

1809

## SETTLERS TO VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH.\*

22 Feb.

May it please your Lordship, 22nd February, 1809.

Baulkham  
Hills  
settlers.

We, His Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, who voluntarily left the United Kingdom to settle with our families in this remote part of His Majesties' dominions, beg with all humility to state to your Lordship, in as concise a manner as possible, a transaction that took place in this colony on the 26th January, 1808, which we have ever disavowed, and held in the greatest abhorrence, notwithstanding the principal perpetrators boast of stiling it a revolution, as in fact it may be term'd nothing less.

Circum-  
stances of  
Bligh's  
arrest.

Major George Johnston (now Lieut.-Colonel) with Capt'n Kemp and other subalterns, with many soldiers, march'd up to and forcibly entered Gov't House, seizing the person of His Excellency Gov'r Bligh, annulling his authority with which he was invested by His Majesty, and dissolved the whole of the civil and ecclesiastical establishments, violently breaking open his desks, &c., and carrying with them his commission and all his other public and private papers; and on their return from hence Lieut.-Colonel Johnston, at the Gov'r's gate, inform'd the public that he had thought proper to put His Excellency the Gov'r-in-Chief under arrest, and take upon himself the command of the colony, and concluded by proclaiming martial law, while at that time we solemnly assure your Lordship the whole country was in the utmost tranquility. However, these unprecedented measures of the military created a consternation undescribable, no one knowing the cause that had led them to such extraordinary proceedings, or what might be their issue, and to this date, we are sorry to say, is still very uncertain.

Martial law  
proclaimed.Spirits  
bartered by  
officers.

It will be necessary to acquaint your Lordship in what state the country was in when His Excellency Governor Bligh took the command of the colony, in order to developpe this mysterious usurpation of the military over the established civil power, and thereby totally laying aside His Majesty's authority over this territory. During the time Gov'r King had the command the officers were indulged with great quantities of spiritous liquors, which they disposed of to individuals at enormous prices, with various other articles which they sold wholesale and retail, as also kept hawkers and pedlars travelling through the different settlements to dispose of their property, which was almost totally monopolized by those gentlemen. We know not whether they have His Royal Highness the Duke of York, the Commander-in-Chief's, permission for such purpose, nor neither do we pretend to know His Majesty's instructions to any of his Governors respecting them; but most certain it is, immediately after Gov'r King left the colony, His Excellency

\* At the time when this address was prepared, news had arrived from England that succours were at hand. The signatories were settlers at Baulkham Hills.

Gov'r Bligh began to establish a very different system by endeavouring tottally to suppress monopoly by the officers, or any other persons, and turn'd his attention to the encouragement of agriculture in this infant colony, which was in a very low state in his predecessor's time, as instead of encouraging he had almost tottally depress'd it, in many instances too tedious to trouble your Lordship with. Moreover, the people were become extremely idle, and under no regular subordination to their employers.

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Bligh as a reformer.

Thus, my Lord, under all those disadvantages, we vouch was the true state of the colony when His Excellency Gov'r Bligh assum'd the command, and we assure your Lordship, in our humble opinions, he deserves much praise, from his indefatigable perseverance and the laudable steps he took to reform the great abuses that had been suffered by his predecessor. Further, to elucidate this extraordinary event, Gov'r King had, with all other indulgencies to the principal officers and others, granted them large tracks of land, which your Lordship will see in the chart of the colony, presuming there is one in your Lordship's possession, which will fully prove our assertion.

Abuses under Governor King.

And that your Lordship may be more fully acquainted with some of their indulgencies, Mr. McArthur, who was formerly a captain in the New South Wales Corps, had been in England, and on his return brought with him a great quantity of spirits, and was suffered, in Gov'r King's time, to sell it wholesale at three pounds sterling p'r gallon, while a mercantile house establish'd here from India was ordered and compell'd to take spirits from hence that they had ship'd from this port, and which they offered to the public at large at the rate of six shillings p'r gallon, with six months credit, and take in payment the produce of their land, by the which proceedings your Lordship will be able to judge of the chicanery that has formerly been played upon the public in this obscure part of His Majesty's dominions.

Favouritism shown to Macarthur.

Mr. McArthur, we verily believe, had a principal hand in bringing about this revolution, as he not only seduced the officers but soldiers also (who taken collectively together, officers and men, are living in the most licentious manner imaginable). He was liberated from the county goal by the military a few hours previous to their deposing the Governor, where he was confined for trial for divers misdemeanours, and it is evident from all the circumstances attending the business, that he had predetermined to set at defiance all laws and lawful authority. He was one of the principals that march'd up to Government House to depose the Gov'r, and of committing other outrages on his person and property, and took upon himself the management of public affairs, affecting the same pomp as the Governor, riding with light horsemen after him, keeping a soldier to attend him at his house in the character of an orderly, &c., and publicly styling himself the Colonial Secretary,

Macarthur's influence over the officers and soldiers.

The management of public affairs.

