

THE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE 1820 SETTLEMENT  
DOWN TO 1846

by

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## PREFACE

The arrival of the 1820 Settlers in South Africa and their impact on the political and social life of the Cape Colony has been well covered by historical research. This work is an attempt to illuminate yet another area in which their impact was felt. The failure of the settlement scheme under which these people were introduced into the colony has tended to detract from the importance which agriculture played in the early years of their residence in South Africa. The failure of the first crops may well have ended the attempts by many to establish themselves on the land but for others it was the beginning of a process of adaptation to the agricultural conditions of a new country. In this they were remarkably successful and within a decade the English farming community of the eastern frontier was prospering.

The theme of this work traces the progress of these farmers through the initial period of crop failures, which condemned the settlement in the eyes of many, and through the ensuing years and later misfortune, the Sixth Frontier War of 1834-35. Both these setbacks were very significant in moulding the development of agriculture as practiced by these farmers. In the past, historians have tended to over-estimate the reverse suffered by these farmers during this frontier war. The seemingly paradoxical questions raised by the rapid recovery of this community after the war have been left largely unanswered. Some attempt is made in the pages which follow to shed new light on this issue.

In the first three chapters of this work the letters written by Thomas Philipps to his family in Britain form the chief source

of information. Much of this correspondence has already found wider publication in a volume edited by Arthur Keppel-Jones,<sup>1</sup> but there are significant omissions, particularly with regard to Philipps' commentary on agricultural matters. Unfortunately, this series of letters ends in 1830, and the chief sources for the latter period of this work are the various entries made, on agricultural matters, in the Graham's Town Journal,<sup>2</sup> together with the farm diary of James Collett,<sup>3</sup> another frontier farmer. From these, and various other works, it has been possible to trace the major developments of this farming community.

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<sup>1</sup>Keppel-Jones, A. (ed.), Philipps, 1820 Settler (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter & Shooter, 1960).

<sup>2</sup>First published in December, 1832.

<sup>3</sup>Unpublished Document No. SM593 in 1820 Settlers' Museum, Grahamstown.

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I also wish to acknowledge, and thank, Mr Peter Mountford for his able assistance in the compilation of a computer programme for the processing of the statistics used extensively in Chapter V of this work. These statistics relate to market prices which appeared with some regularity in the Graham's Town Journal over the period covered by my research. I hasten to add that all conclusions derived from these statistics are entirely my own.

I wish also to acknowledge an 'ad hoc' grant made available to me by the Human Sciences Research Council which greatly facilitated my research at the South African Archives in Cape Town.

## CHAPTER I

The history of White South Africa down to 1870 developed around the interaction of various groups in what was largely an agricultural economy. Farming and the land are the underlying themes of most of this history. It was only with the discovery of diamonds in 1867, that the first step was taken towards broadening the economy of the various states away from their agricultural base.

This study is an attempt to consider this agricultural development on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony during the period 1820 to 1845. The reason for the choice of this area and time period lies in the fact that by the early decades of the nineteenth century the agriculture of this colony had largely established itself in a set form. This form was to be altered after the arrival of the British Settlers in 1820, who were placed upon this frontier as an agricultural community. Amongst this group were farmers who had experienced the innovations of the British Agricultural Revolution, and who were now in a position to impart this knowledge in the country of their adoption. The outcome of this infusion of new ideas which now acted upon the time-tried traditional methods of the older Dutch speaking sector of the community, was the rapid advancement of South African agriculture.

The eighteenth century had seen the diversification of agriculture at the Cape into two distinct channels. In the older, more established, part of the colony, which was also in closer proximity to the only major market at Cape Town, cultivation of various crops, of which wheat and wine were the chief ones, could be successfully carried on. Beyond a radius of approximately 70 miles from this market in Cape Town, it was no longer a profitable proposition to

pursue cultivation. The reasons for this lay in a combination of two factors; the limited nature of the Cape Town market, and the poor communication links within the colony.<sup>1</sup> In the interior farming orientated towards pastoralism. There was a ready market for meat in Cape Town and the animals could carry themselves to market over country where no roads existed.<sup>2</sup> Pastoralism also catered for a certain mobility which was essential in the interior where drought could require the movement of herds and flocks to fresh pastures.

Under the administration of the Dutch East India Company (1652-1795) two main forms of land tenure had developed. Initially most of the land had been granted to farmers on a freehold basis, or for the payment of a quitrent. The Company no longer granted freehold farms beyond the districts in the immediate vicinity of Cape Town, which was the area into which the colony was expanding early in the eighteenth century. Instead farmers could take out a loan tenure, where farms could be held on loan from the government, initially for six months, but later for a year at a time. Once granted, the Company administration seldom revoked such a grant although it was legally entitled to do so. A uniform rent, irrespective of the ground's fertility, was fixed at 12 Rixdollars in 1714, but raised to 24 Rix-<sup>19</sup>dollars in 1832.<sup>3</sup> This loan farm (leenings plaatsen) system was a compromise by the local Company administration to keep the farmers, who now moved freely about the interior, under the jurisdiction of that administration. It could now gain revenue from them without

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<sup>1</sup>Neumark, S.D., The South African Frontier 1652-1836, Ch. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Duly, L.C., British Land Policy at the Cape 1795-1844, p.15.

imposing any form of direct control.

Throughout the eighteenth century, there was a steady progression eastwards of these white pastoral farmers. In part, this was simply a movement of restless spirits who had no desire to settle permanently in any one spot, but for the greater part it was engendered by an expanding population, in which those who now formed the younger generations sought farm land of their own. Their progress was largely unimpeded by the various placats issued by Cape Governors in order to determine frontiers and restrict their movement.<sup>1</sup> Neither had it been seriously restricted by the Khoisan tribes with which they had made contact. In the north the San had provided a greater obstacle to this expansion than had the Khoi or San in the east, but even these northern San had been eliminated as an obstacle by 1810.<sup>2</sup> The relative ease with which a loan farm could be obtained also facilitated this movement, as it was a comparatively simple task to claim a farm, and even easier to abandon it when conditions proved unfavourable. While this progress eastwards was steady, it was not concerted, so that choice locations were taken up first, resulting in a wide and thinly distributed settlement.

The first major impediment to the progress of this movement lay in the east. Beyond the Gamtoos River this progression of white farmers represented an inroad on territory already occupied by small bands of the Xhosa tribes. These represented the spearhead of a migration moving in the opposite direction to the white farmers. In time conflict between these two groups was to become inevitable.

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<sup>1</sup>Neumark, S.D., *op.cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Marais, J.S., Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p. 3.

Both were pastoralists who measured their wealth by the size of their herds. Increased herds would mean the requirement of more land, and now that they had met, more land represented that of the other group. Both groups were also loathe to kill their cattle for their own use while game abounded. The Xhosa, in common with other Bantu tribes, regarded their cattle first as a source of wealth,<sup>1</sup> and secondly as a source of food. It followed that while the animal lived it was more valuable to its owner, and was only called upon to render its milk as a source of food. It was only when the animal died that it was eaten.<sup>1</sup> It was rather to the herds of game which were hunted, that the Xhosa looked for a source of protein. The frontier farmers could find a ready market for their cattle in Cape Town, or from the butchers 'knechts' who travelled around the countryside,<sup>2</sup> so that they too looked to the natural game for their supply of fresh meat. Conflict was also to arise from the theft of cattle by both sides. As the Xhosa were more firmly attached to their land than either the Khoi or San, it was inevitable that this conflict between black and white pastoralists was to be a protracted one.

Another source of conflict between these two groups arose from trading contact between them. Trading connections between the two groups were established early in the nineteenth century,<sup>3</sup> prior to the meeting of the pastoralists and continuous contact between the two groups in the 1770's.<sup>4</sup> While not all of this interaction

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<sup>1</sup>Lichtenstein, H., Travels in Southern Africa, Vol. I, p.330.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>3</sup>Wilson, M., Co-operation and Conflict: The Eastern Cape Frontier, O.H.S.A., Vol. I, pp.234-5.

<sup>4</sup>Marais, J.S., op.cit., p.1.

would seem to have been hostile, trading and hunting parties having been allowed to move freely into the Xhosa country at regular intervals, with the passage of time trading malpractice and theft seem to have given rise to a certain amount of resentment. The chief items of trade which the white traders sought were ivory and cattle, which they exchanged for metal goods, trinkets, beads, and tobacco. As Lichtenstein has indicated, the Xhosa were very reluctant to part with their cattle,<sup>1</sup> so that with the passage of time and an increasing awareness of their value to their trading partners, they would come to ask more for them. The white farmers who followed in the wake of the traders and hunters also complained that while the Xhosa entered the areas occupied by them ostensibly to trade their cattle, which these farmers welcomed, many of these Xhosa now simply settled down amongst the farmers.<sup>2</sup> Nor were the farmers blameless. There is evidence of malpractice on the part of the whites as well. Marais quotes the case of a certain de Buys, who farmed and traded on the frontier.<sup>3</sup>

"...Two 'Kafir Captains' had told him [Maynier] how de Buys 'withheld' the Kafirs' wives and cattle.... He [de Buys] used sometimes to shoot elephants in Kafirland, and to obtain cattle from the Kafirs in exchange for the best tusks. From the other tusks he made 'the rings worn by the Kafirs for ornament for which also they pay in cattle.' When he was in Kafirland de Buys took such cattle as he fancied out of the Xhosa kraals, had them driven to his farm, and when the Kafirs complained, he made them lie on the ground and beat them almost to death."

Men such as de Buys were bound to jeopardize relations between the two groups.

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<sup>1</sup>Lichtenstein, H., *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p.330.

<sup>2</sup>Marais, J.S., *op.cit.*, p.14.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p.31.

Another cause of dissent between the two groups lay in their fundamentally different concepts of the ownership of land. The Xhosa could not understand the principle of individual ownership of large tracts of land, and the exclusion of others from it. In turn the white farmers could not understand that while a chief could allocate grazing land to them, or the right to graze their cattle in certain areas, the land remained the possession of the tribe, and that no chief had the right to alienate it or dispose of it to anyone.

This co-operation and conflict was an ever present factor in the development of the region for the eighteenth century and well in the second half of the nineteenth century. Within this period nine wars were fought between these two groups before the whites had imposed their concepts of property and ownership on the blacks.<sup>1</sup> A more positive feature of this interaction was that this same period had also seen the creation of a permanent interdependence between the two races in all aspects of economic life.

Throughout the eighteenth century government officials were conspicuous by their absence from the eastern frontier. In 1786 the landdrostyd of Graaff Reinet had been established to control the activities of the frontier farmers and to collect the fee of twenty-<sup>r</sup>four Rixdollars payable annually for their loan farms. This official had to control the activities of the farmers in an area of approximately 50 000 square miles,<sup>2</sup> and a frontier of over 700 miles.

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<sup>1</sup>Some of these wars, particularly the earlier ones, were no more than armed clashes between the two groups. The dates for these outbursts are: 1779, 1789, 1799-1802, 1812, 1818-19, 1834-5, 1846-7, 1850-2, 1877.

<sup>2</sup>Duly, L.C., op.cit., p.8.

Contact with the Xhosa in the east would seem to have initially hastened the eastward progression of the frontier. In 1743 the Great Brak River had been declared the eastern frontier of the colony. In 1770 it was shifted to the Gamtoos River. In 1774 the Bruyntjes Hoogte were declared the eastern perimeter, but as in previous declarations, the government moved at a slower rate than the colonists, with the result that in 1775 the frontier was once again shifted in the north-east to the Fish River, and to the Bushman's River in the south-east.<sup>1</sup> In 1780 the full extent of the Fish River was declared as the frontier. In many respects the government, lacking the administrative machinery and personnel, could not effectuate its claims to these territorial frontiers. It could neither keep the Xhosa out of its territory nor its colonists within it. In 1778 governor Van Plettenberg attempted to legislate against further interaction between the two groups,<sup>2</sup> but the co-operation and conflict of trade and pasture, together with the lack of administrative pressure, ensured the failure of the measure.

This was the position when a military force established the 'Star Fort' at Algoa Bay in 1799 when on an excursion into the interior to quell the rebellious farmers of Graaff Reinet during the first British occupation of the Cape (1795-1802).<sup>3</sup> In the same year a more sturdy structure was constructed, which was called Fort Frederick, in honour of H.R.H. the Duke of York.<sup>4</sup> This fort

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<sup>1</sup>Marais, J.S., op.cit., pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp.94ff.

<sup>4</sup>Redgrave, J.J., Port Elizabeth in Bygone Days, p.11.

represented the first military building established in the eastern Cape. Its garrison came to represent the first local outlet for the agricultural produce of these outlying farmers, short of Cape Town. Here they found a ready market for their fruit, butter, and cattle, although the bulk of their cattle still gravitated towards the Cape Town market. The brief period of Batavian Republic rule (1802-1806), saw the division of the district of Graaff Reinet, and the creation of the new drostdy of Uitenhage in the south-east, stretching from west of the Gamtoos River to the Fish River in the east, and extending inland to the Bruyntjes Hoogte. Within this newly created division fell both Algoa Bay and the Zuurveld, the site of the future settlement.

The establishment of the fort in Algoa Bay was economically significant, not only in that it created a market for the produce of surrounding farmers, but also in that it was not to be too long before merchants and traders were to settle in the shelter of its presence. A hamlet soon sprang up in the opening decade of the nineteenth century. Amongst the earliest of these traders, and certainly the most significant of them, was Frederick Korsten, who arrived at Algoa Bay in 1811 as an established merchant from Cape Town. The lure of Algoa Bay to a wealthy merchant lay in the lucrative nature of the provisions contracts to supply the British troops garrisoned on the islands of Mauritius and St. Helena, and the passing naval convoys carrying troops and provisions to the east.<sup>1</sup> The closer proximity of Algoa Bay to the chief sources of the Colony's supply of beef meant that this commodity could be procured more cheaply here, than

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<sup>1</sup>Chase, J.C., Old Times and Odd Corners (1), p.3.

in Cape Town. Besides this there was the relatively untapped interior trade of the frontier farmers. A base at Algoa Bay would also be in a position to corner most of the ivory and other raw produce, such as gum, from the far interior, which had previously passed on to Cape Town. Distance and difficulty of transportation to the Cape Town market had now become a limiting factor on production for this market. This was particularly true with regard to commodities such as soap and butter which were mainly supplied by farmers in the interior.<sup>1</sup>

Algoa Bay was ideally suited to the preparation of salt beef for the military contracts. The only article which the area could not initially supply, was the kegs necessary for packaging. Cattle could be bought from the surrounding farmers, or bred on the large loan farm 'Papenuil's Fontein' which had been granted to Korsten.<sup>2</sup> Salt was available from four salt pans in the immediate vicinity; two on the site of the future town of Port Elizabeth, one at the mission station at Bethelsdorp, and one on the eastern heights of the Zwartkops River.<sup>3</sup> Labour could be obtained from the surrounding Khoi tribesmen, or from the slaves which Korsten brought with him from the Cape.<sup>4</sup>

Korsten did not limit his interests to the salt beef trade. He soon started a tannery as a subsidiary to this trade, a cooperage to overcome the high costs of importing barrels from the Cape, and a

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<sup>1</sup>Neumark, S.D., op.cit., pp.135ff.

<sup>2</sup>Chase, J.C., op.cit. (1), p.3.

<sup>3</sup>Chase, J.C., The Cape of Good Hope and E.P. of Algoa Bay (2), p.64.

<sup>4</sup>Chase, J.C., op.cit. (1), p.4.

mill which was to encourage the growing of wheat by farmers in the immediate vicinity. He also established seal fisheries on St. Croix and Bird Islands, which he leased from the government, and a whale fishery 'at the point of Algoa Bay'.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these enterprises, he operated a big trading store at which farmers could purchase most of their requirements. Branches were later opened in Algoa Bay, Uitenhage and Grahamstown. By the action of opening these branches, he became the first merchant to move into the interior to meet the needs of the farmers of the eastern frontier.

The external trade of Algoa Bay was still largely confined to the visits of small coasting vessels, and the appearance of the odd whaler or Indiaman. Items which were to make up the more regular part of the exports, were butter, supplied by the surrounding farmers, hides and skins, the barrels of train oil and salt beef, dried fish, salt from the surrounding salt pans, and on a more limited scale, ivory and curiosities from the interior. To facilitate the transport of this produce by sea from Algoa Bay to Cape Town, Korsten operated his own coasting vessels.<sup>2</sup> This ensured the regularity of this trade and did much to encourage farmers to avail themselves and their produce of this quicker means of communication with the mother city.

By 1819 the civilian population of Algoa Bay was still only some 35 souls.<sup>3</sup> There were now three other merchants operating from the Bay, Nicholls and Chabaud, in partnership, and William Brooksby Frames, who had landed in Algoa Bay in 1815.<sup>4</sup> The settlement could

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Redgrave, J.J., op.cit., p. 55,15.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

only boast four houses of permanent construction, besides the fort and the 'large pile of buildings' which made up Cradock Place.<sup>1</sup>

This then was the extent of the settlement of the future Port Elizabeth, which was to expand so rapidly as a port of access to the Zuurveld following the establishment of the settlement there in 1820. By 1830 it could boast of the export of colonial goods representing £24,318 and of imports valued at £18,454.<sup>2</sup>

The establishment of the British settlement in the Zuurveld in 1820 was politically and strategically motivated. While the Fish River had been declared as the frontier of the colony in 1780, no serious attempt was made before 1812 to clear the area west of the Fish, known as the Zuurveld, of the Xhosa and Khoi who occupied this area alongside the few white farmers.<sup>3</sup> The outbreak of the Fourth Frontier War in that year decided the governor, Sir John Cradock, that such a step should be undertaken. In the course of that year some 20 000 blacks were driven across the Fish River. The necessary fortifications and administrative structure was established which would, hopefully, keep the area clear of blacks, and thus accessible for peaceful white occupation.<sup>4</sup> Farms were offered on a quitrent tenure in the immediate locality of the military settlements of Cradock and Grahamstown. This measure was not successful. The terms of settlement did not encourage the white farmers to occupy the area, while the Xhosa drifted back

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<sup>1</sup>Chase, J.C., op.cit. (1), p.4. Korsten altered the name of his loan farm from Papenkuil's Fontein to 'Cradock Place' in honour of the governor, Sir John Cradock (1811-1814).

<sup>2</sup>C.O.5971 (Cape Archives, Govt. Blue Books).

<sup>3</sup>Marais, J.S., op.cit., p.10.

<sup>4</sup>Walker, E.A., A History of Southern Africa, p.153.

to their old habitats.

Cradock was succeeded as governor by Lord Charles Somerset (1814-1826). The failure of his predecessor's measures induced him to adopt a policy of negotiation with the Xhosa chiefs. Treating the chief Ngqika as the paramount of the western Xhosa, Somerset arranged a reprisal system on the principle that stolen cattle would be traced into Xhosa territory and cattle to an equivalent value, or those stolen, retaken from the kraal nearest to which the spoor ended.<sup>1</sup> Lacking the necessary troops to effectively operate this system, following a reduction of troop numbers in the colony in 1817, the new system could not succeed. In addition to this, Somerset allowed himself to become involved in a political struggle amongst the Xhosa, in which colonial forces were used to support Ngqika against Ndhlabi, who was seeking to unite the western Xhosa, after the defeat of the former in November 1818. Ndhlabi retaliated against the colony in the opening months of 1819. During the course of this, the Fifth Frontier War, Ndhlabi was duly defeated. The Xhosa were cleared from the area between the Fish and Keiskamma Rivers which, with the exception of the Tyumie Valley which was retained by Ngqika, was declared to be a neutral 'no man's land'.<sup>2</sup>

This frontier unrest was causing increasing embarrassment, both to the authorities in Cape Town and London. While the Batavian rule of the Cape (1802-1806) had been marked by distinct attempts to establish the colony as a viable economy,<sup>3</sup> the second British

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<sup>1</sup>Walker, E.A., op.cit., p.154.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.155.

<sup>3</sup>Freund, W.M., 'The Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony during the Batavian Period', Journal of African History, XIII, 4, 1972, pp.631-645. Two examples of this are the immigration schemes of

occupation (from 1806) had been undertaken largely for strategic reasons. This was to colour both the attitude of the colonial authorities towards economic policy, particularly investment expenditure, and the internal politics of the colony, particularly racial contacts. While the Cape was valued only in strategic terms, it followed that the British government should be interested in reducing expenditure for the maintenance of the colony to a minimum. Particularly at a time when the British treasury was finding it difficult to meet its commitments in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, which had seen an increase in the national debt from £426.6 million in 1790-9 to £844.3 million in 1810-19.<sup>1</sup> This had been followed by a post-war depression which, brought on by the necessity for British industry to make re-adjustments away from the war-orientated economy, had resulted in an abnormally high level of unemployment. The returning troops were an additional idle force which sought accommodation in the peace-time economy. Once this initial depression had passed, there remained the dislocation, as certain industries progressed at a faster rate than others.

The arrival of the British 1820 Settlers in South Africa can be seen as a reconciliation between the problems facing the Cape and Great Britain. Any attempt to keep the Xhosa out of the Zuurveld required the presence of a large military force. This had proved particularly true while the white population of the area remained small. Of the approximately 145 families which had settled in the

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G.K. Van Hogendorp and the "Eene Commissie ter verbetering van Veeteelt en Landbouw, hoofdzaklijk ter conversie van der Schapen deezer Colonie in zogenaamde Spaansche of Wolgevende Schapen".

<sup>1</sup>Mathias, P., The First Industrial Nation, p.463.

Zuurveld after the war of 1812, when the Xhosa were first supposedly 'cleared out' of it, some 90 families had again abandoned the area by 1817 due to the insecurity following the withdrawal of the troops. By 1820 only 38 farms were occupied.<sup>1</sup> Lord Charles Somerset saw a possible reduction in the level of the military expenditure of the colony, which was paid directly by the British Treasury rather than the local administration, in the introduction of a closely knit settlement of whites on the frontier.<sup>2</sup> Such a settlement would then form a human barrier to deter further incursions by the Xhosa. This would enable a troop reduction to be effected permanently. The necessary people for such a scheme could then be found amongst the unemployed members of the working classes of Britain. To a British government being confronted at home with increasing social unrest, an emigration scheme to settle the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony seemed a perfect short-term solution to both the question of unemployment at home and military expenditure within the colony. Agreement to this<sup>3</sup> scheme was reached in 1818 while in the following year the necessary advertising and preparations were carried into effect<sup>3</sup> — the scheme being made all the more urgent by the outbreak of yet another frontier war in 1819.<sup>4</sup> Eventually, in the closing weeks of 1819 the transport vessels carrying the Settlers left their various ports of embarkation on the long voyage to South Africa.

The first of the transports began arriving in Algoa Bay during

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., History of South Africa Since 1795, Vol. I, p.296.

<sup>2</sup>Edwards, I.E., The 1820 Settlers in South Africa, pp.31-3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.42ff.

<sup>4</sup>Fifth Frontier War.

April, 1820. Here the Cape government had been busy making the necessary preparations for their arrival. The exact number of Settlers to be catered for was not known, but the camp established at Algoa Bay was planned to accommodate 1 500 people, while provisions for 2 000 people for one month were laid on.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these preparations, transport in the form of over 200 ox wagons, together with their teams of oxen, drivers, and 'voorlopers', had been requisitioned amongst the local Dutch farmers by the government to carry the newly arrived Settlers to their eventual destinations in the Zuurveld. Cattle and sheep were also bought up by the military commissariat to meet the needs of the tent town which had sprung up on the shores of Algoa Bay. The British government had undertaken to supply the necessary seed, ploughs, and other agricultural equipment, which would be needed by the Settlers in their new venture. These items were sold to the Settlers at cost.<sup>2</sup>

The financial arrangements for the establishment of the settlement and the passage money out to the colony had been approved on 12 July, 1819, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Vansittart, introduced a motion into the House of Commons asking for £50 000 to assist "unemployed workmen to remove to one of His Majesty's colonies".<sup>3</sup> The sum was used to defray the costs of the project. The British government required that a deposit be paid by all potential settlers, on the basis of £10 for every family taken out; a family being defined as a man, his wife, and two children under

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<sup>1</sup>Hockly, H.E., The Story of the British Settlers of 1820 in South Africa, p.47.

<sup>2</sup>See infra, pp.21-2.

