jail upon the bond; but Tom visits and comforts him. He perseveres, therefore; and his master loses his labour. Suppose that the master could “scarify his back.” Even then, though apparently subdued, he might contrive to do less than three shillings worth of labour per day, in which case the produce of his labour would be a loss; and this without manifestly departing from the bond. He might also – and this is no uncommon case – secretly do more than three shillings worth of injury per day to his master’s property. Upon the whole, when once an indented labourer becomes dissatisfied, the sooner his bond is cancelled the better for the master.\textsuperscript{46}

Unwilling labour, according to Wakefield, was a liability. The landowner’s problem did not end there however. Having lost his labour, he then found that his former labourer, John, had obtained his own grant of land and become a competitor for labour and thus raised ‘the price of labour to all.’\textsuperscript{47} This was insult to the landowner’s injury.

To summarise, the essential import of this second theme of Wakefield’s argument in relation to labour was that existing practices were not providing colonies with the labour they needed. Some control over labour needed to be exercised to ensure the

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, pp.109-10.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, p.109.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
development of concentrated settlements and enable colonies to fully exploit their
economic potential and to produce a cultivated society. Existing controls whereby
labour was forced to work directly for specific masters, whether through contractual
or other relationships, however, were not acceptable or effective means of achieving
these ends.

The third and last of the intertwined, labour related themes of Wakefield’s argument
was the need to adopt his scheme of systematic colonisation as the effective means
of achieving concentration and the outcome of greatness which naturally followed.
The principle underlying this scheme was that labour should be subject to control, not
through forms such as slavery or indentures, but through the indirect management of
the labour market.

The key to solving the problem of dispersion, according to Wakefield, was not to
directly force labourers to labour, but to stop them becoming landowners.
Rhetorically, Wakefield asked, ‘Does not our inquiry into the causes of the evil [being
the development of an economically unproductive and uncultivated new colonial
society] point not [sic] a remedy?’ The ‘Government’ provided access to land and
therefore had the power to restrict access. And by restricting access it could ensure
‘the most desirable proportion between people and territory’. Without access to land
ownership, labourers would have to labour.\textsuperscript{48} In the case of indentures, Wakefield
had already considered and rejected some possible means of restricting labourers
from becoming landowners. These included the provision of land grants to indentured
labourers as part of the terms of the indenture to be met on the full completion of
their contracts, and regulation preventing indentured labourers from obtaining land

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, pp.158-59.
grants except by completing their contracts. Wakefield’s preferred option was to control labour by the setting of a ‘sufficient price’ for land.

In promoting this preferred option, Wakefield argued for the application of a system which kept the growing extent of settled land and labour precisely in proportion. He also argued that ‘the wisest government’ would need to ‘invent some rule’ which measured out ‘the due increase of land according to the increase of people’. In fact the wise government did not need to invent a rule. Wakefield provided the invention.49 His recommendation was to restrict access to land by setting the price of land, that is the ‘sufficient price’, beyond the ordinary means of labourers.

Wakefield acknowledged that the American Government already sold land, but also argued that it was sold cheaply and did not restrict labourers from obtaining land.50 The price had to be higher, even if Wakefield could not say exactly how much higher. The exact figure ‘could be determined only by experience’.51 Wakefield, however, did envisage a sliding scale, set by government, which priced land to achieve a balanced outcome of available labour and available work. On one side, the price was not to be so high as to unduly slow the labourers’ access to land, thereby causing a glut in the labour market and ‘a scarcity of well-paid employment’.52 On the other, it should not be so low as to be ineffective in slowing the labourers’ march into land ownership with the attendant labour market problems already described in relation to dispersion: that is, an absolute want of labour, and the related ‘dearness of labour’53 and ‘extravagant wages’.54 A sufficient number of labourers was to be retained in the market by the operation of the ‘sufficient price’ set by the government at a level to

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49 Ibid. p.159.
50 Ibid. pp.159, 178.
51 Ibid. p.159.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid. p.182.
54 Ibid. p.184.
ensure the labour needs of the colony were met and the labourers received reasonable wages.

The ‘sufficient price’ had a further function in Wakefield’s system of a controlled labour market. While in one respect it acted as a barrier to labourers becoming landowners too quickly, it also provided, where land was sold, the basis for a substantial fund of government money which could be used to fund the passages of poor emigrants to Australia. The availability of this fund strengthened Wakefield’s scheme as a general control over labour. To some extent the scheme was promoted as being self-regulating. It was also, however, set to be carefully managed. In terms of self-regulation, while the land fund was intended to provide the means for poor emigrants to reach Australia, Wakefield also argued that labour would be naturally attracted to the colony in the first instance because it offered higher wages than in Britain. In these circumstances the fund merely greased the squeaky wheel of emigration. If the supply of labour by this means of assisted immigration increased beyond the capacity of the labour market to absorb labour readily into work, then ‘wages would not be high, but low; and immigration would cease until a fresh demand for labour should arise.’\(^{55}\) The supply of labour, even with the free funding of emigration, would thus be generally self-regulating. Wakefield’s specific outline of the scheme in the appendix to \textit{A Letter from Sydney}, however, also included provision for a much more carefully directed control which in fact negated the prospects that the supply of labour would be left to find its own level. Wakefield repeated the object ‘That the supply of Labourers be as nearly as possible proportioned to the demand for Labour at each Settlement; so that Capitalists shall never suffer from an urgent want of Labourers, and that Labourers shall never want well-paid employment.’ He also stressed for those to whom the responsibility fell, the paramount need ‘to collect...

true information' as to the demand for labour in the colonies, and to execute the task of supplying labour to the colony with 'considerable intelligence and judgement'. Wakefield also recommended the keeping of an 'exact register' of the employment needs of the colony's capitalists to help achieve this objective. On these bases, the supply of labour 'would be carefully regulated' by the 'Government at home'.

The general goal of concentration was therefore to be achieved primarily through two means – the restriction on access to land ownership through the 'sufficient price' and the use of revenue from land sales to supply specific quantities of labour to the colonial labour market.

The scheme also had three further features which had implications for the control of labour and wages. These were: the selection of labour; the role of the colonial government in building the physical economic infrastructure of the colony; and the furnishing of 'a very moderate provision' to the emigrant workers on arrival 'until hired'. The last of these issues, the minimal provision of relief to help tide over the emigrant arriving in the new colony until work was obtained, is to be dealt with in the following chapter.

Briefly, the primary point Wakefield emphasised with regard to selection was the need for a gender balance. From this, particularly, derived the advantages of putting to 'an end the general corruption of females' and intensifying the effect of the removal of excess population from Britain to the colonies. This intensification simply involved lowering the natural population growth rate in Britain through the removal of its most fertile couples and increasing the growth rate in the colony with the arrival in

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57 Ibid.
the colony of the same fertile couples. Beyond this, however, Wakefield's scheme also proposed selection on the basis of the qualitative labouring requirements of the landowners. Naturally masters sought individually to choose industrious, compliant workers. Wakefield's scheme, however, proposed to pre-select all candidates for emigration on the basis of these characteristics. Wakefield proposed to use the process of labour supply to select young emigrants because they 'would most readily accommodate their habits to a new climate, and embrace new modes of cultivation and general labour.' Having young families to support, Wakefield thought, would make the emigrants 'more industrious'. Wakefield proposed therefore to control the supply of labour not only to meet the general demand for labour in the colonial economy, but also to screen for workers of desirable industrial traits.\(^{59}\)

In addition, Wakefield proposed that the government might make use of any surplus in the emigration fund to build the physical economic infrastructure of the new colony, that is 'the construction of roads, bridges, canals, docks, or other public works, having a tendency to increase production and consumption'.\(^{60}\) The proposal created a prospect that the colonial government might become a major employer, if not the major employer in the colony, a status which would enhance its ability to manipulate the overall state of the market and, in particular, wage levels.

In general, Wakefield's argument in *A Letter from Sydney* has a strong underlying pattern in relation to labour. He argued that the desired objects of the development of concentrated and cultivated settlement (which improved the capacity of the colony to alleviate unemployment in Britain), and its corollary of a concentrated labour force, could not be achieved by supplying and controlling labour through the institutions of slavery, indentured labour, or convict transportation. He elaborated in detail on the

\(^{59}\) Ibid, pp. 164-65.
\(^{60}\) Ibid, p. 183.
deficiencies of these institutions. In doing so, he also explicitly raised an important question. If the desired objects could not be achieved using traditional means of supplying and controlling labour, how were they to be achieved? His answer was systematic colonisation, a scheme designed to generally control the colonial labour market, and thus, indirectly, control colonial labour.

*Related Antecedent and Contemporary Ideas and Practices*

To look now at how these ideas fitted with more general developments, the direct implication of the argument in *A Letter from Sydney* was that Wakefield was proposing something new. The overall consensus amongst both his contemporaries and historians is also that he did indeed provide a novel contribution.\(^6\) In more detail, though, how novel or different were Wakefield’s proposals? In answer to this question the following identifies antecedent and contemporary ideas and practices that relate to each of the major labour issues raised by Wakefield. It also highlights Wakefield’s consolidation and adaptation of this material to achieve a new synthesis that was ultimately encapsulated in his scheme of systematic colonisation.

To start again at the beginning of his argument, Wakefield was by no means alone in his concerns over British unemployment and his general interest in colonisation as a means of alleviating this problem. Keith Sinclair’s *A History of New Zealand*, among other sources, notes a strong concern among Wakefield’s contemporaries over unemployment and attendant social distress. Sinclair writes that while Wakefield ‘sensed the threat of revolution in the unemployment, low wages and grim living

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conditions which afflicted the poor', the 'rich were alarmed by radical political movements and hungry mobs'. The rich were also 'uneasy about the stern competition for existence among themselves.' Douglas Pike's history of South Australia notes the 'dangerous discontents' of the 'English poor' that followed the conclusion of the Napoleonic War and, more particularly, describes the considerable interest of some, not entirely convinced by Malthus's argument that the distress could not be effectively resolved by action, in colonisation. Pike provides ample evidence of attempts by the British government, prior to the writing of A Letter from Sydney, to reduce the number of poor in Britain by encouraging them to migrate to the colonies. Various sums were spent on a number of projects to put the idea into practice.

Wilmot Horton, the under-secretary responsible for several of these projects at the Colonial Office, answered critics of his efforts with the retort that 'he was as little a friend of expatriation as any man, but who would deny that it was better to translate persons to a fruitful soil rather than leave them starving under a system of paralysing pauperism'. A.G.L. Shaw, a prominent Australian historian of the 1960s and 1970s, notes an appeal in 1820 from the Home Office to the Colonial Office that the latter try to see if it could 'not tempt some of our superabundant population to go to New South Wales?'

The concerns are also illustrated in an article from the Quarterly Review which pre-dated by twelve years the work used by Wakefield in his preface to A Letter from Sydney. In words not dissimilar to those of the later article, the Review of July 1817 noted that 'Whoever casts his eyes around him, and surveys the labour, the distress,
the penury, and the ignorance in which a great part of the human race, even in the most favoured countries, are more or less immersed, must want all the finer feelings and most amiable charities of our nature, if he does not spontaneously give way to the benevolent desire of correcting so much vice and relieving so much misery. Under the influence of these feelings, even the chimerical visions of Mr. Owen have attracted attention. The Review also noted that the ‘population has proceeded to a length and swelled to an amount which we now find inconvenient, and are obliged to meet by growing demands on public and private charity, and glad to remedy by extensive emigration.

The popular concern is further and perhaps even better illustrated by reference to William Cobbett, the great populist commentator of the time, and his strongly critical view of the state of both the agricultural and industrial workforce. To cite one example of his criticism, he noted, firstly, with respect to unemployment and distress, that the transfer of work from cottage to urban factories was ‘one great cause of pauperism, and of the degradation of the people.’ The urban workers, particularly, had been ‘converted ... into ... slaves’, and were ‘still more miserable than the wretches left behind them in the agricultural districts.’ He had no time whatsoever for the ‘Scotch Economists’, who, he said, ‘complain of the surplus population of the fields and woods’ but never ‘about surplus population in these hellish stews’ of the manufactories. Later, in 1830, he also wrote in praise of a farmer departing with his five sons for the colonies, for ‘performing a truly parental and sacred duty’. The father

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would die, Cobbett wrote, ‘with the blessing of his sons on his head, for having rescued them from this scene of slavery, misery, cruelty, and crime.’

Clearly, unemployment was a cause of great concern and in part generated contemporary interest in Malthus’ ideas. But even given the prominence of Malthus and his popularity with ‘the educated public’, Wakefield’s view that unemployment should be alleviated by colonisation was by no means exceptional. While Malthus indicated the futility of action, other prominent voices in the community proposed action and specifically spoke in favour of emigration as a tool for alleviating the problems of unemployment and distress in Britain.

With regard to Wakefield’s argument on how colonisation should be implemented, A Letter from Sydney itself provides examples of contemporary opinion which pointed to the need for the concentration of settlement.

Raynal’s comments in particular were clearly and directly pertinent. To recap, Raynal argued that the French settlers in Louisiana had been allowed to settle as they wished and had become isolated from one another on their large landholdings.

Raynal added that if the settlers had been made to live in closer proximity around ‘a

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69 Ibid, p.203. Cobbett emerged as a radical critic of English society in the early nineteenth century. He regarded the rapacity of the aristocracy, aided by their political power, as the source of the distress he saw around him. He specifically sought in response the reform of parliament and the reduction of taxes. Richard Price also notes that Cobbett ‘envisaged an egalitarian, industrious, society where the wide dispersal of property ownership and minimal government ensured independence and freedom.’ For much of his radical career, Cobbett did not favour emigration as the solution to the ills of unemployment and distress. He believed that it was the birthright of Englishmen and women to live without distress in England. Because of increasing distress, however, he began to shift during the late 1820s towards the support of emigration as a means of ameliorating the condition of the poor. Patricia Hollis (ed), Class and Conflict in Nineteenth Century England, London 1973, pp.xxi, 72; Richard Price, Labour in British Society, London, 1986, p.51; Ian Dyck, William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture, Cambrige, 1992, pp.28, 32-42, 156. Cobbett’s reference to ‘slavery’ here goes beyond Wakefield’s use of the term in A Letter from Sydney. The matter is discussed further on p.48n, below, and in chapter 2.

70 Borrie, p.45.

71 James, pp.346, 349.

72 Also Pike, p.31.
common centre’ this would have produced advantages of heightened co-operation and greater social interaction. He saw that while a common centre was maintained, the settlement could still expand at the perimeter as the population of the settlement grew. Clearly, though, such expansion should be relatively consistent with the maintenance of the existing population density. Raynal also hoped that if this settlement pattern was adopted it could lead to the colony becoming ‘a powerful nation’.  

Raynal thus provided one acknowledged source anticipating Wakefield’s enthusiasm for concentration and the core elements of his argument for the need for concentrated settlement and the possibilities for such a settlement. Lloyd Prichard’s collection of Wakefield’s works, however, further notes another possible source in the form of a statistical account by Robert Gourlay, published in 1817 or shortly thereafter. Gourlay had concluded that the Canadian colonists ‘were poor because they possessed a territory excessive in proportion to their numbers.’ Wakefield noted the work in his publication, A Statement of the Principles and Objects of a Proposed National Society, published in 1830. Similarly, Pike also provides an example, predating A Letter from Sydney, of an effort to promote the concentration of colonial settlement involving the establishment of the township of Guelph in the Lake Huron Tract. Pike was probably alerted to the significance of the settlement by Wakefield’s use in 1832 of the example in his publication, Founding a Colony in Southern Australia. The description provided by Pike, however, indicates the scheme was primarily designed not to produce a more efficient and productive colony but to

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73 See pp.8-9 above. Washington’s criticism that Americans were not producing the best from their land also implied, albeit less directly, the need for concentration.
74 Lloyd Prichard, p.16. Lloyd Prichard notes on p.14 that Gourlay’s account was published in 1817 and in p.16n that it was published in 1822. The two dates suggest the possibility that the account went through two if not more editions. Wakefield specifically referred to 1817 as the date of Gourlay’s work, in A Statement of the Principles and Objects of a Proposed National Society for the Cure and Prevention of Paupersim by means of Systematic Colonisation, London, 1831, p.25.
ensure rising prices on a limited quantity of land subject to high demand, and thus a speculative windfall for initial investors.\textsuperscript{75}

In addition, Wakefield may have been aware of government policy in Australia which resembled some tendency towards concentrated settlement. Against a backdrop of liberally distributed land grants dating from the establishment of the New South Wales colony, Macquarie, Governor from 1810 to 1821, keenly sought, 'as a prelude to orderly rural development', the building of 'firm bases from which to colonize, in the shape of well-organized towns.' Unfortunately for Macquarie, he was opposed by a 'stinting and parsimonious' British Government in London.\textsuperscript{76} There were also relevant developments in the mid 1820s under Brisbane, Macquarie's successor as Governor of New South Wales. In 1824, the Governor introduced a policy whereby those granted land were required to maintain one convict labourer per every one hundred acres. Shaw notes this development as 'anticipating the idea which Wakefield later claimed as his, that cultivation should be encouraged and "dispersion" prevented.'\textsuperscript{77}

(In Wakefield's defence, however, one must at least note that Wakefield acknowledged a number of sources as advocates of concentrated settlement, and his idea of concentrated settlement was by no means necessarily derived and borrowed from Brisbane's idea.). Brisbane also introduced a policy in 1825 that responded to the Colonial Office's concerns over 'the injury to society when land remained in a barren state from either the lack of capital or a disinclination to employ it' and over the separation of 'The settlements of the richer or more enterprising colonists ... from each other by intervening tracts of the original wilderness.' As a

\textsuperscript{75} Pike, p.38; Wakefield, \textit{Founding a Colony in Southern Australia}, 1832, p.280. The Canada Company, which was responsible for establishing Guelph, appears to have been the most significant enterprise principally involved in land settlement in Canada in the early part of the nineteenth century. Founded in 1824, the Company was responsible for the establishment between the Great Lakes of Huron and Ontario of the towns of Guelph, Galt and Goderich. Kenneth McNaught, \textit{The History of Canada}, London, 1970, p.79; Norah Story, \textit{The Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature}, Toronto, 1967, pp.96, 145, 307.

\textsuperscript{76} M.H. Ellis, \textit{Lachlan Macquarie}, Sydney, 1952, p.212.

\textsuperscript{77} Shaw, p.191.
result Brisbane introduced regulations which required that land grants would be only made on the conditions of character, respectability, and a capital investment of £500 per square mile.  

Furthermore, Bernard Semmel notes comment in the late 1820s in the Westminster Review, and from two parliamentarians, Alexander Baring and Michael Sadler, indicating support for the greater concentration of colonial populations. The Westminster Review referred in 1827 to "a very imperfect division of employments" as being 'the unfortunate result of the dispersion of the Canadian population'. Baring 'inquired' in parliament, also in 1827, 'as to whether there was not "too great an extension of the population in America for the purpose of civilisation",' and praised, 'rather, a "moderate degree of compression".' More forthrightly, Sadler 'insisted' in parliament in June 1829, 'that "where men were most thinly scattered, then was their condition most wretched and degraded", and 'where they were most crowded, there were they most prosperous and happy'.

The historical record thus provides ample evidence of precursors to Wakefield's ideas regarding the need for concentration. In fact even the text of A Letter from Sydney acknowledges the debt Wakefield owed specifically to Raynal, and, to a lesser extent to others. Gourlay and the establishment of Guelph, both mentioned by Wakefield in later publications, actual practice in New South Wales, and advocacy from various contemporary English sources, may also have provided some inspiration for Wakefield's promotion of the general idea and desirability of concentrated settlement.

79 Semmel, pp.106-07. Semmel notes that Baring was sympathetic to Wilmot Horton, and Sadler was a 'Tory social reformer'.
Wakefield’s rejection of slavery, and convict and indentured labour, reflected an even greater wealth of traditional and contemporary criticism and, indeed, the various degrees to which these forms of supplying and controlling labour had already been abandoned in North America.

Of these forms of supplying and controlling labour, black slaves, and indentured and convict labour began to arrive in Britain’s North American colonies in the early seventeenth century. Over the next nearly two centuries approximately 100,000 black slaves arrived from Africa and through natural increase comprised a population of 300,000 slaves by the 1780s. A further proportion of migrants, at least equal to the number of black slaves, and roughly equivalent to a half to two-thirds of all European migrants to the British colonies to the date of the American Revolution, came as indentured labour. In addition, tens of thousands more arrived from Britain as convicts (who were also usually indentured but for longer terms than non-convicts). By any calculation, the use of these forms of labour was highly significant in the settlement of Britain’s North American colonies.

The criticisms of these forms of labour, and the changes to which they were subject, were also not minor matters. Slavery came under very effective attack from the abolitionists in Britain and North America in the second half of the eighteenth century. Despite the prominence of Britain’s position at the time, ‘both as a slave trader and as an employer of slaves [in its colonies],’ the attack resulted in a relatively short period of time in the prohibition of the British and American slave trade and the

81 Drescher and Engermann, pp. 239, 396; John Steinfield, The Invention of Free Labour, Chapel Hill, 1991, p. 89; Shaw, pp. 32, 35.
82 Slavery was relatively rare in Britain because it ‘lacked the legal status it possessed in the colonies’, Drescher and Engerman, p. 10. Also see Somersett v Stewart (1772), J.B. Howell, State Trials, vol. 20, London, 1816, pp. 1-81; Shanley v Harvey (1762), English Reports, vol. 28, London, 1903, pp. 844-45.
ending of slavery in various American colonies. Drescher and Engerman identify the key factors in achieving this success as ‘the spread of Enlightenment ideas regarding natural rights and political liberty’, ‘the growing conviction in Nonconformist and evangelical circles that slavery was contrary to the teaching of the Gospels’, and the political contribution of the Quakers. 83 James Walvin, in his history of the end of the British slave trade, similarly describes the spread of Enlightenment ideas as ‘an accumulating critique of slavery – primarily from men of the French and Scottish Enlightenment – which slowly but effectively began to erode the previously unchallenged assumptions and arguments in favour of slavery’. 84 Important among these men were Montesquieu and his promotion of liberty and his denunciation of its opposite, slavery, and, from amongst a host of British intellectuals, Adam Smith. Michael Craton, another historian of British slavery, notes that Smith argued ‘that slavery was so manifestly inefficient that it was only sustained by the slave owners’ lust for power’. 85 Theologically, Walvin notes, the growing concern over slavery and the growth of anti-slavery sentiment developed in relation to the growing influence of the ideas of benevolence and brotherly love, and the association of the evil of slavery with the prospect of divine retribution. 86 Other critical factors in the success of the abolition campaign included the promotional and political work of the Quakers, 87 the organisation and expansion of abolitionist sentiments through anti-slavery societies, the eventual support of the Methodist movement, and, ultimately, division in the resistance of the slave owners at least to slave trading. 88 The successful progress of this work during the later part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth

83 Drescher and Engerman, p.10.
85 Michael Craton, Sinews of Empire, New York, 1974, p.257. As below, this was clearly not an uncommon idea by the 1820s. Also note Jaffe, p.32.
86 Walvin, pp.99-100.
87 Both Wakefield’s father and grandmother were Quakers, Lloyd Prichard, p.9.
88 Drescher and Engerman, pp.10-12; Walvin, pp.101-22. The division of the West Indian interest was based on concern amongst the British West Indian landowners and planters at the prospect of the newly acquired French West Indian colonies being stocked with slaves and becoming commercial rivals in their established markets. Drescher and Engerman, p.12.
century was marked by: the adoption of gradual emancipation legislation in Pennsylvania in 1780, the subsequent adoption of similar legislation by New York and New Jersey, and the elimination of slavery throughout New England by 1804; the closure of the British slave trade by legislation passed in 1806 and 1807; the closure of the American slave trade in 1808; and the British Emancipation Act of 1833.\textsuperscript{89}

The use of convicts in North America ended with the American Revolution. Shaw's history of convicts notes that even prior to the War of Independence, some Americans were unhappy with the supply of convicts to the American colonies to meet the labour demands in these colonies. He notes Benjamin Franklin's complaint with respect to the British, that 'Emptying their jails into our settlements is an insult and contempt, the cruellest that ever one people offered to another.' Shaw also notes the Governor of Maryland's hearty wish that the convicts 'were sent to any other of His Majesty's plantations', and also his resignation that, regardless, 'while we purchase them, they will send them'. Moreover, Virginian representatives complained of the 'great danger and disrepute ... by the frequent sending thither of felons [sic] and other Condemned Persons'. Their sense of a physical and moral threat manifested itself in a number of legislative efforts to prevent and control the use of convicts.\textsuperscript{90}

Regardless of this opposition, however, it was the war that finally made the continued supply of convicts impossible and also contributed ultimately to the transportation of convicts to Australia. One last reference from Shaw underlines the existence of a general understanding that the convicts constituted a danger to colonial societies. King George III, having lost his American colonies, and faced with a proposal to recommence sending convicts to the United States after the conclusion of the war,

\textsuperscript{89} Drescher and Engerman, pp.12-13, 22; Steinfeld, p.12.
\textsuperscript{90} Shaw, pp.32-33.
responded that ‘Undoubtedly the Americans cannot expect nor ever will receive any favour from Me, but the permitting them to obtain men unworthy to remain in the Island, I shall certainly consent to.’ George rejoiced in the fact that the convicts could only do his enemies harm. In the end, however, the American colonies refused to allow the trade to recommence.\textsuperscript{91}

The end to the enforcement of indentured labour came a little later but had still virtually ceased in the United States by the 1820s. The termination of this practice in the United States appears to have been tied to the end of the general requirement demanding the specific performance of service, that is the completion of agreements to serve for particular terms as was common in Britain from the Middle Ages,\textsuperscript{92} and the end of slavery.

With regard to the first of these two changes, the traditional view concerning the end to the requirement of specific performance of service has been that it reflected the general development of the western market economy. Hay and Craven, for example, state that ‘Like other areas of contract’, employment contracts governed by master and servant law were ‘substantially recast in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, and deeply affected by the market assumptions increasingly found in 19\textsuperscript{th}-century private law.\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, 38, 45.
\textsuperscript{92} As discussed above, indentured servitude involved the agreement of individual servants to serve specific masters to repay the cost of passage to the colonies (see p.18 above). In contrast, traditional contracts of service involved individual agreements to serve for specific terms for ongoing wages. The length of these terms these varied, but could tie the servant to their master for lengthy periods. Cornish and Clark for example note that in England at the end of the eighteenth century, just thirty years before the writing of \textit{A Letter from Sydney}, ‘The servant in husbandry was normally hired from year to year, initially at a hiring fair’ and, to terminate this relationship, ‘each had to give a quarter’s notice before the annual expiry date.’ See W.R.Cornish and G.de N.Clarke, \textit{Law and Society in England: 1750-1950}, London, 1989, p.286.
\textsuperscript{93} Hay and Craven, p.176.
It now seems, however, that the relationship between the rise of the market economy and the end of specific performance was somewhat more complex. Chris Tomlins, in his study of the relation between law, labour and ideology in American society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, notes that the ‘base proposition’ that ‘the growth of commerce/economic change and expansion/capitalist development ‘requires legal improvements that increase the certainty and predictability of exchange relationships’ … is not at all certain.’\textsuperscript{64} In his text, he provides a sophisticated argument which shows that the legal changes which occurred followed from the accumulation of consistent, particular choices by participants within the American legal order favouring a ‘representation of working life in voluntaristic terms’ at the same time as ‘legal discourse was assuming a pre-eminent position in American society as a whole’. This process of change was, he adds, ‘not so much a consequence of the development of a particular political economy … but rather … an integral element in that political economy’s constitution.’\textsuperscript{65} In other words, changes within and to the status of the American legal order were part of the emerging political economy rather than a reflection of its separate development.

In a similar vein, John Steinfeld, who has more specifically considered the movement from enforcing to not enforcing the completion of contracts of service, notes that the penal enforcement of labour contracts was not necessarily incompatible with the development of a new market economy and that the transaction to purchase labour could be (and was) conceived of ‘as a purely contractual relationship, in which the parties have specific performance or criminal penalties among their legal remedies for breach.’\textsuperscript{66} Thus, rather than as a change which naturally followed the development of a new market economy, John Steinfeld explains the shift from

\textsuperscript{65}Ibid, xii-xvi.  
\textsuperscript{66}Steinfeld, pp.4-5.
enforcement to non-enforcement as a deeply rooted consequence of emerging 'liberal and republican ideas' in the seventeenth century which distinguished more sharply between conditions of freedom and unfreedom,\textsuperscript{97} combined with the polarising effect of the abolitionist movement against slavery.

On one side of this divide between freedom and unfreedom, day labourers and then all servants without written contracts were the first to become free to depart service as a result of these emerging liberal and republican ideas.\textsuperscript{98} Free in this sense was the freedom to depart without the prospect of criminal sanction or the requirement to perform specific service, though not without the possibilities of the loss of any unpaid wages and of action for damages to cover any loss arising from the lack of reasonable notice.\textsuperscript{99} This freedom which generally applied to waged labour (although clearly hedged about with possible contractual liabilities) was well established in the United States before the end of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{100} Steinfeld further explains that the argument which made its appearance in the middle of the eighteenth century, 'that free labor was more efficient than unfree labor', may have reflected the increasingly evident truth at that point of time of this proposition, given that some labour had already become free.\textsuperscript{101}

On the other side of the divide was slavery and, increasingly from the end of the eighteenth century, indentured labour. Entry into contracts of indenture was, as

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, p.102. These ideas included notions of persons as separate, autonomous, and essentially uniform individuals, Steinfeld, p.78; and 'the moderation of action by a secular civic-minded virtue, sustained by propertied independence', Tomlins, p.25. The roots of Jacksonian democracy and particularly the egalitarianism associated with this development may also be connected to the trend towards free labour in America, e.g. Harry L. Watson, Liberty and Power, New York, 1990, pp.8-9. This particular subject is not included within the scope of the work of Steinfeld, but there is a brief suggestion of such a connection in Tomlins, p.258.

\textsuperscript{98} Steinfeld, pp.8-9, 102-103.

\textsuperscript{99} Steinfeld, p.4; Tomlins, pp. 272-78.

\textsuperscript{100} Steinfeld, pp.103, 112-13, 121; Drescher and Engerman, p.204; Tomlins, pp.240, 256, 272n.

\textsuperscript{101} Steinfeld, pp.112-13. This point in relation to slavery was also made by Adam Smith, see p.34 above.
Steinfeld explains, initially conceived as a matter of a person’s freedom to dispose of their own labour as a property right, that is in this case to sell their labour for a specific, albeit extended, period of time to another person. Over time, however, the unfree aspects of this form of labour, in particular the alienation of the labourer’s freedom for an extended period of time, made indentured labourers appear more like unfree than free labourers. This, Steinfeld finally explains, reached a critical juncture with the success of the anti-slavery movement, coupled with the efforts of slave owners to circumvent the effect of the end of slavery by using indentures to keep their slaves in bondage, and led to the general demise of indentured servitude in the United States in the 1820s.\textsuperscript{102}

To illustrate this demise, Steinfeld also points to the examples of the constitution adopted by the new state of Indiana in 1816 and a decision of its supreme court in 1821. The new state constitution generally outlawed slavery and ‘involuntary servitude’, noting that they could ‘only originate in usurpation and tyranny’. The Indiana Supreme Court also subsequently decided in 1821, in ‘The Case of Mary Clark, a Woman of Color’, that Mary Clark, an indentured servant, could not be compelled to provide specific performance of her contract of indenture. In particular, it stated that ‘Such a performance, if enforced by law ... would produce a state of servitude as degrading and demoralizing in its consequences, as a state of absolute slavery; and if enforced under a government like ours, which acknowledges a personal equality, it would be productive of a state of feeling more discordant and irritating than slavery itself.’\textsuperscript{103} Servitude based on a voluntary agreement to a

\textsuperscript{102} Steinfeld, pp.6-7, 102-103, 137, 144f.

\textsuperscript{103} Steinfeld, pp.143-45. Further factors that may have assisted in the decline of indentured labour in the United States were restrictions placed by European governments on the practice and the lowering of the cost of the Atlantic passage. The lower cost allowed an increasing number of servants to reach America without monetary assistance, M. L. Bush, Servitude in Modern Times, Malden, 2000, p.65.
contract of indenture was thus held to be a form of involuntary servitude and to be as repugnant as black slavery.

During the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, therefore, all the traditional forms of labour supply and control were subject to criticism of one kind or another, and, by the 1820s, the use of each of these forms in a considerable part of North America had either ceased or was in terminal decline.

The early new Australian colonies did not experience the same shifts from unfree labour to free labour that had occurred and were continuing to develop in the early nineteenth century in North America. There was, however, repetition of, and addition to the criticism already articulated in North America well prior to *A Letter from Sydney*. This particularly related to the use of convict labour. Shaw indicates Australian concern over the efficiency of convict labour in noting that ‘There was, of course,... much argument about the value of assigned convicts’ and by reference to Governor Macquarie’s defence of the convicts. Shaw notes for example Macquarie’s insistence ‘that most of the settlers had only themselves to blame for many of the shortcomings of their servants, “whose original callings were not suited to the Employment they are required for”’. He also notes Macquarie’s belief that “many convicts who might have been rendered useful and good men, had they been treated with humane and reasonable control, have sunk into despondence by unfeeling treatment.”

Macquarie’s comments indicate of course that he recognised the criticisms of the labour value of convicts and the substance of these criticisms even if he saw the basis for this lack of usefulness differently from the critics. Concerns were also raised over the physical and moral dangers of using convict labour.

Commissioner Bigge, who inquired into the state of the New South Wales colony

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104 Shaw, pp.90-91.
between 1819 and 1821, ‘agreed with Macquarie that there might be danger in
"placing so many convict labourers in remote situations, under no better control than
that of the individual superintendent of the establishment"; this was an "essential
objection to the extension of settlements in which convicts are employed".\textsuperscript{105}
Governor Bligh wrote home in 1807 about the incorrigible immorality of the convict,
not expecting 'until the next or after Generations ... any considerable advance to
morality and virtue.' He noted the financial harm done to merchants and sea captains
by convicts who had become prominent in business.\textsuperscript{106} Female convicts were also
seen as a particular encouragement to immorality in the colony. Parliament's
Transportation Committee reported in 1812 that the indiscriminate distribution of
female convicts 'operated as an encouragement to general depravity of manners'.
Macquarie justified building a factory in Parramatta as 'particularly Necessary for
keeping those Depraved Females at Work within Walls, so as in some Degree to be
a Check upon their Immoralities and disorderly Vicious Habits'.\textsuperscript{107}

Besides these echoes and amplifications of American criticism, there were also
specifically Australian criticisms of convict labour, in part reflecting the greater control
of the governors of the Australian colonies over the distribution of convict labour.
Instead of the American colonial practice of selling convicts into indentured servitude,
the Australian convicts were firstly assigned to the governor, who either retained
them to provide labour on the government farms and for public works or assigned
them to landowners and other masters.\textsuperscript{108} This responsibility left the governor, as the
prime distributor, vulnerable to the criticism of playing favourites in assigning
convicts to some masters and not others. Bigge noted in his report that the

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, pp.94-95.
\textsuperscript{107} Shaw, pp.100-101.
\textsuperscript{108} Evans and Nicholls, pp.25-26, Shaw, pp.64-67, 70-74; Drescher and Engermann, p.206; G. Abbott
assignment of mechanics in particular 'has always been considered the greatest favour that could be bestowed by the governor, and it has been granted only to individuals whom he wished to distinguish or oblige, or who could plead the execution of some important undertaking.'

In addition to this criticism, the Bigge Report of 1822 contained evidence from the Superintendent of Convicts that the number of convicts arriving could not satisfy the labour demand of the settlers, with 'Farming men' in particularly short supply. In answer to the question whether there was 'sufficiency of that description of men to supply the demands of the settlers, Hutchison, the superintendent, replied 'Not by one fourth part.'

Sir Nathaniel Wraxall also condemned the use of convict labour as the basis for establishing an empire. In a political commentary written in the year convicts first left for Botany Bay, he forecast that the convicts would 'soon emancipate themselves from the feeble restraint impos'd upon them; and that they may, in succeeding times, fill the Chinese and Indian seas, with slaughter and depredation, notwithstanding the prodigious distance, at which even those parts of the earth are removed from New-Holland. In every case, and under every circumstance, it would seem, that this country must relinquish all hope or expectation of deriving any benefit for their labour and exertion, either immediate, or remote.'

A related point on the potential for the convicts to pursue their violent and deadly criminal ways in Australia was, of course, made by Wakefield in *A Letter from Sydney*. In fact, most of the individual elements of Wakefield's arguments against

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109 Evans and Nicholls, p.34.
111 Ibid, p.23.
112 See p.16 above.
the traditional means of supplying labour to the colonies and the concomitant
traditional practices of controlling labour had antecedents in, or were
contemporaneous with, American and Australian criticisms and changes in practice.

Finally, there were also the ideas and schemes which provided forerunners to
elements of Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation. There were two major
elements to his scheme: the setting of the price of land at a price designed to restrict
the movement of labourers into landownership; and the use of land sales to fund
emigration.

As indicated above, there was action to restrict the poor from obtaining land prior to
Wakefield’s proposal. Brisbane, for example, introduced regulations in New South
Wales in 1825 to restrict land grants to ensure that new landowners possessed
sufficient capital to develop their new landholdings. The restriction was of course not
specifically designed for the purpose Wakefield had in mind, that is to restrict
labourers from obtaining land in order that they remained in the labour market,
though it should have had this effect.113

With regard to the sale of land, as opposed to the granting of land, to fund
emigration, Sinclair notes that Wakefield’s proposal to sell land to generate
‘government revenue’, which would provide ‘a fund for the immigration of further
supplies of labour’, had not ‘originated’ from Wakefield.114 Given the generality of his
history, Sinclair does not elaborate on the origins. Fortunately, though, Lloyd Prichard
provides two relevant antecedent proposals. The first was Robert Gourlay’s, to
which, as already discussed, Wakefield referred in his article of 1830, A Statement of

113 See p.31 above.
114 Sinclair, p.59. Wakefield did acknowledge of course that land was already being sold by the
American government, but not for the specific purpose of funding emigration. See Wakefield, A Letter
from Sydney, p.159.
the Principles and Objects of a Proposed National Society. 'It was', Lloyd Prichard states, 'Gourlay who in A Statistical Account of Upper Canada (1817) suggested that waste land in colonies should be sold and not given away and the proceeds devoted to assist immigration.' Lloyd Prichard also notes a letter to Wilmot Horton in 1829, not from Wakefield, suggesting 'that the government should simply provide funds for sending out labourers and recover the money from the improved value of land in the colony and the produce on that land.' The idea of a land fund for the purpose of funding emigration was therefore clearly alive and well before A Letter from Sydney.

Overall, the above outline of concerns over unemployment, assertions of the need for colonisation, the criticisms and changes to traditional practices of supplying and controlling labour in the colonies, and ideas and developments relating to the sale of land and to assisted emigration, show that many of the elements of Wakefield's argument had been already aired well before the idea of A Letter from Sydney was conceived, or had been developed for publication. It is also possible, however, to see that his argument was far more than a mere repetition of these antecedents. What he did, in particular, was to consolidate existing criticisms and changes and shape them into a coherent new argument with distinct relevance to Australia.

Firstly, Wakefield embarked on this course by making the issue of unemployment, and the associated concern over British overpopulation and popular distress, powerful reasons for implementing concentrated settlement in the colonies. In doing so Wakefield joined two distinct ideas. The first of these was that unemployment could be resolved by colonisation. The second was that concentration produced prosperous and cultivated settlements. Wakefield synthesised these ideas, and argued that colonisation could only be an effective solution to unemployment if the

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colonies were prosperous and cultivated, and this could only occur if settlement was concentrated. The attainment of prosperity and cultivation was vital because it was these characteristics which made the colonies attractive to migrants and gave them their capacity to absorb incoming labour. In short, Wakefield made the achievement of concentration a moral imperative, a necessity for overcoming distress in Britain.

In the second instance, Wakefield emphasised that the achievement of an effective concentration of settlement in the colonies required the adequate supply and retention of labour in the colony in relation to the land under occupation. Colonial settlements had to have scope for the development of a prosperous and civilised class and this in itself demanded the existence of a distinct and substantial labouring class working on the land and fully exploiting its productive potential. In arguing thus, Wakefield specifically opposed the development of small, self-operated farms in the colonies, which he said condemned their owners to unproductive and barbarous lives.

Thirdly, and this was the key issue with respect to labour relations, Wakefield considered how labour should be supplied and controlled in the colonial labour market in order to achieve the adequate supply and retention of labour in the colonies. In doing so, he consolidated the substance of various criticisms and changes into a new and generally systematic critique of traditional and contemporary forms of supplying and controlling labour. He also extended existing ideas on land sales and assisted passages to formulate new alternative proposals for a dedicated land fund and the ‘sufficient price’.

With respect to his critique, Wakefield reflected and endorsed a wide range of prior and contemporary criticisms of slavery, convict labour, and indentured labour.
These criticisms included reference to: a general opposition to any form of labour resembling slavery; the physical and moral dangers posed by slavery and convict labour to the colonies and the colonists themselves; the inefficiency of unfree labour; concern that the use of convicts militated against the development of a cultivated and civilised society; the dangers to political and imperial interests; concern that they would lead to conflict between settlers; and the inadequacy of the supply of unfree labour.

Further, Wakefield’s critique also had an important implication for traditional service. Wakefield’s argument against indentured labour, on the basis that it was futile and probably counterproductive to force unwilling workers to work by enforcing their indentures, also implied an attack on the tradition of enforcing contracts of service generally. Both contracts of service and contracts of indenture were enforced under the master and servant law, which provided severe sanctions for breaches of the term of service.\footnote{Both contracts of service and indentures were enforced by the master and servant statutes: Hay and Craven, p.177; Steinfeld, p.40ff; Drescher and Engerman, p.204.} The implication was reinforced by Wakefield’s strongly drawn linkages between slavery and not only convict labour but also indentured labour. As Steinfeld shows,\footnote{See pp.37-39 above.} this association was crucial in North America in the process of removing the last vestiges of criminal sanctions to force servants to complete the term of their contracts. Wakefield closely reflected the discourse of this contemporary American development.

The relevance to Australia of Wakefield’s general critique was severalfold. Although each of the specific controls rejected by Wakefield had already disappeared from many of Britain’s existing or former North American colonies, this had not occurred in her Australian colonies.
Of these practices, only slavery was an untenable proposition as a result of the prohibition of the slave trade. The transportation of the convicts, on the other hand, was the prime mode of supplying and controlling labour in Australia. The supply of convict labour to Australia flourished in the 1820s and well beyond. Australian migration statistics show that convicts remained the predominant migrant type to New South Wales until the second half of the 1830s, and to the 1850s in Tasmania, and was only finally discontinued in Australia, when it concluded in Western Australia in the late 1860s.¹¹⁹ Wakefield’s commentary on indentured labour was also significant. While the practice was ending in North America in the 1820s, it remained a prospect for Australia, as indicated by both the preface to A Letter from Sydney and by Wakefield’s own specific remarks in the main text of A Letter from Sydney. In particular, while there is little indication that indentures were widely used earlier, they were employed in the settlement of Swan River which was established in June 1829 in Western Australia and also promoted in relation to the settlement of South Australia in the mid-1830s.¹²⁰ More latterly, it became a popular means of providing colonies, including the Australian colonies, with non-European labour, for example from the Indian subcontinent and from Melanesia.¹²¹

In addition, while the requirement to provide specific performance in general contracts under the threat of penal sanctions had generally disappeared in the American colonies during the eighteenth century, it still applied in Britain and its Australian colonies.¹²² John Steinfield explains the survival of the practice in

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¹¹⁹ Borrie, pp.28-29, 49, 53.
¹²¹ Drescher and Engerman, pp.205-06; Bush, pp.204-08.
¹²² Early evidence of the adoption of English master and servant law is provided in an advisory issued by the Governor of New South Wales in March 1797 reminding settlers that the term of hiring should
Britain, in contrast to the experience of the North American colonies, as the consequence of the slower absorption of the liberal and republican ideas which had appeared in the seventeenth century and had distinguished more clearly between states of freedom and unfreedom. This slower absorption was at least partly due, according to Steinfeld, to the lack of extant domestic forms of labour bondage, such as villeinage, to stress the elements of compulsion and unfreedom in traditional service.

Wakefield's criticism of penal sanctions as the means of forcing labourers to work therefore implied a challenge to the substance of two extant British and Australian statutes. In brief, this legislation primarily comprised at the beginning of the

be made clear and committed to a written contract so 'should any dispute arise, a Bench of Magistrates will at all times be able to settle it, the English law being very full and clear on this subject.' Historical Records of New South Wales, vol. III, pp. 197-98. While the practice did transfer to Australia, such a transfer is not necessarily automatic. Alex Castles, quoting Blackstone, states that 'While recognising that in new-settled colonies "all the English laws then in being ... are immediately there in force", he emphasised strongly that this statement was to be "understood with very many and very great restriction". In a sentence which was to find many echoes in judicial decisions in Australia and elsewhere he argued that the first inhabitants of settled colonies carried with them "only so much of the English law, as is applicable to their own situation and condition of any infant colony".', Alex C. Castles, An Australian Legal History, Sydney, 1982, p.11f. Also see: George Athan Billias (ed), Law and Authority in Colonial America, New York, 1965; David Neal, The Rule of Law in A Penal Colony, Cambridge, 1991; Patrick Parkinson, Tradition and Change in Australian Law, Sydney, 1994, p.131f.


More fully, Steinfeld explains that the tendency in the American colonies for traditional service to lose all aspects of compulsion as an assertion of the freedom of labour in contrast to labour which was clearly unfree, such as slavery (and, over time, indentured labour) was much reduced in Britain. In particular, Steinfeld explains that 'one source' which slowed this absorption was the 'difficulty in making a consistent distinction between free and unfree' which 'lay in the fact that villeinage was the only form of bondage that English law explicitly recognized as bondage.' Thus, because villeinage had largely disappeared by the sixteenth century, there was generally no clear example in Britain, providing an existing contrast, to highlight the elements of compulsion in traditional service. Steinfeld, pp.99-105.

It also seems that arguments in favour of a free labour market from the early classical economists were neither specifically directed at, nor had any immediate impact on, the state of English master and servant law. For indications of these arguments see the references to David Ricardo, G. Poulet Scrope, and Nassau Senior, in Jaffe, pp.24, 29-31. Similarly, criticisms of English slavery such as Cobbett's, as referred to on p.28 above, seem to have been primarily directed at the fact that workers were compelled to accept miserable wages in an oversupplied labour market in order to barely survive, and not specifically at the unfree state of servants in relation to the requirement to provide specific performance under master and servant law. For other examples of this discourse through to the 1840s, see Tholfsen, pp.51, 64, 88, 91; John Charlton, The Chertists, London, 1997, p.67. Wakefield also described impoverished labourers in England as slaves, e.g. E.G. Wakefield, Swing Unmasked; or the Causes of Rural Incendiarism, London, 1831, p.18. The weakness of the specific challenge in Britain
nineteenth century of the English master and servant law of 1747, which provided among other things for justices of the peace to hear and regulate any complaints by masters against their servants of ‘any Misdeemeanor, Miscarriage, Ill-behaviour’ in relation to their ‘Service or Employment’ and to punish breaches of service requirements by loss of wages and by ‘Commitment to the House of Correction, there to remain and be corrected, and held to hard Labour for a reasonable Time not exceeding one Calendar Month’. ⁴ In 1823, this statute was superseded by new English master and servant legislation which was also formally adopted in the first New South Wales master and servant statute in 1828. ⁵ The unlawfulness of a failure to complete the terms of contracts of service and indentures was explicitly highlighted in both of the new statutes and the level of punishment increased. Specifically in the New South Wales statute, an offence occurred where ‘Servants Laborers and Work People’ neglected or refused to work as contracted, either as by the piece or for the specific period of engagement. To deal with these offences, the legislation provided Justices with the option of committing ‘every person convicted of so offending … to the common gaol here to remain without bail or mainprize for any time not exceeding six calendar months or … to some house of correction there to remain and to be kept to hard labour for any time not exceeding three calendar months. The statute also allowed for the forfeiture of wages due or owing. ⁶

⁴ 20 Geo II, c.19, s.II. Some doubt emerged in the first or second decade of the nineteenth century about the application of the master and servant law in New South Wales. This occurred because of the lack of Quarter Sessions in the Australian judicial environment, which were required under the 1747 statute as the legal forum for appeals against decisions made by Justices of the Peace (and other specific judicial officers) in cases brought to them under the statute. An element of doubt continued into the 1820s, despite a proclamation issued by Macquarie in 1818 which provided for the application of a truncated set of rules based on the 1747 legislation but without the appeal process. 20 Geo II, c.19, s.V; Historical Records of Australia, Series IV, Section A, vol. I, 1922, pp.325-26, 412-15; and Series 1, vol.XI, p.67.

⁵ Castles, pp. 81-82; Historical Records of Australia, Series I, vol. IX, pp. 565-67, 633 and Series IV, Section A, Volume I, pp. 325-26; 4 Geo IV, c.34 (GB); 9 Geo IV, c. 9 (NSW); also Adrian Merritt, ‘The Historical Role of Law in Employment’, Australian Journal of Law & Society, vol. 1, No. 1, 1982, argues that the 1828 statute and the later statute of 1840 were part of a general process extending the coverage of the master and servant legislation, see particularly pp. 60-61, 64-66.

⁶ 9 Geo IV, no. IX, s.1.
Adrian Merritt’s study of the application of master and servant law in Australia shows that this legislation in fact continued to be adapted and enforced well into the twentieth century and that employer-initiated actions against their employees under the law continued at least in New South Wales into the 1860s and beyond. The timing of Wakefield’s argument as a general criticism of the requirement of specific performance, and as a reflection of American developments, was therefore well ahead of the eventual demise of the enforcement of this practice in Australia, and, indeed, in Britain.

The overall effect of Wakefield’s critique therefore was to stress that the major traditional British forms of supplying and controlling labour in the colonies were defective and needed to be replaced. This specifically included the supply and control of labour to, and in, Britain’s Australian colonies.

In also considering Wakefield’s alternative colonising practice, and its relevance to Australia, it is possible to see, as some like Sinclair have, similarities in Wakefield’s proposal to existing ideas. In particular, Gourlay had proposed that land be sold and the proceeds used for emigration. It is also possible to see, however, that Wakefield’s scheme was more complex, in that it was designed not only to supply but also retain labour. He may therefore have borrowed Gourlay’s idea of using land sales to fund emigration, but he also did more. In particular, he set the price of land not merely to fund emigration, but also, and primarily, to stop labour moving onto the land too quickly. This was an entirely new object. He also proposed to use the funds quite

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128 Merritt, pp.61-62. Why the requirement of specific performance survived in Australia for so long, given the continued example of the unfreedom of convict labour, and why indentured labour was so popular long into the nineteenth century, are unclear, but the questions are beyond the scope of this thesis to consider.

129 Simon, p.160.
selectively. He intended that they be used to only assist industrious, fecund migrants who would benefit the colonial market. Wakefield strongly opposed previously funded emigration schemes which were described as the ‘shovelling out of paupers’. All this went beyond Gourlay, and even more so beyond the practice in Australia, where land was still granted to migrants and where the passages of migrants, although assisted, were funded generally by the government. Pike also notes that the British Government had in any case ceased to fund emigration schemes in 1827.

The new scheme also proposed that the government implement a program to build the physical infrastructure of the settlement. Such a program was, again, in itself, not novel. The Australian colonial governors, for example, were involved in the establishment of public works and, indeed, enterprises such as the government’s farms, from the very first days of the New South Wales settlement. The implications of this involvement for the labour market had also been a matter for discussion and criticism. The economic historians, Abbott and Nairn, note, for instance, that Macquarie’s use of convicts on his public works program was one of the issues discussed in John Bigge’s report of 1822. Bigge concluded that Macquarie had taken his first claim on the convicts who offered the most valuable employment skills and left only an undesirable rump for private employment. While government public works and the potential for some criticism of the consequences of the employment of labour on these works were not new, however, what was new was Wakefield’s proposal to use funds from land sales (surplus to emigration requirements) to implement the required construction program.

130 Pike, p.33.
132 Pike, p.33.
133 Abbott and Nairn, pp.318-319. Also Davison et al, p.156.
As Wakefield's name for his scheme suggests, systematic colonisation brought together and enhanced various contemporary ideas to form a new, more advanced and organised plan for the transfer of labour from Britain to the colonies and the retention of this labour in the colonial labour market, in order to ensure the development of more cultivated, civilised, and prosperous colonial economies.

It is of course a rare thing that an invention or a new argument arises without any visible, established antecedent. Wakefield's contribution, like many others in other spheres, therefore, must be mainly measured by the degree to which he advanced beyond earlier ideas and practice. Against this measure, Wakefield's innovation should be regarded as his consolidation and linkage of various existing concerns and ideas into a new synthesis directed specifically at the Australian colonies. Of all his ideas, however, Wakefield probably went furthest with his idea of the 'sufficient price', and its specific object of controlling labourers in the colonies by restricting their opportunities to escape the labour market. This particular idea appears to have had the most indistinct origins and seems to have been, as a result, the most novel product of his inventive mind.

Conclusion

There is a great deal in *A Letter from Sydney* which relates to labour and labour relations. Wakefield began with preliminary concerns regarding British unemployment and the general solution of transferring labour to the colonies, but developed more fully the issue of how to transfer labour to the colonies and maintain this labour in the colonial labour market. He underlined the need for the development of concentrated settlements to produce successful colonies. He also identified the difficulty in maintaining concentrated settlements as being a matter of the inadequate supply of
labour exacerbated by the rapid movement of labour out of the labour market and into a struggling self-employed existence as impoverished landowners. He argued that the means of resolving the issue both of supply and the retention of labour in the colonial labour market was not through existing means of labour supply and control but by his new scheme of systematic colonisation.

In particular, the last parts of this argument had highly significant implications for colonial labour relations. In considering the control of labour, Wakefield rejected various forms of forced labour, both of a contractual nature (contracts of indentures and, by implication, any contracts requiring the performance of a specific period of service) and of a non-contractual nature (slaves and convicts). In doing so, he adopted a position which largely reflected existing circumstances in various parts of North America where labour had become generally free of legal and physical sanctions designed to restrict the movement of labour from one master to another. The primary implications of this change for labour relations were twofold. Firstly, it involved a general reduction in the authority of masters over labour. And secondly, the change had specific implications for bargaining over conditions of work, particularly wages. To go back to Wakefield’s cautionary tale of the indentured labourer who was persuaded to oppose his indenture, Wakefield acknowledged that the weakening of the master’s ability to retain his servant also reduced the ability of the master to resist demands for improved conditions of employment, particularly wages. A similar perception was in fact behind the original introduction at the time of the Black Death in the fourteenth century of the statutory requirement to directly force labour to work as required.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{134} 23 Edw III, 1349 and 25 Edw III, 1351.
In presenting a view on traditional forms of labour supply and control which largely reflected American practices and developments, the special significance of Wakefield’s position was also of course that he applied his criticism to the Australian colonies which persisted with these traditional practices of forced labour. Of even greater novelty, however, was his proposal of an alternative form of control, which was without precedent, either in America or Australia. Rather than rejecting existing controls and leaving the relations of masters and labour (including of course the matter of wage rates) to be settled as they might within an unpredictable and often scarce labour market, he proposed to regulate the labour market and ensure its good function by controlling the number of emigrants supplied to the colony and by regulating, through the mechanism of the ‘sufficient price’, the departure of labourers into landownership. Traditional bonds were to be exchanged for the impersonal control of the regulated labour market. Like Adam Smith, Wakefield favoured the operation of the market as the optimum determinant of economic outcomes, but he also recognised the need for some manipulation of the labour market in particular to ensure it maintained a proper balance.

Wakefield ended A Letter from Sydney with a plan of the scheme to control and correct the labour market which pointed the way to his future work as a coloniser. A Letter from Sydney was followed over time by many articles and much promotional material reiterating the main points of systematic colonisation set out in A Letter from Sydney. The process of transforming the theoretical model into a practical proposition, however, produced at least one major adjustment with significant implications for the relationship between labour and capital. This was the developing promise relating to the security of work. Not much had been said of this, however, in

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135 Barber, p.48, notes Smith’s dislike of “virtually all government intervention – apart from the discharge of such essential functions as the maintenance of law and order ... [and] the administration of justice”.

Wakefield's first and most single-minded outline of systematic colonisation. Labour relations in *A Letter from Sydney* were, instead, almost exclusively about freeing labour from its traditional bonds of tight personal control and applying the more impersonal control of the regulated labour market.
Chapter 2

Constancy and Change

Introduction

Historians have had mixed views about Wakefield’s character. Of the more unflattering, Douglas Pike described Wakefield as ‘capricious, unscrupulous, avid for influence and fame’.\(^1\) Keith Sinclair, for his part, described Wakefield as having a ‘perverse and unstable character’ and as ‘a scrt of intellectual confidence man, adroit, resilient, yet regarded with unalterable suspicion by those out of range of his persuasive voice and the fascination of his personality.’\(^2\) Erik Olssen noted in 1997 that historians had generally produced a picture of Wakefield as ‘a rigid reactionary, dishonest and unscrupulous, perhaps even a megalomaniac.’\(^3\) In the same year, in Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the Colonial Dream, Ngatata Love also described Wakefield as ‘an opportunist, a fortune hunter of the worst kind, and a convict.’\(^4\) While reflecting only the negative part of the spectrum of views on Wakefield’s character, these views nevertheless give due cause for some care in defining the nature and content of Wakefield’s ideas and concerns.

Before considering the influence of Wakefield’s ideas relating to labour and labour relations on New Zealand, there is a need to clearly establish what shape and form these ideas were in after the eight years that elapsed between the publication of A

\(^1\) Pike, p.53.
\(^2\) Sinclair, p.61.
Letter from Sydney and Wakefield’s letter to his brother-in-law, Charles Torlesse, in 1837, in which he declared his interest in the colonisation of New Zealand. Had Wakefield’s ideas, in other words, bent and shifted as expediency or whim demanded, or had they been constant and certain?

In brief, this chapter demonstrates a general, robust constancy in Wakefield’s views. This is done by reference to his reiteration, reinforcement, and promotion of the argument for systematic colonisation, up to and including the publication of The New British Province of South Australia. The chapter also describes, however, two particular variations in his views prior to 1837 and variations in the positions adopted by others involved in the colonisation of South Australia. The first of these variations centred on the level of the ‘sufficient price’ of land. His position in A Letter from Sydney was that the ‘sufficient price’ had to be high enough to prevent dispersion. Subsequently, he accepted that the price of land would in fact need to be low to ensure initial land purchases despite the consequence for dispersion. Later still, he returned to the idea of setting the initial price of land at a level sufficient to prevent dispersion from the very beginning of the establishment of a new colony. This return to his original principle placed him in conflict with his colleagues involved in the colonisation of South Australia and contributed to his disassociation from the scheme. The second variation involved the promise of guaranteed employment. At the outset, Wakefield promised in A Letter from Sydney ‘a very moderate provision’ to the emigrant who had newly arrived in the colony, ‘until hired’. During the course of the next eight years this promise grew and appeared eventually to offer relief work on wages to any who might need it. This enlarged promise also became the practice

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5 In his letter to Torlesse of 12 May 1837, Wakefield wrote, ‘I have set on foot a new measure of colonization on principles which have worked so well for South Australia. The country is New Zealand—one of the finest countries in the world, if not the finest for British settlement.’ A.J. Harrop, The Amazing Career of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, London, 1928, p.92.
6 Wakefield, A Letter from Sydney, p.180.
in South Australia though it was not to survive the economic crisis which hit the colony in 1840.

*From Principles and Objects to Founding a Colony in Southern Australia*

Wakefield’s adherence to the general argument for systematic colonisation, with all its implications for labour and labour relations, can be demonstrated by reference to the content of his publications over the five years following the publication of *A Letter from Sydney*. This demonstration is an inevitably lengthy process. Ultimately, however, it is also a fruitful one, not only showing beyond the shadow of doubt Wakefield’s attachment to the main contours of his original scheme, but also providing evidence of an increasingly comprehensive overall argument. Because of the extent of Wakefield’s works, particularly *England and America*, the following discussion has been divided into two parts. The first considers Wakefield’s publications from *Principles and Objects,* published in 1830, to *Founding a Colony in Southern Australia*, published in 1832. The second considers almost exclusively the detail of *England and America*, which was published in 1833.

The first of these publications, *Principles and Objects*, was written by Wakefield in 1830. Following his release from Newgate in May 1830, Wakefield had almost immediately become involved in the formation of the National Colonisation Society. This society replaced an earlier society concerned with the promotion of colonisation, which had been formed by Robert Gouger (who had acted as Wakefield’s editor for *A Letter from Sydney*) the previous year. Shortly thereafter, *Principles and Objects was*

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7 The full title of *Principles and Objects* is *A Statement of the Principles and Objects of a Proposed National Society for the Cure and Prevention of Pauperism by means of Systematic Colonization.*
released.⁸ The main object of the publication was to set out the goals of the new society. These goals were to secure the practical implementation of the principles of systematic colonisation. The pamphlet provided new emphases and structure to the argument for colonisation but Wakefield’s problems and solutions, and thus the implications for labour and labour relations, remained essentially the same as those presented in *A Letter from Sydney*.

To briefly remind ourselves of the relevant content of the argument in *A Letter from Sydney*, this was: concern over the misery and redundancy of labour evident in contemporary Britain; the unsatisfied need for labour in the colonies coupled with the need to concentrate settlement in the colonies; the inadequacy of traditional and contemporary methods of supplying labour to, and controlling labour in, the colonies; and, in contrast, the advantages and capacity of Wakefield’s scheme, systematic colonisation, to do what these traditional and contemporary methods of supplying and controlling labour failed to do. The illustrations used to demonstrate Wakefield’s case were drawn largely from his understanding of circumstances in New South Wales. This was a place he had never visited but had become aware of in greater detail during his stay in Newgate where transportation to New South Wales remained a prospect for a considerable proportion of its inmates.

In *Principles and Objects*, relief of the misery of the working classes was set out as one of the two basic objects of colonisation. These two objects were defined as: needing to ‘afford the greatest possible relief to the most miserable class in Britain, by enabling the greatest number of them to emigrate’; and the creation of ‘the largest possible market, or as many markets as possible, for the products of British

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⁸ Lloyd Prichard, pp.29-30; Temple, p.134; Harrop, pp.55-58; O’Connor, p.82.
industry. As Wakefield’s argument developed, he added the condition that the practice must be self-sustaining. In other words it was not to be funded by Britain out of general government revenue.

On the inclination of this miserable class to emigrate, Wakefield argued that the poor and distressed in Britain, especially the ‘very miserable’ and ‘very wretched’, needed little encouragement. He did add, however, that the greater the difference between poor prospects in Britain and better conditions in the colonies, the greater the motivation for migration. And the greater the motivation, the more likely it would be to override the inclination, based on a natural love of country, to remain in Britain. Good prospects of colonial employment and future prosperity therefore played a part in generating enthusiasm for emigration. Wakefield defined these prospects as ‘the certainty of obtaining absolute plenty, – an ample provision of food, clothes and fuel, for himself, his wife, and any number of children.’ Given that migration might improve the balance of the labour market in Britain and the condition of the working classes there, Wakefield also considered that some future improvement in colonial prospects might be necessary whereby the migrant sought ‘an existence even superior to an ample provision of mere necessaries. He must be enabled, besides maintaining his family in ease, to lay by some property every year, and to become, in time, an employer of other labourers – an occupier, if not a proprietor of land.’

Given the inclination to emigrate, the wretchedness of the potential migrants posed a problem of how to transform the inclination into actual movement to the colonies. As a result of ‘their extreme poverty’, the impoverished migrants were ‘still chained to the

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10 Ibid. p.8.
11 Ibid. pp.4-8.
12 Ibid. p.31.
13 Ibid.
spot’ by ‘the cost of passage’. Wakefield’s answer to the problem began with criticism of established methods of overcoming the obstacle of the cost of passage to the colonies, in particular the use of indentured labour and the provision of advances for later repayment.

Wakefield noted that the use of indentured labour ‘has never afforded any considerable relief to the miserable classes in Britain, and it never can’. It always disadvantaged either the master or the indentured servant, ‘for, either the indentured emigrant is not held to his bond, in which case the capitalist who has paid for his passage is a loser; or, if he be held to his bond, his condition is not bettered.’ He added as background that ‘Up to the time of the American Revolution, capitalists in America did manage, by an excessive tyranny, to hold indented emigrants to their bond; but the consequence was, that there were very few voluntary emigrants of that description, and that the extreme want of labourers led to a species of slave-trade in whites, called “kidnapping.” Since the American Revolution it has been found quite impossible in the United States, and very difficult in the British colonies to hold an indented emigrant to his bond.’ Many masters in the Northern states had therefore turned to redemptionist labour. This, Wakefield explained, had involved ‘The great number of poor Germans conveyed ... during the late war, and sold under the name of “redemptioners,”’ who appeared to be similar to indentured labourers but were in fact ‘temporary slaves’. While Wakefield accepted that indentured labour could be subject to excessive tyranny and were like slaves, redemptioners were totally ignorant ‘of the laws, even of the language, of America’ and were ‘placed’ even more completely ‘at the mercy of their masters’. And, indeed, he added, ‘very often but little mercy was shewn to them.’ The exploitation was such that ‘On their arrival at the American ports they were actually sold to the highest bidder; and, in too many cases,

\[14\] Ibid, pp.7-8.
\[15\] Ibid, p.9.
the master contrived to prolong the term of service agreed upon, by bringing his bondsmen in debt, and requiring to be repaid in labour.’ With regard to Australia, in the absence of the use of redemptioners, Wakefield confined himself to repeating a note from the wealthy New South Wales farmer, James Macarthur, that ‘There is no instance on record ... where settlers have been able to prevent their indented servants, hired in England, from becoming dissatisfied, and then leaving them after their arrival.’

With regard to government advances to migrants, Wakefield ridiculed the prospects of repayment. In the first instance he expected the paupers to readily take up land and for the population of the colony to become dispersed. He noted ‘That emigrants would, almost universally, claim land if it were allowed to them’. He added that it was a fact ‘no one who knows any thing of the habits of emigrants, or of the state of the facts in the particular colonies in question, can doubt.’ Equally, however, he expected that their land would be quickly exhausted through poor agricultural practices and a lack of labour. They would, therefore, make little income from production and their land would lose value through increasing infertility. These factors would, in themselves, make repayment unlikely. If not prevented by these causes, however, repayments would be prevented by ‘either ignorance, or improvidence, or idleness, or drunkenness, or fever, or a serious bodily accident, or a wandering disposition, not to mention death.’

Wakefield also emphasised that dispersed settlements produced poor and barbaric colonies unless they resorted to the use of slaves. Capital, he reiterated, needed to be combined with labour to be productive. Labour also needed to be combined in

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16 Ibid, pp 10-11, 10n. Presumably the ‘late war’ referred to by Wakefield was the Anglo-American War of 1812-14.
17 Ibid, p.49.
itself as 'great production is never accomplished, either in agriculture or in manufactures, except by combination – by setting several persons to help one another in the same work.' On America in particular, Wakefield stated that while he was prepared 'Not to dwell on the advantages, nor to mention the terrible evils, which America has derived from slavery, it seems evident that great cheapness of land produces, amongst a skilful and industrious people, great scarcity of labourers; that great scarcity of labourers is injurious or almost fatal to accumulation; and that the want of power to accumulate soon removes the desire – whereby civilized men are converted into semi-barbarians.' As a form of reverse verification, he noted that concentrated settlements, such as New York, which had fortunately been unable to disperse because of hostile Indian tribes, were, in contrast, prosperous and civilised.

Wakefield further argued that high wages were not paid in colonies with widely dispersed populations. Although there was always a great need for labour, poor landowners had insufficient capital or income to pay high wages. For colonial wages to be high and to be attractive to prospective migrants, therefore, 'it would be necessary to give [the migrants] a territory more extensive than that of Britain, but it would be equally necessary to confine them, throughout the whole progress of their increase, within the narrowest limits which would permit the greatest possible increase of people.'