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Addresses  
on Bligh's  
arrival.

from which we suppose he intended to vie with your Lordship in your official character as one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State. On the arrival of His Excellency Governor Bligh in this colony he, amongst his other effronteries, had the presumptive assurance to present him with a congratulatory address in the name of all the free inhabitants,\* and a very flattering one to Gov'r King, approving of his gov't, in their names also, without having ask'd or obtained one of their consents, which flattering address of Gov'r King's was, by public addresses from every district, flatly and positively contradicted, which reflected but little to Gov'r King or Mr. McArthur's honor either as presenter or receiver.

Conduct of  
the officers.

And indeed the shameful proceedings of the officers ever since the deposing of His Excellency the Gov'r-in-Chief but too fully evince the causes that led to their mutiny and rebellion against His Majesty's established lawful authority, as they have ever since engross'd the whole of the spiritous liquors, &c., selling them at unheard-off enormous prices, and making use of every mean artifice to impose upon and impoverish the public. Even His Majesty's stores they are rifling wholesale (which is intended for the use of the inhabitants in general), that they may make still further extortions upon the already almost ruined inhabitants. They in their rapacity are also seizing and bestowing upon their creatures great numbers of the public stock, some of whom two years ago was not master of a shilling, are now in possession of from twenty to forty and fifty head of cattle, besides extensive grants of land, which they also presume to dispose of.

Appropriation  
of  
stores and  
stock.Distribution  
of spirits by  
Bligh.

Thus your Lordship will see from the above what was the idol they sought after that induced them to act in open defiance of the laws. We hinted before that Gov'r Bligh made it his study to encourage and assist the industrious. He, therefore, in the distribution of spirits, &c., let every free inhabitant have a share according to the number of their familys or their deserts. To the cultivators he sent it to the nearest settlement to them, allowing them to pay it in grain into His Majesty's stores, which greatly gall'd those voracious vultures, seeing their usual means of monopoly and nefarious traffick likely to be ruined by the prudent, wise, and salutary measures that His Excellency had adopted and was determined to support. He also settled a plan, in conjunction with the Commissary, to supply the inhabitants of the distant parts of the settlement with the necessaries from His Majesty's stores at the nearest places to their abodes, which saves many of them a hundred miles traveling (and who had often, very often, in his predecessor's time been obliged without reason to return without them), which was a greater relief to the inhabitants than can possibly be conceived, unless your Lordship were actually on the spot.

Stores for  
the out-  
settlement.

\* See these addresses—vol. vi, pp. 165 and 166; and addresses of settlers on pp. 188 and 190, ib.

But, indeed, the whole of Gov'r Bligh's plans was ultimately calculated for the relief and promoting the prosperity and happiness of the people, the honor of His Majesty's service, and to add lustre and dignity to the United Kingdom. To sum up the whole, my Lord, Gov'r Bligh has endeared himself to the inhabitants by his tender regard for their welfare, his affable manner of receiving them and visiting them at their habitations, and humanely making minute enquiry into all their wants, noting them down and supplying them as far as possible.

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Prosperity  
under  
Bligh.

Therefore, my Lord, it was natural for us to be greatly agitated and enraged at those who had so degraded His Excellency in his high rank and station, as His Majesty's representative, and who threatened all with imprisonment and deprivation of all support and indulgence who did not acquiesce with them in their shameful mutiny and rebellion, which some of us have actually undergone, for daring to be loyal subjects to our most gracious and dread Sovereign, and supporting and vindicating his greatly and unjustly injured representative, who has been most cruelly and basely treated by those daring usurpers. But it would be intruding on your Lordship for us to give a full detail of all their base transactions, as we trust it will come from more able pens. At the same time, we thought it our duty not to be wholly silent on such a momentous subject.

Alarm of  
settlers.

Lieut.-Colonel Johnston, Mr. McArthur as Colonial Secretary, and their partisans, assumed and exercised every part of legislative authority—nay, they even dared to approach and profane the sacred altar of the church, by performing and officiating in all the sacred functions of the rituals of matrimony, which alone belong to the sacerdotal office. They held Courts of Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence, condemning and executing males and females, whilst, in the judgement of the public, they themselves are more criminal than those they condemned. They rul'd with a rod of iron for six months. Then followed Lieut.-Colonel Foveaux, who, by a proclamation he published, declared that it was beyond his authority to be a judge of the business, and that it must be left to His Majesty's Ministers, who alone were competent judges and able to decide,—which made us hope he would be a milder master than the Johnston and McArthur faction. But we was woefully mistaken, for he soon approved of all the inglorious actions the others had basely committed, and thrust us into gaol for daring to dissent from him in opinion, and took from us our labourers (who was indented to us) in the midst of harvest, leaving our crops to the mercy of the elements, to be destroyed by stock, or other depredations, our persons being shut up in cells in the county gaol at Sydney. He continued five months, when we was blessed with another Colonel and Governor of the New South Wales Corps (viz., William Paterson, Esq'r.), who has abated nothing of

The  
churches  
and law  
courts.Foveaux's  
administra-  
tion.