<sup>3</sup>Hockly, H.E., op.cit., p.52.

the age of fourteen years, and £5 for every two additional children under the age of fourteen, or £5 for every one additional child between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. This sum was to be repaid to the settlers in instalments. One-third of the sum was to be repaid on landing in Algoa Bay, when victualling at the expense of the British government ceased. Another third was to be made available to the settlers once they had been located on their land allotments in the Zuurveld, while the remaining amount was to be paid out three months after the second payment.

This arrangement was not carried into effect.<sup>1</sup> The initial payment was duly made, but the remaining two-thirds of the deposit money was withheld as security for the supply of rations by the Cape government. This move was essential for the maintenance of the Settlers until such time as they had reaped their first crops. From the time of their arrival to 30 September, 1821, the Settlers received full rations, while from 30 September to 31 December, 1821, they received half rations.<sup>2</sup> The Settlers were the ultimate benefactors from this arrangement in that while they were indebted for their rations to the extent of 210 470 Rixdollars or £18,416 2s.6d., more than the value of their unpaid two-thirds of the deposit money by the end of 1821, this sum was written off by the authorities on instructions from Lord Bathurst, the Colonial Secretary, in 1825.<sup>3</sup> These rations were supplied in bulk to the various locations of Settlers. They were collected by the Settlers at the new centre of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.48.

<sup>2</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. I, p.313.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Bathurst, which, chosen for its central locality in relation to the locations, was to become the new seat of the magistracy.<sup>1</sup> Meat, in the form of live sheep, flour, sugar, tea, candles and soap were supplied.<sup>2</sup> The basic rations were supplied on the calculation of  $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. meal and 2lb. meat daily for the men, half this amount for the women, and a third of it for children.<sup>3</sup>

The original number of Settlers to arrive in the winter months of 1820 was 3 736.<sup>4</sup> By the end of 1821, close to 5 000 Settlers had arrived at Algoa Bay, at a cost to the British government of £86,760 5s.4d.<sup>5</sup> The arrival of the Settlers also created difficulties for the Cape administration as the colony's expenditure was to rise without a proportional increase in revenue. The Settlers were exempt from the payment of taxes for the first ten years of their sojourn in South Africa.<sup>6</sup> This made it more difficult for the Cape government to raise the finance necessary for providing the Settlers with food. Down to 30 June, 1825, the Settlers had cost the colony £34,461 for their maintenance, besides the additional sum of £3,375 annually for the salaries of officials for the drostdy of Albany.<sup>7</sup> During this

<sup>1</sup>This decision taken in 1821 by the Acting-Governor, Sir Rufane Donkin, was rescinded on the arrival back in the colony of the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, in 1823.

<sup>2</sup>Hockly, H.E., op.cit., p.59.

<sup>3</sup>Rivett-Carnac, D.E., Thus Came the English, p.43.

<sup>4</sup>Chase, J.C., op.cit. (2), p.87.

<sup>5</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. I, p.352.

<sup>6</sup>An attempt was made in 1821 to gather taxes from them but this move was resisted most strenuously by Philipps and others. See Philipps 1820 Settler (ed.) Keppel-Jones, A., p.100.

<sup>7</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. I, p.352. The Drostdy of Albany had been created in 1814.

period the only contribution which the Settlers made towards the revenues of the colony was in the form of the increased customs dues and other fees payable on the increase in the importation of goods through the newly named village of Port Elizabeth.<sup>1</sup>

The object of the settlement was to form a closely knit agricultural community on the frontier, which would act as a buffer against the inroads of the Xhosa. To achieve this each family, or head of party on behalf of each family introduced into the colony by them, was to receive an allocation of 100 acres of land. This was very small in comparison with the farms of between 3 000 and 6 000 acres occupied by the Dutch farmers in the colony. It was intended that these allotments would be used mainly for cultivation, with the numbers of livestock kept to a minimum. The success of this scheme was at best partial.<sup>2</sup> The reasons for this being threefold. Firstly, less than half of the Settlers had any agricultural experience, or even experience of a rural situation.<sup>3</sup> This is revealed time and again in the writings of the Settlers in reference to the difficulties experienced in the erection of their first homes, the problems of driving their rations home to their locations, and the difficulties encountered in the planting of their first crops. Secondly, and certainly an over-riding factor, was the unsuitability of the Zuurveld, with the exception of localised patches, for intensive cultivation. Even where the land was suitable for cultivation, success was still subject to the uncertain rainfall of the region.

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<sup>1</sup> So named by the Acting Governor, Sir Rufane Donkin, on 13 February, 1821.

<sup>2</sup> Hockly, H.E., *op.cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Rivett-Carnac, *op.cit.*, p.55.

This factor condemned the settlement in terms of the limited size of the land allocations. Finally, the Settlers initially lacked a market, so that even if all had been agriculturalists and the land had been conducive to a close settlement, the scheme could not have succeeded in its original form. As it was, it was most fortuitous that many of the Settlers were in a position to answer the call of the colony for skilled artisans, for in being drawn away from the land they assisted in the creation of a market for the very agricultural produce which would otherwise have caused their downfall.

## CHAPTER II

The arrival of the Settlers in April and May of 1820 coincided with the beginning of the planting time for winter cereal crops in the Southern Hemisphere. After the months of inactivity on board the transport ships, many of the new Settlers now looked forward to the opportunity of establishing themselves and their families on their allocations of land.<sup>1</sup> These allocations of land had been limited to 100 acres for each adult male, in order to restrict their activities on this ground to arable, rather than pastoral, farming. Lord Charles Somerset, as Cape governor, had sought the creation of a closely knit settlement as part of his schemes for the defence of the frontier. It was also realised that the presence of large numbers of livestock in the settlement would tend to encourage discontent and trouble on the frontier between the

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<sup>1</sup>In order to gain a better understanding of the progress of the settlement as an agricultural proposition in its early years, a closer inspection of the records must be made to isolate information relating specifically to farming. There is no continuous record of an agricultural nature relating to this early period, before 1830, which has survived, so that information has been gleaned from several sources in order to construct a picture of the settlement in these formative years, which are so important in the history of South African agriculture. The chief source of information for this period is the collection of letters of the Settler, Thomas Philipps, who had come to the Cape with the intention of establishing himself as a gentleman farmer. (Philipps, T., Letters to his Kinsfolk in 5 vols. covering the period 1820-9. This is the source for A. Keppel-Jones' Philipps, 1820 Settler, in which much of the information relating to agriculture has been omitted or reduced.)

Information has also been drawn from the diaries of various Settlers and from the pioneering work of Thom on sheep-farming in South Africa. (Thom, H.B., Die Geskiedenis van die Skaapboerdery in Suid Afrika.) From this information it is possible to gauge the progress of the settlement.

Xhosa tribes and the whites. Cattle had in the past been a cause of friction. The Xhosa had shown themselves adept as cattle thieves in the past, and there seemed no reason why they should have changed their ways, particularly in consideration of the fact that they had only recently been driven from the area now to be occupied by the settlement, and in which stock thefts could fulfil a wider political function in relation to the loss of this territory.

The parties which the Settlers formed in Britain prior to setting sail for the Cape can be classified into several different types relating to the social status of those involved. With regard to the land and land-ownership, there were broadly two types of settler who were to gain a right to the land. There were some parties, such as the Sephton party and most others, which were made up of independent family units, and in which each unit was to receive its own allotment of land. Others, such as the Philipps and Pigot parties, were made up of party heads who had every intention of farming the land for their own account and who had brought out their labourers to carry on their farming practices as they had in England. In such cases these parties were allocated land according to the number of labourers they had brought with them. Many of the independent members of the parties had no previous farming experience, which was to result in additional hardships for them during the initial stages of the settlement. This, and the lack of capital amongst many of the poorer type of Settlers, resulted in them banding together and pooling their resources and knowledge in order to try to establish themselves.

To assist the Settlers in their new agricultural pursuits, the British government made available to them, at cost, the necessary

equipment for their farming operations. Ploughs and other agricultural equipment was shipped out to Algoa Bay in readiness for the arrival of the Settlers. There would seem to have been delays in the execution of this plan and all was not ready for the issue of this equipment to the Settlers when they began to move away from Algoa Bay in the wagons of the Dutch farmers. These had been requisitioned to carry them to their locations in Albany. Writing in November, 1820, Philipps indicates that the delivery of the ploughs was delayed to such an extent as to delay the planting of the first wheat crop until July,<sup>1</sup> which was very late in the season. It would seem that many of the articles were also allowed to deteriorate in the sea air of Algoa Bay, prior to their delivery to the Settlers.<sup>2</sup> To overcome the difficulty of a lack of ploughs, Philipps had a plough made for his own use,<sup>3</sup> but for the majority of Settlers, seven-tenths of whom had little or no means on their arrival,<sup>4</sup> this was impossible. When the implements were finally delivered, Philipps commented as follows,<sup>5</sup>

"The implements which were sent out by the Government and disposed of at prime cost, proved to be of the most wretched quality, and became in the end extremely expensive, in the purchase of many of them Government was most shamefully imposed upon."

The English ploughs which were sent out were found, by some, to be unsuitable for the firm, rocky ground of some of the locations,

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps 1820 Settler, ed. A. Keppel-Jones, pp.74-5.

<sup>2</sup> Rivett-Carnac, op.cit., p.39.

<sup>3</sup> Philipps, op.cit., p.75.

<sup>4</sup> Chase, J.C., op.cit. (2), p.87.

<sup>5</sup> Philipps, op.cit., p.124.

causing many of the Settlers to combine their resources to buy the heavier local ploughs and the necessary spans of oxen to pull them.<sup>1</sup>

The late arrival of this agricultural equipment, together with the fact that it was also essential for them to consider the construction of their first rude dwellings, restricted cultivation to that of vegetable gardens and small plots of wheat. These they hoped to reap before the end of 1820. A lack of cattle also hampered this cultivation, as oxen were required for draught purposes.

Arriving after the March and April rains in the Zuurveld, the Settlers found the grass growing tall and the streams flowing. To many the prospect seemed good. Thomas Stubbs recalled,<sup>2</sup>

"There must have been very heavy rains before we arrived, for the whole country was running with water and the grass was knee high...many a Settler began a garden where he saw the water running out an Ant Bear hole on the side of a hill, but which dried up before a Month. They then began as close to the rivers as possible, built houses, made Gardens, and had every prospect of doing well until the Floods came in 1823 and cleared everything away..."

Philipps cast a more critical eye over his allocation,<sup>3</sup>

"After a walk of 3 miles, we arrived at my location, where we were left, and we immediately pitched our Tents near the ruins of the old House, hardly venturing to ask each other how we liked it, in fact none were in reality pleased, there was scarcely a vestige of wood, and it being an extensive plain, we considered we had a full view of all that was to be seen, and we had left the day before such charming places."

Attitudes towards their settlement were bound to differ amongst the individuals who made up the various parties. All tastes could not be catered for, and for the majority, who had no direct experience

<sup>1</sup>Rivett-Carnac, op.cit., p.58.

<sup>2</sup>Stubbs, T., Reminiscences of..., pp.7-8.

<sup>3</sup>Philipps, op.cit., p.53.

of an agricultural environment, there was not much to distinguish one piece of land from another. The choice of a location for the settlement on the eastern frontier was surely not only motivated by a desire for defence on the part of Lord Charles Somerset. The Zuurveld had a favourable reputation as a farming area in the annals of the Cape, and for a governor who had not personally made a detailed investigation of the area, it was inevitable that the records of early travellers and current opinion would do much to influence his decision. H. Lichtenstein had written in 1803-04,<sup>1</sup>

"The country about Algoa Bay is by nature so fertile, that even if uninhabited it would produce wood, game, salt, and grass for feeding cattle in abundance. Now since it has been cultivated by Europeans in quiet times, it produces corn and fruit of all kinds, and even wine. The breeding of cattle prospers so much, that meat, milk, butter, soap, and other articles dependent on this part of husbandry, are to be had at very low prices."

Thomas Philipps gives an indication of the attitudes of the Dutch farmers to the area,<sup>2</sup>

"The Dutch always looked to this quarter as a desirable residence, but were deterred by the incursions of the Caffres. Anxious to have every information we could collect in coming up, we gleaned all we could from our Drivers, the result was 'one country is good for the Corn, another for the Sheep, and another for the Cow, but your country is good for all, oh the Zuurveldt is good' and thoroughly convinced am I that we shall find it so, but perhaps not altogether for sheep. This will be a disappointment to me..."

W.M. Macmillan has suggested that the Dutch farmers pitied the fate of the newcomers if they were to be settled in the 'drought-stricken' areas of the Zuurveldt, but bases this statement on unsubstantiated evidence.<sup>3</sup> It is quite possible that the Dutch farmers realised that

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<sup>1</sup>Lichtenstein, H., Travels in Southern Africa, Vol. I, p.288.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Letters to his Kinsfolk, Vol. I, pp.223-4.

<sup>3</sup>Macmillan, W.M., The Cape Colour Question, p.109.

the size of the proposed allocations were insufficient, but this would not detract from the overall desirability of the area. To deny this is to negate a good deal of the theory of land as a causative factor in the frontier conflict between black and white.

In his search for information regarding the suitability of the Zuurveld for the location of the settlement, the governor also called for the opinions of the recently appointed head of the London Missionary Society in Southern Africa, Dr John Philip. Having recently returned from a journey through the eastern districts of the colony, Dr Philip was in a position to supply information regarding the area. Philip saw that the area was suitable for a settlement, but stipulated that,<sup>1</sup>

"...For several years they will have to rely on herds and flocks rather than on agriculture."

He also stressed the necessity for making a preliminary survey of the area to ensure an adequate water supply for each location. While nothing else is stated by Macmillan, this assertion for an initial reliance on pastoral rather than arable farming by Philip, would suggest that he had realised the limitations of the area, particularly with regard to climatic conditions and the all essential saleability of agricultural produce.

That the advice of Philip and any others who sounded a note of caution with regard to the establishment of the settlement, was not heeded, is borne out by the eventual pattern which the settlement took. Here the strategic value of a closely knit settlement placed in close proximity to the frontier, outweighed any arguments for a more economically viable settlement.

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<sup>1</sup>Macmillan, W.M., op.cit. (1), p.110.

Another of the faults of the early settlement, was the failure of the Cape government to appoint an officer to assist the Settlers in adapting to South African farming conditions. The appointment of such an officer would have possibly helped to overcome many of the early problems faced by the Settlers, and prevented the mistakes of experienced and 'Cockney' farmers alike. To what extent the tales of the exploits of 'Cockney' are justified, is difficult to determine. Their prevalence would suggest some foundation for a distinct lack of knowledge of basic farming principles, such as, sowing, ploughing, and the training of animals, on the part of a large number of the Settlers. This factor in itself, without the aggravating circumstances of the failure of the wheat crop owing to its infestation with rust, would have resulted in smaller than required crops during the first year. As it was, both the experienced and 'Cockney' farmers were to make mistakes during the first season in the new environment. While 'Cockney' farmers were attempting to plant wheat by the spade full, burying carrot seed, or hiding potatoes under tufts of grass,<sup>1</sup> the more experienced farmers and men who had brought agricultural labourers out with them, were also recording mistakes and failures. Philipps recorded two such mistakes, and indicated the cause of his errors,<sup>2</sup>

"Government were remiss in not selecting proper people to attend us and point out what we were to do - The Officers were our only guides, their advice was - sow and you will reap - don't put manure, the ground is too rich - the fact is the reverse, the ground is poor and requires more manure than at home..."

Philipps paid dearly for this advice, and as many of the 'Cockneys'

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<sup>1</sup>Butler, G., The 1820 Settlers, p.136.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, Vol. I, pp. 309-10.

looked to the supposedly experienced for guidance, the cumulative effect of such advice can only be imagined. Commenting in November, 1820, Philipps stated,<sup>1</sup>

"I am sorry to say our crops are looking very bad, owing to the ground not having been sufficiently worked before the seed was sown - had we followed our own course we should all have done better but we were told we had only to sow and reap - disappointed as we shall be this year, yet the cause is so manifest that we are reconciled to it, my loss is the greatest as I have the most seed in the ground..."

Another sphere where the mistakes made by the Settlers was to cause problems was in the planting out of their gardens. Philipps points out,<sup>2</sup>

"We ignorantly put many of our garden seeds into the ground in the month of May and most of them perished - Potatoes which were then put in, I have seen in August cut off by the Frost, but they recovered again..."

The first visit of an official related to agricultural matters to the settlement was only made late in 1820, when Robert Hart, the superintendent of the government 'Somerset Farm', was sent to check on the progress of the Settlers during October. He offered sound advice but it is interesting to note that the commentary made on this officer's advice by Ayliff's 'Harry Hastings' extended only to the novel sight of the hobbling of the horses of Hart's party when they were put out to graze, and his criticism and warning against the construction of homes too near to the banks of streams. As the construction of these dwellings was already a fait accompli, little notice was taken of this sound advice.<sup>3</sup> This had disastrous

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 278-9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Vol. I, p.231.

<sup>3</sup>Ayliff, J., The Journal of Harry Hastings, Albany Settler, p.79.

consequences in 1823.

If certain of the garden seeds planted by the Settlers had failed to germinate, others had, and in June, 1820 Philipps could claim to have 'Peas, Beans, Onions, Cabbages, etc.'<sup>1</sup> sprouting. Dugmore recalled in 1870 that the Settlers were earnest and energetic in their first attempts to make a success of their farming ventures, and soon garden plots had sprung up throughout the settlement. If a lack of agricultural equipment and draught animals had initially hindered the cultivation of larger areas, this situation was eventually remedied, so that after the initial failure of the first crop, summer planting could be undertaken on a wider scale.

While some of the wealthier Settlers had brought out livestock, the numbers involved were small, and were only to form a nucleus for the improvement of local stock. Livestock for general utility would have to be purchased locally. This was found to be a relatively inexpensive business. Philipps had obviously had prior warning of the low cost of acquiring cattle. Realising the urgent necessity for acquiring a span of oxen for the pursuit of his farming operations, he bargained with the Dutch farmer who carried his family to their location,<sup>2</sup>

"I was anxious to purchase a black span of 12 [oxen] which drew Potgiter's waggon, as well as for their colour<sup>3</sup> as their beauty and altho' I offered the large sum of £40 for 12 I could not persuade him. In Britain the 12 would have produced at one time £300."

Philipps was overjoyed, when on reaching his location, he found that

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.71.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.65.

<sup>3</sup> Philipps came from Pembrokeshire, which had by the eighteenth century its own characteristic breed of middle-horned black cattle. See Ernle, Lord, English Farming: Past and Present, p.179.

his son had met with greater success,<sup>1</sup>

"...he asked me if I had passed 12 black oxen, he had purchased them the day before for 390 Rixdollars, or £39 [English] and hoped he had done right. Never was anything so apropos."

Philipps was able to purchase his livestock at the following prices. Sheep at between 5s. and 6s. each, cows for 24s. each, oxen for 60s. each, and calves for 4s. each. He noted that the equivalent of the Cape ox would sell in Smithfield market for between £25 and £30.<sup>2</sup> At these prices the stocking of their farms presented no problems to the wealthier Settlers, but for those who had little money at all, it still required that they group together for the purchasing of their draught animals. Hastings recalled the group purchase of four oxen from Piet Retief in Grahamstown for the sum of 120 Rixdollars,<sup>3</sup> while Stubbs noted that their first draught oxen were taken from those provided for slaughtering as a part of their rations.<sup>4</sup> For those who had enterprise and little else, a new avenue opened itself for the acquisition of livestock. The Settlers had soon come to realise that many of the common features of everyday life in the rapidly industrializing culture which had spawned them, represented rarities in the lives of the Dutch frontier farmers. Watches, the new Sheffield knives, and the very fabrics which were the hall mark of the new era, were eagerly sought after by the Dutch farmers, and as early as October 1820 there is evidence of Settlers undertaking trading excursions into the interior amongst these farmers. Most of this

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.67.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.71.

<sup>3</sup> Ayliff, J., op.cit., pp.65-6.

<sup>4</sup> Stubbs, T., op.cit., p.19.

trade was now undertaken by barter, and in this way Settlers were able to accumulate herds and flocks of Dutch cattle and sheep.<sup>1</sup>

The demand for livestock was bound to have its influence on prices. Writing in June, 1820, Philipps noted,<sup>2</sup>

"Cattle and sheep are increasing in price rapidly, and must if more Settlers come out. Horses have become extravagantly dear. I gave £10 for mine which before I arrived could be bought for £5."

The influence of rising prices and the distances involved in journeying into the interior to undertake trade with the Dutch farmers, turned Settler eyes to a potential market for cattle which was nearer home. Across the Fish River lay the Xhosa tribes, cattle farmers in their own rights.

Bartering for cattle was not a new aspect of frontier life. Trade was eagerly sought after by individuals on both sides of the Fish River long before the arrival of the Settlers, but the colonial officials had seen that while this interchange brought prosperity, it also brought enmity, thefts, and the intermingling of the two races, which was strategically undesirable.<sup>3</sup> When outright prohibition had failed to stop this contact,<sup>4</sup> an attempt was made in 1817 to organise a regular fair at Grahamstown at six month intervals.<sup>5</sup> This was inconvenient for most Settlers who needed a more regular trade to meet their cattle requirements. There was also the additional

<sup>1</sup>Butler, G., op.cit., pp. 193-4.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. I, p.201.

<sup>3</sup>See supra, Ch. I, pp.4-5.

<sup>4</sup>All contact between the two racial groups had been prohibited by a placat of the D.E.I.C. administration in 1778. This was followed by similar legislation from the British.

<sup>5</sup>Walker, E.A., op.cit., p.154.

inducement that besides cattle the Xhosa had ivory to barter. Thus while cattle prices rose within the colony, there was no immediate reason to increase the value paid for these cattle to the Xhosa, and the profitability of such ventures increased. Passes were also granted to Xhosa to enter the colony to procure the red clay they used for cosmetic purposes from the pits which were in close proximity to several of the locations. Stubbs has pointed out that these people brought cattle and ivory with them to barter, not for the clay, but for trinkets, beads, and buttons.<sup>1</sup> It was inevitable that the Settlers living in close proximity should be tempted to indulge in such trade. Once this initial step had been taken, the next, of trading expeditions into Xhosa territory, followed naturally. The growth of this trade was inevitable following the failure of the first attempts at cultivation and the increasing reliance on livestock. It was not without its hazards, as the frontier was patrolled to prevent such trade and the incursion of Xhosa into the colony. The death of Stubbs' father when returning from one of these expeditions in June, 1823,<sup>2</sup> bears testimony to this. It may nevertheless be safely assumed that a fair proportion of the cattle finding their way onto the settlements to meet the requirements of the Settlers, were of Xhosa origin.

For the party of Scots who had been settled away from the other locations, in the Baviaan's Kloof, the procurement of livestock was an easier matter owing to their closer proximity to the Dutch farming communities of Cradock, Tarka, and Graaff Reinet. Their

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<sup>1</sup>Stubbs, T., op.cit., p.26.

<sup>2</sup>McGeoch, R.T., The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs 1820-1877, pp.3-4.

leader, Thomas Pringle, noted that having fulfilled their first necessity of erecting crude dwellings to shelter themselves from the elements in this mountainous region,<sup>1</sup>

"The object next in urgency was to provide ourselves with a sufficient number of horses and draught-cattle for our immediate wants, and with breeding cattle and sheep to commence farm-stock. For this purpose each family sent one of their number over to the Tarka, a district rich in flocks and herds, to make purchases; and with the assistance of one or two of our Hottentots for interpreters, this necessary business was satisfactorily transacted. Good draught oxen cost us on an average about £2 each; cows £1; sheep (broad tailed) about 3s.; and ordinary country horses from £3 to £7. Ten or a dozen stout watch dogs were also obtained."

As has been mentioned above,<sup>2</sup> several of the Settlers brought livestock with them from Britain for breeding purposes within the colony. The most important of these animals were the woolled sheep, but cattle, pigs, and poultry, were also brought with them. Major Pigot had brought with him two bulls, one of the Devon breed and the other a Fatherland or Friesian, together with a small flock of merino sheep.<sup>3</sup> There is also evidence of him owning at least one Alderney cow, which died on 9 October, 1820.<sup>4</sup> The death of this animal within the first year, and the mention of it in his daughter's diary, suggests that it was an animal brought with the family from Britain. It has been claimed that these merinos of Major Pigot's were the first of that breed introduced into the eastern districts of the colony.<sup>5</sup> The diary of Sophia Pigot mentions the arrival from Algoa

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<sup>1</sup> Pringle, T., A Narrative of a Residence, pp. 45-6.