19 Ibid. p.47.  
20 Ibid. p.37.  
21 Ibid. p.29.  
22 Ibid. p.40.  
The obvious means of controlling these limits, Wakefield stated, was regulation by the owner of the ‘waste land’, that is the government, through the simple method of requiring ‘a considerable price for all future grants of land without exception.’ The remedy also coincided with the solution required to overcome the obstacle the poor faced in seeking to reach the colonies. The funds obtained from the sale of land would cover the costs of passage as well as ensuring concentration by placing land out of the immediate reach of the arriving pauper. The scheme had the further great advantage of being self-funding and self-regulating. Wakefield acknowledged that the ‘considerable price’ could not be determined without some experimentation, but argued that ‘even the little more than nominal payment’ that was being charged for American land had helped to check dispersion to some degree. Wakefield had already noted, in discussing the potential cost of paupers migrating to colonies, the great advantage of selecting only young and industrious couples for the scheme. For the passage of two, their potential to contribute to the further enlargement of Britain’s already too large population was eliminated, and was instead added to that of the colony. In other words, the colony paid for two but got significantly more in the long run.

Wakefield concluded with a brief outline of other benefits which would follow from the application of his scheme, and a general summary. The outline of these benefits included: the provision of roads, a necessity neglected in other ventures; the scheme’s tendency to compensate the slave owner for the loss of his slave; the remunerative advantage for the colonial labourer in that ‘the amount of his wages’ would be ‘greater’ because, even though the share for labour in relation to the share

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26 Ibid, pp.43-46, 52.
27 Ibid, 17f.
28 Any loss of a bound servant or slave would be easily compensated by the availability of other willing servants and labourers ready for hire.
for capital from the benefits of colonial production might be smaller, production generally would be so much greater as a result of systematic colonisation; the certainty that the scheme would never lead to ‘any scarcity of labour in proportion to employment’ in Britain despite reducing the surplus population of Britain, and its misery; the colonies would not impose any cost on Britain; the colonies would be fundamentally agricultural and wealthy and would provide employment opportunities for the middle classes; and the scheme met the main objections of critics of colonisation in that it would reduce Britain’s domestic population at a rate faster than the domestic population could replenish itself and it was cost effective, particularly in the sense that emigration under the scheme was cheaper than maintaining the same migrants on relief in Britain. Wakefield also noted that the impact of the scheme would be different on different colonies. Systematic colonisation would have its own special impact on Canada, for example, where cheap land in the United States would affect its application. But, Wakefield insisted, the application would always be beneficial to some degree and that although the price of land in each colony could not be specifically predicted, even a rate initially set at too low a level was not necessarily harmful in that it encouraged speculation and thus the early accumulation of revenue in the emigration fund. 

To compare Principles and Objects with A Letter from Sydney, Principles and Objects provided a more substantial outline of the interest of the working classes in colonisation, and also their difficulty in leaving Britain. The commentary included additional detail on unfree labour in America – particularly redemptioners – and

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29 The essentials of this argument, that all in society will be better off if production grows, even if shares become more unequal, is of course still a strong element in current political discourse. Wakefield explained this point in more detail in England and America; see below.

30 The basis for this argument was that as unemployment decreased, poverty, unease, and therefore the motivation to emigrate, would also decrease. The natural inclination to remain in Britain, based on a love for one’s own country, would therefore eventually prevail before any shortage of labour could occur, and emigration would cease to be significant, Wakefield, Principles and Objects, pp.58-59.

31 Wakefield, Principles and Objects, pp.56-68.
Wakefield noted that colonial wages were not always high, which was contrary to what he had indicated in *A Letter from Sydney.* This was because impoverished dispersed settlers did not have the means to pay high wages. Furthermore, he emphasised that systematic colonisation provided the labourers with the effective means of achieving their true great object. This object was not to become just the owner of land. This was the natural and indeed the generally achieved objective of all labourers who emigrated to the colonies. Unhindered, labourers would as a matter of course buy land as soon as they could in their new home and quickly settle themselves on it. The greater object in fact was to be the master of men. None of these points, however, detracted from the core ideas of Wakefield’s original argument. The general effect was to refine and reinforce the content of *A Letter from Sydney.*

In a more limited way, the same can be said of *Swing Unmasked, Householders in Danger,* and *Punishment of Death,* three pamphlets published by Wakefield in the year or so after the release of *Principles and Objects.* These pamphlets were clearly not in the mould of *A Letter from Sydney* or *Principles and Objects.* They did not directly argue for the adoption of systematic colonisation. There was no mention, for example, of the issues of dispersion or concentration, indentured labourers, the ‘sufficient price’, or the establishment of an immigration fund derived from revenue obtained from the sale of land. Although not directly seeking this end, however, these publications still clearly considered issues both relevant to, and supportive of, Wakefield’s case for systematic colonisation.

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33 The full titles of these publications are: *Swing Unmasked, or the Causes of Rural Incendiarism; Householders in Danger from the Populace; and Facts Relating to the Punishment of Death in the Metropolis.*
In *Swing Unmasked*, Wakefield's main object was to outline his view on the causes of the Swing riots, which began in the summer of 1830.\textsuperscript{34} He stated that 'The first step towards the cure of most evils is a clear understanding of their nature'.\textsuperscript{35} Wakefield attributed these riots primarily to the oppressive behaviour of the rural landowners and the application of the poor law allowance system (often referred to as the 'Speenhamland' system). In particular, Wakefield denounced the rural rich for their self interested, parsimonious administration of the allowance system.\textsuperscript{36} The system – one of a number of measures of poor law relief, which included the labour rate system, the 'Roundsman' system, and work on public projects such as building and repairing roads – provided a supplement to inadequate wages which brought them up to a basic minimum wage (based on 'the ruling price of bread'), with the allowance also scaled to make additional provision for dependants.\textsuperscript{37} Wakefield stated that the rural elite set wages only after 'elaborately calculating the minimum of food that will keep together the soul and body of a clodhopper.' Wakefield argued that the allowance system both impoverished and denied otherwise able labourers the opportunity to fulfil their potential to be 'wise, virtuous, and happy'. The labourers were debased and, as such, like slaves. He noted that the able bodied poor, with their 'strength, energy, and skill, ... would earn a comfortable subsistence as

\textsuperscript{34} E.J.Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1969, p.97
\textsuperscript{36} Wakefield's own reference to *Swing Unmasked* as reproduced in E.G. Wakefield, *England and America*, 1833, pp. 340-42. Wakefield also regarded the clergy as 'oppressors' but defended the tenant farmers. He argued that the farmers were also suffering because their profits had been 'reduced to the minimum'. Wages could only be raised, he stated, if taxes, tithes, or rents were reduced. Wakefield, *Swing Unmasked*, pp.20-24, 29-30.
\textsuperscript{37} Under the labour rate system, a parish rate was struck on the basis of the number of able bodied labourers to be supported and each ratepayer had the option of directly spending their rate on labour for their own use or paying the proportion to the parish. Under the 'Roundsman system', unemployed labourers were sent around the parish until they found a master willing to employ them at the subsidised parish rate.\textsuperscript{37} Rose also notes that 'In some parishes, unemployed labourers were put up for auction, or sent to work on roads, with varying degrees of success.' J.D.Marshal, *The Old Poor Law: 1795-1834*, London, 1985, pp. 13-15; Michael Rose, *The English Poor Law*, Newton Abbot, 1971, pp. 19-22, 59. Also Paul Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 32. The village of Speenhamland was the best known of the localities that adopted the allowance system in the late eighteenth century, Anthony Brundage, *The English Poor Laws, 1700-1930*, Houndmills, 2002, pp.28-29.
labourers, if the modern fashion of paying wages out of the poor-box did not interfere with the due course of things, and reduce all the labourers of a parish, the old and young, the weak and the strong, the idle and the industrious, to that lowest of wages, or rather of weekly payment to each, which in each case, is barely sufficient for the support of life.' Conditions for the labourers were also exacerbated by the enthusiasm of the rural landowners for the enclosure of the commons and the exclusion of the poor from their walled parks. 'Wakefield could only sympathise with the courageous and resourceful resort of the poor to 'poaching or smuggling' in order to sustain themselves and their families. In the circumstances, the Swing riots were hardly a surprising reaction. The 'privileged classes' had taken, Wakefield wrote, 'infinite pains to be abhorred by their poorest neighbours.'\footnote{Wakefield, \textit{England and America}, pp. 340-42. Wakefield provided several reasons for the specific timing of the Swing riots in 1830. In part this reflected an increase in the proportion of 'husbandry labourers ... in a state of pauperism'. But, he stated, 'The important difference between past times and the present is, that whereas, in past times the misery existed without being known, - we now know all about it.' This included the husbandry labourers who through the work of the government had begun to receive an education and as a result had been given 'a knowledge of their own debasement, a discovery that they are slaves'. Wakefield added that the example of the French revolution of 1830 had also had the effect on 'the peasantry of England' of 'violently inflaming them against those classes whom they most justly consider as their oppressors.' Wakefield, \textit{Swing Unmasked}, pp.16, 18-19, 28.}

In fulfilment of his stated object, therefore, Wakefield delineated exactly where he felt the fundamental responsibility for the Swing riots lay. This was with the rural landowners. In reaching this conclusion, however, \textit{Swing Unmasked} also provided material which was relevant to his argument for systematic colonisation.

Firstly, Wakefield emphasised the degree and endemic nature of poverty and misery of the rural labourers. Indeed they were 'slaves'. They were in the same generic position as black slaves, convict labourers, indentured labourers, and redemptioners, that is, the slaves he had identified in \textit{A Letter from Sydney} and \textit{Principles and Objects}. Slavery had to be eliminated. In categorising the rural English labourers as slaves, therefore, he intensified the need to eliminate their misery and distress.
Furthermore, Wakefield emphasised that the English rural poor were not necessarily at fault for their own poverty. Even in describing the ‘thoroughly depraved’ pauper, who was ‘defective …, weak in body and mind, inert, pusillanimous, and stupid’, Wakefield attributed the deficiencies not only to inheritance but also dependency engendered by the poor law and to poor nutrition. In the case of the superior able-bodied paupers, responsibility for their condition was put squarely at the door of the poor law and the oppressive behaviour of the rural gentry. The significance of this finding, that primary fault lay with the conditions of the pauper’s environment, was that, rationally, any remedies had to involve some change in the pauper’s environment. This was especially the case for the superior able-bodied pauper. Wakefield’s presentation of the superior able-bodied paupers as victims of the rural gentry and the administration of the poor law also implied that the former deserved assistance and a change in their environment.

In part, therefore, it followed that the poor law needed to be reformed. Wakefield suggested relief which provided pauper children at least with better nutrition and favoured a poor law whereby ‘labour was paid in proportion to the work performed, and not according to a scale founded on the power of gastric juice under various circumstances’. This contrasted with the prevailing political view in Britain in favour of the adoption of a still more severely punitive poor law, which found its expression in the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners and in the New Poor Law of 1834.

41 Modern poor law histories note a variety of concerns and criticisms relating to the poor law from the later part of the eighteenth century. Paul Slack, among others, notes that the pressure of rising costs generated criticism of the poor law and the pressure for reform. Slack p.26; Rose, pp.20-21; Marshall, p.16. The criticism itself involved a general challenge to the traditional view of poor law assistance as a matter of right for the poor in need. Rose summarises the tenor of this criticism as disapproval ‘of the more generous out-relief system [as opposed to confinement to the workhouse]’ and the argument ‘that, for the good of his character, the poor man ought to be forced to look after himself, making provision through friendly societies for periods of emergency, adopting a more frugal standard of living, and limiting the size of his family by abstaining from early marriage.’ Rose, p.21. Knott also notes that
Swing Unmasked also provided a basis for any reasonable propositions which would lead to an improvement in the conditions of the impoverished rural labourers and an end to their enslavement. It justified Wakefield’s suggestions of change to the poor law. Equally, however, it provided some of the initial justification needed for arguing that the superior able bodied poor should be spirited away from the impoverishing and enslaving conditions endemic in the Swing counties under the auspices of Malthus’ theory was fundamental to this view. Given a population increase would follow from increasing wages, ‘then ‘no distribution of money, no matter how great, could possibly raise the general standard of living for the poor and destitute. Malthus therefore proposed ‘the abolition of the entire poor law system.’ Knott, p.41. In addition, Knott shows there was strong support for severe restraint in the application of poor law relief because, not only did it encourage marriage, but it also ‘removed hunger as the chief stimulus to labour and discouraged the worthy poor.’ Ibid. Severe want or the threat of severe want, therefore, would ensure that the unemployed would not neglect any opportunity for work and, by the same token, workmen in employment would anxiously retain their existing employment. Further, Knott notes the influence of Jeremy Bentham, who severely criticised the availability of outdoor relief and the availability of relief to persons with some assets, even if modest, and provided the intellectual basis for the less-eligibility principle at the heart of the 1834 Poor Law Report. The principle included the acceptance that some relief should be provided to prevent starvation ‘while food existed’, but primarily centred on the necessity of ensuring that those without work were not maintained in a condition more favourable than those who did work. If such was the case, persons would withdraw from the labour market, to the eventual extent that ‘there would be nobody left to labour at all for anybody.’ Bentham proposed, therefore, the establishment of great, strictly organised workhouses where paupers were ‘maintained at a standard only slightly above starvation.’ Knott, pp.45-47.

Wakefield rejected a number of possibilities. Hanging, he thought, could be effective if the criminals were quickly caught, but it could also provoke an escalation of violence ranging from the burning of corn to the burning of ‘mansions and rectory houses.’ He considered that the argument that it was wicked to burn food while the poor starved would be easily rebutted. The poor could not get less. Moreover, the fires had already produced some improvements in wages and parish allowances and also an increase in ‘anxiety … amongst the ruling classes to serve the pauper herd.’ Expressions of horror by the oppressors were equally of little advantage as the peasantry saw only a positive advantage to themselves in the incendiariarism. Wakefield provided two criticisms of the idea that an increase in wages might curb the riots. In the first instance, the farmers had no money to provide an increase. Secondly, ‘a tax on landlords and parsons for the support of paupers, would diminish the expenditure of the aristocracy by so much, and if the amount were large, would bring total ruin on a vast number of dealers and manufacturers of every rank.’ To respond to the incidence of fires by granting increasing wages in the areas where fires occurred was also a dangerous encouragement for workmen to light fires elsewhere. Furthermore, Wakefield argued, on the basis that there was only a finite amount of food available, that increasing wages and thus the ability for some to purchase more food ultimately only deprived others of food. In addition, Wakefield considered military repression and spring guns. In the case of the former, he thought that the ‘humanity of the middle classes’ had grown to such a degree as to make a repeat of the Peterloo massacre difficult. He added that the soldiers might be reluctant themselves to act against the labourers and the tenant farmers would also be unsupportive. The use of spring guns would lead to revenge attacks and the guns would in any case be easy to disable. Wakefield, Swing Unmasked, pp.39-45. The reference to Peterloo relates to a meeting at St Peter’s Field in Manchester involving an estimated 60,000 protesters. The purpose of the meeting was, according to D.G.Wright, to ‘display the power of the unrepresented [i.e. in Parliament], as well as anger at the Manchester magistrates’ use of the Combination Laws’. An attack by the yeomanry cavalry on the crowd led to 11 dead and over 600 injured. D.G.Wright, Popular Radicalism: The Working-Class Experience 1780-1880, London, 1988, pp.71-73.
systematic colonisation. In other words, he justified some change, whether it was to be reform of the poor law or the adoption of systematic colonisation.

One can also hardly escape the conclusion that the superior able bodied paupers Wakefield described in *Swing Unmasked* would provide exactly the sort of desirable migrants Wakefield had previously identified in *A Letter from Sydney* as suitable for participating in his systematic colonisation scheme.

In explaining the Swing riots, therefore, *Swing Unmasked* provided an account which supplemented the call for action in *A Letter from Sydney* and *Principles and Objects* to deal with the poverty of the English labourers, though it did not directly follow this through to a specific argument for the adoption of systematic colonisation. In addition, it intensified the need for action. *A Letter from Sydney* and *Principles and Objects* provided reasons of economic common sense and a vague humanitarianism for the shift of redundant, suffering labour from the mother country to the potentially prosperous colonies. *Swing Unmasked* provided the motive of justice and the need to provide assistance for victims of oppression. It also emphasised that the rural gentry had a self interest in supporting this change. It illuminated the dangers which flourished with the misery. 'Is it credible', Wakefield asked, 'that the pauper should not view with satisfaction the flurried steps and pale face of the rector, the assumed air of indifference not half concealing the uneasiness of my lord who owns the soil on which the stacks were burnt, and the violent rage of a neighbouring squire, mixed with nervous indications?' Action to remedy the cause and to prevent the eruption of violence was, according to Wakefield, urgently needed.  

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Danger from the very poor was one of the issues which also related *Householders in Danger* to Wakefield's colonisation argument. The general concern of *Householders in Danger*, written as violent riots took place around the country in relation to the Reform crisis, was the danger posed to the law-abiding citizenry of London by impoverished elements of the city, led by ill-meaning criminals and political extremists. Within this context, *Householders in Danger* briefly mentioned the deserving working class in London who showed their strength of character in adversity and want in 'resisting manifold inducements to go wrong'. But Wakefield was more concerned with the most impoverished elements of the working class 'who had a deep sense of the evils of their condition'. These elements were dangerous because of their condition. 'The misery, the barbarous ignorance, the last degradation of the poor people, and their constant intercourse with thieves', Wakefield argued, 'render them enemies of all law and order'. They were the most susceptible to the corruption and the manipulation of the incorrigible criminal class, which, Wakefield argued, was ready and waiting for a moment of social disorganisation, such as might accompany the struggle for the Reform Bill. This chaos would give the criminally inclined the opportunity 'to pluck sensual enjoyment in the midst of blood and fire'.

The reference to 'barbarous ignorance', and the 'constant intercourse with thieves', of course echoed concerns raised by Wakefield previously in *A Letter from Sydney* and in *Principles and Objects* over the dangers of dispersion to the social character of the colonial population and the corrupting influence of incorrigible convicts on a non-

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44 The most notable of the disturbances associated with the attempt to reform Parliament occurred in Bristol in late October 1831. At least twelve rioters were killed and nearly one hundred badly wounded when troops finally retook the town. Thirty-one prisoners were subsequently sentenced to death but only four were actually executed, Wright, pp.90-91.
criminal population. Wakefield emphasised the despicable nature of London's thieves and the dangers they represented. They were, he said, ‘reckless’, desirous of 'idleness and debauchery', ‘of a cruel disposition’, ‘pitiless and ferocious, like ... the tiger’, and ‘free from all merciful considerations’, and they took ‘delight in hurting others’. He expected that in their attack on London, ‘plunder and rape would be succeeded by fire as a means of concealing those crimes’.48

Another group Wakefield attacked was the political idealists. This attack also had links to his colonisation thesis. Wakefield represented systematic colonisation in A Letter from Sydney and Principles and Objects as the solution to the misery of the working classes and, as such, a solution which was in competition with various other political remedies in currency at the time. His attacks on activists with alternative remedies therefore indirectly served the purpose of promoting systematic colonisation. In Householders in Danger, he condemned the followers of Henry Hunt and Robert Owen.

Hunt represented a similar position to that held by Cobbett, blaming unemployment and distress on an oppressive aristocracy, and advocating republicanism, universal suffrage, and annual parliaments.49 Like Cobbett, Hunt saw ‘Taxation’ as ‘the cause of the want of employment’ and ‘Corruption’ as ‘the cause of taxation’. The oppressive aristocracy were ‘a borough mongering faction’ which subsisted ‘on the plunder wrung from ... [the] miseries’ of the people.50 Wakefield simply branded Hunt’s followers as irrational, lazy, simple, and cowardly.51

48 Ibid, pp.5-7.
49 Ibid, pp.9-10.
51 Wakefield, Householders in Danger, pp.9-10. These followers included the revolutionary ‘Spenceans’, who sought the abolition of private property, Wright, pp.68, 71.
Wakefield also condemned the followers of Robert Owen. Owen was especially prominent as a leading critic of British society on the basis of its preoccupations with competitive individualism and with acquisition.

In explaining Owen's ideas, Tholfsen notes that he 'articulated three interconnected themes that were to echo through the disparate forms of working-class protest in the 1830s and 1840s – denunciation of a society based on the principle of competitive individualism, a rejection of political economy and other forms of middle-class ideology, and an insistence of the labour theory of value.'52 Owen argued that acquisitive individualism placed men in opposition to each other, deprived them of the 'wisdom to enjoy', and was 'opposed ... perpetually to the public good'. In declaring that manual labour was the source of all wealth, he also argued that when the principle was placed into practice, 'The demand for human labour would no longer be subject to caprice, nor would the support of human life be made, as at present, a perpetually varying article of commerce, and the working classes made the slaves of an artificial system of wages, more cruel in its effects than any slavery ever practised by society, either barbarous or civilised'.53

Owen's radical contemporaries also began to develop these ideas in the 1820s to provide an analysis centred on the proposition that the capitalist was just an oppressive middleman eating up the produce of labour, to which he had no right. The more general enemy of labour therefore became capital, rather than merely the aristocracy as Cobbett and Hunt argued.54 Owen also put his ideas into practice and

52 Tholfsen, p.54.
53 Owen cited in Tholfsen, pp.54-55.
54 Tholfsen, pp.56, 58. Also see Jaffe, p.32. Wright, p.98, notes the development of these ideas from William Thompson and Thomas Hodgkin to Henry Hetherington, William Carpenter and Brontierre O'Brien. Wright also notes that 'this nascent socialist critique involved emphasis on the labour theory of value, on theories of working-class under-consumption and the need for higher wages and full
initiated a co-operative movement as an alternative to competitive individualism. This work included the establishment of a model factory at New Lanark and the model community of New Harmony in Indiana, and a failed attempt to establish co-operative production in London in 1833 and 1834.55

Owen’s ideas and those of his radical contemporaries were clearly antithetical to those of Wakefield. For Wakefield, capitalists and capital performed vital roles in the management of labour and the generation of production. The combination of capital and labour in the correct proportion produced the desired objects of wealth and civilisation. The demand for labour could be effectively controlled by the regulation of the labour market. Wakefield strongly approved of waged work for capital. Wakefield could agree that labour working at unreasonably low wages which caused impoverishment and distress was slavery, but he did not agree that the working classes in general were enslaved.

In line with these differences, therefore, Wakefield attacked Owen’s followers, stating that they were ‘bent on the overthrow of all existing laws, with a view to the formation of a “new state in society,” in which there should subsist either a perfect equality of property, or rather no property at all, as we use the word, but a community of goods.’ The idealistic and uncompromising Owenites, he said, ‘would become remorseless tyrants’ if they attained power.56

Wakefield’s immediate solution to the threat of riot and destruction in London, which he made appear imminent by emphasising the controversy and disturbance created

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56 Wakefield, Householders in Danger, pp.10-11.
by the failure of the Government to pass the Reform Bill, seems, by his own usually sophisticated standards, too simple, perhaps even facile. His answer was to arm the householders of London. This, he believed, would deter and stop the potential rioters. There is a note in *Householders in Danger* which indicates, however, that he was also generally alert to the need to remedy the cause of the misery of the poor and not merely react to its consequences, even if he did not give his thoughts on such remedies any specific shape in his pamphlet. While his immediate advice was ‘Put a householder and a gun together, and the householder is safe’,\(^{57}\) more generally, he suggested that if anyone had ‘common humanity and much leisure, he will turn his attention to the means by which the condition of the poorest class may be improved.’\(^{58}\) Leisure was generally presented as a great virtue in Wakefield’s colonisation literature. It arose in conjunction with the concentration of population and provided the opportunity for social cultivation and civilised thought. This was a further example of how leisure could be utilised to great effect.

The last of Wakefield’s three relatively short publications was *Punishment of Death*. Of the three, the discussion in *Punishment of Death* was the one that most explicitly reached beyond the domestic English context and into the colonial context.

*Punishment of Death* was generally concerned with the ineffectiveness of the contemporary practices of criminal detection and punishment, and, particularly, with the ineffectiveness of the death penalty as a deterrent to criminal activity other than murder. Because he was primarily concerned with criminals, Wakefield said little in *Punishment of Death* of the non-criminal poor. He did, however, note the incorrigibility of criminals and their corruption of the poor and vulnerable. As he did in *Householders in Danger*, Wakefield heavily underlined the largely irredeemable

\(^{57}\) Ibid, p.15.

\(^{58}\) Ibid, pp.3-4.
nature of the criminal class, even recommencing their lives of crime as they walked away on release from the gates of Newgate Prison. With regard to corruption, he described the use of food by criminals as a ‘means of seduction’ to persuade and corrupt the hungry to join their ranks. The attractions of sex were also used to corrupt even the very young. These descriptions again presented a domestic circumstance which paralleled and reinforced the idea of the corruption of honest colonists by transported convicts. Wakefield in fact stressed this latter corruption in his final chapter on transportation as something to be expected ‘in a society constantly imbibing moral poison’. He also attacked transportation as a system of punishment and deterrence. It was, he thought, only a punishment to hardened criminals in that it prevented their further participation in criminal life in London. Otherwise, the punishment offered little hardship. He noted that although the convict ‘was sent to become a bond-servant’, the convict quickly became aware of his scarcity value in the colony and came to terms with his master. Under these terms, the convict was required to perform ‘much less work than is performed by the great mass of his native countrymen, who were never criminal’, and instead of the ‘miserable existence’ which rewarded his native countrymen, the transported convict ‘obtain[ed] all the comforts, and many of the luxuries, which one of his habits [could] desire.’ The felon could even ‘save a portion of his earnings’ and become a master. It was, Wakefield emphasised, ‘an odd description of punishment.’

In summary, the three Wakefield pamphlets published in 1831 added generally to his systematic colonisation thesis by noting not only the obvious poverty endemic among the British working classes and underlining the need for change, but also the redeemable nature of at least some sections of the poor given a change in the

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60 Ibid. p.200.
61 Ibid. p.265.
62 Ibid. p.264.
environment in which they lived. Wakefield further added the spice of danger to encourage change, disparaged some of the alternative proposals for radical change, and underlined the consequence of corruption when honest folk had to associate with incorrigible criminals.

Wakefield followed these articles with *Founding a Colony in Southern Australia*. Published in 1832, *Founding* promoted the colonisation of South Australia on the bases of its attractive geography, its potential for providing ‘Exportable Commodities’, and the intention to apply the principles of systematic colonisation to ensure that the colony’s full potential was exploited. With regard to the latter, Wakefield opened with a detailed plan for implementing systematic colonisation in South Australia. The important argument, however, justifying and explaining systematic colonisation, was placed in the concluding sections of the publication. This argument in particular clearly indicated that Wakefield remained well attached to the core principles of his scheme.

The objects of systematic colonisation, Wakefield stated, were the task of enabling ‘Great Britain to limit her population to whatever number might be necessary to place and keep the labouring class in a state of comfort, not only without any expence [sic] to the government, but with these additional advantages; first, of saving almost all that portion of the nine or ten millions expended in Poors’ [sic] Rates which is not employed in the maintenance of those who are aged or infirm: and secondly, of covering our uninhabited or thinly peopled Colonial possessions, with settlements which would increase in population and wealth more rapidly than any which have yet been founded in any part of the world, and create immense markets for our manufactures.’ Wakefield also noted that the main cause of the failure to date to

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63 Wakefield, *Founding a Colony in Southern Australia*, p.305. Also see Wakefield’s reference to relief of ‘the overstocked [labour] market of Britain’ in s. 9 of the ‘Plan of a Company’, p.276.
develop these prosperous colonies was an inadequate supply of labour. He stated that ‘The great want felt in all infant Colonies where the institution of slavery does not exist, and that which leads most of the other wants which they suffer in its train, is the want of labour.’ He added, prefacing his account of the virtues of systematic colonisation, that ‘No attempt has ever been made to furnish a Colony with the greatest quantity of labour at the smallest possible expense.’

Wakefield’s comments on dispersion as the fundamental cause of the want of labour included reference to land grants, particularly the free distribution of land and the granting of land to vested interests and political favourites, in both Canada and Australia. Of this practice, Wakefield noted that ‘The evil consequences of such a system of disposing of waste lands are many.’ The prime consequence, however, was that the poor labourer quickly became a landowner. In this regard, Wakefield noted that because land was distributed cheaply, ‘The savings of a very short period enable the poorest labourer to obtain a few acres of land in some of the districts most distant from civilisation.’ Wakefield also explained that ‘The desire of becoming a land proprietor, for the gratification of which he is willing to make great sacrifices, induces him to avail himself of his power of obtaining land, although he has little or no capital to employ upon it.’ This placed the new poor landowner in inglorious isolation from ‘manure and extensive markets’, without capital to overcome the cost of transport, and kept him in an impoverished state, ‘until perhaps the rapid strides of civilization towards the wilderness, encourage and enable him to grow a surplus.’

Wakefield further noted the effect of this dispersion on the genuine capitalist with sufficient capital to raise a surplus from the commencement of their occupancy of the land, and on the overall development of the colony. He noted that ‘The country being thus left unprovided with a class of labourers, offers no attractions to capitalists who are not prepared to cultivate their land with their own hands and those of their

64 Ibid, p.295.
families, and to live on the produce of their own estates [that is, in a state of subsistence].’ Consequently, the colony was ‘deprived of the advantage which it would derive from immigration of persons of wealth, who are now either deterred from emigration, or driven back from the colonies in disgust.’ More generally, Wakefield summarised the problem of ‘capital and labour ... dispersed in minute portions over a wide expanse of land’ as one of ‘imperfect cultivation’ yielding ‘a much smaller return than the same quantity of both would produce if applied in combination on much fewer acres.’

One new illustration in *Founding* of the effect of dispersion was a description of the Swan River settlement, which had collapsed since the publication of *A Letter from Sydney*. Wakefield noted that land had been available to all immigrants at 1s. 6d. an acre and payable over seven years. The consequences, he added, were that the labourers immediately took up their own land and left the goods of the ‘capitalists to perish on the beach for want of assistance to remove them, and their cattle to die or wander for want of attendance, while their grants remained uncultivated, and the provisions which they had taken out were unproductively consumed.’ All had ended badly as the labourers found they were unable to sustain themselves on their own land. They returned to find work but could not be re-employed by their former masters because these same masters no longer had the means to provide employment.

For the purpose of ‘strikingly’ illustrating the need for a specific labour force working in combination in the fields for a capitalist class, Wakefield referred to ‘the history of Virginia’. The history also underlined the importance of the use of black slaves as the means of combating dispersion. In this illustration, Wakefield recorded that the early

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65 Ibid, pp.297-98.
years of the American colony had been very unsuccessful. During its first forty years, he stated, the colony had ‘produced no exchangeable commodities – indeed it did not produce food sufficient for its consumption’. This hardship ended with the arrival of slaves aboard a Dutch ship ‘and from that moment the settlers of Virginia were enabled to produce tobacco, and became the wealthiest of the settlers on the coast of America.’ Slaves, he explained, made it ‘possible to have combination of labour; that is to say, the capitalist was able to employ a great number of labourers in the same field at the same work and for a considerable period of time – a mode of employing labour which was quite impossible in colonies where land was attainable for nothing, until they procured slaves’. The capitalists had needed to resort to slavery, therefore, because of the ineffectiveness of other traditional means of securing and retaining labour.

Wakefield did not in fact specifically condemn the practice of black slavery in *Founding*, though the content of his other publications before and after leave no doubt as to his opposition to the practice. Regardless, he did specifically condemn the use of convicts, which was the most likely source of unfree labour to South Australia at the time. Wakefield called them ‘the scum of the mother country, comparatively useless as labourers’. They were also ‘an idle and vicious population almost wholly unacquainted with the business of agriculture’.

The desirable alternative to the use of convicts and, by implication, black slaves, according to Wakefield, was to assist the passages of the virtuous poor. He proposed that ‘A large fund’ from the sale of land ‘be formed for the importation of labourers, the future parents of a numerous population’. Wakefield emphasised the

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67 Ibid, p.299.  
70 Ibid, p.299.
importance of this object, noting 'that the money paid apparently only for land shall really be paid for labour also.'\textsuperscript{71} Wakefield also sought 'none but young couples, well adapted to the wants of Colony' and 'well selected from the classes of agricultural labourers and workmen'.\textsuperscript{72} Wakefield prescribed the selection of persons on the brink of marriage and child bearing, and thus with the greatest potential for adding to the colonial populations.\textsuperscript{73} While he did not expressly note the need to select for characteristics of industry, ability, and adaptability to matters of labour, as he had in \textit{A Letter from Sydney}, he did exclude from consideration those who were 'old, infirm, idle, ignorant, or vicious.'\textsuperscript{74}

Moreover, besides providing the basis for funding the supply of labour, the price of land was to act as the barrier to the dissipation of labour into land ownership and 'injurious dispersion',\textsuperscript{75} and ensure that the colony would be made up 'principally' of two classes, 'labourers and farmers'.\textsuperscript{76} Wakefield also stated that the price was to ensure the creation of 'The degree of concentration ... which is most favourable to production – that which will lead to the combination of labour necessary to obtain the greatest quantity of produce from a given number of hours' work and a given quantity of capital.'\textsuperscript{77}

In addition, Wakefield gave the 'Company' which, in his plan, was to be set up to organise the colonisation of South Australia, the great task of building the infrastructure of the colony. This too had ramifications for the control of labour. While the Company was not to 'attempt the production for sale of any commodity' (that is to

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid, p.276.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid, pp.282, 296.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, p.276.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, p.296.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, pp.297-99
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid, p.277.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid, p.304. What the actual price should or could be was also subject to comment. This particular discussion is to be considered separately below.
engage in activity which might threaten the enterprise and profitability of private capitalists), it was bound to take up responsibilities for 'the formation of roads, bridges, docks, etc', which were such large undertakings as to be beyond the scope of all but a few capitalists, and with perhaps even these few being unwilling to undertake such tasks 'amidst the inconveniences of a new colony'.

The work ensured the Company would be a major, if not the major employer in the colony, and through this dominance, also have some means of controlling the colonial labour market.

In general, Wakefield was much more explicit in *Founding* about the need to attract capital to the colony than he had been in *A Letter from Sydney*. This, however, did not diminish the importance of Wakefield's ideas on labour supply and control. Rather, alongside the issue of commercial prospects based on the positive attributes of South Australia's physical geography, the availability of labour and the ability of the colony to retain its labourers remained vital in making South Australia attractive to capitalists. According to Wakefield, growing and exporting production would be possible in the Australian colonies if 'the colonial capitalist [was] able to avail himself of a constant and ample supply of labour'. Similarly, he noted that 'The use made of ... [the] natural productions of the sea and land by the Australian Colonists has hitherto been very limited, from the impossibility they have experienced of obtaining a sufficient supply of labour to work much in combination. One of the essentials of the plan upon which the New Colony is to be founded, being such a concentration of people as will ensure a combination of labour, every profitable employment will be followed for which the amount of capital at the command of the Colonists will suffice.'

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78 Ibid, pp.278-79.
79 While this was the general tenor of *Founding*, see, in particular, p.299ff.
80 Ibid, p.290.
Ultimately, Wakefield had no doubt that South Australia could be colonised without the use of systematic colonisation. But he was also certain that such a colony would be but only a pale shadow of the colony it could have been if developed under his scheme.

England and America

Wakefield’s last publication to be fully considered here in relation to the constancy of his core ideas on systematic colonisation, labour, and labour relations, is England and America, which was published in 1833. The work, set out in two volumes and approaching some two hundred thousand words in length, provided by far the most comprehensive treatment of the issue of systematic colonisation of all Wakefield’s publications prior to the colonisation of New Zealand.82 It also came at an important time for those interested in colonising South Australia. By 1833, the South Australian scheme, already stalled once by the Colonial Office, needed some further catalyst to rekindle public interest in the project.83 This was partly supplied by England and America through its general promotion of systematic colonisation. The work was set out as a comparative study of the ‘social state and the political economy of England and America’, with the object of clarifying issues of ‘common interest’. The prime illustration of this common interest was ‘the subject of colonization’. The second illustration was ‘the interest of the English to buy cheap corn of the Americans, and of the Americans to buy cheap manufactured goods of the English’.84 Even here,

82 Lloyd Prichard notes that ‘many consider’ the work to be ‘Wakefield’s most important work’, p.32.
83 The initial efforts of the South Australian colonisers were thwarted by the Colonial Office’s concerns particularly over the governance of the colony, and during much of 1832 their scheme lay moribund, J.M.Main, ‘The Foundation of South Australia’, in Dean Jaensch (ed), The Flinders History of South Australia: Political History, Netley, 1986, pp.5-6; Temple, pp.149-55.
84 E.G.Wakefield, England and America, p.318.
however, the issue had important implications for Wakefield’s colonisation argument. In effect, *England and America*, almost in its entirety, heavily reinforced each of the key components of Wakefield’s original argument for systematic colonisation and his ideas on labour and labour relations.

With regard specifically to the content of *England and America*, Wakefield began, not with the problems of the middle and working classes in England, but with an introduction to the need for labour and capital to work in combination and, thus, for settlement to be concentrated in the colonies. In addition, his initial illustration of the point was not drawn from the colonies, as it had been in previous works, but from English domestic experience. Despite these features, however, they represented only a changing of the order and description, not the essential meaning, of his general argument justifying and explaining systematic colonisation.

In his opening discussion, and reflecting of course the influence of Adam Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Wakefield primarily considered the reasons why England was wealthy relative to other countries, in particular, America and France. In answer, Wakefield argued that England’s great wealth, relative to all other countries, was based on the degree to which the resources of labour and capital were combined. This argument ultimately led to, among other things, a conclusion that all societies including colonies would become wealthy only if they had enough labour to combine with available capital resources.

Wakefield argued that ‘The very first improvement ... in the productive powers of industry’ was the ‘combination of labour.’ This led to the development of excess production and thus the commencement of the accumulation of capital. In turn this led ‘to the institution of property’ and ‘also ... to the division [or specialisation] of employments.’ Wakefield generalised that ‘every step in civilization, every
improvement in the productive powers of industry, including distribution of
employments, ... rested on concert or combination among all the members of the
society.’

There also had to be some inequality in wealth. If not, capital could not be combined
with labour: ‘No man would find others willing to employ his capital for his advantage
as well as their own, rather than their own capital for their own exclusive advantage’.
The point was illustrated by reference to ‘new American settlements, where a
passion for owning land prevents the existence of a class of labourers for hire; and,
where, consequently, half the crop is sometimes left to rot upon the ground.’
Wakefield noted that joint stock companies might help in part to overcome the
problem of an equality of wealth, but essentially, the problem was naturally resolved
by the inclinations of ‘one man’ to save ‘because he expects to find others willing to
work for him’, and ‘other men’ to spend ‘because they expect to find some men ready
to employ them’. In this way, Wakefield said, men acted in concert and combination.

He further noted that men co-operated in the way they combined their employments,
that is, they engaged in work specialisation, or as Adam Smith had put it, they
divided their labour into either one trade or another, or into the discrete tasks useful
in producing even simple goods such as pins. Wakefield noted the lack of such co-
operation in Ireland, France, and among ‘most free settlers in new colonies’. In each
case, he stated, the ‘labourer works by himself, and for himself only, with no larger
capital than his own hands can employ, without exchange, or nearly so, and
producing, even in the most favourable case – that of the settler – not much more
than enough for his own subsistence.’ Wakefield compared this to the great
production of English farms and of the plantations of Virginia, where slaves were
employed.
Wakefield elaborated at length on the superiority of the British, particularly over the French and Americans, in combining labour and capital, which included ‘that general combination ... under which some men grow tea, some dig for metals, and others build ships, some are farmers, some manufacturers, and others merchants’, and ‘that particular combination, on which depends the use of large masses of capital and labour in particular works, and the most beneficial division of those particular works.’

By implication, therefore, if America was to be as wealthy as England, it would need a greater degree of sophistication in the combination of its labour, as well as the combination of its capital and labour. Wakefield also indicated that part of the reason for this lack of sophistication was the mode of landownership in the newer American settlements on the American frontier, which produced small, dispersed, subsistence farming communities. In other words, something needed to be done to change the mode of landownership, and to bring labour together, and labour and capital into closer proximity with each other. The settlements had to be concentrated.

Before more closely examining the question of the concentration of colonial settlement, however, Wakefield turned to consider two other issues also relevant to the case for systematic colonisation. These were the misery of the poor in England and the uneasiness of its middle classes, that is, the issues to which he had briefly referred in the beginning of his justification of the need for systematic colonisation in *A Letter from Sydney*.

In describing the relative wealth of the English, Wakefield excepted only one group: the English labourers. Their lives were ones of relative poverty, not relative wealth. While the wealth of London generally far exceeded that of other cities such as Paris,
New York, or Vienna, the English working class were the poorest. Wakefield emphasised that the ‘excessive ... evil’ of the English labourers’ poverty was due to simple economic facts: that the ‘only property’ of the poor was ‘their labour’; that, in taking ‘this property to market’, they found ‘the market overstocked with labour’; and that as sellers of labour in this market, and ‘in order to live’, they undersold ‘each other’ until they reduced ‘the market price of their property to what political economists call the minimum of wage – to that sum, namely, which will barely supply the labourer with necessaries according to his estimate of what is necessary.’ The bare supply of what the English labourer deemed ‘necessary’ was of course a reference to their relative poverty. The English, Wakefield stated, had a generally higher expectation in respect of necessaries than people of other nationalities, but had, particularly in the manufacturing districts, been badly affected by labour competition from ‘the barbarous and easily satisfied Irishman’. The devastating result was ‘English work and Irish wages!’

Wakefield’s description of the poverty of the English poor was divided into two parts. The first, a description of the rural poor, was crown verbatim from Swing Unmasked and as a result needs no further illustration here. The second, however, was new and dealt with the plight of the urban poor. Wakefield expressed a particular concern over the long hours that children were forced to work ‘for wages which but just satisfy their ruined appetites.’

Wakefield also considered contemporary efforts to introduce factory legislation to remedy the problem by requiring reduced hours of work. With regard to these efforts, Cornish and Clark note that there was ‘Genuine concern for the health and life

86 Ibid, pp.320, 321, 323.
87 Ibid, pp.339, 343-44.
88 Ibid, pp.342-43.
expectation of factory children ... particularly among humanitarian Tories, who saw brute self-interest in demands for free contract and wanted the chance to impose fundamental decencies'. Inevitably, the legislation also received support from 'Workers' leaders' and the work force. Even mill owners conceded some change was inevitable in relation to children, and concentrated on obtaining restrictions which would not limit the hours of adults.\textsuperscript{89} Fundamentally, however, Wakefield disagreed with the attempt to reduce the hours for children. He argued instead that if the children did not work in the factory, they would, without the means of the income earned in the factory, starve 'at home'.\textsuperscript{90} Factory legislation, just like the programmes of the Huntites and Owenites referred to in \textit{Householders in Danger}, was no solution, not even in part, to the problem of the misery and poverty of the poor. Wakefield thus closed the door on another proposal which might have diminished the need for systematic colonisation.

In addition, Wakefield's descriptions of the English poor included many comparisons with, and objections to, slavery. He agreed that the 'peasantry of the south of England' had 'been properly called' 'White slaves', and described their ill treatment relative to American slaves.\textsuperscript{91} Referring also to parliament's enquiries into factory work, he noted that the treatment of English children in the factories, was 'a system of torture, compared with which the treatment of American slaves appears truly benevolent'.\textsuperscript{92} He added that the evidence showed 'that the worst kind of slavery exists in England',\textsuperscript{93} and noted the ironies that 'American slaves, or convicts in New South Wales, are fat and happy compared with very many free-born Englishmen' and 'that Englishmen commit crimes for the purpose of becoming galley slaves in New

\textsuperscript{89} Cornish and Clark, pp.302-03; Wright, pp.102-04.
\textsuperscript{90} Wakefield, \textit{England and America}, pp.342-43.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, p.339.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid, pp.342, 347-49.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid, p.342.
South Wales.' Wakefield's comments were not a measure of his approval of slaves and convicts but of his assessment of 'the misery and degradation of the people'.\textsuperscript{94} The dangers of these conditions were once again alluded to. Of the Swing rioters, Wakefield noted that 'if the English had been a martial people, those forlorn men, once roused as they were, would either have destroyed the classes whom they consider their oppressors, or have perished in a servile war.'\textsuperscript{95} He also warned that if the condition of the poor was 'such that it must be worse before it can be better, the crisis is coming.'\textsuperscript{96} Something urgently needed to be done to stop the continuing impoverishment of the British working classes.

Wakefield also emphasised, as he had done in \textit{Swing Unmasked}, that the cause of poverty did not lie with the nature of the poor themselves. It was, rather, a product of their condition. With reference to urban poverty, and in contrast to Malthus' basic proposition that misery followed from vice, Wakefield argued, for example, that the popularity of gin shops and the resort to prostitution followed from, rather than led to, poverty. Wakefield’s view of gin drinking was that it provided the poor 'for the moment' with an escape from the 'oblivion of their misery'\textsuperscript{97} and he agreed with the urban worker's standard retort that although it poisoned them, they would die anyway, 'with gin or without', and that 'life such as ours, without gin, is worse than death'.\textsuperscript{98} Wakefield also noted that while misery caused gin drinking, 'poverty' was 'the main inducement to a life of prostitution.'\textsuperscript{99} It provided essential income as the poor struggled to physically maintain themselves. As in \textit{Swing Unmasked}, Wakefield pointed to the possibility of resolving the misery of the poor, which resulted not from any innate weakness but from their physical and economic circumstances, by

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid, p.344.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid, p.339.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, p.353.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, p.346.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid, p.347.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid, p.352.
engineering a change in these circumstances. In this case, however, he was to propose systematic colonisation, and not indicate reform of the poor law, as the first remedy.

The circumstances of the middle classes provided another basis for adopting an active policy of colonisation. Wakefield's brief references in A Letter from Sydney to Britain's self interest in colonisation, highlighted the need to resolve the problems, not only of the overstocked labour market and poverty of Britain's labouring poor, but also the redundancy of a significant proportion of her middle classes. Wakefield elaborated on this issue in greater detail in England and America. Wakefield stated that the great majority of the middle classes were far less prosperous and content than they might be and were, as a consequence, 'uneasy'. The reasons were simply that there were too many middle class professionals and too much capital and enterprise to be absorbed by available or prospective employment or business opportunities in England. Wakefield stated that because of the abundance of capital, competition between investors was intense and profits were lower. Thus, 'All those ... whose incomes are derived from the employment of capital, except great capitalists, who can easily save out of diminished incomes, have smaller means of meeting heavier calls [given price rises since the end of the Napoleonic Wars].'

Other professionals in the middle classes also suffered from their own over-abundance. Here Wakefield claimed 'It is not ... the smallness of the incomes earned by a swarm of educated people that strikes one so much, as the vast number of competitors for those small incomes; the hungry crowd of expectants watching to oust the beggarly crowd in possession.' Essentially the middle class experienced,

\footnote{Ibid, p.356.}
\footnote{Ibid, pp.356-61}
\footnote{Ibid, pp 360-61. Also pp.362, 363n. Wakefield argued that the uneasiness of the middle classes was the principal cause of the demand for 'exuberant prostitution'. The demand was generated largely by young men who struggled to find good matches for themselves and thus delayed marriage or in some cases never married, pp. 352, 364.}
as much as the working classes did, the same basic problem of an over-abundance of numbers.\footnote{103}

The next steps in the argument set out in *A Letter from Sydney* and *Principles and Objects* were that colonisation presented an obvious solution to this problem, but that this solution would only be fully effective if it was carried out in such a way as to also resolve the chronic problem of colonial labour shortages. In *England and America*, the first stages of this argument were rephrased in terms of the need to extend the ‘field of production’, and augmented by various new comments which expanded notably on the themes of production, wages, and the dangers of inaction.

In the first instance, Wakefield emphasised that the distress of Britain’s working classes and the uneasiness of its middle classes were related to the size of the ‘field of production’, that is, ‘The land … from which a society derives its food’.\footnote{104} For Britain, this field was ‘limited, first by nature [its geographical boundaries and intrinsic fertility], and next by the corn laws, which decree that the people of the United Kingdom shall have no bread but that which is grown in the United Kingdom’.\footnote{105} Capital and labour, Wakefield stated, were oversupplied in relation to the size of this field, and as a result of excessive competition between capitalists for investments and labourers for employment, both profits and wages were low. If, however, the field of production was increased, as it was in America (that is, as new land was brought into production as the American frontier moved westward), this competition would be markedly reduced and a high-profit, high-wage economy would eventuate. In other words, drawing capital and labour out of the domestic British field of production into the newly extended areas of the field of production, that is, new colonies, would

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\footnote{103} Ibid, p.362.  
\footnote{104} Ibid, p.375.  
\footnote{105} Ibid, p.372.
reduce competition in the domestic British economy, and raise domestic profits and wages. There were caveats, however, with regard to how fast the field of production should be extended. On the one hand, the increase in the size of the field needed to be greater than the rate of the growth in capital and labour supply so that the competitiveness of the markets would be reduced. But the rate of expansion also had to be tempered by consideration of the need for concentration of capital and labour in the new colony. Concentration and combination were, as they were in Britain, highly conducive to production. Dispersion and a lack of combination were not. America’s field of production was expanding without sufficient control being applied to ensure the concentration of capital and labour. Thus, ‘America’, Wakefield stated, ‘is the example, where the produce raised by a given amount of capital and labour, though sufficient to yield high profits and high wages, is not equal to a fourth, perhaps, of what the same amount of capital and labour would produce on the same land, if employed with English skill.’

With regard to wages, Wakefield stressed ‘that masters and servants have one and the same interest’ in accepting the need for concentration and combination. Wakefield had already noted in the early stages of *England and America* that ‘The English farm labourer is a miserable wretch, no doubt, because he obtains but a very small share of the produce of his labour; but this is a question, not of distribution, but of production.’ It appears from context, that Wakefield partly meant by this, firstly, that the English labourers had become very specialised in their economic role and no longer engaged in traditional crafts, such as spinning the wool they produced, or in the marketing of this wool. The advantage of these activities had been that they had bolstered the security of the rural labourers’ economic position. The loss therefore was undoubtedly a severe cost of the otherwise vastly favourable process of

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107 Ibid.
specialisation and combination of labour which generally predominated in Britain.\textsuperscript{108} But Wakefield’s comment on the labourers’ share of the product of their labour also looked forward to an elaboration of a point already raised in Principles and Objects that the labourers could still obtain high wages even with small shares as long as the overall production was large enough.\textsuperscript{109} Wakefield now noted that capitalists obtained an advantage in appropriating a greater share of rewards from production in circumstances where capital was scarce relative to labour, and, \textit{vice versa}, labour gained a greater share where labour was scarce relative to capital. But, he also argued, ‘this relates to nothing but the division of the produce. A far more important question remains – what determines the amount of produce to be divided?’ Wakefield stated that the question of shares was divisive and unproductive. He noted that ‘By dwelling’ on the question ‘we make bad blood between the two classes’. By dwelling instead on how to increase production, masters and servants would generate ‘a state of things good for both parties.’\textsuperscript{110} Futile arguments about shares therefore had to be put aside and both masters and servants had to recognise the higher object and act co-operatively to maximise production and implement the principles of concentration and combination.

Wakefield strengthened his argument for the adoption of a form of controlled colonisation by adding to the warnings included in his pamphlets in 1831. Firstly, he predicted that if the British economy did not expand its field of production, only the very wealthy would be able to maintain a reasonable rate of profit through their dominance over production and trade. This in turn would lead to ‘wealth’ obtaining ‘such inordinate respect and so many advantages over and above what wealth will purchase in any market’, that it would thus produce corruption, ‘savage discontent’,

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid, p.329.
\textsuperscript{109} Wakefield, Principles and Objects, p.58.
\textsuperscript{110} Wakefield, England and America, pp.373-74.
and ‘violent political convulsions’. Secondly and regardless of these developments, he argued that if the already discontent poor were not appeased promptly, they would be able to soon take what they wanted by constitutional means. In brief, he explained that the working class were poised to achieve political power and control. The extension of the franchise in 1832, by which the middle classes had obtained political power, had been underwritten by the threat that if reform was rejected there would be a violent working class reaction. In turn, he argued, the middle class would eventually need to surrender their political power under the same threat of violent reaction and extend the franchise to the working class. Wakefield stated that ‘The reform bill was carried by physical force’, the working classes accepting it ‘As a step... but merely a step’ on the way to ‘Universal suffrage’. It was the arrival of this circumstance, inevitable to his mind, that posed the great danger. As the majority in parliament, the working classes would have the ability to ‘make laws for the sake of their own class alone, laws not good, perhaps bad, for the other classes.’ Among these, there was the great risk of laws which would ‘cause a revolution of property’ and ‘confiscation’, which would lead in turn to economic destruction. Capital essential for production would be fragmented, hoarded, and sent overseas. ‘[A]ny legislative attack upon property’, according to Wakefield, ‘would cause a decrease of production.’ He stated that: ‘The great steam-power of England would be next to annihilated’; ‘with respect to England, confiscation is synonymous with destruction’; and, with some irony, ‘One may imagine the result; the scenes of contention and suffering, which must end in England’s ruin; which might make England a hunting field, or a place fit to receive convicts from America.’

111 Ibid, pp.377-78
112 Ibid, Note V, p.400.
113 Ibid, p.401.
114 Ibid, pp.404-06.
As before, Wakefield offered the means of avoiding a dreadful end. Democracy was unavoidable, but the politics of confiscation could be avoided by rendering 'the English working class comfortable, satisfied, and as wise, at least, as the working class in America', and achieving all this before universal suffrage was conceded.\footnote{Ibid, p.406.}

As time was short, Wakefield discarded the suggestion that education could raise the condition of the working classes in time.\footnote{Ibid, pp.409-10.} Education and learning followed rather than preceded comfort and ease. In Wakefield's words: 'Prudence, wisdom is the end; the means, high wages, leisure, peace of mind and instruction. A world of trouble has been wasted in the endeavour to instruct the wretched. You must begin at the beginning. Bestow ease on the working class, and then, indeed, you may teach them to dread the return of misery. The first step is to raise wages.' In answer to the problem of how wages should be raised, Wakefield concluded that, among other things, 'the field for the employment of English capital and labour must be enlarged', England's corn laws should be repealed so that the working classes could obtain cheaper bread, and England should 'take a lesson from the Americans, who, as their capital and population increase, find room for both by means of colonization'.\footnote{Ibid, pp.410-11. The form of American colonisation noted here was the expansion of its frontier. Wakefield at this point did not need to repeat that the lesson comprised the need for concentration as well as expansion.}

At this juncture in \textit{England and America}, Wakefield temporarily departed from the established themes of systematic colonisation and turned to consider more fully the corn laws and trade liberalisation. As indicated in his introduction, these were issues to be considered in their own right.\footnote{Ibid, p.318.} Nevertheless, the discussion still had implications for systematic colonisation.
The repeal of the corn laws was not only an advantage for the poor in introducing cheap bread, but it was also vital for the viability and prospects of the new, primarily agricultural colonies which Wakefield proposed under systematic colonisation. The main points of Wakefield’s argument for the repeal of the corn laws included, firstly, that the rental income of British landowners would not necessarily be reduced by the repeal of the corn laws. The main determinant of the value of rents, he stated, was the proximity of population and not the suitability of land for corn growing. The point also reinforced Wakefield’s conception of the minimum ‘sufficient price’ for colonial land as a means of maintaining concentrated settlement. Settlements would remain concentrated where colonial land was sold at a minimum ‘sufficient price’ because the price would become increasingly excessive, regardless of fertility, the further land was located away from centres of population.

Wakefield also argued that the landowners and the poor would benefit from a sharp, complete repeal rather than a gradual phasing out of the tariff. With a sharp, complete repeal, Wakefield stated that the poor would immediately make a significant saving on the purchase of corn and would be able and willing to buy other food in addition to corn. In other words, the poor would become a strong market for other food products such as meat, which could be produced on the British farms that had formerly grown corn, and land and capital in Britain would consequently shift from corn production to meet the new demand for these other food products. British importation of corn would also stimulate overseas economic growth and provide markets for British manufactured goods and consequently jobs for any rural poor displaced by the fall in corn production. This, in turn, would reduce the demand for

\footnote{Ibid, p.416f.}
\footnote{Wakefield also noted that while trade in corn and British manufactures would be positively stimulated by the repeal of the corn laws, this trade would follow not merely from bilateral trade between England and America, but also indirectly from the general growth of international trade. This growth, and the case in general for free trade, was illustrated at length with particular reference to China and the advantage of establishing a free trade port ‘nearly opposite the mouth of the Canton
relief and poor rates. The gradual phasing out of the corn laws on the other hand would merely allow for a Malthusian-like population increase which would maintain overpopulation. ¹²¹

The more general argument for trade liberalisation contained within it comments on the relationship between the production of cheap corn, cheap land, and slavery. This included the disposal of the notion that slave labour might be the basis for cheap colonial corn. Wakefield noted that slaves were often better looked after and thus more costly to maintain than wage labourers. They were also less productive. They could not be simply replaced by wage labourers, however, because of the cheapness of land. Waged labour quickly purchased cheap land and left the work force and, once dispersed, became relatively unproductive. The only way therefore to ensure the advantages of labour working in combination (the element most important in generating productive output) where land was cheap, was to own slaves who could not abandon the labour market. ‘This’, Wakefield stated, ‘explains why slavery and great cheapness of land have generally existed together; showing besides, that the cheapness of corn raised by slaves is owing; not to the cheapness of slave labour, but to the cheapness of land; that same cheapness of land being also the cause of slavery.’ ¹²² As in Wakefield’s earlier outlines, the way out of this conundrum was of course through the application of the ‘sufficient price’. Land sold at the ‘sufficient price’ would still be relatively cheap in relation to the price of land in Britain, but not so cheap as to allow labourers to swiftly purchase it. In terms of the price of corn, the increased cost of land sold at the ‘sufficient price’ would be offset by cheaper unit production through the use of efficient and willing waged labour in place of slave labour. Hence the production of cheap colonial corn would be preserved.

¹¹¹ Ibid, Note VIII, p.456. China ceded Hong Kong to Britain at the end of the First Opium War (1839-42).
Thus, even when Wakefield diverted in *England and America* from direct consideration of the issue of colonisation as he did in pursuit of the issues of the corn laws and trade liberalisation, he still substantially reinforced the general argument for systematic colonisation and provided quite specific comment on the need to change the method of controlling labour in the colonies.

After discussing the corn laws and trade liberalisation, Wakefield returned to where he had left the main stream of his argument on colonisation. Up to that point, he had restated in detail the need, from a domestic British perspective, to remedy the problems of the redundant and underemployed working and middle classes and argued that the co-operation and combination of labour and capital were the keys to the effective production of wealth. This was strong confirmation of the first parts of the already established pattern of Wakefield’s original case for the adoption of systematic colonisation. In recommencing these themes, he proceeded to provide further new detail to complete the restatement of his case.

The first part of this discussion was ‘Some Social Peculiarities of the Americans’ in which he described the barbarous condition of those who lived in a dispersed state. He noted the literature of the British travel writers and their reports of ‘the crazy doings of a camp-meeting in the back woods ... Bodies writhing, arms swinging, legs dancing, eyes rolling; groans, shouts, howls, and shrieks; men knocking their own heads against trees, and women tearing the clothes off each other’s backs’. Wakefield noted that some attributed the ‘excesses of love feasts and camp meetings’ to democracy. Wakefield’s explanation was that the excesses were merely another manifest result of dispersion. He stated that the ‘disperssed

inhabits of America' lived the 'great part of their lives in solitude' which he described as 'out of the way of social intercourse, each family being isolated from all the others, except on rare occasions, when they congregate in spite of distance and bad roads.' These rare occasions were 'delightful' for the dispersed inhabitants who were 'easily intoxicated', for example, by the eloquence of itinerant preachers.\textsuperscript{124} The behaviour of the dispersed Americans was similar to that of 'savages, who for want of spirits, drugs, music, shows, romances, and icols, are said to intoxicate themselves by twirling round till they fall.'\textsuperscript{125} Wakefield noted that the barbarism of the Americans generally could have been 'well avoided with a greater concentration of the people; as indeed, the produce of American industry might have been greater if the people had been less dispersed.' The processes of dispersion also continued, according to Wakefield, as land, although now sold, was nevertheless sold 'at the very low price of five shillings per acre.'\textsuperscript{126}

Further, Wakefield both more fully illustrated the development of black slavery in the colonies and more clearly condemned the practice. Slavery, of course, satisfied the demand for labour in combination, but it did so at an unacceptable price.

Wakefield had already made several references to the use of slaves. These included his observations that: American slaves were treated with more care than British labourers; British working class children were no more free than American slaves; and slavery was the result of cheap land.\textsuperscript{127} The implication of these comments was that the condition of the British poor was intolerable, slavery was unacceptable, and that land should not be sold cheaply. Wakefield now explicitly condemned slavery, both black slavery and similar practices.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, pp.463-64.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid, p.463.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid, p.466.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, pp.339, 344, 347, 429.
Wakefield began with examples of outrage from English and American commentators on the subject of American slavery. It was slavery, according to one commentator, 'in its most hideous form' when considered in the context of the general espousal in America of 'absolute freedom'. From another, it was the duty of 'every American who loves his country' to seek 'to efface the foul blot of slavery from its character.' Wakefield agreed and again expounded in some detail on the background and cause of 'the evil effect'.

Wakefield outlined the establishment of slavery in the first European colony in America, the Spanish settlement of St. Domingo. He stated that the colonists did not take labourers with them. This was because they had no motive to do so without an agreement that they should all convey labour. Wakefield noted that if some had spent their capital on carrying out labour and others not, 'Those who had not so diminished their capital' would have been able to offer and would have offered 'higher wages than those who had [so diminished their capital]'. As a result, labour would have tended to leave those who had paid for their labourers' passages and take up work with those who had not. He also argued that even if the colonists had acted in concert, the labourers would have quickly purchased their own land in the new colony and both withdrawn from the labour market and increased the competition for labour. Faced with the 'want of labourers', therefore, 'the first settlers in St. Domingo persuaded the Spanish government to include in each of its grants of land a proportionate grant of natives.' The misuse and destruction of the slaves drawn from the indigenous populations later led to 'native' slaves being replaced by African slaves.

130 Ibid, p.472.
A similar pattern of need and recourse followed in the first English colonies. As Wakefield had indicated already in *Founding*, the initial Virginian colony failed because the colonists dispersed. As a result the colonists were reduced to famine and returned to England. Wakefield presumed that the subsequent two settlements which disappeared with little trace were also destroyed by famine which followed from the dispersal of the colony’s population. Wakefield also described the difficulties of the English settlement at Chesapeake Bay in Virginia as the ‘independent’ landowners struggled without ‘hands in combination’ and in circumstances where each proprietor was ‘surrounded’ by an ‘impassable’ ‘desert’. Circumstances were not improved by the arrival of labourers from England who also quickly dispersed. Generally, the material and social conditions in which the early Virginian settlers lived were, in the word Wakefield liked to use, ‘barbarous’. Wakefield summarised the reputation of ‘The founders of Virginia’ as ‘not more remarkable for their great disasters than for their atrocious crimes. They are described as resembling hungry wild beasts; and if we must speak of them as human beings, it is not harsh to say, that they appeared to have crossed the Atlantic for the purpose of cutting each other’s throats without restraint from any law.’ Like the Spanish on St. Domingo, however, salvation of a kind came in the form of slaves, in this case aboard a Dutch slave ship. The slaves allowed ‘For the first time in [the] colony … combination of labour and division of employments.’ The availability of labour in combination in Virginia enabled the colonists to develop their lucrative tobacco industry and transformed the fortunes of the colony.  

132 Ibid, pp. 473-75.
133 Ibid, p.476.
Given this background of dispersion mingled with the rise of black slavery, Wakefield briefly summarised the rise of opposition to ‘the horrors of the African slave-trade’ and ‘the abominations of slavery’.\textsuperscript{134} He noted the mistaken presumption of those who had sought the end of the slave trade that this achievement would produce the end of slavery itself. He was willing to accept though that it had at least improved the condition of slaves in the United States.\textsuperscript{135} In this he distinguished between the state of slavery in the United States and in the West Indies. Of the West Indian colonies, Wakefield conceded that the colonies had not had ‘a motive for keeping up the number of their slaves’ because of the end of their monopoly of the British sugar market.\textsuperscript{136} This, coupled with the limited extent of their lands and deteriorating fertility, had left the ‘island planters …, for some years past, … without a motive for keeping up the number of their slaves, while they have had the strongest motive for working them to death. The result is well known; a decrease of population such as if pestilence and famine had done the work.’\textsuperscript{137} ‘Turning to the United States’, the expansion of settlement (with the constant arrival of European migrants who quickly procured their own landholdings) had increased the demand for slaves and encouraged ‘the trade of breeding slaves for sale.’ Despite the increase in this trade, the level of demand ensured that slaves had become more precious and, thus, ensured an improvement in their treatment. This, according to Wakefield was the fortunate, but unintended effect of the abolition of the British slave trade. It also reinforced, nonetheless, his point that the ‘original and permanent cause’ of slavery ‘seems to be superabundance of land in proportion to people.’\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid, p.476.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, pp.476-77.
\textsuperscript{136} See p.34 above.
\textsuperscript{137} Wakefield, \textit{England and America}, p.478.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid, p.479.
Wakefield added several other comments to underscore this last point. As in *A Letter from Sydney*, he attacked Adam Smith's view that colonial prosperity followed from the rapid expansion of colonists onto new land.¹³⁹ Wakefield stressed the exact correlation between great colonial prosperity and the practice of slavery. This included references to the Australian colonies and New England. Of the 'prosperous colonies' of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, he stated, 'capitalists are supplied with slave-labour in the shape of convicts. That they set the greatest value on this labour, is proved by their extreme fear lest the system of transportation should be discontinued; although the evils which it produces are too many to be counted, and too great to be believed in England.' Wakefield also condemned the use of redemptioners and indentured labourers in New England. Though New England colonists abstained 'from the purchase of negro slaves' on religious grounds, they used other forms which Wakefield still considered tantamount to slavery. In part the colonists were involved in 'an extensive traffic in white men and children, who, kidnapped in Europe, were virtually sold to those fastidious colonists, and treated by them as slaves.'¹⁴⁰ Largely repeating his account in *Principles and Objects*, Wakefield also explained that more came as 'redemptioners'.¹⁴¹ These redemptioners, despite being 'white and free in name, ... were really not free to become independent landowners'. By this token, 'it was possible to employ their labour constantly and in combination.'¹⁴² Considering black slavery alone, Wakefield continued with a demonstration that the non-slave states, through their economic interrelationships with the slave states, had also 'reaped the economical benefits of slavery' but 'without incurring the chief of its moral evils'.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Wakefield, *Principles and Objects*, p.10, 10n; *England and America*, p.480.
¹⁴³ Ibid, p.482.
Moreover, Wakefield sought to demonstrate the integral link between a ‘superabundance’ of land, slavery, and material prosperity by referring to the deplorable condition of ‘those new countries in which the people have had a superabundance of good land without slavery.’ He argued, in effect, that the correlation between slavery and colonial prosperity was reinforced by the correlation between the absence of slavery and a lack of colonial prosperity. Wakefield’s demonstration included a description of ‘the Spanish colony of Buenos Ayres’ which languished despite its broad expanses of most fertile land. Wakefield imagined what would have been achieved with slavery but also commented: ‘That slavery might have done all this, seems not more plain than that so much good would have been bought too dear if its price had been slavery.’ He also added to the comments he had made in *Founding* on the Swan River settlement. Wakefield described the failure of Swan River where the labourers, who had been taken to the colony, had abandoned their masters, despite their indentured contracts, as soon as they ‘reached the colony’ in order ‘to become landowners.’ Cheap land and dispersion without labour were again the downfall. The original colonists, Wakefield noted, had not wanted any convicts. They, he said, ‘are now begging for a supply of convict labour. They want slaves. They want labour which shall be constant and liable to combination in particular works.’ Again, Wakefield said the examples showed ‘that the original and permanent cause of slavery in America is superabundance of good land.’