1809 the rigour of his predecessors—nay, even he has treated His  
 22 Feb. Excellency with greater indignity, dragging him from his house,  
 Paterson's treatment of Bligh. where he had been suffered to remain, under many guards, and  
 Bligh's projected departure. cram'd into a surgeon's barrack belonging to the military, and  
 now is upon the eve of being forc'd out of the colony; indeed,  
 we almost despair of his life from the brutal treatment he has  
 received at their hands. We assure your Lordship it is with the  
 greatest reluctance we part with him, as we shall never be relieved  
 from our anxious concern untill we hear of his safe arrival on the  
 British shore, where we humbly hope His Majesty will be pleased  
 to bestow upon him some distinguishing mark of his Royal munifi-  
 cence for the manifold and unjust sufferings he has experienced in  
 this unhallowed and ungrateful colony. And we, with all humility,  
 beseech your Lordship that you would vouchsafe to move His  
 Majesty, in his great goodness, graciously to be pleased to restore  
 him again as his representative in this territory, where a willing  
 people will be ready to receive him with acclamations of great joy.

Persecuted loyalists. We have much, my Lord, to dread in his absence by those our  
 military rulers, as they persecute with unremitting hand all who  
 have stood loyal to His Majesty and endeavoured to support his  
 and the nation's honor in this territory. Some of us are still in  
 gaol; and the aforementioned mercantile house, who have been  
 peculiarly loyal, they have annoyed in their shiping and otherwise  
 in the most base, mean, and malicious manner that only sordid  
 low minds could possibly be capable of.

The other side. We doubt not but that your Lordship is in possession of papers  
 of a different tendency from what we have related by the  
 faction, who sedulously brooded over and hatch'd them in the  
 following manner:—Just at the moment of going to Gov't House  
 to depose His Excellency the Governor, they contrived to have a  
 small number of their creatures (generally believed to be six)\*  
 assembled in a room, where they were (as is believed by Mr.  
 McArthur) presented with a paper purporting the deposing of the  
 Gov'r, which, when they found there was no retracting, they signed.  
 Lieu't-Colonel Johnston then exclaim'd: "I am ready." On which  
 they all ushered forth with him at the head of the troops, which  
 were previously drawn out on the parade with their band of music  
 &c., and march'd up to Gov't house as before stated. The next  
 day it was noised abroad by them, that the inhabitants had  
 requested them to depose the Gov'r to blind the public, and  
 thus to justify their outrageous proceedings, and the above paper  
 had many signatures affixed to it afterwards, purporting they were  
 all previous to their committing this their atrocious act. They  
 then, with some of their partisans and tools, sent other papers

Post factum  
 signatures.

\* This statement bears out the opinion hazarded in the Introduction to vol. vi, pp. lxi and lixiii. The available evidence points to Macarthur, Blaxcell, Jamison, Mileham, Badgery, and Lord, as the six who signed the requisition *prior* to the actual arrest.

throughout the different settlements, in which they were applauded for their inglorious actions, and threatned with imprisonment, &c., as before stated, all who did not affix their signatures to such papers; and therefore, my Lord, from dread and terrour, many were compell'd to do that which they have regretted and repented off ever since, as it was wholly compulsive and tottally against their inclinations (which can be best proved by a voluntary address they had presented to His Excellency from all parts, highly extolling and approving of his wise measures but a few days previous to the arrest),\* and we assure your Lordship there is now nothing but murmurings and great discontent in all places against our unlawful, arbitrary rulers. It may seem somewhat extraordinary to your Lordship that there should be so few signatures to support our assertions; but, my Lord, we live in a very small district, some of them are not resident on the spot, and from the present juncture of affairs we dare have no communications with the neighbouring district.

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A reign of terror.

Therefore, my Lord, having declared nothing but the truth, we are ready to come forward to prove our assertions if ever call'd upon, and have no seperate views but the welfare of the colony at heart, having all large familys, and in all probability will end our days in this obscure corner of His Majesty's dominions. We therefore, my Lord, with all humility, subscribe ourselves His Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, and your Lordships most devoted, &c.,

Bond fides of signatories.

AND'W MCDUGALL,	MATTH'W PEARCE,
JOHN SMITH,	JAMES KENNEDY,
THOS. HARLEY,	W'M HANCEY,
JOHN HILLAS,	MICHAEL HANCEY.

GOVERNMENT AND GENERAL ORDER.

Head-quarters, Sydney, 24th February, 1809.

24 Feb.

THOMAS JAMISON, Esq., Principal Surgeon of the territory, having been ordered to proceed to Europe at the request of Lieutenant-Colonel Johnston, the Senior Assistant Surgeon† will repair to Sydney and take upon him that officer's duty.

The medical staff.

The Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased, in consequence of the vacancy in the medical establishment, to appoint Mr. E. Luttrell to act as Assistant Surgeon until His Majesty's pleasure is known, and to do duty at Parramatta.

GOVERNMENT AND GENERAL ORDER.

Head-quarters, Sydney, 25th February, 1809.

25 Feb.

THE Lieutenant-Governor is pleased to appoint Nicholas Bayly, Esq., to take upon him the duties of Naval Officer.

Appointments.

\* See the address to Bligh, 1st January, 1808, vol. vi, p. 410. † D'Arcy Wentworth.