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The separation movement in Otago: The origins and early history

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A long essay submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of

Master of Arts in History

at the University of Otago, Dunedin,

New Zealand.

1959
THE SEPARATION MOVEMENT

IN OTAGO

The Origins and Early History

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M.A. History 1959
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INTRODUCTION

By 1859, the settlement at Otago had been in existence for eleven years, and during the time progress had been steady but not spectacular. Although Otago had never been exclusively Scottish or exclusively Free Church, as originally intended by its promoters, the leaders and many settlers still retained the idea of the 'separateness' of Otago. From the very beginning the settlers were resentful of what little General Government control there was\(^{(1)}\) and jealous of the revenues of the province\(^{(2)}\). The whole attitude of the community was one of antagonism to a central Government which disliked class settlements and democratic institutions.

From 1850 until the 1852 Constitution Act, there was much political agitation for local self-government. The Otago Settlers' Association, founded in May 1851, to express the political opinions of the settlers, failed in its efforts to re-dress grievances. Revenue continued to be misapplied and public works neglected. Government expenditure was negligible and it was felt that the General Government was indifferent to their welfare. Nor did this distrust of the General Government weaken with the establishment of the Provincial Government and a General Assembly.

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\(^{(1)}\) e.g. Suspicion of Strode - appointed by Grey in 1848 as Deputy Inspector of Police, then Resident Magistrate and Sub-Treasurer for Otago - an attempt to connect the settlement with the General Government.

\(^{(2)}\) 1850 memorial from the settlers to Grey concerning the surplus revenue.
As could only be expected in a recently settled developing community, Otago was primarily concerned with day to day affairs of purely local importance. With the General Government situated at Auckland, mails only arriving monthly and so much depending on news from the northern newspapers which arrived sporadically, events happening in the north seemed of little importance.

Otago did, however, expect her grievances to be remedied by the General Assembly. The settlers hoped for consent to the establishment of a bank which had previously been denied; they wanted steam communication with the north, and that regularly; and they wanted to be able to maintain the Provincial Council's land regulations. Otago found support neither for the bank, nor for the improved communications and at the 1856 session Mr. John Cargill objected to Otago's subsidizing a steamer from which she received no benefit. (1) Illustrative of the state of communications, it took two months for the Otago members to reach Auckland for the first session of the General Assembly, while in 1856 it was quicker, and cheaper, to return to Dunedin via Sydney!

At the 1856 session of the General Assembly the so-called "compact" transferred the administration of land and its revenues to the Provinces. Thus Otago was assured of her land revenue and her land regulations became law. These regulations were liberal and comprehensive and Otago's slow but steady development became more rapid. Capital flowed into the Province, and

(1) New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 1856-8 p.106
agriculture and pastoralism developed rapidly. The Provincial Government's immigration schemes were bringing labourers, so that it was possible to extend public works. The introduction by Macandrew of steam communications between Melbourne and Port Chalmers in 1858(1) gave a great impetus to trade, for there was a vast demand in Victoria for agricultural products following the gold rushes. There was a great increase in the wealth of Otago, in 1859 her land revenue was the largest in New Zealand, immigration continued, commerce was expanding, capital looking for investment and a period of steady agricultural and pastoral development seemed to be opening up.

Into this dropped the bombshell of the gold discoveries. The population of Otago, which had been 8,899 in 1859, was 30,000 by the end of 1861; the import trade increased from £325,000 in 1860 to £844,000 in 1861(2) The Province was developing at "railway speed" and with this tremendous growth was an increasing dissatisfaction with the General Government.

At the 1858 session of the General Assembly, the Ministry took the opportunity offered by the absence of the Wellington members to pass the new Provinces Act. Otago's only representative, Captain Cargill, tenaciously fought the measure. To Otago it was a matter of more than purely theoretical concern, for the settlers of the Murihiku District had already petitioned the General Government for erection into a separate district. (3)

(2) The Witness 12 April 1862
(3) Petition tabled in House of Representatives 12 May 1858
and it would only be a matter of time before they had the requisite European population. The Provincial Council and the settlers united behind the Superintendent in condemning the Act, which they interpreted as a deliberate attempt to weaken the strong Provinces, and they looked for its repeal at the next session.

