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CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE COLONISATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

By J. S. BATTYE, B.A., LL.B., Chief Librarian, Public Library, Perth.

(*Read on* 10*th September*, 1918, *by invitation of the Council.*)

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Although there is a certain amount of evidence which would lead to the belief that the existence of a continent to the south of the East Indies was vaguely known nearly four centuries ago, and there is definite evidence that Dutch voyagers touched at various points of the western coast of this great continent during the 17th century, no attempt was made to do anything in the way of establishing a settlement until the third decade of the nineteenth century, some 40 years after the erection of the penal colony at Botany Bay. That the Dutch made no attempt to exploit the resources of the new land was more than likely due to the fact that they were fully occupied in the task of securing wealth from their possessions in the East Indies, whilst the reason that no other nation had its attention directed to the possibilities for colonisation that might exist was possibly the secrecy with which the Dutch surrounded their discoveries. Some authority for this is to be found in the statement of the English Ambassador at the Hague in the time of Charles II., Sir William Temple, who gave it as his opinion that: "A southern continent has long since been found out," which he said was "as long as Java, and is marked on the maps by the name of New Holland, but to what extent the land extends either to the south, the east, or the west, we do not know." To the same authority we are indebted for the declaration that the Dutch East India Co. "have long since forbidden, and under greatest penalties, any further attempts at discovering that continent, having already more trade than they can turn to account, and fearing some more populous nation of Europe might make great establishments of trade in some of these unknown regions, which might ruin or impair what they have already in the Indies."

This statement has been vigorously denied by the Dutch, but the fact remains that of the voyages made by the Company little was known until the publication of the instructions issued by the Governor General of Batavia to Tasman on his second voyage in 1644. This curious document was found by Sir Joseph Banks in 1770 when turning over the old archives at Batavia, and was published by Sir Alexander Dalrymple in his Collections concerning Papua.

The Dutch voyages were followed from 1688 to 1818 by the English voyages of discovery and survey, notably those of Dampier,

Vancouver, Flinders and King, all of which brought back to England accumulative and definite information concerning the western coast of New Holland. Even with this information, however, in its possession, the British Government took no steps towards the foundation of a settlement on any part of this wide area. In all likelihood this was owing to the unsatisfactory reports on the new territory brought back by the navigators, who, confining themselves to the more or less uninviting coast line appear to have made little or no examination of the interior, and so to have missed the more fertile districts further inland. Another contributing cause may have been the fact that the population of the old country, depleted by the long Napoleonic wars, had not reached that congested state which made it necessary for the Government to further the establishment of new colonies as outlets for the surplus people. At the same time, private enterprise was scarcely likely to be attracted to the new country, as the only inducement in those days to leave the comforts of civilisation was the almost certain knowledge that fortunes, great in extent and rapidly gained, were to be secured by a few years exile.

All these excuses for the non-fulfilment of her destiny on the part of Great Britain appear to have, however, gone by the board when the suspicion entered into the minds of the British people that other nations, and more particularly the French, were contemplating new settlements in the South seas. It is impossible to ascertain how those suspicions arose, as an exhaustive examination of the policy of Napoleon fails to reveal any suggestion in his mind of Australian colonisation, and although during the long years of his captivity on St. Helena, Napoleon discussed very freely his projects, as well as his successes and failures, with those around him, no mention appears ever to have been made of any project of that character.

That the suspicion existed in the minds of the members of the British Goverment there is, however, ample evidence, and this suspicion had also communicated itself to the Directors of the East India Company, one of whom, the Hon. C. F. Greville, wrote to Brown, the naturalist of the "Investigator," in 1802, a letter in which he said: "I hope the French ships of discovery will not station themselves on the coast of New Holland."

In his "Recollections," Lord Russell states that during his tenure of the Colonial Office, a member of the French Embassy called upon him and asked what portion of Australia was claimed by Great Britain, to which he replied, "the whole." As Lord John Russell was Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1839 to 1841, it seems strange that that question should have been asked at that late period, but possibly the scientific researches of French navigators at the beginning of the century may have been present in the Frenchman's mind.

Again, the Earl of Ripon in 1833, with regard more particularly to Western Australia, said: "The present settlement at Swan River owes its origin, you may perhaps be aware, to certain false rumours which had reached the Government of the intentions of a foreign power to establish a colony on the west coast of Australia. The design was for a time given up entirely on the ground of public economy, and would not have been resumed but for the offer of a party of gentlemen to embark in an undertaking of this nature, at their own risk, upon receiving extensive grants of land, and on a certain degree of protection and assistance for a limited period being secured to them by this Government."