<sup>2</sup> See supra, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Rainier, M., The Journals of Sophia Pigot, p.73.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.72.

<sup>5</sup> Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.305 suggests that Pigot bought his merinos from the Somerset Farm. This is refuted by Rainier.

Bay of 'the English sheep and bulls' on 29 October, 1820. If the claims of the Pigot flock master, Charles Webb, are correct, and that these were merinos,<sup>1</sup> then these sheep had certainly arrived earlier than those brought into the colony by the returning governor Somerset, in December, 1821.

There is also a strong possibility that the merinos of Pigot were not the only ones introduced during 1820. Miles Bowker had commenced sheep farming with merinos at Cherborough Park in Devon, after his marriage in 1800.<sup>2</sup> There is therefore a strong possibility that a few of these sheep were taken with him when he set sail for South Africa. His purchase of two merino rams from those introduced into the colony by Lord Charles Somerset<sup>3</sup> might well only have been an augmentation to those already in his possession.

The rams and bulls imported by Pigot were driven slowly to the settlement and only reached there on 29 October, 1820, after having been rested at Algoa Bay.<sup>4</sup> Thomas Philipps chose to transport his small stock in one of the wagons carrying his possessions.<sup>5</sup> Great care was taken for the welfare of these precious beasts, both on board the ships and after their arrival in Algoa Bay. Philipps recalls some of the problems besetting the livestock on board the

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<sup>1</sup>Rainier, M., op.cit., pp. 125-6.

<sup>2</sup>Mitford-Barborton, I., Commandant Holden Bowker, p.11.

<sup>3</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.305.

<sup>4</sup>Rainier, M., op.cit., p.73.

<sup>5</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., pp.125-6.

transport ships in his journal,<sup>1</sup>

"Friday 17th March. One of my sheep had received a hurt long since, which gradually got worse, and living so long on hay, he did not improve. In order to save his life [sic] I cut his throat...

Saturday 18th March. The ship has rolled so much that one of my Ewes received a blow, but I hope she will recover, altho' with the loss of her lamb...

Thursday 23rd March. My last bag of hay is up today, and cannot last more than four days, however there are plenty of peas etc..."

Fortunately for Philipps, land was sighted on Sunday 26 March. Once Algoa Bay had been reached, his animals were taken on shore,<sup>2</sup>

"I took my five sheep on shore and my greyhound, and we were highly amused with the surprise of the animals when they again came on grass."

One of his rams went wild and fled the camp, and was only recaptured with great difficulty. Algoa Bay was only a respite. Soon preparations were made for the trek overland to the locations. On May 4, 1820, Philipps loaded his five sheep, one sow, cocks and hens, dogs and puppies, into one of the five wagons taking his possessions and farming equipment to the Zuurveld.<sup>3</sup> It was soon proved that bumping wagons could inflict as much injury on the livestock as rolling ships,<sup>4</sup>

"On getting the Sheep out of the Waggon to graze I found my favourite little Ewe with her leg broken and soon afterwards another Ewe died all by the violent jolting [of the Wagon]."

A year later Philipps lost his sow,<sup>5</sup>

"...I have lost a sow which I brought out by her swallowing a bone, she was a beautiful animal and I would have sold

<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., pp. 35-6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.47.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.49.

<sup>4</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., p.131.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Vol. II, pp.14-15.

her for £20. I have three of her breed luckily but not as perfect as she was..."

Pigs were very scarce on the eastern frontier prior to the arrival of the Settlers. Philipps commented on this and went on to suggest that he was determined to pay particular attention to pig breeding, as he saw the weather as being ideal for the salting and curing of ham and bacon for the greater part of the year. The necessary salt for this curing could be obtained cheaply at the salt pans outside Port Elizabeth. A wagon load could be had for 4s.<sup>1</sup> and the cured products could be sold in Cape Town at between 2d. and 3d. per pound.<sup>2</sup>

Both the pigs and poultry were prolific. As with pigs, poultry was very scarce on the frontier prior to the arrival of the Settlers. Philipps was astounded at the price of poultry on his arrival,<sup>3</sup>

"...they sold on our arrival Geese 24s. a couple, Turkeys 30s., Ducks 7s., Fowls 6s. I have one duck and cannot procure another without going 30 miles. Fowls from our sea stock and we now have 20 or 30 breeding hens [July 1821] - they bring out every egg to the number of 25 so that you may suppose the increase,..."

There is also reference to the breeding of poultry to be found in the diary of Sophia Pigot.<sup>4</sup> Here particular emphasis seems to have been laid on the breeding of ducks and turkeys.

Those Settlers with a knowledge of farming as practiced in Britain found farming conditions on the eastern frontier, in what

<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.77.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, p.15.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. II, p.15.

<sup>4</sup> Rainier, M., op.cit., pp. 73-5.

they considered, a primitive state. Philipps singled out the agricultural equipment for criticism in a letter written in November, 1820. Commenting on the yoke, he wrote,<sup>1</sup>

"The yoke is a strait round pole which is laid on their [the oxen] neck, two strait sticks are put thro' it on each side of the neck with notches on them, they are fastened by a thong made of Hide, thus the strait pole rests on the neck, and the animal has a high hump behind it on the top of the Shoulder against which it draws, but the thong on drawing hard presses the wind-pipe which prevents much exertion. Our own form is evidently superior, but without the necessity for that thickness which we give them. We found difficulty in getting wood that would easily bend, and we have universally adopted the Dutch mode for the present only."

Commenting on the plough, Philipps wrote,<sup>2</sup>

"The Plough has only one handle and is the rudest implement ever seen, they may very well put 14 oxen to draw it - they force it through with a vengeance. The Dutch allow that 6 or 8 oxen will do for our ploughs, but they allege they do twice the work with theirs and if tearing the soil to pieces may be called ploughing, they are right. I cannot however do them the justice to say that they listen with great attention to our suggestions..."

Philipps also noted that the harrow in use was still equipped with wooden teeth and that there was a conspicuous lack of the use of rollers for evening the seed bed prior to planting.<sup>3</sup> He also noted that leather thongs had replaced cordage in general farm usage, and that rather than the flail, grain was threshed by being trampled out under the hooves of horses or cattle. Commenting on this, he wrote in 1822,<sup>4</sup>

"We are in fact gone back to primitive times, the plough is rude like what we have seen in old prints, the threshing floor is enclosed with a mud wall only, in the field and

<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.74.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. I, pp.220-1.

<sup>3</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.76.

<sup>4</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 212-3.

the grain trodden out by cattle as recorded in Scriptures - we have no coin, everything is done by barter - as Homer values Glaucus' shield at so many Oxen, so do we estimate everything, an Hottentot is hired by the year for so many Cows - I have at this moment two labourers working for so many pigs or beeves."

Surprise was also shown at the different composition of the countryside. Here, at the Cape, there were no neat tidy patchworks of cultivated fields interspersed with pasture lands, and strictly defined by the stone walls and hedgerows. The Settlers had to contend with a totally different climate to that to which they were used; one which dictated a very different pattern and style of farming. It was only with the coming of the barbed wire and netting fences, introduced later in the nineteenth century, that enclosures became possible and practicable in the South African context. Philipps wrote in 1820,<sup>1</sup>

"As a Farmer here never dreams of enclosures, his Cattle and Sheep are herded by day, and brought home to a kraal at night which is in general composed of dead hedges of the Thorny Mimosa. Here exposed to the wet they lie without fodder or bedding. I long for a good farm yard and sheds, without it we shall never have good farming...."

Another significant difference lay in the field of animal husbandry. Here the Dutch farmers' reliance on his Hottentot and slave labourers in the herding, tending, and milking of cattle was quickly noted by the Settlers. Ayliff recounts the amusing experiences which could occur at milking time,<sup>2</sup> while Philipp, as the serious farmer took a dimmer view of this aspect.<sup>3</sup>

"...owing to the Dutch practice with them I cannot succeed in milking them, without letting the calf draw at one...."

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., pp.76-7.

<sup>2</sup> Ayliff, J., op.cit., pp.69-70.

<sup>3</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. I, p.224.

whilst the girl milks the other - another practice is to let the calves suck first and take the remainder they allege that the Cow will not give milk if you withdraw the calf to rear it as we are accustomed, and if the calf dies, the Cow is turned dry immediately. Now all this is complete ignorance and when we have proper buildings and heifers to calve first with us, we shall convince them it is owing to mismanagement - ...

Philipps noted that by November, 1820 the price of cows had increased from 24s.<sup>1</sup> to between £1 6s. and £2, and for cross-bred animals, which were now becoming popular, anything up to £3 and more.<sup>2</sup> Philipps was initially proud to be the owner of two 'handsome ones of a Devon Brown' which he had bought in calf for 26s. each, but these had yet to calve.<sup>3</sup>

"The Cows have sadly disappointed us, it would take 8 or 10 female Europeans to milk 50 Cows and then we should not have as much as 20 European cows would give - they have a flush at first but the dryness of the grass makes it soon deminish - the two hind legs must be tied to prevent kicking - ... - the Hottentot men only can manage them, this we cannot remedy and must be content until our own scorsing<sup>4</sup> become Cows, or, until we can get European crosses which are increasing fast, but I have not had one of this kind that has calved yet, altho' I expect every day."

Despite the initial problems confronting the Settlers, the lack of agricultural equipment, draught animals, and a guiding hand and advice in applying themselves to their new found tasks, there was a general air of confidence throughout the settlement during 1820. There had been regular rains and if there was disappointment in the

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<sup>1</sup>See supra, p.29. The increase being between 2 October and 22 November, 1820.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.77.

<sup>3</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, pp.26-7.

<sup>4</sup>Scossing or scorsing were the words from Old English still in use in the dialects of the south-west of England in the nineteenth century, meaning barter or exchange.

relatively small acreage of land under wheat cultivation, there was general pride in the success of the small gardens which had sprung up in close proximity to every cottage. Vegetables flourished, and in the dry spells it was an easy matter to irrigate these gardens from the streams which flowed in close proximity to many of the Settler homes. Philipps wrote enthusiastically on the success of his garden, despite the initial failure of many of the seeds.<sup>1</sup> By November, 1820 he was already expressing an opinion on the most suitable time for planting, and the most suitable crops,<sup>2</sup>

"August in my opinion is the best month for sowing in the garden - and wheat in the field and Barley in September and we shall reap to the latter end of January or beginning of February - however there are different opinions on this head...Oats I am confident would answer well here - it is seldom grown for seed, but cut green and made hay of. We want an importation of real good Barley and some potatoes..."

Other settlers were also enthusiastic about their gardens. Sophia Pigot's diary has an entry during August, 1820, 'I digging my garden',<sup>3</sup> while by September 10, 1820 the Rev. Boardman and his neighbour, Alexander Bisset R.N., had planted, in addition to two and a half acres of wheat, 100 vine stocks, potatoes, peas, beans, pumpkins, melons, turnips, cabbages, onions, beetroots, and cauliflowers.<sup>4</sup> Philipps wrote in July, 1821,<sup>5</sup>

"You would be delighted with the gardens...crops of vegetables succeed each other every month now. Potatoes

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<sup>1</sup> See supra, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. I, p.231.

<sup>3</sup> Rainier, M., op.cit., p.68.

<sup>4</sup> Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.22.

<sup>5</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, pp.11-13.

all the year round - the increase you will wonder at, when I tell you that Mr Ellis gave me a little bag not a 1/4 of a Winchester at the Bay, ... Capt. Evatt gave me about the same quantity, I smiled when they pressed it on me, supposing I could get some here. I found, however they were 10/- a winchester, but none could be procured at that price when I passed through - they were planted - We had resolution not to taste above a few dozen - they were again planted - I again proposed abstinence - they are again in the ground above a month and occupy 2 acres - all this within 12 months if they bear then [at the] present price I shall have enough to set, enough to cut, and sell £50 worth - they are a certain crop twice a year.

A cabbage sold here when we came up for 2/- You would have smiled and pitied us to see us eat our mutton without potatoes or greens - the turnips were sown too thick, the thinning of them procured us the first vegetable dish, next the bean tops, and then a plate of radishes was placed on the table...in less than six months we had everything...You can have no conception of the delicacy of every vegetable excepting the parsnip, which is rather starchy at times....I can grow enough to feed 20 families, but am too far from this place [to Grahamstown] to send any for sale, but indeed everyone growing, a sale is difficult..."

Philipps summed up the general attitude of the settlement when he wrote, on November 25, 1820, that,<sup>1</sup>

"...We are going on prosperously altogether, altho' we suffer much from the high prices which we are paying for everything imported."

Even as he wrote, a problem had presented itself to the Settlers, which was rapidly to turn into disaster. A fungus disease, more commonly known as 'rust', began attacking the wheat crops. Coming to the crops which were, at best, only a partial success, feelings were bound to run high. Having been told to only plough once and to sow the seed thinly,<sup>2</sup> their wheat had failed to stool.

Although it had grown following good rains in October, it remained stunted, and by November was coming into ear when only twelve

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.80.

<sup>2</sup> See supra, p. 27.

inches high.<sup>1</sup>

It should be borne in mind that, situated on the small allocations of land, the object of which being to encourage arable rather than pastoral farming, this crop of wheat represented the first opportunity for the Settler to gain a cash reward from his farming activity. Being reliant, as he was, on rations from the Cape government for the greater part of his subsistence, the failure of this wheat crop also determined the necessity for a longer and greater dependence on these rations. The shortage of wheaten flour in the colony, and the failure of its inclusion in their rations for nearly two months during September and October, 1820, was already leading to sickness and distress.<sup>2</sup> This had enhanced the hopes of the Settlers for the success of their own crops. By early December it was clear that the first 'cash crop' was lost.<sup>3</sup> Philipps described the progress of the disease in a letter of April 25, 1821,<sup>4</sup>

"...a blight, called here very appropriately the rust, attacked our corn. It is exactly like the rust of Iron and appears at the root, and soon covers the stalk, and the ear dries up. Some say it is owing to the sun's hot rays after a...rain. However it is the most destructive of all visitations, for the whole of my crops which had wonderfully improved...and promised a fair return were totally spoiled, that they were not worth cutting for the straw and the Cattle would scarcely eat it, altho' part was green."

For the poorer Settlers it was a great disappointment and a direct threat to their existence, many not having the necessary funds available for another serious attempt at cultivating considerable

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.75.

<sup>2</sup> Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.26.

<sup>4</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.89.

acreages of land. They now had to rely increasingly on the supply of rations and their gardens, while they chose to remain on their locations, or were compelled to in terms of the stringent regulations made by the government to keep them there,<sup>1</sup> in the case of the indentured artisans. To add to their misfortune, the government announced on December 21, 1820, that it would close all accounts of deposits, with a view to discontinuing the issue of rations.<sup>2</sup> This was owing to the fact that most of the parties had overdrawn on the value of their deposit monies. By December 31, 1820, the balance due by the Settlers for provisions issued up to that date amounted to over £24,000, and ranged from £1,279 owing for Willson's Party, to 30s. for General Campbell's Party.<sup>3</sup> Owing to the failure of the crops, the government agreed to the continuation of the rations against payment, or undoubted security.<sup>4</sup>

This new regulation provided a strong incentive for the poorer group of independent Settlers to vacate their locations, wherever there seemed a remote possibility of finding alternative employment. For the wealthier type of Settler, it offered an encouragement to reduce their labour forces to only those required for the continuation of their farming activities. Philipps wrote in April, 1821,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The high salaries paid to artisans in the colony were a strong inducement to the labourers who had been indentured to the heads of parties, to break their engagements. The regulations stipulated that no one could leave his location without a pass from the head of his party, or the district without one from the landdrost.

<sup>2</sup>Theal, G.M. Records of the Cape Colony, Vol.XIII, pp.337-8.

<sup>3</sup>Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.26.

<sup>4</sup>Records, Vol. XIII, p.338.

<sup>5</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.97.

"I have only 5 men at home, the rest I can have at any time I want them, I shall run no risk of losing my land. Every Head has been obliged to dismiss some of his men in consequence of the total failure of the first crops."

For the wealthier group of Settlers there was an inducement to try again. To men like Philipps, the first crops were seen as a failure even before the rust attacked them. In consideration of their wider resolves to establish themselves as gentlemen farmers, along the lines of the English class system, there was no question but to start once more.<sup>1</sup> As early as December 14, 1820, Pigot had again begun ploughing.<sup>2</sup> These men had the necessary capital to invest in another crop, and there was the inducement of an inevitable rise in the price of wheat in the eastern districts of the colony. In addition, men such as Pigot and Philipps had not relied entirely on their wheat crops. Pigot was to reap good barley and oats crops,<sup>3</sup> while Philipps would seem to have had some success with maize.<sup>4</sup> Miss Philipps wrote in February, 1821,<sup>5</sup>

"The wheat alone has suffered, and we have Barley, Rice and Indian Corn to subsist on till America can supply us, and there is still some wheat to be procured. The Indian Corn makes very excellent bread mixed with a little Wheat, we have grown some in the Garden which has produced abundantly."

By April, 1821, Philipps had learnt the truth regarding the rust in wheat crops in the colony,<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hattersley, A.F., An Illustrated Social History of South Africa, p.85.

<sup>2</sup>Rainier, M., op.cit., p.75.

<sup>3</sup>Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.27.

<sup>4</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.85.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, Vol. II, pp.309-10.

"Now we have become acquainted with the practical farmers we find that it [rust] is partial every year, but few remember to such an extent as this year, for the whole colony suffered alike - the Dutch treat it with the utmost indifference, if it fails they are contented to eat fat mutton, without bread, they merely sow enough for their own use, never having till lately a Market..."

Philipps sought an explanation to the rust in the prevailing weather conditions,<sup>1</sup>

"...the weather as to hot and cold is most remarkably uncertain one day hot summer the very next sharp Autumn, this has no bad effect on the human constitution whatever, but I think it is a great measure the cause of the failure of the crops of Corn -"

The close of the year 1820 brought no material relief to the Settlers. Commenting on their position to the colonial secretary, the Cape acting governor Sir Rufane Donkin, wrote,<sup>2</sup>

"The failure of the harvest will be most severely felt by the new Settlers, whose crops have been, I may say, wholly destroyed by the blight, so that scarcely any of them expect to reap even the quantity of seed put into the ground.

The failure of their first effort is much to be lamented, and, in its consequences, must be attended with considerable expense and trouble to this Government. I beg leave to assure Your Lordship, that whatever of the former may be incurred, shall be watched by me with the utmost attention."

With no pecuniary income and debts mounting up as they continued to rely on government rations for their subsistence, the future for many Settlers certainly looked bleak. While the Cape government had agreed to the continuation of rations, and this had relieved all of the anxiety of wondering where their next meal was to come from, it must nevertheless have come to represent an increasing psychological burden for many. Particularly as most of these rations

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, Vol. II, p.333.

<sup>2</sup> Records of the Cape Colony, Vol. XIII, p.346.

were only granted against the mortgage of their future crops and property.<sup>1</sup>

The new year, 1821, was heralded with mixed feelings by the Settlers. The majority of the Settlers, being townsfolk, who had no agricultural training or links with the land, were naturally despondent. Philipps wrote,<sup>2</sup>

"Out of 5000 people there must be a great many who entered into the scheme at the solicitation of others or without reading, or maturing their ideas. From such as these you will find complaints..."

But there were those who chose to remain on the land. For many of the Settlers, coming from their working class backgrounds in Britain, the lure of the ownership of land must have been irresistible. Especially so in the light of the development of class and political awareness which marked the early nineteenth century in Britain. Undoubtedly, the sight of land which was 'not another England', would have disheartened many from the outset. The high wages paid to skilled artisans in the colony also offered a strong incentive to many to abandon their original intentions of wresting a living from the land. Philipps commented on this as follows,<sup>3</sup>

"A great many tradesmen came out who could find no employment on their land, and they are flocking to the Towns. It is from this discription of People that complaints will go home to England, but I will venture to pronounce that Farmers, Carpenters, Masons, in short all the Country trades in the County of Pembroke will be most amply recompensed by emigrating to this Colony, and will always find employment. £6 a month is the common rate of pay for Carpenters and Masons. Many of them earn enough for their families, and if saving, to buy a couple of Cows every month."

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<sup>1</sup>Hockly, H.E., op.cit., p.67.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, p.cit., p.84.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.79.

Within a short while Settlers began requesting permission to abandon their locations in search of pursuing their old trades, or for gaining the necessary cattle and sheep, by barter, to carry on their farming operations on a pastoral basis.<sup>1</sup> Another attempt at growing wheat was only a privilege for those who had the necessary capital and equipment. An increasing tendency towards stock-farming became evident in the settlement during the course of 1821.

Philipps wrote in April, that he was again preparing for the planting of a wheat crop,<sup>2</sup>

"I am determined to try Corn again, I shall begin to sow in May and keep on a little for June and July to try each month. I am now busy ploughing with two teams of 6 oxen each,..."

Where he had failed in the preparation of his land the previous year, Philipps and others were determined that this should not be a factor in bringing on the failure of their second crop. The land was duly well prepared, by ploughing several times and the application of repeated harrowings, to provide a smooth planting surface. There was no scarcity of rain and the crops progressed favourably.

Writing in July, 1821, Philipps commented,<sup>3</sup>

"We are jogging on very fairly considering we have a famine and such a one which I am happy to say, no one remembers, so of course it is not likely to happen again, at least so general...I have sown as much corn as anyone - I will deserve success, if I can't obtain it - We shall not know if we can reap until the Reapers are in the field so sudden does the rust set on the ear - we only want some return for our labours, to enjoy ourselves extremely well in this ( ) and uncommon climate."

By September reports were reaching Grahamstown of the outbreak of

<sup>1</sup>See Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, Entries for 1821, pp.27ff.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.97.

<sup>3</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, p.4.

another attack of rust on the wheat crops. On the 13th September in a letter to his sister, Philipps wrote,<sup>1</sup>

"...Sorry I am to say that I must again inform you of the probable failure of our crops of wheat, mine are looking luxuriant, healthy and everything that could be wished, but at the moment I am writing I dread the visitation of this scourge called the rust..."

The dread of another outbreak of rust was all too evident in a letter written on 18 September, although it is clear from it, that Philipps had no other complaints to make regarding his situation,<sup>2</sup>

"...Altogether there does not exist on the face of God's earth such another fine climate as this...when we get our vineyards in bearing and our garden fruits and grow Indian corn and barley - we must forget wheaten bread and the annoying rust - unfortunately for us the two former grains are so scarce that we cannot procure them for seed. I have a little of both but not sufficient for our subsistence - We are at a most awful period indeed and if the rust is general I know not what we are to go on."

An entry in the letter of 19 September, contained the news of the rust,<sup>3</sup>

"Grieved beyond measure I am to inform you that the rust is again making a regular progress,...there is no doubt but it will be general again and gloom and despair appears in all ranks here, but chiefly with People like myself who derive income from our land, Mechanics are doing well and getting up in the world while we are sinking fast - this year I looked to deriving £300, but it will all be gone and subsistence is now precarious, this is a result that no human foresight could foretell, to what the necessaries of life when in possession of fruitful land and promising crops, appear so inexplicable...A second time too - and in a successive year when such a general calamity was never known before..."

As if in a mocking gesture, the rust had appeared three months earlier, that was, early enough to tempt those on the land into the

<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.104.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, p.45.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp.45-6.

planting of spring crops. To those who could get it, and afford the expenditure, it was generally believed that the rust was less destructive to barley crops.<sup>1</sup> There was now also the possibility of planting crops of maize. For many there was no possibility of a third crop, and aided by the reduction of rations by a half<sup>2</sup> in October, 1821, more people were encouraged to leave the land. Philipps had lost between 70 and 80 acres of wheat. This, even to a wealthier Settler, such as Philipps, was a serious blow. Writing in October, 1821, he commented,<sup>3</sup>

"...the loss of this such a golden crop would win even an English Farmer what must be the consequence with us who have been already 2 years without deriving any income from the Land certain of being a third and even a chance of another failure - in short wheat, by which grain we can alone hope to gain an income beyond mere subsistence presents so many obstacles from rust and drought occasionally that it is in vain to trust to it,..."