Separation was in the air during the 1850's, Victoria broke away from New South Wales in 1850, followed by Queensland in 1859 and Natal had broken away from the Cape in 1848. Auckland agitated for separation in an attempt to maintain her distinctive character and economic and social position and did so whenever the southern members of the General Assembly threatened to move the seat of government from Auckland. (1)

Against this background the movement in Otago for Middle Island Separation began. Middle Island Separation was no new idea, as early as October 1853 Henry Sewell suggested in a private letter that if Auckland held out for the seat of government, the Middle Island would choose to separate, as a necessary evil. (2) Until late 1861, however, the suggestion was not seriously taken up in Otago.

In this essay I propose to explore the origins and early growth of the Separation movement in Otago, who, if anyone, originated the movement and why and when it became a live issue, actively supported by the people.

(1) e.g. Southland News 19 April 1862
(2) Political Pamphlets Vol. 27
5. **EARLY STIRRINGS**

In 1860, as in earlier years, Otago was chiefly concerned with local affairs. There was little interest in either Provincial politics or in the affairs of the General Government and the interests of the community were reflected in the newspapers, The Witness, and The Colonist.

Otago eagerly followed the movement for separation in the Murihiku District, the separation meeting in Invercargill and the adoption of the petition. The settlers thought that the Otago Provincial Council would have to carry out the promised improvements, to prevent the dismemberment of the Province.

Affairs of wider than Provincial interest, however, were not neglected. The coming session of the General Assembly was considered with interest and regarded as a struggle between "the rival principles of entire centralization and rational provincialism". The great principle behind the measures Mr. Stafford's Ministry would introduce would be the overthrow of provincialism, already weakened by the New Provinces Act, and the establishment of a centralizing policy. Should this occur it would perhaps be advisable to separate the two islands in legislative function, each with a Governor and Government of its own. Should Mr. Sewell make a bid for power, this separation of the two islands was his trump card - the best possible thing.

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(1) e.g. Witness 24 March 1860
(2) Colonist 6 April 1860
(3) Witness 8 Sept. 1860
(4) Witness 16 June 1860
(5) Colonist 17 Feb. 1860
(6) Witness 18 Feb. 1860
that could happen to the Southern Island, or at least a choice of evils, because the North Island had recklessly squandered their public funds, a war was possible in Taranaki and the bankrupt Northern Province had hinted their intention of upsetting the financial arrangements of 1856 and of seizing the Southern land funds.\(^1\) Wellington would of course oppose this division in order to prevent her being left to fight her battles with Auckland alone. It was thought, however, that the Stafford Ministry would moderate its extreme centralism and aided by the divisions within the opposition, would retain office.

Mr. Sewell's proposal was not considered very seriously and provincial opinion at the time was best summed up:

"The time will come, and possibly it is not very far distant, when a central Government will manage the affairs of the whole colony better than the provinces independently could do; or rather two Central Governments, one for the Northern and one for the Middle Island might do it; but that time has not arrived."\(^2\)

Feeling in Otago against the new Provinces Act had not diminished, the act was regarded as "involving the subversion of the constitution of New Zealand"\(^3\) and unless it was repealed, the Provinces would not only be divided but reduced to mere municipalities. The settlers were also most dissatisfied with the General Government's continued neglect of communications,

\(^1\) Witness 24 March 1860

\(^2\) Colonist 17 Feb. 1869

\(^3\) Witness 16 June 1860
and neglect to make better arrangements for the administration of justice in Otago. Mr. Gillies, Otago's only representative at the General Assembly in 1860, in spite of strenuous efforts, failed to gain the repeal of the New Provinces Act. He was more successful with regard to the administration of justice, the House carried a resolution that the administration of justice was sufficiently provided for without the establishment of District Courts, as they were then constituted. (1)

(1) N.Z. Parlt. Debates 1858-60 p. 756
II THE IMPETUS GIVEN BY GOLD

At the end of 1860 and the beginning of 1861, all attention was naturally directed towards Macandrew, the Superintendent, and his juggling with the Provincial Finances and suspected frauds.