[It is now generally accepted that the French expeditions of the period had one of two objects in view, either the advancement of science or the discovery of the fate of La Pérouse.]

Having thus discussed shortly the attitude of the British mind towards French activities, let me turn more particularly to the causes which led to the colonisation of Western Australia, and which are to be found in the statement noted above made by the Earl of Ripon—Firstly, the fear of French annexation; secondly, the offer to colonise on the part of a syndicate.

It is not necessary to inform you that rumours existed early in the century that Admiral Baudin contemplated a settlement at Western Port in 1802, and that Freycinet, in 1818, had made an exhaustive examination of the north-west coast. In 1825 we find that a further French expedition, consisting of the "Thétis" and "Espérance," commanded by Bougainville and Du Camper, was cruising about the southern coasts, and this seems to have made General Darling, who towards the end of that year had assumed the governorship of New South Wales, anxious that some steps should be taken to deprive France of the chance of gaining a foothold on Australasian soil. Recognising that, in case of dispute, Great Britain would have difficulty in establishing her claim to the west coast, he wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies regarding the matter, and said: "It will not be easy to satisfy the French, if they are desirous of establishing themselves here, that there is any objection to their doing so on the west coast, and I therefore beg to suggest that the difficulty would be removed by a commission describing the whole territory as within the Government." (The territory of New South Wales, it may be mentioned, extended westward only to the 129° of E. Longitude.) On 1st March, 1826, the Secretary of State, Lord Bathurst, addressed two despatches upon the subject to Governor Darling, and, at the same time, wrote a more or less private and confidential communication. The first of these despatches instructed the Governor to commence immediate preparations for the formation of a settlement at Western Port, using whatever means he might think best. In the second despatch Darling was instructed to endeavour to procure correct information respecting the country im-

mediately adjoining Shark Bay, ostensibly for the purpose of establishing a base to which convicts, reconvicted of lighter crimes at Botany Bay, might be sent and "that possession may be gained of a port which it may hereafter be found important to have retained." In the private communication the Secretary says, "The sailing of two French ships on a voyage of discovery have (*sic*) led to the consideration how far our distant possessions in the Australian seas may be prejudiced by any designs which the French may entertain of establishing themselves in that quarter, and more especially on that part of the coast of New South Wales which has not as yet received any colonists from this country. I allude to that line of coast which extends to the westward from the western point of Bathurst Island in 129° E. Longitude. . . . . As this tract of shore is understood to be for the most part barren and devoid of all circumstances which could invite settlement, it is probable, if the French Government should entertain any serious intention of forming an establishment on that side of the continent, any island with so advantageous a port as Western Port would not be overlooked by them . . . . . In giving those instructions you will observe that I have carefully avoided any expression which might be construed, in the event of the instructions being hereafter referred to, as an admission of there not having been a preoccupancy by us before the French may have admitted to establish themselves there, and you will regulate your language accordingly. The establishment to be formed at Shark Bay is, as you are aware, partly for a different object, but it is equally necessary that our projects in that quarter should not be anticipated."

The advice to Darling to regulate his language probably explains why there was no public proclamation of any intention on the part of the Government to establish a settlement.

On the 11th March a further despatch was sent to the Governor asking him also to have an examination made of the country around King George's Sound, as it might possibly prove a better locality than Shark Bay. In all probability these despatches were forwarded by the same ship. At any rate, they were answered by Governor Darling on the 10th October, 1826, who stated that, in his opinion, King George's Sound was unsuited even for a penal settlement, and that Shark Bay was even worse, but that he would have an examination made and added, "The French would, therefore, find it difficult to maintain themselves at either of these places."

Immediately after the receipt of the instructions, the Governor took steps to have them carried out. Three sites for occupancy were determined upon, at Raffles Bay, Western Port, and King George's Sound, and the officers in charge of the three expeditions were confidentially advised "to avoid any expression of doubt as to the whole of New Holland being within this Government, any definition of it which may be supposed to exist under the designation of New South Wales being merely ideal, and intended only with a view of distin-

guishing the more settled part of the country. Should this explanation not prove satisfactory, it will be proper in that case to refer them to this Government for any further information they may require." They were also instructed that if a landing should have been already effected by the French, "You will, notwithstanding, land the troops agreeably to your instructions, and signify that their (the French) continuance with any view to establishing themselves or colonisation would be considered an unjustifiable intrusion on His Britannic Majesty's possessions."