Pigot, too, had suffered severe losses. By May, 1821, he had ploughed and fenced one hundred acres,<sup>4</sup> and it can be safely assumed that a large proportion of this land had been under wheat. Considerable efforts had also been made by Pigot for the improvement of this land, for during July, 1821, his daughter, Sophia, noted in her diary that their carts were involved in carrying lime from Bathurst to Pigot Park.<sup>5</sup> An entry for 2 October in her diary is somewhat confusing, stating '...in the ploughed field evening, cutting green wheat.'<sup>6</sup> This would suggest that either this was a

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, p.50.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.107.

<sup>3</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, p.51.

<sup>4</sup> Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.32.

<sup>5</sup> Rainier, M., op.cit., p.80.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.90.

later planting, or that some of the wheat affected by rust had fallen and germinated in the ploughed field. This was presumably being cut to feed poultry.<sup>1</sup>

Had the rust not attacked the wheat of the Settlers in September, there would still only have been a poor crop. The greater part of the second half of the year passed in drought. Philipps wrote in December, 1821,<sup>2</sup>

"I am sorry to say that our garden this year, like all others, produces nothing, we have had so little rain that vegetation is totally different from last year. Would you believe that we have had no rain to penetrate far into the ground since June, and one hundred miles from us animals have died for want of food....I sowed 6 Winchesters of Barley, my return from this will not be more than I sowed, it is so short I cannot reap it, my men are pulling it up by the roots. The peaches and figs in the old Gardens are dropping off for want of moisture. My potatoes failed in quantity, judging from last year and the quantity sown, I expected 240 measures, I gathered only 60. In short two such different seasons could not be supposed in the same country,..."

Philipps had noted in November, 1820 that the weather was not to be relied upon. He mentioned that while the climate could be considered as a great ally of the farmer, a regular supply of water by irrigation was essential to ensure a return.<sup>3</sup> What he had not seemed to realise, was the temporary nature of Southern African streams as a source for irrigation.<sup>4</sup> By January, 1822, he reported that every garden had been scorched by the drought. The general lack of knowledge of South African farming conditions, coupled with a lack of capital and the necessary equipment, had acted against the building

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.73ff.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.109.

<sup>3</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. I, p.310.

<sup>4</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.109.

of dams by the Settlers. There was no assured irrigation to any part of the settlement in these formative years.

In contrast to the previous Christmas, which had been marked by optimism by the wealthier type of Settler, like Philipps, the Christmas of 1821 was dismal. Plans were being made by certain of the Settlers for another move to a more hospitable country. The two most favoured countries being Van Dieman's Land or South America.<sup>1</sup> Philipps wrote,<sup>2</sup>

"Last Xmas we could joke on the loss of our Harvest - but it is very far from a joke this time, had it not been for the visitation of the Rust we had really almost overcome all our difficulties and in spite of drought etc. I could have said that I should have been independent, but it is in vain to regret what human power cannot remedy."

The end of the year 1821 saw a fall in the price of cattle. Philipps attributed this to the Settlers having stocked their farms, or being unable to purchase more.<sup>3</sup> Other likely factors were the drought and the increase in depredations by Xhosa tribesmen from across the border. The earliest thefts of cattle to affect the Settlers took place in the vicinity of the clay pits. Xhosa were allowed into the colony twice a year to attend the Grahamstown fair. Special passes were also granted to them to enter the colony for the specific purpose of gathering the red clay from the pits in close proximity to several of the Settler locations. Mahoney's party was situated in close proximity to these pits, and it was from this party that the first cattle were stolen. There is every reason to believe that the theft of these cattle was connected to Xhosa

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.111.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, pp.77-8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.81.

resentment to the presence of the Settlers, and the wider political motive of retaliation for the loss of the Ceded Territory following the war of 1819. There was also the factor that cattle belonging to another tribe or group were considered fair game. Neither, it should be remembered, were stock thefts something new. The initial presence of a large body of whites on the frontier during 1820 had probably served to discourage stock thefts, particularly as there were then very few animals on these locations. Thus in the very short term, Somerset's policy of a dense settlement of arable farmers on the frontier might be seen to have succeeded. The failure of the first crop had, however, stimulated the Settlers' quest for cattle and during 1821 increasing numbers of cattle were finding their way onto the locations.

This factor, together with the increasing contact between Settlers and their Xhosa neighbours, particularly by those Settlers located closest to the frontier, such as the Mahoney party, had shown to the Xhosa the relative vulnerability of the whole settlement. Stubbs complained of the inadequacy and inefficiency of the military force sent to regulate the activities of the Xhosa at the clay pits,<sup>1</sup> while the Settlers were, generally, poorly armed.<sup>2</sup> The build up of herds of cattle in close proximity to the frontier was to do much to increase the frequency of cattle thefts. The Xhosa were to take advantage of this ideal situation over the next twenty years. The Settlers stood, initially, as pawns in the wider political conflict between black and white in Southern Africa.

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<sup>1</sup>Stubbs, T., op.cit., pp.25-6.

<sup>2</sup>Mitford-Barborton, I., Comdt. Holden Bowker, p.52.



By 14 March, 1821, the Xhosa collecting clay from the clay pits had taken 14 of Thomas Mahoney's cattle.<sup>1</sup> This is the first recorded loss from the Settlers. The Settlers, not being allowed to employ black or slave labour, other than Khoi, who could be recruited from the nearby mission station at Theopolis, had increasingly resorted to the use of their own children to guard their herds and flocks. This was done as the Khoi were found to be unwilling workers where their services could be obtained. Young children were sent out with their lessons to tend the cattle, until the murder of one determined that it should be guns rather than books which were taken to the fields. Thomas Stubbs recalled,<sup>2</sup>

"It was now arranged that I and my Brother, William were to herd the Cattle, we had to take all our books with us to learn lessons set by my Mother, and say them when we came home at night, this went on for some time untill a young Lad named Williams, while herding cattle at Stoney Vale, (he was reading a book), was murdered by the Caffers and his body thrown into a Vley...Our books were now exchanged for Guns..."

The employment of Khoi as labourers was further restricted in terms of pass laws which had been introduced in 1797 and 1809 with the intention of restricting the free movement of these people about the colony. This had tended to restrict Settler recruitment to the Theopolis mission station. The early murder of Settlers and their families was severely felt on the labour forces at their disposal. This was particularly true once more of the Settlers had started moving away from the locations. Those remaining were largely prevented from employing any but white labourers and these too were few and also expensive, as any additional labour not brought out under the original

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<sup>1</sup> Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.30.

<sup>2</sup> Stubbs, T., op.cit., p.24.

settlement scheme would have to have their passages out, and other incidentals paid for by the Settler sponsoring them. Most could not afford this. The original intention of the scheme of giving allocations of one hundred acres had implied that such an amount would suffice for the satisfactory employment of a family. The nature of the climate had increasingly called into question this assumption, and by 1825 Lord Charles Somerset had agreed to the enlargement of the locations of those remaining on the land.<sup>1</sup> This extended the labour shortage to those who would otherwise have had too small an allocation to be severely effected by the shortage of labour. The early murder of these people was thus also felt as a loss of labour. Reporting the murder of two children from Willson's party while out herding in 1823, Philipps continued,<sup>2</sup>

"These poor people are now left without the means of taking care of their cattle. It is utterly impossible to procure Men or Boys or even Hottentots to herd. Everyone retains their own little portion of land and finds employment for their Sons either herding their cattle or in cultivating the land and the Hottentots who have activity enough to leave the idle life they lead at the Mission Schools are immediately taken by the Dutch Boors or by the Government Farm."

This lack of labour was later seen by Philipps as responsible for the delay in the full exploitation of the land.<sup>3</sup>

J.C. Chase indicated that during the course of 1821 there were some 294 cattle and 4 horses stolen from the frontier farms, that were officially recorded.<sup>4</sup> Of these Hockly has suggested that 94(?) were recovered.<sup>5</sup> This was a remarkably low figure, if the annual

<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. I, p.329.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.182.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.252.

<sup>4</sup>Chase, J.C., in Graham's Town Journal, August 30, 1838.

<sup>5</sup>Hockly, H.E., op.cit., p.89.

losses of the frontier farmers are considered over a longer period,<sup>1</sup> but it should be remembered that even the loss of small numbers to the Settlers suffering from the straits in which circumstances had placed them, was a severe blow. There was also the fact that cattle bartered illegally from the Xhosa, and lost to them again by theft, could hardly be reported to the authorities. Their losses could therefore have been far greater than actually claimed. Here it should be borne in mind that while the Xhosa can be held responsible for a large proportion of these losses, they cannot be held responsible for all of them. Considering that the majority of these Settler herders were inexperienced little children who had not grown up in this land still abounding with wild beasts, and who, unlike their Xhosa counterparts, were untutored in this task of herding cattle, losses were inevitable. It would be naive to suggest other than that a certain proportion of these animals were simply lost.

The cattle numbers of the Settlers grew rapidly after 1820. Theal reports that,<sup>2</sup>

"...many hundreds of oxen and cows were purchased and brought into the pastures of Albany."

By mid 1823 the settlement could boast of 2,950 cows, 3,230 oxen, 3,220 sheep, 650 goats, 500 pigs and 210 horses.<sup>3</sup> Certainly the major reason for this rapid increase in the number of livestock, and particularly that of cattle, was, that in addition to their use for draught and milking purposes, there was the apparent higher profitability of stock-farming. This was true particularly following

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. I, p.325.

<sup>3</sup> Hockly, H.E., op.cit., pp.89-90.

the failures in arable farming, which turned many Settlers away from this form of farming. The presence of a meat processing plant at Cradock Place on Algoa Bay and the availability of large quantities of cheap salt, together with the periodic visits of Cape butchers, meant that there was always a fair probability of an internal market, or an external market in the form of salted beef.

From the outset, the experienced farmers amongst the Settlers had asked where or what their market was to be. Philipps noted,<sup>1</sup>

"...this is the grand obstacle to our well being, the want of market, if navigation is not opened in some manner,..."

The only potential market within close proximity to the settlement was the military village of Grahamstown, where the garrison and a few merchants represented the only sector divorced from agricultural pursuits.<sup>2</sup> Here the Settlers had to face the monopoly enjoyed by the government 'Somerset Farm' which had been established in 1815 for meeting the requirements of the troops serving on the frontier for farm produce, at a time when little surplus cultivation was being undertaken by the Dutch farmers along the frontier. Philipps described the government farm as a curse,<sup>3</sup>

"...They monopolise the cattle contract as well as the corn, and we cannot sell our beeves to the Army which ought to be our market."

This lack of a market severely hampered the progress of the settlement. The failure of the wheat crop in 1820 saw most of the Settlers still in possession of good, flourishing vegetable gardens,<sup>4</sup> but since there

<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, p.13.

<sup>2</sup> Goldswain, J., The Chronicle of..., Vol. I, p.55.

<sup>3</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.139.

<sup>4</sup> See supra, pp. 39-40.

was no market within the immediate vicinity, this potential stop-gap to bolster their incomes had failed. The acting governor, Sir Rufane Donkin, had hoped to abolish Somerset Farm, but this step had been made impossible due to the failure of the Settlers to provide the necessary wheat required for the victualling of the frontier troops.<sup>1</sup> Another factor which operated in favour of the government farm, and against the Settlers, was the fact that the farm was operated mainly by military servants and Khoi labourers, who could be hired cheaply. This enabled the farm to undercut the Settlers in all sectors where competition was possible, as in the supply of vegetables. The Settlers were only allowed to employ white labour, which, particularly after 1822, when all restrictions on the abandonment of the settlement had been removed and potential workers could leave the locations in search of better wages, meant that the price of agricultural wages had risen accordingly.

Somerset Farm was eventually closed down by the governor, Somerset, in February, 1825, in response to the petitions made to him on his visit to the settlements. By then the damage had been done and the majority of the Settlers had left the locations and were independent of any necessity for an agricultural market; other than that they now represented a demand for agricultural goods themselves. The removal of the larger portion of the economically active Settlers from the land by 1823, meant that within the district of Albany there was a proportionately large non-agricultural population created, with the exception of those who moved further afield. They now came to represent a market for farmers' produce. Once the

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<sup>1</sup>Hockly, H.E., *op.cit.*, p.74.

restrictions on the movement of the Settlers had been lifted in 1821<sup>1</sup> and the market forces allowed to act freely on the supply and demand for labour, it was inevitable that the lack of a market for agricultural produce, acting in conjunction with the high wages offered to skilled artisans and labourers, rapidly drew labour away from the stagnant settlements. Added to this was the collapse of the farming system, owing to the failure of the wheat crops, which served to precipitate this movement. The new system had stabilised within three years. Cory notes that by May, 1823, of the 1004 males who had arrived in 1820, only 438 remained on the locations.<sup>2</sup> The point to be made here is that even if the settlement had succeeded from an agricultural point of view, it is doubtful if the parties would have remained long in their original forms. The lack of a local market and the high wages offered in the colony to skilled artisans and labourers would, inevitably, have had the influence of reducing the number of Settlers left on the locations. The fact that the settlement failed in its original form, meant that a large proportion of the Settlers were now released from the land to attempt other forms of occupation and to create a market for those who remained on the land.

The year 1822 was marked by a distinct increase in the incidence of Xhosa stock-thefts. The theft of cattle belonging to the missionaries stationed at the kraal of Ngqika in February led to a retaliatory raid by a patrol from the colony. This had failed in its objective of capturing the chief and only succeeded in promoting

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<sup>1</sup>Cory, G.E., The British Settlers of 1820, in C.H.B.E., Vol. XIII, p.240.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.241.

a series of cattle raids. There were fears that this action might lead to war but this had not materialised. The removal of the troops stationed at the Clay Pits Post, the Coombs Post, and the Scott's Bottom Posts,<sup>1</sup> in February, and their return only in August,<sup>2</sup> probably was also a contributory factor. Chase calculated that some 2,537 cattle and 54 horses were reported missing during the course of 1822 along the frontier,<sup>3</sup> or an increase of 2,243 cattle and 50 horses over the previous year.<sup>4</sup> Of these a fair proportion disappeared from the settlement.

Agriculturally, the year did not hold out much promise. The drought which had affected summer crops during the second half of 1821, continued. Philipps noted,<sup>5</sup>

"The drought still continues, Indian corn, cabbages etc all burnt up, we can do nothing to employ ourselves - the ground is too hard to dig or plough."

As a result of this drought, which continued into July, the best months for the sowing of winter cereals passed without an intensified effort being made at planting these crops. Philipps noted in August that the barley crop planted in April was only then coming up, while the planting of their wheat had been delayed to mid August, so that there was very little hope of a substantial return. He had ordered maize seed from Cape Town and was banking on this for his support in the coming year.<sup>6</sup> Much of the wheat which was now being planted

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<sup>1</sup>Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.42.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.47.

<sup>3</sup>Chase, J.C., in G.T.J., August 30, 1838.

<sup>4</sup>See supra, p.53.

<sup>5</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.112.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.129.

was of the Bengal variety, which was a much harder, if smaller grain. Philipps recounted the success which one farmer had had with this grain the previous year,<sup>1</sup>

"From 6 Winchesters of Bengal wheat which a Dutch farmer was luckily able to get from Cape Town last year, he reaped 240 which he sold at about one guinea per winchester..."

Unfortunately, much of the Bengal seed supplied had been eaten by the weavils so that it too came up very thinly. The wisdom of planting a hardier type of wheat was not to go untested, for as early as September reports began filtering in of attacks of rust on the wheat crops of the eastern districts. Philipps wrote early in September that,<sup>2</sup>

"I am sorry to say that although the most confident hopes were entertained by all the native farmers that the long protracted winter would eradicate the Rust, symptoms are appearing in all the native corn, the Bengal even partially but mine is too backward to judge at present. I have sown all Bengal, except a very little as an experiment, and that only by desire of the Landroost."

By the end of September Philipps' wisdom in planting the majority of his land to a hardier type of wheat was reaping its reward,<sup>3</sup>

"...the rust has appeared in my Bengal - but don't be alarmed - it is so trifling that it has had no bad effect as yet, and we really have the liveliest hopes that we shall not perish altogether. It is impossible to see a finer ear although thin in the Ground, had we better grain sent us, ..., we might have reaped enough.

The Cape wheat is again affected, some say not with that violence as before, but I have not had an opportunity of judging generally - in my neighbourhood it is all gone."

One of the Settlers who now tired of the struggle to establish himself as a farmer, was Major Pigot. Philipps noted his plight,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, p.237.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.262.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp.237-8.

"Major Pigot has given in at last, he is convinced that farming will not answer, and intends to raise only sufficient for his own consumption. Cattle he is afraid of venturing on, as his Place is the very den of the Caffres. Sheep he means to attend to, as the Caffres do not take them, but the heavy winter rains which sometimes fall make that branch very hazardous without sheds. Four years ago one man lost 7000 in one week, but he had the enormous stock of 15,000 -"

This contrasted strongly with Philipps' own excitement at the prospect of eventually being able to reap a crop.<sup>1</sup> This excitement was not altogether justified, for in spite of the harder type of wheat planted, the rust was still damaging if at least not totally destructive. By October Philipps was reaping a good barley crop and the immediate fears of want in the coming year were allayed. Not all the Settlers were so fortunate, although 1822 would seem to have been a good year for potatoes and maize as well. The problem of the lack of a market was brought forcefully into focus again in the eyes of the settlement. Philipps commented on this surplus production of maize and potatoes as follows,<sup>2</sup>

"The return, you may have read, is enormous, and it will be quite unsaleable in another year and so indeed [...] of every grain that will grow, for our markets are so limited and having no navigation we can never expect more than a bare maintenance in this country or rather it will never be worth our while to grow more than we can consume - this country will do very well for those who have never been educated with a view to anything better than the little farmer of Europe, such a person may here enjoy himself beyond comparison much more than he can at home, his land will be his own, he has very few taxes, no tythes, no poor rates, he is harrassed by no Exciseman, in short he is really independent but even if he is industrious he can have no hope of improving his condition he can never be rewarded for his industry and if he has 20 children he has no hope for them - beyond his own condition - his daughters will marry Boors, and his Sons will remain with him until they are of age to ask for a farm - which

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.139.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, p.270ff.

is seldom less than 3 or 6000 acres that is given them, they occupy it with a few cows, set a few pumpkins, build a wood cabin and plaster it with mud...then they grow a few acres of corn - their cattle increase to 500 which is perhaps as much if not generally more than the farm will maintain and that is his utmost riches with 2 or 3000 sheep, the value of all this is not more than what a farmer of 100 acres in England commands."

While Philipps derided the traditional way of life of the frontier farmer, he was also quick to note that the appearance of the Settlers had roused the older inhabitants to exertion. It was seen that this, combined with the instability of the frontier, made success impossible for a man with the designs of himself, for the establishment of a new landed aristocracy at the Cape.<sup>1</sup>

"We were for a short time blaming these people for their inactivity and could they have foreseen our arrival they might have made a little money, this and the rust has roused them to exertion, more land has been cultivated by them and what will be the result - At a good harvest what with both our exertions corn will be unsaleable, for it is quite idle to imagine that it will pay for 100 miles of land carriage to Algoa Bay, this has lately been brought to our conviction for at one time it was thought we should have a general harvest when contracts were talked of at a price that would not pay, with such losses as we have already had, with continual dread of losing our little property by the Caffres and with such prospects for our Offspring - can you wonder at our wish of removing to some other country, in our own minds there remains no doubt..."

By December at least some of the Settlers were eating bread made from wheat grown by their own efforts. The Bengal strain of wheat had at least proved partially resistant to the rust, although Philipps noted that it destroyed large parts of the stem, making the reaping of the wheat all the more difficult.<sup>2</sup>

The partial failure of another crop and the increasing intensity of the Xhosa raids, were destroying what little faith remained amongst

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, p.270ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.301.

the Settlers for the success of their labours at the Cape. Added to this was the advent of another drought in the closing months of 1822. Philipps was anxious to leave the colony to try his luck in Van Dieman's Land as he saw no hope for his success at the Cape. The only factors restraining him were the pleasant climate of Albany and a lack of ready money. This made him reliant on his family connections in England to press those in power to grant him a free passage. It was not forthcoming. The mildness of the climate at the Cape had captivated Philipps and he noted that, in spite of the many privations suffered by the Settlers, there was very little disease and illness; indeed several of the doctors who had come out with the Settlers had given up in disgust.<sup>1</sup> Philipps summed up clearly his sentiments at the end of 1822 in a letter to a Mr Harries dated December 9,<sup>2</sup>

"I have taken a house at Bathurst, close to the Barracks in which there are only to be seen 15 men, but still we shall be perfectly safe there in case we learn of the advance of the Caffres...Our Cattle are quite safe and I have built a new house for the men close to the new Kraal, and I think we may now defend it from the Marauding Caffre, if we had a wish to move before, what must be our increase on that head, but how are we to go is still more out of the question, our land when we have a title will perhaps now not sell for a farthing

Yesterday I heard that Bailey had received a letter... to give him a free passage to England, if this is consented to, surely we have a right to expect the same to Van Dieman's Land, to which place we must go there is no alternative and the more I think with others on the subject, the more convinced I am that Government will be obliged to support us there with free passages, rations and full grants of land, at this moment we are so dried up that our gardens are perishing, nay more, our little well only gives us enough to drink, our brook has long since been totally dry - there surely never was such a dry country known, it was scandalous to send such a body

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<sup>1</sup>Hockly, H.E., op.cit., p.65.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.Cit., Vol. II, pp.283-4.

of People to it - our wheat turns out so so, but how much better than our neighbours, I don't know one that has succeeded like me, but my Van Dieman's land wheat is gone, also my Cape - in short all the fine delicate wheats perish...it is a poor satisfaction at the end of the 3rd Season to say a farmer has barely enough to serve him for the year, how are wages and the etc etc to be paid for..."

The increase in the incidence of Xhosa cattle thefts during 1822 caused widespread concern amongst the Settlers. Philipps noted that the intensity of these raids increased during periods of political disturbance between the frontier authorities and the Xhosa, such as the attack on the kraal of the chief Ngquika. Another action taken by the Cape authorities, on directions from the returned governor, Lord Charles Somerset, was the conversion of the right of the Xhosa to enter the colony on passes to collect the red clay from the pits near the settlement, into a government fair at which the Xhosa were now expected to barter ivory and other commodities for this clay.<sup>1</sup> This decision on the part of the government, to capitalise on what the Xhosa had come to consider as a right, was bound to cause friction. That they were now called upon to pay for what they had previously been allowed to carry away freely, was seen by them as an injustice which was, no doubt, rectified by the lifting of as many cattle from the immediate proximity as possible. Another major spate of thefts was to follow the return of a patrol led by Ensign Lavoine in February, 1823, which as a punitive measure, had captured a large number of Xhosa cattle.<sup>2</sup>

Several Settlers lost their lives in encounters with the Xhosa.<sup>3</sup> This was the cause of a great deal of alarm and petitions were made

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<sup>1</sup>Hockly, H.E., op.cit., p.76.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., pp.155-6, 172.

<sup>3</sup>Hockly, H.E., op.cit., p.79; Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.47; Supra, pp. 52-3.

for the establishment of some form of defence system. In October, 1822, the Albany Levy was created, consisting of two troops of yeomanry and five companies of infantry, a body of some 600 men.<sup>1</sup> This force was unsuccessful in reducing the number of depredations, as it was impossible to carry out both military and farming operations. It is notable that it did not lack volunteers, which gives a clear indication of the fears felt by the settlement. This loss of cattle and lives by the Settlers, at a time when they were struggling for their existence, was bound to severely affect their attitude towards the Xhosa.

The settlement entered the year 1823 while in the grip of a severe drought. Thus the prospects for agriculture were bleak from the very outset. The first good rain only fell in March. Philipps wrote,<sup>2</sup>

"We have had some rain at last enough to soak the ground for planting & the grass at last grows which it has not done for 9 months so as to last, for what rain has hitherto done, the Sun has in a few days afterwards undone..."

No further good rains fell until October on Philipps' location and similar conditions prevailed over most of the settlement, although good rains had been experienced in the interior. The repeated failure of the crops, together with the drought and Xhosa depredations, were now taking a heavy toll of the Settlers who had managed to remain on the land. Less than half of the adult males who had emigrated in 1820 were now left on their locations,<sup>3</sup> while many more, like Philipps, were all too eager to be off.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.80.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. III, p.47.

<sup>3</sup> Cory, G.E., 'British Settlers', op.cit., p.241.

<sup>4</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.176.