Wakefield added to this a consideration of the future prospects for the slave owning colonies of the West Indies and states of the United States. He expected that slavery in the West Indies would soon cease despite the passing of legislation indenturing

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144 Ibid, pp.482-84.
145 Wakefield, *Founding*, pp.289-90; *England and America*, pp.484-85. Convicts were sent to Western Australia between 1850 and 1868, Borrie, p. 55.
the West Indian slaves ostensibly as apprentices but which nevertheless made them continue to ‘work like slaves’. Clearly, once the terms of indentures were complete, the slaves would finally be free. He forecast greater difficulty in the United States. He thought that the example of the final emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies would encourage an increasing demand for emancipation in the United States and, in reaction, ‘Greater harshness’ from the slave-owning population ‘in proportion to the greater danger’. Such harshness might speed the outbreak of ‘a great servile war’ with the possibility, temporarily, of a successful slave uprising. The prospects, Wakefield thought, were ‘as black as possible’.  

Taking stock again of Wakefield’s long unfolding argument, he had now reinforced his criticism of the inadequacies of some of the traditional forms of labour control used in the colonies. A major component of his argument comprised the proof that plentiful cheap land could only be made profitable by forms of slavery. While acknowledging therefore that not all colonies were materially lacking in prosperity, these prosperous colonies were only prosperous through the resort to immoral and uncivilised means. Wakefield also expressed concern that the practice of black slavery could result in a dangerous revolt. The question now, reflecting the argument in his previous publications, was how to resolve America’s difficulties, and those of the generic colony, by means of discovering an effective way of obtaining and managing labour.

The problem was resolved in *England and America* in the same way it had been resolved in *A Letter from Sydney* and his other publications. Wakefield first stated and then rejected the prospect of simply transferring unemployed paupers from Britain to meet the labour demand in America. He argued that even paupers would be able to quickly buy land and leave the labour market. He thus raised the question

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147 Ibid, p.486.
as to whether there was any 'prospect that land' would 'rise in value, so that every freeman shall no longer be able to obtain for a trifle more good land than he can possibly cultivate.'\textsuperscript{148} Given existing circumstance, Wakefield saw that the question had to be answered in the negative. There was no restraint preventing an increase in the area of the land to be appropriated, and thus its increase in constant proportion to the increase in population. There was so much land in America to be settled. Some land, indeed, had been worked out and had become even cheaper to purchase.\textsuperscript{149}

Wakefield also argued, however, that if one looked beyond existing circumstance, it was quite feasible to increase the price of land or at least the price of 'the good title to ... land'. Government gave the land good title and in doing so was in a perfect position to control the sale of good title 'to regulate the proportion between numbers and acres of appropriated land.' He noted that the Americans already had a 'nearly uniform' system of disposing land to colonists at a rate of 5/- an acre. The revenue was collected to support the general purposes of the nation, but could equally be used to fund emigration. He speculated that there would be several great benefits if the price of land was progressively raised and the revenue used to fund emigration. In sequence, these benefits were that: labourers would be prevented from quickly becoming landowners; dispersion would therefore be prevented and concentration, combination, productivity, and profits and wages, would all be enhanced; and, through competition, land would become even more valuable. On this basis, Wakefield expected that, ultimately, 'the owners of slaves and land' might 'set free their slaves without loss' and 'slavery' might 'be abolished without injury to anyone, with the greatest benefit to all.'\textsuperscript{150}

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, p.487.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid, pp.487-89. Wakefield also explained here that there would be no concentration of population in the slave states because 'the greater part of the whites of America' would prefer 'to share from a distance the economical advantages of slavery, without incurring its moral evils by going to live among slaves.'
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid, pp.489-90.
Wakefield completed his commentaries on the United States with an 'Apology for the American Tariff'. Again, even though this had more to do with trade liberalisation, it still had a bearing on Wakefield's argument for colonisation. While generally promoting free trade, Wakefield recognised that the protection by the United States of its urban industries also provided a basis for concentrated settlement, and gave the United States the advantages that followed from this state of settlement as opposed to the disadvantages that followed from dispersed settlement. He further noted that American farmers would not generally benefit from the removal of the tariff. Normal expectations would be, he thought, that the removal of tariffs protecting urban industries would lead to capital and labour flows into agriculture. Given the generally unproductive nature of American agriculture, however, he thought the returns on such inputs would remain poor and money and labour would simply go elsewhere. Thus, far from America obtaining the benefits of increased capital and labour, Wakefield argued that the end of its tariff would weaken the concentration of its various pockets of population and harm the farmers by diminishing their closest markets.\(^{151}\)

In addition, Wakefield noted the complication of the different interests of the North and the South over the tariff, particularly in relation to trade with Britain, and how these interests also related to the ubiquitous problems of dispersion and slavery. Wakefield identified as fundamental, the idea that 'Exchange to any great extent cannot take place unless two parties raise a surplus produce, [and] unless the produce of both parties be great in proportion to the hands employed'. If America was to prosper in trading on an equal footing with Britain, it needed something to trade with. In the case of the North, agricultural production was limited by dispersion and

\(^{151}\) Ibid, pp. 491-95.
there was little demand for its manufactures in Britain. In the case of the South, however, the effect of dispersion was countered by recourse to slavery and a suitable surplus was produced for exchange. The South, unlike the North, therefore was opposed to the tariff.

With greater relevance to the North, therefore, Wakefield noted that 'in America particular combination of power, with particular division of employments, will not take place so long as any quantity of good land may be obtained by anybody for the low price of five shillings per acre.' For both the North and the South, however, he stated that 'Evils resulting from the very low price of waste land meet one at every turn in America'\textsuperscript{152} and 'As in the southern states slavery, so in the northern states the tariff, is an expedient, a shift, for correcting the mischievous influence of dispersion.'\textsuperscript{153} Generally, the northern states with their dispersed and relatively poorly producing population stood to gain little from the removal of tariffs. The removal of tariffs would only become useful when the problem of dispersion had been resolved. For the South, while it was opposed to the American tariff, it was opposed only because it was a slave owning society.

The heading of the last part of Wakefield's \textit{England and America} is 'The Art of Colonization'. Wakefield had already delved in considerable detail into and around various issues relating to systematic colonisation. These included: the distress and dangers of the British working classes and the discontent of the middle classes; the need for an enlarged field of production; the need for free trade as part of this enlargement; the dangers of dispersion; and the immorality of slavery in all its forms. Wakefield now provided an extensive denouement to the argument that further

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, p.495.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, pp.496-97.
underlined the constant themes of his argument in relation to colonisation, labour, and labour relations.

Wakefield commenced this last part of *England and America* by returning yet again to the inadequacies of Adam Smith’s analysis of colonisation, which he had first referred to in *A Letter from Sydney*. In addition, however, he criticised the inadequacy of the more contemporary views of John Stuart Mill, and particularly his generally disparaging view of colonisation. This included Mill’s assertion of the ‘tendency of colonial possessions to produce or prolong bad government’ and his emphatic condemnation of ‘colonization as a fruitful source of jobs, monopolies, and wars.’ Wakefield insisted Mill would have done better to have considered ways of improving on past failings.¹⁵⁴ Wakefield then set about showing him the ways.

Wakefield’s first concern was to identify the objects of emigration and the consequential colonisation of waste lands.¹⁵⁵ For Britain, this involved ‘an enlargement of the field for employing capital and labour’, which Wakefield further subdivided into three objects: ‘the extension of the market for disposing of [the old society’s] own surplus produce; ... relief from excessive numbers; ... [and] an enlargement of the field for employing capital.’¹⁵⁶ Within these objects, Wakefield included specific goals such as: the establishment of free trade which would both directly and indirectly allow for cheaper imports, most importantly corn, to reach Britain;¹⁵⁷ the reduction of the surplus of labourers in the British labour market; the redirection of Irish emigration away from England; the reduction of the burden of poor law rates; and the increase of wages.¹⁵⁸ For the colony, its primary object was to

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p.504.
¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p.508.
obtain 'more capital and labour for cultivating an unlimited field.' This of course interlocked with the objects and goals of 'the old country'Wakefield emphasised in particular that the colony's 'want of free labour at any price' was the cause of slavery in America and the basis for the demand in New South Wales of 'a stream of population utterly depraved and irreclaimable.' This latter form of slave-labour compared even unfavourably with 'that kind of slave-labour which they have in America', in that masters in New South Wales obtained their convict labour at the discretion of the Governor, and none could have sufficient because of the small number of convicts available overall and the Governor's fear of being criticised of favouritism.

To establish how the objects should be achieved through colonisation, Wakefield considered the fortunes of various colonies. In sum, he concluded that there was a pressing need for colonies to control the distribution of land to settlers with a view to limiting the availability of land to that which could be effectively used. Colonists, he argued, always sought to obtain as much land as possible. If left unchecked, this tendency resulted in dispersion and damaged the colony. Wakefield noted, as he had done in Principles and Objects, the fortunate success of the New York Colony and the concentration of the local colonial population, which had resulted not from the application of far sighted economic policy but because of 'the warlike temper of the natives, and the extreme denseness of the forests'. He also noted that the New South Wales administration, for all its faults, had, up to 1822, disposed of only a small proportion of land and that, accordingly, the prosperity of the free settlers had been much admired in England. This good work, though, had been undone by

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159 Ibid, p.520.
subsequent grants. Wakefield similarly compared the greater prosperity of the Americans over the Canadians, the former distributing almost all their land according to a ‘nearly fixed and uniform’ system which included a minimum payment that operated ‘as a check, almost as a bar, to the appropriation of land by persons not able, or not willing, to use their property.’ The poorer Canadians had in contrast no such check.

In light of the details of the failures of colonies, leavened by the occasional partial success, Wakefield determined that colonies needed to exert their power over the disposal of ‘waste land’ to private individuals and entities. The reasons for this included the need to prevent the monopolisation of land by small numbers of individuals and to ensure the colony was able to attract migrants. Wakefield also stated that the ability to attract migrants required ‘that the colonial profits of capital, and wages of labour, should be as high as possible.’ It further required ‘an ample field of production’ (and thus the ability to pay high wages) though this field needed ‘never to be so large as to encourage hurtful dispersion’. He concluded that the best method of achieving these objects was to sell land at a price ‘high’ enough ‘to deter individuals from taking more land than, for the benefit of the whole society, they ought to take’, but also low enough so ‘that none should be withheld from individuals able and willing to use it in the best way.’ The price which satisfied these two considerations in previous publications was the ‘sufficient price’. He now referred to the price as ‘The golden mean’. Wakefield considered and dismissed various objections including the possibilities that migrants would squat rather than

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164 Ibid, p.530.
165 Ibid, p.537.
166 Ibid, p.538.
168 Ibid, p.541.
169 Ibid, p.541-42.
buy land at the 'sufficient price' or go to colonies which freely distributed rather than sold land. Particularly with respect to the second of these possibilities, Wakefield stressed that colonies which sold land at the 'sufficient price' offered more than the opportunity of becoming a landowner. This opportunity to become a landowner was of course offered by all colonies and in fact was most speedily realised in the colonies that gave away land or sold it most cheaply. Wakefield's prize was greater: 'every labourer reaching the colony might surely become not only a land-owner, but something more grateful to one of his class, a master of other labourers.'

In relation to what he referred to as 'The removal of the people' to the colonies, Wakefield restated his opposition to the 'state of bondage', objecting to it as slavery and also because of its ineffectiveness. He repeated his comments particularly on redemptioners. 'The supplies of labour', he said, 'obtained by kidnapping in the old English colonies of America, by the late immigration of poor Germans in the United States; poor Germans who, ignorant of the law and of the language of America, were liable to be held in a state of bondage; and by the transportation system in New South Wales and Van Dieman's land; all these supplies of labour depended on a kind of slavery.' Equally, if strict controls were not applied on the movement of labour, capitalists who provided the wherewithal for labourers to travel to the colonies almost immediately lost their investment on the arrival of the labourers in the colony.

Wakefield stated that 'The difficulty lies in this: that without some kind of slavery, the capitalist has no security for repayment of his outlay; that the labourer, as soon as he reaches the colony, laughs at his engagement; that what the capitalist brings to the colony in the shape of labour, ceases to be labour the moment it reaches the colony; or, at all events, is never labour over which he who paid for it has any control.'

Wakefield referred once more to Macarthur and his comments that it had proved

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170 Ibid, p.552.
impossible to hold indentured labourers to their contracts\textsuperscript{171} and further noted that the
governor at Swan River had been ‘required to punish \textit{indentured labourers} for refusing
to work for those who had brought them from England’ almost as soon as they had
landed. ‘In vain’, he concluded, ‘have severe laws been passed to enforce the
observance of such contracts by the labourer.’\textsuperscript{172}

The solution to this problem was yet again systematic colonisation. Wakefield
described in detail the mechanics and benefits of the scheme. He emphasised the
usefulness of the revenue from land sales in funding and regulating immigration. The
detail included the level of the ‘sufficient price’, which, as previously noted, is to be
discussed separately below. The selection of migrants was also discussed.
Wakefield stressed the need for an even number of men and women, without
children. He argued that women would free men from domestic chores and allow the
male labourer to devote ‘the whole of his time, attention, and labour, to the work of
production.’\textsuperscript{173} Wakefield mentioned but did not explain the advantage of colonies
where there was an even number of men and women over colonies which
experienced the ‘the moral evils of ... [an] excess of males’. It is easy to surmise,
however, that these evils were prostitution and homosexuality.\textsuperscript{174} Wakefield was
more forthcoming in noting that women kept men in order, ensuring ‘industry,
steadiness, and thrift.’\textsuperscript{175} Wakefield further argued that migrants ‘ought to be young
people, whose powers of labour would last as long as possible, and who would
readily turn their hands to new kinds of work.’ He discouraged the emigration of
children for a number of reasons including the facts that they would not provide
immediate labour and that they would encumber others and distract labourers from

\textsuperscript{171} See p.62 above.
\textsuperscript{172} Wakefield, \textit{England and America}, pp.552-54. Wakefield also noted that the \textit{Quarterly Review} had
explained ‘the impossibility of holding apprenticed labourers to their engagements.’ P.554n.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid, p.562.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid, pp.563.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid, p.567.
their productive work. The selection of young men and women would also have another positive effect on the British labour market. Under past regimes, ‘the number removed were too small for any effect on wages.' The selected number emigrating under systematic colonisation, however, would remove more than their own number. They would remove both themselves and the number of their future offspring, which was likely to be all the greater because of their youthful fertility. This would maximise the loss of labour from the British labour market and therefore the advantage of labour in Britain in seeking to secure improved wages. This, in turn, would have the advantage of putting ‘the bulk of the people at ease'.

Wakefield concluded his description of his scheme by directly repeating his request in *Principles and Objects* that his readers decide for themselves whether or not the scheme ‘would prevent all undesirable increase’ in the population of Britain and ‘cause the greatest possible increase’ in the population of the colonies; whether the concentration of the colonial populations would lead to the wealth and civilisation of these colonies; and whether or not the scheme would provide the greatest amount of employment and greatest fund for conveying labour to the colonies. If, he said, the answer to these questions was yes, then the scheme would significantly reduce poor rates and pauperism in Ireland, it would dramatically increase the demand for British goods, ‘it would extinguish slavery in South Africa ... by the substitution of free labour’, and it would enable Britain’s larger colonies to cover their own costs.

There could hardly be a better proof in brief of the constancy of Wakefield’s general argument for systematic colonisation than this conclusion borrowed complete from one of his earlier works.

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177 Ibid, pp.571-73.
Even after this conclusion, however, Wakefield still had a few final words. These included comments on the ‘cruelly refused’ efforts of his colonisers to obtain government support for their scheme to colonise South Australia, and an argument for colonial self government. On the latter, he stressed, with Jeremy Bentham, how difficult it was for a metropolitan authority to govern a colony at a great distance. Wakefield noted also the capacity of the colony colonised as an extension of the old society, to govern itself, and its ability to stand alone without British economic, commercial, or military support.¹⁷⁹

As a final confirmation of the constancy of Wakefield’s core ideas, therefore, Wakefield’s last chapter further reinforced his argument with relation to the needs for colonisation and the inadequacy of traditional forms of labour control. But it also went further. It supplied yet another layer of illustration and brought his publication in general to the conclusion that the British government needed to support Wakefield’s proposal of systematic colonisation.

Although published in 1833, *England and America*, was effectively Wakefield’s last published word on systematic colonisation prior to the colonisation of New Zealand by his supporters. Wakefield’s publication the following year of *The New British Province of South Australia*, in which he largely reiterated his theory of colonisation by appropriating large sections from *England and America*, illustrates this sense of finality.¹⁸⁰ As Wakefield stated in the later work, there was little more to say as the subject had ‘been treated at great length, in two volumes ... under the title “England and America”.’¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, pp.577-88.
¹⁸¹ Ibid, pp.3-4.
Generally, *England and America* interwove previously published material with new detail to provide a more comprehensive argument for the adoption of systematic colonisation. Besides the greater detail, Wakefield also discussed at length some issues scarcely mentioned in his earlier publications. These included free trade and the dangers of rebellion on the part of the American black slaves. There were also some shifts in attitude. He was less censorious of American society and much more predisposed to the independent governance of the colonies, probably because of his experience with the Colonial Office with respect to the South Australian scheme.

In some respects, therefore, Wakefield's *England and America* was different from his previous works. Yet, while *England and America* had its own characteristics, it also related the same basic themes of previous publications. Together, they collectively argued and promoted the same case for systematic colonisation. Wakefield also provided through these works a consistent general commentary in relation to labour and labour relations. This included concern over the impoverished English working classes afflicted by unemployment and low wages, the need for labour in the colonies, the inadequacy of the traditional labour controls applied in the colonies, and the need to adopt his scheme of systematic colonisation as the means of supplying and controlling labour in the colonies. Wakefield also stressed that wages for labour in the colonies would be far in advance of those in Britain, though the drawing off of young labourers from the British labour market was expected ultimately to also increase wages in Britain. Wakefield further promised colonial labour an eventual escape from the colonial labour market.

It is appropriate here to also consolidate Wakefield's thoughts on the attitudes and aspirations of labourers and the nature of their escape from the colonial labour market. These all became more and more explicit in his works subsequent to *A Letter from Sydney*. In particular, Wakefield wanted his emigrant labourers to think like
masters and to ultimately become masters. Under his scheme, Wakefield sought not only to select industrious, resourceful, and thrifty labourers, but he wanted them to put aside notions of class interest and conflict and throw themselves wholeheartedly into working alongside their masters to ensure production was maximised. Wakefield also made it clear that his scheme offered labourers not merely the opportunity of becoming landowners but also of becoming masters. The purchase of land and the opportunity to become landowners was, as Wakefield had consistently noted, always available to labourers who emigrated to colonies. This, of course, was the cause of the scourge of dispersion. What Wakefield specifically offered to his selected, ambitious, and industrious labourers was the opportunity to change their status from labourer to master, and in particular become the master of labourers. They did need to accept that gratification of this desire would be delayed, but they were assured that the delay would be only temporary and that they would be better served as a result.

Most simply, Wakefield wanted labourers for his colonies who essentially had the mindset, not of their own class, but of their masters, and to become masters. The greatest encouragement to emigration, he said in *The New British Province of South Australia*, would be the letters home of those who first go to the colonies and ‘who will not fail to boast of having exchanged the condition of a servant for that of a master.’¹⁸² This new condition of master was, of course, the condition of a master of servants who were not slaves. These servants could still be held to contractual liabilities (arising from contracts of service)¹⁸³ and, most importantly for Wakefield, would still be constrained by the ‘sufficient price’. They would not be forced, however, to work through physical coercion and action or by the threat and application of punitive penal sanctions.

¹⁸² Ibid, p.117.
¹⁸³ See pp. 36-38 above. Contracts of service are agreements of employment between employers and their employees. The precise meaning of this term has been subject to change and has been defined and
The Level of the ‘sufficient price’

While an almost overwhelming proportion of Wakefield’s material to the middle of the 1830s followed constant themes and ideas, not all aspects of his vision remained unchanged. There were in fact two significant sets of changes that had particular implications for labour and labour relations.\textsuperscript{184} One of these sets of changes related to the level of the ‘sufficient price’.

Wakefield’s first position on the level of the ‘sufficient price’, set out in 1829, was that it needed to be high. He subsequently appeared to accept the need for a low ‘sufficient price’. In 1833, however, it appears that Wakefield began to shift again towards the promotion of a high ‘sufficient price’. This reversal, from a low ‘sufficient price’ to the promotion of a high price, was particularly significant in that it contributed to a rift between Wakefield and his fellow South Australian colonisers which ended in Wakefield’s withdrawal from direct involvement in the South Australian venture.\textsuperscript{185} The differences between Wakefield and his fellow South Australian colonisers are also evident in the decisions of the early colonisers to use indentured labourers and to enact a most severe master and servant statute.

\textsuperscript{184} In addition to the level of the ‘sufficient price’ and guaranteed employment, Wakefield and other South Australian colonisers did alter their initial position on a number of very specific issues as they sought political support for the systematic colonisation of South Australia. These additional issues included the timetable for establishing self government, the appointment of a governor, and the basis for funding the administration of the colony. None of these issues, however, were central to Wakefield’s concerns as they related to labour and labour relations. By contrast, for example, the general principles of selling land at or above a minimum price, and the use of the revenue from these sales to fund emigration, which were central to his concerns as they related to labour and labour relations, remained intact. See Main, pp.7-9; Pike, pp.57-62.

\textsuperscript{185} Temple, pp.158, 165-70.
The details of Wakefield's changes on the level of the 'sufficient price' are well recorded in his various publications through to the mid-1830s.

Wakefield set out the 'sufficient price' as a general concept in *A Letter from Sydney*. The price was not to be so high as to unduly slow the labourers' access to land, thereby causing a glut in the colonial labour market, unemployment and low wages. But it also could not be so low as to be ineffective in slowing the purchase of land by labourers and thus preventing the constant depletion of the labour market. ¹⁸⁶

Although Wakefield did not go any further in *A Letter from Sydney* to address more precisely what this might mean in terms of a particular 'sufficient price' for land, he had already proposed a price of £2 per acre in his earlier short work, *Sketch of a Proposal for Colonizing Australasia*. ¹⁸⁷

Subsequently, in *Principle and Objects*, Wakefield indicated a willingness to adopt a price of only 5s. as the minimum price for land in colonies founded on his principles of systematic colonisation. ¹⁸⁸ He stated that although the 'sufficient price' could not be determined without experimentation, even the very low price which was being charged for American land had helped check dispersion to some degree, and that a rate set initially at too low a rate was not necessarily harmful in that it encouraged speculation and thus the early accumulation of revenue in the emigration fund. ¹⁸⁹

These thoughts on the initial rate were reinforced in *Founding*. In accordance with his general theory, Wakefield proposed to sell land at a 'sufficient price' 'to ensure adequate cultivation'. Land distribution was also to be conducted in such a way as to

¹⁸⁶ Wakefield, *A Letter from Sydney*, pp.159-60.
¹⁸⁷ Harrop, p.53.
¹⁸⁸ Wakefield clarified that the minimum price of American land was 5s. an acre in *England and America*, p.466.
ensure that there was 'no departure from a uniform and impartial system.' But these were also only to occur 'as soon as expedient'. Wakefield proposed in fact that the 'sufficient price' would initially be lower in the early years of the settlement and then higher as the settlement became more established. These rates were to be 5s. for the first year and 7s. 6d. in the second year, until it became 'sufficiently high to ensure the adequate cultivation of all land granted'.\textsuperscript{190} This was despite his acknowledgement that the price of 5s. was 'wholly insufficient' and 'obviously too low' to prevent dispersion and thus 'the consequent want of a class of labourers'.\textsuperscript{191} He accepted these lower initial prices, however, because he was concerned to avoid deterring cautious capitalists from involvement in the scheme before his theory could be proven. In short, as the first priority, he needed 'to attract capital to the Colony.'\textsuperscript{192} 'It remains to be considered,' Wakefield wrote, 'what effect the price put upon the land will have in inducing capitalists to select other parts of Australasia rather than ... [South Australia].\textsuperscript{193} At the same time, he envisaged that the price would 'be raised as fast as may be expedient, until it reaches the proper point.'\textsuperscript{194} He stated that '40s. would perhaps be high enough', but for the time being 'it is feared that so high a price would deter Capitalists both from joining the Company, and emigrating to the Colony, until the working of the plan had been shewn by experience'.\textsuperscript{195}

There appears to be nothing to suggest that Wakefield did not maintain this view up to about the time he began to write \textit{England and America} in 1833. He also noted in \textit{England and America} that much could still be done to assist immigration with funds from land sold even at the low price which applied in America and which fell short of

\textsuperscript{190} Wakefield, \textit{Founding}, p.276.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid, p.304.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid, p.276.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid, p.301.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid, p.299.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid, p.304.
the required 'golden mean'. In addition, Wakefield noted that it was preferable in
cases of doubt as to whether land was being sold at too high or too low a rate, to sell
at the lower rate because prices could always be increased with less injustice to the
early purchasers of land. An increase in the sufficient price would of course always
tend to increase the value of the early purchasers' initial investment. Generally,
however, Wakefield indicated in England and America that he no longer thought that
5s. an acre was an acceptable initial 'sufficient price'. In discussing the numbers of
emigrants who could be assisted to Canada through the emigration fund, Wakefield
used a rate of £1 as the sufficient price. He also noted that the rate would need to be
higher if similar numbers were to be assisted to the more far off destination of
Australia. In addition, Wakefield expressed reservations over the sale of land under
the Ripon Regulations, which were passed in 1831 at least partly due to the force of
his argument for systematic colonisation. These regulations established a
minimum price of five shillings per acre for all land sales in New South Wales.
Wakefield indicated that the price charged in Australia under the regulations was too
cheap and more inclined to promote dispersion than concentration. He stated that
'The English government makes five shillings per acre the upset [reserve] price of
waste land in New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land. With perfect liberty of
appropriation at this price, it may be doubted whether the new plan, instead of
checking, will not rather promote the appropriation of more land than is good for the
whole society.' While content that the price prevented the appropriation of land by a
favoured few, he argued 'it will, if the price be too low, cause a worse, instead of
better, proportion between land and people.' In Principles and Objects, Wakefield

196 Wakefield, England and America, p.555.
197 Lloyd Prichard notes that the passing of the Ripon Regulations followed two approaches by the
National Colonization Society to the government on the issue of the sale of colonial land, pp.30-31;
Temple, p.149.
198 Wakefield, England and America, pp.561-62, 561n. It is not clear that Wakefield would have had
access to or received any information relating to the effect of the application of the Ripon Regulations
on actual trends in land sales and their impact on the labour market as at the time of writing England
and America.
had also argued the need for a low initial sufficient price on the grounds that a high sufficient price might deter capitalists from becoming involved in the purchase of land in the initial stages of settlement. This argument was absent from *England and America*.

Reinforcing these early signs of movement in *England and America*, Wakefield’s opposition to a low ‘sufficient price’ certainly became increasingly clear during 1834 as work on establishing South Australia advanced. Philip Temple notes Wakefield’s anger over the willingness of his fellow colonisers to compromise his principles in order to obtain the South Australia Act, which was to underpin the colonisation of the new settlement.¹⁹⁹ One of these compromised principles was the ‘sufficient price’. Wakefield indicated at least scepticism in *The New British Province of South Australia* over the level of the price set in the Act. He noted that ‘It may be doubtful whether the price inserted in the Act of Parliament, that is, the price of twelve shillings per acre, below which land is never to be sold, would prove sufficient for the object in view’. He also commented on the role of the South Australian Commissioners. Under the Act, they were entrusted with the responsibility of selling the new colony’s land and organising the emigration of its colonists, and had some ability to adapt the provisions of the legislation (including the setting of a final minimum price for land) in accordance with changing circumstances. Wakefield stated that ‘we may conclude that they will use their power in a manner to save the colony from becoming a second Swan River.’ He further emphasised the reason for a high ‘sufficient price’. He noted that masters could engage and bring out with them to the colony any number of ‘labourers or domestic servants’, but they could only be

¹⁹⁹ Temple, p.158.
retained ‘without some kind of slavery’ by the operation of an effective ‘sufficient price’.\textsuperscript{200}

In a letter to the \textit{Morning Chronicle} in October 1834, Wakefield consolidated, underlined and extended his concerns stating that the ‘sufficient price’ had to be ‘a price as would prevent labourers from becoming landowners [until] after they had worked two or three years for hire. No price less effective than that can be too high. Taking three years for the period, and 40s. per week as wages, then, if the labourer could quit his master in half a year, with land at 12s., the price of land ought to be six times 12s. or £3 12s. \ldots Lord Goderich and Lord Howick [Secretary for War and the Colonies and Undersecretary for the Colonies respectively in 1831], in fixing 5s. per acre as the upset price for New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land, professed to carry into effect the main principles of the Colonisation Society of 1830. Either they were afraid to act on a principle which they acknowledged, or they did not understand it. The mode of selling land in those colonies is a mockery of the plan which it professes to be.’\textsuperscript{201}

Wakefield’s position by 1834 therefore had become very clear. There was no longer any question in his mind that a low ‘sufficient price’ should be applied in South Australia. It had to be high. It was also not too long before the issue was the subject of an open and heated dispute between Wakefield and his South Australian colleagues.

This conflict became fully apparent in May 1835 when the Commissioners finally settled on their ‘sufficient price’. Wakefield responded bitterly to their decision. He


\textsuperscript{201} Harrop, pp.77-78. Also see Wakefield, \textit{The New British Province of South Australia}, London, p.104.
wrote a few days later to Gouger. Wakefield stated: 'Unable to tell whether you are a party to the plan for making 12s. the minimum price for land, I hardly know what to say, but must say something. ... I have always thought £2 the very lowest price that ought to be required for the object in view. ... If they start with 12s. the Colony will be a second Swan River, and if you support that price, many people will naturally suppose that I do. It is for the sake of a year or two hence that I wish to guard myself from even a seeming participation, through you, in an experiment which, in my opinion must fail. The principle is mine, and I have a right to defend it from the injury which it would sustain if the Colony, with 12s. for land, were considered a fair trial of the principle.' Wakefield’s comments suggest that his support of a low ‘sufficient price’ had always been grudging, and the result of persuasion from his fellow colonisers against his own inclinations. Gouger in his turn argued that commonsense demanded that the ‘sufficient price’ had to start out low and rise. In other words, Gouger used the argument Wakefield had previously presented in Principles and Objects and in Founding. The dispute continued in further letters exchanged between the two.

Because of Wakefield’s anger and a threat to withdraw his support from the scheme, the Commissioners attempted to sell land in the colony at £1 despite the fact that they had already set the minimum price at 12s. an acre. With a poor volume of sales, however, Gouger eventually accepted a proposal in September 1835 from George Angas, a leading supporter of the scheme, which involved the establishment of a joint stock company to purchase sufficient land at the rate of 12s. per acre for colonisation to commence. This action ended Wakefield’s active participation in the scheme.

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202 Harrop, pp.76-77.
203 Edwin Hodder, The Founding of South Australia, as recorded in the journals of Mr. Robert Gouger, London, 1898, pp.168-69.
204 Temple, p.166, Harrop, pp.78-79.
205 Angas was initially one of the South Australian Commissioners. He resigned, however, over the conflict of interest apparent in his substantial purchase of land through the South Australian Company,
though later the price was to rise back to £1 and he was to express some satisfaction in 1837 when it seemed that, despite his initial misgivings, the colony was enjoying some early success.  

In considering Wakefield’s views on the level of the ‘sufficient price’ at least to the commencement of colonisation of South Australia, these very clearly varied significantly over the first five years of the life of his scheme of systematic colonisation. Wakefield showed, after his first explanation in A Letter from Sydney, that he was able in fact to accept a low land price, which was ineffective in preventing dispersion, as an expedient to get colonies started. Yet by 1834, he was no longer prepared to make this compromise. The price of land had to be beyond the easy reach of the colonial labourer and be an effective means of retaining labour in the labour market and preventing dispersion. In effect he had gone full circle. He had come to a conclusion that his original inclination that a fully effective ‘sufficient price’ was necessary had been correct and that he had to follow this inclination.

Even though there were no further changes in Wakefield’s position on the level of the ‘sufficient price’ prior to 1837, it is worthwhile also discussing changes in the South Australian colonisers’ views from 1835 on the use of the ‘sufficient price’ as the primary means of controlling labour in the colony. These changes are indicated in the South Australian Commissioners’ promotional material and the activity of both George Angas and the early South Australian legislature in relation to the use of indentured labour and the law of the master and servant. The discussion of this

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Main, pp.10, 20; Pike, pp.129-130, 173; Harrop, pp.79-80; Hodder, George Fife Angas, pp.103-111; O’Connor, p.117.


207 The changes and controversy over the level of the ‘sufficient price’ directly in relation to Wakefield and the colonisation of New Zealand are discussed below in chs 3, 4.
issue provides a useful basis for comparing and assessing later events in New
Zealand.

Initially, and not surprisingly, the South Australian Commissioners at least partly
reflected Wakefield’s ideas on the supply and control of labour. In 1835, the
Commissioners stated categorically that they intended to supply ‘free labour’ and
declared ‘that no convicts shall be sent to the settlement, and thus the Colonists are
protected from the enormous evils which result from the immorality and profligacy
unavoidable in a Penal Settlement.’ They also stated that ‘As the labourers will be
carried out at the common cost of the landowners by means of the Emigration Fund,
and as they will be sufficiently numerous it is not necessary that they should be
indentured to any one. Both employers and labourers will be perfectly free to enter
into any arrangements which may be mutually agreed upon, a state of things, which
experience has shewn, to be much more conducive to contentment and prosperity
than any other.’

Unfortunately, however, these statements were deceptive, certainly in relation to
indentured labour. Pike notes that probably even before the above statement was
released to the public, Angas, who had been responsible for initiating the sale of land
at 12s. an acre, had already also proposed in May 1835 that labourers ‘should be
held down by compulsory articles of indenture’. Pike notes Angas justified his
proposal on the basis that he had received information that a plan had been devised
to induce labourers ‘by the temptation of high pecuniary advantages’ to leave South
Australia for New South Wales. But Pike further notes that the indentures, which

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209 As indicated below, it seems that the Commissioners and the South Australian colonisers in general
may have liked the idea of South Australia as a colony founded on advanced principles yet were in the
end more concerned that they would not be able to preserve their supply of labour under the same
principles.
210 Pike, pp.123.
were mostly for three years, were in fact more used to prevent labourers leaving
Angas's South Australian Company for other individual masters within the colony.\textsuperscript{211}

Furthermore, the Company created additional forms of indebtedness to bind its servants and required regular repayments with interest as sureties for good behaviour. In general, the wages of the indentured labourers were fixed at rates slightly higher than those obtainable in England, but far lower than colonial rates — resulting in the indentured labourers subsequently being called '2 shillings a day slaves'\textsuperscript{212} — though in special cases the colonial manager of the Company was

\textsuperscript{211} Pike, 200. Pike complicates the early position on indentures somewhat with his note on p.153 that a sub-committee of the Company appointed to consider relations between capitalists and working men produced 'an elaborate and detailed plan, highly expressive of the suspicions held by the employers towards their labourers. There was to be no written contract of labour, nothing to bind the master to a bad bargain or a slovenly servant.' The source cited by Pike as the basis for this additional information, however, is incorrect. Regardless, the general view that labourers needed to be tied to specific masters is indicated in any case by the South Australian Commissioners' promotional material and reports. Even in the Commissioners' statement in 1835, in which they trumpeted their commitment to 'free labour', they also 'recommended that emigrant labourers should be hired by some capitalist for at least one year from their arrival in the colony.' Given the enactment of the first South Australian master and servant statute in 1837, see below, these hiring agreements were plainly to be enforced. The Commissioners' annual reports of 1836 and 1837 also provide indications of their two-sided approach to the issue of free labour. In 1836, they expressed particular concern over 'the scarcity of free labour in the neighbouring Colonies' and considered that 'the probability of such temptations being offered' to their labourers to go to these colonies was 'too obvious to escape attention'. Accordingly, they stressed the need to establish a compromise between the freedom of the labourers, and the need of the colony to retain their services. On the one hand, they stated that 'all restrictive measures we have rejected as useless and mischievous. We wish to attach the emigrant to the Colony, by making him a member of a virtuous and enlightened society, by placing him under the benign influence of free institutions, by securing for him a just reward for his industry, and by holding out to his view a fair prospect of advancement in life.' But alongside these laudable goals, they also argued that they still needed to be practical, and that the temptations of the other colonies and to be 'counteracted by strengthening every motive likely to attach the emigrant to his adopted country'. Thus, while they wished 'the emigrant to feel himself a perfectly free agent, and to remain in the Colony only because it is his interest so to do,' they also stated that 'we wish by all fair means to discourage a restless, roving disposition, which we conceive will be most effectually accomplished in the manner here indicated.' This 'manner' included, again, the preference for selecting labourers hired for at least a year, and also a decision to provide assisted passages for their children. The latter, according to the Commissioners, was 'judicious, partly from the consideration that the parents of a numerous family were less likely than others to give way to any temptations which may offer to remove from the Colony.' \textit{British Parliamentary Papers: Colonies: Australia}, vol. 4, 'First Annual Report of the Colonization Commissioners of South Australia', 1836, pp.10, 21. The South Australian Commissioners' report in 1837 also made 'the privilege of selecting servants and labourers for a free passage ... subject to the conditions ... that the persons so selected should be hired by those who selected them ... for at least one year after their arrival in the Colony.' The purpose, they said, was twofold: firstly, to supply the 'emigrating capitalist with the quantity and the quality of labour' which he needed; and, secondly, to afford 'the emigrating labourer regular employment' until the colonial labour market had properly established itself. \textit{British Parliamentary Papers: Colonies: Australia}, vol.5, 'Second Annual Report of the Colonization Commissioners of South Australia', 1837, p.5.

authorised to grant incentive payments. The latter accorded with the directors’ claims to believe that ‘Persuasion will be better than compulsion, and as reward sweetens labour, let increase consist of gifts or donations rather than a regular weekly increase of wages.’

In fact Angas and others South Australian landowners appear to have been no more willing to rely on the devices of persuasion than they were prepared to rely on the ‘sufficient price’. John Cashen notes that there was a meeting of landowners, prior to the departure of the first settlers, ‘to consider ways that “their” labour could be guaranteed to them’. This meeting recommended to the South Australian Commissioners that regulations should be passed and procedures adopted for preventing any wage earners from leaving the colony without permission, or without repaying their passage. Cashen adds that ‘It also urged that a Masters and Servants Act be passed in the colony to ensure work agreements were honoured. Policing all departures from the colony was impractical, but a Masters and Servants Act became the third Act passed in the colony.’ Angas almost certainly had a role in ensuring this development. Captain John Hindmarsh, on his departure in July 1836 to take up the position of the colony’s first Governor, received from Angas ‘papers for perusal relating to suitable laws for the Government of South Australia’. Hindmarsh subsequently arrived in South Australia in December 1836 and Gouger recorded in his journal the passing of master and servant legislation on 2 January 1837. At this point, the colonists were still conducting their legislative business in a tent. A few weeks later, Gouger also observed how useful the law was. ‘On Saturday last’, he wrote, ‘I decided two cases of quarrel between master and servant, according to the

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experienced by the South Australian indentured labourers was similar to the circumstances which Wakefield had already described, the best part of a decade earlier, in his illustration in _A Letter from Sydney_ of conflict over, and the undermining of, indentured contracts. See p.19 above.

213 Pike, p.200.
214 Cashen, p.105.
215 Hodder, _George Fife Angas_, p.228.
Act passed by the Legislative Council, on the 2nd ultimo, without which enactment the long process of a civil action would have been required to procure redress. This promises to be a most useful law, and it is highly popular in the colony.\textsuperscript{216} Its popularity was undoubtedly one-sided. The Act provided an unusually harsh maximum penalty for servants deserting their masters. The penalties included imprisonment with 'solitary confinement or otherwise, at the discretion of the Magistrate committing, for any period not exceeding six months'. The Act also included a provision for the award of penalties of between £5 and £50 against masters who employed fugitive servants.\textsuperscript{217}

Cashen notes that the Act 'had a two-year life in the colony before news of its disallowance by the Queen in Council was received [on 5 December 1838]'. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Glenelg, took the opportunity of deriding the pretensions of the new Wakefield colony, expressing the view that 'the act was better suited to a penal colony than one which boasted of being a free society'.\textsuperscript{218} Subsequently, the disallowed statute was replaced by another master and servant law in 1842 which still allowed for a punishment for failure to serve, of sixty days imprisonment and forfeiture of wages.\textsuperscript{219} In terms of Wakefield's principles, these master and servant acts were a remarkable development. They were a complete departure from what might have been expected by any reasonable reader of Wakefield.

This departure in fact was so complete that it appears sensible to conclude that the adoption of these Acts by the South Australians indicates Wakefield's ideas on labour

\textsuperscript{216} Hodder, \textit{The Founding of South Australia}, pp. 204-05. Unfortunately Gouger does not provide any details of these cases.
\textsuperscript{217} \textit{William IV}, c.3, 1837, South Australian Statutes (disallowed), ss. 2 and 3.
\textsuperscript{218} Cashen, pp.105-06.
\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Victoria}, c.10, 1842, \textit{South Australian Statutes}, Sec s.2.
control had only a minimal impact on South Australia. On reflection, however, this conclusion requires some qualification.

Clearly, the South Australians adopted indentured labour and the law of the master and servant law to stabilise their colonial labour market and perhaps also prevent the loss of labour, imported at quite some cost, to their rival colony of New South Wales. Why, however, did they move to the extreme end of the range of possible measures to ensure the stability of their market and to prevent the loss of labour to other colonies? Neither the use of indentured labour nor the enactment of new master and servant law were unknown in early colonial Australia. But it appears that the use of British indentured labour was relatively greater in South Australia than in the other Australian colonies barring perhaps the failed Swan River settlement. 220 And certainly, as Gleneig and the disallowance of the first South Australian Master and Servant Bill indicate, this statute was exceptionally harsh by any standard.

A possible answer to this question is that the South Australians had been made especially sensitive, by prolonged and repeated exposure to Wakefield’s ideas, to the issue of the need to control labour and the inadequacies of traditional means of control. The key to economic success according to Wakefield was the maintenance of labour in the labour market. The South Australians were also acutely aware of Wakefield’s condemnation of the low ‘sufficient price’ as a tool which would not meet the need to keep labour in the labour market. How, then, they would have asked themselves, was the market to be maintained? The instinctive answer, given their deliberate and, in their view, necessary weakening of the ‘sufficient price’ as Wakefield’s alternative tool for controlling labour, was to try and strengthen one of the

traditional means of controlling labour such as the use of indentures. This object was certainly consistent with the enactment of the draconian Master and Servant Bill of 1837 which enhanced the ability of masters to not only enforce their agreements with their indentured labourers but also enforce any contracts of service with labourers hired by the year or any other period.

In general, therefore, Wakefield’s ideas with respect to the replacement of traditional means of labour control by the application of the ‘sufficient price’ were not well reflected by corresponding developments in South Australia. Indeed, it seems possible that they had the opposite effect in provoking the South Australians into the adoption of measures which reflected more stringently, rather than less, the traditions of forced labour in the colonies.

It is also evident that Wakefield’s lack of a positive influence on South Australia with respect to the supply and control of labour cannot be simply put down to his withdrawal from the scheme. His influence was on the wane before his withdrawal from the scheme. Clearly he was already losing the battle over the level of the ‘sufficient price’ when he finished his association with the scheme in September 1835. Angas had also begun to make inroads with respect to the use of indentured labour by May 1835. Thus, even if Wakefield had not ended his work with respect to the colonisation of South Australia, it is by no means clear that he would have had any substantial success in preventing the introduction of indentured labour or the imposition of a harshly punitive master and servant law. In the end it may have been as well that Wakefield did break with the scheme as these developments made a farce of his general concern to institute a colony where labourers could not be called slaves.
The ending of Wakefield’s association with the South Australian scheme also had some significance for New Zealand. Without South Australia, Wakefield was ready for another colonisation project. He had already recognised New Zealand’s potential as a colony as early as 1833.\textsuperscript{221} and he noted in an appearance before a Parliamentary committee in 1836 that ‘Very near to Australia there is a country which all testimony concurs in describing as the fittest country in the world for colonisation; as the most beautiful country, with the finest climate and the most productive soil. I mean New Zealand.’\textsuperscript{222} The following year he commenced action to make that country a British colony.

\textit{Assistance for the Colonial Labourer}

The second of the two significant sets of changes relating to Wakefield’s general argument for systematic colonisation and to his ideas on labour and labour relations was a series of modifications to his original limited promise of assistance to migrants on arrival in the new colony. The promise finally ended as a proposal which appeared, ultimately, to promise relief work on wages to any who needed it. In other words, work would be made available if ever unemployment managed to temporarily interrupt the advanced colonial prosperity which was to be secured by Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation.

The opening promise of assistance was included in the outline of systematic colonisation in the appendix to \textit{A Letter from Sydney}. Article V of this outline included the promise ‘To furnish’ arriving emigrants ‘with a very moderate provision until

\textsuperscript{221} Wakefield’s awareness of the possibilities of New Zealand is indicated in \textit{England and America}, p.579n.
\textsuperscript{222} Marais, p.26.
Wakefield did not elaborate on why he included this specific provision in his outline of his scheme. Some educated guesswork, however, can be applied to ascertain what might have been in his mind.

Firstly, he would have certainly recognised that the labourers in Britain would want reassurance, before deciding to emigrate to a strange land, of some support while trying to establish themselves in their new environment. Theories on job prospects were unlikely to ever entirely replace the tangible promise of food and shelter on arrival.

Wakefield was also probably influenced by some of the ideas which underpinned the English poor law. In England, the general intent of the poor law administrators was to apply relief so stringently, in the forms already noted earlier in this chapter, that none but the impotent poor (that is the old, sick and infirm) or those who were without any hope of finding other work would apply for such support. This reduced costs and also maximised the pressure on labourers to either remain in the labour market or re-enter the market at the earliest opportunity. The emphasis in Wakefield’s provision through the use of the phrase ‘very moderate provision’ indicates a similar stringency. The fundamental difference was, however, that Wakefield’s measure was designed to push migrants into a prosperous working environment whereas the effect of the English poor law was to push labourers into work which was perceived as generally providing nothing more than a continuation of an impoverished existence.

Other obvious differences were the very limited nature of Wakefield’s measure compared to the complexity of the poor law regulations and its practise, and that his measure only applied on arrival, whereas the relief provided by the English poor law applied without a time limit.

Wakefield may have also been concerned to ensure that his emigrants did not develop undue expectations based on the practices that were followed in New South Wales. There was in fact no formal commitment in New South Wales to provide relief for the poor, but incoming (non-convict) migrants nevertheless often received various forms of assistance including access to provisions from the government store for up to a year and a half. If Wakefield was concerned that his migrants might expect similar support, the stated limits of his provision would have certainly gone some way to undercutting such expectations.

One can further surmise that Wakefield genuinely saw little need for assistance. His scheme proposed the construction of a colonial society of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity. In Wakefield's view, arriving emigrants would at worst need support only briefly as they quickly orientated themselves in the new colony, took stock of the labour market, and selected and obtained work at good wages. The limitation of the provision also complemented the special image of the scheme of systematic colonisation. The promise of the scheme was the certainty of secure

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224 The provision of assistance in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land was not based on the formal arrangements of the poor law. This did not mean, however, that support was not provided. In particular, the convicts, as prisoners of the state, were supported from the government store, though the colonial governors also sought to minimise their liability by assigning convicts as servants to free settlers and by providing them with tickets of leave to find their own work. Shaw, Convicts and Colonies, pp. 67, 73. The early free settlers were also given varying degrees of assistance. In the 1790s, they were given land, convict labour, tools, and provisions for two years from the government store. Later, support from the government store was reduced to six months and then eliminated altogether for most incoming free emigrants. Without any formal commitment, however, those who arrived destitute, including the wives and families of convicts, continued to receive support, often for a year to a year and a half. Support in this form was also evident in the 1830s, after the Ripon Regulations and the commencement of assisted passages. A witness to a New South Wales inquiry into immigration in 1838 noted ‘Numbers of helpless, and many idle and profligate persons, have been brought to our shores; they have consumed vast quantities of food, and have been supported in idleness for weeks, even months after arrival, at an expense little short perhaps of that incurred in their passage.’ R. B. Madgwick, Immigration into Eastern Australia: 1788-1851, Sydney, 1969, pp. 12, 37, 41, 44, 136, 146. Also see Historical Records of Australia, Series I, vol 1, p. 681; Series I, vol. IX, p. 236; Graeme Davison, John Hirst, and Stuart MacIntyre, The Oxford Companion to Australian History, Melbourne, Oxford 1998, p. 522. The American colonies also practised various forms of relief, including practices derivative of the English poor law. See M. W. Jernegan, Labouring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America: 1607-1783, New York, 1965, chs 12, 13; J. T. Adams and R. V. Coleman, Dictionary of American History, vol. IV, New York, 1946, p. 226.
prosperity through the maintenance of a constantly buoyant labour market. The promise of very moderate assistance soothed concerns over the transition but did not undercut the ambience of certainty, so strongly promoted by Wakefield, that work in the colony would provide the basis for all the new colonists’ needs. The colony was to be a land where the provisions of the poor law were unnecessary.

Wakefield’s promise in *A Letter from Sydney* was therefore a formal commitment to support incoming migrants, but it was also very limited in scope. Wakefield’s first change to this provision was made in *Principles and Objects*.

The shift in *Principles and Objects* involved a substantial extension of the right of the colonists to receive support when unemployed. Specifically, the new proposal ‘suggested, that every person in the colonies, being unemployed and destitute, should have a legal claim for mere subsistence, either on the colonial government, or on the township in which such pauper might reside.’\(^{226}\) The prime significance of this promise was that it extended the right of the colonist, from support limited to an initial period after arriving in the colony, to an ongoing right to relief, though clearly this remained only a right to subsistence.

Unlike the provision in *A Letter from Sydney*, Wakefield also clearly set out his reasons for the proposal. Firstly, it was to provide an incentive for the administrators of systematic colonisation to precisely tailor immigration to the need for labour in the colonies. The cost of relief provided a penalty for inaccuracy, thus rendering ‘those, who should determine the yearly amount of emigration, very careful not to sin on the side of excess’.\(^{226}\) Thus, while Wakefield’s promise in *A Letter from Sydney* was not

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\(^{225}\) Wakefield, *Principles and Objects*, pp.55-56.

\(^{226}\) Ibid, p.56.
related by Wakefield to other aspects of his scheme of systematic colonisation, the
new promise was directly integrated into the operation of the scheme. Wakefield’s
second reason was that the measure would reassure the British labourers that they
did not risk disaster in emigrating. The emigrant wanted, for example, ‘the certainty of
obtaining absolute plenty, - an ample provision of food, clothes and fuel, for himself,
his wife, and any number of children.’\footnote{Ibid, p.31.} He added that it ‘would be satisfactory to the
emigrants, by absolutely insuring them against the risk, however, slight, of perishing
for want.’\footnote{Ibid, p.56.}

Wakefield’s proposal in \textit{Principles and Objects} was certainly an improvement on his
proposal in \textit{A Letter from Sydney}. But, just as his proposal in \textit{A Letter from Sydney}
was replaced by his suggestion in \textit{Principles and Objects}, his suggestion in
\textit{Principles and Objects} was also subsequently superseded by a proposal in his next
work specifically on colonisation, \textit{Founding}.

The new proposal represented a retreat from the proposal in \textit{Principles and Objects}.
Wakefield now promised that ‘The Company [to be formed to oversee the
colonisation of South Australia] will find employment during the first year at least, for
such of the emigrants sent out with the purchase money of its land [that is, in receipt
of passages funded from the revenue from the Company’s land sales], as may be
willing thus to employ themselves, in making roads, bridges, and other improvements
on the Company’s grant.’\footnote{As in \textit{Principles and Objects}, this promise was also an
cencouragement to the labourer to migrate to a far off colony. Labour was assured
that the provision of guaranteed employment [alongside an ‘abundance of
Kangaroos’, an ‘abundance of fish’, and animal food at low prices from Launceston]}

\footnote{Wakefield, \textit{Founding a Colony in Southern Australia}, p.302.}
removed the new colony from the danger 'of suffering any of those privations which
new settlements have frequently experienced.\textsuperscript{230} But his new proposal also promised
significantly less. Without clarification as to whether or not wages were to be higher
than subsistence wages, the promises can only be judged on the conditions attached
to the provision of relief. In the case of \textit{Principles and Objects} there were no
conditions. In \textit{Founding}, the condition for receiving relief was the performance of
work. The promise, with some similarity to \textit{A Letter from Sydney}, was also clearly for
only the first year after arrival and was not a continuing entitlement.

Unfortunately, and again as in \textit{A Letter from Sydney}, Wakefield did not directly
explain his proposal in \textit{Founding}. To a large extent, Wakefield's changes to his
promises, as with his views on the level of the 'sufficient price', show an element of
uncertainty in his mind about the issue which he was still trying to resolve. It is
perhaps also pertinent, however, that \textit{Founding} was primarily designed to encourage
the involvement of landowning capitalists in the colonisation of South Australia. There
remained a need to promise to provide labourers with support, otherwise they would
not emigrate. But Wakefield may well have also calculated that more modesty in his
proposals to support the labourers was needed in order to appeal to landowners and
capitalists, who were more than unlikely as a group to be enthusiastic about
generous relief provisions. The specific detail of the scheme indicates furthermore
that the promise would have been an easy one to make because it was likely to be
virtually costless. The establishment of the colony under systematic colonisation
required a good deal of preliminary work such as surveying land for sale and building
roads. In effect, the offer of work on public works when no other work was available
made a virtue of necessity; the company was bound to need to employ a
considerable amount of labour in its first year of operation in any case. In terms of

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid, pp.301-02.
Wakefield's overall argument, once this preliminary building had been completed, the colony under systematic colonisation would also be a thriving settlement and unemployment would be a non-existent fear.

Wakefield's subsequent works published before the commencement of his active promotion of the colonisation of New Zealand, that is, *England and America* and *The New British Province of South Australia*, do not contain any further suggestions or promises of assistance. The South Australian Commissioners, however, included another new promise in a promotional circular released shortly before Wakefield withdrew from active involvement in the project.\(^{231}\) The Commissioners promised that ‘On the arrival of the emigrants in the colony they will be received by an officer who will supply their immediate wants, assist them in reaching the place of their destination, be ready to advise them in case of difficulty, and at all times give them employment, at reduced wages, on the government works, if from any cause they should be unable to obtain it elsewhere.'\(^{232}\) Whether the new promise offered more or less than Wakefield's promise in *Founding* is an open question. The new promise was associated with the arrival of emigrants but it was also a promise of work 'at all times'. And while Commissioners offered relief work 'at reduced wages', Wakefield had not provided any direction on the rate of pay for relief work in *Founding*.

Regardless of the uncertainty and whether or not Wakefield was involved in the construction of the South Australian Commissioners' promise, it is clear that both the promise in *Founding* and the South Australian Commissioners' promise, while not as

\(^{231}\) The reference in this promotional material to the sale of land at £1 per acre indicates its release prior to the complete breach between Wakefield and the other active South Australian colonisers, (Hill), p. 3.

\(^{232}\) (Hill), p.3. The Commissioners also offered assistance from their stores ‘for the security of the poorer class of emigrants’. See *British Parliamentary Papers*, 'First Annual Report of the Colonization Commissioners of South Australia', 1836, p.11. Newly arriving emigrants also had the benefit of being ‘met by the Emigration Agent who presented each couple with a cock and hen and offered his assistance in finding suitable employment.’ Cashen, p.106.
complete as Wakefield’s promise in *Principles and Objects*, were significant advances on the initial promise of assistance to incoming migrant labourers that had been included in *A Letter from Sydney*. As matters stood in 1835, therefore, the colonists had two guarantees. The first was the guarantee of general prosperity in the colony as a result of the adoption of systematic colonisation and the achievement of concentrated colonial settlement. The second was the guarantee against any residual risks resulting from unemployment for not just a period of personal transition on arrival in the new colony, but for the fuller period (at least) of the initial development of the colony.

To complete this discussion, it is also useful, as we have done with the issue of the level of the ‘sufficient price’ and, again, particularly in light of subsequent New Zealand events, to consider how this promise fared in the early South Australian settlement. The principal feature of this early period was that while the Commissioners’ promise was implemented in the new colony it was also relatively quickly undermined by the economic crisis which hit the colony in 1840 and a change in the governance of the new colony in 1841.

The need to apply the Commissioners’ promise and provide work in South Australia at reduced rates almost certainly began with the foundation of the new settlement, but it became particularly significant after 1838 as the scale of emigration increasingly ran ahead of available work. The Commissioners’ public works were mostly undertaken by contractors and the labourers employed on these works were paid at a rate of 1s. 6d. per day plus rations. Standard wages in the colony in January 1838, by comparison, ‘varied from 5s. to 6s. a day’. Undoubtedly, the

overall rate for public work was lower than the colony’s standard rates – the Commissioners of course only promised wages at a reduced rate – but the degree to which they were lower is unclear because the value of the rations provided was not defined.

Despite a continuing need for this employment, both the availability of public work and the reduced rates were cut drastically in 1841. The general basis for these cuts was the continued deterioration of the colony’s financial position caused primarily by a drastic fall in the level of incoming capital and low agricultural production which had brought the colony to the brink of famine. These developments, in turn, made it increasingly difficult for the colony to support its growing number of unemployed labourers.  

Given the background of financial and social crisis, the particular timing of the cuts was also associated with a second event, the replacement by the British government of the existing Governor, George Gawler, with its own appointee, George Grey.  

Grey’s appointment was important in relation to the application of the Commissioners’ promise to provide relief work because, appointed by the Crown alone and not responsible to the South Australian Commissioners, he did not regard himself as legally bound by their undertakings. As a result, he felt able to take and consequently did take a series of actions to reduce expenditure on relief. These included the cutting of relief wages from Gawler’s rates of 1s. 6d. a day plus rations down to rates varying from 1s. 2d. for single men without rations to a maximum of 3s. 8d. for married men with children. Grey also cut the work available on public

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236 Gawler replaced the first Governor, Hindmarsh, in October 1838, and was replaced, in turn, by Grey in May 1841, Grenfell Price, pp.131, 194.
238 Ibid, p.213.
work contracts and reduced the size of the colonial administration’s establishment.\footnote{Rutherford, pp.26-27; Grenfell Price, p.212.} He hoped by these measures to force the desperate labourers into isolated rural areas and promote lower production costs.

With some irony, Grey’s new rates were also exactly the type of rates which Wakefield had criticised in *Swing Unmasked*. Their similarity to the English poor law was hardly accidental though. Grey’s response to South Australia’s crisis was to apply what he knew and felt at least morally obliged to apply. He stated: ‘I hold ... that the Home Government is bound to provide for them [the unemployed labourers in South Australia] in exactly the same manner that they would have been provided for in an English workhouse.... I will grant no single indulgence to them, but I will not suffer them to starve.’\footnote{Ibid, 214.}

It seems unlikely that anyone prospered under Grey’s regime, but his policy was nevertheless still subject to some criticism from London. The British government saw particular dangers in the possibility that Grey’s policy conveyed to the unemployed in the colony the idea that they had a right to relief. Reflecting the prevailing harshness of sentiments in England, the Colonial Office cautioned Grey against making any formal commitment whatsoever to providing relief. In its stead, it recommended re-emigration. This was to allow the labourers to again become independent as soon as was ‘consistent with safety and humanity’. It repudiated any sense of the idea that ‘the Mother Country is, as of right, under any circumstances to be called upon to provide a maintenance for these migrants.’\footnote{Ibid.} Furthermore, Lord Stanley, the Secretary at the Colonial Office, warned Grey that ‘You appear to have been led by mistaken feelings, to sanction a system of abuse which has revived in South
Australia all the vicious principles of the late Poor Law of England.\textsuperscript{242} The reference to vicious principles presumably included the provision of married rates which apparently gave undesirable encouragement to marriage and procreation. Wakefield had of course also criticised this principle in \textit{Swing Unmasked} and \textit{England and America}.\textsuperscript{243} The Colonial Office's recommendation to Grey that he institute re-emigration instead of providing relief also had interesting implications. In part it indicated that the Colonial Office accepted colonisation as a better way of dealing with pauperism than the provision of relief. It certainly saved the government precious funds. It further suggested, though, that the government had no strategic view of how to cope with colonial unemployment other than to shift migrants from one station to another and hope for the best in terms of future prosperity.

For their part, the South Australian Commissioners still clung to the sense of their own responsibilities and, also commenting at a distance (from England), objected to the idea that those who had found their way to South Australia other than under their own auspices should receive any support whatsoever. They stated that, 'With respect to all other classes of persons, ... as no engagement for their support has been in any way made with them, we see no reason why they should continue to be maintained at the expense of the Colonial revenue.'\textsuperscript{244}

To provide a broader perspective on the developments under Grey, his measures can also be compared with a roughly contemporaneous response to rising unemployment in New South Wales. In 1843, New South Wales and the new settlement of Port Phillip, also faced an economic crisis. During this crisis, George Gipps, Governor of New South Wales, sent instructions to C.J. La Trobe

\textsuperscript{242} Rutherford, p.28.
\textsuperscript{244} Grenfell Price, p.214.
(Superintendent of the Port Phillip District) to offer 'work at low wages, not exceeding in any case what we give them in Sydney, that is 3d a Day to Mechanics and 2d to Labourers, also excluding altogether single men – and men with Families who might (if they chose to accept it) get employed in the Country.'\textsuperscript{245} Clearly these rates were exceptionally low, even relative to Grey's rates.\textsuperscript{246} But the rates in both cases were derived from the same type of policy. They represented the provision, without legal obligation, of minimal relief in keeping with sparse financial resources and were designed as much to force the recipient to take whatever work was offered (and wherever it was offered) as to keep them alive.

Finally, it is revealing to note the response of the working colonists themselves to these developments. The notable responses from the South Australian labourers who had been encouraged to emigrate to South Australia by the promises from Wakefield and the Commissioners, included: their refusal to 'honestly submit and sit down in quiet with their families seeing them starving and ... wearing out their clothes without any prospect of replacing them'; their claim 'that the wages paid on government relief were insufficient to purchase the quantity of rations given to prisoners in gaol'; their objection 'to being termed "paupers"'; and their belief that they 'themselves', who were 'the producers of all wealth', had been "lured from their native land under the most flattering inducements" to be degraded into "a state of actual bondage".\textsuperscript{247} Petitions also complained of 'economic bondage' and 'a relapse to servile barbarism'.\textsuperscript{248}

\textsuperscript{246} A strict comparison between the South Australian and New South Wales' rates is quite problematic. The difficulties include the lack of information about whether the latter rates were paid in addition to rations, what the respective cost of provisions were in the two centres, and whether the settlers in Sydney had better access or not to charitable institutions (see F.K. Crowley, \textit{A New History of Australia}, Melbourne, 1974, p.108), which could have provided additional support to the unemployed and poorly paid.
\textsuperscript{247} Pike, p.190.
\textsuperscript{248} Rutherford, p.27. Also see a reprint of reports on Grey's actions in the \textit{Nelson Examiner}, 4 and 11 May 1844.
Similarly, the working class of Sydney, which included free settlers who had been encouraged by favourable reports in England to emigrate, also complained about their conditions. In mid 1843, for example, Gipps was petitioned as follows: ‘The humble petition of the undersigned mechanics and labourers of Sydney sheweth - That your petitioners left their native country under the representation that, by proceeding to this colony they would materially better their condition, by obtaining abundant employment with fair and equitable remuneration. That, notwithstanding such representation, they have been doomed to grievous disappointment - a great number of them, at present not less than six or seven hundred, being unable to obtain any employment, who have yet, for the most part, families depending on them for support.’ A month later, another petition to the New South Wales Legislative Council was organised appealing for relief for the destitute and the starving and also demanding the removal of prisoners and assigned servants in order to increase the demand for free labour.

Clearly both the New South Wales and South Australian workers were vocal critics of developments in their respective colonies and of the actions of the colonial administrations. Their responses confirm that the unemployed colonists in both settlements were, ultimately, in receipt of relief which, like the English poor law, did nothing to prevent the impoverishment of the recipient. At the risk of reading too much into limited evidence, there is also a difference in the petitions described which may reflect the strong promotion of South Australia as a ‘free’ colony and the hopes that this may have engendered. The New South Wales petitioners put most of their emphasis on their right to work, including their right to take the places of convicts.

249 Madgwick, pp.85-86, 158-59.
250 *Nelson Examiner*, 9 September 1843 (reprinting a report from the *Australasian Chronicle*, 18 July 1843).
251 Ibid, 11 October 1843.
The South Australians, in contrast, appear to have put more emphasis into bitter complaints about servitude and bondage. They were particularly concerned that, despite the promises of the colonisers, freedom from the enslavement of minimal relief wages, poverty, and distress had not been fully realised. Their complaints echoed in parts various radical voices in England during the 1820s and 30s, including those of Cobbett, Owen, and, indeed Wakefield.

Conclusion

Wakefield’s body of written work shows that by far the greater proportion of his ideas outlined in *A Letter from Sydney* remained intact up to the time when he wrote his letter to Charles Torlesse in 1837 announcing his new, active interest in New Zealand. These publicly stated ideas included: the need to deal with the issues of the unemployment, low wages and the poverty of substantial elements of the English working classes; the need to prevent the dispersion and encourage the concentration of colonial labour; and the need to shift from traditional to more modern market oriented controls of labour.

Of his variations from the outline in *A Letter from Sydney*, these were principally two matters of detail relating to the implementation of the overall scheme. Neither received more than relatively brief mention in the great welter of Wakefield’s words. One variation was the development of a guarantee of employment which, while possessing its own distinctive features, provided a colonial practice which was not altogether different from the practice in New South Wales. It also resembled aspects of the English poor law, albeit removed from the context of chronically poorly paid work and persistent poverty. The second variation involved the level of the ‘sufficient
price’. Wakefield went some way towards compromising the function of the ‘sufficient price’ as he had set this out in *A Letter from Sydney*. But he also stepped back from this compromise and, by 1834, had renewed his general commitment to a ‘sufficient price’ which he expected would keep labourers, for a sufficient period, from purchasing their own subsistence farms.

Against this backdrop, a description of the early colonists’ activities in South Australia also provides perspective for the following discussion which concentrates on the influence of Wakefield’s ideas, particularly with respect to labour and labour relations, in New Zealand. Wakefield’s position in 1836, despite the changes in his views on the level of the ‘sufficient price’, was largely consistent with the scheme outlined in *A Letter from Sydney*. In contrast, the South Australians, with Grey, had radically diverged from Wakefield’s ideas. Their adjustments and changes included the use of indentured labourers and the enactment of severe master and servant legislation. In addition, while Wakefield had established a position in his early pamphlets of support for the provision of employment where colonists were unable to find work, the South Australian labourers were, in 1841, beginning to suffer the severe consequences of the curtailment of this same promise.

It is clear that the leading South Australians colonisers, and Grey, saw their actions as practical responses to the difficult realities of colonisation. Some also regarded Wakefield’s views, at least with respect to the level of the ‘sufficient price’, as naïve. The question that now needs to be addressed is what happened to these perhaps naïve and impractical ideas in relation to the establishment and the first years of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements.
Part Two:

Labour and the First Years of the

New Zealand Wakefield Settlements
Chapter 3

Wellington to Nelson

Introduction

The practical colonisation of New Zealand by the New Zealand Company started in May 1839 with the sailing of the Company's ship, the Tory. Wakefield had identified the colonisation of New Zealand in 1837 as his new personal goal to succeed his South Australian interest, but the following two years were largely lost in a fruitless political campaign directed at obtaining the support of the British Government for the venture. In 1839, however, matters came to a head. Wakefield and his supporters, working firstly through the New Zealand Association and then the New Zealand Company, were faced with a decision by the British Government to annex New Zealand and pre-empt further land sales. This put in jeopardy their whole scheme by threatening the Company's prospects of obtaining cheap land for re-sale to migrants at the 'sufficient price'. The immediate implications were profound, threatening the creation of the Company's fund for assisting migrants to New Zealand and profits for its shareholders. In reaction, the Company decided to take its own pre-emptive action and send an expedition to New Zealand under the command of William Wakefield, one of Edward Gibbon's several brothers. The prime initial object was to purchase land before British sovereignty could be declared. Shortly afterwards, the Company also began to finally look to the particular arrangements necessary to ready its emigrants for its new settlement.¹

The specific object of this chapter is to provide an opportunity to assess, from this starting point in 1839, the impact of Wakefield's scheme of systematic colonisation on labour and labour relations in the first years of the initial three Wakefield settlements in New Zealand. To achieve this, the following considers three issues. First, given Wakefield's proposal to control labour by controlling the supply of labour in the labour market, how did the New Zealand Company's actions correspond to this proposal? Second, how did the Company's promise that it would provide work if no other work was available relate to Wakefield's theory of systematic colonisation and how did the Company apply its promise? And third, how did the thoughts and behaviour of the first Wakefield settlers reflect the ideas with respect to labour and labour relations that Wakefield had expressed in setting out his scheme of systematic colonisation?

