

correctness of his charts and sailing directions, which I have on several occasions been called upon to verify and trust to in navigating the squadron.

The difficulties encountered by Mr. Dawson, were chiefly owing to the excessive droughts that occurred in the years 1827, 1828, and 1829. In these years there was in some districts an entire, and in others a partial failure of the crops, while the pasture-grounds were all dried up.

At other times, continued rains would cause great floods; whole districts of country were overflowed; and along the rivers, not only stacks of grain, but the buildings, were swept away. From this it may be easily understood what difficulties the settlers of this country have to contend with. To these also are to be added the contests between the two parties, as to whether this shall remain a penal colony or become a free one.

It is only to be wondered that it should have continued to flourish, notwithstanding all the impediments it has met with from misrule and anarchy, growing out of a neglect to establish any well-combined system of policy in its early stages. The governors, for want of any positive enactments, were left free to adopt such measures as circumstances might dictate, and having their attention engrossed by the difficulties with which they were continually surrounded, were compelled to neglect the improvement of society, and took no pains to frame prospective regulations for the well-being of the colony.

In 1831, Governor Darling was superseded by Sir Richard Bourke. The country had, during the administration of his two predecessors, improved rapidly by the aid of convict labour. When the latter gentleman came into office, the policy of selling lands, instead of making free grants, was adopted; this was considered an important change for the colony.

The money arising from the sales of land was set apart by the home government, to be applied to the immigration of free settlers; but great complaints have been made that this fund has been diverted from the original object, or that a surplus remained in the government coffers unexpended. Labour is, in consequence, in the greatest demand in all parts of the colony, and the inconveniences of convict labour begin to show themselves. From what I could understand, the assignment system is getting into disrepute, and all the respectable settlers are now turning their attention to the moral condition of the colony. Strong representations have been made to the home government, and an act has been passed, by which New South Wales is no longer to be a penal settlement, and transportation thither is to cease. The