"All are quitting one way or other, not one half the Men remain at their Locations. Mr Dalgairns and his three Daughters took leave of us yesterday. He has taken a farm 100 miles off near Somerset Government farm in partnership with the proprietor Mr Hart, there he can irrigate without which there is no certainty whatever. Mr. Greathead, ruined completely, is travelling up the country buying and selling goods to the Boors. Mr. Southey and Mr. Holder have both taken farms up the Country, many days journey from Society, but they can irrigate and are free from the Caffres. Thus 3 out of the 5 Heads of Parties in the Kennersley Castle have quitted their acres as useless."

Philippps was preparing to plant again, but rather with a view to enhancing the value of his property, than the hopes of reaping a good harvest.<sup>1</sup>

"As for ourselves we are ploughing and preparing for a fourth crop and perhaps a fourth disappointment. We mean to sow 6 acres of Rye and I hope and trust in God that before the next harvest ripens we shall be off..."

In April he related the fact that in the previous year he had been offered £600 for his farm, if he could assure the title. He now doubted that he would get even this amount, which he considered paltry, as the general determination to quit the colony was so strong amongst the Settlers.<sup>2</sup>

At least one of the Settlers, Mr R. Dunn, together with H. Nourse, was turning the potential of the settlement to good advantage.<sup>3</sup> In August, 1822, he had salted beef at Bathurst which he had shipped in casks made of local timber to a merchant in Cape Town.<sup>4</sup> A second shipment was made in June, 1823, when some sixty casks, each weighing 330 lbs., were consigned from the Kowie.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. III, pp.77-8.

<sup>3</sup>See infra, p.83.

<sup>4</sup>Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.47.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.56.

By 1823 Philipps complained of the great uncertainty of any form of crop that might be planted and of the great expense incurred in obtaining the necessities of life on the frontier. The existing drought had destroyed all hopes of harvesting anything worth considering as a substantial crop. In January, Philipps wrote,<sup>1</sup>

"The greatest objection to this Country, is the want of certain return for labour, you can rely on no crop; for instance I have this season two acres of potatoes, the haulm is fine, but no return whatever. I have not a single potato for use, I must be content to let the haulm die off and wait another four or five months, when without touching the drills I may have a crop, this provided there is rain, if not the seed will remain perhaps 12 months."

Robert Hart, the superintendent of Somerset Farm, also told Philipps that while wheat had been grown on his property in the past, there was a very small chance of this succeeding on a regular basis.<sup>2</sup> Besides their failure to reap a cash crop in the 1822-23 season, there had also been a general failure of secondary crops, such as pumpkin and maize.<sup>3</sup> It was probably this factor, for these crops had become the staple diet of the poorer Settlers, which drove many of those who had remained behind on the locations following the previous failures, from the land. One of the outcomes of this was that labour on the locations became scarcer and dearer.<sup>4</sup> This resulted in appeals being made by those who remained on the land to the Board of Commissioners, who had recently been appointed to investigate the financial position of the colony and the conditions of the Settlers. It was even rumoured that the Commissioners, who by May 1823, had

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, pp.339-40.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. III, p.74.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.234.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.234.

not yet reached the eastern frontier, were to recommend that labourers be sent out, on government expense, from Britain, but without the promise of land.<sup>1</sup> Philipps suggested that this should have been the case in the first instance!

In spite of difficulties and earlier doubts, Philipps wrote in May, 1823, that he was again involved in ploughing and planting,<sup>2</sup>

"...we are ploughing and sowing once more, not again, I hope, to be disappointed, but I am sure you will not wonder that after three successive blanks we should feel a great distrust for any return capable of repaying us, even the expenses independent of profit. We intend sowing very little wheat, and some few acres of Rye which we are informed & indeed have tasted makes excellent bread, & it has succeeded more generally than other grain altho' liable to attacks from the Caterpillar - the crop of barley produces very little, the husk is so thick that when sifted but very little flour remains, we have however been living on it since Xmas and now and then some Indian corn cakes of which also we had a very trifling return..."

Philipps saw that he was comparatively well off in comparison to the poorer Settlers, who were now living almost entirely on maize and pumpkins, and of these there had been a very poor return. Without the prospect of rations this shortage of essential food stuffs meant that in the face of another disastrous crop, many of those Settlers remaining on the land would be confronted with famine conditions.

The disaster followed in October, when, on October 1, the period of nearly two years of inadequate rainfall was broken by good rains. By October 10 there had been five days of continuous rain, and already buildings were beginning to collapse.<sup>3</sup> By October 13,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.234.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Vol. III, pp.81-2.

<sup>3</sup>Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, pp.58-9.

the rain had become a heavy downpour, which falling on waterlogged ground gave rise to raging torrents in all the local streams.<sup>1</sup> It was only on October 27, that the rain finally stopped falling. By then large parts of the settlement had been destroyed by the flood-waters, particularly the dwelling and gardens of the poorer type of Settler who had specifically built on the banks of streams to be in close proximity to the water supply. Philipps noted,<sup>2</sup>

"The accounts all around us have been lamentable indeed, many poor people of the Labouring Class have lost their little all, houses, gardens and small pieces of Indian or other Corn entirely levelled with the ground, and the Soil swept away."

Philipps, being located on a plain, had escaped very little damage beyond the destruction of parts of his garden, the collapse of a wall of his kraal, the death of one cow, and the loss of several sheep, which had been swept away in the swollen stream which ran near his kraal.<sup>3</sup>

Worse was to follow the floods for those whose crops had survived damage by this means. Philipps wrote,<sup>4</sup>

"The greatest misfortune is that since the storm the Corn everywhere has been dreadfully affected by blight, rust, and caterpillar, even the solid stem wheat that every one depended upon, and has been grown for the last 3 years without being affected in the smallest degree, is in many places totally destroyed. Mr. Hart of the Government Farm at Somerset has actually lost 4000 Muids of it. Col. Cuyler of Uitenhage has also lost his, and many others. The Rye is also much injured by the Caterpillar and blight, ours is attacked by the former and our Wheat by the Rust, but the ears continue untouched and at present look

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.59.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.185.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp.184-5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.185.

remarkably fine, we hope we may have a part spared tho' not a full crop. Some few have partly escaped and are now reaping small crops. God grant that this may be the case with ourselves..."

Thus, in general, 1823 was another failure for those Settlers who had remained on the land. They had sunken to their lowest ebb. The majority of those able to had left the land, while those that remained, either through choice, or not having an alternative form of employment to go to, were destitute. Even those who considered themselves superior to the majority in every respect, like Thomas Philipps, now lacked the means for removing themselves from the Cape. It was on this sombre note that the year 1823 ended.

## CHAPTER III

In consideration of the recurrent failures of their initial attempts to grow wheat, the question should be asked as to why the Settlers persisted in their attempts at its cultivation. To find an answer to this question it must first be borne in mind that the size of their locations disqualified pastoral farming as a suitable alternative to cultivation in the formative years of the settlement. Set with no viable alternative to arable farming, they fixed on the only crop, which, dictated by their English background, was considered as a 'cash crop'. Wheaten bread also formed the chief staple in the diets of most nineteenth century European countries, and as such had formed the chief source of income to British arable farmers and to those in the rest of Europe. While it might not have been common knowledge to the Settlers that Britain had become a wheat importing country during the early years of the nineteenth century,<sup>1</sup> the record prices which wheat had realised during these years<sup>2</sup> was a major contributory factor to their emigration. What little information could be gained before their embarkation would have suggested

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<sup>1</sup>Imports of wheat and oats into Britain, 1800-1859:-

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wheat and flour</u>	<u>Oats and meal</u>
1800-9	1,989,000 cwt.	1,470,000 cwt.
1810-19	2,617,000	1,188,000
1820-9	1,631,000	2,206,000
1830-9	3,743,000	1,494,000
1840-9	10,676,000	1,834,000
1850-9	19,326,000	3,523,000

(Source: Mitchell and Deane, 1962, pp.97-9.)

<sup>2</sup>Chambers, J.D. & Mingay, G.E., The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880, pp.112-3. In 1812 wheat prices were at their highest for the nineteenth century at 126s.6d. per quarter. In the early 1790's it had sold at between 48s. and 58s. per quarter.

that the Cape was a colony where wheat was known to succeed. A colony where land was to be had for next to nothing, where the burden of taxes was virtually unknown, and where wheat could be cultivated, was indeed a land of Goshen. It was probably hoped that their surplus production could find a market within the colony, or that it might even be produced at a low enough cost to stand the high transportation costs to Britain or her other dependencies and colonies. Added to this was the blunder of the Cape government which also believed that wheat could be successfully cultivated in the Zuurveld, and had thus planned the settlement to cater for this form of farming. This administration, too, rather than admitting its mistake and abandoning the settlement, chose to actively encourage it.

Thus what might in retrospect seem absurd, was motivated at the time by some knowledge of the European conditions, ignorance of the local conditions, and tradition. To the Settlers the growing of wheat was essential to their existence. It was also more than a mere cash crop. The first essential of the new Settlers was to attempt to achieve self-sufficiency in the provision of foodstuffs. In this wheat was to play an essential role alongside their vegetable patches. The fact that considerable crops of maize could be successfully grown and succeeded in saving many from outright starvation in the early years of the settlement, did not detract in the eyes of these Englishmen from their traditional staple. Maize was considered a poor substitute for their wheaten bread, and thus they persisted in the cultivation of wheat in the hopes that either the rust would disappear or that a suitable strain would be found which would be resistant to this malady. In this way, it was hoped, sufficient wheat could be cultivated, to maintain their

traditional way of life in the land of their adoption, and also provide them with an income.

The high freight charges payable on produce shipped between Algoa Bay and Cape Town, and the high wagon transport rates between the settlements and Algoa Bay, meant that from the outset the Settlers were placed at a disadvantage for the production of a bulky commodity such as wheat, both in the Cape Town market and abroad in Europe.<sup>1</sup> This set the more influential Settlers to clamour for the opening of their immediate market in Grahamstown, for the military forces on the frontier, and to begin a search for other markets for their produce in Mauritius and the Australian colonies.

At the same time a greater understanding of the local farming conditions was reached. While Philipps could boast in 1820 that he had been settled on what had been the best wheat lands on the eastern frontier,<sup>2</sup> by 1824 he had come to realise that this was a qualified and somewhat dubious claim in relation to what the average English farmer would expect a good corn land to be. Rust, drought, plagues of caterpillars and locusts, revealed themselves in turn to cast doubt on the wisdom of such statements, and the concept of re-establishing the traditional 'south of England' estate began to fade from the minds of the intended squirearchy of the Settlers.

If cultivation could not answer as the chief source of income and farming activity in the settlement, it was nevertheless impossible to abandon it entirely. The costs of imported foodstuffs, whether from the west of the colony or from abroad were prohibitively

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> See supra, pp. 23-4, also Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.53.

high. The early incidence of stock thefts by their Xhosa neighbours also clearly indicated the wisdom of not placing too great a reliance on stock farming. The period after 1823, down to the outbreak of the Sixth Frontier War in 1834 was a period of diversification and experimentation by the Settler farmers in their new environment. Diversification into cattle and sheep farming, alongside cultivation, was fostered by the failure of the wheat crops, and the general unreliability of the area to agriculture. At the same time attempts were made to find by experimentation a more suitable and reliable crop which would answer to the needs for providing an income from the land.

It was natural that the Settlers who had chosen to remain on the land entered the year 1824 with a great deal of doubt and trepidation. If there were signs of an improvement in their political relations with the Cape government and with the appointment of the Commission of Enquiry to investigate their complaints,<sup>1</sup> the course which this political activity might take still remained vague. Once more their ploughs were turned to in the hopes that they might finally provide a miracle, or at least a subsistence. In the cultivation of wheat, all attention was diverted to the growing of Bengal wheat where possible. The Rev. William Shaw had used some of the funds provided by the Society for the Relief of Distressed Settlers in 1823, to acquire this strain of wheat from those who had succeeded in growing it the previous year, in order that the Settlers who would otherwise not have been able to afford this strain might now also begin to reap the benefits.<sup>2</sup> In some instances 50 Rixdollars per muid<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hockly, H.E., *op.cit.*, p.91ff.

<sup>2</sup>Theal, G.M., *Records*, *op.cit.*, Vol. XVI, pp.265-6.

<sup>3</sup>1 muid = 3.1 bushels.

had been asked for this type of wheat. By June, 1824 Philipps reported that his son Edward was again ploughing and that they were sowing only solid stem wheat and barley 'with a very faint hope of any return'.<sup>1</sup> Philipps had grown despondent with his farm 'Lampeter', and had during January applied for an additional farm for grazing purposes.<sup>2</sup> In May he made a more specific request to the Commissioners of Enquiry at their sitting at Bathurst, for a grant of land at Rietfontein, on the coast.<sup>3</sup>

As the season progressed and it became evident that the crop was to be a vast improvement over their previous attempts, the question of an adequate market for their produce became a reality for the first time. By November, 1824, Miss Charlotte Philipps could write,<sup>4</sup>

"We have had the most delightful weather this season, the gardens are very luxuriant as we have had so much rain and the corn looks very well at present and promises a plentiful harvest particularly up the country."

The Commissioners of Enquiry, in reporting to the governor, Lord Charles Somerset, in July 1824, stressed the need for a market for the produce of the Settlers,<sup>5</sup>

"The Settlers admit that hitherto in consequence of the destruction of the greatest portion of their Crops by the rust, the loss of a Market for the remainder was of little consequence to them.

During the last year however some inconsiderable quantity of produce was at the disposal of a few of the Settlers near Graham's Town, who no doubt, unless the ultimate views of Government respecting the Somerset Farm were explained, would not fail to perceive in the present mode of supplying both Grain and Meat, the exercise of a command over the

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. III, p.246.

<sup>2</sup> Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.63.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.67.

<sup>4</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. III, p.263.

<sup>5</sup> Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XVIII, pp.156-7.

Market that might at any time be used to their prejudice, or unjustly relaxed in their favour...It further appears that as the failure of the Corn Crops at Somerset Farm have happened in the same years that those of the Settlers have suffered, that Establishment has not afforded a resource in times of scarcity, while its produce would come into competition with theirs in plentiful Seasons."

For the Settlers who had settled in the Baviaans Valley, the problem had come a season earlier. There had been good crops of wheat at the end of 1823, and in February, 1824, their leader, although now settled in Cape Town, had memorialised the governor. He stated that this group were at a disadvantage as there was no market in the immediate vicinity, other than the Somerset Farm, which had refused to purchase their surplus from them. Pringle requested that they be allowed to deliver this surplus to Somerset Farm at a reasonable price, below that which it cost the government to supply wheat from the western districts.<sup>1</sup> On February 19, 1824, Pringle submitted a tender for the supply of 100 muids of wheat to the Somerset Farm, or any post within that distance from the Baviaans River, at 14 Rixdollars per muid.<sup>2</sup> This tender was then accepted.<sup>3</sup>

On the strength of the recommendations of the Commissioners of Enquiry and the general political unrest which had become increasingly evident amongst the Settlers following their fourth successive crop failure in 1823, the governor undertook a journey to the eastern districts in 1825 to judge conditions for himself, and to attempt to appease the political faction which was now growing into a strong opposition in that quarter. This visit had certain far-reaching

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, Records, op.cit., Vol. XVII, p.85.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.87.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.90.

implications for those Settlers still on the land. Following up the recommendations of the Commissioners, the Somerset Farm was disbanded, and on the site of the former farm a township was laid out and building erven were offered for sale.<sup>1</sup> This village became known as Somerset. By this move the market created by the military presence on the frontier was thrown open to the Settlers. Needless to say, this did not create a free market, as the bulk of purchases of agricultural produce on the frontier were made by the military on a tender basis. These tenders soon passed into the hands of a few who were in a position to meet the military requirements regarding quantity, delivery and price. This was bound to exclude the small producer but it appeased the political force amongst the Settlers. Goldswain pointed out the difficulties confronted by the small producer,<sup>2</sup>

"...at this time it went verely hard with meney of the Settlers [1823]...and having no Market for our produce fer our nerest Market was Grahams Town thirtey Miles and meney of the Settlers having no convaince so that if they had aney thing for sale it was forst to be cept untill it got of no youce,..."

Other steps taken to appease the Settlers, were the review of the original land grants and the granting of loans to those in possession of land, or who could offer some other form of security.<sup>3</sup> On May 21, 1824, Somerset reported to Earl Bathurst, the Colonial Secretary, the appointment of a commission headed by William Hayward, to investigate the claims of the Settlers and to readjust their land allocations.<sup>4</sup> This commission worked relatively quickly and by

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<sup>1</sup>Hockly, H.E., op.cit., p.104.

<sup>2</sup>Goldswain, J., op.cit., Vol. I, pp.55-6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Vol. I, p.56.

<sup>4</sup>Theal, Records, op.cit., Vol. XVII, p.340.

November Philipps was able to comment on its proceedings. As a leader in the group of Settlers who were now opposed to the governor, and who were appealing to their connections in Britain to bring parliamentary pressure to bear on the Cape administration, in order that it might pay greater attention to the needs of the Settlers, it was inevitable that Philipps' wishes would be assiduously pursued,<sup>1</sup>

"I think you were informed of the arrival at Graham's Town of the Commissioner Hayward to settle and adjust the Claims for Land and new Grants etc. He is now nearly finished his arduous task of endeavouring to please and satisfy us all and has given general and universal satisfaction. There may be some few discontented grumblers amongst us but the greater part of those even have no reason to complain of him, he has not been able to find Farms sufficient for many who have applied and are deserving of them but this is not his fault and must be left to Government who we hope will see the necessity of purchasing Farms of the Boers now for sale and giving them to the Settlers...

Great care is taken not to grant Farms to any who can maintain themselves by any trade or Profession. Mechanics and Labourers are to be encouraged to follow their trades in the different Towns - this is the plan at present proposed and which we all ardently hope will be adopted as the surest means of general improvement."

Philipps had made representations to both the Commissioners of Enquiry<sup>2</sup> and to the government commissioner to be granted an area of land at Rietfontein. This land had originally been granted to the Sephton party, but they had later been moved to make room for the proposed large party under General Campbell. General Campbell died of injuries sustained when falling from his horse in May, 1822,<sup>3</sup> and the party never materialised. His widow could thus not claim the full amount of land which had previously been allocated to the General.

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<sup>1</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. III, pp.265-6.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup>Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.44.

The area of land in question was now claimed by the original occupiers and Philipps. The grant was made in 1825, in Philipps' favour, after both sides had made their representations to the governor during his visit to the frontier. Permission was granted to Philipps in mid 1824 to pasture his cattle on this land, with the provision that they should be removed in the event of the land being granted to the other party.<sup>1</sup> So sure was Philipps of his claim, that by the time the land was granted to him on February 23, 1825, he was already busy with the construction of a house.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission of Enquiry pointed out in July, 1824, that it considered the land grants of the Settlers too small,<sup>3</sup> and so the governor on his visit undertook to implement the findings of this commission in granting larger locations. The Settlers had been due to receive the titles to their land in mid 1823, on the completion of three years residence upon the land. The land was to be measured at the expense of the government and the holder was to receive his title to the land on payment of a perpetual quit rent. This quit rent was not to exceed the sum of two pounds per annum. These grants were only to be made to those Settlers who had fulfilled the conditions of permanent residence upon the land and its useful cultivation.<sup>4</sup> The landdrost, Rivers, failed to have these titles completed by the fulfilment of their three years residence in May 1823. This led to the appointment of the commission under Hayward

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. III, p.269.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.236.

<sup>3</sup> Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XVIII, p.156.

<sup>4</sup> Hockly, H.E., op.cit., p.27.

to complete this task as quickly as possible.<sup>1</sup>

While the Settlers had agreed to what seemed a nominal sum to pay by way of quit rent for their land prior to their embarkation for the Cape, on landing they discovered that this sum would be proportionately far in excess of what the Dutch colonists were expected to pay. Writing to the colonial under-secretary in June 1823, George Pigot pointed out that for between four and six thousand acres of land the Dutch colonist paid between twenty and one hundred Rixdollars, while the Settlers were now to pay not more than twenty five Rixdollars for every 100 acres. It therefore followed that on the largest holding of any Settler, roughly two thousand acres, the quit rent could amount to a sum of five hundred Rixdollars.<sup>2</sup> The uncertainty and resentment which this discrepancy caused was finally settled in October, 1823, when the landdrost of Albany was issued with instructions to fix the quit rent at a rate of 4 skillings for each hundred acres, or at a similar rate to that paid by the older colonists, namely, 36 Rixdollars per 3,000 morgen of land.<sup>3</sup> By December 31, 1824, some 90,400 morgen 313 roods and 122 feet of land had been granted in quit rent for a sum of 1,289 Rixdollars, a sum well below the maximum of two pounds per hundred acres.<sup>4</sup>

The prospect of an individual title to the land had drawn a considerable number of the Settlers back to the land who had previously left it. The Commissioners of Enquiry noted that the number

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.88.

<sup>2</sup>Theal, G.M. Records, op.cit., Vol. XVI, pp.74-5.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Vol. XVI, pp.408-9.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Vol. XIX, p.369.

of Settlers residing on the locations increased from 438 in May, 1823, to 596 in February, 1824.<sup>1</sup> The reasons stated for this were, that they had returned to await the granting of titles, hoping that the government would take a lenient stance considering that they had broken their original agreements of permanent residence upon the locations for three years. The partial crops of 1823 were seen to have revived the hopes of many for succeeding on the land. There were also those who had now made good as mechanics or labourers and were returning from the interior with small funds of capital.<sup>2</sup> In turn, many of those who had remained on the land and had not moved away in search of other employment, were destitute. In November, 1824, a sub-committee of the Society for the Relief of Distressed Settlers was formed, to investigate the living conditions of these Settlers.<sup>3</sup> They found that there were many people without even a subsistence, very often in a degraded state and almost without clothing. While temporary relief had to be afforded to these people, more permanent relief came in the form of a substantial harvest.

The acreage under cultivation in 1824 had fallen drastically in comparison with two years previously, but returns were substantially more. There was certainly not sufficient sown to yield a surplus which would provide an income for the Settlers, but there was sufficient to stave off immediate want until the following season.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Vol. XXI, p.301.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.71.

TABLE I

Crop Yields on the Settlements in 1822  
and 1824 respectively<sup>1</sup>

Crop	Year	Acreage Planted	Total Reaped	Average Yield per acre
Wheat	1822	679,5	117,5 muids	0,173 muids
	1824	68,75	482	7,011
Barley	1822	191	753,5	3,945
	1824	41,75	398,25	9,539
Oats	1822	62,5	270	4,320
	1824	6	29	4,833
Rye	1822	10	50	5,0
	1824	0,5	9	18,0
Maize	1822	320,75	389	1,213

This good agricultural season, being followed by the visit to the frontier of the governor in January and February of 1825, and the resultant increase in the size of many of the locations, meant that for most of the serious practicing farmers, the future now seemed considerably brighter. The crop of 1824 for the first time removed serious doubts that the land on which they were situated was capable of producing any form of crop. It had become evident that the returns to be expected per acre would be considerably below those achieved by their British counterparts. This was due to the nature of the soil, climate, and the fact that these factors could not be overcome to any considerable degree by the employment of irrigation. Lacking the offal and sewage wastes of a more densely populated country to assist in the fertilisation of the soil, greater reliance had to be

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XVI, pp.40-1; Vol.XIX, pp.386-7.

placed on the use of animal manures and rock minerals, such as lime for the improvement of the soil. It says much for the desire of these early Settlers to improve their land that men such as Goldswain and others could earn a livelihood by transporting lime to the locations.<sup>1</sup>

The development of arable and pastoral farming in Albany were thus to reinforce each other. Any expansion in arable farming would require a considerable increase in the number of cattle or sheep to provide the necessary manure, while a certain amount of this cultivation would be devoted to the growth of fodder crops. This latter factor would not play as great a role as in the European countries due to the relative mildness of the winters in the Albany district. Any increase in cultivation would thus also require a disproportionate increase in the size of a farming unit. In evidence before the Commissioners of Enquiry, the government commissioner, William Hayward, pointed out that at least ten loads of manure were considered necessary for the cultivation of one acre of land, and as there was no litter used in the cattle kraals in the colony, this necessitated twenty head of oxen or cows to provide this quantity of manure. More animals were thus required for the cultivation of land than were necessary for the working of it. It was seen that a team of ten oxen could provide the labour necessary in the cultivation of thirty acres.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to this, Hayward pointed out that roughly ten acres of grazing was required to keep an animal in Albany.<sup>3</sup> The size of a

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<sup>1</sup>Goldswain, J., op.cit., Vol. I, p.69. Part of this lime was used for whitewashing buildings etc.