Local affairs assumed even greater importance after the discovery of gold at the Lindis Pass in March 1861 and then at Gabriel's Gully in June. Gold became the chief topic of conversation - the likelihood of fresh discoveries, the size and richness of the deposits, the regulation of the gold fields and especially what gold might mean to the future of the Province. (1)

Otago was unanimously in favour of the principle of maintaining provincial control of provincial matters and the members elected to the General Assembly in 1861 were all pledged to oppose a centralizing policy. Thus the news of the fall of the Stafford Ministry was received with pleasure in Otago. (2)

Mr. Gillies resolution of the previous session had borne fruit for the District Courts were abolished and a judge was to be appointed for Otago and Southland, and a Resident Magistrate for the goldfields, both of which Otago urgently required. (3)

The General Assembly, however, had refused to grant Otago and Canterbury £2,000 p.a. to establish direct steam communications with Australia, while approving the grant of £3,000 p.a. to Auckland for the same purpose. (4) Once again, efforts to amend or repeal the New Provinces Act had failed and steam

(1) e.g. Witness 27 July 1861
(2) Colonist 16 Aug. 1861
(4) N.Z. Parlt. Debates 1861-3 p.228; Witness 24 Aug. 1861
communications still not improved, and thus two main Otago grievances were not remedied.

An article from *The Nelson Examiner* entitled "Separation from the Northern Island" was printed by the Otago newspapers. This article speculated on Governor Grey's policy to deal with the native war, and only dealt with separation in the final paragraph:

"Finally, should an Auckland and Wellington Ministry seek to drag us into an engagement we disapprove and repudiate, we must withdraw from the connection altogether. We, the settlers of the Middle Island, have no personal interest in the dispute or any other feelings respecting it, although our narness to the scene of action may make them more lively, which we do not entertain in common with the colonists of Tasmania or the Cape of Good Hope, and we could not prove this more effectually to the somewhat obtuse perceptions of those at a distance than by moving for a separation."

Public opinion in Otago had supported the Taranaki settlers and her members at the General Assembly had voted in favour of the war. The only spark this article struck was that although the Middle Island had no direct interest in the success of the war, yet it was willing to share the expenses.

Another article from *The Nelson Examiner* appeared entitled "Union or Separation of the Islands of New Zealand".

(1) Witness 7 Sept. 1861
(2) Witness 17 March 1860
(3) Witness 2 Nov. 1861
It stated that it was clear that the interests and fortunes of the two islands were very dissimilar and that their future developments would be no less unlike. Two great differences were mentioned, climate and natural productions, and the presence of "a large population of a barbarous people" in one island and not in the other. The gold discoveries also constituted an important difference. The article concluded:

"While these great and manifold differences exist between the islands of New Zealand, the question arises.... why are we both of us fractions of the same political unit, subject to the same authority, governed by the same laws? .... The case may be briefly summed up thus; the progress of a colony of Englishmen will be very different from that of a colony half Englishmen, half savages..... The financial aspect of the case ... do we gain or lose money, what do we get as an equivalent? ... Now the revenue of this island is rapidly passing and will still more rapidly pass and exceed that of the Northern Island ... we are paying hundreds of thousands of pounds for a state of things which hardly affects us at all...."

Separation was not advocated in so many words, but there was to be a following article, which was not printed in the Otago papers. Although these two articles were printed, the first attempt to analyse the differences between the two islands, which indicated a certain amount of interest in the question of Separation, Otago was more interested in the goldfields and their future, and land and immigration. Dissatisfaction with the General Government had not abated - the postal communications or rather the lack of them, were a constant source of irritation,
although Otago had paid her share for the steamer, it sometimes
did not come as far south.\(^1\)

Then, suddenly a strongly worded editorial entitled
"Separation" appeared in The Colonist\(^2\)

"The resumption of the Governorship of New Zealand by
Sir George Grey, is likely to have a double influence..... upon
the question that largely concerns the future well-being of the
colony, the separation of the Northern and Southern Islands."
The South could not desert the North while she was fighting
and once peace came Grey might not want to divide the colony;
which would involve loss of prestige. Grey might, however,
sacrifice private feelings to public policy and prefer to
associate himself with separation. Not only were the climate,
resources and people of the two islands totally dissimilar, but
wool was the principal export of the colony and in the three
months ending June 1861, the South Island had exported £163,036
worth, while the North only £66,257. Gold was not taken into
consideration because separation was wanted without regard to
its permanance.

America was referred to: ".... New Zealand has a
frightful example before her, by which to take warning... New
Zealand has many points of resemblance with the United States.
The Southern Federal Provinces have different interests to those
of the Northern, and day by day..... the separation will widen,
the differences become greater..... the break between the north

\(^1\) Witness 23 Nov. 1861

\(^2\) Colonist 25 Oct. 1861
and the south must become widened, as the latter sees its revenue devoted to purposes only affecting the former."