Supply and Retention

The application of Wakefield's scheme of systematic colonisation required the implementation of particular policies. These were the sale of colonial land at the 'sufficient price' to prevent labour from quickly acquiring land in the colony and the use of the revenue from these sales to fund the emigration of selected workmen. For the first three New Zealand Wakefield settlements, responsibility for applying the scheme fell to the New Zealand Company (with its auxiliary, the Plymouth Company).\(^2\) The New Zealand Company indicated from the outset of its colonising activity that it wanted to apply Wakefield's scheme of systematic colonisation. This included the use of the scheme as the means of controlling labour in the New

\(^2\) The Plymouth Company had only a short-lived existence before being merged with the New Zealand Company at the end of 1840, R. Dalziel, 'Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol. 20, 1986, p. 5.
Zealand settlements and the application of each of the major aspects of Wakefield’s scheme: the sale of land at the ‘sufficient price’, the establishment of an emigration fund, and the supply of labour to the selected settlements. It is also apparent, however, that the Company did not apply the scheme with great success, nor did its efforts last. Indeed, by 1843, after a mere three and a half years of operation, the scheme had been remodelled into a form which was, in terms of Wakefield’s original outline of systematic colonisation, a travesty of the scheme. Wakefield, although he worked with the New Zealand Company, took no responsibility and regarded his role as only that of the ‘generalizer and theorizer’. The mundane task of ‘the filling-up of an extensive project’ was for lesser persons to complete.3

The New Zealand Company’s initial commitment to Wakefield’s plan is illustrated in John Ward’s Information Relative to New Zealand. In promoting the colonisation of New Zealand, Ward, the Company’s Secretary, referred in the preface to his first edition of June 1839 to Wakefield’s earlier works and to the works of others with like themes. He noted that ‘The plantation of a Colony has been called a heroic work, and we believe systematic Colonization to be emphatically the want of our age.’4 As background to the Company’s current work, Ward referred to the objects of the New Zealand Association. These had been set in the period immediately following the receipt in England of the initial reports of the arrival of the first settlers in South Australia.5 The objects included, he stated, ‘The aim … to induce the government and the legislature to apply to New Zealand the peculiar system of colonisation which has proved so successful in South Australia’.6 The peculiar system was Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation. Of course it was not yet fully apparent in 1839

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3 Temple, p.260. Wakefield’s involvement with the Company was certainly also severely restricted from 1842 to 1844 by his heavy involvement in Canadian matters, Temple, ch.20.
6 Ward, pp. 112-13.
that the establishment of the South Australian colony had been anything but a great success.\textsuperscript{7}

Ward also stated that ‘The grand object of the new, or improved, system of the disposal of colonial lands, is to regulate the supply of new land, by the real wants of the Colonists, so that the land shall never be either superabundant, or deficient, either too cheap, or too dear.’ He added, implicitly acknowledging Wakefield, that ‘It has been shown that the due proportion between people and land may be constantly secured by abandoning the old system of grants, and requiring an uniform price per acre, for all new land, without exception.’\textsuperscript{8}

Furthermore, Ward stated that the ‘sufficient price’ would ensure land development and the creation of work even where land was purchased by speculators. Ward restated Wakefield’s argument in \textit{A Letter from Sydney} in relation to the significant difference between desirable and undesirable purchases of land by speculators.\textsuperscript{9} A sufficiently high price of land, he said, ‘deters speculators from obtaining land, with a view to leaving their property in a desert state, and thus prevents injurious dispersion’.\textsuperscript{10} In other words, landowners could not afford to forgo an ongoing return on costly investments, even if their ultimate object was to benefit from a simple increase in the value of their land. Both Wakefield and Ward expected that landowners would have to bring their land into production in order to obtain the necessary return on their investment and, in the process, provide employment.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, p.114n. Temple notes that Wakefield had begun to be aware that there were problems in South Australia but sat on the information, p.230. There was no direct comment on the use of indentured labour or the colony’s master and servant law.\textsuperscript{8} Ward, p.129.\textsuperscript{9} Wakefield, \textit{A Letter from Sydney}, pp.181-82.\textsuperscript{10} Ward, p.129.
Ward also noted that the ‘sufficient price’, if it ‘be not too low’, would, ‘by compelling every labourer to work for wages, until he has saved the only means of obtaining land,’ ensure ‘a supply of labour for hire.’ Moreover, ‘If, on the other hand, the price be not too high, it neither confines the settlers within a space inconveniently narrow, nor does it prevent the thrifty labourers from becoming a land-owner, after working some time for wages.’ Ward added that the sale of new land at a ‘sufficient price’ obviated ‘every species of bondage’. It also, ‘by providing combinable labour’, rendered ‘industry very productive’, and maintained ‘both high wages, and high profits’. In relation to the emigration fund, Ward noted that the deliberate assistance of labour to the colony caused ‘the best sort of colonization to proceed at the greatest possible rate.’ This included diminishing ‘the period during which the labourer must work for hire, and by the rapid progress which it imparts to the best sort of colonization, it explains to the labouring class of emigrants, that every one of them who is industrious and thrifty, may be sure to become not merely an owner of land, but also in his turn, an employer of hired labourers, a master of servants.’

Clearly, Ward spoke Wakefield’s language. He was also ‘perfectly master’ of Wakefield’s theory. He not only justified the Company’s application of Wakefield’s scheme but also related its application to the achievement of specific ends with respect to labour and labour relations.

The New Zealand Company also underlined its broad commitment to Wakefield’s scheme by generally implementing, from 1839 to 1842, each of the major aspects of Wakefield’s scheme that related to the supply and control of colonial labour: the sale of land at a ‘sufficient price’, the establishment of an emigration fund, and the

11 Ward, pp.129-30. Ward also referred his readers to The British Colonisation of New Zealand. This work (E.G. Wakefield, The British Colonisation of New Zealand, London, 1837) also provided an outline of systematic colonisation, see chapter 1.
12 Meeting of the New Zealand Company, 2 May 1839, C.O. 208/185 (New Zealand Company records).
selection and supply of labour to its new New Zealand settlements. This said, however, the Company also applied the scheme in ways which were not always in keeping with the theoretical prescription.

The Company sold its New Zealand land at various prices, but these were always relatively high prices. As noted in the previous chapter, Wakefield had objected to the sale of land in South Australia at 12s. per acre and had sought a price of £1. His position changed in 1837, however, with the apparently successful establishment of the South Australian colony. Seemingly proven wrong, he accepted that land at 12s. an acre could be a 'sufficient price' and was not the bar to the effective working of his scheme of systematic colonisation that he had feared it would be. This change resumed the variability Wakefield had shown on the level of the 'sufficient price' before 1834, but he was not alone in reacting to the initial progress in South Australia. The success also encouraged the British Government to change the price of New South Wales land to the same standard of a minimum of 12s. Even so, Wakefield and other members of the Company decided, when the time eventually arrived to sell its New Zealand land, to sell at a higher price. Perhaps seeing that a higher price might be even more effective (and certainly happy that potential purchasers would not be deterred by the higher prices), he, and his Company colleagues, decided to impose prices of £1 and 30s. per acre. These prices were applied to sections which varied between fifty and a quarter acres and two hundred and one acres.

13 Michael Turnbull notes that, even though the Company sought to encourage land sales by claiming that its land was cheap, its price of land 'was undoubtedly high in comparison with the price of land in other colonies', The New Zealand Bubble, Wellington, 1959, pp.10-13.
14 Wakefield, A Statement of the Objects of the New Zealand Association, p.5.
For the first settlement, Wellington, the Company imposed an initial price of £1 per acre for its land. Moreover, the land was sold not by the acre but in large sections of one hundred and one acres comprising one town acre and one hundred country acres. Purchasers were required therefore to pay £101 to become a landowner in the new settlement. A second lot of land, primarily to be sited at Wanganui, was priced at £100 for one hundred acres of rural land alone. For the Wakefield settlement of New Plymouth, the Plymouth Company sold land at £75 for each allotment, comprising a quarter of an acre of town land and fifty acres of rural land. The New Zealand Company priced its land for the last of the central New Zealand settlements, Nelson, at 30s. an acre. The Nelson sections were also much larger than those offered for sale in the other settlements. They comprised one town acre, fifty acres of suburban (or 'accommodation') land, and one hundred and fifty acres of rural land.

As Wakefield’s scheme required, the price of the Company’s land on these terms must have been an impediment to men of limited means becoming land owners. If 12s. per acre had previously been considered sufficient to prevent labourers from quickly purchasing their own land, clearly the higher prices of 20s. to 30s., and section prices of between £75 and £300, were going to be most effective. If there were any concerns over the effectiveness of the prices, it would have been that they might prove too great a barrier for labourers wishing to become landowners.

The Company also committed a high proportion of the revenue from its land sales to fund emigration. In the case of the Wellington settlement, the Company allocated

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17 Marais, p.55.
18 B. Wells, The History of Taranaki, New Plymouth, 1878, p.51. The history includes numerous letters and reports relating to the early settlement of New Plymouth.
20 This and following references to the New Zealand Company include the Plymouth Company. The Plymouth Company will be referred to directly only where necessary.
21 The Company rounded the price for each section in Nelson down to £300, rather than charge the odd figures of £301.30s, or as it was initially proposed, £301, Allan, p.50.
seventy-five percent of the revenue from its sales ‘for the exclusive benefit of the purchasers, in giving value to the land sold, by defraying the cost of emigration’. This included a discount on the cost of passages for landowners, their families and their family servants, and the provision of ‘a free passage for young persons of the labouring class, and as far as possible of the two sexes, in equal proportions.’\textsuperscript{22} The Plymouth Company also allocated land revenue for emigration, though at a rate reduced from that set for the Wellington settlement. The Plymouth prospectus set a rate of two-thirds of the revenue from land sales for emigration. It also provided a much less generous passage rebate for land purchasers. The rebate was to a maximum of 25\% of the purchase price paid and further limited to purchasers of land ‘to the extent of £300’.\textsuperscript{23} For Nelson, the New Zealand Company only allocated fifty percent of the land revenue to its emigration fund, but as the sections were more expensive than those at the other sites, the revenue per purchase still matched the revenue per purchase obtained from the sale of land in Wellington. The Company assigned just under 87\% of the Nelson emigration fund to cover the cost of passages for free emigrants, with the balance allocated for rebates for land purchasers.

Besides needing to cover the general expenses of establishing the settlement and of profit taking, the Company also assigned one sixth of the total revenue from the Nelson land sales to the establishment and development of religious and educational institutions and to the development of communication by steam ship.\textsuperscript{24}

After the sale of land at the ‘sufficient price’ and the establishment of an emigration fund, the next step in Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation involved the selection and supply of labour to the colony. Wakefield had specifically argued that emigrants should be carefully selected and sent out only in numbers which were

\textsuperscript{22} Ward, pp.128-29.
\textsuperscript{23} Wells, p.52.
\textsuperscript{24} Allan, p.51.
compatible with the maintenance of the colonial labour market at a happy equilibrium. This equilibrium was the point of balance at which employers had all the labour they needed but no more, and employees obtained good but not excessively high wages. Wakefield also thought of his working-class colonists mainly in terms of a male worker aided by a supportive wife, but not hindered by the presence of children. In reality, the Company found the task of achieving the accurate selection and supply of labour according to this prescription very difficult.

Primarily, the Company sought agricultural workers but also recognised the need for workers in a number of other categories that it considered particularly useful. Besides agricultural labourers, the Company sought: ‘shepherds, miners, bakers, blacksmiths, braziers and tinmen, smiths, shipwrights, boat-builders, wheelwrights, sawyers, cabinet-makers, carpenters, coopers, curriers, farriers, millwrights, harness-makers, boot and shoe-makers, tailors, tanners, brick-makers, lime-burners, and all persons engaged in the erection of buildings.’ The Company also required that its emigrant workers had to be ‘of sound mind and body, not less than fifteen, nor more that thirty years of age, and married.’ With respect to women, the Company gave preference ‘to those accustomed to farm and dairy-work, to sempstresses, straw-platters, and domestic servants.’

The New Zealand Company was not well equipped to carry out the selection of this labour. While notably good at publicising its ventures, it had neither an established network nor the experience to implement a comprehensive and thorough-going selection process. It also faced the difficulty that the numbers of prospective applicants were never great, given a continuing general repugnance toward emigration and competition from other destinations. The Company faced other

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25 Ward, p.158.
difficulties too which restricted its choices. The availability of prospective emigrants had to be synchronised with relatively infrequent sailings to New Zealand (compared to other colonial destinations). This was especially difficult in relation to agricultural labourers who were still hired in the first half of the nineteenth century for periods of twelve months and were required to give three months notice. Others did not need to give as much notice, but still needed time to leave home and sell household goods. Occasionally, the Company also had to respond at short notice to replace approved applicants who failed to arrive for their sailings. Inevitably the processing of these replacements would have been cursory and incomplete.26

Because of its lack of expertise and infrastructure, the Company generally adopted the standard practice of the day of recruitment: through the use of agents. The Company required its agents to solicit applications, check the ‘ability of the applicant to convey their family to New Zealand’, and verify the character of the applicant ‘with his employer and his “religious instructors”’.27 If the applicant passed this vetting process, the Company then made a final decision on the suitability of the candidate. On paper, the process appears relatively systematic. In reality, however, there were significant problems. By and large, the agents sought foremost to maximise their commissions and did not necessarily share the objectives of Wakefield or the Company. Practically, the higher the volume of emigrants they processed the more they benefited and they had little incentive to screen out undesirable candidates, especially where any weaknesses in their suitability could be readily hidden. The Company did reject some applications, but it was generally not in a strong position to regularly or thoroughly audit the work of its agents.28

27 Burns, p.189.
28 Burns, pp. 189-90; Allan, p.112; Marais, pp.46, 63-65.
Of the results, there are sufficient statistics to indicate the degree to which the Company accurately applied the selection criteria set out in Wakefield’s scheme. With regard to selection by occupation, Patricia Burns generally notes that ‘more urban tradesmen, and fewer agricultural labourers’ arrived than should have, and that among these were ‘Some surprising tradesmen ... including a number of the weavers and spinners who were unemployed in their thousands in Britain, soap boilers, tinkers, and a maker of dolls’ eyes.’29 The Nelson shipping lists also show that 41% of the Nelson male steerage emigrants were agricultural labourers, but another 39% were in the very broad category of artisans. The remainder comprised a variety of occupational groupings: gardeners, sawyers, shipwrights, boatmen, tailors, servants, clerks, winkedressers, miners, policemen, and millers. Allan also notes that the second group of emigrants to Nelson ‘contained a higher proportion of artisans and mechanics, “such as shoemakers, tailors, tinkers, portrait painters, soap boilers, weavers, spinners, watchmakers etc.” whose trades, though useful, were not in demand.’ Of the small minority of female emigrants who declared an occupation, 65% were recorded as servants and 30% as sempstresses, but only 3% declared an occupation which fell within the category of being ‘accustomed to farm and dairy work’.30 A study undertaken by J.C.Dakin indicates moreover that declarations were to a degree contrived by applicants to ensure their selection. The study found from a sample of 167 emigrants that approximately twenty per cent of emigrants gave ‘occupations “substantially” different from those recorded elsewhere.’31 A significant number of under-equipped emigrants therefore appear to have been selected for the Wakefield settlements. It appears that the most rural of the emigrants were those who settled in New Plymouth. As Raewyn Daiziel notes, they came from a

29 Burns, p.191.
30 Allan, pp.114, 185. All the women within the category of being ‘accustomed to farm and dairy work’ specifically declared themselves ‘Dairymaids’.
31 Burns, p.191.
predominantly agricultural, pre-industrial area of Britain’, that is the South West of England. Dalziel also notes that of the 201 males who travelled in steerage to New Plymouth in the Company’s vessels, 86 were listed on the ships’ registers as agricultural labourers or just labourers, and ten more were listed in ‘allied occupations’ including ‘farmers, bailiffs, shepherds’, and gardeners. There were also ‘fairly numerous’ rural craftsmen such as ‘sawyers, coopers, blacksmiths, limeburners and the like’ and a further, ‘nearly’ ten per cent ‘were described as carpenters.’ Of the remainder, there were ‘shoemakers, bakers, builders, shipwrights, wheelwrights, a malster and a surprising five tailors.’ As in Nelson, the occupations of only a few women were recorded, with most declaring themselves to be domestic servants. Otherwise there were ‘a few farm servants, two sempstresses and two straw plaiters.’ The Company also sent a group of local miners in response to reports of rich mineral deposits in Taranaki.

Over a third of the emigrants were children. While the Company’s officials wanted married labourers between 15 and 30, they agreed, in order to encourage applications, to depart from the rule ‘in favour of persons having large families, whose qualifications are in other respects satisfactory.’ The statistics indicate that the emigrating families who sailed in the Company’s first ships in 1839 took on average one or two children under the age of fifteen. Thirty per cent of the passengers carried in the first ships to Wellington were children under fifteen years of age. Later vessels carried higher proportions: 40% in 1841 and 39% in 1842.

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35 Ward, p.158; New Zealand Journal, 2 January 1841.
36 Ward, p.136.
37 Allan, p.106.
Dalziel shows that emigrating families to New Plymouth had three children on average, though some of the children appear to have been fifteen or above.\footnote{Dalziel, ‘Emigration and Kinship’, pp.122-26.}

In addition, Wakefield sought a general equality in the number of males and females who emigrated. Clearly the Company obtained a better balance than hitherto had been achieved in other settlements, but it did not achieve complete parity. The first group of emigrant vessels to Wellington carried 751 adult passengers. Sixty-one per cent of these were male and 39% were female.\footnote{Ward, p.136.} The Nelson settlement received a better ratio of 55 males to 45 females.\footnote{McAloon, p.16.} The New Plymouth settlement received a ration of 54 to 46 in relation to adults travelling in steerage and a less satisfactory ratio of 69 to 31 in relation to the much smaller number of cabin and intermediate passengers (first and second class).\footnote{Dalziel, ‘Emigration and Kinship’, p.122.}

In terms of general disposition, Wakefield’s scheme also required men and women who would identify with the views of their masters and seek to join their ranks. In this regard the Company sought applicants who were not only healthy and had the right occupational skills, but were also able to supply ‘the most satisfactory testimonials as to … character’.\footnote{Ward, p.158.} Obviously character is a most difficult area for measurement and there are no statistics which provide a guide to the Company’s success in selecting on this criteria. Clearly though, because of the difficulty of the selection task, the Company must have been less successful in determining character than in selecting on more easily observable and verifiable characteristics such as age, gender and occupation. In addition, the radicalism of the labourers in the new settlements, in support of the eight hour day and the minimum wage (to be discussed below), also
suggests limits to the success of the Company in selecting workmen who strongly identified with the specific interests of masters.

The last but not least feature of the Company’s selection and supply of labour to the New Zealand settlements was the quantity of labour it sent. Wakefield’s theory not only required the dispatch of the right types of emigrants but also the dispatch of the right number of workmen to the colonies. The Company’s first task, having sent William Wakefield in May 1839 to purchase and prepare land for the settlers, and presuming on his success, involved the calculation of the quantity of labour that would be required to fulfil the agricultural and commercial needs of the Wellington settlement. Subsequently, the same calculations also had to be made with respect to the initial needs of the primarily agricultural New Plymouth and Nelson settlements. The second, and ongoing task after the settlements had begun to function, was to monitor the labour markets of the settlements to ensure they were kept in balance by judicious re-supply from Britain. The Company again faced particular difficulties in meeting these requirements.

The Company actually knew little of the reality of New Zealand and Wakefield, who undoubtedly knew little more, provided only vague guidance with respect to the numbers of labourers that might be needed in the initial settlement phase. In one place in England and America, Wakefield indicated possible numbers by illustrating his theory with examples of three to seven labourers required per hundred acres of land. In another example in England and America, he used a proportion of only three couples per two hundred acres. The latter was similar to the proportion set under Wilmot Horton’s revised grants scheme, which conveyed Irish emigrants to Canada

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43 Temple, pp.232-33.
44 Wakefield, England and America, pp.489-90, 561-62. The New Zealand Journal, 2 January 1841, also suggested, in discussing an issue of land grants to the Company for emigrants carried to the Colony, a proportion of three couples per hundred acres, or one per forty acres.
in 1823.\textsuperscript{46} Wilmot Horton's scheme of course related to subsistence farming, not to the type of industrial farming proposed by Wakefield. Wakefield's examples were also limited in that they appeared only to indicate possible proportions for the number of agricultural labourers required to farm the new land, not possible proportions for the general needs of the settlements, that is of both town and country. This was a particularly pertinent consideration for the Wellington settlement which was expected to be both a commercial and agricultural centre.\textsuperscript{46}

Guided only by guesswork and largely unencumbered by fact, the Company initially took what appears to have been a cautious, yet still flawed approach. In preparing the settlement for the arrival of its first emigrants, the Company proposed to rely on local Maori to do much of the required work, such as cutting and transporting timber to the proposed new towns. This preliminary activity, however, did not eventuate as William Wakefield pursued other tasks, and the Company's survey ship, the \textit{Cuba}, arrived only days before the first emigrant ships arrived.\textsuperscript{47} In the circumstances, the local Maori population was not used to prepare the settlement, though it did later provide the settlers with some labour as well as essential fresh produce from its own gardens.\textsuperscript{48}

The Company's first emigrant ships to Wellington, which began arriving in January 1840 also contained a low proportion of labourers to land purchasers (relative to the proportions considered in \textit{England and America}, and to the proportions sent on later vessels). Assuming generally that half the males in steerage were labourers to be employed by land purchasers and all the males who went cabin class were land

\textsuperscript{46} Ward, p.117.
\textsuperscript{47} Ward, pp.116-27; Burns, p.88; Marais, p.109.
purchasers, the Company sent about 170 potential labourers and 123 potential employers, a ratio of 1.4 to 1. The ratio of labourers to sections (of one hundred acres) was certainly even lower, as undoubtedly some of the land owners purchased more than one section.\(^{49}\) Even with these low ratios, however, the Wellington settlement experienced a temporary oversupply of labour because of the lack of preparation of the settlement. As a result, the Company had to immediately implement its promise to provide the consequently unemployed labourers with work in the absence of alternative employment.\(^{50}\)

The New Plymouth and Nelson settlements also had problems from the outset. In both cases, the Company spent considerably more time preparing the settlements for their first emigrant ships.\(^{51}\) In neither case, however, was this work sufficient to ensure that emigrants were able to find work on arrival. The reality was that the Company seriously underestimated the time and effort required to bring the land into a state where it could be worked on by the settlers. The Company's greatest fault, though, was its lack of caution in supplying workmen to the two settlements. The first emigrant vessel to New Plymouth, for example, carried five cabin passengers and one hundred and thirty-four in steerage.\(^{52}\) The ships that left England for Nelson in 1841, carried 1,582 steerage passengers and one hundred and fifty cabin passengers.\(^{53}\) Like Wellington, therefore, but more predictably so, most of the new labourers on arrival became immediately dependent on work with the Company.

The Company's second task under systematic colonisation was to provide ongoing management of the labour markets of the settlement to ensure they were kept in

\(^{49}\) Ward, p.132.
\(^{50}\) Miller, pp.42-47; Burns, pp. 131-34; William Wakefield's Journal, 2 February 1840, C.O. 215/196.
\(^{51}\) Wells, pp.60-63; McAloon, pp.14-15.
\(^{52}\) Wells, p.59.
\(^{53}\) Allan, p.104.
balance. By and large the Company also badly failed to meet this responsibility. The Company sent out a more or less continuous stream of labourers from 1839 to 1842, to coincide with the establishment and consolidation of the settlements of firstly, Wellington, then New Plymouth and Nelson. This stream only partly – and luckily at that – reflected the actual needs of the labour markets in the settlements.

In reality, only Wellington was able to absorb the labour sent out by the Company, and this was largely through good fortune arising from a construction boom. In promoting the settlement, the Company had suggested that a wide range of industries would be quickly developed. These included agriculture, fishing, whaling, mining, and trade in timber and flax. None, however, flourished. Agriculture, for instance, on which stress was placed through the inclusion of a substantial country component in each block sold to land purchasers, aroused little enthusiasm. In part, the development of land to a productive state was always likely to take some time, but it was also hindered by a variety of factors including uncertainty over title – the result of doubtful purchases by William Wakefield – and the resulting hostility from local Maori; the difficulty of clearing the Wellington bush and the ruggedness of the terrain; and slow surveys. The emigrants were also blamed for being too lazy and thus too readily deterred by the obstacles that were otherwise evident. Whaling was

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54 Burns, p.198.
55 From 1839 to 1841-42, the Company added approximately 2,000 men, women and children to the population of Wellington: Heaply, pp.82-83. Cf. Ward, p.136. See below for further references to the ongoing supply of labour to the New Plymouth and Nelson settlements for the same period; also McAloon, p.28.
a particular disappointment. The Company established its first settlements just as the industry entered into a rapid decline as a result of over-fishing.57

Instead of a wide range of economic activity, therefore, the settlement survived on a narrowly based construction boom, which included the building of business premises and facilities in keeping with the settlement’s proposed role as a commercial centre. Supplemented by the Company’s survey work, the boom managed to meet a vital need in creating sufficient employment to overcome the initial oversupply of labour and to absorb most of the Company’s continuing supply of labourers for much of the following three years.58 In late 1842, however, circumstances changed substantially. With ever-declining numbers arriving, capital became increasingly scarce. In addition, the settlement began to experience the onset of the Anglo-Australasian depression which also limited inflows of capital and credit and dampened any enthusiasm for building. This ended the settlement’s construction boom and its capacity to absorb or even retain existing labour disappeared.59

New Plymouth and Nelson for their part were never able to satisfactorily absorb the labourers the Company sent out. The most significant difference from Wellington was the lack of any similar sustained construction boom. The causes of this relative weakness appear to have been lower proportions of emigrating land purchasers and lower levels of incoming capital.60 In particular, Dalziel notes that the Plymouth and the New Zealand Companies sent 896 steerage passengers to New Plymouth between November 1840 and September 1842 but only ninety-seven cabin and

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59 McAlloon, p.25; New Zealand Company, ‘Sixth Report’, 10 October 1842; New Zealand Colonist, 13 September 1842; Miller, pp.115-18; Marais, pp. 137-38, 321n; and, for example, New Zealand Journal, 11 November 1843, and Wellington Spectator, 11 January 1843, 13 January 1844, 7 February 1844.
nineteen intermediate passengers.\textsuperscript{61} The proportion was very similar for Nelson. Jim McAloon notes that ‘Of the 810 men over 21’ sent by the Company, ‘fewer than 90 had much capital.’\textsuperscript{62} Michael Turnbull notes that there were only about sixty landowners resident in Nelson in 1843.\textsuperscript{63} Relative to Wellington, New Plymouth and Nelson also had lower thresholds for essential construction in what were expected to be primarily agricultural settlements.\textsuperscript{64} In other respects, New Plymouth and Nelson, like Wellington, made only slow progress in developing agriculture and other industries. The New Plymouth and Nelson settlers also found themselves bogged down in relation to agriculture by problems of surveys, concern over title and Maori opposition, and the natural difficulties of the land. There was also no substantial development of other industries. Symptomatic of this and the Company general failure to provide a balanced supply of labour to either of the settlements, the miners sent to exploit Taranaki’s anticipated mineral wealth remained largely unemployable up to their re-emigration to Auckland in 1845.\textsuperscript{65}

There seem to be at least three reasons why the Company failed in the important task of sending labour to the settlements in accordance with their labour market needs. The first of these is that the Company sent out emigrants at least partly to entrench and consolidate the establishment of their new settlements. Unfortunately, the Company found at the same time that few land purchasers in fact wanted to participate as emigrating settlers.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{61} Dalziel, ‘Emigration and Kinship’, p.115.
\textsuperscript{62} McAloon, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{63} Turnbull, \textit{The New Zealand Bubble}, p.54.
\textsuperscript{64} Ward, p.117; Dalziel, ‘Popular Protest in New Plymouth’, p.12; McAloon, p.20; Turnbull, \textit{The New Zealand Bubble}, p.52.
\textsuperscript{65} Dalziel, ‘Popular Protest in New Plymouth’, pp.24-25.
Secondly, the reports the Company received were often ambivalent. They not only failed to provide accurate assessments of conditions in the settlements but in fact gave the Company some encouragement to continue to supply the settlements with unneeded labour. In one instance, for example, a leading New Plymouth colonist wrote back to an associate of the Company in April 1842 without any mention of the significant problem of unemployment which existed in the settlement. Instead the emphasis was on the contentment of the newly arrived emigrants aboard the *Timandra*, and the delight of William Wakefield and others ‘with the country and its fertility’.\(^{67}\) Captain Arthur Wakefield, a third Wakefield brother and the Company’s agent in Nelson, also wrote to the Company in London in August 1842 complaining first that ‘the demand for labour is not great in spite of wages being still at least 5s. a-day for labourers, and 10s. for mechanics’, but later stating ‘I have no fear of our labour soon finding employment, as 500 of the accommodation sections were distributed on the 22\(^{nd}\) and 23\(^{rd}\) instant.’\(^{68}\) Instead of being urged to stop sending more emigrants, Arthur Wakefield indicated the likely need for more. This was not the sort of monitoring and reporting the Company in London needed in order to do justice to Wakefield’s scheme.

The third and most important reason, however, was the great distance between Britain and New Zealand which rendered reports of anything but a major crisis worthless as a basis for remedial action. The Company in London received reports that were already at least four months old, knowing that any reaction on its part, even if immediate, would be only felt in New Zealand four more months hence. Clearly circumstance could have well changed in the meantime. Whether the labour markets in the settlements were balanced or not, therefore, was a matter of chance, not a

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\(^{67}\) Wells, p.81. Also, for example, see Wells, pp.83, 89-90.

\(^{68}\) *Letters from Settlers*, p.112.
predictable result arising from the Company’s considered actions in sending emigrants from Britain.

Ultimately, despite its intentions, the Company did not have the capacity to control the labour markets of the new settlements. In part, the Company found the task of consistently selecting emigrants of the precise quality difficult. Even more difficult, if not impossible, however, was the task of sencing the right number of emigrants at the right time. All three of the main settlements suffered an initial oversupply of labour, and New Plymouth and Nelson continued to be oversupplied with labour. Only the Wellington settlement achieved a satisfactory balance for much of the period from 1840 to 1842. This, however, was the result not of the Company’s judicious action but because of the construction boom which fortuitously created the jobs necessary to absorb the emigrants the Company had already sent and continued to send to Wellington.

The small mercy is that the Company’s failing did not continue much beyond the end of 1842. News of a major crisis, that is the existence of a ‘superabundant mass of Labourers’ in the settlements who could not find work in the economically depressed settlements, at last filtered through to, and registered with the Company in May 1843. This, combined with the Company’s struggle for solvency and its inability to get another settlement scheme underway, conspired to bring an end to the large scale supply of emigrants to central New Zealand.

To a great extent, it is clear that Wakefield’s view that colonial labour should be controlled by the manipulation of labour supply, and his ideas on how this should be

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69 Allan, pp.104-05, 114.
70 Burns, p.249.
71 Marais, p.183; Burns, pp.248-51; William Wakefield to Company Secretary, 19 January 1843, C.O. 208/101.
achieved, failed the test of practice in these first Wakefield settlements. There is, however, a further dimension to this failure, because in the end, and despite the Company’s initial intentions, it not only failed to apply Wakefield’s scheme, but the Company subsequently also adopted and promoted practices which were fundamentally contrary to Wakefield’s original plan.

In terms of Wakefield’s argument for systematic colonisation, he had decried the establishment of colonies of small subsistence farmers. He regarded such farming as unproductive and the cause of the development of barbarous colonial societies. In contrast, systematic colonisation was designed to ensure labourers worked together for a single landowner or master and for the masters to combine the labour of these workmen with his capital. This, Wakefield argued, increased the power of production geometrically. In addition, it provided the landowner with freedom from the stultifying grind of manual labour to develop his personal learning and sophistication and to contribute to the art and civilisation of the new colonial society. The ‘sufficient price’ was supposed to also be the key mechanism which made systematic colonisation work. It prevented labourers from becoming landowners before they had sufficient capital to become land owners of substance and ensured a continuing supply of labour to work for the owners of large land holdings.

Despite this argument, however, the New Zealand Company knew of, and tolerated, some small farming in its settlements as early as 1841. In January 1841, the New Zealand Journal expected that labourers would ‘shortly be in a situation to become purchasers of land’ though it did not ‘approve of that course’. There would, it stated, ‘be a great struggle for the acquisition of even parts of sections’.72 William Wakefield also reported with some satisfaction to the Company on 3 July 1841 that of the

72 New Zealand Journal, 2 January 1841.
emigrants who had recently arrived at Wellington in the Catherine Stewart Forbes, only five had required work from the Company. ‘The remainder’, he said, ‘had either taken land on lease or found private employment.’ The Company and its resident agents in New Zealand went further in 1842 and began to actively promote small subsistence farming. The key to this development was the Company’s difficult financial position. In general, with the exception of its first offering of sections for Wellington, the Company’s land sales had been very slow. The Company also had high outgoings. This involved not only the provision of assistance for passages through its emigration fund but also the funding of land surveys in the settlements and the provision of Company work for those unable to find other employment. The latter became increasingly burdensome with the establishment of the New Plymouth and Nelson settlements. Even from an early date, therefore, the Company, both in London and in New Zealand, worried about the state of its finances. In part, the Company tried to shore up its financial position by seeking support from the Government. This effort eventually came to nothing however. More directly, the Company in London pressured its resident agents to reduce expenditure. This placed the agents in an awkward situation particularly in relation to the provision of Company work in the absence of alternative employment. Quite clearly, there was insufficient work in the settlements of New Plymouth and Nelson. When they did respond to the pressure from London, as they had to, therefore, they not only broke the Company’s promise to the labouring emigrants to provide work under specific conditions (to be discussed more fully below), but they also had to push the labourers into self employment, particularly into small farming.

73 William Wakefield’s Journal, 3 July 1841.
74 Turnbull, The New Zealand Bubble, pp.51-53; Burns, p.182.
76 Burns, pp.201, 241-54; Miller, p.119.
This direct promotion of small farming in the settlements is evident in a letter in May 1842 from Thomas Shute, the leader of the labourers in New Plymouth, to John Wicksteed, the Company’s agent in the same settlement. In this letter, Shute rejected Wicksteed’s comment that the Company had fulfilled its obligations to support the New Plymouth labourers by providing them with plenty of encouragement to provide their own subsistence on small plots of land. Shute’s argument was not over Wicksteed’s encouragement of small farming or its impact. This form of farming was plainly well underway. One New Plymouth settler noted in September 1842 that, of the early emigrants ... nearly all [had] bought four or five acres of ground each, and the Nelson Examiner noted a report in April 1843 that there were ‘very few labourers in New Plymouth] who have not their one or two acres of garden or potato ground, a circumstance that must in a great degree’ serve ‘to promote their independence and happiness.’ Shute’s and the labourers’ argument of course was that they wanted paid employment at least in addition if not instead of gardens.

Allan also notes Arthur Wakefield’s efforts during 1842, as the Company agent in Nelson, ‘to introduce a system of cottier farming by offering the workmen small plots of land in the country on easy purchase terms’ as well as seeds for wheat and seed potatoes. William Wakefield introduced a similar policy to Wellington the following year when the settlement began to suffer the effects of the economic depression and the same desperate need for work. From April to June he forced ‘as many as fifty families of mechanics and labourers’ onto land on the Porirua Road. Later, in October 1844, he noted, that through the absence of private employment and by

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77 Shute to Wicksteed, 22 May 1842, N.Z.C. 308/1.
78 Wells, p.90; Nelson Examiner, 4 March 1843.
79 Allan, pp.185-86.
80 William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 16 June 1843, C.O. 208/101.
denying labourers access to Company work, he 'had long since compelled and enabled the unemployed laboring population to betake themselves to the cultivation of the earth for their maintenance'.

The local newspapers added encouragement by strongly promoting the garden cultivation of crops and relaxing their opposition to the dispersion of the settlements. In May 1844, the Wellington Spectator also indicated the significance of the policy by objecting to it. The paper asked that 'the immediate attention' of the Company 'be directed to the hardships inflicted on the original land purchasers', by its policy of 'disposing' of its own land 'contrary to the principles of colonization, and to the laid down rules by which the Company is pledged to us to dispose of nothing but whole allotments, and certainly for ready money only.' It noted that by disposing of land, particularly 'on long-deferred credit, to the immigrants introduced by the proprietors' fund', it had 'thus' created 'a cottar community in opposition to the Wakefield system of colonization.' There was of course no prospect of the Company's agents changing their policy. The Company was desperate for any income, even small rentals, and the labourers for whom it could not find work had to have land to live.

The Company's resident agents, under pressure to reduce costs, had thus turned from the implementation of systematic colonisation to the necessary construction of a society antithetical to Wakefield's principles and objects. They had undermined the principle that the 'sufficient price' should not only provide funds for assisting emigration but also prevent labourers from leaving the labour market and becoming

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81 William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 8 October 1844, C.O. 208/102.
82 For example: New Zealand Colonist, 30 December 1842, 24 April, 1843, and 30 June 1843; Nelson Examiner, 20 May 1843.
83 Wellington Spectator, 1 May 1844. Also see Marais, pp.140-41. The substantial degree to which small farming communities were in fact created is described in Miller, pp.119-120 and McAlone, p.39, and indicated in Dalziel, 'Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth', p.25.
small subsistence land holders. They did this by reducing the effect of the 'sufficient price' so that labourers could more easily obtain their own land. Their new policy minimised the number of labourers and mechanics in the labour market and created instead agricultural communities largely composed of self-employed small farmers. This was the type of community that Wakefield had condemned.

Aside from the actions of the resident agents, the Company in London also took a direct hand in the subversion of Wakefield's original ideas by changing the type of emigrants it sent to New Zealand. Again, apart from the first sale of Wellington land, sales had been slow. Very few were interested in establishing large scale farming in New Zealand. The Company therefore eventually began to target men of lesser means. Allan notes that in 1842 the Company offered cheaper passages to encourage the emigration of 'smaller men' as 'second class or intermediate' passengers. These men, according to the Company were 'a most valuable class of capitalists, who preferred husbanding their resources to paying the high rate of passage required'. More to the point, however, the New Zealand Journal explained that these small capitalists 'in themselves' combined 'industry and capital'. The Company noted that it was also taking what action it possibly could to fill 'up the vacant gaps in the Wellington district, by throwing into the market, to "intending colonists", small allotments of 25 acres ..., at £2 per acre.' These 'arrangements', it thought, were 'amongst the best means that could possibly be devised for rendering colonization popular and efficient.' Regardless of the positive language, these actions were quite inconsistent with Wakefield's original conception of systematic colonisation.

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84 Allan, p.105.
85 New Zealand Journal, 5 August 1843 (also see 2 September 1843).
In essence, the ideas of getting both labourers and small capitalists to own and work their own land were a far cry from Wakefield’s idea of systematic colonisation and his industrial model of farming. The Company was applying only lip service to the application of the ‘sufficient price’ and there was no astute supply of labour. The Company had by 1842 largely abandoned Wakefield’s model whereby the labourer worked in a managed labour market and sought to emulate his master, and the well resourced capitalist managed his labour and land in order to maximise production and income and cultivated his manners and learning in his leisure time. In practice, the Company had come to promote small subsistence farming and thus the development of a society which Wakefield had said would be backward, of limited economic potential, and inhabited by an uncouth, barbaric people of an American sort.

Sadly for the Company even the abandonment of Wakefield’s fundamental principles in favour of these new policies could not restore its financial fortunes nor lift the settlements out of their economic malaise. By the end of 1843, it had nearly exhausted its funds and further emigration of land purchasers, labourers and those who were to be both almost completely ceased.\(^\text{86}\) A few months later, in March 1844, the Company sent word to New Zealand that all its operations were to cease. The settlers received this information in August.\(^\text{87}\) This was the ignominious end to the New Zealand Company’s attempt to control labour by the manipulation of the supply of labour in the central districts of New Zealand.

\(^{86}\) Wellington Spectator, 9 December 1843; Allan, p. 105.
\(^{87}\) Allan, pp.360-62.
The New Zealand Company also made a promise in 1839 to provide work when other work was not available in its proposed new settlements. To some extent, the origins of this promise lay in Wakefield’s proposal to support newly arriving emigrants in his first major outline of systematic colonisation in *A Letter from Sydney*. The Company’s promise, however, also very much reflected contemporary working-class interest in employment and wage security, and as such usefully encouraged a parallel interest in New Zealand and helped the Company get its fair share of migrants in a colonial world competing for labour. During 1840, the Company’s promise became even more generous with a guarantee of work at £1 plus rations. While Wakefield’s initial proposal had been sparse and very limited, this new promise from the Company was probably unmatched in the colonial world. As such, therefore, it was certainly highly attractive for poor English working men and women struggling to be free of the enslavement of poverty and distress. The Company provided them with a rare and precious certainty in an uncertain and harsh world.

Unfortunately, however, it proved to be no certainty at all. Relatively early in the life of the settlements, the promise became the subject of dispute as the Company came under increasing financial pressure and sought to cut back its expenditure. The unemployed labourers and mechanics who had come to rely on work with the Company vigorously sought to protect what they considered to be their right to employment at good wages. Equally keenly, the Company promoted its own, different view. The general outcome was not only conflict, but also, by 1844, the elimination of all vestiges of the Company’s promise and a legacy of disenchantment and mistrust.
The road from Wakefield's idea of systematic colonisation to the Company's promises of 1840 and 1841 begins in *A Letter from Sydney*. Wakefield, as already discussed above, first promised very little with regard to the assistance of emigrants in the general absence of work. Without any accompanying explanation, his promise in the appendix to *A Letter from Sydney* was that, on arriving, emigrants would receive 'a very moderate provision until hired.' Over time, though, the promise changed character and became more substantial.

To briefly remind ourselves of these changes, Wakefield suggested a legal right in *Principles and Objects* (1830) to subsistence at any time of need arising from unemployment and destitution. The right was not only to provide an absolute protection for emigrants against injury but also to ensure that the future managers of his colonisation scheme implemented the scheme with care. He expected that they would work harder to implement the scheme scrupulously if they were aware that any failure would result in the need to pay the price of underwriting relief work. In *Founding* (1832), Wakefield promised employment with the company that was to be established to carry out the colonisation of South Australia. He did this explicitly to encourage labourers to emigrate to South Australia. The guarantee, however, only held good for the settlement's first year. The South Australian Commissioners subsequently made a further promise in 1835. They also promised work in times of need in order to counter doubts about the safety of emigrating. Emigrant workmen and workwomen would not find, having left employment in England (no matter how poor that was), that there was in fact no work for them in Australia. The Commissioners differed from Wakefield's previous proposal, however, in that they specifically promised work at all times. This was clearly an improvement on Wakefield's idea. But the work was also to be paid at 'reduced' rates. This last

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88 See pp.133-146 above.
qualification of course hinted at the New Poor Law and its emphasis on the principle of less eligibility. 89 Under this law, which was strongly disliked by British workmen and women, 90 relief was provided but only under conditions which would ensure that workmen would never prefer it to private employment. As a result of this condition, therefore, the Commissioners' overall promise provided an ambivalent form of encouragement to prospective British migrants – some, but not too much.

For its part, the New Zealand Company further shifted the boundaries of these promises. It commenced with a specific promise which, while very similar to that of the South Australian Commissioners, had an important difference. Like the Commissioners, the Company also promised that 'On the arrival of the Emigrants in the Colony, they will be received by an officer who will supply their immediate wants, assist them in reaching the place of their destination, be ready to advise them in reaching the place of their destination, be ready to advise with them in case of difficulty, and at all times to give them employment in the service of the Company, if from any cause they should be unable to obtain it elsewhere.' 91 Unlike the Commissioners, however, the Company did not mention reduced rates. The Company made no mention at all of any rate. In making this alteration, the Company removed the ambivalence which tamished the Commissioners' promise. Both encouraged labourers to emigrate. Only the Commissioners, however, had sought to ensure at the same time that the labourers did not expect too much. The obvious effect was that the New Zealand Company's promise, on the face of it, was more attractive than the promise made by the South Australian Commissioners.

89 The principle is discussed in pp. 69-70n above.
90 Anthony Brundage notes that the law engendered an 'apocalyptic fear and intense hatred' amongst the working-class, p. 82.
91 Ward, p. 159.
While this was the Company’s public position, there is evidence that shows that the promise was not wholeheartedly supported by the Company in private. Company sources from later in 1839 indicate an intention, regardless of appearances, to provide only very limited support for its emigrants. In particular, Raewyn Dalziel notes that in September 1839 the Company’s emigration agent for Wellington was ‘instructed to take care that no labouring Emigrant falls into a state of Destitution, but that you will at the same time acquaint the Emigrants that they are not to expect more from the Company than a bare subsistence.’ This was not an isolated reference. A month earlier, the minutes of one of the New Zealand Company’s committees had recorded that ‘Mr Hutt urged the importance of apprizing the laboring emigrants that if employed by the Company their remuneration would be by rations on the smallest scale and not by money.’ On the basis of this information, the Company’s promise was really to be at best only on a par with the South Australian Commissioners’ promise.

Yet, in spite of its instructions to its agents and the comments of William Hutt, the fact is that the Company actually implemented its promise without any restrictive conditions, up to late 1841. The reality appears to have been that, despite underlying reservations, the Company generally decided that it did not want to appear stinting and run the risk of undermining the value of its promise of work as a means of encouraging labourers to choose New Zealand as their colonial destination. Thus, when the first labourers landed in Wellington and found that they had to turn to the Company for work because of the lack of preparation for their arrival, they also found a reasonable and responsive William Wakefield. Instead of work for rations only, and these ‘on the smallest scale’, Wakefield provided the emigrant workmen, in the absence of other employment, with work on wages of £1 per week, with ‘11s 6d’

93 Shipping and Emigration Committee, 21 August 1839, C.O. 208/185.
'kept off ... for rations. By the standard set in South Australia, this was clearly a good rate. Governor Gawler’s rate in 1841 was only 1s. 6d. plus rations. Wakefield’s report back to London dealt diplomatically with any concerns within the Company organisation that his provisions may have been too liberal by emphasising how far he had reduced the expectations of the newly-arrived labourers. He reported that ‘The emigrant labourers’ had been ‘obliged to divest themselves of’ the idea of ‘at once receiving high wages’ and had ‘agreed to the reasonableness of my representations on this head and brought their minds to the contemplation of getting only as many shillings a week for their labour as they had anticipated per day.’ Of course, while William Wakefield stressed how little he paid the labourers, the payment was by no means at the level of bare subsistence, and his rate did not undermine the favourable profile the Company was trying to promote for the settlement.

Furthermore, the Company in fact went on to improve on its promise. It is unclear exactly how long William Wakefield applied the Company’s promise at £1 less rations, but at some time during 1840, the Company went further than simply providing relief and began to promote its rate as a de facto minimum wage. As described by the New Zealand Journal, the basic promise to provide work in times of need remained. It noted that if emigrants to the Company’s New Zealand settlements could not ‘at once get work’ they could ‘always have it’ from the Company. It also specifically added, however, that the Company rate was ‘at £1 a-week’ and that, as labourers did not currently need its work (because of the Wellington construction boom which resolved the initial unemployment experienced by the settlers on arrival).

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94 New Zealand Journal, 2 January 1841.
96 Most of the letters from the early settlers which are readily available for reading were published by the New Zealand Company or the New Zealand Journal. As a result, there is a suggestion that they may portray the settlements as the Company wanted them portrayed, rather than as they actually were. The fact remains, however, that the letters from the first Wellington settlers did not express any significant discontent about the provision of work or the rate paid by William Wakefield. See for example, New Zealand Journal: 1 August 1840; 2 January 1841; 22 May 1841.
the 'only office performed by Colonel Wakefield's notice is to establish a \textit{minimum} below which wages cannot fall.\textsuperscript{97} This addition was a significant improvement for the emigrant labourers on the Company's initial promise and on the previous guarantees proposed and made by Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the South Australian Commissioners. The Company's new rate, unlike the South Australian Commissioners' broad reference to reduced rates, was very specific and set, not to force labourers to work at minimum market rates, but to prevent the market rate from falling below the set standard. It was now apparently designed to ensure the workmen always got reasonable wages.

Again, almost certainly, the Company promoted its rate as a minimum wage for the same reasons the Company had originally promised assistance to the labourers should they need it. It was to encourage labourers to emigrate to New Zealand. In particular, towards the end of 1840, the Plymouth Company was beginning to ready itself for its search for emigrants who were eventually to be sent to New Plymouth, and the New Zealand Company began similar work with respect to the Nelson settlement a little later.\textsuperscript{98} The promise also represented the fulfilment of a key interest in working class and radical circles in statutory wage protection. This guaranteed attention. The interest in statutory wage protection, which can be traced back at least to the early seventeenth century, had grown in intensity during the early nineteenth century as a response to a perceived deterioration in working class conditions.\textsuperscript{99} It was therefore a response to the same concerns that fuelled Wakefield's systematic colonisation. It was also a key element behind the Chartist programme which began to be formulated in the late 1830s. The Chartists at least in part felt that the inability

\textsuperscript{97} \textit{New Zealand Journal}, 2 January 1841.
\textsuperscript{98} Wells, pp.48, 59; Allan, p.51.
of parliamentarians such as John Fielden, not only to stop the New Poor Law, but also to advance their minimum wage bills, could only be overcome by the adoption of such measures as universal suffrage and annual parliaments. John Fielden underlined this association in a speech in 1838, saying ‘If Parliament was composed of poor men, they would not have passed the new Poor Law Amendment Act, but would have first secured to the working class fair remunerative wages’.

By 1840, therefore, the Company had travelled a long way from the limited promise in A Letter from Sydney. It now appeared indeed to be in the same camp as the Chartists. Although an unlikely situation, especially given the urging, for example, of Hutt in 1839, the Company’s apparent alignment is not quite as incongruous as it seems. In fact the Company’s adoption of the terminology of a minimum wage did not necessarily mean that Edward Gibbon Wakefield or any others involved with the Company supported the establishment of a minimum wage in Britain. In general, Wakefield promoted systematic colonisation as the sole means of avoiding or easing the way to social, economic and political change in Britain. There was also a clear underlying sentiment within the Company in favour of the ‘less eligibility’ principle which was an essential part of the New Poor Law. While suggesting an antipathy to the establishment of the statutory minimum wage in Britain, however, these objects and underlying sentiments did not prevent the adoption of a minimum wage in the colonies. In Britain, a minimum wage was designed to have, and would have had, a profound effect on the existing pattern of wages. It would have negated the tendency of wages to fall in a number of sectors of the changing British economy. But for the colonies, founded and organised in accordance with Wakefield’s principles of systematic colonisation, the Company expected prospects to be different. There was no pre-existing wage structure. Wakefield had also explained that the colonies would

be prosperous and wages would be high. Indeed they had to be high to attract further emigration, which provided essential labour for the prosperous colony. The Company had also added assurances that its settlements were bound to be prosperous. It had Wakefield, an apparently inspired thinker who had found the key to successful colonisation, helping to direct matters from within its organisation. It also still had for the moment the example of the apparent success of South Australia and the commencement of reports that Wellington was on the road to prosperity. It was much easier therefore for the Company to accept and even promote the use of a minimum wage to hold up wages in New Zealand, than to support the same measure in Britain. It encouraged emigration, it complemented the general objects expected of systematic colonisation, and appeared, in all likelihood, to include little significant financial risk.

In addition to the radical adoption of the minimum wage, the Company also increased its rate from £1 less rations to £1 plus rations.\(^{101}\) In part, the Company may have increased its rate because, instead of having to provide assistance, it in fact needed workers and wanted to keep pace with general wage movements in the more buoyant local economy. Regardless, the new rate added to the attractiveness of the Company’s minimum wage to the labourers in England who were prepared to consider emigrating to New Zealand. It is also evident from later disputes, which are to be discussed more fully below, that the Company’s recruits did take special note of, and were enticed by, this promise.

In summary, the Company’s promise, by 1841, had developed substantially from Wakefield’s original and very slight proposal. Wakefield, the South Australian

\(^{101}\) The increase is demonstrated by the Wellington Spectator, 16 October 1841, and by the sequence of subsequent adjustments in the Company rate from 1841 to 1844. Also note William Wakefield to Company Secretary, 19 January 1843, C.O. 208/101.
Commissioners, and the Company had, subsequent to *A Letter from Sydney*, offered promises and guarantees which met, to varying degrees, the traditional expectations and the ambitions of British working people for support in times of adversity, such as unemployment. At the same time, however, the Commissioners and the Company certainly harboured underlying sentiments which favoured a punitive form of relief in keeping with the less eligibility principle which was emphasised in the New Poor Law. The key difference between the Commissioners and the Company, in its first days of the settlement of New Zealand, was that the Company suppressed the application of qualifications which may have associated its promise with the sentiments of the New Poor Law. Instead it publicly pursued a policy which only provided encouragement for labourers to emigrate. It also appears that as news began to filter through that the Wellington settlement had been established successfully, the Company decided to make an even greater effort to match the interest of British workers by offering a high minimum wage. This appealed strongly to those who felt the hardship and unfairness of the New Poor Law and to those who sought a minimum wage in England. By adopting this position, the Company also provided a guarantee of support of an almost completely different type to that originally envisaged by Wakefield in *A Letter for Sydney*. It was a guarantee which went perhaps as far as anyone anywhere could have hoped in the nineteenth century.

As much as the Company's minimum wage provides a highlight in the early history of New Zealand's labour relations, however, it is equally a feature of this period that the minimum wage just as quickly fell from grace. Having promised so much, the Company subsequently began, from 1841 on, to dismantle its minimum wage and express openly the need to more stringently qualify its provision of relief. It did so largely because of considerable pressure on its finances and to force the labourers in its settlement to participate in the development of the land either as agricultural
labourers or subsistence farmers. Generally, the Company and its supporters in the settlements increasingly concentrated on the need for less eligibility, made claims that the workmen were the authors of their own misfortune, and stressed the need for the workmen to support themselves. This path eventually led to the virtual elimination of all relief provisions.

It is possible that the Company may have begun the work of dismantling the minimum wage at the time of the arrival of the very first emigrants in New Plymouth in March 1841, but the evidence is too vague to be conclusive. Although the labourers had been promised the minimum wage, the Company officials arrived with instructions “not to “enter into competition with individuals in the labour market” and to provide employment “at a scale of remuneration below the current rate of wages”’. These instructions were not as harsh as the instructions issued to Wellington’s emigration agent in 1839, or William Hutt’s views, but they were of the same sort. They required the payment of a punitive rate to ensure that the workmen did not prefer the Company’s work to private employment. From the limited information available, however, it is not clear if the Company’s officials in New Plymouth attempted to follow these instructions or chose to treat them in the same way that William Wakefield had treated the instructions to the Wellington emigration agent, that is, to put them discreetly aside. What is known is the officials had some ‘stormy’ discussions with the labourers and mechanics when they first arrived in the settlement and that as a result of these discussions, the labourers were paid at a set rate of 5/- per day, a rate on a par with the promised minimum wage, and mechanics obtained a rate of 7/- per day, a rate that provided recognition for their additional skill.\textsuperscript{102} The question that cannot be answered is whether these agreed rates were a victory for the Company or for the labourers and mechanics. Possible contradictory

\textsuperscript{102} Dalziel, ‘Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth’, pp. 13-16.
answers are that the Company officials attempted to breach the promised minimum wage but failed; the mechanics sought rates higher than the minimum wage and succeeded; and the labourers failed to obtain a rate of pay higher than the minimum wage. What we can only be certain of is that the minimum wage was not breached.

In the circumstances, William Wakefield’s attack on the minimum wage in Wellington in October 1841 is a much clearer beginning to the dismantling of the Company’s minimum wage and the implementation of provisions that had a punitive intent. Similar attacks on the minimum wage followed in 1842 in New Plymouth and Nelson.

William Wakefield had two reasons for breaking his promise of the minimum wage in October 1841. In the first instance, he wanted to save money. In July 1841 he had to apologise to London for the bills he had drawn on to meet the cost of employing large numbers of labourers in the winter. He added that he could not refuse to employ the labourers given the clear promise that they had been given on leaving England that they would ‘always be employed by the Company when they can find no better employers’. By October 1841, he also found the Company’s credit threatened. On 8 October, the Union Bank had written to William Wakefield that ‘At present we have no legal Estate, nor has the Company; it all lies in Equity, and the Company is now exercising a Species of Trust, for the discharge of which, it may incur a heavy and dangerous liability, such as probably may not have suggested itself to the Company’s Officers.’ Wakefield was strongly disposed therefore towards cutting back the Company’s expenditure, a substantial part of which involved the wages of those who worked for the Company.

\[103\] William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 15 July 1841, C.O. 208/99.
\[104\] Union Bank of Australia to William Wakefield, 8 October 1841, C.O. 208/99. This tightening of credit led William Wakefield to later complain that the bank’s interest rate had become ‘exorbitant’, William Wakefield to New Zealand Company, 5 November 1841, C.O. 208/99.
The second and immediate cause was William Wakefield’s concern with the apparent effect of the minimum wage on the development of agriculture in the settlement. Several landowners reported to Wakefield that many of the labourers ‘preferred the work on the road for the Company at £1 per week with rations of flour and meat to receiving 30/- a week in private employment.’ Access to the Company’s work at the minimum wage in other words did not just appear to ensure that all landowners paid at least the minimum wage. It deprived landowners of labour unless they paid a higher rate than the Company, and certainly more than the 30s. which was already on offer.\(^{105}\) Wakefield found it ‘necessary’ therefore to reduce the Company rate to 14s. plus rations, a rate which he stated was ‘sufficient to prevent destitution, according to the agreement by the Company and will induce many landowners to commence agriculture by means of a small addition of wages to our labourers.’\(^{106}\)

There was of course no merit from Wakefield’s point of view in referring to any agreement made to pay a minimum wage of £1 plus rations.

Wakefield received strong support for his action from the Wellington Spectator, which insisted that while the Company was ‘pledged’ to provide waged work, ‘they [the Company] have no intention at any time to become competitors in the labour market.’ Wakefield and the Spectator both agreed that the labourers had to be deprived of the use of the Company rate as a means of ratcheting upwards rates for private employment and that the way to do this was to reduce the Company rate. The Spectator also engaged in a personal attack on the labourers, noting that ‘a large number of the road party’ had not been ‘able to do a fair days’ work.’ It also revealed that Wakefield had done something as well about the labourers’ open access to employment with the Company. The labourers who had refused the offers of private

\(^{105}\) William Wakefield costed the rations initially provided by the Company at 11s. 6d. It appears thus that the private employment rate of 30s. was very similar to the Company rate of £1 plus rations.

employment and had prompted Wakefield's reduction in the Company rate also lost their jobs.\textsuperscript{107}

The labourers did protest against William Wakefield's unilateral action, but without any significant effect. The Spectator reported that the dismissed labourers 'consider themselves so unfairly dealt with, that they have talked of petitioning the Governor to give them free passage to Auckland.' Whether the labourers were sufficiently well organised to petition the Governor is not clear. No record of this has come to light. But some did leave. For good measure the Spectator added: 'We are satisfied, that few really valuable members of the working class have left Port Nicholson - though many we were well rid of have left us. And if our information be correct, the threat may be carried into effect, and the prayer granted, with advantage to the settlement. We consider it not only no disadvantage to lose the incompetent and lazy of the working class, who by deception have managed to obtain free passages, but positively a good, for we save the expense of supporting them in idleness.'\textsuperscript{108} A little later, William Wakefield very happily reported the success of the reduction in the Company's rate in stimulating agricultural development. Recent arrivals were 'fast leaving' the Company depot, he told London, and the 'reduction of the road wages and the fine season have had the best effects in inducing a more intensive cultivation of the neighbouring country lands. The valley of the Hutt promises to be quickly cleared and has already a population of many hundreds employed in growing produce for the Town and Shipping.... I have never seen the colony presenting so promising and sound an appearance as at the present moment.'\textsuperscript{109}

The Company rate was also cut in New Plymouth in May 1842 and then in Nelson in September 1842. In relation to New Plymouth, William Wakefield was aware, at least

\textsuperscript{107} Wellington Spectator, 16 October 1841.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
by December 1841, that the settlement was not just struggling financially but ‘very much in debt’. But it was not until March 1842 that he finally visited the settlement, prompted by further news of the ‘derangement’ of the settlement’s affairs. Once there, he found many of the labourers employed by the Company on survey work, due to a lack of capital and of private landowners with sufficient resources to employ labour. Wakefield decided as part of his retrenchment plan to give the surveying contractors, who were ‘cutting the line’, three months’ notice. Wakefield may have hoped that the distribution of the already surveyed land, which was later announced for 20 June 1842, would absorb some if not all the labour that had been employed on the survey work, when this work ended. But to restrain costs in the meantime, and to ensure the labourers had every incentive to find private employment when the surveys ended, he also reduced the Company rate to 16s plus rations, effective from May. Although the cut was a significant blow to the labourers, it was, nonetheless, 2s. higher than the comparable Wellington rates, probably to allow for the higher cost of provisions in the smaller isolated settlement. Other cuts were also instituted. Wakefield terminated forthwith the employment of artisans by the Company, restricted eligibility to Company work to only those who could find no work at all, and also made provision to pay less than the minimum rate for ‘Boys and “inefficient” workmen’. Wicksteed was also appointed the new resident agent and was required to ensure William Wakefield’s instructions were diligently carried out. He arrived in May in time to oversee the new reductions in the wage rates.

111 Wells, p.81.
112 Wells, p.82.
114 Dr Henry Weekes stated that the ‘high price of provision’ was the reason given by the New Plymouth labourers for striking in July 1841, though Weekes felt the reason unjustified, Rutherford and Skinner, p.95.
In response, the New Plymouth labourers, led by Shute, presented a petition, which made a number of points. Firstly, the labourers had been promised £1 plus rations. The promise was restated: ‘the acting agent of the then Plymouth Company of New Zealand’ had promised ‘that the wages we should receive on our arrival here would be 1 Pound Sterling and rations per week from the company if no better could be Obtained.’ Secondly, the promise had persuaded them to take the difficult step of leaving their ‘native land’ for New Zealand ‘with a view of improving our condition and that of our families’. The labourers merely by emigrating had earned their right to the promised minimum wage. Thirdly, the labourers stressed that the Company had not fulfilled its side of the contract. The petition noted the ‘sad and serious disappointment’ of the labourers to find that they were to receive not the promised £1 plus rations, but only 16s. plus rations. Fourthly, they stated that the 16s. plus rations for the labourers and their families, averaging ‘to be 4 children’, and ‘coupled with the high rents clothing tools and medical aid’, placed them ‘in worse circumstances than in England.’ The fifth and final point was a plea to Wicksteed to use his ‘kind interference’ to enable the labourers ‘to live in credit and respect, rather than penury and want’.\footnote{Dalziel, ‘Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth’, p. 17.} As Dalziel points out, the protest had elements of right based on contract and on what E.P.Thompson called the moral economy. This economy was ‘a popular consensus’ that determined a legitimate entitlement, in this case to wages, ‘grounded upon a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community’.\footnote{Petition to Wicksteed, 14 May 1842, N.Z.C. 308/1. E.P.\text{Thompson}, ‘The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century’, \textit{Past and Present}, L (1971), p.79.}

The petition had no effect however. Nor did Shute’s subsequent letter which threatened, as the Wellington labourers had done, that the labourers would leave the settlement, and also threatened to publicise the Company’s breach. Wicksteed
rejected the claim that the labourers had been reduced to ‘penury and want’ and suggested, as noted above,\textsuperscript{118} that the labourers had some responsibility for supplementing their wages by developing their own gardens.\textsuperscript{119} The cuts remained in place.

In Nelson the reduction in the Company rate did not occur until later in the year. Some latitude seems to have been allowed by Arthur Wakefield possibly because the first emigrant ships only arrived in February 1842. There may also have been an element of wariness on the parts of William and Arthur Wakefield at the sense of organisation and solidarity of the new workingmen who had arrived in Nelson. In May 1842, for example, the journeymen carpenters in the settlement had met and resolved not to work ‘for less than 12s. per day.’\textsuperscript{120} In July, the Reverend Charles Saxton wrote that ‘The high price of labour here is not from its scarcity or the value of it, but because there is a kind of tacit agreement not to work under certain prices’. Saxton’s assessment was echoed by Arthur Wakefield in his correspondence.\textsuperscript{121}

Nonetheless, economic fortunes in the settlement deteriorated as the year wore on and pressure mounted for such a reduction. In June, Francis Jollie noted the shortage of ‘settlers here, that is, actual purchasers of land’.\textsuperscript{122} By October, the New Zealand Colonist was able to report with certainty that New South Wales was in a state of economic depression.\textsuperscript{123} As the same downturn began to hurt the new Nelson settlement, an increasing burden fell on the Company to support the labourers in the community. Arthur Wakefield expressed concern that rates in the

\textsuperscript{118} See p.172 above.
\textsuperscript{119} Shute to Wicksteed, 22 May 1842, N.Z.C. 308/1.
\textsuperscript{120} Nelson Examiner, 14 May 1842.
\textsuperscript{121} Letters from Settlers, pp.106,112.
\textsuperscript{122} Letters from Settlers, p.93.
\textsuperscript{123} New Zealand Colonist, 25 October 1842.
settlement were generally too high and needed to be reduced. As a further sign of his concern, Arthur Wakefield also sought, like Wicksteed, to make the labourers less dependent on the Company by encouraging them into small scale farming through the offer of small plots of land for sale on easy terms of purchase, and seeds for planting. There was, however, just a weak response to the initiative. Arthur Wakefield only had a limited amount of free land to sell and the labourers who were interested in setting themselves up as small farmers were interested in just the best of this land.

The pressure finally came to a head in September and Arthur Wakefield reduced the Company rate under instructions from his brother, William. Unlike the other settlements, the Nelson labourers had for some unexplained reason been paid a guinea plus rations, instead of £1 plus rations. This was now reduced to the Wellington rate of 14s. plus rations.

As in the other settlements, the reduction aroused anger. Besides demanding the restoration of their minimum wage, the labourers took strike action. This had no effect and the labourers eventually had to return to work. They evidently remained resentful, however, and perhaps prompted by the arrival of new settlers (who probably only learned of the cut to the Company rate when they landed) or by new rumours of a further reduction, they renewed their protest in January 1843. In the petition they presented to Arthur Wakefield on 14 January 1843, the labourers noted that ‘the Company’s 16th Resolution guarantees to us Employment provided that we cannot meet with it elsewhere. It does not guarantee Subsistence but expresses the

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124 Letters from Settlers, p.112.
125 Allan, pp.185-86.
126 Jim McAloon, p. 28, cf. Ruth Allan, p.184, who puts the timing of the rate reduction as May 1842. A September reduction is consistent with the labourers’ strike of the same month. Also note Letters from Settlers, p.112.
word Employment distinctly', and 'Before we left England we were told that if we could get work no where else the Company would give us one guinea per week with rations, and this we consider our lawful rights'. The Company had been clear. So were the labourers. A rate subjectively based on a minimal standard of living could not reasonably be substituted for a fixed rate guaranteeing a good income. The petition also noted that the promise and other 'flattering pretensions' had 'seduced' the labourers into coming to New Zealand. The Nelson labourers had, furthermore, earned the fulfilment of the Company's promise by enduring 'considerable hardship' and by exposing, 'to the dangers and Perils of the deep and briny ocean', 'both ourselves and family's where many parents have lost their children and children their parents.' As an alternative, and as a concession, the labourers demanded that if they were not to be given a guinea plus rations, they be given free land and provisions for a year. For the Company, with its activity founded on the idea of selling land at a high value, the option was unacceptable. Besides being completely contrary to Wakefield's scheme (a principle which admittedly had been subject to some compromise), no-one would buy its land if it was being given away. The workmen's petition also asked whether 'any reasonable man' could 'think, taking into consideration the present state of every thing, that 14/- per week with 7lb. rations is sufficient for a man, his wife, and 2 children, the man 9 or 10 miles from his mud home.' The petition added: 'Then where is the clothes to come from, and as for shoes there is no end to the wear and tear of them from the nature of our work and the travelling from post to pillar and back again.'