<sup>2</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXI, p.383.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.382.

farming unit would thus have to be disproportionately large in relation to the amount of cultivation which could be undertaken on it. This increased size had been granted and it remained for the Settlers to increase their cattle numbers to cater both for their agricultural needs, as well as to meet the demands of the frontier market. The contracts for the supply of meat for the European troops at Grahamstown had already been placed in the hands of the Settler farmers in 1824.<sup>1</sup>

A demand for cattle was also created at the Kowie, where Henry Nourse had established a plant for the processing of salt beef under the management of R. Dunn in 1822.<sup>2</sup> Regular cattle fairs were held there to meet the requirement of this plant and for the dispersal of sheep and cattle amongst the Settlers by agents and traders who brought them from the interior. Goldswain recounts the purchase of cattle at such a sale held during October, 1824.<sup>3</sup> Miles Bowker also noted the potential of this Kowie outlet for their produce, in 1824,<sup>4</sup>

"Our prospects of improvement will be also much in feeding, in cattle, sheep and pork. We have an excellent market for it salted, at the Kowie, where our cheese which we make very good, as well as fat and hides, find a good market."

Lord Charles Somerset found it sufficiently significant to report to Earl Bathurst the sailing of the 'Good Intent' from the Kowie on December 4, 1823, for Cape Town with the first full cargo of hides, fat, butter, and other goods, purchased principally from the Settlers.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.325.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, p.65.

<sup>3</sup>Goldswain, J., op.cit., Vol. I, p.56.

<sup>4</sup>Mitford-Barborton, I., Comdt. Holden Bowker, p.24.

<sup>5</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XVI, p.464.

The development of the Mauritius, and indirectly, the St. Helena trade, for salt beef became a very important matter to the Settler farmers. Men like Nourse and William Cock were largely responsible for pioneering this trade, while many of the farmers attempted the processing of their own beef for this market. Here too mistakes were made and the Cape product fell into disrepute, particularly in Mauritius.<sup>1</sup> Philipps wrote in June, 1827,<sup>2</sup>

"We are begining to salt Beef - Mr Nourse has just arrived to live upon his farm, he has brought up English salt - he expects to get a contract for the Isle of France but we all hope it will be a public tender - the garrison is kept 9 months in the year in Salt Beef from Ireland - our good Friends the Commissioners of Inquiry mean to recommend a Contract here..."

but later noted that others had undertaken the salting of beef in the hot summer months, which caused the product to deteriorate rapidly and had given the Settlers' product a bad name.<sup>3</sup> Cock suggests that this was largely a situation contrived by the Mauritian traders. He visited the island in 1827 and commented,<sup>4</sup>

"On the evening of my arrival at Mauritius I learnt that Cape beef was not in very good repute, but that the Provision Merchant that bought the 300 casks condemned would like to obtain another lot of the same quality.... The next business was to obtain a cask of the condemned beef. I eventually succeeded when I requested the agent to have it opened and to expose the beef for several days, and when cooked to allow me to taste it. This was done with the exception of my tasting it. The Commission of Enquiry were then at Mauritius and took great interest in

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<sup>1</sup> Cock's Diary (Cory Library MS 14262), pp.3-4.

<sup>2</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, Vol. IV, pp.231-2. The date on this letter is given in the letter-book as 24 June 1827. Nourse approached the government requesting a trade monopoly for salt beef on 30 January 1824 (Records, Vol. XVII, pp.33-4).

<sup>3</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.338.

<sup>4</sup> Cock's Diary, op.cit., p.4.

the matter. Beef was delivered at Mauritius at 2 1/4d. per lb. Irish beef costing about 6d. in England. Mr Pennell, the Officer of the Commission, a big gentlemanly man, admitted that it was probable that they were wrong, that he would advertise for the entire supply of the Island, which he did and we took the contract for three years."

The improved stability of the settlement following the good season in 1824, gave rise to an increasing demand for livestock, beyond the immediate initial requirement for draught animals and milch-cows.<sup>1</sup> An increased awareness of the need for large quantities of manure for cultivation and the opening of lucrative markets for animal products, enhanced the desire of the Settlers to enlarge the size of their herds and flocks. A market for salt beef was pioneered. This was shortly followed by exploratory moves for a market for hides and skins in Britain. The successful breeding of woolled sheep had already been undertaken in the western districts and was pioneered on the frontier by Settlers like Pigot and White. There was thus a keen demand for livestock in the settlement. Men like John Montgomery,<sup>2</sup> James Howse,<sup>3</sup> and William Cock,<sup>4</sup> were to pioneer the trade with the interior farmers and that which became known as the 'kaffir trade' with the Xhosa across the Keiskamma River. From these sources came the cattle and sheep to meet the demands of the Settlers for more livestock. In 1823 the governor had put an end to all legal interaction between black and white on the frontier in an endeavour to end the theft of colonial cattle by the Xhosa.

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<sup>1</sup> See supra, pp.30-1.

<sup>2</sup> Montgomery, J., The Reminiscences of..., passim.

<sup>3</sup> Ayliff, J., The Memorials of James Howse, passim.

<sup>4</sup> Cock, W., Diary, pp.2-3.

This merely resulted in an illicit traffic being carried on. In July, 1824, a system of fairs was introduced at Fort Willshire on the Keiskamma River, in which the two races could participate in trade under the watchful eye of the military authorities.<sup>1</sup> Licenced dealers were allowed to barter with the Xhosa under the temporary restriction upon the purchase of cattle, and the sale of spirits, arms and gunpowder.<sup>2</sup> This restriction upon the purchase of cattle was imposed with the object of 'checking the improvidence of the Caffres in disposing of their means of subsistence.'<sup>3</sup> The trade in gum, ivory, and hides, was encouraged as it was seen that these items in no way interfered with the social composition of Xhosa life. Cattle it was realised, stood as a measure of social status and wealth in Xhosa society, and while the exchange of them for novelties, such as buttons and beads and other trinkets, might be considered as acceptable to the Xhosa, the time would nevertheless come when the value of these items became known, and resentment and enmity would follow. This move was thus an attempt to check such trade until the Xhosa had come to realise the full value of their cattle. That the first seven months of this trade were to result in the Xhosa parting with some 50,441 lbs. of ivory, and in the first five months of 16,800 lbs. of gum and 15,000 hides, would suggest the wisdom of this move in the interests of preserving peaceful relations between these two groups.<sup>4</sup> A proportionate drain in cattle would have been disastrous.

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M. Records, op.cit., Vol. XXI, p.320.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.320.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.320.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

A proclamation by the governor of November 17, 1825, removed this restriction on the trade in cattle. It pointed out that the proclamation of July 23, 1824,<sup>1</sup>

"...has occasioned constant Smuggling in that Article [cattle], and has been attended with the most pernicious consequences to the Peace and Tranquility of the Frontier:.."

This measure had not stayed the Settlers' desire for cattle, or the Xhosas' desire for ornamentation.<sup>2</sup> Writing to Earl Bathurst on November 19, 1825, the governor complained,<sup>3</sup>

"...your Lordship will perceive that the Kaffers have been very troublesome of late...the constant illicit Traffick which takes place between the Kaffers and some of the worst description of the Settlers located near the Frontier, and the frequent Incursions which the Kaffers make to plunder Cattle, in order to enable them to carry on such illicit Traffick have long since given me such uneasiness as the recovery of such Cattle by the Military must lead at times of bloodshed, by which the Spirit of revenge is always kept up."

It was inevitable on the poorly guarded frontier that such illicit trade would result, particularly as there was such an urgent motive behind this trade. It was also inevitable that the Xhosa, having little harassment from the troops stationed on the frontier, would steal other colonial cattle on the way out of the colony, to recoup themselves for those traded to such 'unscrupulous Settlers'. Some of these animals would then be kept, but others were slaughtered for their hides. As the landdrost of Albany pointed out,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M. Records, op.cit., Vol. XXIII, pp.443-4.

<sup>2</sup>Lower Albany Chronicle, Part I, p.73. On January 14, 1825, John Johnson and John Brown were intercepted by a patrol, while trading with the Xhosa for cattle. On January 19, 1825, a patrol prevented Thomas and Daniel Mahoney trading for cattle at Trompetters Drift.

<sup>3</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXIII, p.447.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp.450-1.

"...hundreds [of hides] are now brought to Grahamstown, which show plainly to whom they had belonged...a Caffre now gets as much for the skin of an Ox as he considers the whole beast to be worth."

It was no longer a question of attempting to protect the position of the Xhosa in his supposed ignorance as to the value of cattle, but rather an attempt to protect the colonial farmer from increased harassment. The wisdom in this shift in emphasis, or lack of it, was to be revealed later. In a report to Earl Bathurst, the Commissioners of Enquiry noted,<sup>1</sup>

"The Caffres have long been desirous of opening a commercial intercourse, and have entered keenly into the spirit of it, and whenever they have learnt the habit of respecting the right of property when it is transferred from their own hands to others, the traffic in cattle cannot fail to become a source of much advantage to the British Inhabitants, altho' we still think that the Caffre tribes will find a difficulty in dispensing with a species of property that at once influences their civil condition in their own country, while it ministers essentially to their daily wants; such a barter might also stimulate them violently to dispossess other tribes of their cattle..."

While there was a strong possibility that they would now be willing to dispossess other tribes of their cattle to meet the requirements of the colony for cattle, there was also the possibility that the day might dawn when they chose to dispossess the colonists across the frontier of their cattle as well. This would be particularly true once they came to realise the forfeiture they had made in supplying a great many of these animals to the settlement. It was inevitable that the day would dawn when the Xhosa came to realise that their cattle were worth a great deal more than the buttons and beads they had received for them.

Cattle thefts were a continuing feature of the whole period

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXIII, pp.208-9.

between 1824 and 1834. In an age before the appearance of a cheap form of effective fencing and enclosure, it was inevitable that the incidence of both losses and thefts would be far higher. This is particularly true if the nature of the terrain and of the immediate neighbours, the Xhosa tribes, are taken into account. The hilly terrain of Albany, together with the dense bush which is to be found in most of the valleys, meant that animals could be lost to the sight of anyone herding them within a relatively short space of time. Cattle grazing on the crest of a hill could have disappeared on the far side and have moved down into the valley and bush before the herder could come up to them. This also made it difficult to notice the activity of thieves, and the Xhosa, being familiar with the type of terrain, knew how to put it to best advantage for secreting and driving off cattle. There was also, undoubtedly, a certain amount of negligence on the part of the Settlers and also a lack of servants for the herding of these cattle.<sup>1</sup>

In the period 1824 to 1833 two of the Settlers were to estimate the annual average loss of livestock through Xhosa depredations as 74 horses and 1,461 cattle.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to gauge the accuracy of these figures, but if they are correct, then they are a good indication of the seriousness of this problem which faced the Settlers. It was inevitable that the Xhosa should be blamed for the odd case of negligence where animals were simply lost, and also for thefts by residents of the colony. It is also probable that these figures reflect the total loss of livestock from the colony, so that a monthly

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M. Records, op.cit., Vol. XXI, p.321.  
See supra, pp. 52-3.

<sup>2</sup>Wilmot, A. & Chase, J.C., Annals of the Cape Colony, p.303.

loss of 6 horses and 120 head of cattle over the whole length of the frontier would not seem quite so severe. It is, nevertheless, true that such depredations were a continual source of worry and annoyance with which frontier farmers had to contend. The loss of one or two animals to whatever cause represented a serious blow to the poorer settler, while the loss of twenty or thirty head of cattle was a disaster to any man.

The 1825-6 agricultural season was not, generally, a favourable one. In the western districts of the colony, the wheat crop was once more attacked by rust, causing prices to rise on the Cape Town market from 111 Rixdollars per load of 10 muids, to 224 Rixdollars per load.<sup>1</sup> Drought played a role, and on April 3, 1826, a proclamation of the new acting-governor, Major-General Richard Bourke, who served while governor Lord Charles Somerset proceeded to Britain to defend his actions as governor, stated that due to the general failure of the crops all pulse, grain, and flour, was to be admitted into the colony's ports at a reduced ad valorem rate of 3 per cent until December 31, 1826.<sup>2</sup> On a journey undertaken by Philipps into the interior in 1825 to pay the Pringle location a visit, he noted that this was reported to be the driest season yet experienced by the Pringles in the interior. As a result of this drought, the Baviaans River, which supplied this settlement with water for irrigation of their wheat lands, had dried up.<sup>3</sup>

This situation contrasted strongly with the position in lower

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<sup>1</sup>Neumark, S.D., op.cit., p.32.

<sup>2</sup>Theal, G.M. Records, op.cit., Vol. XXVI, pp.235-6.

<sup>3</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.58.

Albany. Philipps had moved his family permanently to his new farm at Rietfontein, which he finally chose to call 'Glendour'. Here his sons had planted grain and laid out a garden, on which Mrs Philipps commented in July, 1825, as follows,<sup>1</sup>

"We are all quite well and enjoying ourselves very much improving this sweet place - our Corn coming finely on with a fair promise at present of a good harvest plenty of Milk and Butter and Vegetables in our present small garden..."

While Philipps' cattle were improving in condition on the richer grazing of his new farm, they were not without disease. It would seem strange that a man as well educated and well read as Philipps should have attributed the cause of the complaint affecting his cattle to the nature of their grazing. The only reason for this can be attributed to the novelty of this disease and the fact that it had not been encountered before. Many of the diseases with which the Settler farmers now had to contend had not been encountered in Britain, particularly the tick-borne diseases which plagued the Albany district. Mrs Philipps commented on this disease as follows,<sup>2</sup>

"...we occasionally send our Cattle there [Lampeter, the original farm] when they want a change of grass, for it is literally sometimes too rich for them and there is at present a most extraordinary complaint amongst the Calves they say occasioned by it, when once attacked by it they never recover and removing them into a different and poorer grass to prevent their taking it is the only means to be adopted, it commences by a small lump formed under the skin which on the shoulder or leg occasions the Calf to walk lame if immediately perceived and killed the rest of the meat is extremely good and the Hottentots eat it - the part affected has exactly the appearance of Sponge or a violent bruise and it is called the Sponge sickness if left alone this spreads all over the body and it dies in two'days or less - no cure has yet been found for it - it is very common in this part of the

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<sup>1</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. III, p.371.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Vol. III, pp.361-2.

country and our Calves have been attacked by it, on this account we have sent them to Lampeter for a change the grass there is poor enough -"

The disease from which these animals would seem to have been suffering was Blackquarter.<sup>1</sup> During 1826, Philipps was also to complain of a fatal distemper which affected the horses, and which seemed to be particularly virulent along the coast.<sup>2</sup> In the same letter, written in April or May of that year, Philipps noted that there had been considerable falls of rain. These are the ideal conditions for the spread of Horsesickness.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Handbook for Farmers in South Africa, Vol. III, pp.362-3.

The germs causing this disease are of a highly resistant nature and can affect pasture lands for a number of years. The period of susceptibility in cattle ranges from six months to three years and usually affects young cattle in good condition, with those between nine months and two years being most susceptible. The exact mode of infection is still largely unknown but it is generally believed to be ingested in the case of cattle or to result from wounds caused during shearing in the case of sheep. The Handbook quotes the following: "When a bovine is affected, it develops a temperature, stops eating and very soon shows a widespread swelling in a part of the body covered with thick muscles, for example the buttocks, shoulder or neck. The swelling spreads rapidly... The animal weakens quickly, goes down and shows accelerated breathing. Death soon follows.

When the carcass of a bovine is skinned over the affected portion, the subcutaneous tissues appear red, jelly like and moist. The affected muscles on cross-section, resemble a sponge and the cut surface gives the impression of marble, due to darker and lighter areas. The gas escaping from the muscles smells like rancid butter."

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.164.

<sup>3</sup>Handbook for Farmers in South Africa, Vol. III, p.427.

Horsesickness is a virus disease, which while not being contagious, is transmitted by night-flying gnats. It is a disease which is unique to the African continent and which is most prevalent, amongst other areas, in the eastern Cape. The disease occurs most frequently during the summer and particularly in the autumn. The most dangerous years are those in which there has been a heavy precipitation of rain. Infection usually occurs in animals which are exposed on the open veld during the night.

Philipps attempted, once more, to grow wheat on his new farm, in the hopes that this area might be more suited to its cultivation than his property at Lampeter. This was not to be the case, and in January, 1826, he reported the failure of this experiment,<sup>1</sup> although he could boast of fine crops of potatoes, maize, and pumpkins.<sup>2</sup> The latter crop was now grown largely for the feeding of his servants.<sup>3</sup>

Besides the cultivation of what had now become their standard crops, Philipps was also keen to undertake experiments in the cultivation of other crops in the hopes of finding one which would serve as a replacement for the loss of wheat as a cash crop. In February, 1826, he reported having half a dozen cotton plants which were already in blossom.<sup>4</sup> In May, 1826, Edward, Philipps' eldest son, was to write,<sup>5</sup>

"...we are continually making experiments of one thing and another there are several very fine Cotton Trees growing and seem to thrive remarkably well all covered with pod - Our Orange Trees are also in a progressive state - ...The Cotton Trees...we had growing here my Father raised from Seed procured from Ceylon but as the latitudes of Malta and the Colony are nearly the same I think Seed would thrive still better..."

The Philipps' had relatives in Malta and this broad hint to the relatives in Britain was to result in various seeds being sent out to the Cape from Malta. In August, 1827, Philipps wrote to his relatives in Britain,<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.32.

<sup>3</sup> See infra, p. 108; supra, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.32.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp.155ff.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp.253-4.

"...I am now putting in 500 Cotton seeds and am anxiously waiting for what Mr Hunter [of Malta] has promised me will you remember to ask him for full directions as to sowing, culture and cropping and if he could send me a discription of the machine for getting the seeds free, without which latter I cannot get on - what I have grown is fine..."

The arrival of the anticipated seeds was recorded in a letter from Mrs Philipps in February, 1828.<sup>1</sup> Due to prevailing drought these seeds were not planted until September, 1828,<sup>2</sup> and by January, 1829, the plants were destroyed, along with the other crops at Glendour, by swarms of locusts.<sup>3</sup> This effectively put an end to these early attempts to grow cotton in the Albany district. Others were to follow later. Experiments were also being made in the cultivation of tobacco, cinnamon, and various strains of wheat. Cinnamon did not succeed, but Philipps was able to successfully cultivate some tobacco. Again his relative, Mr Hunter of Malta, was looked to to provide information regarding the curing of this crop,<sup>4</sup>

"Can he give me or procure me any hints as to the Brazil method of curing Tobacco we grow very fine plants but cannot manufacture it well enough."

It was also hoped that woad<sup>5</sup> could be successfully cultivated by those who had sufficient manure to provide the high level of soil fertility required by this plant. Nothing came of this either.

For the Albany farmers the 1826-7 season saw a good return for their efforts. In a letter to Earl Bathurst, the acting-governor Bourke pointed this out in February, 1827, when he transmitted a

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, pp.302-3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. V, p.8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp.71-2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Vol. IV, pp.253-5.

<sup>5</sup> A plant grown for the production of a blue dye.

memorial from the inhabitants of Albany requesting the repeal of the prohibition on the distillation of liquor from grain in the colony. This request was made due to the abundant harvest of barley and oats which had been reaped and for which no other way of disposal was seen.<sup>1</sup>

"It is truly gratifying to be enabled to state to your Lordship that the affairs of the Settlers in Albany appear to be improving. By far the greater part of these people are now finally placed on their lands, which have this year yielded considerable returns of barley and oats, and in some places, tho' not generally, the wheat is reported to be an average crop. The power of producing the former of these grains in the Albany District is I believe very extended, and if an easy vent for the surplus produced were procurable might be made a source of great profit to the growers. The difficulty consists in the expense of land carriage from the district to the shipping port in Algoa Bay. Return carriage is seldom to be had, and, the whole cost of transport must be laid on the grain, which would in most years enhance its price beyond what the exporter could afford to pay. If the prices were moderate the barley would be taken off to St. Helena and the oats to Mauritius... The difficulty attending the entrance to the River Kowie is such as to have deterred almost all the Traders from frequenting Port Frances,...

The expense in land carriage...is to be hoped may in great measure be overcome by the increased demand in that district for wine, brandy and British goods brought coastwise from Table Bay and for Mauritius sugar...which would thus furnish a return load for the waggons...Barley may also be used for brewing beer...which is not prohibited by the Colonial Laws for domestic use, and Beer may be brewed for sale on an annual licence of forty-five pounds."

The permission to distil was not granted as it was felt that such a move would jeopardise the position of the wine farmers of the western districts. It was inevitable that the production of a surplus of grain would immediately give rise to questions being asked regarding its disposal. The only shortage which remained was that of sufficient wheat to meet the bread requirements of the Settlers. The wheat price was now 2s.6d. and that which was available was considered to be

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXX, pp.330-1.

virtually useless.<sup>1</sup>

Not all the grain crops planted by the Settlers were allowed to grow to maturity. Those farmers who lived within closer proximity to Grahamstown had the advantage of contracting for the military requirements for green forage for its horses. There was a distinct advantage to be gained from this as it meant that the farmer could be assured of a profit within a shorter period of time and usually before the appearance of rust on these cereal crops. In evidence before the Commissioners of Inquiry, Lieut. T.C. White pointed out that when wheat sold for less than 100 Rixdollars per load of 10 muids in the Cape Town market, bearing in mind that the transportation cost between Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth was 4 Rixdollars per muid, it meant that with the high costs of white labour in the settlement and other sea freight costs, production of wheat in particular, and the other cereals, was unprofitable.<sup>2</sup> This was the reason for Albany's undisposible surplus of grain. Such problems did not exist for those who could cut the bulk of their crop while it was still in a green state. Describing the farming activity of his son-in-law, John Carlisle, who farmed in the Belmont Valley in close proximity to Grahamstown, Philipps wrote,<sup>3</sup>

"...his farming is entirely different from us at a distance, he grows Barley which is cut green and contracted for by the Commissariat for forage for the Cavalry in Barracks and also Oats which is suffered to grow till nearly ripe and then cut and made into Hay for the same purpose -"

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, pp.188-9.

<sup>2</sup> Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XVI, p.431.

<sup>3</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, pp.190-1.

The profitable nature of this exercise<sup>1</sup> was to encourage Philipps to undertake it as well in 1829. In August of that year he wrote of an experiment which he and his sons had undertaken of planting their oats particularly early in the season following good rains in April, in the hopes that this crop could be sold, either as dry forage for the Cavalry, or for the grain, noting that,<sup>2</sup>

"...both will do in part and what we cannot do in the former will do at a minor profit in the latter."

For the Settler farmers, rust was to remain a major obstacle to their cultivation of wheat throughout the period down to 1834. The Bengal wheat which had come to their rescue in the initial years of the settlement was not considered a very satisfactory substitute for the European varieties of this grain. It had a coarse husk and yielded a relatively small quantity of flour. Experiments were thus undertaken with a great variety of wheat strains in the hopes of finding one which would answer to local conditions. Unfortunately not all these farmers were in a position to undertake such experiments, and a general failure of the wheat crops continued to feature in the reports from this district. These farmers had become accustomed to such regular failures of this crop, and all of them had diversified their activities into other crops and livestock farming. Writing home in November, 1826, David Cawood summed up the position of the average Settler farmer,<sup>3</sup>

"The crops of wheat are failing in general with the rust which has been the cause of it since we came into this country. Barley, oats, Indian corn we have in general very

<sup>1</sup>Mitford-Barborton, I., Comdt. Holden Bowker, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, Vol. 5, p.109.

<sup>3</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXX, p.398.

good crops, and all kinds of vegetables grow very well. We have plenty of all sorts of fruit. I have heard that the worsted trade is very bad, and I think I am much better here out of it."

For those who were in a position to do so, various strains of wheat were gathered for experimentation. Philipps was a keen participant in such activity, as was Lieutenant T.C. White, who was to bring 48 different strains of Italian and European wheat back to the colony from the Paris Botanical Gardens on his return in 1828.<sup>1</sup> Philipps drew his samples of wheat from his relative, Mr Hunter of Malta, and from Lieutenant White. In October, 1826, he commented in his letters on the success of a strain which had become known as 'Russian wheat' amongst the Settlers, although the exact origin of this wheat was not known. John Carlisle, his son-in-law, had also successfully reaped three acres of this variety.<sup>2</sup> By December, 1826, the other varieties, planted later than the Russian wheat, had been harvested.<sup>3</sup>

"We have excellent little crops of wheat...our Wheat is what is called in England creeping wheat...We have enough for use and perhaps a little for disposal - our Barley Wheat, or as some call it Tartarisa Wheat is really an excellent grain - no rust comes near it and we shall have a second crop - we reaped this in the first week October and sowed it again 27th October and now it is in ear and next month will be cut - As Agriculturalists we are in high spirits with this and the creeping wheat..."