These three expeditions, all of which numbered convicts amongst them, duly established themselves at the points mentioned, that at King George's Sound being founded on Christmas Day, 1826, and continued until March, 1831, when the convicts were withdrawn, and the settlement brought under the then new colony at Swan River.

Meanwhile, the arrival of the French corvette "L'Astrolabe," at Sydney, in December, 1826, after spending a month at King George's Sound, accentuated the fear of French annexation, and in Governor Darling's opinion made it still more necessary that some British settlement should be established on the west coast.

Fortunately, the opportunity of taking the initial steps towards that end was ready to hand. A settlement had been established at Melville Island on the north coast in 1824, which had, from the commencement, been a failure. In consequence, the Secretary of State instructed Governor Darling to send a war ship to the island for the purpose of removing the settlement to some more suitable site, preferably further to the east. When the despatch arrived it so happened that H.M.S. "Success," commanded by Captain Stirling, was lying in Sydney Harbour, and the Governor appears to have communicated the wish of the British Government to Captain Stirling in an unofficial way, as the first intimation we have upon the matter is in the form of two letters from Stirling to the Governor, in the first of which, dated 8th December, 1826, it was pointed out that the north-west monsoonal rains would interfere with the removal of the settlement at Melville Island until after April, while in the second dated December 14, Stirling suggested that instead of remaining in harbour until the following April, he should employ the time in making an examination of the Swan River. In the prosecution of these considerations, he says "Certain ideas have been suggested to me by professional observation, relative to the necessity of immediately seizing a possession upon the western coast of this island near Swan River." . . . He concludes his letter with this statement: "Finally, Sir, at a time when we have one French vessel of war with objects not clearly understood, and with one American vessel of war being also in this neighbourhood seeking a place for settlement, it becomes important to prevent them from occupying a position of such value, particularly as you were pleased to say that His Majesty's Government is desirous of not being anticipated in such views by any

foreign power." On the 18th December, the Governor forwarded a despatch to Lord Bathurst, stating that he had agreed to Captain Stirling's proposal "as it is of great importance that so advantageous a position should not be taken possession of by the French. . . . At the same time, if the French meditated a settlement in New Holland, Swan River, from the accounts given of it by Captain Stirling, should not be neglected."

In pursuance of these arrangements, Captain Stirling left Sydney on the 17th January, 1827, in the "Success" for the Swan River, with the ostensible purpose of making up the French survey deficiencies, and of thoroughly examining all the country within a reasonable distance of the river. He took with him Mr. Charles Fraser, who was at that time Colonial Botanist in New South Wales. The "Success" anchored off the south head of Swan River on the 6th March, 1827, and early on the morning of the 8th, Stirling proceeded to carry out the real objects of the expedition, which were "to proceed, if possible, to the source of the river, to examine the banks and the depth of water, to fix upon an eligible spot for the settlement, to ascertain the products of the country, the nature of the soil, and the practicability of forming a harbour for shipping."

For the purpose of fulfilling these instructions the ship's gig and cutter were provisioned for a fortnight and well armed, after which, under the command of Captain Stirling, they proceeded up the river. Mr. Fraser formed one of the party. No difficulties were met with until they reached the flats above Heirisson Islands (the site of the present Perth Causeway), where the water was too shallow to float the boats, which had to be unloaded and drawn across. After that the way was tolerably easy, and on the 13th they arrived at what they deemed to be the source of the river.

"At daylight on the 13th," says Captain Stirling, "we were as usual in motion, and observed little variation in the appearance of the land as we ascended, except that the hills on the banks were higher and more frequent, and the soil upon them of a coarser description. They are here composed of a red sandstone, red clay, and an ochry loam, varying between red, brown, blue, and yellow. The soil on the lowlands continued as good as ever. About an hour before starting we had the misfortune to stave the cutter on a sunken tree; lead and fearnought, however, speedily effected a cure, and we continued to pursue our course amid increasing difficulties from similar obstructions, and from the decreasing width of the stream. The hills around us were high, and we ascended them with ease, but it was in vain that we sought a view of the country; we were the more disappointed because its character was evidently changing. At length, after several halts, we reached, about 11 o'clock, a spot where the river takes an eastern direction, just above a considerable creek on the left hand. We there found insurmountable obstructions to our further progress, in fact, we have reached the termination

Far beyond this there was the bed of a torrent, but no longer a river, nor even a continuation of water except in a succession of distant parts. Here, then, on a high bank we pitched our tent. The richness of the soil, the bright foliage of the shrubs, the majesty of the surrounding trees, the abrupt and red-coloured banks of the river occasionally seen, and the view of the blue summits of the mountains from which we were not far distant, made the scenery round this spot as beautiful as anything of the kind I had ever witnessed."