The Nelson labourers repeated the Wellington and New Plymouth threats to leave.

The petition warned 'Captain Wakefield' that 'If you do not stretch forth your hand to

127 *Nelson Examiner*, 7 and 21 January 1843.
128 Miller, pp.121-22; *Nelson Examiner*, 21 January 1843.
129 McAlloon, p.29.
130 Miller, p.122.
the working class at Nelson you will never have a Colony, and will that not be a painful burden on your breast to bear. It is a well known fact that many of the pretended Capitalists are reduced already to all but starving point. Shiners with them are something like Angels Visits, few and far between. In fact there is little or no money in the Colony except the Company’s. We at present are the only circulating medium. On you Sir (visa: versa:) success of the Colony depends. If you refuse to stand by the working men of Nelson you Sign its Death warrant and seal its doom.\footnote{131}

The petition ended with an appeal, declaring that ‘we only want a Right and Legal thing and our Motto in endeavouring to gain this right shall be peace, tranquility and concord, for where peace remains, there harmony dwells for no man is so happy as the working man for when his day’s work [is done], he comes home to his family and by his own fireside he enjoys or should enjoy the fruits of Industry we do not want large fortunes or Extraordinary Incomes but to live Comfortably and decently.’\footnote{132}

The petition was rejected. Having already struck in September, the labourers began a second strike on 16 January 1843. They marched on the port and an unproductive meeting with Arthur Wakefield took place. The labourers presented again their demand for the reinstatement of their guinea plus rations and threatened to leave, proposing to go either to Sydney or Western Australia. Wakefield told the labourers that ‘They were free as air to go whereever they choose, and he could have no objection to their taking any steps by which they were likely to better themselves’ (though later he also warned that they would be best to first establish the rates and prices in any colony to which they were considering departing). Wakefield was not prepared to negotiate. The labourers tried again. According to the Examiner, ‘One of them stated that he could not live upon the wages he now had and his rations, [a

\footnote{131} Ibid. ‘Shiners’ are evidently coins, possibly pounds or guineas.  
\footnote{132} Allan, p.187-88.
claim] which Captain Wakefield clearly proved false, by going through, item by item, 
the price of the various necessaries of life which he would require, and the case was 
too plain to admit of reply.' Frustrated, the labourers ‘adjourned to an open place ... 
and there held a meeting, at which some rather strong language was used, and 
various resolutions passed, the most important one being that they should send a 
memorial to Governor Gipps, requesting him to send a vessel for them." 133 The strike 
in the end was short-lived and once over Arthur Wakefield took steps to weaken the 
ability of the labourers to consolidate their opposition to the Company, by dispersing 
them to country locations. On dispersion, some more of the labourers, but not many, 
took up Wakefield’s option of purchasing small plots of land.134 A memorial was 
apparently sent in the end to ‘some Western Australian Company’. 135 McAlloon notes 
that ‘many’ of the Nelson settlers did re-emigrate over the next few years, though it 
is not clear how many of these were the labourers who had struck or where they left 
for. 136

Arthur Wakefield’s actions completed the demise of the Company’s rate of £1 plus 
ration as a minimum wage for the settlements. It had provided the labourers with 
protection for only a short while. The Company had probably kept its promise for just 
over twelve months in Wellington, a little longer in New Plymouth, and somewhat less 
in Nelson.

Disappointing as this change in their conditions must have been for the labourers, 
they were soon to face even further disappointments. The Company’s unilateral 
withdrawal of its promise of the minimum wage proved to be in fact the first episode

133 Nelson Examiner, 21 January 1843.
134 Allan, p.188.
135 Nelson Examiner, 21 January 1843. The Examiner, 21 March 1843, also republished, and ridiculed, 
a letter, already published in the Colonial Observer (Sydney), which claimed that a petition had been 
sent to Gipps.
in a general devaluation of the Company’s fundamental promise as set out in its regulations of assistance to the labourers should no other work be available. What followed from 1842 to 1844 was a series of cuts to the Company rate and attempts to restrict access to Company work which finished only with the suspension of the Company’s activities in 1844 and, worse, the end of any and all formal commitment to provide relief.

The next clear incident on this path occurred in late 1842 when William Wakefield began referring labourers and mechanics who were seeking work to independent roading contractors as a means of avoiding responsibility for their relief. He confided in a report that the practice was ‘in no respect more expensive than the indiscriminate employment of applicants for work, as the contractors hired labourers who would otherwise have come upon the Company and by means of a vigilant superintendence probably discouraged idlers from applying for similar work.’ The New Zealand Colonist also reported in response to a complaint from a labourer that Wakefield had refused to give work on the road ‘to persons who, from want of other means of employment are in a state of utter destitution.’ The Colonist added that ‘It cannot, we believe, be denied that in the early days of the colony, the New Zealand Company in order to attract labouring emigrants to the settlement did pledge itself to find employment for them at certain specified rates.’ While the paper did not disapprove of the cut in the Company’s minimum wage of £1 plus rations (adding that it was never made clear how long this promise held good for), it also stated, ‘that the

136 McAloon, p. 37.
137 William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 28 May 1842, C.O. 208/99. William Wakefield’s discharge of labourers in October 1841 may be regarded as an even earlier breach of the original guarantee. It occurred, however, at least according to the Wellington Spectator, 16 October 1841, because the labourers had failed to take up the opportunity of alternative work. The Spectator’s claim may have had some merit because of the relative buoyancy of the Wellington economy at the time. Its later claim of the same failure on the part of the labourers in May 1843, when the settlement was struggling with the onset of economic depression, is less likely to be justified, see below.
138 William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 28 January 1843, C.O. 208/101; Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, and the Brees Report, both in the despatch of 21 December 1842, C.O. 208/100.
labourers looked upon [the promise of work at specified rates] as an absolute
guarantee against destitution, at least as long as the management of the affairs of
this settlement should remain nominally in the hands of the Company. They would
regard it as a substitute for that security against starvation which in England is
furnished by the poor law.¹³⁹ The counsel appeared to be that William Wakefield
should not go too far.

William Wakefield, however, was compelled by the Company’s financial concerns to
continue limiting its relief provisions. In addition to turning away unemployed
labourers, William Wakefield cut the Company rate again in March 1843, but this time
only to a minor degree. In his report to London at the beginning of March, he noted
that bay whalers were competing for work in Wellington because of the poor whaling
season, and this had resulted in a surfeit of available labour, a general fall in wages,
and, inevitably, a large increase in the number of applicants to the Company for
work. While ever hopeful that the Company would soon resolve the issue of the
contested title to the land it occupied and thereby remove the barrier to further
development and employment in the settlement, Wakefield reported that in ‘the mean
time’ he was following the wishes of ‘the Cour: of Directors’ in London as best he
could by ‘rigidly adhering’ to a system to ensure applicants were the ‘proper objects
of relief’. He was doing this by setting ‘wages at that point which holds out a promise
of profitable employment of labour by the settlers and by directing the work
exclusively to effecting communications through surveyed land’. He therefore
provided work but reduced the Company rate from 14s. plus rations, to ‘18/- a week,
without rations, for an able bodied man’s six day’s work of 9 hours a day, with
deductions for wet weather or inefficiency’. Wakefield claimed that the reduction once
implemented had an immediate effect of reducing ‘the working parties.’ The changes
were not sufficient for all however. An official in London subsequently noted in the margin of Wakefield’s report that Wakefield had not fully met his instructions and was continuing to employ those who had previously had private employment.\textsuperscript{140}

A further reduction in access to Company work was implemented in April when William Wakefield limited work to just a single party engaged in cutting survey lines in the Hutt Valley.\textsuperscript{141} This appears to have been reduced again in May. On 10 May 1843, the \textit{Spectator}, defended Colonel Wakefield’s discharge of ‘a considerable number of hands’ from the Company’s works in the Hutt Valley. The explanation echoed that of October 1841. ‘We know’, the \textit{Spectator} said, ‘more than one landed proprietor, who has stated his readiness to employ 20 hands, at fair wages, and exceeding by 6d. per day the late pay on the roads, and notwithstanding the discharge of some 30 or 40, but seven have offered themselves for employment.’ Attacking the dismissed labourers, the \textit{Spectator} accused at least ‘some of them’ of sticking ‘like leeches to the Company from the earliest formation of the settlement, being so through[ly] imbued with the principles of the pauper working system, that they are not only a nuisance to the settlement, but render every honest labourer who is placed in contact with them, liable to be affected with the same dishonest practise of shirking their work.’\textsuperscript{142} Despite the \textit{Spectator’s} accusation, it seems unlikely that there were in fact many jobs to be taken. The general evidence is that the settlement had entered into a period of serious economic depression and that mechanics and

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{New Zealand Colonist}, 3 February 1843; also note the \textit{Colonist’s} approval of the reduced Company rate, which it described as ‘reasonable’ in 28 October 1842.  
\textsuperscript{140} William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 8 March 1843, CO 208/101.  
\textsuperscript{141} William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 15 April 1843, CO 208/101.  
\textsuperscript{142} Wellington \textit{Spectator}, 10 May 1843. The tendency for the \textit{Spectator} to blame the labourers for their own condition is also evident in its comments on the failure of the labourers to save money. It noted that ‘very large sums of money have passed into the hands of artizans and labourers, and been wasted by them’. If it had been saved, they ‘would now be in possession of funds sufficient to secure them from distress, or land sufficient to support themselves.’ Wellington \textit{Spectator}, 21 October 1843.
labourers, without access to the Company, were being forced as a matter of necessity to become small subsistence farmers.¹⁴³

Overall, the reaction of the Wellington labourers to these developments is poorly documented. There is evidence, however, of one last desperate appeal. The labourers referred in this appeal to ‘the Company’s published statements throughout Great Britain of their intended generous provision in favour of the destitute emigrants’, but their primary concern now was just for assistance ‘to prevent the well disposed and industrious workman from becoming a pauper or felon in this distant land, to procure food for himself and family, as the cry of bread from a family is an irresistible appeal that no man of humanity however well disposed can tamely resist.’ They requested that Wakefield give them sufficient relief in order to get by, either ‘by employment on the roads, or a supply of rations until employment can be obtained elsewhere by those truly in need of the same.’¹⁴⁴ There is no evidence that William Wakefield was moved by the labourers’ request.¹⁴⁵ Emphasising an increasingly uncompromising position, William Wakefield reported his exasperation with the provision of relief in Wellington to Ward in London in September 1843. He noted that ‘nearly all the evils of the Old English Poor Law System prevailed in the settlement, the Company representing the parish, and its funds the poor rate.’¹⁴⁶

It is possible to also track the same effort to minimise the Company’s original guarantee of assistance in New Plymouth and Nelson. Dalziel notes a quarrel in New Plymouth in November 1842 involving a wage reduction ‘which Wicksteed tried to

¹⁴³ William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 16 June 1843, C.O. 208/101.
¹⁴⁴ Wellington Spectator, 18 October 1843.
¹⁴⁵ William Wakefield almost certainly continued to force the labourers into subsistence farming, William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 8 October, 1844, C.O. 208/102.
¹⁴⁶ Allan, p.192.
quieten by reducing the price of flour.\textsuperscript{147} This was followed in March and April 1843 in New Plymouth and Nelson respectively by the removal of rations which was also carried out in March in Wellington.

In New Plymouth, the cutting of the labourers’ rations came on the heels of a further visit from William Wakefield. He found Wicksteed diverting funds from land sales completed in New Plymouth to finance ongoing work to open up more land in the settlement. While Wakefield recognised that this could lead to further sales, his main concern was to conserve income to meet existing expenditure commitments rather than spend any precious income earned on expanding developmental work. He therefore retrenched, terminating the employment of the surveyors and the storekeeper and reducing the Company rate in the settlement from 16s. plus rations, to 16s. without rations. But he also offered a quarter acre section rent free for two years, after which time the occupying labourer would have the option of purchasing the section for £5. With regard to the Company rate, Wakefield argued yet again that it was holding market rates at too high a level. He stated that ‘The reduction of the wages of the working men is necessary to enable the settlers to farm their land with any hope of profit.’ He expected that with a lower Company rate, more labour would be taken on by the settlers and the number of labourers with the Company would be ‘diminished.’\textsuperscript{148} What actually happened was that the landowners combined to lower the rates they already paid.\textsuperscript{149} As in Wellington, it seems that the measure did not create any new employment.

It did, however, arouse further ill-will among the labourers who reacted with ‘threatening and violent behaviour’.\textsuperscript{150} Dalziel notes that ‘as Wakefield was about to

\textsuperscript{147} Dalziel, ‘Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth’, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{148} William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 31 March 1843, C.O. 208/101.
\textsuperscript{149} Dalziel, ‘Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth’, p.21.
\textsuperscript{150} William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 31 March 1843, C.O. 208/101.
leave the settlement, a group, described by Wicksteed as a “brutal rabble”, gathered on the beach shouting abuse at him’, and that in the ‘evening the same group demonstrated noisily outside Wicksteed’s house and Molesworth’s horse was attacked.¹⁵¹ A week or so later, the labourers held an angry meeting which precisely set out the nature of their complaint. They insisted that the Company’s promises had established legal rights which had to be upheld. Singling out the Company officials in New Zealand as responsible for the breaches of its guarantees, the labourers resolved to send a petition to the Company Directors in London and that ‘depositions ... be taken before the Police Magistrate’ from those who had ‘left England by reason of most base and false inducements held out to them by the agent at home,’ and ‘by which reason many families have been seriously injured’.¹⁵² After some further few weeks of organisation, the final form of the petition, supported by affidavits, was sent to the Company in London in July 1843. The petition followed a now familiar pattern. It noted step by step: the Company’s promise; the fulfilment of their part of the bargain in allowing themselves to be ‘transferred from their Native Soil to the shores of this remote and isolated portion of the Globe solely on the faith of certain promises’; the failure of the Company to keep its promises; and the need for the Company to engage in ‘the strictest and most careful investigation’ of their complaint.¹⁵³ In reality sending a petition to London was pointless. William Wakefield was under direct instructions from the Company’s officers there not to pay wages above what was required for ‘the absolute necessaries of life’, and merely to avoid ‘destitution and suffering’.¹⁵⁴ The London directors had also already decided in July 1842 to ensure labourers leaving England were no longer promised work with the

¹⁵¹ Dalziel, ‘Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth’, p.20. Molesworth, a young member of the gentry who had been encouraged to emigrate, and now a Wellington farming settler, had travelled with William Wakefield to New Plymouth perhaps to give him some moral support.
¹⁵² New Zealand Colonist, 6 June 1843.
¹⁵⁴ Allan, p.191.
Company, and other instructions followed directing Wakefield to cut existing expenditure in New Zealand to the bone.  

Later in the year, Wicksteed tried a new method to relieve the pressure of providing work. He confided to William Wakefield that he attempted to 'get rid of [the labourers] ... by sending them twenty-two miles inland, where they had little or no shelter'. The stratagem did not work however. Rather than refusing to do the work, the labourers disappeared into the bush, only to return 'at the end of the week, many sick, and all of them miserable and discontented'. Some claimed medical aid, while others 'commenced the trade of pig and sheep stealing'. 

With this apparent failure, Wicksteed subsequently reduced the wages of single labourers in New Plymouth to only 8s. a week. He also tried an 'experiment' by which he 'offered to the landowners to pay 6s. a week to the married men, and 2s. to the unmarried, provided they would pay the amount wanting to make up the Company's wages of 16s. and 8s. per week.' This, Wicksteed claimed, led to the employment of 'about 50 labourers', who now worked within easy distance of their homes and could tend their gardens in their spare time. Wicksteed's offer was, as Dalziel notes, a 'variant on the old Speenhamland system' of the poor law which was strongly criticised in the process leading up to the enactment of the New Poor Law in 1834. Wicksteed also made a distinction between applications for work from labourers and mechanics, by applying 'the rule of paying and employing those only

155 Allan, p.189; Minutes of Meetings of the Special Committee on the State of the Company’s Expenditure, 21 December 1842 and 11 May 1843, C.O. 208/186; William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 19 January 1843, C.O. 208/101. It appears from William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 31 March 1843, C.O. 208/101, that news that the Company had stopped promising waged work did not arrive until at least a couple of months into 1843, presumably with the first settlers so affected.
156 Wells, p.98.
158 Wells, p.95.
159 Wells, p.98.
who would be destitute without such aid, excluding all who have had the opportunity of saving money [in particular the better paid mechanics] when wages were higher.’

While not specifying any reaction to his reduction in the rate for the single labourer or the adoption of the variation on the Speenhamland system, Wicksteed reported that the refusal to provide work for the mechanics had ‘subjected me to the fiercest storm of menaces and abuse I have as yet had to encounter in New Plymouth.’\(^{161}\) The reaction included a threat to pull part of his house down and actual physical attacks on his crops and animals.\(^{162}\) In October, Wicksteed received yet another demand to restrict the entitlement to employment. This included a requirement to deny employment to any who had already obtained private employment, a practice which, as noted above, even William Wakefield himself had been slow to implement in Wellington.\(^{163}\) On this occasion, Wicksteed feared the consequences of the changes and did not apply them. The continuing need for employment, however, forced Wicksteed, after the work of spring had finished, to reduce the married rate from 16s. to 12s.\(^{164}\)

The general pattern of a declining entitlement was also evident in Nelson. The Company rate for labourers in Nelson of 14s. plus rations was changed in April 1843 to 16s. without rations for men with two or less children, and 18s. without rations for men with more than two children, a net loss of about 3s. and 1s. a week respectively.\(^{165}\) According to the *Examiner*, this continued as ‘the *minimum* price of labour in this settlement’ and was also ‘a fair if not luxury-providing rate of wages’.\(^{166}\)

It seems unlikely that the reduction passed without some dissent from the labourers,

\(^{161}\) Wells, p.98. It appears that this action may relate to an order made by William Wakefield in May 1842 to terminate the employment of all artisans. Possibly the original order had not been continuously applied and had fallen into disuse, until, of course it was reactivated in the winter of 1843.

\(^{162}\) Dalziel, ‘Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth’, p.22.

\(^{163}\) Annotation to William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 8 March 1843, C.O. 208/101.


\(^{165}\) Allan, p.191.

\(^{166}\) *Nelson Examiner*, 22 and 29 April 1843.
but none at least was reported. Arthur Wakefield also tried to obtain an agreement with the labourers to carry out road work at piece rates. He even offered the prospect that with industry more could be earned than on the Company rate. The offer had a catch to it however. After six months on the scheme, labourers would lose the right to reapply for Company work. Few took up the offer. Arthur Wakefield decided as a result that if the labourers could not be persuaded to take up piece rate contracts, he would at least tighten supervision of the road gangs, and appointed a superintendent, Philip Vallé, for the purpose.\footnote{167}

Following Arthur Wakefield’s death at Wairau in June 1843, a further attempt to implement changes to the Company’s relief provisions was proposed by his temporary replacement, Frederick Tuckett.\footnote{168} The main points of the grand plan Tuckett formulated were: to hire labour to carry out and complete public works at set contracted prices; to sell land to the labourers in 2 ½ to 5 acre lots, the purchase price being paid off by deductions from payments for the work completed under the contracts; to provide rations as advances to labourers who took leases on Company land; to refuse to employ any further labourers; to pay the passages of redundant mechanics to Australia; and to deport the disaffected leadership of the labourers, that is, ‘all the most disorderly contentious and indolent men’.\footnote{169} A feature of these proposed measures was that they were to a considerable degree self financing. Payments for contract work would come back in some part to the Company to pay for purchased sections, and leaseholders of Company land would pay rent which would fund the immediate cost of the rations advanced to the leaseholder. Otherwise the main, new, un-discounted cost was one way passages, most likely to Australia, for men who were regarded as an unnecessary burden on the settlement.

\footnote{167}{Allan, pp.191-92.}
In reality, Tuckett only attempted to introduce some minor changes, but even these met with physical resistance. In the first instance, Tuckett tried to institute the fortnightly payment of wages in July 1843 to apparently enable closer monitoring of work to be completed before payments were made.\textsuperscript{170} The labourers confronted him in his office and weekly payments were restored. He also offered the labourers leasehold land, but was rebuffed. In August, under instructions from William Wakefield, he tried to tighten up the operational control of the labourers which Arthur Wakefield had planned to carry out just before his death. His method included, however, the consolidation of the labourers into two groups, thus reversing the dispersal of the labourers which Arthur Wakefield had implemented to weaken them in the wake of the January 1843 strike. Tucket hoped that, by consolidating the labourers, he and Vallé would be able to keep a close eye on them to ensure that they carried out their work, and, through the use of timekeepers, to measure accurately the productivity of each labourer and make deductions for any shortcomings from wages. Again, however, the labourers opposed the change, this time by threatening and intimidating Vallé. A number of the labourers were arrested and subsequently appeared before a local magistrate but not before two further confrontations in which some of the arrested labourers were forcibly released. Lacking a police or military presence, the magistrate acted as best he could by warning that the events could have justified transportation but also discretely dismissing the charges. In a later incident, Tuckett attempted but failed to move the labourers at Waimea South further from the town and to institute a four day week.\textsuperscript{171} The tension between the Company and the labourers was also illustrated in the

\textsuperscript{169} Allan, pp.276-77.
\textsuperscript{170} Although not explained, the longer period would have allowed for the completion of a greater quantity of work and perhaps a better base for assessing performance. The longer period will have also ensured more time to complete inspections.
\textsuperscript{171} McAloon, pp. 37-38; Miller, pp. 123-24; Allan, pp. 277-80; Nelson Examiner, 9 September 1843.
labourers' refusal to provide voluntary work to build a block-house to defend the settlement amidst great concern over the threat of an attack from Te Rauparaha.\textsuperscript{172}

Tuckett was replaced in September 1843 by a more calculating and seemingly stronger personality, William Fox. Fox noted that 'in the existing state of the police in the settlement it is hopeless to attempt to enforce any system in which the labourers do not themselves concur.'\textsuperscript{173} Fox's strategy was to not only disperse the labourers again but also discuss work arrangements with his overseers and some of the labourers. Out of these discussions emerged a new programme. This included the offer, as an alternative to the existing form of employment with the Company, of a combination of piece work to earn the Company rate and a right to lease and cultivate unoccupied sections. The piece rate was set at such a level as to enable labourers to earn their full quantum in half a week, leaving them with increased free time to develop their leased sections. Alongside these measures and despite the continued absence of police, Fox also pushed through some harsher measures as well. In particular, in December he managed to implement the fortnightly pay regime which had caused Tuckett difficulty earlier in July, and in January 1844, much as William Wakefield had done in October 1841, he punished the labourers severely for apparently failing to respond to the offer of private employment to bring in the harvest. Fifty men were discharged. Only four of those discharged, however, actually found new employment. Fox also made those who had not been cultivating their own land work for the Company for the whole week and generally denied those who had arrived with the preliminary expedition (that is the original survey crew), and boys, access to employment with the Company.\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{172} Nelson Examin\textemdash er, 28 October 1843.
\textsuperscript{173} McAlloon, p.38; Allan, pp. 353-55.
\textsuperscript{174} Allan, pp. 355-57.
Wicksteed and Fox made some further final adjustments in 1844, the last year of the Company’s operations in New Plymouth and Nelson. Wicksteed faced another crisis in New Plymouth in early 1844 with an increase in the price of flour leading to protests and pressure for increased wages. He reacted by buying his own supply of flour and threatening to undercut the market. "The disappearance of the protest suggests his action was successful. In February, however, Wicksteed once again became the villain by reducing the subsidy in aid of wages by half. This led to protest because the private employers would not make up the loss. Wicksteed advised William Wakefield that the announcement had ‘provoked a threat of personal violence against myself’. The labourers held a meeting and agreed to send a petition to the new Governor, Robert FitzRoy, asking him to compel the Company to set a minimum rate of 18s. 175 The threat of the petition came to nothing. The labourers in Nelson also protested to FitzRoy over the conditions of their employment with the Company when he visited the settlement in February 1844, though the precise details of their concerns do not appear to have been recorded. Fox met FitzRoy as well, however, and reported that FitzRoy was unsympathetic towards the labourers, telling them ‘that if they caused any disturbances in the settlements he would be down upon them with the military, and that what he did in that way he would do effectually.’ At the same time, FitzRoy indicated to Fox that he was ‘not inclined to countenance any reduction of wages or increase of the quantity of work.’ 176 This proviso seems to have been quickly forgotten. Both New Plymouth and Nelson obtained a military contingent shortly afterwards and Fox and Wicksteed continued to reduce the Company rate. 177

176 Report from Fox, February 1844, included in despatch from William Wakefield to Secretary, New Zealand Company, 19 February 1944, C.O. 208/101; Nelson Examiner, 10 February 1844.
By mid-autumn, Wicksteed had removed the subsidies altogether and reduced the wages of the married men to 10s. \(^{178}\) The *Examiner*, publishing a private letter from New Plymouth, reported in May that the demand for labour was steady at 15s. to 18s. a week, and that there were no applicants for employment at the Company rate of 10s. \(^{179}\) A further reduction followed in the winter, dropping the rate down to 8s. Only three or four applied for work under the conditions. \(^{180}\) The occasional increases in unemployment and the ‘great distress’ of those who still required work from the Company continued to produce protest. Another petition for the rate to be increased was sent to William Wakefield but again without success. \(^{181}\)

Fox, for his part, made further inroads into the Company rate in February, the month the soldiers arrived. The rate was reduced from 18s. to 14s. for married men with more than two children, and from 16s. to 10s. for other labourers. In July the rates were further reduced to 12s. and 9s. respectively. \(^{182}\) In the same month the mechanics refused to work at their trades for the Company unless they received an extra allowance. The *Examiner* called for their immediate dismissal. \(^{183}\) It is not clear if Fox followed this advice, but it would seem most unlikely that they obtained any improvement in their rates.

The final act in the demise of the Company’s guarantee was the arrival in August 1844 of the instructions from London advising the settlers of the suspension of the Company’s operations. The Company ceased to provide employment for the unemployed. The guarantee of waged work at any rate and to any labourers and mechanics came to end. Wicksteed indicated a fatalistic mood among the settlers in

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182 Allan, p.356-57.
183 *Nelson Examiner*, 13 July 1844.
the first part of his response to William Wakefield on receiving the news of the suspension. He reported that ‘It only remains for me to state that your instructions relative to the discharge of persons in the Company’s employment at New Plymouth have this day been carried into effect.’ The names of the principal employees, such as those of the surveyors and the beachmaster, were recorded. Included amongst the discharged were ‘a few persons employed upon the roads’. He added that the various changes had ‘been effected quietly, without anger or remonstrance from any of the parties interested, though it will be easily believed that they have spread gloom over the settlement.’ In a manner so typical of the Company with its seemingly irrepressible capacity for optimism, however, Wicksteed then carried on directly to report that even in this moment of despondency the prospects for the settlement were promising indeed.\(^{184}\)

After the Company’s operations ceased, several leading voices expressed various opinions on the provision of relief, particularly in Nelson, where a considerable number of men had been employed on relief right up to the date of the suspension of the Company’s activities.\(^{185}\) Landowners appear to have been willing to provide work where they could, but only on the basis of 10s. a week including payment in kind.\(^{186}\) There was no longer to be any local guarantee of relief work however. Rather, Fox and the Nelson Examiner considered that relief was a Crown responsibility and accordingly appealed to FitzRoy for assistance. FitzRoy and his representative in Wellington, Major Richmond, offered some support. Richmond sent a gift of £100 and FitzRoy made an offer to provide work in Wellington. This could not be taken up, however, because he refused to pay the passages for the destitute Nelson labourers to the neighbouring settlement. In general, FitzRoy had as much good reason as the

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\(^{184}\) Wells, pp. 113-14.  
\(^{186}\) Allan, p.363.
Company for not providing relief. Like the Company, his administration was also in
desperate financial straits.\textsuperscript{187}

In pressing the Crown to take responsibility for relief, it is also clear that the
Examiner's position was not necessarily based on its concern with the suffering of
the labourers but on the need for the settlement to preserve its labour supply for
future development. It stated that 'it is most clearly the duty of Government, if any
labour be unemployed here, to keep it in the market by employing it temporarily on
public works, or in any other way that may prevent its removal elsewhere. The future
welfare of the settlement may in a great measure depend upon such a step, and of
course it is the duty of Government to do all it can to promote that welfare.'\textsuperscript{188}
Elsewhere the Examiner advised the labourers to rely on their own resources and
warned them that 'We think it is quite unnecessary to remind every one that any
infringement of the law or disturbance of the peace must end in the punishment of
the offender.' It added that Richmond's troops were readily available for any policing
that needed to be undertaken.\textsuperscript{189}

Other than these remarks, William Wakefield and Dillon Bell (a former Company
official in London and by this time an agent for absentee landowners in Nelson)\textsuperscript{190}
noted that the settlements would benefit from the end to the Company's interference
in the labour market and the setting of wages. Wakefield considered, on reflection,
that the Company's expenditure had been 'artificial and injurious' to the settlement.
Bell labelled the end of the Company's public works as 'one of the greatest benefits
that could be conferred upon the settlement' because the settlers could now afford to.

\textsuperscript{187} Marais, p.246.
\textsuperscript{188} Nelson Examiner, 9 November 1844.
\textsuperscript{189} Nelson Examiner, 31 August 1844.
\textsuperscript{190} Raewyn Dalziel, 'Bell, Francis Dillon', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, p.23.
employ labourers. The tenor of these comments indicate that they were strongly inclined to oppose any future repeat of the Company's promise of assistance. One might guess that other masters in the settlements, having observed the conflict of the previous few years, felt much the same way and it seems more than coincidental that, in 1846, the Legislative Council stepped in to clarify its obligations by passing the Destitute Persons Ordinance. In its preamble it noted its intent to make ‘the maintenance of destitute persons’ the responsibility of ‘the relatives of such person[s]’. The new ordinance reflected the general intent of the policy with respect to relief that the Company had pursued from 1841, that is, to minimise its responsibilities. It also reflected the Crown’s reluctance to do what the settlers would not do for themselves. It did this to the extent that it almost entirely threw responsibility for relief on family members. The ordinance was indeed far more restrictive in its provision for the poor than the New Poor Law in England.

While the ordinance may well have reflected the anxiety of the settler elite and Crown to avoid any new binding commitment to assist the unemployed, the labourers and mechanics must have felt that the measure completed their betrayal. Before many had departed for New Zealand, the Company had promised them as much as probably any other organisation had ever promised in terms of security from the terrors of unemployment. It had extrapolated from Wakefield’s brief provisions and ideas, and from the South Australian Commissioners promise, to produce a promise of a substantial minimum wage that was guaranteed to attract and secure the attention of English labourers and mechanics. It offered a level of protection against unemployment and consequential poverty which was high by any standard, historical or modern. It had been in the end, however, all rather temporary and insubstantial.

As the Company’s finances worsened and the labourers and mechanics showed their

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191 Allan, p.363.
192 10 Vict. 9 (N.Z.), 1846.
unwillingness to leave the town to work on farms or to become subsistence farmers, the promise of the minimum wage was quickly discarded, and the general guarantee of work whittled away to almost nothing. The Destitute Persons Ordinance underlined the extent of the rout. Labourers and mechanics emigrating to the settlements ended up in 1846 being even less well off than they would have been had the very limited promise in *A Letter from Sydney* applied.

*The Settlers*

There are two further matters to consider in order to complete this general picture of labour relations in the early years of the first New Zealand Wakefield settlements. These relate to the thinking and activity of the settlers in the settlements in New Zealand and how they reflected the ideas with respect to labour, which were part of Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation. The first of these matters is the evidence of support from the settlers for Wakefield’s ideas on the supply and control of labour. In part this is illustrated in the colonial newspapers and their views on the supply of labour into their local labour markets. It is also indicated in the opposition of the settlers to convict labour, their apparent lack of interest in the use of indentured labour, and by the absence of evidence of their use of master and servant law. The second matter is the pursuit by the workmen of their share of the colonial prosperity which was emphasised in the promotion of systematic colonisation by Wakefield and the New Zealand Company. In general, it appears with respect to these two matters that the ideas in Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation had a significant impact on the thinking and activity of the first settlers in the Wellington, New Plymouth, and Nelson colonies.
In seeing Wakefield's ideas extend to the settlements in these ways, however, it is also clear that the effect changed over time particularly as a result of the onset of the Anglo-Australasian depression and the Company's reduction in its support for labour. This included the newspapers' shift, in response to mounting evidence that the settlements were not doing well, away from claims that the Company was applying Wakefield's theory and towards indirectly supporting the theory by criticising its misapplication. In other words, the problems of the settlements reflected not the inadequacy of the theory but the fact that the scheme had not been properly applied. Furthermore, it became increasingly untenable for the workmen to believe that they were working toward securing a share of an inevitable prosperity arising from the application of systematic colonisation. Rather, their object, in the face of chronic unemployment in the settlements and the Company's reduction in its commitment to provide employment at good or reasonable wages, became one of survival. Although taking somewhat longer to become apparent, a few masters also altered their practice in relation to master and servant law and began to seek the enforcement of specific service in Nelson from 1846.

Firstly, it is apparent from several sources that there was support in the settlements, at least among the colonial elite, for Wakefield's ideas relating to the supply and control of labour. Perhaps the best publicised assertion that the system provided an effective means of controlling labour and labour relations in the Company's settlements were remarks made by Charles Heaphy, a Company draughtsman, after the first year of the Wellington settlement. With the settlement at its best, and keen as an employee of the Company to promote the scheme, he told the readers of his travel book that 'The happy effect of the "Wakefield system" has been to cause the supply of labour and the demand to be at all times equal, and neither have the rate of
wages been high, or the labouring classes in want of employment'.\(^{193}\) Quite clearly, the evidence in hindsight shows that the Company had little if any effective control over the supply of labour in relation to the needs of the settlement. Unless he intended to mislead, therefore, Heaphy let his belief in Wakefield's scheme override any ability he may have had to provide an objective judgement on the performance of the Wellington labour market. He was not the only one, however, who believed so strongly in Wakefield's ideas.

In addition to Heaphy, the *Nelson Examiner* and the *New Zealand Colonist* provided similar support. The *Nelson Examiner* noted in March 1842 that the labour market had become a little short of labour and 'that the Company are seeking for more men at *their* rate of wages; and even private employers do not find it the easiest possible matter to get their work done.' It further noted, though, that 'At this moment, just when the scale was beginning to display an inclination to lose its equal balance, the *Bolton* has arrived to throw into the market an addition of labour, which will also, doubtless, be soon swallowed up, and a field opened for the emigrants of the other ships which are already on their voyage to this settlement.' In effect, the Company was supplying labour to the Nelson settlement, according to the *Examiner*, as it should. It concluded: 'Thus, although we have never been obliged to pay exorbitant colonial wages, yet full employment has never been wanting; and the prophetic confidence of the Company in our success will keep us sufficiently in advance of the demand for labour to prevent that worst of evils, a body of labourers who are daily exhausting the resources of their employer. There is work to do, and plenty of it; and as each new field of employment presents itself, a supply of labour arrives to fill it.'\(^{194}\)

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\(^{193}\) Heaphy, p.68; Temple, p.238.

\(^{194}\) *Nelson Examiner*, 19 March 1842.
Furthermore, in November 1842, the *New Zealand Colonist* also confidently commended the stability of the Wellington labour market. Stressing the contrast with Auckland and its apparent difficulty in finding work for incoming migrants, the *Colonist* noted that ‘there is no lack of employment here, and the addition of from fifty to one hundred labouring families would produce none, or only a momentary depreciation of wages.’ It also emphasised that the labour being supplied to the settlement was generally commensurate with demand and that the general stability of good wage rates was assured. It added that ‘In fact, should a temporary depreciation occur, which is barely probable, the increased opportunities of employment consequent upon the opening of the country, would more than compensate for it, and would speedily raise wages up to a sum above their present level.’\(^{195}\)

Some influential voices in the settlements, therefore, believed in Wakefield’s scheme. Not surprisingly, however, with the deterioration of the economic state of the settlements from the end of 1842, these expressions of support for the Company indicating its effective control of the labour markets of the settlements ended. It was certainly not possible to argue that the scheme was working when the settlements were in the midst of a severe economic crisis and suffering from chronic unemployment. Equally predictable in the circumstances, some also began to criticise Wakefield’s ideas in general. Despite the crisis, though, support for Wakefield’s principles did not end. Rather, it became more indirect.

With regard first to the criticism of Wakefield’s ideas, the change in the economic circumstances of the settlements provoked the *New Zealand Colonist* in April 1843 to condemn the ‘abstractions’ of political economists. It also claimed that both it and its

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\(^{195}\) *New Zealand Colonist*, 1 November 1842.
rival, the *Wellington Spectator*, now accepted that dispersion of the populations of the settlements would be the source of the settlements' future prosperity.  

While the *Colonist* had obviously begun to reject Wakefield's ideas, however, this was not in fact completely true for the *Wellington Spectator*. Although the *Spectator* had joined the *Colonist*, at least in promoting small scale farming settlement, it did so not because it had necessarily rejected Wakefield's idea of systematic colonisation, but because it was adapting to the failure of the Company to properly manage the scheme. As the *Spectator* stated in 1844, the flaw had been in the application of the system, not the system itself.  

In general, the *Spectator*, and the *Nelson Examiner*, continued to express faith in Wakefield's ideas by finding excuses, which were other than flaws in Wakefield's ideas, for the failings of the new settlements.

These excuses largely centred on the imbalance between the inflow of capital and labour, particularly with too little of the former being sent to the settlements. As early as November 1842 (and before its rejection of Wakefield's ideas), the *New Zealand Colonist* pressed the Company to arrange for the supply of more capital to the settlements, a point reiterated by the *Examiner* the following month, and by the *Wellington Spectator* in February 1843. The *Spectator* also suggested that if the Company decided to accept George Rennie's early proposals with respect to the eventual establishment of what was to be the Otago settlement, that it would do well to ensure that more capital was made available to the new settlement.  

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196 *New Zealand Colonist*, 24 April 1843.  
197 *Wellington Spectator*, 16 March 1844.  
198 *Nelson Examiner*, 26 October 1844.  
199 *New Zealand Colonist*, 1 November 1842; *Nelson Examiner*, 17 December 1842; *Wellington Spectator*, 2 February 1843.
At the end of 1843, the *Spectator* extended its criticism of the Company. It identified various faults including the Company’s lack of personnel with business experience, the inadequacy of the Company’s initial preparation of the colony, its haste in sending out settlers to the colony, and its supply of labour without regard to the wants of the colony. It also continued to harp on the need for capital. While noting that the work of the Company had improved, it also warned that the Company needed to avoid cutting back on expenditure. It was alarmed at the prospects of the Company exacerbating the poor inflow of capital through the further reduction of its own expenditure. It counselled against ‘a foolish parsimony’ as much as ‘misdirected expenditure’.²⁰⁰ A few months later, the *Spectator* added that ‘If, for instance, New Zealand is to advance only as she creates capital, our trade will not in fifty years be of that magnitude, which it would be in ten years, if the colony receives the proper aid and support from home’.²⁰¹ This was the same sort of claim Wakefield had made in *A Letter from Sydney* for systematic colonisation in general. Systematic colonisation would advance a colony to a stage in ten years that would take fifty years in a colony settled without the assistance of his scheme.²⁰²

The Company’s application of Wakefield’s theory was also specifically criticised in a letter to the *Examiner* from Wanganui in 1843. According to this correspondence, the Company’s faulty application had begun with the establishment of the Company’s high minimum wage. The high wage had enabled the labourers to overcome the barrier of the ‘sufficient price’ and produced exactly the want of labour that Wakefield had sought to avoid. The correspondent noted firstly that ‘Hitherto the want has not been extensively felt; we could occasionally obtain some sinewy fellows, but only at an exorbitant rate. The wages of working men on the survey was fixed at fifty pounds

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²⁰⁰ *Wellington Spectator*, 9 December 1843. Also see, *Wellington Spectator*, 10 April 1844.
²⁰¹ *Wellington Spectator*, 7 February 1844.
²⁰² See pp.11-12 above.
a year and rations – hear this you miserable cottiers of the United Kingdom, who
labour for twelve hours in the day for a pittance of six, or eight, or tenpence! – and
this became the market price.' Payment at this rate, according to the correspondent,
allowed the labourer to quickly buy his own land and leave the landowner to the
barbarising task of performing his own menial duties. The correspondent noted that
the 'Settlers, who must have had help "will ye nil ye", were obliged to pay this sum,
and soon their labourers retired from service and became free-holders. Other settlers
of small means and gentle birth, not having a Gi[d]eonitish nation to task, were
compelled to be their own "hewers of wood and drawers of water", and these had not
even hope to refresh their labours – their anticipated possessions was a dream – the
assurances of Mr. John Ward, mockery – and they saw daily disappearing the
conveniences and comforts which months of anxious thought and almost griping
economy enabled them to accumulate for future years.' The settler concluded that
'We have been cruelly and shamefully neglected, our just rights have been withheld,
and our remonstrances disregarded. A heavy responsibility attaches to the New
Zealand Company, and assuredly it will be demanded. I know not and care not
through what agency this Company was misled, but to them we must look for
redress. We trusted in their judgement and integrity, we believed in their confident
assertions – and they must recompense us.' 203 Some recompense, at least in the
form of an exchange of 'worthless land for good', did ultimately eventuate in the late
1840s. 204

There was also, as the letter from the Wanganui settler indicates in passing, a further
theme to the excuses alongside the general concern over the performance of the
Company. This was the Company's claim that its failures were the result of the
obstruction of the Crown. In general, relations between the Company and the Crown

203 Nelson Examiner, 22 July 1843.
204 Miller, pp.112-13; Allan, pp.378-385.
had never been good. The Company in London felt the government had wanted to prevent it from undertaking the work of colonising New Zealand. Relations in New Zealand were also strained, primarily because Hobson had chosen Auckland as his capital and because the government had decided to investigate land purchases before confirming them, thus seemingly restricting the potential for land development in the Company’s settlements. Hobson’s recruitment of some of the Wellington labourers for work in Auckland had added to the tension.\(^{206}\) For a brief period following Hobson’s death and the appointment of FitzRoy as the new Governor, the Company held out hopes of some improvement. The Spectator, in articulating this hope, claimed that the problems of unemployment and low wages in particular would be easily resolved by the new governor. It noted in the first instance that labour had never been greatly ‘superabundant’, but that even ‘A very small surplus of labour has a depressing tendency upon wages very far in excess of the proportion which the persons seeking employment bear to the whole working class of a community.’ Thus, with such a minor fault to remedy, the Spectator stated, ‘We feel confident the relief we may reasonably expect upon the arrival of Captain FitzRoy will soon prove the principle we have just asserted, and that all really good men willing and able to work will find employment within their command at reasonable rates of wages.’\(^{206}\) Unfortunately, the hoped for relief – the approval of the Company’s title – was not forthcoming. The Spectator indicated at the end of 1843 that FitzRoy’s appointment had changed, and would change nothing.\(^{207}\) In the end FitzRoy was pilloried in much the same way as Hobson had been.\(^{208}\) The Examiner also damned the government generally in March 1845 stating that ‘though the Government has injured us beyond the power of compensation in wasting our resources; in driving away many valuable

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\(^{206}\) Wellington Spectator, 22 November 1843.  
\(^{207}\) Wellington Spectator, 9 December 1843.  
\(^{208}\) See for example Nelson Examiner, 14 and 21 December 1844.
settlers; in injuring our trade; and in preventing further immigration from the confusion and anarchy which have resulted from its measures, though our present prospects are gloomy, the [Nelson] settlement has taken too deep root to be entirely prostrated.208

Unless the settlements’ newspapers were badly out of touch with their readership, therefore, there was still support in the settlements at the end of 1844 for Wakefield’s ideas in relation to the control of labour, even if this control had not been achieved by the Company. In fact, the support existed because this control had not been properly exercised. If it had not been properly exercised, the scheme had obviously not been given a fair test. This was crucial in more generally leaving open the possibility that another test would have to be undertaken. It was an opportunity which was eventually taken in the establishment of the Otago and Canterbury settlements.

A significant degree of support in the settlement for Wakefield’s general principles as they related to labour control is also indicated in relation to the issues of forced labour and the enforcement of specific service. As discussed in the previous chapter, the early South Australian colonists had used indentured labour from the very beginning of the colonisation of South Australia and they had also passed a severe master and servant law as one of their very first legislative acts on arrival in the new colony.210 By comparison, the behaviour of the first New Zealand Wakefield colonists was far more closely aligned to Wakefield’s opposition to the use of any labour forced to work through physical coercion and action or by the threat and application of punitive penal sanctions.

208 Nelson Examiner, 1 March 1845.
210 See pp.129-30 above.
Like the South Australians, the New Zealand Company and the Wakefield settlers were adamantly opposed to convict labour.\textsuperscript{211} This was still a serious consideration in 1840. Britain continued to send convicts to Australia until 1868.\textsuperscript{212} Unlike the South Australians, however, they did not use indentured labour nor do they appear to have been inclined to do so. This is strongly indicated by \textit{New Zealand Journal}, which generally articulated the views of the New Zealand Company.\textsuperscript{213} While the Company gave a preference in its selection process to labourers under engagement to ‘capitalists intending to emigrate’,\textsuperscript{214} the \textit{Journal} made it clear that neither these labourers, nor any others, were being placed under indentured contracts. It noted that labour was simply to be ‘conveyed to the Colony’ and that ‘At the moment of landing the individual labourer is at liberty to make what bargain he pleases. In like manner, as part of the proposed plan, neither the Government nor a Colonising Company could become a party to any contract for securing service as the price of passage.’ The \textit{Journal} added that while inden\textsuperscript{214}ured contracts were legally enforceable, they were impossible to enforce in practice. It also stated that if the contracts were ‘at lower wages …, the labourer invariably deems himself cheated – and so he is.’ According to the \textit{Journal}, the situation was very clear: ‘The only fair

\textsuperscript{211} The \textit{Nelson Examiner}, 10 September 1842, for example, rejected transportation and stated that ‘Emigration among a free people must of course by voluntary’. The \textit{Wellington Spectator}, 7 December 1842, also reacted badly to news of the arrival of about 60 boys, previously inmates at Parkhurst Prison in England, in Auckland, in 1842. It noted that ‘This is another modification of transportation, against which one and all must protest. It is a monstrous way of using the emigration fund, for we think it can be shown that a worse way of flooding us with convicts could not be conceived.’ Also see \textit{Wellington Spectator}, 10 December 1842 and Marais, p.161. The British government agreed later not to send any further boys, ‘Great Britain Parliamentary Papers Relating to New Zealand’, vol.6, 337/116. Neither the New Zealand Company nor the purchasers of land in the settlements used or contemplated the use of black slaves. This was not even a remote consideration for any British colonist in 1840.

\textsuperscript{212} See p.47 above.

\textsuperscript{213} Marais, p.47; Allan, p.52.

\textsuperscript{214} Ward, p.158. In the case of the South Australian requirements, the Commissioners sought emigrant labourers engaged for at least one year. The contracts were also clearly designed to bind the servant to their masters for this period, see p.128n above. The general interest of the New Zealand Company in the preference may have served two purposes. First, it ensured that emigrating land purchasers could guarantee that the passages of their own labourers were funded by the Company. And, second, it also relieved the Company of some of the onerous responsibility of selecting labourers.
contract is an agreement to employ at current wages.\textsuperscript{215} This was exactly the situation that Wakefield had described in \textit{A Letter from Sydney}.\textsuperscript{216}

In addition, there appears to have been considerable reticence on the part of the colonists in relation to the use of master and servant law to enforce even contracts of service against workmen in the first years of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements.

To briefly note the status of this law in the first years of colonial New Zealand, whilst there was no attempt to emulate the South Australians and introduce or seek the introduction of any new master and servant law in New Zealand, master and servant law did apply nevertheless. This followed in the Wakefield settlements, first from the adoption by the initial Wellington settlers of a private covenant agreeing to apply English law,\textsuperscript{217} and then from the automatic application of the general body of New South Wales and English laws when New Zealand first fell under the jurisdiction of the New South Wales Government and then became a British colony in its own right.\textsuperscript{218} The first of the master and servant laws to apply therefore was the 1823

\textsuperscript{215} \textit{New Zealand Journal}, 2 January 1841; Ward, p.159.

\textsuperscript{216} See p.19 above. The South Australian Commissioners noted in their regulations “that emigrant labourers should be hired by some capitalist for at least one year from their arrival in ... [South Australia]”, (Hill), p.3. The New Zealand Company did not include any reference to its regulations to any period of service in New Zealand.

\textsuperscript{217} English law was initially adopted by the Wellington Wakefield settlers in the form of a covenant agreed to by the first settlers before they left England: N.A. Foden, \textit{New Zealand Legal History: 1642 to 1842}, Wellington, 1965, ch.8; J.Hight and H.D.Bamford, \textit{The Constitutional History and Law of New Zealand}, Christchurch, 1914, pp.141-43; A.H.McLintock, \textit{Crown Colony Government of New Zealand}, Wellington, 1958, pp.264-66. The covenant reflected in part Wakefield’s idea of ‘imperium in imperio’, which promoted the movement of emigrants as an organised group to a new colony, \textit{The New British Province of South Australia}, pp. 4-7. Wakefield, in his restatement of this idea in 1837, added that the colonists would benefit from this cohesion, especially, ‘If before their departure they procure to be made, so as to carry along with them, the laws which they will have to obey’, E.G.Wakefield and J. Ward, \textit{The British Colonization of New Zealand}, London, 1837, xiv-xv.

\textsuperscript{218} When British sovereignty was established as a result of the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand became part of an extended New South Wales colony and the law of New South Wales generally applied. In terms of its composition, New South Wales law was a mixture of English law received at the outset of the establishment of the colony and modified by new statutes and ordinances passed subsequently by the New South Wales administration: Alex Castles, \textit{An Australian Legal History}, Sydney, 1982, pp.1,11, 17-19; Foden, pp.148,150-51. The applicable law finally reverted back to English law in 1842 after New Zealand had been made a separate colony and after a transitional period in which the Governor and Legislative Council introduced New Zealand ordinances to substitute for the New South Wales ordinances which had been in force. Hight and Bamford, pp.158-64; J.L.Robson,
English statute. This was followed by the 1828 New South Wales Act and then the 1840 New South Wales Act. 219

The judicial machinery for using and enforcing this applicable master and servant law, including the master and servant laws, was also available to the New Zealand settlers. With regard to the Wakefield settlements, magistrates were in place in Wellington at least by 1841 and in New Plymouth and Nelson by 1842. 220 Also illustrating the application of the law generally in New Zealand, the New Zealand Journal reported a master and servant case in the Bay of Islands during 1840. The report noted that 'Richmond and Samuels, sawyers in the employ of Mr. Mair, were sentenced to two months' imprisonment for absconding from their hired service.' 221

Even if the settlers did not imitate the South Australians and pass their own particular law on arrival, therefore, master and servant law clearly arrived in New Zealand in 1840. Despite the availability of this law and the opportunity for masters to use its provisions against servants to maintain continuity of service, however, there is no record of any such usage while the Company actively operated in the New Zealand Wakefield settlements. There are no references in the court and police reports

219 See pp.48-49 above. The 1840 Act, 4 Vic. 23, provided for the apprehension and punishment of servants who absented themselves from their work, refused or neglected their work, returned their work, or ‘quit the same’, before completing it. The Act provided as its first penalty the forfeiture of wages and the payment of double the damages due to the master for loss caused by the servant. In the event that the servant was unable to pay the damages, the servant could be committed ‘to the common gaol there to remain without bail or mainprise for any time not exceeding three calendar months unless the same [that is the double damages awarded] be sooner paid.’ The 1840 New South Wales statute was replaced in 1845, that is after New Zealand came under British law. This statute, 9 Vic. 27, provided for ‘Justices to commit every such person [that is the offending servant] to the house of correction there to remain for a reasonable time not exceeding three months or in lieu thereof to punish the offender by abating the whole or any part of his wage and to discharge such servant from his contract service or employment Provided it be the desire of such master employer or employers or his or their manager agent or overseer that such servant shall be so discharged but not otherwise.’
221 New Zealand Journal, 22 May 1841.
carried by the newspapers in the settlements,\textsuperscript{222} or in letters, or the Company's papers, to any master and servant cases in the settlements. The extant court records for the period, unfortunately only available for the Nelson settlement from 1842, also do not show any master and servant cases taken by masters to hold on to their servants in the early settlement period. The predominant work of the courts was instead debts, including some attempts to recover outstanding wages; ship desertions; stealing; trespass; damage caused by livestock; drunkenness; and assaults.\textsuperscript{223} The apparent lack of reporting of master and servant cases stands in sharp contrast to the particular attention given to the master and servant law by the South Australians, and also to the use of master and servant law in New South Wales. Adrian Merritt has estimated that there was a 'total of 160,000 prosecutions in New South Wales from 1845 to 1930'.\textsuperscript{224} This was an average rate of nearly nineteen hundred cases a year. There was clearly no comparable rate of use of master and servant law in New Zealand's Wakefield settlements between 1840 and 1844, even allowing for the difference in the size of the populations of the respective colonies.

It is also useful to note that the \textit{New Zealand Journal} discouraged the use of the punitive provisions of the master and servant law over this early period through some very critical, but largely ill-informed, comments in relation to the New South Wales master and servant law. In reference to the New South Wales statute of 1840, it

\textsuperscript{222} For example see: \textit{Nelson Examiner}, 29 October 1842, 31 December 1842, 27 April 1844; \textit{Wellington Spectator}, 8 January 1842, 1 March 1843, 11 September 1844; \textit{New Zealand Spectator}, 26 October 1844, 13 December 1845, 20 March 1847. The \textit{Wellington Spectator} (e.g. 2 November 1842, 12 December 1842, 28 October 1843) and the \textit{New Zealand Spectator} (26 September 1846) also occasionally carried reports for Wanganui and Auckland.


\textsuperscript{224} Merrett, pp.61-62.
noted in February 1841, that ‘we observe very lately that an act for the purpose of enabling the master to tyrannise over his work men has been extended to New Zealand.’ Later, in May 1841, the Journal provided further criticism, both attacking the new New South Wales master and servant statute and praising the English law. It stated that ‘The Council of Sydney has been too long in the habit of legislating for convict labourers to permit them to appreciate and do justice to free men. The whole character of Sydney legislation, between employer and employed, accordingly, loses sight of the idea of a contract of hiring and service, such as our law contemplates, and such, moreover, as our labouring classes are accustomed to, and arms the master with powers of coercion which convert him at once into a tyrant over slaves.’ The Journal added that servants and artificers under the New South Wales law were treated as felons for, what in Britain was a ‘simply a breach of contract’ and expressed surprise that any would emigrate to New South Wales with such a prospect. Unfortunately, the Journal misrepresented the English law, which quite plainly did provide criminal sanctions for breaches of service requirements.

One should note, that the Nelson court records do begin to record some master and servant cases from 1846 onwards. The first of these cases, dated in January 1846 involved ‘David Nioriso’, who, having being hired ‘from week to week’, by ‘Richard Kinsideley’, was charged with having ‘absconded and deserted from the services of Kinsideley. No record of the outcome is provided. Other cases were recorded in 1848 and 1849 and beyond. In these cases, the courts’ decisions were noted. One

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225 New Zealand Journal, 27 February 1841.
226 New Zealand Journal, 22 May 1841. The Journal also sought to emphasise the liberal conditions espoused by the Company by printing adverse reports of conditions in Tasmania. On 20 June 1840, it reported for example that ‘the Colonists [in Van Diemen’s Land] were extremely anxious that the whole of the proceeds [from land sales] should be applied to the purposes of emigration; they appear to wish, also, that the labourers so emigrating should be bound down to remain three years in the island, stating, that if this is not done, they will probably be importing emigrants for the benefit of Port Phillip, labour being much higher in that Colony’. The Journal also reported on 19 June 1841 that servants in Van Diemen’s Land were flogged for neglecting their cuties.
employee of Renwick and McAlister, possibly a brewing firm, was sentenced to fourteen days with hard labour for being drunk at work and then leaving without notice. The employee was not required to return to complete his service. 228 Another case, taken by Hugh Martin, a farmer, against Andrew Henderson for failing to complete a promised twelve months of service as a husbandry labourer, was withdrawn on the basis that Henderson returned to service until a replacement labourer was found. 229 In the case of an absconding carpenter apprentice, the apprentice was fined. 230 And in yet another case, John McDonald complained that his labourer, George Gipps, had 'absented himself without consent' and 'contrary to the provisions of the Statute'. The 'boy' defended his action. He feared he was going to be whipped because he had been late back with McDonald's cows. The magistrate sentenced Gipps to fourteen days hard labour. 231

It is not clear why these master and servant cases began to appear in Nelson in 1846. Perhaps one of the best answers is that the labour market had become better balanced causing more competition for labour and creating more incentive for masters to hold onto their existing employees. McAlloon indicates a slowly recovering settlement over this period and some labour had also departed for other colonies. 232 A second answer is that the influence of Wakefield's theory had receded somewhat, partly because the Company no longer dominated the settlement and partly because Wakefield's ideas were at least undermined to some degree by the poor condition of the settlement. Regardless of the reason or reasons, there seems little doubt that the Nelson settlement at least had lost something of the distinctive character of its early labour relations as a result of this development.

As discussed in the following chapter, there appear to have been at least some further but perhaps isolated actions taken by masters against their servants under master and servant law in a variety of places in New Zealand. At the same time, it is also very clear that these actions were never widespread or on the same scale as they were in Australia.  

In addition to the newspapers and the masters in the settlements, the first workmen also reflected the influence of Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation. In terms of their objects, they of course generally emigrated, as most if not all workmen and colonists did, in order to obtain better lives and to better themselves. But they were also subject to and reflected the New Zealand Company’s aggressive promotion of the virtues of systematic colonisation. This promotion was designed to attract their attention and encourage them to emigrate to the New Zealand Wakefield settlements instead of more accessible and better known destinations. The promotion also made it clear that the workmen would be employed as workmen in the new settlements. They would not be granted land to become frontier subsistence farmers. They were specifically promised secure employment and good wages.

The understanding of the Company’s promotion by the workmen in the early days of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements is demonstrated particularly in relation to the Company’s guarantee of employment. The workmen’s petitions, as already discussed above, explicitly related their decisions to emigrate to the Wakefield settlements, to the Company’s guarantee of work. In 1842, the New Plymouth

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233 One or two cases a year on average continue to appear in the Nelson records after 1849, see for example, Nelson: Records of Depositions, vols 6-10. The records for the Wanganui Police and Petty Sessions Court Fines, 1845-1853, also show a brief flurry of actions against servants under the ‘Hired Servants Act’ from late 1851 to early 1853. The actions seem to involve the mistaken application of the New South Wales master and servant legislation, see Appendix. The substantial majority of the Wanganui cases led to reprimands or case dismissals.
labourers had noted that 'the acting agent of the then Plymouth Company of New Zealand' had promised 'that the wages we should receive on our arrival here would be 1 Pound Sterling and rations per week from the company if no better could be Obtained.' The promise had persuaded them to take the difficult step of leaving England for New Zealand 'with a view of improving' their condition. In the petition presented by the Nelson labourers to Arthur Wakefield in early 1843, the labourers noted that 'the Company's 16th Resolution guarantees to us Employment provided that we cannot meet with it elsewhere. It does not guarantee Subsistence but expresses the word Employment distinctly', and 'Before we left England we were told that if we could get work no where else the Company would give us one guinea per week with rations, and this we consider our lawful rights'. In addition, the Nelson labourers also directly related their decisions to the Company's general promise of prosperity. They stated that other 'flattering pretensions', in addition to the promise of work, had 'seduced' them into coming to New Zealand. They also indicated an understanding of the vital role labour placed in Wakefield's system. They threatened to leave when the Company cut their relief provisions and 'If you do not stretch forth your hand to the working class at Nelson you will never have a Colony' and that 'We at present are the only circulating medium. On you Sir (visa: versa:) success of the Colony depends. If you refuse to stand by the working men of Nelson you Sign its Death warrant and seal its doom'. The Wellington and New Plymouth workmen also threatened to leave at various times. The Nelson workmen had at least found the Company's flattering pretensions' compelling at the time they had emigrated. This may have been perhaps because of the example of the apparently associated success of South Australia or at least some passing acquaintance with Wakefield's theory of systematic colonisation and why prosperity would follow from the

234 Petition to Wicksteed, 14 May 1842, N.Z.C 308/1.
235 Miller, pp.121-22; Nelson Examiner, 21 January 1843.
236 See pp.190-95 above.
application of his theory. There seems to be little reason for the workmen in Wellington and New Plymouth not to have been similarly influenced.

The workmen also reflected both the general motivations for emigration and the influence of the promise of Wakefield’s scheme through their collective action to secure better conditions as servants and labourers. These conditions were in the form of shorter working hours and good wages. The action clearly coincided with the general object of self advancement. In addition, it reflected Wakefield’s ideas in its clear focus on securing the objectives of servants and labourers as servants and labourers. What also suggests that the action of workmen reflected more than the ordinary objects of emigration, and therefore the special promise of Wakefield’s scheme, is their interest in securing the advanced object of the eight hour day.

It also needs to be noted, however, that shorter hours and collective action were not fully consistent with Wakefield’s ideals and that the influence and inspiration of these ideals also faded. Shorter hours of course tended to conflict with the Wakefield’s expectation that labourers would be industrious and ambitious. This was also true of the collective action they resorted to, which conflicted with the free running of the labour market within the boundaries set by the supply of labour by the New Zealand Company. In addition, it is evident that the great expectations of the workmen derived from their positive view of the prospects of emigration, particularly conducted under the principles of systematic colonisation, only lasted a short while and had been largely dashed by the time the Company ceased business in 1844.

In Wellington, the dominant feature of this activity of the early workmen emigrants and their pursuit of promised better lives comprised the well known quest and achievement of the eight hour working day. The interest of the workmen in reduced hours was linked, as with the minimum wage, to the activity in Britain of various
political radicals and the Chartists, who strongly supported reduced hours of work. The main vehicle for this effort by the radicals was the Ten Hours Movement, but there was also some effort to establish an even shorter working day. Dorothy Thompson notes that during the 1830s, 'The Society for the Promotion of National Regeneration, founded in Lancashire, proposed direct industrial action in support of a legal eight-hour day.'\textsuperscript{237} The Society included Robert Owen and John Fielden among its leading members.\textsuperscript{238} Generally, however, the first object of the radicals had to be the ten hour day. Indeed, Cornish and Clark note that it was not until the 1890s that the eight hour day made real 'headway' in Britain by 'being accepted, for instance, in government and municipal works.'\textsuperscript{239}

There are two accounts of the adoption of the eight hour day in Wellington. The first is that it was introduced by the Wellington surveying crew following their confinement together on the \textit{Cuba} on their four month journey to New Zealand. This was evidently a conducive environment and time for the workmen to consider such matters and come to a common position. In keeping with the main contemporary objective of a ten hour-day, Roth notes that the surveyors discussed and initially proposed a ten hour working day, presumably to be their joint demand for presentation to the Company on arrival. Roth also notes, however, that one of the passengers, Arthur Heywood, 'had worked an eight-hour day in a socialist community in Cambridge' and was a sufficiently strong advocate to persuade the rest of the workmen on the vessel to support the same principle.\textsuperscript{240} The Company was of course desperate for the settlement to be surveyed and appears to have readily agreed to the demand when the survey crew arrived in Wellington.\textsuperscript{241}

\textsuperscript{237} Thompson, pp.24-25.
\textsuperscript{238} D.G.Wright, p.104; Roth, p.3.
\textsuperscript{239} Cornish and Clark, pp. 307-08.
\textsuperscript{240} Roth, p.3.
\textsuperscript{241} 'The Struggle for the Eight Hours' System, J.D.Salmond Papers, Misc. MS.257. Also note Hicks to Brother, 4 June 1840, in \textit{New Zealand Journal}, 15 January 1841. Hicks stated in his letter that he did
Alongside this development, Samuel Parnell also appears to have contributed to the restriction of working hours in the Wellington settlement to eight hours. Parnell, a carpenter, had to negotiate his daily rate of wages and his hours of work. His inclination, like the surveyors, was also for an eight hour day. In addition, and again like the surveyors, he had considerable leverage to ensure he obtained the hours he wanted. In Parnell’s case, his advantage was the shortage of carpenters as the settlers began to construct their new settlement. Only three arrived in the first group of Company ships. Thus Parnell was able to insist on and obtain an eight hour day as part of his agreement to build a store house for George Hunter, a merchant in the new settlement. Roth notes that this example was followed by other tradesmen and enforced as a general standard for all workmen in the settlement by ensuring that all new immigrant ships were met and advised of the practice and that ‘anyone offending’ would ‘be ducked into the harbour’.\textsuperscript{242}

In contrast to their action in obtaining the eight hour day, there is little to indicate any concerted effort on the part of the Wellington workmen to secure good wages from 1840 to 1842. If this was the case, as it seems to be, it reflected both patience on the part of the workmen and a generally strong demand for labour.

With regard to the initial landing period, the workmen did arrive with high expectations of good wages as promised by Wakefield and the Company. As already noted, William Wakefield recorded in his journal that he had to reduce the expectations of the new emigrants on arrival in Wellington because of the lack of

\textsuperscript{not want to return to England to work hard. We work eight hours a day for our two pounds per week … if you were to know how things are going on you would stop in England but a very little while; for this [Wellington] is an excellent place’.}

\textsuperscript{242} Roth, p.3. Elsewhere Roth places more reliance on the Parnell account than the Cuba account, ‘Parnell, Samuel Duncan’, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, pp.334-336.
employment, other than with the Company, to ‘as many shillings a week for their labour as they had anticipated per day.’ At this stage, the promise of the generous minimum wage of £1 plus rations had still to be made. Despite their undoubted initial disappointment, however, it appears that the Wellington labourers expected and were prepared to wait for an improvement. A letter written just after the first settlers arrived in Wellington stated that when the land purchasers got their land and ‘they begin to build a town; then our wages will be more than double [the Company rate], as there will not be quarter enough hands.’

In the event, the confidence was justified and the demand for labour began to rise within perhaps even weeks of the arrival of the emigrants, as a result, particularly, of increasing construction activity. With the Company rate providing a bottom to the market, this in turn generated rising wages which were sustained at a relatively high level from at least mid 1840 until late 1842. There are, for example, a number of references to wage rates during the construction phase of the settlement indicating wage rates from, at the very lowest, 24s. to 36s. a week and above for labourers, and from 36s. to over £3 for tradesmen. A few references described even higher rates. Alexander Majoribanks’s travel book stated that labourers were receiving 42s. in 1841, and bricklayers, carpenters, and similar tradesmen received £4.

Furthermore, a Wellington letter sent in June 1840 reported that one individual ‘is earning £4 and £5 a week.’ Another letter noted that ‘A woman can earn 15s. per week very comfortably.’ The New Zealand Colonist also regularly published a range of wage rates which sat comfortably within these bands.

244 New Zealand Journal, 1 August 1840.
247 New Zealand Journal, 10 April 1841.
248 New Zealand Journal, 27 March 1841.
249 For example: New Zealand Colonist, 2 August 1842.
Besides the lack of work on arrival, there seems to have been just one discordant note in terms of the wages paid in the Wellington settlement in its first few years. This involved William Wakefield's initial breach of the minimum wage following the apparent difficulty landholders had in getting labourers to work on clearing land in the Hutt in October 1841. According to William Wakefield, action had to be taken because at least some workmen believed the rates offered by employers other than the Company were not high enough relative to the Company rate to compensate for the greater difficulty or inconvenience of the work. Other than this incident, though, there seems to have been no sign of complaint that the workmen were not able to obtain the wages they had expected on arrival as a result of the Company's promotion of Wakefield's scheme.