The editorial spoke in terms of actual warfare:

"An additional tax to swell an unequally expended revenue resisted by the south, will be the signal for aggression by the north; and the fire of discord once lighted up, the descendants of the early New Zealand settlers may forget all the traditions of past associations, and enter into a fratricidal war.... united action must be taken by the Southern Provinces and the agreement entered into, to leave the seat of Government to the imperial authorities .... Surely the Crown that permitted the separation of Queensland and New South Wales will not refuse the same to the islands that compose the colony of New Zealand."

When *The Colonist* next took up the Separation question(1) it was in a more moderate vein. The defects of the Constitution were considered with reference to Otago, who wanted money for public works. The Governor was refusing his assent to ordinances for any or no reason, and the distance from Auckland, with only monthly communications, was an added trial when Otago was increasing at such a rate, and when events of the greatest importance calling for immediate action might occur at any moment. A fundamental alteration in the Constitution would remove this objection. The Provincial System was regarded unfavourably but as long as the two islands were united, would have to be maintained. Should, however separation be attained,

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(1) *Colonist* 15 Nov. 1861
they might have a strong united Central Government and to this would be attracted the ablest and best men who were neglecting public duties because of the enemies they would make. This last argument in favour of separation was hardly realistic, for be it a General or a Provincial Government, the public figure still makes enemies.
III  THE  FIRST  DAILY  NEWSPAPER

Early in November 1861, The Otago Daily Times was established with Julius Vogel as editor. Vogel had just spent nine years in Victoria and had seen the immense strides that State had made since its separation from New South Wales in 1850. The Otago Daily Times straightway became the supporter of separation, taking up the cause mildly at first. The future fortune not only of Otago, but of the whole of the Middle Island, was deeply interested in the question of separation. The two islands had nothing in common, the South enjoyed immense returns from land, the North did not, and the customs revenues from Otago alone would exceed those of the whole North Island within a few months. The union of the two islands was considered in every way unequal, the Northern Island gained advantage in every way, the Southern no benefits. (1)

Soon the issue was taken up more strongly, an editorial of The Otago Daily Times (2) was very reminiscent of that of the Colonist of 25th October. It referred to Governor Grey's double purpose of putting an end to the war, to be followed by the destruction of the Provincial Governments and the consolidation of New Zealand into one powerful state. The editorial continued:

"For the present the Middle Island has nothing to do but watch what is passing, but when the war question is settled, an agitation of the strongest character must be got up to enforce

(1) The Otago Daily Times 16 Nov. 1861
(2) O.D.T. 18 Nov. 1861
a separation........ Let the Middle Island be only firm, united, and determined and Sir George Grey, seeing that he could not stem the tide, would go with it and himself become the father of Southern New Zealand."

Thinking on the subject was changing; the end of the war became the time when separation must be pressed because it was feared that as the North Island would have exhausted her land funds and would therefore covet those of the South, Grey would yield to pressure and abolish the Provinces.

The question of a quarrel between the General Government and Otago loomed large. While many settlers considered it fashionable to blame the local government for its slowness and dullness, The Otago Daily Times considered the General Government equally to blame. The delay of many reforms urgently required - in providing wharf accommodation, the inadequate facilities of the Post Office, the non-appointment of the commissioners on the goldfields to the Commission of Peace - could all be attributed either to the apathy or to the deliberate policy of the General Government. They believed the purpose of the General Government to be, "the destruction of the Provincial Governments and the establishment of one general government", but this must not be permitted until separation was granted to the South. It was hoped that the Provincial Council would be alive to the dignity of the Province and vehemently protest against all General Government encroachments. (1)

When the Provincial Council was prorogued, the supporters

(1) O.D.T. 28 Nov. 1861
of separation considered it "blameworthy in the extreme" that
the Council had neither expressed an opinion as to the conduct of
the General Government, nor affirmed the expediency of a sepa-
ration between the two islands. (1) They added:

"We mistake public feeling if the interests at stake
(between the Provincial and General Governments) will not be
found sufficient to unite all parties in seeking the only
effectual remedy in a complete separation from the Northern
Island." (2)

In early December 1861 a Dispatch from Governor Grey to
Earl Grey was printed. (3) In this Dispatch of 16th March 1848,
before the arrival of the settlers, Grey stated that he consider-
ed Otago well adapted for occupation by British settlers, and
continued:

"The distance of this part of the Middle Island from
Wellington leads me, however, to apprehend that the early
settlers at Otago and its vicinity will experience considerable
disadvantage from the remoteness of the seat of Government,
which would be situated in the Northern Island. I would there-
fore suggest ..... that should there be any probability of a
large number of settlers proceeding to Otago, it would greatly
promote their prosperity ..... if Her Majesty would authorize me
to proclaim a third Province in the New Zealand Islands."