During the course of the trip two gardens were planted about 15 miles up the river, and after some trouble friendly intercourse was established with the natives. The soil along the banks was ex-examined and an abundance of fresh water found. An ascent of the hills, to which the name General Darling Range was given, was made by Mr. Fraser. The cutter then returned to the ship, leaving the gig, with Lieut. Belches in charge, to make a hurried examination of a tributary river (the Canning), to which the French had given the name of Moreau Inlet. After her return the crew of the frigate was employed surveying the islands of Rottnest, Berthollet (now Carnac), and Buache, as well as the adjacent rocks. On Buache a garden was planted (from which probably the present name, Garden Island, was derived), and some cattle and sheep left there. The "Success" sailed for Geographe Bay on March 21. Here Stirling remained until the 25th, when he set his course for King George's Sound, which was reached on April 2. He remained at the settlement, which did not come up to his expectations, until two days later, when he left for Sydney, arriving in Port Jackson on the 15th of the same month, having been absent about three months.

So far as their reports go, both Captain Stirling and Mr. Fraser seem to have been greatly impressed with the possibilities of the newly-examined country. The latter, who had certainly greater experience in judging, was, if possible, the more pronounced in his good opinion, and there is no doubt that his opinion was largely relied upon when the question of colonisation was under discussion. In concluding his report upon the natural history, soil, etc., of the Swan River district, he says: "In delivering my opinion on the whole of the lands seen on the banks of the Swan, I hesitate not in pronouncing it superior to any I have seen in New South Wales eastward of the Blue Mountains, not only in its local situation, but in many existing advantages which it holds out to settlers, viz.:—

(1.) The evident superiority of the soil.

(2.) The facility with which settlers can bring their farms into a state of culture from the open state of the country, the trees not averaging more than ten to the acre.

(3.) The great advantage of fresh water springs of the best quality, and consequent permanent humidity of the soil—two advantages not existing eastward of the Blue Mountains.

(4.) The advantage of water carriage to their own doors and the non-existence of impediments to land carriage.

These favourable reports so impressed General Darling that he forwarded, on April 21st, 1827, a despatch in which he strongly advised the Home Government to establish a settlement at Swan River as quickly as possible. In this despatch he points out: "As Captain Stirling's visit to Swan River may attract attention and the report find its way into the French papers, it appears desirable, should His Majesty's Government entertain any intention of forming a settlement at that place, that no time should be lost in taking the necessary steps."

Stirling's report and the Governor's despatch appear to have been conveyed to England by Stirling in person, and were forwarded by the Colonial Office to the Admiralty for an opinion in regard to the formation of a settlement at Swan River. The Secretary to the Admiralty, whilst admitting the physical advantages detailed by Captain Stirling and Mr. Fraser, was of opinion that the anticipations of commercial intercourse with India were fallacious, and that it was questionable whether it was advisable to form a settlement on the west while so many millions of acres of rich country remained unoccupied on the eastern side. The report concludes with this statement: "No other motive, I conceive, than the political one of preventing other nations, as the French or Americans, of possessing themselves of the south-west corner of New Holland, should induce us to anticipate them; and even in the event of its falling into the hands of the one or other of these Powers, it would be a long series of years before they could give our other colonies much annoyance."

After consideration of the various reports and opinions dealing with the question, the Secretary of State for the Colonies wrote to Governor Darling on the 28th January, 1828, reviewing the adverse report from the Admiralty, and concluding: "Under these circumstances, I am of opinion that it would be inexpedient, on the score of expense, to occupy this part of the coast, and that it is unnecessary, with a view to any urgent interest to attempt any new settlement at present in that quarter. . . . . I shall not fail, however, to apprise the East India Co. of the circumstances attending the discovery of Swan River in case they should consider it advisable to make any settlements there, but I am not aware of any sufficient motive to induce them to embark in an undertaking of this nature."

Two days later another despatch was forwarded in which it was hinted that the same causes would probably induce the Government to withdraw the settlement which had been formed at King George's Sound, but that if it were finally decided to maintain that settlement, then, in all probability, the decision not to found a colony at Swan River would be reviewed. This decision was conveyed by the Colonial Office to Capt. Stirling, but it does not appear to

have dissuaded him from continuing his solicitations for the establishment of the new colony.