In contrast to the evidence for Wellington, the focus of collective action in New Plymouth and Nelson was more obviously on good wages than shorter hours. This is probably because economic activity, and thus the demand for labour, was not as strong in the newer settlements. To achieve similar rates to those in Wellington, therefore, greater reliance had to be placed on the Company rate and collective action. As already discussed, the first indication of collective action in New Plymouth involved a meeting where the very first settlers to New Plymouth met the Company's local officers and argued over what rates should be paid. They eventually agreed that labourers should be paid 5s. per day and mechanics, 7s. Dalziel also notes that 'shortly after this the carpenters demanded and got an increase to 7/6.' Furthermore, with a rise in prices, the labourers also 'struck for a wage increase' but the Company firmly resisted 'and the strike rapidly collapsed.'

Clearly, this defeat underlined the relative weakness of the labourers in the labour market. But, for the time being at

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250 Dalziel, 'Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth', p.16.
least, they did remain protected by access to work with the Company, and by the Company's rate. Despite the defeat of the labourers' strike, therefore, the workmen do not appear to have lost much ground at least in the medium term, that is, during 1841 and the early part of 1842 (before the Company reduced its rate in the settlement). A letter from A. and E. Hoskin to their parents in England in February 1842, for example, reported that labourers continued to earn between 5s. and 7s. per day; tradesmen, 8s.; females in service, £12 to £18 per annum; and sawyers, the grand sum of £3 per week.\(^{251}\) Another letter back to England compared similar wages with 'The agriculturalist earning 8s. or 8s. 6d. per week at home.'\(^{252}\)

The Nelson workmen also expected good wages and the carpenters took specific steps to ensure that this happened. The *Nelson Examiner* noted in May 1842 that at 'A meeting of the Journeymen Carpenters of this settlement', held on 6 May 1842, that 'a resolution was passed to the effect that no carpenter should work for less than 12s. per day.' The meeting was also attended by the editor of the *Examiner* who 'endeavoured to impress upon the meeting his view of the political economy of the question of wages, and the impropriety of attempting to combine to fix any rate of wages, but without much effect, for the resolution was unanimously adopted.'\(^{253}\) It would seem likely nevertheless that the editor's view was shared by others of the settler elite and the settlement's landowners and masters.

Nelson's generally high wage rates during 1842 (despite the lack of employers in the settlement) were noted in a number of sources. These sources indicate that the rates specifically for labourers were slightly higher than those in New Plymouth, suggesting a marginally stronger demand and/or more effective organisation by the labourers in

\(^{251}\) *Letters from New Plymouth*, pp.7-8.

\(^{252}\) *Letters from New Plymouth*, p.6.

\(^{253}\) *Nelson Examiner*, 14 May 1842.
Nelson. One letter in April 1842 noted that 'Wages are at present ruinously high; a common labourer cannot be had under 6s. a-day, carpenters 12s., and sawyers 15s. Of course, while this lasts very little can be done, but when we have more emigrants labour will certainly become more reasonable, though never perhaps so low as at home. It is a splendid country for the working classes'.\textsuperscript{254} Another correspondent brought an employers' old world perspective of fair wages to bear on the circumstances in Nelson. He emphasised that prices were 'very dear', with the effect of making 'labour dearer than it ought to be' and 'allowing to the labouring class a far greater share of wages than in England, and such as ought to be a proper proportion of the profits between them and the employers.' In addition, the writer indicated that collective enforcement lay behind the high rates. He noted that 'there is little doing, for no one will lay out a pound more that he can help; while tradesmen are 12s. a-day, and labourers 6s. or 7s.; the result is a most unwholesome state of society.'\textsuperscript{255} The sentiment was reinforced by another letter written in July 1842 which stated that 'The high price of labour here is not from its scarcity or the value of it, but because there is a kind of tacit agreement not to work under certain prices.'\textsuperscript{256} William Wakefield's report of 19 January 1843 also noted that the Company's promise had 'led to combinations or at any rate tacit resolutions' designed to prevent the movement of wages in relation 'to the existing supply of and demand for labor.' He added that 'The present rates of wages, which differ very little from those of the first days of the Colony ... [despite the fall in prices] confirm me in this opinion.'\textsuperscript{257}

While wages tended to take centre stage in Nelson and New Plymouth, there is evidence that the two settlements did nevertheless adopt the principle of the eight hour working day. Whether or not this occurred independently of the establishment of

\textsuperscript{254} Letters from Settlers, p.83. Also see p.88.
\textsuperscript{255} New Zealand Journal, 29 April 1843.
\textsuperscript{256} Letters from Settlers, p.106.
the eight hour day in Wellington is not clear. George Dodson, probably one of the original surveying crew to the Nelson settlement, wrote in February 1842 that he was 'building a house', he was paid '£1. 1s. per week' plus rations, and that he worked 'eight hours in the day'.\textsuperscript{258} Most remarkably, the labourers appear to have worked even shorter hours in New Plymouth. A seven hour day, perhaps an associated result of the first heated discussions over wage rates which occurred when the settlers first arrived, is indicated in a journal kept by Dr. Henry Weekes. The journal notes a change in hours in the middle of 1841 when the labourers took strike action to increase their daily wage rate, but were forced to back down. As a mark of their capitulation, Weekes noted that 'they soon found that the best plan was to resume their labours, which they were allowed to on their working eight hours a day instead of seven.' Weekes described the seven hour day later in his journal as 'dockyard hours'.\textsuperscript{259} Generally, this achievement of the workmen in relation to hours in New Plymouth and Nelson, as well as Wellington, put them well ahead of the vast majority of their contemporaries in England. What also ties their special achievement to Wakefield and the New Zealand Company is that there does not appear to have been any parallel attempts in the Australian colonies to obtain similarly reduced hours during the 1840s.

It is possible to conclude that the first settler workmen were relatively content with their wages and hours in the opening period of the establishment of their settlements. Variously, the Company or the market provided them with generally good, or very good rates of wages, or the workmen themselves had secured similar rates, and good hours, by collective action. Their particular part of Wakefield's promised prosperity seemed to have been secured. Only one group of working people in the settlements seems to have generally not obtained, by one means or another, what

\textsuperscript{258} \textit{Letters from Settlers}, pp.65-66.
\textsuperscript{259} Rutherford and Skinner, pp. 53, 86, 95.
had been promised. The Company’s stated intention had been that Maori labourers would be given ‘employment at full wages’.\textsuperscript{260} It appears that at first they were in fact paid in kind in Wellington – ‘in blankets, tobacco, food, etc.’\textsuperscript{261} Later, it appears they were paid at a rate of perhaps around 3s. per day.\textsuperscript{262} In New Plymouth, at least some of the Maori workmen were also initially paid in kind, that is in tobacco. Later this seems to have changed to clothing and money.\textsuperscript{263} While the expectations of the Maori labourers appear to have increased over time, it is not readily apparent that they were in any way dissatisfied in the early period of the settlement with the fact that they did not get the same wages as the European emigrants. It seems quite likely that they were still adjusting to a money-based economy and were pleased to obtain wages at even relatively modest rates.

The first few years of the settlements seem therefore to have been a time of general contentment for the workmen in terms of their working conditions. This did not last, however, and there can be hardly any doubt that the influence on the European workmen of Wakefield’s vision of good wages amidst general prosperity had waned considerably by the time of the suspension of the Company’s activities in 1844. In part, this can be attributed to the Company’s reduction in its minimum wage and its provision of relief work. This action undermined a key part of the workmen’s conditions: their security of employment and income. It also generated, as discussed above,\textsuperscript{264} a strong but unsuccessful response from the workmen particularly in New Plymouth and Nelson.

\textsuperscript{260} New Zealand Journal, 15 August 1840.
\textsuperscript{261} New Zealand Journal, 29 August 1840.
\textsuperscript{262} Heaphy, p.64; Majoribanks, p.60. Also see New Zealand Journal, 2 January 1841.
\textsuperscript{263} Letters from New Plymouth, pp.29-30. Maori labourers were also employed outside the settlements by the Company, for example, for the purpose of cutting a bridle path to help improve communication between the settlement and Wellington: Wells, p.84.
\textsuperscript{264} See pp.188-208.
Also in part, however, the declining conditions are clearly attributable to the Anglo-Australasian economic depression. The depression made work very difficult to find in all the settlements and made it impossible for the workmen to hold wage rates, even through collective action. Circumstances in New Plymouth where work had been most scarce became even worse. It became increasingly important therefore for the workmen to try and get the Company to keep to its promise and provide a platform for wages. With free access to Company work at a standard relief rate, no one needed to take a lesser rate from another employer and employers were therefore prevented from setting ever lower rates and creating a downward spiral in wages. The desperate efforts of the workmen to hold the Company to its promises of work and the minimum wage, especially in New Plymouth and Nelson, however, were largely ineffective, at best only slowing the decline in their wage rates.

With regard to the detail of this decline in wage rates generally, the drastic fall in Wellington is clearly recorded in the newspapers. The labourers' rate fell from a range of 30s. to 36s. in August 1842, to 28s. to 30s. in January 1843. This again fell in July 1843 to a range of 16s. to 30s. The rates for mechanics fell even more markedly from between 40s. and 60s. in January 1843 to between 20s. and 30s. in July. 265 These lower rates persisted during 1844. 266

In New Plymouth the decline was even worse. Over the winter of 1842, most of the labourers had to take up work with the Company and accept the reduced rate of 16s. plus rations per week which it had set in May 1842. 267 Only sawyers appear to have been in great demand and were paid, according to one settler, 'exorbitant wages'. 268

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266 Majoribanks, p.44.
267 Letters from New Plymouth, pp.53-54.
268 Letters from New Plymouth, p.46.
There was then a brief spring revival. The *Nelson Examiner* reported that good men were hard to get in New Plymouth and were paid between 5s. and 6s. per day.\(^{269}\) A letter from a settler back to Thomas Woollcombe (one of the initial organisers of the New Plymouth settlement) at about the same time noted rates for labourers and a variety of different mechanics of between 5s. and 10s. per day, and also that the 'seven or eight master carpenters' in the settlement had 'their hands full of work' and were complaining that they could not 'get journeymen' to assist them.\(^{270}\) The revival did not last, however, and by April 1843 the labourers' rates had generally fallen back to a bottom rate of 3s.6d. per day.\(^{271}\) The *Nelson Examiner*, again reporting on conditions in New Plymouth, noted that 'It is supposed that landowners may cultivate their property with profit on this rate of wages.'\(^{272}\) The rate for carpenters, up to 10s. a day in 1842, had dropped back to 8s.6d. by July 1843, and sawyers, formerly paid 16s. for each 100 feet of timber cut, were reduced to 10s.\(^{273}\) The labourers' rate fell again to only 2s. to 2s.6d. by April 1844. This time it was the *Wellington Spectator* which expected that the rate would enable the landowners in New Plymouth to begin economic production. The new rate, it stated, gave 'the farmer ... a prospect of raising agricultural produce at a moderate cost.'\(^{274}\) The lowest point appears to have been reached in February 1845 when the farmers combined to set the rate for farm labourers at '12 shillings per week, partly in cash partly in wheat at 6 shillings per bushel.'\(^{275}\) Quite openly, the landowners were now collectively setting rates. With the change in the market, roles had been reversed and it was the turn of the landowners to decide how shares in the fortunes of the settlements should be distributed. The rates also no longer compared favourably to those paid in England.\(^{276}\)

\(^{269}\) *Nelson Examiner*, 3 September 1842.

\(^{270}\) Wells, p.90.

\(^{271}\) *New Zealand Colonist*, 21 April 1843.

\(^{272}\) *Nelson Examiner*, 8 April 1843.

\(^{273}\) *New Zealand Journal*, 17 February 1844.

\(^{274}\) *Nelson Examiner*, 13 April 1844; *Wellington Spectator*, 15 May 1844.

\(^{275}\) Wells, p.135.

\(^{276}\) Dalziel, 'Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth', p.6.
An equally severe decline was experienced in Nelson. Just after the reduction in the Company rate in September 1842 in Nelson, the labourers' rates fell from the range of 6s. to 7s. down to 4s. to 5s. The rates for mechanics, which had been 12s., fell to between 7s. and 10s. 277 This last change brought some pleasure. Francis Jollie, surveyor and another one-time editor of the Examin, wrote 'There was, for a long time, no getting anything done by a carpenter under 12s. a day; now, they are glad to take 8s.' 278 A year later, the labourers' rates were down to 3s. to 4s., and the mechanics down to 5s. to 6s. 279 By August 1844, the respective ranges were 2s.6d. to 2s.9d. and 4s. to 5s. 280 Shortly afterwards, with the news of the suspension of the Company's activities, landowners in the district 'met a deputation from the labourers with whom it was agreed that wages of 10s. a week would be paid' with the proviso that where the employer did not have 'sufficient cash', payment would be 'wholly or partly in provisions and produce.' 281 As in New Plymouth, the bottom of the Nelson market was also reached in 1845, with rates falling to 1s.6d. 282

In addition to the decline in their wage rates, at least some of the workmen may have lost their eight hour day as well. In reducing the Company wage rates in March 1843, William Wakefield increased the Company's hours of work to six days at nine hours each. 283 Correspondence from Nelson indicates a fifty hour week was also in force for some workmen. 284

277 Nelson Examin, 15 October 1842.
278 Letters from Settlers, p.129.
279 Nelson Examin, 21 October 1843.
280 Nelson Examin, 3 August 1844.
281 Allan, p.363.
282 Nelson Examin, 19 April 1845.
284 New Zealand Journal, 5 August 1843.
It seems almost unnecessary to say that the workmen must have been extremely disappointed by the turn of events. Wakefield’s promise of prosperity had clearly been found wanting. The collective action of the workmen, too, had only been effective in the short term. It had of course achieved some notable successes from 1840 to 1842. Ultimately, however, they were not able to stop the Company reducing its relief obligations nor, more generally, prevent the downward slide in their working conditions in the face of a severe economic depression. Reduced largely to impotency, the workmen had to either accept their fate or depart for what they hoped were better prospects in colonies elsewhere.

To look further forward, it is of course true that the settlements eventually recovered from the malaise of the Anglo-Australasian depression. And, as economic conditions recovered, the workmen in the settlements began to look forward again to higher wages. Indeed, by the end of 1845, Wicksteed reported from New Plymouth to William Wakefield ‘that labourers were combining to extort high pay rates from farmers and landowners, “an evil which will not be diminished except by an importation of labourers”’.\textsuperscript{285} It is a moot point, however, that the workmen were acting with the same initial hopes and expectations of the first settlers – to ensure their own desired division of the spoils of an inevitable prosperity as derived from the application of systematic colonisation. One might well imagine that the Company’s failure to abide by its promise of the minimum wage and the drastic decline in the workmen’s conditions of employment would have cured the workmen of any such optimism with respect to the prospects of Wakefield’s scheme. It seems very likely that they now merely acted to secure whatever advantage the moment allowed them.\textsuperscript{286} It is less clear, however, that Wicksteed had left behind his leaning towards

\textsuperscript{285} Dalziel, p.25.
\textsuperscript{286} The declining hopes of the workmen in the settlements is also perhaps reflected in the closure of the Working Men’s Association in Wellington. Established in either 1840 or 1841, it included in its objects the avoidance of the disorder of the Australian colonies and ‘raising the hard-working man in the scale
Wakefield’s theory. His instinctive reaction to the demands of the New Plymouth labourers continued to be to control the labour market by controlling the supply of labour to the settlement.

Assessment

In general, Wakefield’s ideas on labour and labour relations which permeate his scheme of systematic colonisation did have an impact on the settlements of Wellington, New Plymouth, and Nelson. But this impact was also significantly altered by the Company’s financial difficulties and the effect of the Anglo-Australasian depression.

Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation proposed the replacement of traditional forms of labour control with a new market-oriented form of control. The scheme involved the establishment and maintenance of the colonial labour market at a suitable point of equilibrium which provided landowners with sufficient labour and labour with reasonable or good wages. In effect, labourers were to be imported into the colonial labour market in proportion to the work available. They were subsequently required by economic necessity – not by physical coercion or the threat of punitive penal sanctions – to work for wages until they could accumulate sufficient funds themselves to overcome the high price of land in the colony and become landowners and masters themselves. In turn the purchase price they paid for land (the ‘sufficient’ price) was, in the main, to be used to import further labourers to the colony to meet the increased demand for labour which the new landowners would

of being, and placing him in that situation among the lords of the earth, which as a member of the same family is his natural inheritance.’ See New Zealand Journal, 19 June 1841. By the end of 1843, the organisation was defunct, New Zealand Journal, 9 December 1843.
generate. As an appendage to this scheme, Wakefield also proposed some support for incoming labourers if they were temporarily unable to find work. Generally, however, Wakefield promoted his scheme as the guaranteed means of colonial prosperity. A lack of work was not to be a problem if systematic colonisation was adopted.

Of these ideas, the one with perhaps the most marked effect on the first Wakefield settlements in New Zealand was the freedom of labour to work within the labour market. Certainly, there was never any question of the introduction of slaves or indentured labourers into the settlements. With regard to convicts, the British Government did send some juvenile offenders to Auckland to serve as apprentices. But this event, which aroused concern and hostility from the settlers, was not repeated, and no convicts, juvenile or adult, under sentence or pardoned, were ever sent to the Wakefield settlements. There also appears to have been no use of master and servant law in the early settlements despite the fact that the law had been introduced into New Zealand as part of Britain’s colonisation of New Zealand. This restraint not only appears to have reflected Wakefield’s strong views on the futility of coercing reluctant servants to work, but also distinctly set the first Wakefield settlements in New Zealand apart from the Australian colonies.

While Wakefield’s ideas appear to have had a significant impact on the settlements in terms of the rejection of traditional controls over labour, it is also clear that his thoughts with regard to the adoption of systematic colonisation as an alternative means of controlling labour had a more variable impact. The task of specifically planning and controlling the labour market in order to achieve the precise ends Wakefield wanted – that is a market where, generally (at the very least), employers had the workers they wanted and the workers were paid good wages – was never viable. Systematic colonisation was never an effective instrument that would provide
the short term or even medium term adjustments needed to maintain the desired labour market equilibrium. In reality, failures in the market had to be dealt with by the provision of relief and the forced movement of labour into subsistence farming.

Specifically, with regard to evidence of the successful impact of Wakefield’s ideas, the New Zealand Company did generally supply labour to the settlements. It also, initially, established a largely dichotomous structure of labour and landowning employers, in contrast to the model of small subsistence farming which Wakefield specifically condemned in A Letter from Sydney and England and America. In addition, the Company brought out a more balanced labour force in terms of gender.

The Company was less successful in selecting only migrants with the required work skills, and with the desired industrious and ambitious temperament. It also sent far more children than the scheme prescribed. In identifying these weaknesses, though, it is important to acknowledge that the task of accurately selecting workers for specific work is still demanding today, despite improvements in the relevant methodologies. The problems for the Company were compounded in that it had only a limited administrative capacity to carry out the required work of selection. It was also obliged to select migrants from a limited pool, with most inclined already to taking the much easier passage to North America.

The Company also failed to send appropriate numbers of workmen to the settlements. In the first instance, there is little excuse for the Company’s initial oversupply of labour to the settlements. The Company rushed migrants to the settlements to establish its presence in New Zealand and ignored the imbalance between, on the one hand, the number of landowners and potential employers sent in the cabins and, on the other, the number of workmen who travelled in steerage. But there are again some grounds for sympathising with the Company with regard to
the subsequent task of carrying out the ongoing supply of labour to New Zealand and the maintenance of balanced labour markets in the settlements. It appears that with the benefit of current technology, including access to large volumes of information and speedy inter-continental travel, some modern governments do successfully manipulate labour markets, especially markets for specialised professionals, by controlling migration flows. In the 1830s and 1840s, however, the colonists could at best expect a response to any report on the state of their labour market in eight months – the time it took information to go from New Zealand to England, to receive an immediate assessment and response in the form of the organisation of migrants to cope with the reported need or deficiency, and for the new migrants to then travel around the Cape, across the bottom of Australia, and finally to New Zealand. Clearly, the Company had no real capacity to reliably and appropriately control labour market conditions in New Zealand under these circumstances.

Moreover, not only was the Company unable to realise Wakefield’s ambitions in relation to the control of the balance of the labour market, but the general lack of balance in the labour markets which were established, particularly in New Plymouth and Nelson, led the Company to adopt policies which undermined the type of labour market that Wakefield promoted in his scheme of systematic colonisation. In short, faced with significant levels of unemployment, which were exacerbated by the onset of the Anglo-Australasian depression, the Company in New Zealand pushed the unemployed workmen in the settlements into subsistence farming and the Company in England replaced its labouring migrants with men with just enough capital to set themselves up as subsistence farmers. Small subsistence farming was of course the antithesis of the agricultural system to be created by systematic colonisation and its development made the Wakefield settlements look less like the colony promoted by Wakefield in *A Letter from Sydney*, and more like the traditional colonies he had criticised.
With regard to the provision of support for labour, the New Zealand Company applied a promise to provide labour with work and, later, with work paid at a generous minimum wage, when work was not available elsewhere. One must be very cautious, however, in seeing this as a simple reflection of Wakefield’s provision in his original conception of systematic colonisation for the support for labour. Wakefield’s initial proposal had been limited to some very moderate assistance on arrival in the colony, but nothing more. This help was certainly less in overall scope than that provided by the English poor law: old or new. The New Zealand Company’s later proposal in 1839 in fact reflected the development of a more substantial promise of relief in Wakefield’s writings subsequent to *A Letter from Sydney*. It also largely copied the basic format applied by the South Australian Commissioners to South Australia. Further, one needs to acknowledge, alongside these developments, the influence of English radicals such as the Chartists on the adoption of the New Zealand Company’s promise of support and, ultimately, its promise of a *de facto* minimum wage. Fundamentally, Wakefield, the Commissioners, and the New Zealand Company were aware of a strong groundswell of support and interest in Britain for work security and wage guarantees, and they seem to have deliberately developed and promoted their own promises in these areas accordingly to encourage workmen to emigrate to their colonies.

Given this qualification to the association between Wakefield’s original provision in *A Letter from Sydney* and the Company’s promises of work and its minimum wage, it also needs to be recognised that the Company’s promises, no matter how they were derived, had in any case a very mixed impact on the settlers. Certainly, the Company initially carried out its promises to the letter in Wellington, New Plymouth, and Nelson. This included creating, from its original promise of work, the promise of a minimum wage of £1 plus rations, which was a very generous relief rate. Over time,
however, the Company breached and deliberately set about eroding the scope of its support for those unable to find private employment in the settlements. The Company did this for several reasons. Firstly, the settlements did not provide or produce the jobs Wakefield’s outline of his scheme indicated they would and, consequently, many more of the colonists depended on the Company’s work than had been expected. William Wakefield and others in part also argued that the workmen in the settlement used access to the Company’s work to avoid other available work in the settlement and to gouge higher wages from the landowners. Perhaps more importantly, the Company found that the cost of providing relief work was an unacceptable drain on its finances. Concern increased of course with the onset of the depression and additional unemployment in late 1842. In response to its financial concerns, the Company began to reduce its wages as early as October 1841, and it continued, periodically, to make reductions in wages, as well as to restrict access to its work, up to the time of the suspension of its activities in 1844.

Essentially, therefore, Wakefield’s initial and very restricted idea of support for migrants in the colony enlarged over time and indeed blossomed when it was applied to New Zealand during 1840. It is also evident that the Company came to regret its guarantees and struggled to whittle away the quality of its support over much of the remaining years of its management of the settlements. Furthermore, this, in turn, produced two negative legacies. Undoubtedly, the experience weakened the trust of the workmen in the value of guarantees of employment at fair or reasonable wages. The colonial elite in the settlement, for their part, having observed the Company’s struggle to extricate itself from its promises, were in no mood themselves to take up the responsibility of formally promising relief work when the Company finally suspended its activities. Instead they lobbied the government to undertake the responsibility. The government, however, was no less reluctant and in 1846 confirmed in the Destitute Persons Ordinance that it had no intention of taking on any
significant responsibilities for relief in New Zealand. The idea of supporting the colonists when in need – in part Wakefield's, in part the South Australian Commissioners', but in even larger part the adoption of an important contemporary working class aspiration in England – was, at least for the time being, dispensed with.

Finally, Wakefield's ideas also had a very general impact on the expectations of the workmen who came to the Company's settlements in New Zealand. Besides the guarantee of work at a reasonable wage with the Company, the migrant workmen were attracted by Wakefield's promise of a general prosperity that would inevitably result from the application of systematic colonisation. The migrant workmen, however, also worked actively to ensure that they themselves had a significant role in determining how this prosperity was shared. While influenced by the grand promise of Wakefield's scheme, therefore, they were not prepared to simply wait to see what the market gave them. Rather, they used collective action to ensure, where such action was seen as necessary, that they obtained the conditions they wanted. Even as they travelled in their cramped quarters on board the Company's ships, they plotted their course of action in relation to the establishment of an eight hour day. Further collective action ensued on arrival to set wage rates. Again, however, the impact of Wakefield's ideas was severely affected by the Company's reduction in its commitment to provide work at reasonable wages, and also by the Anglo-Australasian depression. In relatively short order, the Company's action and the depression undermined and reduced both the expectations of the workmen, at least insofar as they had been generated by the Company's promotion of its settlements, and the associated achievements of the workmen on arriving in the settlements in regulating their hours and wages.

Overall, Wakefield's ideas had an immediate impact on the way the settlements of Wellington, New Plymouth, Nelson, and also Wanganui, were colonised, and the
behaviour and ideas of the settlers. This impact was reflected in the emphasis on the freedom of labour to move within the labour market, the establishment of a largely waged labour force, some degree of selection of the labour force, in the provision of relief, and the inspiration for working class action to pursue good wages and short hours. The actions of the Company from late 1841 and the onset of economic depression, however, also altered the influence of Wakefield’s ideas. The attempt to control the selection and quantity of labour entering and leaving the labour markets in the settlements was curtailed, a predominately small scale farming community developed, formal responsibility for the relief of the destitute was drastically reduced, the employment conditions of the workmen suffered a substantial decline, and their faith in the general prospects of the settlements was seriously damaged.

Yet for all this, even in the midst of the Company’s failure and the economic struggle of the settlements, Wakefield’s scheme survived. Apologists for his scheme of systematic colonisation worked hard to place responsibility for the problems of the settlements at the feet of others, notably, the Company itself and the government. According to Wakefield’s most faithful supporters, the results of the Company’s first attempts to systematically colonise New Zealand did not reflect the true quality of Wakefield’s scheme. There had been no fair test. The great consequence of this work by Wakefield’s apologists for New Zealand, and the mark of their success, was that they left ajar the door of opportunity for others to attempt to apply Wakefield’s ideas again in Otago and Canterbury.
Chapter 4

Otago and Canterbury

Introduction

The prime movers for the establishment of Otago and Canterbury had substantial connections with the New Zealand Company and Wakefield. In 1842, George Rennie approached the New Zealand Company with regard to the formation of a colony on the east coast of the South Island. The implementation of the project was delayed in particular by difficulties between the New Zealand Company and the Colonial Office and uncertainties over land titles. But eventually the Lay Association of the Free Church of Scotland and the New Zealand Company jointly established a settlement in Otago under the sectarian leadership of William Cargill and Thomas Burns in 1847-48. ¹ The colonisation of Canterbury followed the subsequent year, after Wakefield had issued a View of the Art of Colonisation. The colony was also settled with the involvement of the New Zealand Company, and its leader, John Godley, had been originally involved by Wakefield in discussions on the scheme in 1847.²

The interest here, as in the previous chapter, is to consider the impact of Wakefield's ideas on these last two Wakefield settlements with respect to three key matters. The first of these is the supply and retention of labour in the labour markets in Otago and Canterbury. The second is the guarantee of employment for the workmen who arrived in the new settlements under the auspices of Wakefield's scheme. The final issue is the attitudes and activities of the early settlers in Otago and Canterbury and how these also reflected the influence of Wakefield's special ideas.

¹ A.H. McLintock, The History of Otago, Dunedin, 1949, pp.159, 180-82, ch.5; Tom Brooking, And Captain of Their Souls, Dunedin, 1984, ch.2.
Otago

The promotion and the early years of the settlement of Otago directly reflected Wakefield's ideas with respect to labour and labour relations in several ways. These included the promotion and attempted application of the core principles of systematic colonisation and the employment of working emigrants by the New Zealand Company in the absence of alternative private employment. At the same time, there were also deviations from Wakefield's plan. These included the Otago Association's promotion of small farming and its failure to accurately manage the supply of labour to the settlement. In addition, the provision of relief work by the New Zealand Company only lasted until 1850 and over the course of the first few years of settlement the aspirations of the working emigrants shifted from an expectation of employment on superior terms to a concern to obtain access to cheap land.\(^3\)

Wakefield's ideas were strongly linked to colonisation of Otago in the early promotion of the settlement. Of those responsible for this promotion, George Rennie, a Scottish reforming politician and noted sculptor, provided the initial impetus in July 1842. He was quickly joined by William Cargill, another Scot, who, according to his biographer, Tom Brooking, had become frustrated with his work as a bank manager and was looking for some more profitable purpose in life.\(^4\) Both Rennie and Cargill adopted and promoted the application of central features of Wakefield's scheme of systematic colonisation. Later, they obtained the support of the Free Church and were joined by Thomas Burns, a churchman with a 'fiercely evangelical and sectarian outlook'. The

\(^{3}\) The responsibilities for the colonisation of Otago were split between the Otago Association and the New Zealand Company. The Association took responsibility for land sales and emigration and the New Zealand Company took responsibility for public works, McLintock, pp.206-07.

\(^{4}\) McLintock, pp.158-59; Brooking, pp. 22, 28.
support of the Free Church was particularly useful to the colonisers in that it provided them with direct access to a relatively large and well defined audience. Conversely, however, it also tended to deter some non-members of the Church from involvement in the scheme. Burns' views had a particularly adverse effect on Rennie, who had a far more liberal outlook with respect to the religious affiliations of potential migrants, and the latter eventually 'bowed out' of the scheme in 1845.\(^5\) Despite the loss of Rennie and Burns' preoccupation with the sectarian quality of the Otago settlement, however, the colonisers continued to promote Wakefield's ideas as features of their scheme, particularly through Cargill, the Lay Association, and the \textit{Otago Journal}.

From the outset, the promotion of the Otago scheme involved the sale of land at the 'sufficient price' and the use of the resulting revenue to provide the wherewithal for the emigration of labourers and other workmen to the settlement. In the first outline of the scheme presented to the New Zealand Company in July 1842, Rennie proposed to sell six hundred town sections of a quarter acre each for £25 and one thousand blocks comprising a quarter acre of town land, twenty acres of suburban land, and eighty acres of rural land, all for £125. He also proposed that just under 30% of the revenue from these sales would cover the Company's general expenses and profits, with the balance covering surveying and management costs, public works, expenditure associated with the establishment of religious and educational institutions, and emigration.\(^6\) The second and third outlines were similar. In Rennie and Cargill's second proposal, land was to be sold in blocks of sixty and a quarter acres for the 'sufficient price' of £120, or, in other words, at a rate of fractionally under £2 per acre, and 37.5% of the subsequent revenue obtained from the sale of the land was to be set aside solely to facilitate emigration. The proposal noted that

\(^{\text{5}}\)\text{Brooking, pp.33-43.}  
\(^{\text{6}}\)\text{McLintock, pp.159-60.}
£81,000], will be expended in conveying from Scotland to the Settlement of New Edinburgh, labouring persons eligible according to the regulations established by the Government.' At this point no regulations had been established.  

The proposal was generally repeated in 1845 by the Lay Association of the Free Church of Scotland, which had become the main organisational vehicle for promoting the scheme, with a minor adjustment in the 'sufficient price' from £120 to £120.10s. The new figure brought the price per acre to exactly £2.

The attachment of the colonisers to Wakefield's principles is also indicated in their comments in promoting the Otago scheme. In Rennie's proposal in 1842, he specifically supported the need to implement again 'The new art of systematic colonization' which consisted of 'defraying the expense of conveying the unemployed labour of the Mother-country to the unoccupied land of the Colonies, by means of the marketable value which the approach of [an] industrious population confers on the previously valueless wastes of the new country.' He added to this an emphasis on improving the preparation of the settlement before receiving colonists in order to avoid 'the causes of difficulty and retardation which have occurred in the earlier experimental settlements.' Once the colony had been properly prepared, then a due proportion of capitalists and labourers would be sent and 'the settlement will be made from the first an appropriate residence for a civilized community.' Rennie sought to apply Wakefield's scheme, but with more care than hitherto had been the case. The general principles were repeated by Cargill in 1847. He stated that the interest in colonisation resulted from the distress felt in Britain by 'all classes of society.' He noted that the colony was to be settled according to the principles of systematic colonisation which centred on the provision of labour and capital to a profitable field...

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7 Ibid, pp.167-69.
9 Colonial Gazette, 17 August 1842.
of employment. He demonstrated a clear understanding that systematic colonisation was designed to ensure that the colony retained an ongoing supply of labour. He stated that the labouring man would ‘with economy and industry, ... within three or four years, become himself an owner of property, and independent of working for wages’.\textsuperscript{10} This was about the length of time, according to Wakefield’s theory, that a labourer needed in order to save enough from his colonial wages to purchase land at the ‘sufficient price’. The Lay Association had also already noted in 1845 that systematic colonisation would lead to the relatively quick development of civilised colonial societies. It declared ‘the facilities offered by the New Zealand Company for the formation of class settlements to be a great public boon, and calculated to give a new and elevated tone to British colonization; and if duly responded to by the churches at home, that it must have the effect of carrying the best specimens of religion and civilization into the dark places of the earth, and of combining the benefits sought for by emigration with the diffusion of light and beneficence to universal many.’\textsuperscript{11} The additional emphasis on religion reflected the special concern of the Association to advance the sectarian interest of the Free Church. Undoubtedly the Association believed that its church was where the ‘best specimens of religion’ were to be found.

The promotion of Wakefield’s ideas continued in the Otago Journal, which commenced publication after the departure of the first ships for the new settlement. In an article in its first issue, entitled ‘The Otago Scheme Farther Explained’, the Journal ‘recognised the concentration of the settlers as an important element in the prosperity of the colony.’ The lack of concentration, it noted, ‘has occasioned waste of capital and misapplication of labour’ and ‘retarded the progressive division of labour’. It ‘exposed’ the settlers ‘to privations which have operated prejudicially on

\textsuperscript{10} William Cargill, \textit{Free Church Colony at Otago in New Zealand}, London, 1847, pp.7-9.
\textsuperscript{11} Mcintosh, p.203.
their habits of industry, and in many cases thrown them back into a condition approaching to barbarism.' The Journal adduc that 'an extreme degree of dispersion' reduced 'the power of capital and labour to the lowest point', and conversely, the absence of dispersion created 'a ready market' for the disposal of 'surplus produce' and thus 'stimulated' the 'skilful application of capital and labour' and the 'obtaining' of 'high profits and high wages'. The high profits and wages, in turn, offered 'the strongest attraction to emigration' and a rapid increase in settlement. To complete its sketch of Wakefield's argument, the Journal concluded that the settlers, who were being conveyed to Otago under the principles of systematic colonisation, 'are placed in the most favourable circumstances for becoming an epitome of the parent society in every thing, save the uneasiness of capitalists, and the misery of the bulk of the people.'

The colonisers also noted their objection to unfree labour. The second issue of the Journal, which followed five months later, reported a meeting of 'the friends of the Otago Scheme' in Edinburgh which emphasised the weight placed by the colonisers on the freedom with which the emigrants went to New Zealand. In promoting the 'sound and liberal principles' of the scheme and the advantage of emigration in dealing with the problem of a growing population and the associated distress, the meeting categorically resolved that 'No emigration is salutary that is not voluntary.' At the very least Otago was not to be a home to slaves or convicts.

Some, perhaps many, of the colonists who travelled to Otago were also acquainted with, and enthusiastic about, Wakefield's theory of colonisation, including its aspects relating to labour and labour relations. Cargill and Burns were not only leading proponents of the scheme in Scotland, but its leading colonists as well. Cargill, as

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13 Ibid, June 1848, pp.18-19.
noted above, was particularly active in publicly demonstrating his attachment to Wakefield's ideas. Even in the absence of a record of similar enthusiasm and commitment from other leading colonists, it can be generally assumed that they must have shared the attachment to Wakefield's ideas on systematic colonisation. In general, Otago land had two special selling points over cheaper and more accessible land elsewhere. In the first instance the purchasers of land helped expand the influence of the Free Church. Second, as a settlement colonised under Wakefield's principles, Otago would become prosperous and civilised far more quickly and substantially than other colonies. Almost certainly, most did not buy land to support the Free Church. Brooking shows that most landowners were not members of the Free Church. It seems likely therefore that the special promise of greater prosperity through the application of Wakefield's theory was the primary attraction for most of the landowners who emigrated to Otago in the first years of its settlement. Of course, even those who were motivated by the prospect of establishing the settlement as a Free Church colony may have also been motivated by the promise of an accelerated acquisition of prosperity through the application of Wakefield's scheme.

At the other end of the social scale, the labourers were also subject to and reflected the influence of Wakefield's promise of new and better lives. J.D. Salmond notes Thomas Hocken's claim that the eight hour day was part of the 'plans for the Otago settlement', but the 'stringent provisions' relating to the eight hour day were found to be inoperable 'as contracts to bind free settlers to serve under any conditions of labour beyond the seas was not provided for by any Imperial statute.' Salmond also notes, whilst regretting that many Otago records have been lost, Hocken's claim that

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15 J.D. Salmond (ed. D. Crowley), *New Zealand Labour's Pioneering Days*, Auckland, 1950, p.9. This account helps explain the urgency the leading colonists displayed in enacting a master and servant law when they arrived in South Australia, see p.129 above.
Burns had ‘assured his people on the “Philip Laing” that so far as he had influence their day’s labour in the new country should consist of eight hours, and should be paid at 3/6 or 4/- per day.’\textsuperscript{16} Clearly the promise of an eight hour day had links back to the first New Zealand Wakefield settlements and further back still to the Chartist movement.\textsuperscript{17} The promise undoubtedly also fed the initial hopes and expectations of the workmen. Their initial hopes were not encouraged, however, by Burns’s promised wages. A letter in the \textit{Otago News} in July 1849 from one Caleb Williams indicates that the labourers were expecting far more than 4s. Williams stated that the labourers arrived expecting wages of 7s.6d. Williams also noted that the workmen arrived expecting a free choice of employer. He stated that the price was agreed ‘to by all the “free and easy” passengers on board’ and that they arrived in Otago ‘having first taken the precaution to draw lots for the choice of employers.’\textsuperscript{18} These ideas not only reflected the promise in Wakefield’s theory of work at good wages, as opposed to immediate access to cheap land, but also the general freedom Wakefield thought labourers should have in order to work to their optimum productive level, and in being part of a civilised community.

Cargill provided a further link between Wakefield’s ideas and Otago with his provision of work for the working emigrants in the absence of other employment. This provision does not appear to have been part of the original plans of the Lay Association or the New Zealand Company, but was introduced on the arrival of the first settlers. There were good reasons for this belated guarantee. In the earlier Wakefield schemes, the colonisers had provided guarantees of employment in order to encourage workmen to become colonists. The Otago colonisers almost certainly went out of their way to avoid any similar promise of employment because of the highly discouraging

\textsuperscript{16} ‘The Struggle for the Eight Hours’ System’, J.D.Salmond Papers. The ‘Diary of Rev. Thomas Burns’, pp.54, 101, also shows Burns paying his servants at a rate of 4s. per day.

\textsuperscript{17} The establishment of the eight-hour day in Otago is to be discussed further below.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Otago News}, 7 July 1849.
experiences of the New Zealand Company in the first New Zealand Wakefield settlements, and quite possibly those of the South Australian Commissioners and the South Australian colonial government. In each case, the body providing relief had turned against the provision on the basis that it had, in their view, discouraged initiative and effort amongst the workmen and severely restricted the development of these settlements, and because of the burden it had imposed on their limited financial resources. The Lay Association of course would have been concerned not to be burdened in the same way. For its part, the New Zealand Company, which was responsible for carrying out public works in the Otago settlement, did not want to repeat its own mistakes.

Instead of guarantees of employment to attract working emigrants, the Lay Association therefore initially relied on the promise of general prosperity as well as the appeal of adequate churching and schooling. Cargill emphasised that the emigrant who went to a colony under a plan of systematic colonisation would achieve 'prosperity and comfort'. This specifically included the rise of the labourer to the status of landowner within a few years in the settlement.19 The Otago Journal also concentrated in its first issue on the attraction of the new settlement's expected general prosperity. It said: 'As to the inducements to emigration, in general, and to the Colony of Otago in particular, they may be shown both negatively and positively, as referring either to the difficulties and hardships suffered by large classes of our people at home, or to the greater facilities of acquiring the necessaries and conveniences of life, and to the higher rewards of labour and industry, in the Colonies. And when these inducements are taken together, they must appear very strong, we think, to great numbers of our working class, and small capitalists.' It added elsewhere that the Colony would convert 'severe toil' into 'moderate labour',

19 Cargill, pp.8-9.
that the high profits and high wages of the Colony offered 'the strongest attraction to emigration', and that the systematic colonisation of Otago, with its end product of a regulated labour market, guaranteed there would be no 'glut' or undersupply of labour.\textsuperscript{20} This was the original promise and attraction of systematic colonisation in \textit{A Letter from Sydney}.

While the Association and the Company planned to avoid providing work in the absence of alternative employment, they quickly came unstuck on the arrival of the founding settlers in the \textit{Philip Laing} and the \textit{John Whitcliffe}. When the settlers arrived they found the settlement quite unready for them. This occurred despite the emphasis in Rennie's original proposal that the settlement should be adequately prepared before the arrival of the emigrants. The reality in Otago was that the settlers arrived to circumstances which were little better than those faced by the Wellington settlers and had prompted Rennie's concern in the first place.\textsuperscript{21} The disorganised and unready state of the early settlement resulted in luggage left on the beach below the high water mark and virtually nowhere to sleep other than tents as there was 'scarcely a house or place of shelter erected'.\textsuperscript{22} Until, more permanent dwellings could be constructed, the settlers had to live in 'grass barracks' with 'Clay floors' which 'turned into quagmires' in the rain that set in shortly after the first ships arrived.\textsuperscript{23} Generally, McLintock notes that Dunedin's 'so-called streets' were 'marked merely by surveyors' lines and pegs' and 'were a tangle of scrub, bush and flax intersected by numerous streams and gullies'.\textsuperscript{24} The situation was clearly such that

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\item \textsuperscript{20} \textit{Otago Journal}, January 1848, pp.5, 13-14.
\item \textsuperscript{21} James Chisholm, \textit{Fifty Years Syne}, Dunedin, 1898, pp.89-91; \textit{An Old Identity, The Old Identities}, Dunedin, 1879, p.16; Brooking, p.74; Erik Olssen, \textit{A History of Otago}, Dunedin, 1984, p.35. McLintock, p.246.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Soper, p.34. The \textit{Witness} described the early accommodation as 'mere mud hovels', 3 April 1852.
\item \textsuperscript{24} McLintock, p.246.
\end{itemize}
the landowners were by no means ready to take on workers at wages and start the work of agriculture and industry.

In the circumstances, Cargill probably felt some moral obligation to ensure the welfare of the incoming workmen. He had after all promised them a good deal more than was immediately evident. It is also the case, however, that Cargill had to employ the workmen. In the first instance, the Company needed men to carry out the preparatory work that had not been done. Thus, most of the labourers, and some local Maori, had to be put to work immediately to build communal accommodation, rectify the lack of preparation so that landowners could take possession of their land, and commence the development of the settlement's infrastructure. Just as important as the need to carry out preparatory work, Cargill had to do his best to protect the reputation of the new settlement and maximise emigration which was the key to the growth and development of the settlement. Clearly, the settlement would not attract the British workmen it wanted, that is, those seeking to escape underemployment and the threatening presence of the poor house, if news returned to Britain that workmen could not find work in the colony.

Cargill consequently explained to the Company in an early despatch that he had directly employed the newly arrived working emigrants 'until the choice of town allotments shall have been made, when all hands will be required and engaged by the owners of these lands, to erect their houses, and those of their engaged servants, ere the approaching winter, such as it is, shall arrive.' Cargill promised a subsequent resumption of public works, after the construction work had generally finished, to ensure employment for any who were still unable to find other employment, such as farming work on the new farms. He set wages 'for public works

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in progress at 3s. a-day for a common labourer and 5s. for craftsmen', but noted that after the construction phase, ‘public works will then be executed by contract ... so as to give continuous employment for all.’ Cargill set a separate rate for the Maori labourers he used at 2s. 6d. per day. Emphasising the link between Cargill’s provision of work and the earlier measures of the New Zealand Company, the wages paid by Cargill were also described in the *Otago News* as a 'minimum' rate for the settlement.

Even as the colonists arrived in Otago, therefore, ideas strongly associated with Wakefield and the application of his theory of systematic colonisation were well in evidence. Both colonisers and colonists understood that systematic colonisation was designed to alleviate the misery and unease in Britain. They had bombarded and been bombarded with information on the special qualities of the scheme including: the need for the concentration of the colonial population; the sale of land at the 'sufficient price'; the use of revenue from land sales to fund the emigration of selected labourers; the need for these labourers to travel freely to the colony; the payment of good wages; the need for labourers to stay in the labour market for perhaps three to four years to ensure the colony did not suffer from a want of labour; and ultimately the benefit, in applying the scheme, of the rapid development of the settlement as a prosperous and civilised community. Furthermore, Cargill’s provision of work reflected the promises and guarantees made in conjunction with the promotion and development of the preceding Wakefield schemes. The totality of this influence and activity made Otago very much a Wakefield settlement.

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26 *Otago Journal*, November 1848, p.39; ‘Diary of Rev. Thomas Burns, 1847-1854’, p.54. Burns also notes that Maori workmen refused to work for less than 3s. per day, p.54.
27 *Otago Journal*, November 1848, p.46.
28 *Otago News*, 7 February 1849.
While Otago is readily and distinctly recognisable as a Wakefield settlement, it is also clear that the impact of Wakefield's ideas on the Otago settlement was not always straightforward. Broadly, this resulted from the work of the colonisers in Britain and developments in the settlement. The work of the colonisers included not only the positive promotion of Wakefield's principles, but also the promotion of small farming which ran counter to his principles. It also included their understandably inadequate effort to supply labour to the settlement as prescribed. Furthermore, developments in the settlement tended to undermine and lead to the demise of the Company's provision of work and to undercut the initial confidence of the workmen in the benefits of Wakefield's scheme.

The most significant contradiction in the Otago colonisers' plans involved the strong emphasis they placed from the outset on small farming. As already noted, the trend in the central New Zealand Wakefield settlements from 1843 onwards was to the development of small subsistence farming. Except for the initial sale of Wellington sections, the New Zealand Company generally struggled to attract the interest of wealthy capitalists in its land and sought to overcome this failing by encouraging the emigration of men and women who would buy and physically farm their own land. The Otago colonisers reflected this development in the approach of the Company. Indeed, they made themselves even more dependent on interest from small farmers with Rennie's departure from the scheme and the consequent loss of many of the capitalists who had supported the scheme on the basis of Rennie's leadership.\(^{29}\)

The size of the blocks offered for sale in Otago provide one indication of the predisposition toward small farming. The proposed size of the Otago land blocks in 1842, of just over one hundred acres, was reduced to just over sixty acres in the

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\(^{29}\) Brooking, pp. 43-44.
second and third plans for the settlement of 1843 and 1845. The blocks were of similar size to those which had been sold in New Plymouth, but relatively small in comparison to the blocks offered for sale in the other Wakefield settlements. In Wellington, the blocks had been over one hundred acres and in Nelson, over two hundred acres. Moreover, Cargill, in the Colonial Gazette in November 1843, suggested that land purchasers subdivide at least part of their land to provide ten acre farms for ‘emigrant agricultural famil[ies]’ to encourage settlement and speed the development of the colony.30 Andrew Aldcam, who briefly shared control of the Lay Association Committee with Cargill and Burns, also promoted the establishment of working emigrants as small farm tenants in his notice of the ‘Terms of Purchase’ for the Otago lands in December 1845. The pamphlet noted in its provisions that ‘Single men, or married people without families, whose funds come short of the foregoing minimum [the price of a block of £120.10s], may combine for the acquisition of a property between them, or they may secure leases, with right to purchase.’ To help illustrate the point, the pamphlet noted the possibility of ‘A man who has been ploughman and coachman to the same master 25 years, - he and his wife respectively, 46 and 48 years old, - and a family of five sons – one of them a Blacksmith, with wife and two children, – another a Gardener, – two who are Ploughman, – and the fifth a Groom, – all four unmarried, have leased, with right to purchase, 50 rural acres in Otago; and their plan is to place the father and mother at once upon the land; as far as possible to live with them; and to make common cause, by saving of wages as workmen in the Colony, to pay off the stipulated price, which is £100, with 10 per cent. after the first year, as ‘rent, until the debt be discharged.’31 This was not systematic colonisation as originally conceived by Wakefield but something which fell half-way between what he condemned and commended. In one part, the family represented the subsistence farming units of the colonies he had

30 McLintock, pp.176-77.
31 Terms of Purchase of Land in the Settlement of Otago, 1845, p.8.
wanted to replace, but in this particular case the family also provided labour which could be used by farmers who had sufficient capital to buy their own land and wished to manage, rather than physically work their land themselves.

Actual developments in land sales and land use in the settlement also tended to reflect the promotion of small farming rather than Wakefield's larger scale industrial farming model. Overall, the Association had great difficulty in attracting land purchasers of any sort. It proposed initially to sell 2,400 sections, but set a much more modest target of selling 400 sections before commencing the population of the new settlement. In fact, as the first emigrant ships departed for Otago, only 104 sections had been sold.\textsuperscript{32} Only a few of the purchasers of these sections appear to have had any significant capacity to employ labour on their land. Erik Olssen notes that of the first emigrants only 19 adults were able to afford to travel in the greater comfort of the ships' cabins.\textsuperscript{33} The remainder, nearly 130, had to make do with steerage.\textsuperscript{34} In addition, Brooking records that by the end of 1849, at which point the number of sections sold had risen to 187, only 22 gentlemen were employing labour. One in particular, William Valpy, was a very substantial landholder, purchasing twenty sections, but he was clearly an exception to the rule.\textsuperscript{35} In the main, where the working men who arrived in Dunedin worked the land, they did so on small lots, sometimes of their own, sometimes on leased land.\textsuperscript{36} Olssen also notes that 'Most of the labourers, gardeners, and artisans easily achieved a modest independency by occasionally working for others and cultivating their own sections' and that 'Those families which bought suburban sections ... spent most of their time working for

\textsuperscript{32} Brooking notes that even by 1851, only 203 sections had been sold: Brooking, pp.43, 87, and 91; McLintock, pp.230 and 301-02.
\textsuperscript{33} Olssen, \textit{A History of Otago}, p.33.
\textsuperscript{34} Brooking, pp.55-56.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, pp.87, 91; Reed, p.36.
\textsuperscript{36} K.C. McDonald, \textit{City of Dunedin}, Dunedin, 1965, pp.13-14; Reed, p.36; Olssen, \textit{A History of Otago}, p.35.
themselves and helping their neighbours.\textsuperscript{37} There was, therefore, some combination of labour in the new settlement, but mostly it did not take place within the industrial structure originally envisaged by Wakefield.

For the sake of completeness, it needs to be noted that the development of pastoral farming, which was evident even in the first days of the settlement,\textsuperscript{38} did not bring the settlement any closer to Wakefield’s industrial model. Wakefield’s scheme involved the concentration and combination of capital with labour and labour with labour, leading to a geometric rise in production, and the civilisation of the colonial settlement. His model was that of the intensive production of crops. Pastoral farming, on the other hand, employed labour, but its mode of production largely involved single men dispersed over large tracts of land looking after individual flocks and herds. It was extensive; for most of the year required little combination of labour; and, at least for the shepherds, resulted in remote and lonely lives, which in terms of Wakefield’s argument for systematic colonisation led to barbarism. Although clearly a profitable business and apparently the most apt way for the colonists to begin to make money,\textsuperscript{39} again it did not fit within Wakefield’s theoretical conception of systematic colonisation.

A second important qualification that needs to be made in relation to the impact of Wakefield’s ideas is that the colonisers substantially failed to accurately control the supply of labour to the Otago labour market. As with the first New Zealand Wakefield schemes, there remained insuperable difficulties in sending working emigrants who matched the labour needs of the new settlement. Again, these included the shortage

\textsuperscript{37} Olssen, \emph{A History of Otago}, p.37; \emph{Otago Journal}, November 1850, pp.87-90; \emph{Otago Witness}, 3 January 1852; Shaw and Farrant, pp.12-14.

\textsuperscript{38} Thomas Burns, \emph{Early Otago and Genesis of Dunedin: Letters of Rev. T.Burns 1848-1865}, Dunedin, 1916, pp.4-5; McLintock, p.328.

\textsuperscript{39} Olssen, \emph{A History of Otago}, chapter 6.
of prospective candidates, competition from rival colonies for quality workmen, an inadequate organisational capacity to reliably determine the suitability of candidates, a lack of information on the labour needs of the new settlement, and the distance in time between Britain and Otago. To some extent, the Lay Association imposed an additional burden in attempting to select not only on ‘industry’ but also on ‘piety’ and ‘rectitude’.⁴⁰ Despite their intentions, therefore, the colonisers could not exert an effective control over the labour market. The colonisers could influence the state of the colony’s labour market, but they could not manipulate it to achieve predetermined ends. Any balance in the labour market which followed from the supply of labour by the colonisers was almost entirely fortuitous.

Some of the results of the colonisers’ efforts to supply labour are noted by McLintock and Brooking. McLintock indicates that nearly 40% of the working class emigrants who went to Otago in the first ships were children, and that the adults were not necessarily well suited to the working tasks of a new colony. He notes, for example, that on the Philip Laing ‘A few farmers and farm labourers appeared among a miscellaneous assortment of tradesmen, weavers, storekeepers and the like who were, in all, considered a “mixed lot” both as regards their aptitudes and general character.’⁴¹ Both Cargill and Burns expressed concern in particular over the type of workmen being sent out and appealed for an end to the sending of clerks and others like them who were unaccustomed to physical work.⁴² The Otago News criticised the Association in early 1849 for sending out only 48 labourers but nearly 170 artisans and mechanics. It said: ‘Now, though we do not believe it essential that a man should have passed his life in agricultural pursuits to qualify him for a free passage to Otago,

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⁴⁰ Otago Journal, November 1848, p.35.
⁴² Otago Journal, June 1849, p.56.
we still think that a much better choice might have been made.\textsuperscript{43} McLintock has added that there was also ‘a sad mingling of sinners among the saints.’\textsuperscript{44} Burns had expressed concern in his diary even on the voyage to New Zealand as to character of the steerage passengers given an apparent propensity to profanity and petty larceny.\textsuperscript{46} Brooking in turn describes the steerage passengers as ‘a rather motley collection of working men, some skilled, some unskilled, most of whom were accompanied by their families.’ Brooking notes that only a few seem to have registered their occupations on the passenger list for the \textit{Philip Laing}. These comprised ‘five general labourers, two gardeners, four domestic servants (all women), two masons, one painter, one plumber, one mill-wright, one smith, one carpenter, one mechanic, and one miller.’ On the \textit{John Whitcliffe}, the steerage passengers included eighteen agricultural labourers, four carpenters, one brickmaker, one mason, one bricklayer, one cabinet maker, four storekeepers, five weavers, and one calico printer. The lists do not appear to be seriously deficient, but clearly more of a problem lay with those not on the list, some of whom at least must have been the unwanted clerks. Brooking also notes the failure of the Association to select well for piety and rectitude, citing for example the concern of one of the English Presbyterians over ‘the offensive behaviour of a drunken dock labourer and a “dirty pothouse orator”’.\textsuperscript{46} There does not appear to be any strong reason to damn the overall quality of the first working emigrants to Otago, but by the same token there is little evidence that they were the select group of workers that Wakefield originally had in mind for his colonies. A saving grace, as in the earlier settlements, was the rough equality in the numbers of men and women sent. Even so, one letter

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Otago News}, 7 February 1849.
\textsuperscript{44} McLintock, p.235. John McGlashan also claimed in \textit{.859} that ‘many persons of indifferent character had been brought to the Province’, ibid, p.372.
\textsuperscript{45} ‘Diary of Rev. Thomas Burns’, pp.9, 11.
\textsuperscript{46} Brooking, pp.55-56.
in late 1849 indicated concern over a shortage of female servants and housekeepers.\(^47\)

A third illustration of the variable impact of Wakefield’s ideas is indicated in the application of the guarantee of work made by Cargill on arrival in the settlement, and its subsequent alteration and demise. As already discussed, Cargill’s initial promise to provide work extended to the emigrants not only on arrival in the new settlement, but into the foreseeable future. He promised that even after the settlers had built their houses and begun to develop their land, any who still needed work would at least find employment on public work contracts. This guaranteed the welfare of the workmen and the reputation of the settlement into the future. It appears that Cargill anticipated that his promise would be relatively easy to fulfil. He expected or at least hoped that, despite the disorganisation on arrival, the settlement would quickly come to thrive and grow, as Wakefield promised it would under systematic colonisation. The landowners in the settlement would thus provide plenty of employment and there would be only a limited need and demand for work with the Company. In this vein, Cargill noted in a despatch back to London, that while ‘Our duties as pioneers may be somewhat arduous, but as compared with all that have gone before us, they are light and transitory.’\(^48\) Cargill probably also expected that such prosperity would result in the sale of more land and more development work for the Company. In the circumstances, the provision of work through public works contracts was also more than useful. It ensured a competitive mechanism for keeping the cost of works and

\(^47\) Ibid; Otago Journal, November 1850, p.91. Emigration to Otago appears to have continued at a relatively consistent pace through to 1851. The European population in 1850 was 1161. This had risen to between 1500 and 1600 by the following year, Chisholm, p.109; Otago Witness, 20 December 1851. The Witness, 6 September 1851, however, reported a petition in September 1851 complaining of a lack of new arrivals and that the settlement was suffering from a decline in population. Also see ibid, 6 March 1852 and Burns, Early Otago and Genesis of Dunedin, p.5. The claim of a decline is inconsistent with the figures for arrivals and departures reported by the Witness, 17 July 1852. It reported 246 arrivals and 114 departures for the period from January 1851 to March 1852. Nevertheless, it is clear that the rate of increase had slumped. The following year, the Otago Association was dissolved, McLintock, p.348.

the level of wages down as far as possible in a labour market in which the tendency would be toward higher rather than lower wages.

Unfortunately for the settlers, the colony did not develop according to plan. Instead of a vital and growing economy, Otago tended to struggle forward only slowly. As Cargill had predicted, Otago experienced a construction boom which helped employ a large number of the emigrant workmen, and indeed some Maori workmen. But the boom was only temporary and in its wake only some of the emigrants found work as agricultural labourers. Too few landowners had the need and capacity to employ labour.\(^{49}\) The growth was also insufficient to inspire any great interest in purchasing land in Dunedin.\(^{50}\) Even the *Otago Journal*, which was published by the Lay Association,\(^{51}\) indicated this weak growth and the limited land sales which deprived the Company of any significant income. In the numerous letters it printed, various correspondents either complained of the lack of capital in the settlement or expressed confidence in the prospects of the settlement, but only as it might be. Fox, for example, advised the Company in February 1849 of the shortage of capital, and a colonist, J Elder Brown, wrote to his parents in April of the same year of his hope for people of ‘energy and capital’, and roads, to open up ‘the interior of the country, either in grazing or agriculture’ so that ‘we might soon have a valuable colony’.\(^{52}\) McLintock also notes that John Godley, the head of the Canterbury settlement, found that in autumn 1850 the Otago ‘colonists as a whole were not thriving and showed few signs either of possessing capital or of being likely to make it by industry and initiative’.\(^{53}\)

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\(^{49}\) Reed, pp.34,37,and 44-45; *Otago Journal*, November 1848, pp.47-48; *Otago News*, 7 July 1849.

\(^{50}\) Brooking, pp.86-87; McLintock, p.345.

\(^{51}\) McLintock, p.252.

\(^{52}\) *Otago Journal*, November 1849, pp.70, 73; November 1850, pp.90-91.

As Cargill monitored these developments, his first instinct in relation to the workmen employed by the Company appears to have been generous. Instead of transferring all the Company's work into the hands of contractors, he decided to retain direct control of at least the settlement's road works in his own hands. A letter to the Otago News, written by either Cargill or a close supporter, explained that 'Almost all the public works have been and are being constructed by contract, excepting the roads, which is a species of eleemosynary employment to prevent wages falling too low, which to hand over to contractors (by no means a charitable body) would defeat its object, for the contractor would reject all the inferior labourers and keep down the price as much as possible.' The retention of this control probably indicates not only a commendable concern on the part of Cargill to protect the working emigrants from any deterioration in their position in the face of poor economic conditions, but also a continuing desire to preserve the reputation of the settlement.

Ultimately, however, Cargill did choose to implement his original plan, and in early 1850 he finally gave up direct control of the settlement's road works and placed them in the hands of contractors. There is no explicit explanation from Cargill for his decision to no longer provide what was now clearly recognised as relief work, but it appears quite evident that it reflected a build up of considerable anxiety and resentment. These were fuelled by further deterioration in the New Zealand Company's financial position and the Company's inability to reduce the number of workmen reliant on its relief work and therefore the cost of providing relief. Cargill and Fox (now in overall control of the Company in New Zealand) provide an illustration of these concerns in their response to complaints from the labourers in

54 'of or dependent on alms', COD.
55 Otago News, 7 February 1849.
56 Fox had taken overall control of the Company's affairs in New Zealand on the death of William Wakefield in September 1848 and was visiting the new settlement as part of his new responsibilities, Temple, p.469.
early 1849 about their conditions of employment with the Company. Cargill, in response to the complaints, described ‘many’ of the workers as ‘in reality mere drones’.\(^{57}\) Fox, for his part, emphasised that the Company was acting generously and provided work because of the workers’ need for employment, not because the Company had any need of the services of the otherwise unemployed labourers. In addition, he urged upon the labourers ‘the importance of your exercising self-reliance to the utmost, and not seeking employment at the hands of the Company if you can possibly find the opportunity of maintaining yourselves by some independent means.’ He added that ‘You will not only live better, but preserve that self respect and those habits of independence which are always more or less tarnished and destroyed in those who depend for any length of time on a maintenance provided in the only matter in which the Company can provide it.’\(^{58}\) Fox presented the Company’s work as a form of relief work, which he believed would lead to the degradation of the workers it was supposed to assist. A few weeks later, another correspondent to the *Otago News* noted how the Company had been obstructed ‘by the labourers themselves, through their strikes, their insubordination, their refusal to give a fair day’s work for fair wages’.\(^{59}\)

The *Otago News*’s subsequent reaction to Cargill’s decision also provides evidence of the concerns of Cargill and Fox extending beyond just the Company and its officials. The *News* condemned the waste of the ‘land-purchaser’s money’ which had to that point ‘been so shamelessly lavished on pretended road-making’. It saw only good coming from the change. It stated that ‘To those individuals who have looked upon employment from the Company as merely a step to something better, the new arrangement will be gladly acceded to, and offer a stronger inducement to exertion’.

\(^{57}\) Ibid, 10 January 1849.  
\(^{58}\) Ibid, 24 January 1849.  
\(^{59}\) Ibid, 7 February 1849.
The change was also an end to any encouragement to, or reward for, the indolent or dishonest labourers (as the News saw them), and provided them instead with an incentive to become industrious. For 'those', the News said, 'who have clung from week to week and month to month on the skirts of the Company, and have returned home at the end of every week with a smile on their lips as they thought how easily the money had been earned; never looking or wishing for anything but its continuance; - to such men we are assured the change will not be considered a beneficial one, and will cause no little murmuring. Nevertheless, to them we would say one word: look to the future; awake from your slothful dream, and work for independence.' 60

It is not clear how many labourers were affected by Cargill's decision. But it seems unlikely that there were any more jobs that there had been and that therefore the call from the Otago News to the labourers to seek independence was, in reality, a call for them to take up subsistence farming.

Sadly for the workmen who remained dependant on relief work and now had to work for contractors, this change was just a brief, temporary step on the way to the complete removal of the Company's relief provisions. By the autumn of 1850, the Company's financial position had become critical and further action had to be taken to reduce all costs. Thus, just a few months after Cargill had contracted out the settlement's relief works, Fox instructed Cargill to 'absolutely discontinue all employment of labour on the roads, and on no account give employment to any merely on the ground of destitution.' 61 The 'handful of laborers employed in works connected with the New Zealand Company ... either received notice to quit or left

60 Ibid, 12 January 1850.
61 Reed, p.58. This was preceded in December 1849 by an agreement to allow emigrants on the Moutan to land at Otago only on the understanding that 'the Co', [was] not agreeing to employ them.' 'Diary of Rev. Thomas Burns', p.103.
entirely.\textsuperscript{62} Some functions essential to the Company were obviously to remain, but it was no longer able to even indirectly provide any employment at all to those who merely could not find other work. But even those lucky enough to retain their employment, including Cargill, still lost their jobs in October 1850 when news of the Company’s surrender of its charter finally reached Otago.\textsuperscript{63}

This was a dismal end for the workmen. The Company’s support for the emigrants in Otago, which had echoed developments in the earlier Wakefield settlements, disappeared in its entirety and required the Company’s otherwise unemployed labourers to fend as best they could for themselves. As much as some relief had to be better than no relief (or as little as offered by the \textit{Destitute Persons Ordinance of 1846}), the Otago working emigrants were now plainly in an inferior position to that in which they had been when they were encouraged to travel from Britain to escape the prospect of unemployment and relief work, and to better themselves. In a sign of the labourers’ despair, some of them contemplated re-emigration at a meeting in October 1850. Given the struggle to find work, the labourers considered chartering a vessel ‘to convey them to some settlement where there may be a better prospect of obtaining an honest livelihood.’ The extreme difficulties of the labourers were underlined by the failure of the labourers in part to act on the inclination for lack of funds.\textsuperscript{64}

It also appears that these difficulties were not necessarily quick to disappear and may have continued until 1852. Certainly in September 1851 the \textit{Otago Witness} remained concerned and noted the ‘apparent state of apathy and indifference with which the future prospects of our colony are regarded by many of its people’ and

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Otago News}, 18 May 1850.
\textsuperscript{63} Reed, p.58; Olssen. \textit{A History of Otago}, p.36.
\textsuperscript{64} McLintock, p.251; Brooking, p. 76.
indicated the need ‘to arouse our dormant colonists from their torpor’. By the beginning of following year, however, it claimed that ‘the mechanic and labourer are alike fully employed’. It also noted that ‘the small farmers have mostly all produced food beyond their wants’. Good conditions appear to have subsequently continued through most of the remainder of the decade particularly as a result of the stimulation of gold discoveries in Australia which created a strong demand for agricultural commodities. At the same time, the settlement continued to stint on its public works and the development of its public infrastructure and its roads were still notoriously poor in 1860.

Lastly, the extent of the influence of Wakefield’s ideas on the Otago settlement is also marked by the change in the aspirations of the working emigrants after they arrived in the settlement, and by the degree to which the Otago ‘sufficient price’ persisted. The workmen, as will be recalled, initially had high hopes of plentiful work, good wages, and short hours. In fact, they got much less than they had hoped for. Because of the lack of preparation of the settlement, they initially had great difficulty finding private employment. Cargill also set the Company rates at a relatively low level. These were 3s. per day for labourers and 5s. a day for craftsmen. The Company’s importance in the settlement as an employer also ensured that wages rates in the settlement generally were not high. Cargill stressed that he had set his rates so as to not ‘overtax the capitalist’. But at the same time he insisted that the rates were adequate. In particular, he compared his rate of ‘18s., with a free house and fuel, and grazing for his cow’, with the rates for ‘the man who for common labour

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65 Otago Witness, 20 September 1851.
66 Ibid, 3 January 1852; also note comments in ibid, 13 December 1851. The Witness further noted an ‘abundant’ harvest and rapid pastoral farming development, 3 April 1852, and indicates an emerging concern over ‘high’ wages, 3, 10, 31 July 1852.
67 By 1856, wages for labourers had improved to a range of 6s. to 7s. and to 9s. and 10s. for tradesmen. Ruth Gow, ‘George Matthews’, in G.J. Griffiths (ed), The Advance Guard, series 1, Dunedin, 1973, p. 101.
68 Soper, p.60.
had 12s. a-week at home, subject to house rent.\textsuperscript{69} In addition, he emphasised the fact that the rates were set without rations, presumably allowing the working emigrant the advantage of full control over the expenditure of his wage.