During 1827-8 Philipps was to receive samples of wheat from both Lieutenant White and Mr Hunter and these were duly planted in 1828. Writing in August, 1828, he commented on the progress of these varieties,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., March 16, 1832.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, pp.197-8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp.212-3.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Vol. V, p.7.

"Please do inform Hunter that his wheat is luxuriant - I have sown many sorts given to me by Mr. White on his return - The Tuscan and another Italian wheat looks well. I had rather than 50 Crowns that the 'Hunter' wheat succeeds and it shall be so named if it does..."

Success with this wheat did not mean that it was generally available to the rest of the Settlers, although similar experiments were being undertaken by the government at the Groote Post farms. There is no evidence to suggest that information from these experiments was being distributed in Albany. Thus it remained for farmers like White and Philipps to grow sufficient to initially meet the demands of the district for seed wheat.

The year 1827 was marked by a general deficiency of rainfall in the frontier districts. This shortage of rain, together with the general depression which had set in in the colony following the slump in the British market following the post Napoleonic War boom, the depreciation and fixing of the Sterling-Rixdollar exchange rate at 1s.6d. to the Rixdollar in 1825,<sup>1</sup> and the first slump in the 'Kaffir trade' in 1826,<sup>2</sup> resulted in a general depression and fall in prices on the frontier. The price of cattle, the chief source of wealth amongst the frontier farmers, was to fall drastically. These prices were also to remain low for a number of years. In the interior a major cross road in the saga of the cattle farmers had been reached. It was becoming increasingly difficult to find a market for their cattle in the traditional outlet of the Cape Town market. In evidence before the Council of Advice in Cape Town, a Graaff Reinet farmer, Henry Olivier, stated that there were more cattle available than there

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<sup>1</sup>Arndt, E.H.D., Banking and Currency Development in South Africa (1652-1927), pp.49ff.

<sup>2</sup>Neumark, S.D., op.cit., p.154.

was a demand for them. This was partly because farmers in closer proximity to this market were succeeding in fulfilling all its requirements.<sup>1</sup> This was bound to have repercussions on the market for cattle in Albany, as these farmers sought to divert their animals towards this market. Here the farmers were already beginning to reach a stage where they sought markets for the increase of their own stock. Philipps wrote in August, 1826, the same year in which Olivier filed his complaint, that he anticipated the first killing of cattle they had bred themselves in the following winter for salting.<sup>2</sup> Up to now Albany had been a good market for the interior farmers and 'Kaffir traders', for the disposal of their cattle. Albany farmers had been buyers of livestock for increasing their herds and had not, as yet, become a major source of supply to the organisations which were processing salt beef, or to the military. Their purchases had exceeded their sales. This situation was now changing and this was bound to have an additional depressing effect on the market.

In August, 1826, Philipps noted that the price of well fed oxen for slaughtering stood at £2 5s. This price was considerably lower than the price he had paid for his original oxen in 1820. He had then paid £3 each.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to this, the price of breeding cows had remained largely constant at 24s.<sup>4</sup> Prices were to decline steadily, and Philipps noted in June, 1827,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXIX, pp.477-8.

<sup>2</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.189.

<sup>3</sup>See supra, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, pp.188-9.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp.231-2.

"Affairs are harried in this Country, in Graham's Town several are calling meetings of their Creditors for time principally. Cattle and Sheep have fallen 40 per cent and more if a sale is forced. Sheep have been sold at 1s.6d. and Cows at 15s."

In March, 1828, Philipps noted that the price of cattle had fallen to 10s. a head, while by June of that year he wrote,<sup>1</sup>

"Cattle are no longer saleable...Cows are selling at 3 shillings and sixpence, the Purchaser returning the Hides and Horns to the Seller."

To add to this crisis there was the prolonged drought. No substantial falls of rain were to be recorded between October, 1826, and March, 1828.<sup>2</sup> Swarms of locusts now also made their appearance in the Albany district. The Settler farmers had undoubtedly heard of this plague before but had not, as yet, experienced it on any large scale. Philipps gives a vivid description of his first encounter with this plague,<sup>3</sup>

"...I was suddenly about 25 miles from hence [home] in the midst of what I thought young Grasshoppers,...finding them numerous I got off my Horse and to my astonishment and dismay I discovered that they were the migrating Locusts, O what a chill! I immediately thought of my corn and the advanced state of it which from that circumstance would if eaten never grow again,...on I went and for two miles Myriads crawled about and my Horse crushing them under his feet - ...I learnt I had only seen a small detachment."

Goldswain recalled the descent of a swarm of locusts onto crops of maize in 1827 and indicated that attempts to disturb them were useless and the crop soon devoured,<sup>4</sup>

"...the three acers was eaten quit up in less then two houers. We had two acers of Inden Corn that most of it was quit ripe but as soon as they had eaten the young they

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.338.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.320.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp.240-1.

<sup>4</sup> Goldswain, J., Chronicles of..., Part I, p.61.

fell to work on the old and you mite see a hundred Lokes on one stalk and they eat untill they and the stalk fell to the ground and out of the two acers of Inden Corn we only gartherd one bucket of Corn."

The presence of the locusts continued into the year 1828, and in February of that year Philipps reported a closer brush with them,<sup>1</sup>

"The Locusts have disappeared for the present; one morning Fredk came in to say they were appearing, we instantly saw them over our heads flying towards Port Frances, we set off our Batteries, as the Boys called them, namely heaps of straw, weeds etc., which we set on fire, but owing to the wind they had not much effect. They continued flying for near an hour in a long line, but few alighting, and then disappeared."

The drought had more serious consequences for Philipps, but here too he was to be far more fortunate than most of the inhabitants of Albany,<sup>2</sup>

"Then came on a continued drought, and just at the nick of time seized our wheat when filling, and the result was we have just had our seed back. Our Barley was much better, but from the same cause deficient; we have only realised from our grand expectations three measures where we ought to have had ten. But then we are better off than any one Albanian besides, altho' bad is the best, and what vexes us most this year is that our Dutch Neighbours, from being able to irrigate, have had great returns, and near Cape Town immense. What are we to look forward to?"

In a letter to the acting-Governor, the landdrost of Albany wrote in November, 1827,<sup>3</sup>

"The summer rains have at length, I am happy to say, commenced, which will enable us to get our Maize into the ground, and if that be not eaten up by the young locusts we may perchance keep famine from our doors during the following year.

The graziers are in a sad state of distress from the drought; they have literally been forced with their

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.328.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXXIV, p.134.

cattle into the neutral ground for pasturage, which in many parts of this district is not to be found; the springs and rivers are dry or so brack as to be totally injurious to the cattle;...The failure of milk among the Caffres has reduced those poor creatures in the drier parts of their country to a situation even worse than I have represented our people to be in."

These rains could not have been very substantial for by June, 1828, Philipps again wrote commenting on the dry conditions,<sup>1</sup>

"Our drought has continued almost without intermission, and next October I say let those look out who are in danger, we shall have a flood no doubt - we have ploughed and sowed all early but in the Graham's Town neighbourhood, the soil refuses to admit the Plough...Carlisle has not yet sowed his forage and he ought to be cutting his first crop..."

John Carlisle had in fact taken the post of Deputy Sheriff of Albany as a result of the uncertainty of his farming operations.<sup>2</sup> Rain followed in July and late crops of Barley were planted. The locust threat was also to reappear. The good rains had caused the eggs laid in the previous season to hatch and the farmers were once again troubled by this scourge.<sup>3</sup> These rains resulted in a more abundant harvest being reaped where crops had escaped the ravages of the locusts, and where continued rains had fallen. These intermittent falls of rain were to do more harm than good. They provided sufficient moisture for the hatching of the locusts and for the germination of crops, but did not provide sufficient moisture for the continued growth of such crops. 'Glendour', being situated on the coast, was again to escape the worst of this drought,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.339.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.336.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp.344-5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Vol. V, pp.63-4.

"...Edward and Frederick reposing after getting in for the first time a really tolerable harvest of both Wheat and Barley and at a time when all the Neighbours have suffered and the prices of grain high, the latter even Cent per Cent higher than last year...it has infused fresh spirits into the whole household and an increase of our Agriculture is determined on - pray tell Mr. Hunter that his little present of Wheat has produced 70 fold and finer than the seed sown. I left placid happy Glendour, ...two days ago, grass in abundance and water, whilst here [Grahamstown] they cannot dig their Gardens nor plough, nor a single vestige of green, fruit gone dropped off the trees - higher up Sheep and Cattle dying in thousands - ... 22,500 Sheep had died in one field Country [a sub-division of Somerset district] - light rain is now falling but it will do no good I fear the heat of the sun is too powerful - the Caffres are as badly off their Cattle dying and their last years corn deficient or consumed already, now remember all this does not extend to within about 8 or 10 miles of the Sea all along the Coast, there we are even flourishing not by comparison but our Cattle are absolutely fat, no one can secure credit the wretchedness that prevails elsewhere increasing as the distance from the Sea - Families hitherto independent have lost their whole stock of every kind and obliged to remove for want of water even for drinking for themselves, the very Locusts are dying of famine, our vegetables are so plentiful that we are sending presents to Belmont [Carlisle] ..."

The year 1829 saw a general improvement in the agricultural conditions in Albany. Good rains were recorded<sup>1</sup> and the harvest was generally adequate. As early as August, Philipps was reaping a good harvest of oats and in November he could comment,<sup>2</sup>

"We are in the midst of a plentiful Barley Harvest and have saved a little Wheat from the Rust of a different kind, but our stock one is yet to ripen and looks favourably, we have had a rainy season and the Country is in Splendour."

Philipps hoped that this barley crop would bring in an income of over £250.<sup>3</sup> This was certainly a fair income and from 1830 to 1834 there were no major setbacks to the progress of the Albany farmers.

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. V, p.100.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.140.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.146.

Prices for agricultural produce were gradually to recover their pre-depression levels. Drought had a serious effect on the crops in October, 1833, and forced many to discontinue tillage, but cattle remained in good condition following good rains in the previous season;<sup>1</sup> The Graham's Town Journal commented in an editorial in 1834 that,<sup>2</sup>

"...the pursuit of farming is beginning to acquire that stable character which always indicates that the community itself is in a sound and healthy state."

It will be seen that two of the major innovations of the 'new farming', as practiced in Britain in the early years of the nineteenth century, are conspicuously absent from what has been written so far. There is little mention made in the contemporary literature of the Settlers of evidence of the rotation of crops, or of the introduction of labour saving devices and machinery. Here it is necessary to point out that the famous 'Norfolk system' of alternating the crops grown in any particular soil on an annual basis, usually in the rotation of wheat, followed by turnips, then barley, and finally clover, before repeating the cycle again, and the system of 'ley-farming', which differed in the exclusion of the root crop from this rotation, while the clover was left down for a number of years, were not in general practice, nor applicable to all of Britain prior to the emigration of the Settlers. The Norfolk system was one devised and implemented chiefly in the light sandy soils of the eastern coastal areas of England, while the ley

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<sup>1</sup>Graham's Town Journal, October 17, 1833.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., January 2, 1834.

farming was devised for the heavier types of soil. The application of these types of rotation was not general and should not be looked upon as the sole criterion for judging the advancement of agriculture in the nineteenth century context.<sup>1</sup> They applied more to areas of intensive grain cultivation and were not necessarily practicable to all areas, so that many of the Settlers might not have been familiar with their practice.

In Albany, the Settler farmers were to find a very different set of circumstances. Initially, land was to be scarce on the locations, so that if they had been forced to continue on these small areas of land an inducement to the implementation of strict crop rotation would have existed. As it was, the size of land holdings were to be increased and a style of agriculture was now adopted which borrowed from the experience of the Dutch colonists. The Dutch 'trekboer' had proved the value of cattle to the frontier districts during the eighteenth century, and the wisdom and profitability of this form of farming<sup>2</sup> was soon revealed to the Settlers. There were, nevertheless, still amongst the Settlers men, like Philipps, who were loath to part entirely with the experience of their British background and who were prepared to persist in the development of arable farming under the new conditions of the Cape. There was now also greater incentive to participate in agriculture on the frontier concomitant to the increase in the population of the area, and the increased demand for agricultural produce. The nature of the terrain, the large size of farms after 1825, relative to the amount of

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<sup>1</sup>Jones, E.L., Agriculture and the Industrial Revolution, pp.40ff.

<sup>2</sup>Neumark, S.D., op.cit., passim.

cultivation practiced, and the fact that pastoral farming under South African conditions was possible independently of agriculture, so that crops did not have to be grown to tide animals over the winter months, all acted against the implementation of a rigid system of crop rotation. The type of crop grown thus tended, with the exception of oats, to be strictly for the augmentation of the income of the farmer and for human consumption. There seemed little place, or need, for extensive fodder crops. With sufficient land, there was now little inducement to rotate crops as fresh land could always be broken to replace that which was exhausted.

In considering the lack of adoption of labour saving devices and machinery on the part of the Settler farmers, it is essential to consider the labour requirements of this group at intervals throughout the period. The dramatic loss of labour to those party heads and Settlers who had come to Albany with the specific intention of pursuing agricultural livelihoods, stems from the poor composition of the original parties. There were too few genuine agricultural labourers and too many skilled or semi-skilled artisans in the parties. Neither would there seem to have been any co-ordination between parties and all duplicated the number of artisans that they brought out. In retrospect it is difficult to comprehend that party heads could believe that they would be able to keep on carpenters, bricklayers, and other artisans, as agricultural labourers after they had served their initial usefulness in such skills. Some loss of labour would then have been inevitable. The high wages offered to such artisans increased the discontent within the parties and led to their fragmentation earlier than had been expected. The blame for this fragmentation cannot be laid at the door of the initial crop failures. These crop failures seem only to have precipitated

a process already in progress, and to have caused it to go further than was originally expected; party heads felt obliged to get rid of as much labour as possible, due to pecuniary difficulties arising out of the system of rationing.<sup>1</sup>

As the Settlers were forbidden the use of slave or Xhosa labour, the only alternative source available to them in the formative years was the employment of Hottentots, to which men like Philipps would seem to have resorted.<sup>2</sup> It was the inexpensive nature of this labour, together with the pecuniary difficulties in which these farmers now found themselves, which decided them against the introduction and employment of many labour saving devices; which in addition to their initial cost would have to face the high shipping costs to Algoa Bay. At least one Settler, Oldham, was to sell his threshing machine which he had brought out from Britain to the colonial government for 1,000 Rixdollars to tide himself over these troubled years. This machine was sent to join those already stationed at the government farms at Groote Post in 1822.<sup>3</sup> Other labour saving devices, such as the improved plough, had already been introduced in 1820. The old Dutch plough, which was wheeled and lacked a coulter, needed between eight and twelve oxen to draw it and required three or four men and boys to manage it. This was seen as being vastly inferior to the lighter Scotch and English ploughs introduced by the Settlers, which could be drawn by half or less the number of oxen and managed by one man.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See supra, p.42.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, p.37.

<sup>3</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXVII, p.147.

<sup>4</sup>Pringle, T. op.cit., p.46.

Complaints were made against the quality of the labour which could be acquired from the Theopolis mission station, and against the Hottentots in general, who were judged to be idle in comparison to the average British farm labourer.<sup>1</sup> After the fourth successive failure of the wheat crops, there was likely to have been a fall in the demand for this form of labourer, if only for pecuniary reasons. The fair agricultural seasons which followed, and the acquisition of larger herds of cattle and sheep, would again have seen an increase in the demand for labour. There is no clearer intimation of this demand and the contempt in which the Khoi labourers were held, than the trip undertaken by Frederick Carlisle to Britain in 1825. This trip was undertaken to recruit agricultural labourers and to attempt to goad the British government into assisting such an emigrating scheme.

While there was an increasing demand for labour amongst the farmers in Albany after 1824, this was, nevertheless, a qualified demand for cheap, efficient labour; of the type many of them had been familiar with prior to leaving Britain. The duration of the Napoleonic wars saw a large increase in the price of wheat<sup>2</sup> and a sympathetic rise in rents and the wages of agricultural labourers. This rise was also assisted by the increasing shortage of labour available in British agriculture, during the peak periods of employment, such as the harvest and haymaking periods. At the peace, the British army of over 400,000 men had returned to seek employment in an economy then having to undergo serious adjustments. This meant

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<sup>1</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, p.251.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, p. 70.

that while the industrial sector was undergoing change, a disproportionate number of these returning soldiers sought employment in the agricultural sector. There was between 1815 and 1850, an abundance of cheap labour available to British agriculture. This was also to have implications on developments in technology during this period. Inventions such as Bell's reaper were to remain dormant until the increasing price of labour after 1850 again warranted investigation into labour saving machinery.<sup>1</sup>

The Albany farmer in 1824 and later, sought an abundant supply of cheap labour to assist in his rehabilitation, following the initial financially disastrous years of the settlement.<sup>2</sup> Somerset pointed out to Bathurst in a letter dated March 31, 1825, that the lowest wage for which labour could be obtained was for 2 Rixdollars, or roughly 3s. per day, with food and a bottle of wine (?),<sup>3</sup>

"...Your Lordship will easily perceive that nothing which the Earth can be made to produce will repay such an expense in cultivation,..."

In evidence before the sub-committee for the Relief of Distressed Settlers in 1825, it was suggested that it was impossible, owing to the high cost of labour, to cultivate an acre of land for less than 30 Rixdollars, inclusive of the seed.<sup>4</sup>

In a letter written in November, 1825, Mrs Philipps complained of the shortage of labour and mentioned one of the windfalls which assisted in overcoming the problem,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jones, E.L., op.cit., p.224.

<sup>2</sup>Theal, G.M. Records, op.cit., Vol. XIX, pp.5-6, 8-11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Vol. XX, pp.401-1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Vol. XXI, p.123.

<sup>5</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.252.

"The great want and difficulty of procuring servants and the high price of labour renders it impossible for us to get on with the improvements on our new Place [Glendour]... But we shall now be much better off in this respect, Government having brought down a great many people belonging to the more distant nations who have been driven on by the hostile Tribes beyond them again, and at length have approached our territories and have been induced to seek food and shelter amongst the Boers, etc., in the upper part of the Country. Government at length determined on bringing them down here and distributing them amongst us in this district as servants. Accordingly a great many were sent into Graham's Town and all who wanted Servants and had not Slaves were allowed to have a Family,..."

These Bechuana servants were bound to the Settlers in five to seven year apprenticeships.<sup>1</sup>

When Frederick Carlisle travelled to Britain in 1825, he represented the interests of the frontier community in its search for labour. These colonists had bound themselves to provide guaranteed employment for 771 emigrants in various categories, of which 200 requests were for agricultural labourers.<sup>2</sup> The colonists requesting the emigration of these labourers had further guaranteed the agricultural labourers a minimum wage of 150 Rixdollars or £11.5s. per annum, a daily wage of 8½d. plus provisions, making a total wage of 1s.6d. per day. Carlisle stated in his correspondence to the under-secretary for colonies, R.W. Hay, that while the Settlers were prepared to guarantee employment to such a number of emigrants and to offer the stated wages, they were not seen to be in a financial position to cover the actual transportation cost of such emigrants to the Cape.<sup>3</sup>

"Their funds being so reduced as to render it extremely difficult for them to proceed in their undertaking. On the other hand if we are to look to the labourers them-

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Settler, op.cit., p.254.

<sup>2</sup> Theal, G.M. Records, op.cit., Vol. XXIV, pp.132-3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. XXVI, p.155.

selves for repayment, the subject appears involved in equal difficulty. Considering that the term for which it is proposed to indenture them is only three years, if an instalment amounting to one third of the expense incurred upon each individual should be deducted by the employer from the amount of wages due to the Labourer at the end of each year, the remaining sum would be considerably too trifling to induce people to leave this country, whatever might be the distress of their circumstances,..."

The progress of Carlisle's negotiations with the British government was carefully watched on the frontier. Philipps wrote in August, 1826,<sup>1</sup>

"We long to hear from Carlisle we want population, that is, working people, we could place at occupations 100 families a year and this principally from the ease with which the Country supplies a maintenance - Beef has fallen one halfpenny to a penny a pound and labour is eighteen to twenty shillings a week...In America and Van Diemens Land where labour is only so high Beef is 4d. to 6d. a pound - "

Nothing came of this proposed scheme, which was rejected by the British government. Thus there was no major addition to the work force available within the colony from Britain in the period down to 1834. There was nevertheless a slow trickle of immigrants into the colony within this period, varying between 114 and 204 annually.<sup>2</sup> Very few of these new immigrants were workers or labourers.

No official step was taken to augment the labour supply available to the Albany farmers down to 1828. The potential labour force which existed in the form of Xhosa tribesmen had always been realised, but had never been officially tapped owing to political and strategic considerations. While official thinking had attempted to maintain a strict policy of segregation of the two racial groups,

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<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.191.

<sup>2</sup> Hattersley, A.F., An Illustrated Social History of South Africa, p.87.

this source could provide no solution to the colonists' labour requirements. After 1824, the introduction of regulated trade between the colonists and Xhosa represented the thin edge of the wedge in opening up wider co-operation between the races. In April, 1825, W.R. Thomson suggested to John Gregory that the Fort Willshire fair could be seen as a factor removing distrust and strengthening the relationship between the Xhosa and the English frontier population. He also suggested the introduction of a system of short contracts for the employment of the Xhosa as labourers within the colony.<sup>1</sup>

On October 26, 1826, Lord Bathurst instructed Bourke that,<sup>2</sup>

"I have no hesitation in authorizing you to adopt measures for allowing the Settlers in Albany, who may not possess slaves, to employ, under proper regulations, a certain number of Caffres as Labourers."

This measure was not acted upon until 1828, when in July of that year, Bourke issued ordinance No.49, which permitted Xhosa seeking work to enter the colony if they were in possession of passes issued by a justice of the peace or a field cornet.<sup>3</sup> These Xhosa foreigners were not allowed to work for more than one month without entering into official contracts. These contracts were not allowed to extend beyond a maximum period of twelve months, but allowance was also made for their renewal for further periods of twelve months. Food and clothing could be considered as a part of their remuneration, but liquor and tobacco could not be given to them as part of their payment.<sup>4</sup> The Albany Civil Commissioner reported the entry of some

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXI, pp.175ff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Vol. XXVIII, p.278.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Vol. II, p.11.

<sup>4</sup>Hunt, K.S., Sir G.L. Cole, p.99.

1,000 Xhosa into the colony within the first nine months of the operation of this ordinance; 754 passes being issued and the rest entering without them.<sup>1</sup> Very few of these Xhosa entered into agricultural employment, which was the main objective behind this regulation, but rather chose to wander about the colony hunting and stealing. On August 25, 1829, the new governor, Sir Lowry Cole, suspended this ordinance indefinitely after 5,000 head of cattle had been stolen within a period of five months, and of which only 1,500 head were recovered.<sup>2</sup>

Ordinance No.50, 'for improving the condition of the Hottentots and other free persons of colour at the Cape of Good Hope, and for consolidating and amending the Laws affecting those Persons' was promulgated on July 17, 1828, in the same month as the previous ordinance. As suggested, this ordinance repealed the earlier legislation regarding the Khoi. This previous legislation, a proclamation of the Earl of Caledon (1807-11) as governor of the Cape in 1809, and amended by the Cradock administration in 1812, can be seen as an attempt to induce the Khoi into accepting service for the whites. This was achieved through restricting their ability to own land and in the same instance stipulating that they had fixed places of residence, which would be officially registered, while passes were required if travelling. Failure to comply with these measures resulted in arrest and conviction of vagrancy, whereupon the individual could be forced to take employment as and where directed by the field-cornet. In turn, if masters employed anyone who could

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<sup>1</sup>Hunt, K.S., Sir G.L. Cole, p.101.

<sup>2</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. II, p.11.

not show that a previous contract had terminated, they were liable to prosecution.<sup>1</sup> The ordinance No.50 was to limit the powers of the employer over the Khoi or free black employee. Contracts were restricted to one year duration and apprenticeship of coloured children was forbidden without the consent of their parents. The pass regulations, restricting the movement of these people was also lifted.