This Dispatch was seized upon as advocating Middle Island

(1) e.g. O.D.T. 14 Dec. 1861
(2) Colonist 20 Dec. 1861
(3) O.D.T. 7 Dec. 1861; Witness 14 Dec. 1861
Separation, Sir George Grey was hailed as the first Separationist - he would have to eat his own words, or grant separation. In point of fact, this was not what Grey advocated. He would have erected a third province certainly, but only with a Lieutenant-Governor and still subject to central control. The Otago separationists, however, proceeded to make the evidence fit the case.

The Otago Daily Times considered the imperial policy that colonies were to pay for their own wars and the right of the Colonial Ministers to recommend war when the Imperial Government had to pay for it, was questioned. Following this line of argument:

"What right has the Northern Island of New Zealand to enter into hostilities, the cost of which will fall on the Middle Island? The two islands are as much separate by opposite interests, objects and pursuits, as is New Zealand from the mother country... Why should the north have the power of drawing the wealth of the south to serve the mere greed of territorial acquisition?... the war at an end (the Middle Island) should be allowed to wash its hands of the future struggles that are always likely to arise. (1)

It was thought that the North Island should have no wealthy neighbour to fall back on, and that the imperial authorities were correct, the North should learn the lesson of self-helpfulness. While correct to say that the Maori wars did not directly concern the South Island, it was hardly possible

(1) O.D.T. 7 Dec. 1861
to conclude that the two islands were as much separate by interests, objects and pursuits as New Zealand was from the mother country.

At the end of December 1861 and the beginning of 1862, two isolated letters appeared in *The Otago Daily Times*, both signed Electio. The first, of 28th December, advocated separation because of the General Government's neglect and the difficulty of doing anything without their consent, but separation on terms liberal to the General Government and honourable to Otago. The relative positions of Auckland and Otago, compared with Sydney and Melbourne, were used as a further argument in favour of separation. The second letter, of 4th January, stated:

"... that public opinion is unanimous for separation, and for a Government which will consider Otago as its principal care and the promotion of the interest of the Province its first duty, is not to be contradicted. The only matter of discussion is how to obtain the end desired? .... It seems to me that a public meeting, called for the purpose of considering the question would given an opportunity to collect and disseminate public opinions..... and however small the present effect of the public meeting, I am confident that whenever it may take place, from it will date the institution of measures which will place Otago in the distinguished position its natural advantages fit it to occupy."

In early 1862 an article from the Auckland *New Zealander*, on separation, was printed; (1) a fairly balanced argument against

(1) O.D.T. 10 Jan. 1862
it on the grounds of expediency and temporary prosperity. Otago
admitted there was no cry for separation before the gold dis-
coveries but claimed the demand was based on principles, not
expediency.

"...The cold matter of fact practical is what the
people of the Province are dealing with just now, and we doubt
if the most gorgeous results that could be promised to follow
on separation would have the slightest inducement if it were
not that every day, every hour, people are reminded of the evil
consequences of their connection with the Northern Island...
the people .... are hourly brought in contact with abuses, the
redress of which is prevented by the distance from the seat of
government."(1)

The grievances were listed - postal arrangements,
customs departments, the absence of Justices of the Peace and
magistrates on the goldfields, the delay in harbour reclamation.

The Auckland article rankled, it was several times re-
futed and the people of Otago were rallied to the cause of
separation by the cry, "...(shall we be content to live) under
chains and fetters which bind us grovelling to the earth".(2)

The constitution was considered in early 1862(3), Otago
had no quarrel with a particular government but with the system
of government:

"...It would indeed be difficult to conceive any

(1) O.D.T. 12 Jan. 1862
(2) O.D.T. 13 Jan. 1862
(3) Witness 11 Jan. 1862
constitution more causelessly complicated, more hampered with unnecessary checks, more clogged with elements of delay and failure... the numerous representative bodies, acting independently and inharmoniously, neutralize, in a great measure, each other's influence, and thus the power is thrown into the hands of the Governor, who alone is capable of avoiding it...."

The Governor and his advisers had undue notions of the importance of the North Island, separation was therefore advocated as the only possible remedy, for then it might be possible to simplify the machinery of government. While thus putting forward the necessity of reform of government for all New Zealand the basic concern was selfish - for the South Island to be released from its unequal burdens.