Despite this argument from Cargill, the working emigrants must have been disappointed. The lack of work, the ten hour day, and the wage rates paid by the Company were a far cry from their early expectations. Even the labourers appear to have expected at least basic conditions of an eight hour day paid at 7s.6d. per day. It is also arguable that Cargill’s outline exaggerated the workmen’s actual conditions. In reality the working emigrants lost a day’s pay a week on average ‘by bad weather.’\textsuperscript{70} On occasions, therefore, particularly in the winter, wages must have been drastically low. Brooking notes in addition that 1848 procured a ‘particularly cold, wet winter.’\textsuperscript{71} Brooking also notes, for example, one report which estimated ‘that clothing cost 60 percent more than in Scotland, and kitchen utensils 100 percent more.’ Basic food items, such as flour and potatoes, were also ‘dear’. Butter and cheese were ‘1s shilling a pound and tea 2s a pound.’\textsuperscript{72}

The disappointment of the workmen does not appear to have been expressed immediately in any form of open dissent, perhaps because the emigrant workmen thought, like Cargill, that conditions would quickly improve. In fact some did get higher wage rates.\textsuperscript{73} But overall the wages were too meagre and the restraint did not last. It may be that the first overt expression of dissatisfaction occurred in October 1848 in the form of what Brooking describes as ‘a short strike ... when the sawyers refused to admit fault to Cargill.’\textsuperscript{74} But certainly they complained openly to William

\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Otago Journal}, November 1848, p.39; June 1849, p.56. 
\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Otago News}, 22 June 1850. 
\textsuperscript{71} Brooking, p.75. This is well illustrated in ‘Diary of Rev. Thomas Burns’, passim 
\textsuperscript{72} Brooking, p.75. 
\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Otago Journal}, June 1849, p.61; ‘Diary of Rev. Thomas Burns’, p.54. 
\textsuperscript{74} Brooking, p.76. The cause of the strike or the need to admit fault are not clear.
Fox when he visited the settlement in January 1849. First and foremost, the 'Working Men's Petition', which the workmen presented to Fox, wanted him to reduce working hours from ten to eight hours per day. The workmen argued that a ten-hour working day 'entirely prevents us from doing any little [thing] to our own comfort; our houses at present being unfinished and likely to continue so, should we be compelled to work these hours.' The petition added that 'Our object in troubling you at present is to obtain ... 8 hours per day, which would enable us to bring ourselves and family to some tolerable state of endurance, not being at present able to bear with the heavy load of tasks that we are obliged for the support of our families to endure, such as the long hours, low rate of wages, ... and the heavy rent of our land on which our houses are built, which is £4 for a quarter of an acre'. The petition further stated that these conditions, 'coupled with the rate of provisions and clothing' made the lives of the workmen 'altogether uncomfortable and unbearable.'

Perhaps the most surprising feature of this petition is that it met with some significant success. On the face of it, the workmen had little in their favour. The labour market was very weak and the Company was struggling. Fox also strongly rejected the petition. Noting that the Company provided work only as a matter of relief, he underlined Cargill's initial rationale that the Company rates gave the workmen '50 per cent. more wages than the home average and requires 10 per cent. less work.' He also compared the Otago rates with the Wellington rates which he said were 2s. 6d. per day, for an eight hour day in winter and ten hour day in summer, and involved work far distant from the settlement. Further, he said that 'Wellington is a very costly place to live.' In addition, Fox stressed that rates had to be attractive to prospective purchasers of land who might emigrate to the colony, and the need therefore to set a rate which would not 'by any possibility contribute impediments to the immigration of

75 Otago News, 24 January 1849.
capitalists.' For all the argument that the Otago rates were better than those in England, therefore, Fox implied that the rates were low, and had to be low. Perhaps his best argument in fact was that matters would get better when 'immigrants possessed of the means of employment find this a desirable place for their investment, and be induced to resort to it'. When this happened (and the 'time will not be too distant'), he said, 'instead of the Company having to maintain any of you, you will be able to dispose of your labour in an open market for its full value.'

What appears to have tipped matters in favour of the petitioners, despite the state of the labour market and the opposition of Fox and Cargill, was that the workmen had support for their claim for reduced hours from elements within the colonial elite in the settlement. This support included strong support from the Otago News, which was generally critical of the Company, and Thomas Burns, Cargill's longstanding ally in establishing the settlement who had already adopted an eight hour day for the labourers working on his own land. But perhaps the key to Cargill's concession was the influence of Valpy, who had only just arrived as the dispute had been joined. Reputed to be the richest man in New Zealand at the time, he immediately became the largest landowner in the settlement and also added his weight to the cause of the eight hour day. The matter was finally settled at a public meeting held on 21 February which 'resolved unanimously that eight hours should constitute a day's labour.' Conditions with respect to hours were thus brought into line with what they had been in the other early Wakefield settlements. The support for the Chartist ideal of the eight hour day from elements of the colonial elite also indicates the peculiarly radical nature of some of the middle class emigrants to Otago. It is notable from

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76 Ibid.
78 McLintock, pp.250-51.
79 The workmen's petition also provides a very practical basis for distinguishing British and colonial hours at least in the initial phase of development. This was the need for the workmen to not only work
Fox's response to the workmen's petition, though, that the ideal was no longer being applied uniformly in Wellington.\footnote{Also see p.197 above.}

Nevertheless, the overall conditions of the workmen still remained well short of their early expectations even with their success in obtaining the eight hour day. And certainly without good wages, the workmen could neither be prosperous or become landowners and the masters of men as promised under Wakefield's scheme. By and large, it appears that the workmen and Sam Shaw, a tradesman (with a variety of skills) who emerged as their leader in early 1849,\footnote{Erik Olssen, 'Shaw, Samuel', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, p.393.} recognised that Fox's concerns regarding the Company's limited ability to pay more to its workers had validity and that any future prosperity for the settlement was in fact dependent on the arrival of more affluent landowners. This view is apparent in the workmen's petition itself, which did not directly seek to improve the wages the Company paid even though they were 'low'. It is even clearer in a letter Shaw wrote to England in March 1849, in which he generally accepted Fox's contention that the emigrant workmen were better off than English agricultural labourers. Yet, at the same time, he also encouraged potential land purchasers by adding that ‘Wages are not high, to stop the capitalist.’ He asked his correspondent to make the state of the settlement known and by doing this the Company would ‘increase their land purchasers, and get the best class of labourers’.\footnote{Otago Journal, November 1849, pp.70-71.}

This stance in part put Shaw at one with the general policy of the Company and Olssen notes that ‘The New Zealand Journal, the mouthpiece of the Company,
considered such optimistic puffery worthy of publication." But, it is apparent in Shaw’s letter that he was also beginning to develop an alternative line of complaint about access to land and the function of the ‘sufficient price’ itself. He wrote that ‘There is one restriction upon the sale of land which a number of the settlers wish to see altered, - the high price asked here, viz., £40 for a town or suburban section and £100 for a rural section. There are parties here who would buy from the Company if they would sell the land here for the home price, but as they cannot, they are waiting for an opportunity to purchase from some one coming out here. There are many reasons which might be urged for this alteration which, no doubt, you are aware of.’ One of these reasons was, without question, the shortage of employment in the settlement. The *Journal* added an editorial comment to Shaw’s letter that the Company was now selling part sections at appropriately reduced prices.\(^{84}\) It is evident, though, that the Company’s sale of part sections was insufficient to resolve Shaw’s concern. Although the Association and the Company promoted small farming in general, the price of even these smaller parcels of land remained beyond the reach of the poor Otago workmen. The *Otago News* complained in June 1849 ‘that the price demanded in the Colony, by the Company for their ten-acre sections, is under existing circumstances, unduly high, I may say exorbitant.’ The crux of this complaint was that the price of land acted as the ‘sufficient price’ was intended to act, that is, to prevent labourers from becoming landowners too quickly. The *Otago News* was clearly opposed to this. It added that ‘One reason that has been assigned for placing this high valuation on them [the ten-acre sections] is, if true, but little calculated to do good. No benefit to the settlement at large can ensue from putting artificial obstructions in the road of the honest industrious labourer – to independence.’\(^{85}\) Essentially, labourers needed land in the absence of employment

\(^{84}\) *Otago Journal*, November 1849, pp.70-71.
\(^{85}\) *Otago News*, 16 June 1849.
but could not purchase it because the wages that could be obtained were too low to allow them to effectively achieve the necessary savings. The pragmatic and articulate conclusion the Otago News and the labourers, under the leadership of Sam Shaw, had come to was that the labourers were not going to get higher wages and that they needed therefore to obtain cheaper land, not only in smaller blocks than those originally marketed, but also cheaper by the acre.

Despite the labourers’ need and the change in their primary objective, the Company’s ‘sufficient price’ for land in Otago did survive for some years longer. Cargill remained particularly resistant to selling land at less than the ‘sufficient price’, but his purpose was not necessarily only to hold labour in the labour market. In response to a further claim from Shaw that the Company was still preventing the labourers from cultivating their own land, Cargill defended his actions in October 1849 by citing the need to protect the value of the initial purchasers’ investment in land and the need for landowners to have sufficient capital to not only buy land but to cultivate it as well.\(^{86}\) The Otago News sensibly noted later that the high price of land in fact deprived new landowners of capital which could have been used for land development.\(^{87}\) Cargill blocked a further representation from Shaw in late October 1849 ‘to grant leases of Suburban land to the laboring classes, with a power to purchase in seven or ten years.’ Cargill deflected Shaw by informing him that the question would have to go to the Company for its consideration ‘in a separate form’.\(^{88}\) Shaw subsequently wrote to the Otago News in protest. He perceived that Cargill and the Company were opposed to leasing land ‘for no other motive than that they do not want the laboring man to improve his circumstances, but to keep the man dependent for life who

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\(^{86}\) Ibid, 13 October 1849. Over the same period Cargill also sought to restrict the availability of pasturage rights on land which was not held on freehold title, to the Company’s land purchasers, and to deny the same to wealthy pastoralist squatters. He largely failed, but this was not his failure alone. On a colony-wide basis, Grey was also unsuccessful in curbing the general expansion of the squatters onto leasehold land. McL intock, pp.338-341; Gardner, ‘A Colonial Economy’, pp.63-64.

\(^{87}\) Otago News, 8 December 1849.
comes to this colony with nothing but his labor.' He warned 'that it will never make labor cheap or benefit the colony.'\textsuperscript{88} According to Shaw, Cargill was using the price of land to stop labourers from obtaining land, and he was doing this to ensure that landownership was not just delayed as prescribed in the theory of systematic colonisation but rather prevented indefinitely. By implication, Shaw's argument continued to be that wages were quite insufficient for labourers to save enough to become landowners at the Company's price.

Cargill's opposition to a change in the price of Company land also continued after the Company reduced and subsequently ceased its operations. In May 1850, when the Company ceased providing work, the unemployed workmen, with the encouragement of the \textit{Otago News}, squatted on Company land. Cargill prosecuted them. Olssen notes that at least some moved outside the settlement 'and squatted on land down the harbour near the Maoris, beyond the effective reach of Cargill.'\textsuperscript{89} Similarly, in October 1850, the \textit{Otago News} reported that Cargill refused to allow a labourer to purchase a section of land by payment of 'one-third, or nearly' of the value of the land with the rest paid by yearly instalments, with interest. Cargill responded to the application with an 'answer ... to the effect that laborers would in time become independent, if they thus became land proprietors, and when there came a demand for labor there would be none in the market!' The \textit{News} counselled patience in the hope that the leadership in the settlement might change.\textsuperscript{91} Ironically, Cargill retained his leadership role in the settlement despite the demise of the Company in 1850. Cargill lost his position as the Company's resident agent but then became the Crown Land Commissioner for the Otago Block, and later Superintendent of the Otago

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid, 27 October 1849.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid, 2 February 1850.
\textsuperscript{90} Olssen, \textit{A History of Otago}, p.36; also see \textit{Otago News}, 5 October 1850.
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Otago News}, 12 October 1850.
province. Conversely, the Otago News, financially hurt by Cargill’s withdrawal of the Company’s subscriptions (in retaliation for its many criticisms), had to close at the end of 1850.

As a result of the effective preservation of his status, Cargill was able in fact to prolong the high Company price even further. Matters may well have become a little easier for him for short while as well. In part, the criticism from Shaw and his labourers had probably reduced. Those who had moved away were less able to worry Cargill and employment prospects within the settlement appear to have improved from early in 1852, thus undoubtedly undercutting criticism from those who remained. From 1853, however, Cargill again came under intense pressure to reduce the ‘sufficient price’. The new source of this pressure was Grey’s land regulations which reduced the price of Crown land from £1 to 10s. or 5s. depending on the quality of the land. Not only did the regulations find considerable support within the Otago community (as they did elsewhere in New Zealand), and raise demands for the lowering of the price of Otago land, but the fact that Otago land prices remained high also ‘did much’, according to McLintock, ‘to turn prospective immigrants to more favourable fields.’ It is testimony to Cargill’s determination to preserve the ‘sufficient price’ that he initially fought this support in Otago for lower prices and was prepared to accept the disadvantageous position in which he placed the settlement with respect to emigration. But at the end of 1854, as Brooking notes, Cargill at last accepted ‘that Otago would eventually have to follow the colonial move to the lower price of ten shillings per acre if Otago was to avoid ruin.’ The new lower price was eventually implemented in April 1856. Even Cargill, at the last, had to concede the

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92 McLintock, p. 264; Brooking, p. 99.
93 Brooking, pp.80-81.
95 McLintock, p. 341-42.
96 Brooking, pp. 110-11.
‘sufficient price’ and allow the emigrant workmen easy access to land and subsistence farming. Brooking notes that after some fine tuning to these new prices, the expected result did follow and ‘Men of more limited means were able to get on to the land’. 97

It seems, thus, that the promotion and influence of Wakefield’s ideas on the Otago settlement with respect to labour and labour relations had a considerably varied impact on the settlement during its first years. The colonisers generally adopted the two central features of Wakefield’s scheme, the sale of land at a ‘sufficient price’ and the use of land revenue to assist labourers to emigrate, but also compromised the scheme by strongly emphasising small farming. The difficulties of selection also ensured that the labour sent to Otago only met the colony’s needs haphazardly. Furthermore, the conditions in the colony in the first years of the settlement did not meet the initial aspirations of the working class colonists. Rather, these aspirations were undercut by the lack of work and poor wages and the emigrant workmen who were unable to find adequate work began, in time, to seek cheap land and the opportunity to establish themselves as independent, albeit subsistence farmers. This of course constituted an anathema to the principles of systematic colonisation. The workmen did, however, obtain the eight hour day. Cargill also resisted changes to the ‘sufficient price’ and only finally accepted the need for cheap land in 1854. In addition, Cargill reflected the early examples of the provision of support for emigrant workmen, which had grown stronger over time in association with the promotion of Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation. He did this by providing relief work for the labourers when they arrived in the Otago settlement in 1848. But this assistance ended when the Company finally collapsed in 1850. This demise also must have contributed to the undermining of the hopes of the emigrant workmen of

97 Ibid, pp.111-12.
obtaining an easy prosperity in Otago, at least based on the application of Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation.

Alongside this varied pattern, there was one further influence of note. This was the relatively uncomplicated impact of Wakefield’s conception of free labour. Most publicly, this influence manifested itself in the settlers’ opposition to convict labour. This opposition was strongly expressed in May 1849 in reaction to a British Government proposal to send convicts to any of its colonies where labour was in short supply. The public meeting held in Dunedin in response condemned the proposal noting that truly reformed convicts would be regarded and used as a source of cheap labour and not paid equitably and, conversely, that contact with the great majority of convicts, who would not be reformed, would result in the ‘moral contamination’ of both the European settlers and ‘the natives’. Furthermore, the meeting noted the willingness of the workmen generally ‘to compete with the labour of natives, and of Europeans, who had joined the settlement at their own expense, but not with men in the urgent circumstances of exile convicts.’ The *Otago Witness*, which succeeded the *Otago News*, also recorded its opposition to the introduction of convict labour in an editorial in March 1851. The *Witness* was convinced that the cheap labour it appeared to offer was completely outweighed by negative consequences. The list of these consequences included: ‘insecurity of life and property’, excessively expensive policing, a loss of political freedom, ‘moral taint and stigma’, and ‘the pain of daily witnessing … fellow creatures degraded to a state of slavery.’ The feeling that Otago provided freedom from slavery is also indicated very generally in a letter written anonymously in September 1851 to the *Otago Journal*. The writer celebrated his new home by thanking ‘Almighty God for delivering

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99 *Otago Witness*, 8 March 1851.
us from a state of bondage [in Ireland], and placing us in a land of liberty and plenty'.

Besides the opposition to convict labour and the general sense of freedom, it is also evident that the Otago masters generally did not apply master and servant restrictions against their employees. This appears to have been a conscious choice as there were occasions when the masters felt aggrieved at the loss of their servants. At least a few occasions are indicated in a letter from Cargill to the London Committee of the Otago Association, which was reprinted in the *Otago Journal* in November 1849. Cargill stated that while capitalists could bring their own servants to Otago, ‘they should be generally dissuaded, for their own sake, from exercise of this privilege.’ In a comment which could have been drawn from *A Letter from Sydney*, Cargill added that ‘With one solitary exception, every such engagement has been dissolved, and most of them with bitterness on both sides.’ He also stated that, fortunately, there had been ‘comparatively few’ brought out as servants. The judicial records for the Otago settlement show quite unambiguously that there were no attempts to retain the services of these servants, or others, by resort to legal action. Moreover, it seems from the relatively substantial extant judicial records for nineteenth century Otago that this restraint was not just a temporary phenomenon which was exercised over merely the first few years of settlement. In fact, it appears that masters in Otago never took any master and servant actions against their

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101 David Walker, in *A Legal History of Scotland*, vol. VI, Edinburgh, 2001, notes that the English master and servant law did apply in Scotland. He notes that it applied to ‘servants in husbandry, artificers, mechanics and such workmen’, but not to ‘superior workmen’. He also adds that orders could be made requiring servants to return to service, with possible imprisonment should the order be disobeyed, pp.818-19.

102 As in the previous Wakefield schemes, the Otago scheme also put aside funds to assist servants chosen by landowners to accompany them to New Zealand, McLintock, p.169.

103 *Otago Journal*, November 1849, p.69.

servants at any time to enforce specific service. This includes the period immediately after the demise of the Otago Association when the economy began to substantially improve and there was little economic constraint on workmen changing from one master to another in pursuit of better work and conditions. This lack of legal action was, as previously noted, in sharp contrast to the level of master and servant disputes in Australia.\(^{105}\)

_Canterbury_

Wakefield’s ideas on colonisation with respect to labour and labour relations also had a mixed impact on Canterbury. Generally, the promotion and planning of the settlement strongly reflected Wakefield’s original ideas, but there were some changes. These included a refinement in the selection of labouring emigrants, more attention to the issue of pastoral farming, and the absence of any discussion of substance on the provision of relief. As in the other Wakefield settlements, the management of the supply of labour to Canterbury did not reach the set standard, this time resulting primarily in the undersupply of labour. Yet, because labour was generally short in the settlement, it seems less likely that the initial aspirations of the emigrant workmen were undermined in the way they were in the earlier settlements. The colony also maintained strong support for the ‘sufficient price’, and exhibited continued support for Wakefield’s ideas on free labour.

For the most part, the promotion and planning of the settlement of Canterbury reflected Wakefield’s established views on colonisation with respect to labour and labour relations. This is evident in Wakefield’s last major work, the *Art of Colonization*, written in 1848. This work was primarily an attack on Britain’s

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\(^{105}\) See p.224 above.
government of its colonies and its attitude to colonisation. Wakefield remained insistent on the need for organised colonisation, but argued that this was largely being prevented by the government. In particular, Wakefield vehemently criticised the Colonial Office and its permanent under-secretary, Sir James Stephens. The latter was dealt with especially severely and portrayed as an obstructive, time-serving bureaucrat who was at least partly responsible for the delays in starting the New Zealand Company’s schemes and the early difficulties of its settlements.\footnote{For example see E.G. Wakefield, *A View of the Art of Colonization*, Oxford, 1914 (first published 1849), pp. 25f, 248, 262-63, 283f, 444.} Ironically, given the tasks the New Zealand Company had itself attempted in trying to manage the colonisation of New Zealand, the criticism of the government included reference to the difficulties of obtaining timely information to effectively administer a colony far distant from London and, more generally, organising the affairs of such a colony without an implicit or ‘ocular’ appreciation of the affairs of the colony.\footnote{Ibid, pp.241-42, 288.} In Wakefield’s view, there was a need to establish ‘municipal’ or local representative government in the colony, though he was also keen to stress that such government should not be democratic. Wakefield remained very strongly opposed to the enfranchisement and the consequent empowerment of what he considered to be the ignorant working class.\footnote{Ibid, pp.192, 260f, 301-02.}

Although government was Wakefield’s main concern, he also reargued, with the benefit of hindsight,\footnote{Ibid, p.24.} the need for colonisation in general and how, in addition to the reform of government, it should be promoted, carried out, and nurtured. Wakefield argued that there continued to be a desperate need to use colonisation as ‘a natural means of seeking relief from the worst of our social ills, and of thus averting formidable political changes.’ He stated that there were, in the development of
colonies, jobs for the ‘redundant’ in Britain (there continued to be ‘a want of room for people of all classes’ in Britain); a source of food and ‘the raw materials of manufacture’; a market for British goods; and the gratification of ‘our best feelings of national pride’.

He expressed deep concerns about social discontent and its capacity to destabilise the British economy and lead either to rebellion or, through less violent means, to democracy. As in the colonies, he feared the establishment of a democracy at home, again dominated by a resentful, ignorant, and demanding working class.

In Wakefield’s view, the insufficient concentration of their colonial populations remained a fundamental weakness of recently established colonies. Labourers arriving in the colonies quickly bought land and withdrew from the labour market leaving a severe shortage of labour. This prevented the colonies from benefiting from the productive advantages generally reaped by combining capital with labour and the working of labourers together in combination. Wakefield emphasised the need for the ‘combination and constancy of labour’ if the colony was to advance from barbarism.

In addition, he noted that the colony could provide an effective solution to Britain’s social ills only if the increase in land under effective production was well in excess of the potential for a natural increase in population which might be generated by a rise in prosperity. In other words, effective colonisation had to be especially productive in order to overcome Malthus’ population principle. This principle held that any growth in prosperity would be overwhelmed by a corresponding increase in population (thus returning the formerly poor and hungry to poverty and hunger).

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110 Ibid., pp.6-8, 64f, 83.
111 Ibid., pp.66-73.
112 Ibid., p.323.
113 Ibid., pp. 90-91, 124-25.
Wakefield rejected what he saw as the usual recourse for resolving labour shortages in the colonies. Slavery, which he defined very broadly, could never be satisfactory. It brought a degree of prosperity to the colony which would otherwise be short of labour, but, Wakefield stated, 'Slavery is evidently a make-shift for hiring; a proceeding to which recourse is had, only when hiring is impossible or difficult. Slave labour is on the whole much more costly than the labour of hired freemen; and slavery is also full of moral and political evils, from which the method of hired labour is exempt. Convict labour was specifically referred to as 'the abomination'. Slavery also had the effect of deterring the gentry from emigrating. The gentry, Wakefield thought, were 'the emigrants whose presence in a colony most beneficially affects its standards of morals and manners, and would supply the most beneficial element of colonial government.' They were deterred by the prospect of any association with convicts and found 'Negro slavery ... detestable', having not been 'bred, born, and educated within hearing of the driving-whip.' The gentry, Wakefield wrote, had to be encouraged instead by provision in the colony for religion and education (reflecting the practice already in place in Nelson and Otago). This provision would also help ensure the civilising presence of women. Conveniently, the promotion of the need for religious institutions in the new colony of Canterbury tied in well with the sponsorship of the colony by the Church of England.

114 The definition in the *Art of Colonization* included 'negro slavery', 'convict slavery', and 'a virtual slavery in the forms of servants kidnapped in Europe, and "indented" in America, and "redemptioners," or immigrants whom a contract bound to their masters for a term of years, and whom either their utter ignorance of the law and language of America, or the force of opinion and combination amongst the masters, compelled to abide by their contracts for service.' In addition, Wakefield regarded as virtual slaves both freed black slaves where their condition was of 'extreme degradation in the midst of the whites', and 'the hordes of Irish-pauper emigrants', because 'of their servile, lazy, reckless habit of mind, and their degradation in the midst of the energetic, accumulating, prideful, domineering Anglo-Saxon race.' Ibid, pp.174-75.
115 Ibid, p. 324.
117 Ibid, pp. 135-36.
Wakefield's solution to remedy the tendencies of colonies to experience labour shortage and to try to resolve the difficulty by obtaining slave labour was, naturally enough, systematic colonisation. The key to the loss of labour to landownership remained the implementation of a 'sufficient price' for land. Wakefield stressed this by noting that 'the only object of selling instead of giving is ... to prevent labourers from turning into landowners too soon'. But the 'sufficient price' had to be higher than the prices previously set for the South Australian and the already settled New Zealand settlements. He stated that 'in none of them did the price required prevent the cheapest land from being cheap enough to inflict on the colony all the evils of an extreme scarcity of labour for hire.' Wakefield was still adamant therefore that the 'sufficient price' should impede labourers from obtaining land they would have obtained under normal circumstances. They had to remain in the labour market for a number of years while they thriftily saved their wages and only then should they be able to purchase land and become masters of men. Wakefield also dealt with the possible objection that an important effect of the imposition of the 'sufficient price' and the increase in labour in the labour market (thus giving the capitalist a greater choice of labour and a competitive advantage over labour) would be to lower the wages of the labourers relative to the capitalists' profits. Wakefield argued that wages would always be high (because, if they were - hypothetically - low, emigration would slow and turn the labour market in favour of the labourer), and that even if the labourer's share declined relative to the capitalist's profits, the labourer would still be better off because he shared in an immensely increased overall production.

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120 Ibid, p. 376.
121 Ibid, pp. 341. While this is a perverse claim given the effort of the New Zealand Company to remove labourers from relief work onto their own small holdings in Wellington, New Plymouth, and Nelson, by the end of the 1840s labour was beginning to be more scarce in these settlements and provided some immediate contemporary justification for the comment.
123 Ibid, pp. 369-70.
Furthermore, Wakefield continued to express a decisive preference for the selection of ‘young married couples, or ... young people of the marriageable age in an equal proportion of the sexes.’ He rejected the emigration of the old and, very strongly, children. He stated that ‘By taking none but very young grown-up persons, the maximum value would be obtained for any given outlay.’ These persons, he thought, would be greatly predisposed ‘to hope, to ambition, to engaging in undertakings which require decision and energy of purpose.’ \(^{124}\) Wakefield also emphasised that the landowners should assist in this selection process by nominating and emigrating with their own servants (who would nevertheless be carried out by the Association). He stated that the opportunity given to land purchasers to nominate servants under the rules of the emigration fund, that is, in order to ensure that they obtained the labour they wanted, ‘would induce many a capitalist to emigrate who might not otherwise think of doing so.’ \(^{125}\) The emphasis reflected a recognition of the past difficulties colonising agencies had had in accurately selecting emigrants according to required criteria. \(^{126}\)

Wakefield also discussed the singular effect of the ‘sufficient price’, that is, without the establishment and benefit of an emigration fund to supply the labour market, on the enforcement of ‘contracts of labour’. He stated that ‘Because, now, all labourers being under the necessity of remaining labourers for some years, it would be possible, and not difficult, for capitalists to enforce contracts of labour made in the mother-country.’ He noted, however, that as a result of the ‘sufficient price’ there would be a much reduced propensity for labourers to breach contracts, and that any residual propensity would be controlled by generosity and social disapproval. Wakefield argued that with a full labour force (and therefore high production and

\(^{124}\) Ibid, pp. 405-409.

\(^{125}\) Ibid, p.378.

\(^{126}\) Also see Plan of the Association for Founding the Settlement of Canterbury, 1848, pp.15-16.
great profits), the ‘importing capitalist’ would easily meet the very high wages offered by the ‘non-importing capitalist’, as well as pay the cost of the passage of his labourers (this last cost being very small in relation to the overall labour cost). Moreover, the importing capitalist ‘would’, he said, ‘be better able to keep the labourers he imported, by treating them with kindness and consideration for their human pride as well as their physical want, than the other [the non-importing capitalist] would be to entice them away by the promise of such treatment.’ In other words, the fact of good treatment would always be better than the promise of the same. Wakefield expected that the non-importing capitalists would, in these circumstances, become importing capitalist themselves. But, he added, should ‘some would-be robbers’ remain, ‘they would be prevented by the frowns of society from doing so great a wrong to their neighbour for so small a gain to themselves.’

Wakefield argued that servants and labourers would work for particular masters because they felt valued and wanted to. This was his only recommendation. There was no argument that they should be compelled to work by legal direction. It was of course willing labour, according to Wakefield’s theory, that produced a valuable return to the master. Unwilling labour on the other hand brought the master significant risks of adverse costs.

In addition, Wakefield modified the previous outlines of his scheme by rationalising the provision of cheap rates for pastoral land in New Zealand with the ‘sufficient price’. The problem Wakefield faced was that while he accepted that pastoralists could only operate their landholdings if they paid minimal rates for the use of grasslands, this seemed to leave an opening for labourers to escape the general restriction of the ‘sufficient price’ and obtain cheap land themselves, and thus leave the labour market. In response, Wakefield stated that ‘it is the extreme cheapness, not of natural pasturage, but of land for cultivation, which occasions scarcity of labour

127 Wakefield, A View of the Art of Colonization, pp.372-73.
for hire.' He explained that 'Labourers could not become landowners by using natural pasturage' because 'The use of it requires, in order to be profitable, the employment of a considerable capital, of numerous servants, and of very superior skill; it is a business requiring from the outset much combination of labour for division of employments, and the unremitting constancy of the combined labour: it is a business altogether unsuitable to the common labourer or small capitalist.'

Thus, according to Wakefield, the expense of developing pastoral land rather than the cost of the land itself provided a sufficient impediment to prevent the labourer from leaving the labour market too soon.

There are also two issues that are not referred to in the Art of Colonization which had previously been associated with Wakefield’s scheme. Firstly, there was no reference to the provision of assistance for labourers on arrival in the settlement or in the event of unemployment in the colony. The most that Wakefield offered was ‘care ... to prevent temporary gluts of either capital or labour in very young colonies’ and that he expected the labour market to be kept in balance ‘provided ... that colonial government is tolerably good’.

Again, this reflected the experience of both the South Australian colonists and the New Zealand Company in Wellington, New Plymouth, and Nelson. The value of an attempt to attract labouring emigrants to the colony with a guarantee of work, that is relief work in the absence of other work, was clearly outweighed by the danger to the whole venture through the draining of the colonising agency’s funds. It seems likely that Wakefield also found in these experiences some reinforcement of his already established view that the provision of relief tended to encourage dependency in the recipient. To his mind, this in turn

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129 Despite Wakefield’s argument, the fact is that the capital outlay was not prohibitive for men of small means, Webb, p.231.
130 Wakefield, A View of the Art of Colonization, p. 82.
131 See pp.67, 69 above.
threatened to transform temporary periods of unemployment into more persistent developmental problems founded on a lack of energy and initiative amongst the colonists.

The second issue which Wakefield might have referred to, but did not, was small farming. As discussed previously, the idea was fundamentally contrary to Wakefield’s central idea that production in the colony should be carried out by units involving the employment by capitalists of labourers working in combination. Yet the New Zealand Company had promoted small farming from 1842 onwards in order to try and offset the lack of sales and development in relation to Wellington, New Plymouth, and Nelson. Small farming was also part of the Otago scheme, further reflecting a justified concern over the limited interest in the scheme from landowners with a genuine capacity to employ labour. In light of this promotion and development, the absence of any reference to small farming in the *Art of Colonization* is an obvious omission. It can, however, be easily explained. Wakefield was promoting colonisation as it should be carried out, not as it might need to be fundamentally compromised to accommodate the difficulties that might be placed in the way of effective colonisation by the government. He may also have been much more confident, perhaps because of the strong backing of the Church of England, that his scheme would be well supported by men, women, and families of substantial means. Furthermore, while the *Art of Colonization* continued to harbour concerns to the very end that the government could sabotage his ideas, Wakefield’s effort even in writing the work indicates an underlying confidence that his ideas would ultimately prevail.

The similarities and modifications indicated in the *Art of Colonization* between Wakefield’s established ideas of systematic colonisation and the promotion and

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planning of the Canterbury settlement are also reinforced by reference to the activities of the Canterbury Association. The Association as a body shared Wakefield’s ideas or rather more strictly it acted largely as a vehicle for his ideas, both old and new. This is confirmed in part by the actual plans and regulations of the Association, and in part by its promotional pamphlets and its speeches.

The Association’s plan, set out in 1848, outlined three objects for the new settlement. These were the organisation and independence of the settlement, the concentration of its population, and the abundance of labour. It noted that concentration was to be achieved ‘by the large sum of money required to be advanced in the purchase of every acre of land.’ Land was set at £3 per acre, thus 50% higher than the price of land in Nelson, which had previously been the colony with the most expensive land. One third of this purchase price was channelled into the Association’s emigration fund.\(^ {133}\) The Association also variously set out its goals in relation to the supply of labour in its plan, regulations, and meetings. In its plan, purchasers were prompted to nominate labourers for assisted passages with the selection to include ‘none but persons of good character, as well as members of the Church of England’ so that at least initially ‘the settlement may begin its existence in a healthy moral atmosphere.’\(^ {134}\) The ‘right’ of nomination was ‘subject to the veto of the Association’ and given ‘in proportion to the amount contributed’ by the ‘purchase to the general immigration fund’. It was also made clear that the right of nomination was an effort to improve on previous processes of selection. It was designed to minimise expenditure, that is ‘to obtain the greatest number of immigrants for a given expenditure’, and, through a more intimate knowledge of the applicants, ‘to secure a

\(^{133}\) Plan of the Association, pp. 13-14. In fact, under the Association’s Terms of Purchase, £3 was the rate only for Canterbury rural land. Rural land was to be sold in minimum blocks of 50 acres at £3 per acre, quarter acre blocks in the secondary town (Lyttleton) at £12, and half acre blocks in the main town (Christchurch) at £24. Canterbury Association, Terms of Purchase, 1 January 1850, Canterbury Papers, pp. 41-44.

\(^{134}\) Plan of the Association, p. 15.
better class of labourers'. Details on the types of labour required were included in the regulations, published by the Association in April 1850. These stated a particular preference for farm servants, shepherds, domestic servants, country mechanics, and artisans, and young and married applicants. The regulations added that that 'Passages will only be granted to Single Men subject to the general rule that their number shall not exceed the number of Single Women in each Ship.' The Association's initial plan generally promised that the settlement would 'not have the economic gain, with the moral degradation, of a slave population, to develop the riches of the country'. Rather, it would have gain without degradation because 'the immigration fund will supply a larger amount of free labour to the capitalist than has hitherto been procurable in recent British settlements.' The Association's regulations in 1850 added that the emigrant labourers would be at liberty on arriving in the settlement to 'engage themselves to any one willing to employ them, and to make their own bargain for wages'.

More details of the Association's objects and intentions were provided in its general promotional pamphlets. A pamphlet published in February 1850 explained the purpose of the scheme. It was an escape for 'those who have been suffering from the struggle between pride and penury, and whose minds are continually filled with anxiety about the future,' and from worry about 'the din of war, ... the tumult of revolutions, ... the clamour of pauperism,' and 'the struggle of classes,' all of 'which wear out body and soul in our crowded and feverish Europe.' This last passage appears in particular to have benefited from Wakefield's personal rhetorical touch.

135 Plan of the Association, pp 15-16.
136 'Official Notifications', 22 April 1850, Canterbury Papers, p.64.
137 Plan of the Association, p.13.
138 Colin Amodeo, The Summer Ships, Christchurch, 2000, p.43.
139 'Association for Founding the Settlement of Canterbury in New Zealand', 1850, Canterbury Papers, p.8; also see The Canterbury Association, 1850, Hocken Pamplets, vol.32, 15/2.
Several Association sources dealt with the traditional problems of colonial labour. One pamphlet published in 1850 noted the need to avoid the dispersion of the colony’s population inasmuch as ‘the productive powers of industry are weakened, and social intercourse is impeded’.140 A similar pamphlet noted the connections between the ready availability of cheap land for purchase, the dispersion of settlement, and the consequent want of labour.141 In a speech made in May 1850, the Association’s selected Bishop for the Canterbury settlement, the Reverend Thomas Jackson,142 rejected the use of labour ‘furnished from the workhouse and the gaol’. He added that ‘We do not want the mother country to put us off with its waifs; we do not want to be over-run with needlewomen one year, and the next year with a party of lads fresh from the military discipline of Parkhurst and its iron cells; launched with new clothes and careless hearts, on the boundless liberty of a new settlement’.143 Hinds, the Bishop of Norwich, noted very generally ‘that the time had now come when the spirit of colonization had freed itself from these debasing associations’.144 At a public meeting in London in April 1850, John Simeon, a Member of Parliament, noted that the ‘sufficient price’ for Canterbury land would prevent the solitude which was the lot of the American backwoodsman and was occasioned by the want of labour.145 Jackson, Hinds, and Simeon were all members of the Canterbury Association.146

The Association’s pamphlets and speeches included frequent references to the management of the supply of labour to the settlement. In one pamphlet, the Association stated that it wanted Canterbury to be ‘an extension of England with

140 Brief Information about the Canterbury Settlement, London, 1850, p.3.
142 Jackson went to New Zealand, but was considered ‘unfit of business’ and never formally took up his post. He returned to Britain after a mere six weeks in the new settlement. See Webb, pp. 179-83.
145 A Full and Accurate Report of the Public Meeting which was held in St Martin’s Hall, on the 17th April, 1850, London 1850, Hocken Pamphlets, vol. 32. 11/17.
146 Hight and Straubel, pp. 242-45.
regard to the more refined attributes of civilisation' with a view to attracting English

gentry to the colony. In turn, labourers and smaller capitalists would follow because
they would perceive that the gentry would only emigrate if there was 'a reasonable
certainty of doing well' in the colony. Associated with this, the Association promoted
the need to provide for religious institutions in the colony. The want of this was 'very
repulsive' to the gentry and especially to 'thoughtful mothers'. Gentlewomen of the
gentry class were indispensable. The Association noted that it was 'Deeply conscious
of the importance and beneficial influence of women in civilized life.' The increased
role of the gentry in assisting in the selection of labour was noted by the Reverend
Jackson in his Ipswich speech. He told his audience that 'if you import your own
labourers, you can do something towards making a right selection.' He added that
the clergy, who recommended candidates, should only 'select men of the purest
morals and best characters.' He also explained that the emigration fund ensured that
all land purchasers paid for the labourers who did arrive in the colony. This
eliminated the problem whereby labour was brought in piecemeal by a few employers
who subsequently lost their labour to other employers, who had saved on paying
passages and were able therefore to offer higher wages. Liquid. Later, at a meeting in
Reading, Jackson described the need for 'the very best of peasant men and peasant
women of old England' and for 'right good men, of muscular pith and sap; men of
sound moral character; men, above all, heartily attached to the Church of England,
the church of their forefathers.' At yet another meeting, Lord Lyttelton, who was
chairman of the Association's Management Committee, reported, 'with regard to the
labourers who are to be carried out, that they will, subject to the veto of the
Committee, be selected by the purchasers of land.' Very clearly, the Association

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147 The Speech of the Rev. Thomas Jackson, M.A., pp. 3-4. Also see Brief Information about the
Canterbury Settlement, pp. 2-3.
148 'Public Meeting at Reading', 17 July 1850, Canterbury Papers, p.128.
149 A Full and Accurate Report, p. 7.
reflected Wakefield’s ideas in the *Art of Colonization* on who should be selected, and how they should be selected, to go to the colony.

Like the earlier New Zealand Wakefield settlements, therefore, Canterbury commenced its life under the guidance and leadership of men who showed every intention of broadly applying Wakefield’s original theory of systematic colonisation. Land was to be sold at the ‘sufficient price’ and free labour was to be sent to the labour market with proceeds from the land sales. Labour was to be selected according to generally unchanged criteria. Expectations as to the time they would work in the colony as labourers, their wages, and the ultimate destiny of many to become landowners and masters of men also remained the same. Wakefield continued to promote the use of free and willing labour. He advocated that masters seek to retain the services of their servants by treating them generously and by applying moral sanctions against masters who might tempt servants to change their contracts. Other possibilities were not considered.

Again these were relatively strong beginnings for Wakefield’s ideas. However, Canterbury was also like the other Wakefield settlements in that, despite the intentions and enthusiasm of the colonisers, the supply of labour in the early settlement was not well managed or balanced. Again, this represented a key failure in the application of systematic colonisation. Yet there is also considerable evidence that a number of the colonists, ranging from members of Canterbury’s colonial elite and employers in the settlement, to the colony’s working emigrants, probably continued to support and to be influenced by his ideas during the early years of the settlement, and even beyond. There remained considerable support for a high ‘sufficient price’ of land; there is less reason to conclude that the aspirations of the working emigrants, which were encouraged by Wakefield’s ideas, were undermined and destroyed in the early years of the Canterbury settlement; and it again seems
that the ideas in relation to the freedom of labour that Wakefield continued to
advocate strongly also took root in the new settlement.

With regard to the supply of labour to the settlement, it is not clear that there was an
improvement in meeting Wakefield’s objects in relation to the composition or balance
of the labour market. In relation to the composition of the labour force in the early
settlement, L.C. Webb, in the most comprehensive history of Canterbury (the
Canterbury centenary volumes published from 1957 to 1971), indicates a positive
reflection of Wakefield’s proposals and hope for the new settlement. Webb’s view
does not appear to be fully justified however. He states that the passenger list details
’show that the age limit was fairly strictly observed and that there was a balance of
occupations.’\(^{150}\) Certainly over half the working emigrants (59%) who arrived in the
first four Association vessels were reported as farm workers, though this proportion
appears to have fallen slightly over time. Furthermore, there was also both a wide
spread of trades and occupations represented and a sizeable number of building
tradesmen.\(^{151}\) Yet, John Godley, the head of the settlement as the Canterbury
Association’s Resident Chief Agent,\(^{152}\) sent a concerned request to London in July
1851, that the Association should not send out distressed needlewomen incapable of
acting as domestic servants. This suggests at least some had slipped through the
selection net.\(^{153}\) In addition, the available information on the demographic details of

\(^{150}\) Webb, p.170.

\(^{151}\) C.E. Carrington, *John Robert Godley of Canterbury*, Christchurch, 1950, Appendix E; Hight and
Straubel, Appendix VIII: 51% of the emigrants from the first 22 ships with such reported data were
farm workers or similar.

\(^{152}\) Godley was also made Resident Magistrate and Commissioner of Crown Lands for the settlement
in December 1850, Carrington, pp.76, 115. Variously a lawyer and a journalist, Godley was a man of
some independent means as ‘The heir to a moderately prosperous estate at Killegar, County Leitrim’,
which enabled him to take an active part in public affairs. Godley had established his reputation as a
person interested in colonisation prior to becoming involved in the Canterbury scheme through his
work in promoting Irish emigration to Canada as a response to the Great Famine. Steven Grainger,
‘Who was Godley’ in Mark Stocker (ed), *Remembering Godley: A Portrait of Canterbury’s Founder*,

\(^{153}\) J.E. Fitzgerald (ed), *A Selection from the Writings and Speeches of John Robert Godley*,
Christchurch, 1863, pp.208-09.
the emigrants and the settlers indicates that the Association fared badly in trying to match Wakefield’s injunction to take ‘none but very young grown-up persons’, and equal numbers of males and females. Data in C.E. Carrington’s study of Godley show that probably almost a third of the passengers in steerage were children.\(^{154}\) Moreover, a comprehensive list of all the passengers on one of these vessels, the *Charlotte Jane*, shows that the emigrants included families headed by single women and two families comprising six children each.\(^{155}\) The data also indicates a less than even proportion of women amongst the early working emigrants of 37%, which was consistent with complaints in early years about a chronic shortage of domestic female servants.\(^{156}\) Webb notes that despite the intention to create an Anglican settlement, there is ‘no evidence that any religious test was applied’, although at least a nominally Anglican settlement did result.\(^{157}\) In general, the results may be attributable to several factors. These included unrealistic objects set by Wakefield; continuing difficulties in accurately determining the suitability of candidates; and/or a lack of interest in the settlement from ideal candidates. The Association’s attempt to improve the quality of candidates by including land purchasers in the selection process foundered at the outset through a lack of nominations.\(^{158}\)

Webb also probably overstates the case with respect to the general quality of the character of the working emigrants. As Webb notes, Wakefield and the Association wanted men and women who came with a ‘certificate’ that they were ‘sober, industrious and honest’ and ‘amongst the most respectable of their class’. While recognising the difficulty of measuring these characteristics, Webb states that

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154 Carrington, Appendix E. This table almost certainly understates the number of children in the first ships, see *The Journal of Edward Ward, 1850-51*, Christchurch, 1951, p.209.
157 Webb, p. 171; Hight and Straubel, Appendix VI.
158 Amodeo, p.38.
because it can at least be said that the record of the emigrants on the voyage out, and later as settlers, was good. It is a fair assumption that, with some exceptions, they were in fact amongst the most respectable of their class.¹⁶⁹ This accords with Godley's pronouncement promoting the Association's success on his return to London.¹⁶⁰ Yet, Edward Ward, who travelled in the Charlotte Jane with some of the first main group of colonists, described the emigrant workmen on board as 'a "bad lot" (with few exceptions) ... chiefly the off-scourings of the small mechanics of large towns – up to all sorts of meaness and petty pride – knowing too well the arts of separating the interests of employer and employed.'¹⁶¹ Similarly, Charlotte Godley, John Godley's wife, described the steerage passengers who arrived in the Poictiers, before the first main body of settlers, as 'ill-behaved.'¹⁶² Ward condemned the emigrants who arrived immediately after the first main group as well. He wrote that 'The Idlers of the Castle Eden are a great bore. They seem to take no thought of putting up houses for themselves so they prey upon us and other people.'¹⁶³ Henry Sewell, another of the Canterbury gentry, commented shortly after arriving in 1853 on the lack of industriousness amongst the workmen in the settlement. He stated that 'Nothing can exceed the lazy habits of the working people'. He added, if only as a comment on the susceptibility of the 'New comers', that they 'catch the disease as soon as they land.'¹⁶⁴ It is of course quite possible that Ward, Charlotte Godley, and Sewell had some predisposition towards intolerance to their social inferiors and, therefore, their comments may have been exacting and harsh as a result. But it also seems unlikely that they were talking about the 'most respectable' of the working class. The most recent assessment of the selection of labouring emigrants by Colin

¹⁶⁹ Webb, p.170.
¹⁶⁰ Fitzgerald, pp.235f.
¹⁶¹ The Journal of Edward Ward, pp.14, 73. Ward was made a justice of the peace shortly after his arrival in the settlement. He drowned in 1851.
¹⁶² Godley, pp.89-90.
Amodeo also suggests this is the case. Amodeo notes that by far the great majority of the steerage passengers had to be selected and gathered together in a great rush before the first four Association ships left for Canterbury. This generally disallowed any serious checking of credentials. The emigrants also included at least twenty-seven who received allowances to emigrate from the administrators of the poor law in their parishes.\(^{165}\)

The question of the quality of the workmen in the early settlement can also be extended to include those who made their own way to Canterbury. The first labourers were those employed by Joseph Thomas, who began to prepare the settlement in July 1849. Already by early September this workforce comprised 110 European and nearly seventy Maori workers, mainly brought down from the North Island. The European workers were certainly not an elite group. Thomas was not impressed and ‘wrote of “the very rough characters which for the most part form our labour population, collected as they are from all the Australian colonies.”’ Charles Torlesse, one of Thomas’s surveyors, subsequently noted that ‘Lyttelton ... by all account is the receptacle of all the loose beachcombers and escaped lags or convicts, who have been employed in preference to honest and able men from the settlements. Neither person nor property are safe there.’\(^{166}\) A large proportion of the European labourers were still in the settlement when the main body of the colonists began to arrive.\(^{167}\) In March 1851, Charlotte Godley worried about ‘a number of somewhat disreputable people among our neighbours in the bush, some thirty or forty men.’\(^{168}\) Desertions from visiting ships almost certainly did not add to the quality.\(^{169}\) There is further specific evidence of randomness in the emigrants who

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\(^{165}\) Amodeo, pp.38-44.
\(^{166}\) Straubel, ‘Maori and European to 1850’, in Hight ard Straubel, pp.123-24
\(^{167}\) Ibid, p.128; Webb, p.176.
\(^{168}\) Godley, p.180.
\(^{169}\) Ibid, pp.167-68; McIntyre, p.303.
arrived after the Canterbury Association's vessels discharged their last passengers in March 1853. In May 1854, for example, Sewell exulted in the unexpected arrival of the Balnaginth. The ship provided 'a Godsend in the shape of a batch of labourers all meant for Auckland but kidnapped here. That is the inevitable result. Whatever may be the first Port is sure to get the supply of labour.' In the same year, the settlement sought to encourage emigrants from Australia, particularly Melbourne where the effect of the gold rush had past its peak. Sewell worried about the importation of a 'criminal class' and the consequent need to establish a mounted police force. All told, it appears very doubtful, despite Webb's assessment, that either the Association's emigrants or the Canterbury labour force as a whole matched the high standards set by Wakefield and prescribed in the Association's regulations. The probability, of course, is that the workmen and women who settled in Canterbury in its first years were ordinarily representative of their class and covered the usual range from 'good' to 'bad'.

Similarly, results in the early settlement did not generally match the goal of a controlled, quantitatively balanced labour market. This applied to the period during which Thomas attempted to prepare the settlement, the first year after the arrival of the Association's first four ships, and, of course, the following years which coincided with an exodus of settlers to Australia in search of gold. In the first instance, Thomas, who had brought labourers to Canterbury to prepare the settlement in the winter of 1849, finally ran out of available credit in March 1850 and had to give notice to his road gangs. Godley, who arrived the following month with news that plans to

171 McIntyre, pp.499-500.
establish the settlement had still not been fully decided, confirmed the decision. As a result, the main bulk of the workforce was paid off. Arrangements were made to return the Maori road workers to Wellington and most of the Europeans took up temporary squatting rights in order to make do and wait in hope 'that there would be only a brief interval before the works were resumed.' Thomas also provided some work constructing temporary housing at Lyttelton with payment in goods. But substantial work recommenced only in November 1850 when Godley 'pledged his personal credit with the Union Bank to the extent of £5000' following the receipt of news which indicated the imminent arrival of the Association's first immigrant ships.

Subsequently, when the first four of the Association's ships arrived in December 1850, the labour market was again disrupted and the settlement had its first experience of a labour shortage. The labourers already in the settlement and the working emigrants who had just arrived were insufficient in number to carry out all the work that needed to be done. This work included building their own houses, building houses and shelter for the new landowners, and carrying out necessary public works in the settlement. The demand for housing from the new landowners was probably more intense than in the previous Wakefield settlements, because of the relative affluence of the landowners, their relatively greater numbers, and the early availability of town sections in Lyttelton. Godley was rather coy about the problem, noting in a memorandum to London in January 1851 that he was uncertain 'whether there will be a sufficient number of labourers' in the settlement because the demand was still not ascertainable, but he did not 'anticipate any deficiency'.

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174 Carrington, p.106.  
175 Scotter, p.22; Straubel, pp.122-29; Webb, pp. 173-74.  
177 Fitzgerald, p.189.
Times, on the other hand, had no doubts. It noted in mid January 1851 that ‘Labour has been very scarce, and wages very high. Carpenters get as much as a shilling an hour; but this is partly owing to the fact, that all the labour brought out in the ships is not yet in the market, the people being occupied in making their own houses.’ In February, the Lyttelton Times noted that employers could not find labour. It stated that ‘It is not that it is expensive, or that we grudge the outlay, but, simply, that it does not exist.’ The effort at the end of March, of James Fitzgerald, the editor of the Lyttelton Times and the colony’s immigration agent, to establish for the use of employers a register that recorded the details of labourers available for work, also suggests a continuation of the shortage.

The imbalance, of course, indicates that the Canterbury Association, as with the South Australian Commissioners, the New Zealand Company and the Otago Association could not effectively manage a labour market on the other side of the globe and keep it in balance. The Association at least initially acknowledged that there could be a difficulty. In a despatch from London, which Godley was probably responding to in January 1851, the Association warned him ‘that the proportion of capitalists, or of those who will require labour, may exceed the proper supply of labourers. This will arise from the peculiar character of the present emigration, which consists, for the most part, of persons of a higher condition of life than in any previous instance of a similar kind.’ What confirms the weakness of the Association’s management was that the shortage was not quickly rectified. In admitting the initial possible disproportion, the Association added that the problem would be ‘rapidly’ corrected ‘by extending’ its ‘emigration operations.’ It also expected an immediate amelioration of the problem through the suspension of public works, which would

178 Lyttelton Times, 11 January 1851.
179 Ibid, 15 February 1851.
180 Ibid, 22 March 1851. A shortage of labour is indicated in Lyttelton Times, 1 March 1851. A register to keep account of labour needs was also suggested in Wakefield, A Letter from Sydney, p.180.
allow the labourers who were employed on them, 'including the natives', to 'be available for general services'.  

Unfortunately, the suspension of public works could not be easily undertaken because of the desperate need to improve the settlement's roads.  

Despite the Association’s projections, therefore, the settlement remained chronically short of labour for possibly its first four months.

Following these first months, it appears that the demand and supply of labour slipped into some degree of balance by April 1851, but this did not last long. As late autumn turned into winter, the opportunity in particular for outside work dwindled and labourers began to find employment harder to come by. Charlotte Godley indicated this in early June, writing that 'work is slack, that is people are shy of giving employment at 4s. in these short days'.

The _Lyttelton Times_ suggested about the same time that 'every poor man hire his acre or two of land, and cultivate it during his spare hours'.

A possible implication was that the working immigrants should not be fully reliant on paid employment. The suggestion also vaguely echoed the tendency to promote cottier farming observed in the earlier Wakefield settlements. The promotion of small farming was of course contrary to Wakefield's stated view that farms needed to use labourers in combination with other labourers and with capital.

Matters seem to have worsened by August. John Godley noted that the workmen in the settlement were suffering 'difficulties, hardships, perhaps distresses'. Despite his position as head of the settlement, however, he does not appear to have taken any specific action to ease the problem, probably because of demands from London to be economical, and possibly because he was also not inclined to act. Instead, he

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181 'Despatch from the Committee of Management of the Canterbury Association to Mr. Godley', _Canterbury Papers_, p.198.

182 _Lyttelton Times_, 1 and 15 February 1851.

183 Godley, pp.208-09.

184 _Lyttelton Times_, 14 June 1851. Canterbury did not have Otago’s reputation for small farming, but certainly there was some small farming development. This is indicated by advertisements for the sale of small rural blocks, see, for example, _Lyttelton Times_, 3 April 1852. Also see ibid, 17 September 1853, as cited below.
comforted the workmen with the idea that in time they should come to regard their
condition as having ‘been bettered by emigration.’ Subsequently, in a
further sign of the winter difficulties, a letter to the *Lyttelton Times* in late August
angrily attacked Grey for his failure to provide public works in Canterbury to help
alleviate the unemployment. The attack was all the more resentful because the
Canterbury settlers felt they had contributed their share of revenue through the levy
of duties without any of the benefits of government spending, which had instead gone
to other settlements. Speaking ‘on behalf of the poor men in this place’, the letter
stated that, given they had paid their share ‘in the price of the articles of their daily
consumption’ and that ‘some of them are out of employment here’, that ‘It would not
have been unwise in a paternal government to have expended a few hundred
pounds of the surplus revenue of this place in giving employment here.’ Notably
the government, and not the Association, was asked to supply work. This appears to
have reflected not only parochial jealousy over the government’s distribution of
funding, but also perhaps a calculated determination of where the strongest claim lay
in the absence of any promise from the Canterbury Association and a realistic
assessment of the Canterbury Association’s financial position. Like the earlier
Wakefield organisations, it was never in a comfortable state. The obvious option
for the working emigrants seems to have been to seek the direct transference and
observance of their English rights to relief work from government to government, the
colonial government also being more likely to be able to pay than the Association.

A further, even more dramatic shift in the labour market occurred in late 1851. This
was the result of both an upswing in available work and the withdrawal of labour from

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185 Fitzgerald, p.76; Carrington, p.131. Earlier in the year, Godley had cut salaries including his own
and those of his professional surveying staff, the clergy, and the schoolmasters. There is no similar
reference, however, to a decrease in rates for labourers on any works being undertaken by the
186 *Lyttelton Times*, 30 August 1851.
the labour market. Spring naturally brought more farming work from the larger landowners and better weather for an expansion of construction activity. The great change that transformed the market, however, was the discovery of gold. This resulted in the loss of a substantial amount of labour to Australia. With the positive development of the pastoral sector in particular over the medium term, ‘gold fever’ contributed strongly to a persistent labour shortage for most of the remaining years of the decade.188

Gold was initially found in 1851 in New South Wales and then Victoria.189 The Lyttelton Times in September referred to the gold rush in New South Wales as well as bad Australian harvests, in order to explain high prices in the Canterbury settlement in September.190 This benign explanation gave way to panic in November. The paper began to see catastrophic consequences, stating that ‘An enormous immigration will take place to Australia’ and ‘No doubt if labourers run away, farmers will be ruined.’ These were the larger farmers who were both able to and needed to employ labour. The Association also stood to lose badly, given its large investment in the transport of emigrants to the settlement. The Lyttelton Times went on to appeal to the labourers to stay and make money instead from the supply of food to the Australian gold diggers.191 The Times regarded it as its duty to ‘dissuade persons from acting upon’ what it regarded as one of the ‘great popular delusions.’192 Quite clearly, the workmen in the settlement did not heed the call. Rates for labourers had

188 The settlement also benefited generally from buoyant trade conditions with the Australian colonies at least to 1856: Peter Stuart, Edward Gibbon Wakefield in New Zealand, Wellington, 1971, p.21; Hensley, p.30; and Webb, pp.222-23. The Lyttelton Times further notes that the market was adversely affected by the success of labourers in obtaining their own small holdings, 17 September 1853.
190 Lyttelton Times, 20 September 1851.
191 Ibid, 15 November 1851. The gold rush affected all the New Zealand settlements, Stuart, pp. 29, 41. Comparing Canterbury and Otago, however, it seems that the negative reaction to the gold rush was much stronger in the first than the second. This may have reflected the greater number of large employers in Canterbury than Otago (thus the relatively greater need for labour) and also different expectations in the settlements with regard to economic and employment growth in the short and medium term.
192 Lyttelton Times, 29 November 1851.
risen to '5s. 6d. per day' by the end of the month and carpenters were so expensive that work went to other settlements.\textsuperscript{193} Charlotte Godley described the continuing problem in August 1852. There had not been, she said, 'any great events lately; every now and then a ship comes in from the diggings, and brings accounts of gold to be had for so little trouble that there is a great reluctance to work even as hard for it as they must here; and then those of the unsettled ones, who have their passage money ready, go off when the ship returns'. She thought, however, that life 'at the actual "diggings"' was 'too hard', for a long stay and that 'I have very little doubt that we shall have all those back again, who are at all worth having.'\textsuperscript{194} Some workmen did return,\textsuperscript{195} but Godley was wrong if she hoped this would bring a speedy end to the shortage. More continued to leave as the gold rush maintained its impetus. Sewell reported in February 1853 that 'All the people were gone off to the diggings.'\textsuperscript{196} Like Godley, he tried to be optimistic, adding in his journal a few weeks later that 'the diggings will not always draw people away. In a short time the overflowings of disappointed diggers will bring Ships and labour and the tide of Immigration will flow again.'\textsuperscript{197} He was kept waiting, exclaiming in October 1854 that 'Labour is not to be had. Wages are up to 9s a day. Think of that, Labourers in England!'\textsuperscript{198} He remarked, in June 1856, that he could think of 'No greater calamity' than the finding of 'a Gold field'.\textsuperscript{199} The Canterbury settlement did not regain a semblance of balance until the end of the decade.\textsuperscript{200}

The settlers did try various emigration schemes to deal with the labour shortage in the meantime, but without success. In June 1852, the Canterbury Association had

\begin{footnotes}
\item 193 Ibid.
\item 194 Godley, p.336.
\item 195 \textit{Lyttelton Times}, 14 August 1852.
\item 196 McIntyre, vol. I, p.122.
\item 197 Ibid, p.144.
\item 198 McIntyre, vol. II, p.102.
\item 199 Ibid, p.251.
\item 200 Hensley, p. 65.
\end{footnotes}
discontinued its operations because of continuing financial difficulties, its last charter arriving in Lyttleton in March 1853.\textsuperscript{201} In June 1853, ‘a group of prominent landowners’ in the settlement proposed the ‘importing’ of Chinese labourers.\textsuperscript{202} As alert as any to the implications for the labour market, the workmen in the settlement attacked the proposal and it disappeared with the defeat of its main political proponent in the election for the superintendent of the province in July 1853. A futile effort to encourage workmen back from Australia by advertising ‘the advantages of life in Canterbury’ followed.\textsuperscript{203} A more serious effort was made by the provincial council from March 1854 to reinstate the supply of labourers from England. This included a modification adopted by the council’s emigration agent in England shortly after the start of the scheme. Under the modified plan assisted migrants were required to provide a promissory note to cover their passage ‘on the understanding that payment of the first half would be called for only after twelve months and the rest remitted entirely if the immigrant settled for three years in the province.’\textsuperscript{204} Despite the cost to the immigrants, over a thousand had arrived in Canterbury by the end of

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\begin{enumerate}
\item Webb, p.207; Hight and Straubel, Appendix VII.
\item Hensley, p.54.
\item Ibid, pp.54-55; \textit{Lyttelton Times}, 29 October and 5, 19 November 1853. Sewell noted in his journal that ‘Sir Thomas Tancred followed for his Brother [i.e.speaking at the hustings for H.J. Tancred, one of the candidates for the Superintendency], but tumbled right over the important question of Chinese Labour, and was accordingly groaned down by the crowd below of working men; who are up in arms at the notion of competition in the labour Market.’ Fitzgerald won the race by a substantial majority. McIntyre, vol. 1, pp.346-47.
\item Hensley, p.58. In part, the measures probably represented an attempt to tighten up expenditure. It is clear that at least some form of recovery of the cost of passages was already practised before this new scheme was initiated. In challenging a similar requirement in 1853, ‘Mr Oldfield, a labourer, said it was his conviction that he would be free from all demands upon arrival here.’ \textit{Lyttelton Times}, 8 January 1853. Fox had already expressed much earlier (24 November 1848) the rather mercenary concern that the workmen should pay back some of their passage money once they had made good in the settlements. Fox clearly distinguished his proposal from redemptionism. The object was to recover debt, not force labour. He stated: ‘Nothing can be more true than that it is useless to attempt to force labour from an unwilling labourer, but it is not useless to extract money from an unwilling debtor.’ Fox enclosed copies of extracts from \textit{A Letter from Sydney and England and America} with his letter. Fox further noted in his letter that New South Wales was seeking to obtain more labour and that ‘private parties have had recourse there to the introduction of savages from the Feg ee and other islands, under circumstances which led to their denunciation as promoters of the slave-trade by members of the Legislative Council [of New South Wales].’ ‘Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers Relating to New Zealand’, vol.9, 1/219-221. The Canterbury agent may have also resorted to the issue of promissory notes in 1854 because of a concern that the ‘sufficient price’ could not stop labourers leaving the labour market, as they were leaving for gold, not land. Regardless of the intent, it appears likely that the measures would have been difficult to enforce.
\end{enumerate}
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1856. Yet, even this response did not rectify the haemorrhaging labour market as
‘1857 saw more jobs unfilled than three years before.’ Interestingly, there does not
appear to have been any serious effort to increase the use of Maori labour, despite
the early practice by Thomas. This was perhaps because of a negative view of their
industry and a perception that ‘they’ were inclined to ‘sink back socially and morally
to the level of their native Pa.’ Conversely, the colonists regarded the labour of
their children as extremely ‘valuable’.

For most of its early years, therefore, Canterbury was, more than any of the other
Wakefield settlements in their first years, the colony type that Wakefield had
systematically criticised and rejected in promoting his own scheme. That is, it was a
colony mainly in drastic want of labour. This was in spite of the application of the
‘sufficient price’ and the generally narrow confinement of settlement. It was also,
as Wakefield had described in his works, a place where capitalists lost their leisure
and refinements and had to become workmen themselves. Some, in fact, could not
cope. Charlotte Godley described Thomas Cholmondeley as one casualty. She noted
that he was ‘not well, and will not come out; he is quite a gentleman, though, in every
sense…. I suspect he lived rather delicately at home, for his work here has quite
knocked him up.’ He did recover, however, and the Godleys eventually had the
pleasure of his company, Charlotte explaining that ‘At last he did come to tea with us
yesterday, and the hands are very much better; he can feed himself with one again
now and shake hands gently.’ The already clear difficulties of managing colonial

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205 Hensley, p.64.
208 Hensley, pp.30, 45.
and Graeme Dunstall, (eds), Southern Capital: Christchurch, Christchurch, 2000, p.15.
210 Godley, p.158.
labour markets, now compounded by the gold rush, had evidently produced some sad consequences in the Canterbury settlement.

As in the earlier settlements, the colonisers had of course again failed in their primary task of maintaining a balanced and superior workforce in Canterbury. This failure represents a significant practical limit to the influence of Wakefield's ideas on the settlement. At the same time, it is evident that, despite this important practical failure, Wakefield's ideas did influence the thoughts and behaviour of the colonists in the settlement in several respects. The leading colonists tended, alongside the expression of a growing concern over the effect of speculation, to continue to articulate Wakefield's ideas and to maintain key features of his scheme. The brevity of the difficult labour market conditions in the middle of 1851 also probably limited damage to the early aspirations of the settlement's workmen. And, in addition, there is further evidence of continued support for Wakefield's ideas of free labour.

The *Lyttelton Times* provides evidence of early support for Wakefield's scheme within the settlement. The 'payment of £3 per acre', it said in January 1851, was 'evidence' of 'certain principles and opinion held in common by the subscribers'. In October, it contrasted this with the lack of support in other New Zealand settlements. It remarked that it was the only New Zealand paper still supporting the 'sufficient price'. It claimed that the opposition to the scheme was falsely based on the perception that it had failed. Like Wakefield in the *Art of Colonization*, the *Times* said the scheme had never been fairly tested.

Godley, returning home to England in January 1853, also indicated his continued support for Wakefield's core objectives, while adding a new note of concern over

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211 *Lyttelton Times*, 25 January 1851. Also see other references to systematic colonisation, ibid, 8, 15 February, 19 April, 3, 24 May, and 16, 23 August, all 1851.
212 Ibid, 18 October 1851.
speculators. Godley wrote from on board ship that the high price for land had several purposes. These included the basic Wakefield objectives. The price was to ‘secure combinable labour, by throwing a certain amount of difficulty in the way of the purchase of land by labourers, before they have the means of making profitable use of it’. It was thus to ‘check dispersion’ and ‘thereby’ promote ‘the civilisation of society’. Godley also noted that the high price discouraged speculation and thus prevented the consequent alienation of land. If land was locked up, it would of course become more difficult for labourers to purchase after they had worked for a few years in the labour market. In assessing the results of the Association’s work, Godley recognised that much had not gone to plan. Nevertheless, he stated that the core Wakefield objects had effectively been realised. He, of course, ignored the fact of the labour shortage in the settlement. Godley was also keen to claim that the high price had definitely helped to prevent ‘jobbing’.