In May and June, 1828, the Earl of Dudley, Lord Palmerston, and Messrs. Grant and Huskisson retired from the British Cabinet and a reconstruction of Government followed, under which Sir George Murray replaced Mr. Huskisson as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, and Messrs. R. W. Hay and Horace Twiss became Under Secretaries. This last appears to have been to some extent a personal friend of Captain Stirling, and it was probably through him that Stirling was induced once more to approach the Government with the idea of forming a colony. On the 30th July, 1828, he addressed a long letter to the Colonial Office in which he said, *inter alia*, "The French, under the command of Monsieur Baudin, at the beginning of this century visited that shore (that is, Western Australia) and rendered an account of it more circumstantial, but equally unfavourable, as that of the Dutch. The report which I had the honour to make last year to His Majesty's Government differs so widely from that of the preceding Dutch and French navigators, that it will scarcely be believed that we undertake to describe the same country. For while they report the country as sterile, forbidding, and inhospitable, I represent it as the land out of all that I have seen in various quarters of the world that possesses the greatest natural attractions." He then went on to describe the character of the country, and concluded: "The above-mentioned recommendations point it out as a spot so eligible for settlement that it cannot long remain unoccupied. . . . as, by its position, it commands facilities for carrying on trade with India and the Malay Archipelago as well as with China, and as it is, moreover, favourably circumstanced for the equipment of cruisers for the annoyance of trade in those seas, some foreign power may see the advantage of taking possession should His Majesty's Government leave it unappropriated."

On the receipt of this letter, Stirling's original report was apparently looked up, and the whole question re-submitted to the Admiralty. The Secretary to the Admiralty, after a conversation with Captain Stirling, more particularly concerning the merits of Swan River as compared with King George's Sound, exhibited a complete reversal of the previous Admiralty opinion, and in reply to the Colonial Office (under date 2nd August) said: "I think there requires no hesitation in transferring the establishment at the former (King George's Sound) to the latter place (Swan River), and perhaps the sooner the better, as the publication of the chart containing so fine an anchorage, entirely overlooked by the French navigators, may induce that nation, or the Americans, who are prowling about for some detached settlement, to assume possession of the only spot on the western coast of New Holland that is at all inviting for such purpose, to which we could have no right to offer any resistance."

On the 21st August, Stirling forwarded another communication to the Colonial Office, in which he gives the first hint of the possibility of the formation of an association for the purposes of colonisation, and asks whether, under such circumstances, the association could secure a proprietary charter upon the principles similar to those adopted in Pennsylvania and Georgia. The Colonial Office and the Admiralty combined suggested that he should make further inquiries with regard to the question of an association, and that he did so is evident from a letter dated 22nd October, part of which reads: "But, notwithstanding this favourable inclination, objections are made against the enterprise at present, upon the following points. In the first place there is no information extant, under authority, either to the precise intentions of the Government, or of the nature of that territory, nor do any preparations exist there for the reception of settlers. In the second place, His Majesty's right to that country has never been declared, and as it is reported that the French Government contemplates the formation of a settlement in New Holland, the apprehension is entertained that an expedition proceeding there might find, on its arrival, the best positions occupied, and its aim defeated to the total ruin of the property engaged in it. . . . I take the liberty of suggesting that (the difficulties) may be obviated by despatching at once a ship of war to that quarter. Possession might thus be taken of the country, surveys commenced, and arrangements made for the reception of settlers." The latter suggestion bore immediate fruit, as on the 5th November, the Admiralty was instructed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to order the officer commanding the naval forces at the Cape to despatch one of the ships of war under his command, without loss of time, to the coast of New Holland, with directions to take formal possession in His Majesty's name, and with the further direction that the spot should be at, or near, the Swan River, and that uninterrupted possession be maintained until the arrival of further advices.

These instructions were immediately put in hand, and Admiral Schomberg, the Commander-in-Chief at the Cape, was instructed to detail H.M.S. "Tweed" for the purpose of carrying them out. A couple of days later it was found inadvisable to adopt that course, and the orders were revoked. At the same time, H.M.S. "Challenger," under Captain Fremantle, was despatched from London, and arrived at Cockburn Sound on the 2nd May, 1829. Formal possession was immediately taken by hoisting the British flag on Arthur's Head. Although this action set at rest the question of actual possession, there does not appear to have been, at that time, a definite decision to establish a colony forthwith. Such step was, however, decided upon within the following month, and was accelerated by the fact that Captain Stirling's suggestion to form a syndicate had taken definite shape in the meantime.