In early February two articles were printed, (1) one from The Nelson Examiner and another from The Wellington Independent. The Wellington Independent put forward the grievances on which it assumed the Southern Separationists based their arguments: fear of losing the land fund, differences of interest between the two islands - gold as opposed to natives, the expense of the native rebellion and the distance from the seat of Government. The Colonist admitted these as the real grounds, but denied that they were not sufficient cause to demand separation, and also agreed with the suggestions of The Nelson Examiner, that if financial arrangements were made more equitable, and the means of prompt and vigorous local government provided - a Lieutenant-Governor with sufficient powers aided by a local board - Otago would be satisfied. A fortnight later, however, separation had become

(1) Colonist 7 Feb. 1862
"an inevitable necessity"(1)

By the middle of February the supporters of separation considered that the second stage in the move for separation had been reached. The first stage:

"...we look upon as firmly established in the minds of the people the belief that separation is for the advantage of the community, and the desire to see it carried out."(2)

The second stage was the means by which separation might be achieved. The difficulties of a General Government majority against it, local jealousies preventing co-operation and the charge that Otago sought separation in order to be made the seat of Government, were promptly dismissed. What was required was organization and the methods advocated were those earlier put forward by The Otago Daily Times(3) and Electric - a public meeting at which resolutions in favour of separation would be adopted and a committee appointed; this committee should be supplied with funds, and should seek the co-operation of the other Provinces; then the throne should be made aware of the demand. With firm and systematic organization, it was suggested that the colony could achieve separation within a year.

Discontent in Otago in early 1862 was further fanned by the General Government's proposals concerning the mail service. Otago was justifiably concerned, there were innumerable letters from private citizens and complaints from the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce(4) for the General Government wanted to assume

(1) Colonist 21 Feb. 1862
(2) O.D.T. 17 Feb. 1862
(3) e.g. O.D.T. 6 Dec. 1861
(4) e.g. Colonist 4 March 1862; O.D.T. 28 Feb. 1862
control of the service and to establish a bi-monthly mail communication between Otago and Melbourne. Otago would thus have to depend on the good faith of the General Government for any communication, and what faith they had in such intentions was further shaken by reports of Mr. Ward's activities after his conference in Dunedin - he had broken his solemn promise.

Believing himself unable to attend the 1862 session of the General Assembly, Mr. Dick (1) had resigned, but stood again, his candidature being contested by the Superintendent, Major Richardson. At the meeting to call for nominations, Mr. Kettle (2) asked Mr. Dick whether he was favourable to a conditional separation of the Middle Island of New Zealand from the Northern Provinces. Mr. Dick replied that he was, while Major Richardson would not promise to agitate for separation and certainly not until the native question was settled. Major Richardson's nomination was later withdrawn. That such a question was put to the candidates supports The Colonist's claim (3) that Otago would not be content with members who would not come forward prepared to support separation. The newspaper agitators had found substantial public support.

Towards the end of March (4) a new idea was put forward in favour of separation. Because the two islands were so dissimilar, Provincialism had flourished and each man felt for one isolated spot of New Zealand and not for the whole country.

(1) Thomas Dick: Auctioneer and General Agency, active in politics, a member of the Provincial Council since 1859 and popular leader.
(2) Charles Kettle: Original surveyor of Otago, took up politics in 1860, high principles but usually opposed to public opinion.
(3) Colonist 14 Feb. 1862 (4) O.D.T. 24 March 1862
Thus separation, with an Imperial Representative in each colony would have the effect of enlarging the colony in which one felt oneself interested. This too argument was not advocated again in the period studied.

The view that there was scarcely a person acquainted with the subject who did not favour separation and all the earlier arguments in favour of immediate agitation and action were repeated in a letter to The Colonist; signed Edward de Carle. This letter, and those of Electic, were the only ones concerned with separation, for the rest local affairs, like the deplorable condition of the roads and the water supply, were the all absorbing topics.

The supporters of separation never tired of reiterating Otago's grievances, especially the disparity in the financial arrangements. The total custom revenue of the North Island was £120,000, of the South £230,000, of which Otago contributed £160,000. Under the "compact" the Provinces contributed 3ths to the General Government, Otago's share would therefore be £100,000 and the Middle Island £144,000. In other words, the Middle Island would be bearing the brunt of General Government expenditure. In addition to this, it was feared that the General Government had its eye on Otago's export duty on gold and the General Government had announced its intention of taking control of the Police Force. Otago had admirably organized her goldfields and the police force were adequately in control.