This last issue became particularly prominent as a result of Grey’s cheap land regulations, which were introduced in March 1853. Grey’s intention in reducing the price of Crown land to 10s. for agricultural land and 5s. for more marginal land (with the Otago and Canterbury Association blocks exempted) was to permit ‘needy men to buy a few acres’. This was clearly against Wakefield’s original principles. In opposing Grey’s cheap land regulations, one letter to the Lyttelton Times in April, while agreeing that £3 was ‘too high’, stated that it should still ‘be sufficiently high to prevent persons buying more than they actually want, and intend to cultivate; and thus save others, arriving in a year or two’s time, from the unpleasant discovery that every inch of good and available land is in the possession of land speculators. These are the people who seem to me likely to reap a harvest from the new scheme, and

213 Ibid, 9 April 1853.
214 Sinclair, p.85
not the working class or small capitalists. A second letter urged care in considering Grey’s regulations as they posed, the writer thought, ‘the total destruction of the entire scheme of colonisation in which we have embarked.’ The writer also urged compensation for any damage caused by Grey’s measure. This reflected concern that Grey’s land regulations would undermine the value of the early landowning emigrants’ investments in land. Fitzgerald, in his successful campaign for superintendent of the province, opposed Grey’s cheap land, stating that ‘a low price would not be for the benefit of the people’ in that ‘it would hold out inducements to speculators to step in and buy up whole tracts of country.’ Another comment in the Lyttelton Times several months later asked that ‘the industrious classes reflect how important it is for their interest, that the public land should be protected from private spoliation, and preserved unlocked for the real use of the greatest number.’

The Canterbury settlers also faced an apparently significant challenge to the integrity of the systematic colonisation scheme in a dramatic change from Wakefield himself. As the settlers sought to uphold their ‘sufficient price’, Wakefield, who had arrived with Sewell in New Zealand in February 1853, began, not long thereafter, to actively and explicitly promote more ready access to land for working emigrants, even to the extent of providing free grants of land. In light of the general consistency of his views expressed in his theoretical works, even his colleagues considered the change to be a surprising development.

Wakefield at first naturally opposed Grey’s land regulations because of its dangers to the high ‘sufficient price’ of land in Otago and Canterbury. But within a month he

215 Lyttelton Times, 2 April 1853.
216 Ibid, 16 April 1853.
217 Ibid, 21 May 1853.
218 Ibid, 20 August 1853.
219 Temple, p.491.
220 Ibid, pp.485-86; Stuart, pp. 33-35.
had begun to openly shift and distance himself from the scheme which he had for so long and so passionately advocated. Although his motives for doing so are not precisely clear, the shift both appeared to be a sympathetic move to redress the difficulties that labourers had had to face since arriving in New Zealand and to give Wakefield the opportunity of obtaining support and establishing himself at the centre of New Zealand politics.\(^\text{221}\) In an initial move that reflected both possible objects, Wakefield sold his own land to labourers. This included sales on deposit, with repayment over seven years. Wakefield imposed no impediments of price and inadequate savings to stop working emigrants obtaining land if they wanted it. Wakefield also advocated free grants as compensation for working emigrants disadvantaged by the failure of the New Zealand Company’s administration of the Wellington settlement. Both measures ran counter to the idea that the price of land had to be high enough to stop labourers from obtaining their land before they could effectively farm it as new masters employing their own labourers. In addition, Wakefield adopted and promoted new priorities. He generally argued that ‘the main duty of a colonizing government in disposing of the public wastes for the general good, is to facilitate the acquisition of freehold property by the industrious classes.’ In terms of his theory of systematic colonisation, the primary task had been to ensure concentration and labour for landowners. Wakefield still stated that labourers had to labour. The ownership of land could not ‘be made too easy of attainment’ but, he also stated that ‘the term of labour for hire should be as short as possible’. Similarly, while Wakefield continued to use the term, the ‘sufficient price’, he changed its main

\(^\text{221}\) Ibid, pp.48-49, 54-55. There are at least three contending views on Wakefield’s motives. Lloyd Prichard, M.F., ‘Wakefield Changes His Mind About the ‘sufficient price’’, *International Review of Social History*, vol.8, no.2, 1963, pp.268-69, argues that Wakefield’s change was merely a pragmatic adjustment to the realities of land settlement in New Zealand in order to achieve his fundamental object of ensuring working men were able to settle on their own land. Peter Stuart takes the view that Wakefield was seeking an opportunity to obtain his own political constituency and that the working man was the only choice available, e.g. pp.48-49, 54-55. Temple provides a third view which generally synthesises the arguments of Lloyd Prichard and Stuart. His view is that Wakefield did discard his idea of the ‘sufficient price’ in order to break his past association with the Company and to obtain a power base in a working class constituency. He did not do this merely in the cynical pursuit of power, however, but to pursue honourable and long held objectives, pp.489-90.
purpose. As Peter Stuart notes in his study of Wakefield in New Zealand, it was now ‘not to ensure a supply of labour for the landed proprietor, but to protect the small man’s chances of buying land, and to provide security for the overseas loans necessary to pay for surveys, the extinction of Maori title, and public works." Wakefield explicitly worked towards the development of small subsistence farming which, he had first argued, naturally followed from unorganised colonisation efforts, and which he had tried to prevent through the imposition of the ‘sufficient price’. The changes were a great public about-face for Wakefield who had been for so long the primary advocate of the ‘sufficient price’. It also suddenly left his theory looking somewhat less substantial and convincing. Even Wakefield had abandoned it as inadequate.

Undoubtedly, there must have been some who were disturbed in Canterbury, as elsewhere, by Wakefield’s changes. But the evidence is that Wakefield’s reversal did little in fact to change the general support in the province for the core elements of his original scheme. Wakefield did manage one rotatable, immediate convert associated with Canterbury: Sewell, but this was only temporary. Sewell, who was still at this point an ally of Wakefield, probably saw some need for the changes Wakefield proposed and initiated in Wellington and also enjoyed them as elements in a political game. Sewell in fact set ‘in motion’ the plan to sell Wakefield’s land ‘to the working classes upon fair arrangement, which will give him [Wakefield] return for his money, and stifle all the clamour about working men not being able to get land." He also recorded in his journal in June 1853 that Wakefield was ‘making great play among the Wellington people, and distances the Governor and the advocates of cheap land

222 Stuart, pp.49, 51, 55.
by proposing a Land compensation for the working classes.’ He described
Wakefield’s proposal as ‘an inimitable dodge’.

Apart from these comments, however, the trend in Canterbury was predominantly in
favour of Wakefield’s old scheme. This included Sewell, who, over the course of the
twelve months after Wakefield changed direction, reversed himself and became an
especially harsh critic of Wakefield. Why Sewell had a change of heart was not made
clear, but the shift coincided with the development of a general political split between
Wakefield and Sewell, who were both elected to the colonial government’s new
General Assembly in August 1853. Wakefield was elected as the member for Hutt
and Sewell as the member for Christchurch. Despite his previous indications of
approval, Sewell criticised Wakefield at the end of July 1854 for ‘at last’ making ‘a
desperate reckless plunge for popularity and power by abandoning his ‘sufficient
price’ theory’. He added a further criticism of Wakefield’s proposal ‘to set apart Land
for what he terms Working Settlers, in the way of free grant or what is tantamount to
it.’ Sewell described it as ‘a wild unworkable and dangerous scheme, utterly opposed
to all his old doctrines, only meant as I believe to get himself popularity at our
expense.’ In September 1854, Sewell also condemned Wakefield’s scheme to
distribute a third of land to occupying settlers because it would lead to labour being
‘instantly withdrawn’ from the labour market and ‘the labourer’ would be seduced ‘into
becoming a Capitalist prematurely’. Contrariness prevailed also in relation to what
Wakefield termed the ‘Squattocracy’. Sewell saw Wakefield raising a ‘a class cry’
against them whereas his own view was that they were ‘perhaps the most important
and valuable part of the community’.

224 Ibid, p.333.
227 Ibid, p.78.
228 Ibid, p.87.
Sewell's criticisms of Wakefield double of course as evidence of continued support for key features of systematic colonisation in Canterbury. Much more substantial and thoroughgoing evidence of Canterbury’s general and continued commitment to these features, however, is provided by the work of the provincial council with regard to the establishment of its waste land regulations. Initially the provincial council did not have the authority to regulate the sale of waste lands. Despite this, Fitzgerald and the council expressed their views on the subject in a series of resolutions including the setting of a minimum price for land at £2. This was a reduction from the original ‘sufficient price’, but it reflected the fact that funds were generally not being used for the religious and educational features of the original plan for the settlement. It also reflected the need to reduce the gap between the Association’s land and Crown land at least a little to improve the prospects of sales in general. Otherwise, though, the price still remained very high relative to Grey’s price regime. Later in 1854, the General Assembly passed the Provincial Waste Lands Act which empowered the Assembly to devolve control over waste lands to the provinces. Under the false impression that the new Act had gone further and directly given the provinces the power to regulate, Fitzgerald proposed that the council set the price of land at £3, as it was, but also adopt a deferred payment scheme to avoid paying tax to the colonial government. The council, however, was reluctant to adopt the proposal. In part, their reluctance stemmed from the belief that the price might be too high. But primarily they were concerned that the Governor would accept the initial principal payment of 10s. as the price of land and disallow the subsequent deferred payments. In other words, they were concerned that Fitzgerald’s attempted trickery would leave the settlement ‘trapped with a low price’. Sewell subsequently proposed a compromise of £2 with no deferred payments. Still not satisfied, Fitzgerald proposed evasion again.

this time on the £2 rate, with 10s. paid directly for the land purchased and 30s. paid as a special land improvement rate. Sewell expressed particular concern in his journal over ‘jobbing’ and acknowledged the pressure that the council faced in considering this proposal, especially in light of Wakefield ‘preaching donations of land to the labourer’. But he felt that even ‘£2 an Acre by instalments is better than 5s an Acre à la Sir George Grey.’ In fact, Sewell need not have been concerned because the council did finally agree to his £2 flat rate. The regulations subsequently had a mixed passage because of the disallowance of the Waste Lands Act 1856 by the Imperial Parliament but they were finally confirmed in the Waste Lands Act of 1858.230

The extent of the support for a high ‘sufficient price’ over the first years of the Canterbury settlement, at least among the articulate elite, is further indicated by the generally limited support expressed in the settlement for the alternative regime, that is for Grey’s cheap land regulations. This in part was reflected in the columns of the early settlement’s only paper, the Lyttelton Times, which generally supported Wakefield’s ideals.231 It was further demonstrated, however, in Canterbury’s local elections. The best example of these electoral limits came in the 1855 election for extra seats on the provincial council. Hensley, another of the Canterbury centenary historians, notes that while ‘The lure of cheap land was incontestable … there was only one candidate … who advocated it, and he got only one vote.’232

Thus, towards the end of their first decade, the Cantabrians continued to maintain the price of land in their settlement at a very high level relative to every other settlement

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231 For example see Lyttelton Times, 9, 16 April 1853.
232 Hensley, pp.45-46. Universal white male suffrage subject to a property qualification applied, Olssen, History of Otago, p.43.
in New Zealand. Even though they had made a concession in reducing the rate to £2, this was still as high as the ‘sufficient price’ which had been initially set for Otago and Nelson, and was four times the highest rate which had been set by Grey for all land outside the Canterbury and Otago Blocks. In contrast, even the exempted land inside the Otago Block was now selling for 10s. an acre. This high price for Canterbury land is testament to the strength of the colonial elite’s support in Canterbury for the preservation of this key feature of Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation. But what adds to the similarity between the activity of the council and Wakefield’s scheme is the purpose behind the maintenance of the high price. This was at least in part to deny land to speculators, and safeguard it for purchase by emigrant capitalists genuinely interested in the development of land and for future purchase by working emigrants when they had saved sufficient to farm it effectively. Furthermore, the council continued to include as the proper expenditure of revenue from the sale of land the same objects as those set out in the plans not only of the Canterbury Association, but for all the New Zealand Wakefield settlements. These objects were immigration and public works. It continued to do what Sewell insisted it must do: ‘The land must pay for these things’.

As much as the colonial elite stuck to key features of Wakefield’s now old ideas of systematic colonisation, it is likely that initial expectations raised by Wakefield’s scheme also retained some hold with the settlement’s working emigrants. In the older Wakefield settlements, these aspirations had been dealt severe blows by chronic unemployment and low wages. In Canterbury, traumatic as it must have been for the working emigrants who found themselves without work in the winter of 1851, this negative experience seems to have been milder and certainly much shorter lived.

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233 Hensley, pp. 38-39, 46, 56f.
234 McIntyre, vol. II, p.206. Wakefield’s contributions to the issue of the price of land and other colonial matters came to an end when he became seriously ill in December 1854. He did not return to public life after this date. He died in Wellington in 1862, Temple, pp.517-26.
There was, therefore, less to curb or undermine expectations. Moreover, because the converse was true and there was a general shortage of labour in the settlement, wages and hours were for the most part attractive and probably reinforced the aspirations of the early working emigrants. Again, this reversed the pattern in the previous Wakefield settlements.

The initial expectations of the first settlers are indicated in Edward Ward’s journal entries for 3 to 5 December 1850 as Charlotte Jane closed in on its destination, Lyttelton, and the working emigrants began to consider more seriously what they might work for in the settlement. It is evident that they thought the settlement had much to offer, but they were also suspicious of their masters. Ward reported that he had ‘Heard rumours from steerage of a combination among the emigrants for high wages.’ He considered as one outrageous example, the case of a ‘A married woman (name not mentioned)’, who appears to have been seeking a position as a domestic servant. The woman had, he had been told, ‘resolved not to hire for less (keep included) than £40 a year’.235 Speaking as a master, Ward noted that the steerage emigrants ‘meanly fear a combination of the landowners to reduce wages, instead of trusting to the right feeling of gentlemen and the favour of fortune.’ While Ward remained outraged at the expectation in steerage, the rumours may have made him more amenable to increasing the rates he was prepared to pay his own servants. On the 4th he offered ‘each couple £30 a year with food and lodging’. The following day, on advice of ‘Andy’, presumable Andrew Geddes, a carpenter on board, that the couples had ‘left nearly that behind’, he increased his offers substantially to £35 and £40.236 As nothing more was recorded on the subject, it is presumed that the offers

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235 The Journal of Edward Ward, p.73.
236 Ibid. p.74.
were accepted. Both the Godleys also complained about the generally high expectations of the incoming emigrants.\textsuperscript{237}

Some of these expectations were undoubtedly unreasonable and some sanity eventually prevailed. The \textit{Lyttelton Times} noted in 1852 that ‘the dreams of sentimental colonists have long since been exchanged for the laborious realities of colonial life.’\textsuperscript{238} Charlotte Godley mocked some of the children who came expecting to find ‘sugar (lump? or brown?)’ ready for harvesting from the land.\textsuperscript{239} There was little reason, however, for the emigrant workmen to be disappointed by the immediate conditions of employment which prevailed when they arrived. There was, as already discussed, sufficient well paid work available. Furthermore, although Ward heard no rumours on the \textit{Charlotte Jane} about short hours, the working emigrants would have been delighted to find that an eight hour day was observed in Canterbury, as it had been in the other Wakefield settlements. This may have been the result of the movement of some Wellington settlers to Canterbury and the use of Wellington labourers by Captain Thomas to help prepare the settlement for the first emigrants from Britain.\textsuperscript{240} Charlotte Godley noted on her arrival that ‘The usual hours for work here, now, are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with an hour for dinner, for which they get 4s.; but they may work from 7 to 6 and get 5s., if they like, or from 6 to 7 and get 6s.; and many do work “long hours”, now the days are so long.’ She did also note some resentment, though, as the European labourers sought to ensure that Maori labourers did not receive the same wage rates. They even went so far as to strike, but returned to work after only one day following John Godley’s threat to bring in

\textsuperscript{237} Godley, p.257; Fitzgerald, p.173; Amodeo, p.48.
\textsuperscript{238} \textit{Lyttelton Times}, 25 December 1852.
\textsuperscript{239} Godley, p.257. There were also unreasonable expectations on the part of the gentry. Charles Trellesse felt, for example, that the colonists ‘had been deluded into thinking that “comfortable dwelling houses and every other accommodation” would have been prepared for them’ on arrival, Amodeo, p.161.
more Maori labourers.²⁴¹ Maori labourers themselves refused work when they were offered terms by a new roading contractor which included 'less wages ... than they had been in the habit of receiving from the Association, and a longer day's work.'²⁴² In another entry in her diary, Charlotte Godley noted that 'we had found a woman, who, for about eightpence an hour, came to scrub our floors'.²⁴³ Skilled workers such as carpenters were paid 1s. an hour in January 1851.²⁴⁴

The only real crisis of confidence came in the first winter in the settlement. There was some unemployment, but as already indicated, rates do not appear to have fallen much below 4s. a day, if at all, which was far higher than the rates that were endured by the labourers at critical times in the earlier Wakefield settlements.²⁴⁵ There was also no similar appearance of protests or demonstrations over wages, though there was a dispute over the availability of public work as discussed above (and to be briefly considered further below).

It is likely some became disillusioned by the lower winter rates, but clearly this was not a crisis on the scale of the other Wakefield settlements, and any who retained a modicum of optimism, or arrived in the settlement later, had much to reinforce a positive outlook from what followed. Already wage rates had more than recovered by November 1851 and continued to remain very high. As noted above, the Lyttelton Times reported at the end of the month that labourers were receiving 5s. 6d. per day

²⁴¹ Ibid, p.138. This was not the first strike in Canterbury. In June 1849, for example, workers also refused to work in protest at leaky accommodation and perhaps the standard of their food, P.B.Maling (ed), The Torlesse Papers, Christchurch, 1958, p.91. Rates paid to Maori labourers included 2s.6d in 1849 and 4s. in late 1850, Amodeo, Forgotten Forty-Niners, pp.142, 169.
²⁴³ Godley, p.150. Washermen were also able to obtain 3s. per day 'plus grub', Amodeo, The Summer Ships, p.173.
²⁴⁴ Lyttelton Times, 11 January 1851.
²⁴⁵ See pp.238-240 above. Deans paid his labourers 4s. per day in June 1851, and mechanics, 1s. per hour, Deans, p.210.
and that carpenters were so expensive that work was going to other settlements.\textsuperscript{246} Harvests were especially good times for the labourers. Sewell noted in particular that the rates for ‘common labourers’ just prior to the harvest in 1854, were ‘up to 6s and 7s a day’ and ‘that there has been a meeting of Labourers at Christchurch, at which it has been resolved not to work at the harvest under £1 a day.’ The talk led to a counter threat from the farmers that they would rather let their crops rot than pay such rates. The farmers eventually paid ‘not less than 10s a day.’\textsuperscript{247} The \textit{Lytelton Times} also reported in February 1854 that wage rates had generally increased ‘within the last twelve months’ by fifty per cent. The wages for carpenters had risen from 8s. to 12s. and for labourers, from 4s.6d. to 7s.\textsuperscript{248} There appear to be no references that indicate any change in the ordinary hours of work in the settlement, but it would seem highly improbable given the general condition of the labour market that they could have deteriorated.\textsuperscript{249} Sarah Courage indicates that they did not. She noted, not long after arriving in Canterbury in 1864, that she had ‘met an old man returning from work at five o’clock (8a.m. to 5 p.m. being the hours for working in the “Land of Promise”).’\textsuperscript{260}

Another issue of working emigrant expectations that persistently cropped up in the earlier Wakefield settlements was access to relief work. The Canterbury Association, like the Otago Association, made no preliminary promise of relief to the working emigrants.\textsuperscript{251} Canterbury alone, however, seems to have maintained this position. Unlike Otago, there was no need to alter the stance on arrival because of the improved preparation of the settlement before the arrival of the first settlers from

\textsuperscript{246} \textit{Lytelton Times}, 29 November 1851. Deans noted that Maori labourers were being paid at 4s. per day in April 1852, Deans, p.220.

\textsuperscript{247} McIntyre, vol. 1, pp.418-19, 161.

\textsuperscript{248} \textit{Lytelton Times}, 11 February 1854.

\textsuperscript{249} There is a vague reference in Fitzgerald, p.104, to ‘colonial hours of work’ being shorter than those in Britain.


\textsuperscript{251} The \textit{Lytelton Times} noted that there were ‘no ... poor rates’, 14 June 1851.
Britain\textsuperscript{252} and because of the relative affluence of the new arrivals. But even when there was a need in the winter of 1851, as discussed above, there was no alteration in the Association’s position. The only recorded demand made was that Grey and his government, as a ‘paternal government’, should provide some temporary relief, particularly in light of the taxes it had collected. This demand tends to confirm what one would have anticipated. The working emigrants, even without any specific promises, arrived with at least a general expectation in the back of their minds that in times of unemployment they should have access to public work. It seems fair to assume that the lack of any positive response to the demand must have created some disappointment. Yet it also seems unlikely that the failure to obtain work in this one instance would have been sufficient in itself for the working emigrants to have discarded their long-standing expectation of access to relief work in times of unemployment. The experience of the earlier settlements suggests that it took much more to effectively eliminate hope that the right to relief would be observed.

There was, of course, no further testing of the issue in the early settlement because of the general labour shortage, though Fitzgerald did try to deter as many workmen as he could from taking part in the Australian gold rush by warning them that the settlement would take no responsibility for maintaining the wives they left behind. They ‘must take the consequences’, he wrote, ‘and have no right to expect any aid from charitable or other sources, in case they should be reduced to distress.’ He also warned tradesmen and storekeepers against extending the abandoned wives and families any credit.\textsuperscript{253}

\textsuperscript{252} See for example Amodeo, \textit{Forgotten Forty-Niners}, p.166.
\textsuperscript{253} \textit{Lyttelton Times}, 21 August 1852.
Lastly, Wakefield's original ideas relating to the freedom of labour also made a mark in the Canterbury settlement and, indeed, further afield. The *Lyttelton Times*, which frequently carried court news, did not report any actions by masters to enforce specific service against servants in the first years of the settlement.\(^{254}\) This is in spite of the fact that the labour shortage must have increased the temptation for masters to use all means at their disposal to hold onto their existing servants. Wakefield's advice in the *Art of Colonization* had been for masters to treat their servants with kindness and consideration. There are at least some examples of this behaviour. Sewell and Charlotte Godley provide two extreme instances. Sewell described one Mr Dickens for example who 'was dwelling in a wooden tenement in a state of thraldom to a Labourer, his wife and 7 children, all of whom he had brought out with him that he might be sure of having faithful and attached domestics. The labourer, the wife and the children of course took up all the house, keeping their unfortunate Master in a condition of the most servile subjection under fear of their leaving him in absolute solitude.'\(^{256}\) Charlotte Godley also related a similar departure from normal behaviour in the case of a Mrs. Petre who woke early each day to ready the household before her servants arose.\(^{256}\) Both Sewell and Godley had occasion to also criticise masters and mistresses for not being reasonable towards their servants.\(^{257}\) In addition Sewell had also quickly come to the conclusion on arriving in New Zealand that those who arrived in New Zealand without servants quickly found good new ones, 'whilst he' who did travel with his own, 'before he puts foot on shore is Servantless.' He stated 'as an axiom that no man ought to bring Servant or Labourer, Man, woman or Child specially engaged to a Colony. Discontent and quarrel are sure to be the end. All you

\(^{254}\) Unfortunately, the Justice Department court records for Canterbury for this period are very limited. See bibliography. For examples of court reporting in the *Lyttelton Times*, see 1 and 15 May 1852, 18 and 25 February 1854.


\(^{256}\) Godley, pp.72-73.

can do is to take your chance and be prepared in case of need to do without them.\textsuperscript{258}

This advice harked much further back than the \textit{Art of Colonization}. The idea went back to the very beginnings of systematic colonisation and to \textit{A Letter from Sydney}.

In addition, the \textit{Lyttelton Times} showed its colours in relation to convict labour. This was expressed in particular relation to Australia, though any criticism also clearly included a rejection of the idea that convicts should be sent to New Zealand. The newspaper demanded the freedom of Australian colonies from the abominable opprobrium of being the cess-pool of British crime.\textsuperscript{259} Part of the reason for this demand was the concern that there was a ‘filtration’ of convicts and ex-convicts from convict colonies to non-convict colonies.\textsuperscript{260}

Yet it is also worth observing that there was at least some inconsistency on the part of the Canterbury settlement with regard to convict labour. In particular, this involved the employment of the settlement’s own prisoners on public works in 1856, probably at least partly due to the continuing shortage of labour in the settlement.\textsuperscript{261} The resort to such compulsory labour was of course what Wakefield had said happened when a settlement could not maintain a balanced labour market of labourers who were free to choose their masters. Labour shortages caused slavery. While seeking to persuade working emigrants in the early stages of the gold rush to stay in Canterbury, the \textit{Lyttelton Times} also strangely mixed the moral and the practical in noting that ‘it is “unjust and impolitic” to endeavour to detain labour in a settlement because it is simply impossible to do so.’\textsuperscript{262} It seems more than evident that the idea

\textsuperscript{259} \textit{Lyttelton Times}, 18 October 1851; also note ibid, 4 October 1851.
\textsuperscript{260} Ibid, 12 June 1852.
\textsuperscript{261} Hensley, p.72. The issue had also been previously raised in the columns of the Lyttelton Times in 1853, 29 October, 1853.
\textsuperscript{262} \textit{Lyttelton Times}, 29 November 1851.
of free labour had made its mark in the settlement, but there could be, naturally enough, various contrary views on the subject as well.

To move forward a little in time, the influence of Wakefield’s idea of free labour, alongside the presence of alternative views, is clearly evident in the parliamentary debates over the master and servant law in the 1860s. Although the bills which were debated do not appear to have survived, the debates themselves, which took place in 1864 and 1865, provide vital information about the state of the law of master and servant and attitudes to it, not only in Canterbury in the 1850s and the early 1860s, but in the whole country. They confirm, firstly, that some did in fact want masters to have the opportunity to exercise more control over their servants. Yet, they also tend to confirm what the studies of the early years of the Wakefield settlements above have already indicated: the settlers had not generally used the law, and that they continued not to use the law.\(^\text{263}\) It also seems that in putting aside the law, their comprehension of its content had dimmed.

In introducing a first Masters and Servants Bill in December 1864, Cracroft Wilson, the member for Christchurch, noted that while anyone who was ‘at all conversant with the matter knew very well that the laws relating to masters and servants extended over many hundreds of years[,] ... it was specially necessary at the present time that the law between employers and employed should be clearly understood,

\(^{263}\) Beside the cases already referred to in chapter three above, the Reverend E. Simeon Elwell, *The Boy Colonists*, London, 1878, pp. 149-50, also indicates at least a possible threat to act against servants under master and servant law. There is a remarkably full record of a case on 23 March 1867 involving an action on the Chatham Islands taken by a local storekeeper against his labourer he employed. The complaint laid against the labourer is occasionally confusing but appears to centre on three factual elements: that the labourer had ‘complained about being sick – from the effects of a wound in the American War’; that he had said he was going to a doctor; and that he ‘got drinking’ and refused to go to work. In his defence, evidence was given by the local doctor that the labourer had been ‘affected with swelled testicles and Slight Inflammation’, and needed a short period of rest of two days. It also appears that his left testicle had to be removed. The Resident Magistrate ordered the labourer to return to work after two days rest and pay 4s. costs. Alexander v Smith, 23 March 1867, Chatham Island Record Book, 1867-80.
more especially as works of great magnitude would soon be entered into.' His objects, alongside improved clarity, were to 'to insure the fulfilment of engagements and for the adjustment of disputes between masters and servants'. Wilson added that similar Bills 'had been passed in all the provinces of Australia'.\textsuperscript{264} Gillies, who also spoke in the initial debate, recognised that the 'law of England applied' and, either out of doubt or caution, noted that the new Bill would require 'very careful consideration to what alterations the Bill proposed'.\textsuperscript{265} A few days later the Bill was discharged on the basis that the Government would introduce its own measure.\textsuperscript{266}

The second Bill was debated in August and September the following year. The new debates even more strongly indicated that the English master and servant law had, to that point, been applied only erratically in New Zealand. Indicating the law had not been active, Buckland noted in speaking against the Bill that 'The moment the House interposed between master and servant difficulties would arise'\textsuperscript{267}. On the other side, Carleton spoke for the Bill and noted that 'It seemed not to be generally known what really was the present law on the subject – what the English Acts were which applied. The present Bill relaxed those Acts, and had the further advantage of making the law known to all.'\textsuperscript{268} Thomson thought that 'some law should be laid down for Justices of the Peace to be guided by in cases brought before them.'\textsuperscript{269} James Fitzgerald, now Minister for Native Affairs, added that 'There were statutes on the Statute Book of

\textsuperscript{264} \textit{New Zealand Parliamentary Debates}, 1864-1866, pp.69-70. John Cracroft Wilson was a substantial Canterbury employer 'with a reputation for paying low wages', Tessa Kristiansen, 'Wilson, John Cracroft', \textit{Dictionary of New Zealand Biography}, pp.602-03. The work referred to by Wilson appears to have been improvements to the port and perhaps the construction of the Provincial Council Chamber which included the use of stone from Wilson's quarry, W.H. Scutter, 'Developments of the Mid-1860s' in W.J. Gardner, (ed), \textit{A History of Canterbury}, vol. II, Christchurch, 1971, pp.126-29.

\textsuperscript{265} \textit{New Zealand Parliamentary Debates}, p.70. Thomas Gillies was one of the sons of John Gillies, a resident magistrate in Dunedin, G.H. Scholefield (ed), \textit{A Dictionary of New Zealand Biography}, vol. 1, Wellington, 1940, pp.294-295, 297-98.

\textsuperscript{266} \textit{New Zealand Parliamentary Debates}, p.169.

\textsuperscript{267} Ibid, p.630.

\textsuperscript{268} Ibid, p.631.

\textsuperscript{269} Ibid.
England which were more stringent than the one before them; but it was doubtful whether they were practically in operation in this colony.\textsuperscript{270}

A feature that stands out with regard to these debates is that they were initiated by a Canterbury parliamentarian who now sought, in the mid-1860s, to reverse the previous tendency in the settlement, and in other settlements, not to compel servants to work for masters they no longer wanted to work for. In effect, Wilson wanted to turn away from Wakefield’s established ideas and bring Canterbury and New Zealand into line with their sister colonies in Australia. The argument over the merits of the Bill was relatively simple and the voting finely balanced.

The general argument for the Bill was that there was a need for clarity and, as a result, some increased equity for masters against servants who breached their contracts. John Williamson, for example, approved of the Bill and stated that ‘It would be an advantage to persons coming to New Zealand to know that there was one law for all.’\textsuperscript{271} Henry Sewell, having evidently changed his mind yet again, also spoke strongly in favour of the Bill. He argued that while ‘A great deal had been said about contracts between masters and servants being made binding equally on both, and about civil proceedings, which sounded very well, ... the contract between master and servant was generally one-sided.’ He explained further that because the master had capital and the servant not, that ‘In civil proceedings, therefore, the servant could always obtain recompense, while the master could seldom obtain such.’ Thus, he stated, ‘The Bill was conceived in a perfectly fair spirit.’\textsuperscript{272} For Sewell, the Bill was equal in that it provided effective sanctions for and against both masters and servants. Carleton also promoted the Bill as ‘a relaxation of the present law on the

\textsuperscript{270} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{271} Ibid, p.252.
\textsuperscript{272} Ibid, p.253. Also see p. 630.
subject. While the colony needed a master and servant law, it would not be as harsh as the existing English law.

The opponents of the Bill attacked its provisions and its underlying principles. O'Neill, for example, attacked the ‘very first clause’ because it allowed, he said, ‘two Justices of the Peace’ to ‘bring up an unfortunate servant and dispose of him in their own private room if they liked.’ He said ‘That would hardly be fair, in a free country.’ Colenso criticised the Bill on a number of points including the making of oral agreements binding and the excessive length of service allowed. Generally, he said, the ‘Bill bore too much upon the labourer, and left the master at freedom; it made the servant amenable to the law for the most trifling faults, and under it he might be prosecuted for slamming a door, or for retaining his hat on his head in a room.’ Henderson and Buckland both declared that as experienced employers they had never had any difficulties in dealing with their employees and that, accordingly, the legislation was ‘notorious’ and ‘quite uncalled-for and unnecessary’. Of all the opposition speeches, however, it was Fitzgerald’s that most directly reflected the influence of Wakefield’s ideas. In particular, he noted the similarity of the Bill to legislation already in place in ‘the Australian colonies’ and reminded his listeners of their past. They were, he said, ‘accustomed to slave labour – slave labour in the persons of the convict element with which they had been tainted, and the legislation with regard to which they carried on in their relations to the free labourers.’ More generally, he noted that ‘In the earlier times of history the idea of slavery had crept into all the relations of the servant with the master; but, as civilization advanced, that idea of compulsory service had gradually been eliminated.’ He also argued that labourers should be allowed to sell their labour as ‘an article of commerce’, and any

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274 Ibid, p.252.
breach of agreement to labour should be dealt with as a civil action, not through a criminal trial. It was unfair that the labourer should be subject to criminal charges and the possibility of 'two or three months' in gaol for a breach and the master would be subject only to civil action. Again referring to the past, he said that 'they knew that in old times a servant who broke his contract was treated as a criminal, but he denied that in this colony and in these days they should go back to those times.'

At the end of the speeches, the House of Representative voted and the resulting tied vote was broken by the Speaker in favour of the defeat of the Bill. The demands for clarification of the master and servant law in New Zealand and for masters to be given the clear right to require specific service from their servants were, therefore, not met, and indeed never met. As a result, New Zealand remained quite distinct from its Australian counterparts in the absence of its own master and servant law. In fact, New Zealand was especially distinct in its successful opposition to the use of any master and servant law provision to hold servants to compulsory service.

In summary, Wakefield's ideas certainly had some impact on the early Canterbury settlement. But it also varied over a number of issues. The Canterbury Association provided a labour force which outwardly conformed to some of its broad occupational requirements, but not necessarily to the required qualitative standards relating to age, gender, and character. The Association and, later, the provincial council, also understandably failed to achieve the major object of producing a quantitatively managed and balanced labour force. Yet, despite these shortcomings in the practical

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277 Ibid, p.252.
278 Ibid, p.632. The current parliamentary convention in relation to a tied vote is that the Speaker will not allow the legislative proposal to be enacted. This convention appears to have originated in the British Parliament in 1867, that is of course after the master and servant law debate in New Zealand, Sir Donald Limon and W.R. McKay (eds), Erskine May’s Treatise on the law, privileges, proceedings, and usage of Parliament, London, 1997, pp.357-61.
implementation of Wakefield's scheme of systematic colonisation, Wakefield's ideas continued to find some support in the new settlement. It appears feasible, for example, that the labour shortage which underlined the Association's failure to adequately manage the supply of labour to and within the settlement, reinforced worker optimism derived from Wakefield's argument and promotion of good wages. Traditional expectations of, and concerns over, relief assistance that may have been in the minds of labour and the gentry were also only challenged briefly. Further, Wakefield's idea of the 'sufficient price' led a determined existence in the minds of at least the majority of Canterbury's local leaders. And it is of course clear that Wakefield's ideas of labour freed from any compulsion to work other than the general economic need to work also survived and persisted. Indeed it provided the basis, even if only by a bare majority, for a signal point of legislative difference between the young New Zealand colony, and Britain and its Australian colonies.

Assessment

Otago and Canterbury provide further evidence of the extent to which Wakefield's ideas influenced early colonial settlement in New Zealand in respect to labour and labour relations. Firstly, the colonisers could not and did not supply labour to either settlement in accordance with the prescription set by Wakefield in his established outline of systematic colonisation, or as set out by the colonisers themselves in their own promotional material. In the case of Otao, too many were sent. In Canterbury, too few were sent and retained. Neither can claim to have received the elite workforce envisaged by Wakefield. Secondly, farming in Otago was primarily small scale in its first years, not the large scale industrial farming which had been promoted by Wakefield. This, as the earlier Wakefield settlements had found, was seen as necessary to overcome a lack of interest from wealthy capitalists in the settlement.
Thirdly, in a departure from the practice in the three earlier Wakefield settlements, no preliminary promise was made by the colonisers of either Otago or Canterbury of support for the emigrant labourers in the event that private employment was not available. This reflected the experience of the early settlements and the desire to avoid any repetition of the need to provide relief work, which the New Zealand Company had found such a burden. Yet relief work was provided in Otago when the first settlers arrived and the experience of the previous settlements was repeated: namely the leading colonists found the provision of relief burdensome and they limited and eliminated the provision much to the disillusionment of the emigrant workmen. Fourthly, while the emigrant workmen arrived in Otago expecting good wages and conditions of employment, they were generally disappointed by conditions in the settlement. In Canterbury, however, the reverse was true because of a generally persistent shortage of labour that was due largely to the movement of Canterbury workmen in its first years to the Australian gold fields. But in both cases, the workmen did benefit from the establishment of the eight hour day. Fifthly, both settlements clung to the concept of a high ‘sufficient price’ in their first years, despite the challenge presented by Grey’s land regulations. Otago’s rate was finally reduced to the government rate in 1856. The Canterbury Provincial Council, however, continued to resist and, in the same year, entrenched their high price as part of local waste lands regulations. And lastly, the idea that labour should not be compelled to work for particular masters generally remained in favour in both settlements, and was more or less confirmed as an informal extra-legal convention with the defeat of the Masters and Servants Bill in 1865.
Conclusions

The ideas in Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation relating to labour relations had a strong impact on the establishment and early years of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements. This was felt particularly in relation to the control of labour, the hours of work, and the provision of relief work. In considering more generally the work of John Martin, Margaret Tennant, David Thompson, and others, it also seems that the patterns evident in the early years of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements extended well beyond the initial period of colonisation. The longevity of these patterns, however, appears to have reflected not only the importance of the initial inspirational effect of Wakefield’s ideas, but also the lack of strong and effective new developments in labour relations in New Zealand at least up to the late 1880s.

In the Vanguard

The main object of this comparative study has been to use the framework of Wakefield’s scheme of systematic colonisation to illustrate some features of labour relations in the first years of colonial New Zealand. The study has clearly defined Wakefield’s ideas relating to labour in this scheme and then considered how these ideas were applied to the settlements and reflected in the thoughts and activity of the settlers. It has looked most closely at the establishment and the first years of the Wakefield settlements on the basis that this was the time when Wakefield’s ideas were freshest, most potent, and most likely to be influential. The results of the comparison show largely consistent patterns across the five New Zealand Wakefield settlements. This applies to the rejection of traditional forms of forced colonial labour and attempts to apply the core features of Wakefield’s scheme of systematic
colonisation. It also applies to the thoughts and activity of the settlers, including the
leaders of the settlements, the masters, and the workmen.

The rejection by Wakefield and the early New Zealand colonisers of the use of forced
labour in its various traditional guises reflected a broadening stream of thought and
practice. This development had begun to take hold in Britain’s American colonies in
the eighteenth century, and was to become stronger and more widely felt during the
nineteenth century. Wakefield and the New Zealand Wakefield settlements were
relatively early and very full participants in this development. In 1829, Britain’s anti-
slavery laws were still to prove fully effective\(^1\) and the use of black slaves remained
an institution in the American South until the conclusion of the American Civil War in
1865. Convicts were transported to provide labour to eastern Australia until 1852 and
to Western Australia until 1868.\(^2\) English indentured labour was used in the
settlement of Swan River in 1829 and in South Australia in the 1830s. Melanesian
labourers were indentured in Queensland into the twentieth century.\(^3\) Furthermore,
master and servant law was used to force specific service in Britain and Australia
well beyond the establishment of Wakefield’s settlements. The practice did not end
until 1875 in Britain and continued even longer in Australia.\(^4\) The fact that these
forms of forced labour were not applied in the early New Zealand Wakefield
settlements at least partly reflected the initiative and agency of Wakefield as
expressed through his scheme of systematic colonisation. He specifically ensured

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\(^1\) Drescher and Engerman, pp.12-13.
\(^2\) The Peopling of Australia, Melbourne, 1933, p.52. While forced labour is generally reviled in
democratic countries there continues to be some ambivalence over the use of convict labour. Labour in
this context is sometimes regarded as a necessary form of punishment and as a means of mitigating the
cost of deserved incarceration. This ambivalence is indicated in the United States Constitution which
provides for the use of convict labour as an ‘exception to its national abolition of slavery.’ Drescher
and Engerman, x. For further discussion on various justifications for using convict labour in a modern
society see, for example, A.Chadwick, ‘Does Crime Pay?’, unpublished dissertation, University of
Otago, 2002, ch.1. For a report on the current extent and forms of slavery, see nationalgeographic.com,
\(^4\) Simon, p.160, notes that there were on average 10,000 cases per year taken against workmen under
the law in England and Wales from 1858-75.
that the settlements in New Zealand were included in the general movement away from forced labour. The prominence of the settlements especially in the exclusion of convict labour also contributed to New Zealand’s general sense of superiority and difference from its neighbouring Australian colonies.\(^5\) This has in part persisted to the present day.

What assisted Wakefield in so forthrightly rejecting the use of forced labour, and others in accepting his argument, was his promotion of a new way of settling new colonies through the application of systematic colonisation. The colonists needed labour and if they could not have it in the form of forced labour, they needed it in some other form. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that Wakefield’s scheme was largely unworkable in terms of the object of maintaining a consistently well balanced labour market that ensured both sufficient labour for masters and good wages for workmen. The source and destination of labour were too far apart in distance and time, and the ability of the colonising agencies was too limited to enable them to accurately select the desired quality and quantity of labour. Pragmatists amongst the South Australians began to deviate from Wakefield’s scheme even as the first South Australian colonists were leaving England. This did not occur, however, in relation to the initial colonisation of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements. Perhaps because of the stronger role played by Wakefield in the New Zealand Company, the colonisers initially adhered closely to the main form of the scheme of systematic colonisation. The application of the scheme was also supported in the newly established settlements. The eventual indications of the failure of the scheme to provide a well balanced labour market, especially in the face of the Anglo-Australasian Depression which began to affect the settlements from late 1842, did of course dampen support for systematic colonisation. But it was certainly

\(^5\) For example, Tennant, p.3.
not eliminated. Support was possible even in the face of failure because failings were put down, not to the inadequacy of the form and content of the scheme itself, but primarily to the British government’s interference and lack of support and the particular failure of the New Zealand Company to provide adequate management. This enabled the scheme to survive and for at least some to adopt it as an apparently viable basis for the settlements of Otago and Canterbury. For similar reasons support for the scheme also persisted in these later settlements despite the fact that they too experienced problems obtaining a balanced supply of labour.

While support in principle remained for Wakefield’s scheme both in Britain and the settlements, this did not mean that the colonising agencies persisted in applying the scheme, as it had been originally presented, throughout their active involvement in the establishment of the settlements. In particular, as the fortunes of the New Zealand Company and the first three settlements faltered, the Company’s officials in London and in the settlements set about encouraging the growth of small independent farming units. This included promoting the emigration of men of limited means who combined in themselves capital and labour and the placement of the unemployed labourers in the settlements onto cottier farms. The revised policy meant of course the development of the very form of land distribution that Wakefield had said was the normal consequence of unsystematic colonisation and which he sought to replace. According to Wakefield, in order to optimise farm production and develop a civilised colonial society, landowners had to be free from the toil of manual labour. Their task instead was to provide thoughtful management of their capital and to maximise the combined productive potential of the labourers they employed. This said, the actions of the New Zealand Company in placing labourers on their own land in fact provided a sensible means of dealing with unemployment in the settlements, though of course it did not provide an immediate solution to the problems of hunger and distress that followed from unemployment. In addition, the offer of land to men of
small means was a sensible adjustment to the general lack of interest shown by wealthier investors in purchasing and farming large land holdings in the settlements. There was also a distinct emphasis on small land holding in Otago and some further encouragement of the same in Canterbury. Moreover, despite the general inconsistency with the original conception of systematic colonisation, it is evident that small farming provided at least some with a pathway to a pleasant prosperity. As John Martin points out, Wakefield was prominent in this shift in emphasis towards small farming and should be given some of the credit for the success that accompanied the change. At the same time, we need to be clear that Wakefield’s actions in encouraging small farming were contrary to his theory of systematic colonisation. They were also designed to rectify circumstances which were, at least in part, of Wakefield’s and the New Zealand Company’s making. These included the high initial price of land in the Wakefield settlements, which, if it was at all effective, must have prevented workers in the first instance from acquiring land. The subsequent movement of labourers and other workmen into land ownership was also made more difficult than it might have been by the shortfall of work in the Wakefield settlements and relatively low wages.

The failure of the scheme to provide an effective control over labour might have also been expected to result in a reversion amongst the masters in the settlements to traditional forms of labour control. In fact there is evidence of only a minor regressive trend involving the limited use of the master and servant law to enforce specific service in some localities. In part this relatively muted reaction may be explained by the effect of the weak labour markets which afflicted all the settlements, including

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6 Beaglehole, p.173; Miller, p.125; Dalziel, ‘Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth’, p.25; Jim McAlloon, No Idle Rich, Dunedin, 2002, p.96. The micro-study by Jennifer Officer, ‘Family Fortunes’, unpublished research essay, Otago, 2000, also provides some confirmation of this type of movement (see particularly the progress of the Wintons and Heenans, pp. 26, 28, 30, 32).
even Canterbury, at some stage during their first years. Of course any labourers who left their employment could usually be easily and quickly replaced. Yet the labour market was not always weak and certainly in the 1850s it became very difficult for masters in the settlements as workmen left for the Australian gold-fields. The general reluctance of masters to resort to some form of forced labour even in these circumstances provides a strong indication of the influence of Wakefield's ideas on the issue.

In addition, Wakefield's scheme and the promotion of systematic colonisation had an inspirational effect on the thoughts and activity of the workmen who emigrated to the New Zealand Wakefield settlements. Of course working people usually went to colonies because they expected to better their own lives and those of their families. But in the case of Wakefield's scheme the promise was of a general prosperity beyond the normal. It was also to be initially a prosperity based on a period of perhaps several years of working for good wages. The scheme was specifically adapted to include a guarantee of work if private employment was not available. This adaptation was deliberately designed to meet working class concerns with respect to unemployment in Britain and the attendant threat of distress. It was, thus, also intended to increase the interest of workmen in the scheme. The promise was briefly transformed in 1840 into a guarantee of work at a minimum wage designed to ensure good wages were always paid to workmen. The new promise reflected one of the objects of the Chartists. The workmen in the settlements specifically acknowledged the influence of these promises on their decisions to emigrate in their later complaints over the reduction of relief work. The workmen were also inspired by Wakefield's scheme to play their own active part in labour relations in the newly established settlements. The workmen came specifically prepared to ensure that the promises of prosperous working lives for servants and labourers were fulfilled. They did this even to the extent of contradicting Wakefield's ideas. Wakefield's scheme envisaged the
establishment of a workforce that shared values with masters and capitalists. It emphasised co-operation, hard work, an aspiration to become the master. The workmen who came to the settlements engaged in collective action in opposition to the interests of their masters. They plotted common positions on both wages and hours during the voyages to their new homes. This included the extravagant demand, for the times, for an eight hour day. Their insistence on an eight hour day provided a clear statement that they had not come to New Zealand to work the same treadmill they had been on in Britain. They were not convinced of the need for hard work even if it led more clearly in New Zealand to land ownership and to becoming the master of servants. Like the guarantee of employment at good wages, the eight hour day reflected a contemporary radical working class object that had not been generally achieved elsewhere. Unlike the guarantee of employment and the minimum wage, however, it was not given, at least in the first settlement of Wellington. Instead it was taken through collective and individual bargaining. The New Zealand Company and the masters succumbed to the demand because of their initial need for labour and to avoid any appearance of disharmony that could damage the reputation of the settlement as an attractive destination for both capital and labour. The eight hour day subsequently applied, with perhaps some limited exceptions, in all the Wakefield settlements. The eight hour day did not become the normal practice in Britain, the United States, or Australia until much later. Essentially, the resort to collective action and the demand for an eight hour day reflected a fundamental difference in emphasis between the goals of Wakefield and the workmen settlers. Both shared a general desire for freedom from the enslavement of poverty and distress but Wakefield

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8 Henry Pelling in *American Labor*, Chicago, 1960, pp.37-39, 56, notes increasing agitation and success in extending the ten hour standard for artisans to other areas of the workforce in the United States during the 1840s and 50s, and the development of new union demands for an eight hour day in the 1860s. Patmore notes that some Australian craft unions obtained the eight hour day in the 1850s, but that working weeks of between 55 to 72 hours were still common in the 1880s, pp.57-58. See also Charles Fox and Marilyn Lake (eds), *Australians at Work*, Ringwood, 1990, pp.93, 110. The reduction in hours in England has already been discussed, see pp 228-29 above.
sought more strongly the grand object of colonial greatness. The priority for the workmen was to secure their own safety from the dreaded workhouse and to obtain secure work at wages that were sufficient for them and their families to live comfortably.

Unfortunately for the workmen, the promises of a special prosperity and secure employment proved largely transitory. Wages and access to relief employment with the New Zealand Company were reduced significantly in all three of the first Wakefield settlements in New Zealand after 1842 as the Company struggled with its finances and the settlements struggled with the effects of the Anglo-Australasian Depression. Workmen in the settlements banded together temporarily to oppose the Company's reductions in relief work. Their actions included strikes, petitions, and threats to leave the settlements (to which they had been sent at considerable expense by, and to, the Company). This activity of the workmen may have embarrassed the Company to some degree and slowed the reduction in relief but it certainly did not stop the decline. The Company could not sustain relief work even if it wanted to and it eventually ceased its operations and the supply of relief work in 1844. With falling relief rates and reductions in relief work, the masters in the settlement also had no shortage of labour to choose from, if they could afford any, and pay rates in general fell drastically over the same period. The threats of the workmen to not provide labour, either by striking or leaving, were futile in the circumstances. The results for the workmen were of course devastating. They had emigrated in hope but found renewed hardship and in the end no security. The colonisers and the leading colonists also took a hard lesson from the experience. This was the desirability of avoiding responsibility for the provision of relief. No similar guarantee of work was made to encourage workmen to emigrate to Otago or Canterbury, though Cargill did initially provide the Otago workmen with work when they first arrived because of the desperate need for employment. But he was also to
withdraw this support in 1850. Without the support of the Company, the destitute had to look to their families for support, to rely on other charity, to use whatever land was made available to at least attempt to meet medium term subsistence needs, or to re-emigrate. There were also pleas for the government to supply relief work. Even in Canterbury, commonly regarded as the most successful of the Wakefield settlements, workers experienced some of the difficulties of unemployment.

Overall, this study indicates several immediate and significant differences between the type and content of labour relations that applied in the early New Zealand Wakefield settlements and those that applied in its parent society, Britain, and in its sister Australasian colonies. These differences were an apparently greater work security, the eight hour day, and the modern and universal application of individual contracts of service (that is without resort to penal sanctions to force the completion of specific service). These differences can all be related back to Wakefield's scheme of systematic colonisation. There was, however, never any exceptional colonial prosperity based on the prescribed application of systematic colonisation. There was no effective management of the supply of labour to achieve a controlled balance between supply and demand in the labour market. Any balance between the two was fortuitous. Indeed, rather than an unusual colonial prosperity, there were times during the first years of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements when the settlers experienced unemployment, hunger, and distress. During this period, the attitude of the Company's officials and leading colonists hardened against the provision of any guarantee of long term relief work. The guarantee was reduced and eventually eliminated. This led to even tougher times. The workmen in the settlements were not subject to forced labour conditions. They had hoped, however, that they would also be free of the threat and naturally the reality of unemployment, poverty, and distress in New Zealand. This was not the case for many in the first years of the settlements.
Beyond the First Years

Although this thesis does not explore in detail what happened after the early settlement period of the Wakefield colonies with respect to labour, there is sufficient in this research and various secondary resources to also make some final general observations on the longer term influence of Wakefield's ideas.

First, it appears that there was little in the way of turning back towards the traditional institutions of labour control. There was no importation of convict or indentured labour even during the 1850s when labour became very scarce. Masters in the settlements also made only very limited use of master and servant law to enforce specific service. The rejection of the attempts to introduce a New Zealand master and servant statute in the 1860s confirmed the limited nature of this usage and the early advantage of the workmen settlers over their counterparts elsewhere. It also confirmed the impact of the most direct and fundamental of Wakefield's contributions in terms of his scheme of systematic colonisation to labour in New Zealand.

Second, Keith Sinclair notes that the provincial governments used land revenues to fund immigration 'when they took over from the Wakefield organisations.'9 A linkage remained evident between land sales and immigration in Vogel's public works and immigration scheme of the 1870s.10 John Martin also provides various examples, in 'Unemployment, Government and the Labour Market in New Zealand, 1860-1890', of the provinces and the colonial government struggling to manage the labour market by a combination of immigration, public-relief works, the establishment of labour exchanges, and land settlement. Unemployment in particular occurred concurrently

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9 Sinclair, p.99; Marais, p.158.
and subsequent to the application of Vogel's scheme. From 1871 to 1879, the New Zealand government assisted 100,000 emigrants to New Zealand. Martin notes that in 1875 'some 1200 in Dunedin petitioned the government to stop further immigration to New Zealand, "already crowded with Unemployed ... who are now bordering on Starvation".' The government halved immigration and then halted it the following year. In 1878, with conditions apparently improving, immigration resumed and 'large numbers entered the country.' In 1880, 'bad times ... returned with a vengeance'. The government had to halt immigration. Yet again the economy appeared to recover and immigration resumed even though unemployment remained high. In 1883, 'Serious agitation' over the lack of work broke out in Canterbury and Otago. Later, with the difficulty still unresolved, the Dunedin unemployed sought help from the Victorian government to re-emigrate, noting in their petition that 'We the undersigned ... having been betrayed by false representations of New Zealand by emigration agents, lectures and printed pamphlets, threw up situations, broke up homes and left loving friends, are now facing the bitter reality of parading the streets, hungry and ill-shod, with no prospect of a better future.' Martin notes that relief works had to be revived in all the large centres as these episodes of unemployment recurred. In addition, efforts were made to ameliorate the effects of the oversupply of labour by the establishment and use of labour exchanges from the 1870s.\footnote{John E. Martin, "Unemployment, Government and the Labour Market, 1860-1890", \textit{New Zealand Journal of History}, vol.29, no.2, October 1995, pp. 176-185, 189-95.} The government also engaged in a longer term strategy of land settlement for the unemployed. This included schemes initiated by Rolleston in the 1870s and Balance in the 1880s.\footnote{John E. Martin, ""Waging War on the Labour Market": The State and Wage Labour in Late Nineteenth-Century New Zealand", \textit{Turnbull Library Record}, vol.26, nos 1-2, 1993, pp.46-50.} The labour exchanges and settlement schemes, however, appear to have been not much more than sideshows. Martin observes that the crux of the unemployment problem in the 1880s was 'The combination of the inflating of the casual unskilled labour-force, particularly
by immigration, and a reduction in public works spending.' The reduction in spending reflected the government's own poor financial position and its consequent determination to reduce its costs. This recycling of immigration and unemployment, and the need to resort to emergency relief work and the placement of labourers onto small farms, largely repeated what had already happened in the early Wakefield period. Even the use of labour exchanges had a precursor in the early Canterbury settlement.

Third, the support for labour in such times of unemployment was equivocal. Both Margaret Tennant and David Thomson note the weakness of formal support for those in need in nineteenth century New Zealand. Thomson states that 'Nineteenth century New Zealand, perhaps even more than the other Australasian colonies, was marked by a deliberate attempt to keep all formal collective welfare activity to a minimum, and to maximise individual, family and informal neighbourly assistance when need arose.' This reflected, according to Thomson, the persistent influence of British concerns over the apparent creation of dependency and the need to encourage industry, prudence and thrift. It also reflected, however, the reaction of the colonisers and leading members of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements to the experience of providing relief work from 1842 to 1844. Tennant emphasises the limited support that came in the form of charitable aid tightly administered to ensure only deserving cases were assisted within very tight budgets. She notes that while Charles Hasselden, 'Distributor of Rations and Crown Lands', acknowledged in a report on pauperism in Auckland in 1866 'the effect of localised recession, he was

14 Ibid, p. 194.
15 Thomson, p. 19.
17 Tennant, ch. 1. Thomson notes that charitable aid began to make a substantial appearance in New Zealand during the 1860s and its 'abiding principles' were 'voluntary assistance rather than compulsory support, minimal formality rather than statutory structures, charitable donation rather than tax funding, individualised assistance rather than relief to whole groups or classes, and rigid discrimination between the worthy and deserving, and the unworthy and undeserving.' Pp. 28, 84.
overwhelmingly suspicious of individual imposition and reluctance to work.' The attitude was the same among his successors. McNab Thomson notes that the advocates of voluntary charitable aid were opposed by a substantial minority that favoured the establishment of clear rights to assistance in the 1870s but that this opposition diminished during the 1880s. This falling away of support, he states, reflected growing concerns over government retrenchment and international opinion against the establishment of such rights. Margaret McClure further notes the reaffirmation of the principle of the Destitute Persons Ordinance of 1846, which placed the prime responsibility for the support of the destitute on their own families, in a new Destitute Persons Act in 1877. John Martin in dealing much more specifically with the issue of unemployment notes in his article, "Waging War on the Labour Market", that relief work was grudgingly provided in the late nineteenth century and that 'This aversion went back to the beginning of government involvement in dealing with unemployment at the end of the 1870s.' He adds that 'it was common to restrict relief work to the bare minimum and provide it only at times of dire emergency when social unrest threatened.' Martin has also noted in 'Unemployment, Government and the Labour Market' (which followed 'Waging War') that relief was provided out of a sense of the 'contract' made with 'past immigrants' to assist 'when matters became serious', and 'perhaps more important', the need to preserve the impression that New Zealand was a desirable destination for emigrants. This suggests a government more interested in the aid of the unemployed. Many of Martin's substantial illustrations, however, show that often circumstances did become dire before the government reluctantly acted to provide support for the unemployed. This is consistent with the general positions of Tennant and Thomson on the provision of support to the poor in New Zealand. It was

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18 Tennant, p. 18. Also see p.23.
19 Thomson, pp. 29-32.
21 Martin, "Waging War on the Labour Market", p.46.
also again very reminiscent of the New Zealand Company’s response in the Wakefield settlements to unemployment in 1843 and 1844. The similarity is underscored by the colonial government’s reduction of relief work and relief wages in 1880 and 1887 as it responded to its own difficult financial position.\textsuperscript{23}

Fourth, the workmen in New Zealand generally retained the custom of the eight hour day. They also remained, in contrast, subject to strongly fluctuating wage rates. With regard to hours, J.D. Salmond notes that ‘One of the objects of the Otago Trades and Labour Council in 1881 was “to assist each other in maintaining the eight hours’ principle”’. He also observed that there were various exceptions to the principle. These exceptions included the bakers and the butchers. ‘The bakers … were notable’, according to Salmond, ‘in that no body of workers suffered more from the evil of long hours than they did.’ Their hours must have been extreme because Salmond also notes that the butchers worked ‘14, 15, and even 18 hours a day.’\textsuperscript{24} Despite the exceptions, however, it is plain from the parliamentary debates which accompanied the attempts to establish a statutory eight hour day in the 1880s and 1890s, that the custom had generally and continuously applied from the 1840s and 50s. The objects of the Bills were to ensure that there was no erosion of the custom\textsuperscript{25} and, of course, to remedy any circumstances where specific employers or particular trades were not observing the custom. In relation to wage rates, the pattern in the Wakefield settlement period responded more directly to the fluctuating states of the labour markets and, more generally, the economies of the small settlements. This pattern also extended beyond the Wakefield settlement period. Briefly, Martin’s work on the

\textsuperscript{24} Salmond, New Zealand Labour’s Pioneering Days, pp. 12, 21, 27.
\textsuperscript{25} In introducing the Eight Hour Bill in 1889, R.M.Taylor noted that the arguments used against the measure, including the possible effect it might have on profits and family, were the same as those used in opposition to ‘the emancipation of the negro slaves’ and the Factories Act in Britain. The latter, he stated, was ‘a measure to emancipate white slaves, - the women and children and others who were toiling sixteen and eighteen a day in the factories and other workplaces of the Old Country.’ Taylor’s comments with regard to the persistence of the eight hour day in New Zealand were endorsed by his
rural New Zealand economy states that the Australian gold rush period in the 1850s was generally a high wage period, with wages dropping as a result of a mild recession in 1859. This was followed by a return to higher wages from 1861 as the labour market was affected by gold discoveries in New Zealand. Wages fell considerably when the gold rush came to an end in the mid 1860s. Salmond notes that the labour market then made a relatively quick recovery with new gold finds and good harvests but returned to significant unemployment in 1870. Martin notes a revival of high rural rates in 1877 and 1878. The ‘long depression’, which was to last from 1879 until the 1890s, then took effect and resulted in ‘declining incomes and wages’. As an indication of this fall, Martin notes that harvest rates fell from 1s. per hour to 8d. and 9d. per hour in the mid 1880s and even to 7d. per hour in the mid 1890s. The generality of the fall over the full period, however, is only partly confirmed by M.N. Arnold’s study of wage rates from 1873, which also suggests an overall rise in real rates as a result of price decreases. Regardless of this particular disagreement, clearly wage rates were very much subject to unstable and often negative labour market and general economic conditions up to and beyond the depression. There is equally, or course, no general sense from either account, or from Salmond, that workmen in the early years of the Wakefield settlement, or subsequently more widely in New Zealand, received wages rates that particularly advantaged them over workmen in other colonies because of the application of systematic colonisation.

parliamentary colleague, S.Buxton, who led off the argument against the Bill. *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, vol.64, pp.216-18.

26 John E.Martin, *The Forgotten Worker*, Wellington, 1990, pp.17-24; Salmond, *New Zealand Labour’s Pioneering Days*, pp.16-32. Martin also notes that there was an important seasonal variation between high summer and low winter rates within this general pattern.

27 Martin, *The Forgotten Worker*, p.27.

On the basis of these developments it seems that Wakefield’s ideas on labour in his scheme of systematic colonisation not only affected the first years of the New Zealand Wakefield settlements but that the patterns set down in these first years also persisted well beyond the early settlement period. This included not only the positive developments such as the general reluctance to resort to any form of forced labour and the maintenance of the eight hour day but also the attempts, so often to poor effect, to control the labour market and the government’s strong aversion to the provision of satisfactory relief as a right to be claimed when necessary by the poor.

As a last general observation, it appears that Wakefield’s ideas did not affect New Zealand’s labour relations in a merely ordinary way. They appear in fact to have been a highly significant force by any standard in helping to shape labour relations in New Zealand in the nineteenth century. This includes both the immediate impact of Wakefield’s ideas in his scheme with respect to labour relations and the continuity of these early patterns. The most successful aspects of this impact were in relation to the central issue of the establishment and persistence of free labour in New Zealand and the persistence of the custom of the eight day. Less successful in terms of consequences for labour, but still influential, were the application of Wakefield’s grand ambition to control labour through the control of the labour market and the provision of relief. In the long term, the colony continued to link the sale of land with the provision of immigration. The general ambition, although it was so often unrealised, was also to ensure that the labour market was balanced and prosperity ensued. High quality relief was initially promoted in the New Zealand Wakefield settlements but eventually withdrawn amidst recriminations. The experience produced a strong aversion to the provision of relief amongst the colonisers and leading colonists of the Wakefield settlements. This aversion also characterised the general attitude of the provincial councils and the colonial government toward the provision of any permanent form of relief in New Zealand. The case for Wakefield’s
general significance with regard to labour relations in the nineteenth century also
seems all the stronger because of the weak development of early unionism in New
Zealand and the limited and derivative nature of the first New Zealand statutes
relating to labour relations. Salmond notes in detail the comings and goings of a
number of unions but the general consensus is that there was no substantial union
movement in New Zealand until the late 1880s. Jim Holt states, for example, that
‘Only a few small unions had existed before 1889.’ Bert Roth notes that there were
perhaps three thousand union members in 1888. Holt further states that after the
failed Maritime Strike of 1890, the unions ‘were pathetically weak’ with a ‘puny’
membership of two thousand five hundred. The population of New Zealand at the
time was about 650,000. The limited and derivative nature of New Zealand’s
legislation is indicated by Salmond and by Deeks and Boxall. The principal pieces of
legislation with respect to labour relations that were enacted before the Liberal
Government were the Trade Union Act of 1878, which followed the British statutes of
1871 and 1876, and the Employment of Females Act of 1873, which was copied from
a measure enacted by the Victorian state legislature. In general, it seems that the
patterns established in the early Wakefield settlements persisted with little to
challenge them, that is at least up to the late 1880s when new and dynamic forces

29 James Holt, ‘Compulsory Arbitration in New Zealand’, New Zealand Journal of History, vol.10,
31 Holt, p.106. Also see Deeks and Boxall, p.29. The findings here suggest two possible contributory
factors to this weak development. Firstly, the weak enforcement of the master and servant law may
have, possibly, increased labour mobility and decreased cohesiveness in the workforce, see also Miles
Fairburn, The Ideal Society and its Enemies, Auckland, 1989, p.124f. Secondly, the weak enforcement
of the master and servant law and the early establishment of the eight hour day, substantially reduced
the importance in New Zealand of two issues which were often prime objects of worker organisations
and newly established unions. See, for example: Henry Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism,
Harmondsworth, 1976, pp.38, 44, 52, 63-64, 77, 78-79, 82, 84; Tholfsen, pp. 280, 282, 307; C.Clark,
N.A.Hewitt, R.Rosenzweig, S.Brier, J.Brown, and E.Foner, Who Built America, vol.1, New York,
2000, p.698; Pelling, American Labor, pp.29, 37-38, 55, 59, 70; Fox and Lake, p.97, Patmore, pp.37,
58, 62, 67. The formation in New Zealand of the Engineers Union (1863-64) and the Seamen’s Union
(1880) was also explicitly tied to the establishment of the eight hour day, Roth p.5; Neil Atkinson,
32 The population of New Zealand from 1886 to 1891 ranged approximately from 610,000 to 650,000:
Census of New Zealand, Wellington, 1887, p.1; Census of New Zealand, Wellington, 1892, p.1.
were again in evidence in New Zealand. The patterns tended to be repetitious and the pace of alternative developments pedestrian. The new forces that began to emerge in the late 1880s were, in contrast, to take New Zealand more clearly and decisively into a long era of extensive collective organisation and legal administration. They comprised at this early formative stage the first great wave of unionisation in New Zealand, the politicisation of labour, and the ideas of another notable figure in New Zealand history, William Pember Reeves.
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Appendix

New South Wales Summons Case (1844) Under the 'Hired Servants Act'

'Burgess v. Dallison. Joseph Dallison appeared at the suit of William Burgess, overseer to W. Lawson, Esq., M.C., for a breach of the Hired Servants' Act. Mr Lambton appeared on behalf of the defendant.¹ The Plaintiff's information charged Dallison with disobedience of orders, coupled with insolence. The first allegation being grounded on the fact of the defendants repeated refusal to remove some horses from a spot where their grazing was on plants and not on grass, and the second, that when peremptorily refusing to obey this command, he bid the overseer go to the d------, and receive such sentence as people who visit his Satanic Majesty are usually in the habit of obtaining. Burgess underwent a long cross-examination by Mr Lambton, but the only fact elicited was, that Dallison was a "lazy, indolent man", and that he (Dallison) had affirmed that all the men on Mr Lawson's estate were rogues and vagabonds and the worthy member of Council himself a tyrant. William Hartley, a servant in the employ of W. Lawson, Esq., M.C., deposed that he had very frequently heard the defendant pass the highly complimentary eulogiums, alluded to by Burgess on Mr Lawson and his establishment; and further, that the defendant had on more than one occasion pledged his word to elevate one of his legs to that exact height which would bring it in immediate and close contact with that part of the overseer's body in which it is said the seat of honor is located. The Bench deeming the offences charged against the defendant as having been fully proved, decreed a fine of 20s. and 6s.8d. costs; in default of payment, one month to the Gaol and the agreement to be cancelled.'

¹ Parramatta Chronicle, 18 May 1844.