On the 4th November, 1828, a syndicate composed of Mr. Thomas Peel, Sir Francis Vincent, Mr. Edward Schenley, and Col-

onel T. Potter Macqueen, forwarded a memorial to the Secretary of State, offering to provide shipping for the purpose of taking out ten thousand persons within a period of four years, and to find these persons in provisions and necessaries allowed to immigrants. Further they would take to the settlement a thousand head of live stock, and have three small vessels running between Sydney and the settlement as occasion required. They estimated that the cost involved would be £30 per head, £300,000 in all, and in return, asked for land at the rate of one acre for every 1s. 6d. of that amount, or four million acres in all.

Acting upon what they considered to be a personal assurance of the Secretary of State that their proposal would be accepted, they proceeded to incur expense to the extent of £20,000 in purchasing a vessel and supplies. Then some inkling was received, apparently personally, as there is no correspondence upon the matter, that all was not well with their proposal, and, on the 2nd December, they wrote again to the Colonial Office asking for a written acceptance. Four days later they received a reply to the effect that their proposals would be accepted except as to the extent of land they would receive, the Government being prepared to allow only one million acres. Evidently this decision was not satisfactory to the members of the syndicate, who, one by one, withdrew from it, leaving Mr. Thomas Peel to carry the whole burden. He then decided to accept the Government's offer himself and made an attempt to carry it out. With the results of that attempt we are not concerned here, but it may be mentioned that the scheme was a complete failure from every point of view.

We are, however, concerned with the original syndicate's offer to this extent, that it seems to have been the one additional factor necessary in order to enable the Government to make up its mind, for we find that on the 12th November the Secretary of State for the Colonies addressed a letter to the Admiralty asking that a ship be provided for the purpose of conveying a detachment of troops and other persons to the western coast of New Holland "where it is intended to form a British settlement," and, on the 29th November, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Lord Hill, was asked to provide a detachment "to be held in readiness for embarkation for the western coast of New Holland, where His Majesty's Government judge it advisable to establish a British settlement." Judging from a letter, dated December 28th, Captain Stirling was personally informed that he was to be appointed to the command of the new settlement, but the formal appointment was not made until the 30th. On the following day the administrative establishment was appointed.

Although, as I have said, the proposal of the syndicate seems to have given just that additional weight necessary to tip the scale in favour of colonisation, the principal reason, according to the documentary evidence, was a recrudescence of the fear of French annexa-

tion, because we find that when the decision had been arrived at, and the arrangements completed, the Commissioners of the Treasury were asked to provide the necessary financial assistance on that ground alone. In a despatch from the Colonial Office to the Treasury, dated 31st December, 1828, we find the statement that: "Intimation having been received that the French Government are prepared to colonise some part of the west coast of New Holland, and especially that portion adjoining to the river lately explored by Captain Stirling, the Secretary of State has thought it expedient to send out that officer to form a small settlement in that quarter to which such persons may advantageously resort as may be desirous of establishing themselves in a climate as favourable as New South Wales, and a soil as promising, without the disadvantages which attach to a penal colony." Additional evidence of the fact may also be found in the despatch forwarded to Governor Darling of New South Wales on the 12th January, 1829. After drawing the Governor's attention to a previous despatch of January, 1828, in which he was informed of the grounds which induced the Government at that time to relinquish all idea of colonising the west coast of New Holland, the Secretary of State goes on to say, "Circumstances have since occurred to render the occupation of that position desirable."

This completes, so far as I am aware, the documentary evidence concerning the reasons which induced the British Government to establish a colony in Western Australia. From that evidence it seems to me to be abundantly clear that practically the only reason was the fear of French annexation, though it is doubtful whether that fear would have been sufficiently strong to cause the Government to come to a decision had there not been the offer of the syndicate. This proved that there were, in England, men of financial stability who were confident that a new colony on the west coast could be made successful. We may perhaps add to these reasons a further motive which seems to underlie all the correspondence, namely, the knowledge that existed in the minds of the members of the Government that one or two small settlements on the eastern side of this great island could not, according to the canons of international law, be deemed to be sufficient to enable Great Britain to successfully maintain a claim to the whole of the continent.

By Authority: FRED. WM. SIMPSON, Government Printer, Perth.