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(2) O.D.T. 7 April 1862

(3) O.D.T. 12 April 1862

(4) O.Prov. C. V & P Session XV p.4
Any reorganization necessitated by the General Government's action would result in disorders. Thus this action was seen as spite, as was the fact that Otago had to pay for troops stationed at Dunedin, while those stationed at Auckland were paid from the General Government's funds.

During the years of growing discontent with the General Government, the Provincial Council as reported in the newspapers and recorded in its own publications, had made no move towards separation. Of dissatisfaction there was plenty and it grew as Otago's prosperity grew and it was felt that Otago was not receiving attention to her just demands. The Provincial Council, like the community as a whole, was naturally more interested in public works, post offices and mail services, land regulations and immigration and the many affairs of local importance. Then in April 1862 Mr. Dick gave notice that he intended introducing certain resolutions for the Provincial Council to consider in committee.\(^{(1)}\) The resolutions were in favour of Middle Island Separation and listed the grievances of Otago and the differences between the two islands. The Council was to forward a Memorial to the Queen embodying these resolutions. Before the appointed day, however, Mr. Dick was called upon to form the new Provincial Ministry and asked leave for the motion to drop, he would bring it up in the future when he had more time to consider it. Thus separation was considered, even by Mr. Dick, not of such importance that it could not wait.

By early May even the conservative *Colonist*\(^{(2)}\) thought

\(^{(1)}\) *Witness* 26 April 1862 (not recorded in *O. Prov. C. V. & P.*)

\(^{(2)}\) *Colonist* 3 May 1862
separation the only practical solution to the problem of Otago's distance from the seat of Government, although they hoped that separation would not be agitated on selfish financial grounds, but on the real difference of the native question and war and their resulting cost!

On 10th May the public meeting, so long agitated by the press as the beginning of a new era in the history of Otago, took place. It was greeted enthusiastically by the press as the beginning of a new era in the history of Otago, a white letter day, and the first public and practical blow for separation. The Otago Daily Times of that morning listed the resolutions which it was presumed the meeting would consider - they were word for word those which were adopted:

"That the proper government of the Middle Island of New Zealand from a seat of Government in the North Island, at all times inconvenient, was now, from the vast increase of the European Population in the Middle Island an impossibility."

"That justice to the British colonists of the Middle Island ... demands that legislation and administration for their interests which are so dissimilar to those of the North Island, should not be, as hitherto, tramelled by and subordinated to considerations of a native policy with which the Middle Island has no immediate connection."

"That this meeting considers that the only remedy for the evils referred to in the foregoing resolutions is the separation of the two islands, and they having a Government and Governor permanently resident in the Middle Island and that this separation should be effected upon terms consistent with the honourable fulfillment by the Middle Island of all public lia-
bilities to which it is now a party."

"That a subscription be opened to raise the necessary funds for carrying out the agitation for separation to a successful issue."

"That a committee to consist of ..... be appointed to enlist the co-operation of the other Provinces of the Middle Island of New Zealand, and by means of the press, meetings, deputations, delegates, publications, petitions and otherwise as they consider expedient, to use every effort to obtain a separate Government for the Middle Island."

At the orderly, attentive and enthusiastic meeting between 900-1000 men were present - the total adult male population of Dunedin was 3,525(1) Prominent citizens were present, members of the Provincial Council and General Assembly, merchants and lawyers, whose support of such a cause would not be lightly given. The first resolution was moved by Mr. Walker, a member of the Provincial Council and a leading and respected merchant and his seconder Mr. M'Landress extolled separation not merely for its own sake, but because the issue united the "new identity" with the Pilgrim Fathers.(2) Mr. Gilles, member of the General Assembly, proposed the second motion. He had previously fought against separation, but now advocated it because he was convinced that it had become a matter of necessity and justice, it was necessary for the good government of the islands, an evil, but an evil involving some good. If the natives had been made

(1) Census December 1861, O. Provincial Gazette July-Dec. 1862 p.43

(2) In the early years of the settlement there was great opposition to the Scottish Free Church leaders, by an Anglican English minority - "the new identity".
amenable to British Government and laws, then there would have been no need for separation, because war would have been avoided and the seat of Government moved to a more central position. The question of governing the natives did not concern the Southern settlers and in justice, the interests of 55,000 natives should not dominate those of 60,000 whites. His advocacy of strong measures in preference to a "sugar and blanket" policy was greeted with loud cheers. The General Assembly spent two-thirds of its time legislating in the interests of the natives and Acts passed prevented the whites doing this and that, lest the natives take advantage of it. The Southerners must stand up for their rights as British subjects and should enjoy the benefits of British law untrammelled by the native policy.

Mr. Gillies speech was greeted with loud cheers, while Mr. Hildrich, who had the temerity to suggest that although the resolution should be supported, he did not understand what the native question had to do with it as the native policy concerned only the north, was overwhelmed by cries of 'Oh' and 'Shut up'! The chairman, Major Richardson, managed to restore order and enable the speaker to finish and sit down to the accompaniment of cheers and cries of derision. When Mr. Dick disagreed with Mr. Hildrich's suggestion, the meeting loudly shouted its approval.

Mr. Vincent Pyke, formerly of Victoria, seconded the third motion. The New Zealand Constitution reminded him of a complicated Chinese puzzle which he did not understand, but he believed separation a commercial question, that was why he supported it. Five-eighths of Otago's whole revenue went to
Auckland to prop up a rickety capital and what did Otago get in return? "An infinitesimal fraction of a Governor (laughter), an unknown quantity of a bishop (renewed laughter), and the occasional loan of a judge to hang our criminals ...", for which Otago paid £100,000 p.a. This last sally was greeted with roars of laughter and the remaining resolutions were passed unanimously, while those appointed to the committee were all prominent citizens who had actively supported separation.

Thus the enthusiastic meeting made the separation movement a reality with adequate organization and strongly supported by the people of Otago. This was only a beginning - there were further public meetings, a Southern Separation League was formed, debates and essay competitions were held, the movement which began that Saturday afternoon was to flourish in the future.
CONCLUSION

As the prosperity of Otago increased after 1856, and particularly after the discovery of gold in 1861, so did dissatisfaction with the General Government and its policy. Otago smarted under the New Provinces Act, the lack of adequate communications, the General Government's neglect to appoint a magistrate to the goldfields, the disallowance of the education ordinance, the necessity of paying for the troops stationed in Dunedin out of Provincial Revenue, and more particularly under the inequity of the distribution of the General Revenue.

This dissatisfaction remained no more than a plea for better government until Julius Vogel arrived in Dunedin in October 1861. He was the catalyst which reacted on the widespread discontent to produce the seeking for a remedy in the separation of the Middle Island.

I would go further than The Colonist, which said that the separation movement was "press-led", and say that it was "Vogel-led". The first editorial to deal thoughtfully with

(1) Burdon, R.M. Vogel - no mention of Vogel as the instigator of the movement - suggests he merely took up the cause for the sake of rousing opposition. McLintock A.H. History of Otago p. 557 calls the movement "Vogel's campaign", but implies that it was in existence before his arrival. Morrell W.P. The Provincial System of Government in New Zealand 1852-1876 p. 114 supports this view.
Woods N.S. The Life & Times of Sir Julius Vogel states that Vogel took up the cause of separation in 1862 and that he spoke to a deaf audience.
Gisborne W., Hocken T.M. - no suggestion of Vogel's instigation of the movement.
Middle Island Separation, in the Otago newspapers, occurred in *The Colonist* of 25th October, when Vogel was on that staff.\(^{(1)}\)

The early editorials of *The Otago Daily Times*, repeated those arguments used in *The Colonist*.

The editorials, particularly of *The Otago Daily Times*, by constant reiteration of the many real and supposed grievances supported by Otago under the yoke of General Government, vehemently stressed separation as the panacea until the idea fired the popular imagination and aroused and encouraged public support. By March 1862 such long-standing and prominent citizens as Mr. Dick and Mr. Kettle considered separation a campaign plank for the General Assembly, while the May meeting found the most respected citizens actively advocating Separation while the packed meeting loudly proclaimed their enthusiastic support. Within six months of Vogel's arrival, separation had become a publicly supported movement, a rallying cry urged on by an active committee, Otago indeed seemed "on the bridgeway to a great and glorious future under the golden shower".

\(^{(1)}\) Scholefield G.H. *Newspapers in New Zealand* p. 173
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
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<tbody>
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(The regrettable lack of manuscript material, for example...
the private letters and journal of Vogel or Dick, has unfortunately necessitated almost complete reliance on newspapers and their opinions.)