It is difficult to gauge the impact of this measure on the labour situation on the frontier, particularly in Albany. Undoubtedly, any measure which repealed a system as restrictive as that which preceded this ordinance, would naturally have resulted in a fall in the number of Khoi employed. If nothing else, there would have been a certain amount of temporary unemployment as these labourers gauged the job market and wage structures of the employers before re-settling where they could obtain most for their labour. As such movement was likely to have been on a regional basis, with labourers moving from one district or field-cornetcy to another, the time lag would have been considerable. Again, there were inevitably those who simply opted out of employment to try their chances at self-employment, or to adopt the wandering life of their ancestors. Whatever the real situation, and unfortunately there seems to be no record of the actual numbers lost to employment, particularly by farmers, this ordinance was to create a great deal of political tension throughout the colony. Fears of lawlessness arose, and the immediate consequences of a loss of labour, presented themselves to the farmers. To some extent, it was probably hoped that

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<sup>1</sup>Macmillan, W.H., The Cape Colour Question, pp.211ff.

ordinance No.49 would offset the impact of this loss, particularly in those districts in immediate proximity to the frontier. This was not the case. In spite of growing wealth in the frontier community down to 1834, a 'shortage' of labour featured strongly as one of the drawbacks to the advancement of this community. The Graham's Town Journal suggested that more attention should be paid to the employment of African refugees fleeing the 'N'fecane',<sup>1</sup> and it was more than likely that increasing numbers of Africans, both Xhosa and of other tribes were encouraged to squat or take up 'temporary' residence on the farms of the colonists in return for their labour.

From the foundation of the settlement in 1820, certain of the Settlers paid considerable attention to the breeding of woolled sheep. The failures of the first crops confirmed the determination of these men who had introduced woolled sheep, to persevere in the husbandry of these animals. In so doing, they were to pioneer this form of husbandry on the eastern frontier of the colony. Woolled sheep were not first introduced into the colony by these Settlers, but the willingness with which this form of husbandry was grasped by the rest of the Settler farmers whose land was suitable for sheep farming, did much for the popularisation and spread of this form of farming throughout the eastern districts. Experiments with woolled sheep had already been carried out in the western districts of the colony prior to the arrival of the Settlers. The closing years of the rule of the Dutch East India Company saw the introduction, by Colonel Gordon, of a flock of merino sheep.<sup>2</sup> Attempts had been made in 1789,

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., May 16, 1833.

<sup>2</sup>Thom, H.B., Die Geskiedenis van die Skaapboerdery in Suid Afrika, pp.52-3.

and earlier, to popularise the breeding of woolled sheep. The Dutch farmers remained steadfast in their support of the traditional Cape fat-tailed sheep, which, besides being a source of good mutton, rendered from their tail fat the tallow necessary for the manufacture of candles and soap, and had acted as a basic ingredient in many of their traditional food dishes. This sheep, which was all but indigenous, was well adapted to the climatic conditions of the greater part of the colony, so that it required little maintenance and could survive off the bare veld. Woolled sheep needed far stricter maintenance, and the regular shearing and washing of the wool prior to it becoming saleable. All this required more labour than the Boer farmer had, or cared to have, at his disposal.

The outcome of this had been the rejection of woolled sheep by the majority of the Cape farmers, despite the potential value its introduction would have meant to both the semi-subsistent farmers and the local administration. By 1822 there were approximately 20 flocks of woolled sheep in the colony, making a total of about 8,000 sheep, which had yielded a total of 20,000 pounds of wool in 1821.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of new farming practices into the colony had of necessity to await either the implementation of education on a wide scale and the spread of new ideas in this manner, or the arrival, or availability, of people with the incentive to undertake change. Such a group was the 1820 Settlers. Coming from a country which had undergone and was still in the throes of agricultural and social change, it was inevitable that there were those amongst them who were familiar with the experiments which were being undertaken

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<sup>1</sup>Bird, W., The State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822, p.27.

in the improvement of the various breeds of British sheep. They were also familiar with the new importance which had been given to wool as a fabric by the Napoleonic Wars, and the high prices which could be obtained for this product on the British market. There was also the fact that this woollen industry was rapidly outstripping the production capabilities of both the mother country and Europe to supply the necessary wool. New South Wales had already shown that the production of wool in the colonies was a profitable undertaking, so that it remained only for the Settlers to join their fellow colonists in New South Wales in meeting the requirements of the mother country.

Mention has already been made of the small flock of merino sheep introduced into the eastern districts by Major Pigot in 1820.<sup>1</sup> He was to augment this flock by purchasing rams from the government farm at Groote Post and by buying cross-bred sheep from some of the other 'improved' flocks of the western districts. This flock was not to reach any considerable proportions and most of it was to be sold to John Carlisle on the death of the Major in 1830.<sup>2</sup> Pigot should, however, be seen as one of the foremost figures in the popularisation of wool sheep farming on the frontier. It was he who exported the first wool from Albany, packed in dry hides.<sup>3</sup> The success of this venture was to be the inspiration for many who were to follow him.

Another of the pioneers of the woolled sheep on the frontier,

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<sup>1</sup>See supra, pp.32-3.

<sup>2</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.305.

<sup>3</sup>Hattersley, A.F., op.cit., p.87.

who has also received mention previously, was Miles Bowker.<sup>1</sup> Prior to his embarkation for the colony, Bowker had already made his intentions clear concerning his pursuits there. He specifically requested the colonial office for a grant of 1,000 acres of land in the colony, for the purpose of establishing a flock of merino sheep. It is on the basis of this request, and his previous farming experiments with merinos in Devon, that the presumption rests, that he too brought merino sheep into the colony.<sup>2</sup> In 1823 he purchased two merino rams from the Groote Post farm, and Thom has suggested that these rams were then used for breeding with a group of Cape ewes.<sup>3</sup> This is possible, but it would seem unlikely that a man who had specifically asked for land in the colony suited to sheep farming should have waited three years before commencing this enterprise, and then only with cross breeding. It would seem more likely that these purchases were being made to augment his small flock, rather than to initiate it. Initially, this venture was not very successful. Bowker's two locations of land, which he received in 1820 and 1822, and named 'Olive Burn' and 'Tharfield' respectively, were both in close proximity to the sea, an area in Albany found not to be conducive to sheep rearing. The grazing of this area was blamed for this, but it is also probable that this area, enjoying a higher rainfall than the rest of the district, was more prone to parasite infestation and diseases such as Blackquarter which would have affected the growth of a flock.<sup>4</sup> It was only after the 1835-6 war,

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<sup>1</sup> See supra, p.33.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Thom, H.B., op.cit., pp.304-5.

<sup>4</sup> See supra, pp.91-2.

when the decision was taken to move the sheep away from the coast to an inland farm on the Koonap River, that the Bowker family achieved considerable success from their sheep farming venture. Bowker was, nevertheless, the principal supplier of wool to the Bathurst water-mill of Samuel Bradshaw, who used this wool, and that supplied by other farms, for the production of blankets and kersey cloth. This mill was established in 1822 and continued absorbing some of the wool produced by the Settlers down to March, 1835, when it was destroyed by fire during the war.<sup>1</sup> By the time this war broke out, it would seem that the Bowkers had about 1,000 sheep.<sup>2</sup> As these sheep were only to produce 1,000 pounds of wool in the October-November shearing of 1833, this indicates the poorer state of this enterprise by comparison to the other undertakings of this family, which made it one of the wealthiest in the district.

Another of the Settlers who introduced woolled sheep into the eastern districts in 1820 was Captain Duncan Campbell. Rather than merinos, he was to make a steady and persevering attempt with the English breed of Southdowns. These sheep would probably not have received much attention from the 'improvers' like Robert Bakewell by 1820, so that they were still a relatively small animal which was famed for the excellence of its soft, fine, curly wool.<sup>3</sup> Campbell imported others on several occasions.<sup>4</sup> Theal has suggested that these sheep did not thrive under the local conditions. While

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<sup>1</sup>Morse Jones, E., The Watermill at Bathurst: An Outline Account, Cory MS 7314.

<sup>2</sup>Mitford-Barborton, I., Comdt. Holden Bowker, p.60.

<sup>3</sup>Ernle, Lord, *op.cit.*, p.178.

<sup>4</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.39.

there might be some justification for this assertion, a more probable explanation for their lack of success would lie in the relatively greater success of the merino, and hence the latter breed's greater popularity.

Theal has selected as the three great names in the pioneering of woolled sheep in the eastern districts, the three half-pay officers, Lieutenants Griffith and Daniell, and Lieutenant T.C. White, all of whom had headed parties of Settlers in 1820. Griffith, White and Campbell were all originally to have been located in the western districts and were to arrive in the east only after the main body of the Settlers, their grants of land in the west being found unsuitable.<sup>1</sup> Griffith was the last to leave the western districts, having taken a farm near Cape Town after the rejection of his first location.<sup>2</sup> While in the west, Griffith saw the successful experiments which were being undertaken with woolled sheep at the government farms at Groote Post. It was only in 1828 that, after settling in Albany, he seriously commenced sheep farming.<sup>3</sup> In that year he purchased from a Mr Colebrooke of Hottentots-Holland in the west,<sup>4</sup> a flock of 500 cross-bred sheep, the progeny of merino rams imported from England and half breed merino ewes, which he had removed to the Albany district.<sup>5</sup> Here he occupied the farm 'Burnt Kraal' on the outskirts of Grahamstown. Beginning his sheep farming career as

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<sup>1</sup>Philipps, T., Settler, op cit., pp.92-3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.93.

<sup>3</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.307.

<sup>4</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, p.40. An article in the Agricultural Journal of the C.C., 12 January, 1893, suggests that these sheep came from a merino flock of Mr Goshing at Berg River.

<sup>5</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., pp.306-7.

late as 1828, and with a flock of this magnitude, it is difficult to accord Griffith the status of 'pioneer' with regard to the development of woolled sheep-farming in the east. In a like manner, the same considerations apply to Daniell who commenced his sheep farming career in partnership with Griffith in 1828.<sup>1</sup> It was rather men like Bowker, Pigot, Campbell, and Philipps, who were to do the pioneering work with woolled sheep in the frontier district of Albany. It was these men who were to make the mistakes with regard to the ideal type of sheep for the area. They were also, by their experience, to define the areas suitable and unsuitable for sheep farming in that district. These half-pay officers were simply to exploit the knowledge gleaned by their predecessors to the full. Together with considerable sums of their own, or borrowed, capital, they were rapidly to become the largest woolled sheep-farmers in the eastern districts.

Lieutenant Daniell was granted a location, 'Sweet Milk Fountain', in close proximity to the Bushman's River, in an area ideally suited for the breeding of sheep. Like many other Settlers, he initially concentrated on grain production. By 1823 Thompson on his journey to the Albany settlement noted that Daniell had brought a 'great extent' of arable land under cultivation, which had also been divided into neat enclosures.<sup>2</sup> It can be assumed that, like several of the other Settlers, his capital outlay on the improvement of his land was excessive in relation to the returns it yielded in

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<sup>1</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., pp.306-7. Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, p.40, suggests that he commenced with merinos in 1827. Thom suggests that in 1827 he started gathering merinos but it would seem unlikely that he achieved much before his partnership with Griffith.

<sup>2</sup>Thompson, G., Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, Vol. I, p.15.

these early years. By 1827 he had lost nearly everything that he had brought to South Africa.<sup>1</sup> It was then that he had started collecting the nucleus of a merino flock, no doubt learning from the experience of others, of the greater profitability of such a venture.

The partnership of Griffith and Daniell was short-lived. The most notable feature of this partnership was the purchase of a small parcel of good quality merino sheep which had been brought into the colony from the Swan River settlement in Australia.<sup>2</sup> These sheep were purchased at an average price of £11 per animal, while one ram had cost them £32.<sup>3</sup> Daniell undertook an extensive buying campaign in 1829 for his own account. This would suggest that this partnership with Griffith lasted for little more than a year.<sup>4</sup> This purchasing was probably in part motivated by the fact that all the sheep acquired in the partnership passed into Griffith's sole possession.<sup>5</sup> In 1829 Daniell spent £100 to acquire four rams and four ewes, while in the following year 30 rams and a similar number of ewes were purchased for £400.<sup>6</sup> The disproportionate number of rams would suggest that he was also making extensive purchases of Cape ewes for cross-breeding purposes. In 1829 his return from wool sold amounted to £97.19.4; in 1830 this sum increased to £250;<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M. op.cit., Vol. II, p.40.

<sup>2</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.306.

<sup>3</sup>Agricultural Journal of the Cape Colony, Thursday, 12 January, 1893.

<sup>4</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.306.

<sup>5</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, p.40.

<sup>6</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.306.

<sup>7</sup>This is the figure quoted by Thom. The Cape Almanac for 1831 suggests he had 3,700 lbs. which he sold for 8d. per lb. = £123.6.6. 2,000 lbs. was sent to London where it fetched 13½d. per lb. for the broker. The balance was supplied to a hat maker in Grahamstown (Mr Allison ?).

while in 1831 he had 10,000 pounds of wool on offer for which he expected to receive the sum of £625.<sup>1</sup> He also offered for sale in 1831, 100 merino rams 'of a superior breed' at the low price of 15s. per head and 800 crossed ewes at 5s. per head.<sup>2</sup>

Daniell made a serious and very valuable contribution to the popularisation of wool farming on the frontier. He parted freely with advice regarding his farming operations and was always willing to give encouragement to those who were considering the adoption of this form of farming. By his own actions he was also a very good example of the wealth which could now be acquired by those farmers converting to this form of husbandry. In 1827 he had been virtually insolvent, but within the space of six years he had been able to re-establish himself as one of the wealthier farmers on the frontier.

Griffith would not seem to have been as dedicated to the breeding of woolled sheep, as his counterpart Daniell was. His participation in this form of farming appears to have stemmed largely from the anticipated profit to be gained. His two properties were well suited to this form of farming and by 1836 he had supplied 31 bales of wool to the London market, despite the effects of the frontier war.<sup>3</sup> Griffith soon abandoned his farms 'Burnt Kraal' and 'Vaal Krans', to reside in Grahamstown at the 'Prospect House'. This is implied in the following advertisement which appeared in 1834,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.306.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., Vol. I, No. 1, December 30, 1831.

<sup>3</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.307. See infra, pp.162-3.

<sup>4</sup>G.T.J., January 9, 1834.

"The Young Merino Rams engaged from the Flock of Sheep belonging to the proprietor of Burnt Kraal and Vaal Krans, are now ready to be delivered by the Overseers on the respective Farms whenever sent for. Persons desirous of obtaining Young Rams of the pure blood, from two valuable Saxon Rams imported direct in July last from Lord Western's flock in England, must forward their applications to the above Overseers on the Farms, or to the Residence, 'Prospect House', Graham's Town; that by the period of lambing, during the present and ensuing month, the requisite number to meet the demand may be preserved. The price of the Saxon Merinos will be £3 each."

An advertisement in May of the same year announced that Griffith had 100 young merino rams for sale, delivery in June or July, bred from imported pure merino rams. Their price was now £2.<sup>1</sup> The availability of these young rams, undoubtedly did much to assist the establishment of further flocks of merinos on the frontier.

Lieutenant T.C. White was also only to commence sheep farming on his return from Europe in 1828.<sup>2</sup> Prior to his departure for Europe he had been employed in conducting a land survey of the frontier regions, and during this period he was, no doubt, able to gain a good knowledge of which areas were better suited to sheep farming. On his return to the colony he applied for a grant of land, in lieu of his previous services to the colonial administration, and was granted the farm 'Table Farm' in the vicinity of Grahamstown. The sheep he brought back to Albany were a selection of fine-woolled Saxon merinos from the flocks of the great English breeder, Lord Western, as well as a few which he had procured in Saxony.<sup>3</sup> The experience of the pioneers was not lost on Lieutenant White, who came to the colony with his 48 varieties of wheat<sup>4</sup> and this group

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., May 8, 1834.

<sup>2</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.307.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>See supra, p. 98.

of carefully selected sheep. On the estate sale of Major Pigot, he acquired another group of pedigree sheep, and soon achieved the distinction of having one of the best flocks in the country. His flock was considered second only to that of Lieutenant Daniell.<sup>1</sup>

Philipps might be considered amongst the pioneers of the woolled sheep farming on the eastern frontier. He brought the nucleus of a flock of sheep with him in 1820.<sup>2</sup> These could have been Wiltshire sheep, but as there is no mention of black faces, they were likely to have been of the Ryeland variety, which was popular along the Welsh border. This type of sheep was known for its short-stapled, fine wool. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the advance of mechanised spinning, the popularity of this type of sheep was dwindling in favour of the longer woolled varieties.<sup>3</sup> Even when this animal had been crossed with longer woolled varieties, as it probably had been by 1820, the wool of such sheep would have been inferior to that of the merino. Philipps referred to his sheep on several occasions in his letters, and from this we can attempt to gather some idea of the progress of this flock. In November, 1820, he commented on their shearing, and also noted that he had purchased a further 60 ewes 'of the native breed'. He now hoped that he could procure 'excellent wool' from the first crop!<sup>4</sup> In September, 1821, jackals were to get into his enclosure and killed, amongst other sheep, two of his English breed.<sup>5</sup> By now he had also

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M. op.cit., Vol. II, p.41.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, p.34.

<sup>3</sup>Jones, E.L., op.cit., pp.151ff.

<sup>4</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. I, p.224.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Vol. II, p.45.

discovered the benefits derived from the burning of the veld in winter to bring on the new growth of grass more quickly in spring.

By April, 1822, Edward, his son, was able to write,<sup>1</sup>

"...my father sent a small quantity of the Wool of his half bred Sheep (which was very fine and equal some say to the Merino) in one of Mr. Nourse's ships to Cape Town, but immediately the vessel going out of Algoa Bay ran ashore and everything was lost - the crew saved - they were most of them intoxicated..."

The difficulties encountered by the sheep farmer were also clearly stated by Philipps,<sup>2</sup>

"...our Sheep...suffer much in it [cold weather] we keep them in folds at night,...on account of the Wolves, Jackalls, and Leopards...all sickly sheep die in the first rains, we shall never do well with them till we have roofs - we never turn them out till 10 o'clock and they are in before sunset..."

Under these conditions it was naturally very difficult for the first sheep farmers to make headway. By 1826, Philipps had realised the better qualities of the merino, and was cross-breeding his own flock with this type of sheep.<sup>3</sup> He had also moved to the coastal farm 'Glendour'<sup>4</sup> where he was experimenting with the richer grazing,<sup>5</sup>

"...I am now trying the Merino Sheep with my own kind which I brought out and they are uncommonly fine to the surprise of a great many as it was not generally thought that this rich pasture would do for them however I burn the grass of some of my hills alternatively and by frequent change I have perfectly succeeded - this month proves it in Lambs - I have already 170 and expect about 100 more -"

By continual burning of the grass and the rotation of this flock, there is every possibility that this process was affecting the

<sup>1</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. II, p.157.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp.207-8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. IV, p.196.

<sup>4</sup> See supra, pp. 77-8.

<sup>5</sup> Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.196.

parasite reproduction cycle. In this way Philipps was keeping his flock relatively free from this menace. The ultimate effect on the value of the grazing would, no doubt, have been detrimental. By 1829, Philipps conceded that his farm and those in close proximity to the sea coast were better suited to cattle farming. But his experiment had certainly proved that it was possible to succeed in the raising of sheep in this area. At this time he had made a complete conversion to merino sheep, and was supplying most of his wool to the blanket manufacturing mill at Bathurst.<sup>1</sup>

The results of the early experiments with the breeding of woolled sheep by these Settlers were not lost on the other inhabitants of the region. The spread of this type of farming was a far slower process in the other districts of the frontier than in Albany itself. Amongst the earliest members of the other frontier districts who adopted woolled sheep-farming, were the firm of Korsten, Scheuble, and Chase, who commenced breeding in 1830 at 'Cradock Place' on Algoa Bay, and the laddrost of Graaff Reinet, Andries Stockenstrom. Robert Hart, who had been the superintendent of the Somerset Farm down to 1825, also appears to have commenced this form of farming in the Boschberg around this period. Certain of the original Dutch farmers in the Albany district, men like M. Behrens and C.T. Pohl, had also started shearing woolled sheep by 1833.<sup>2</sup>

Korsten's firm purchased its base stock from Lieutenant T.C. White towards the latter end of 1830. Some 750 sheep were obtained, the large majority of which were cross-bred, with the exception of

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<sup>1</sup>Philipps, T., Letters, op.cit., Vol. V, p.118.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., November 28, 1833.

one, which was an original Saxony merino ram which had been imported by White in 1828, and another ram which had been bred from pure stock within the colony. By 1834 this flock had increased to between 2,100 and 2,200 sheep which were anticipated to yield about 3,000 pounds of wool in that year.<sup>1</sup> In the same year, 1834, a sample of wool from this flock won the Agricultural Society's first prize at a competition held in Cape Town.<sup>2</sup>

The rapid development of woolled sheep-farming in the Albany district should not only be seen in the light of the acceptance of this form of farming by a few progressively minded Settlers. Their activity was, undoubtedly, of paramount importance, but the interpretation of the history of the eastern frontier which has, in the past, lauded the activities of the Settlers and castigated the role of the unpopular governor, Lord Charles Somerset, has tended to detract from the role of his administration in the spread of the merino on the frontier. Little recognition is given to the fact that a free annual distribution of rams was made in the frontier districts, and that many of the rams which were used in the building up of flocks on the frontier owed their origin to a benevolent governor. This action, undoubtedly, was in part politically motivated. After the initial failure of the settlement to establish itself as an agricultural community, the governor would have cast about for a suitable alternative to palliate the political opposition which was now developing towards his rule in that quarter. But there must also have been a more benevolent motive as well.

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<sup>1</sup>De Zuid Afrikaan, January 10, 1834.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., January 9, 1834.

This can be seen in the varied attempts of this governor to improve the practice of both arable and pastoral farming within the colony. The interest he showed in the experiments and activities of the government farms at Groote Post, reflects a deeper concern for the advancement and welfare of the colonists than would be motivated by purely political considerations. Writing to the colonial under-secretary in 1826 in defence of his actions as governor, Somerset was to comment on activities at Groote Post,<sup>1</sup>

"...Although very great losses have been experienced in the Merino Flocks of the Farm [Groote Post], particularly in the tempestuous winter of 1822, constant distributions, gratis, have been made in all parts of the Colony of Merino Rams. During the last season 40 were sent to Graham's Town to be distributed gratis, amongst the Settlers, and previous to my departure I made an agreement with the Overseer to supply henceforward 70 Merino Rams annually to the Albany and Somerset Districts..."

Prior to the free distribution of these merino rams, the government farms at Groote Post had also been a source from which the pioneers had been able to acquire rams at lower prices than the cost of importing them from Europe.<sup>2</sup> That these rams and this service offered to the farmers on the frontier by this administration were anything but beneficial, is difficult to dispute.

From what has been written so far, it is clear that the development of woolled sheep-farming on the frontier was to benefit, both from the patronage of the government, and from the resourcefulness of the Settlers who saw in this form of farming the opportunity of improving their condition and financial status. The example of these pioneers resulted in the rapid acceptance of this

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M. Records, op.cit., Vol. XXVII, p.143.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, pp. 118-9.

form of farming by many of the Settlers who had locations suited for sheep pastures. By 1830 there were reputed to be 10,000 woolled sheep in the district, together with some 67,400 Cape sheep.<sup>1</sup>

In 1834, Thomas Pringle estimated that this figure had grown to 12,000 woolled sheep.<sup>2</sup> The year 1830 was the first year in which a considerable amount of wool was exported from the frontier.

The Graham's Town Journal give the following figures for the first three years' exports:<sup>3</sup>

TABLE II

Returns of Wool Exports through Port Elizabeth  
1830 - 1832

	Quantity	Weight	Value
1830	36 bales	5,040 lbs.	£ 222
1831	75	11,020	£ 550
1832	121	18,150	£ 935

By 1835 the value of wool exported from Algoa Bay was £4,261.<sup>4</sup>

This large increase can be attributed to the growing awareness of the value of woolled sheep amongst the frontier farmers. As early as 1824 the African Court Calendar and Directory, later to be published as the South African Almanack and Directory, had started a propaganda campaign in favour of woolled sheep-farming.<sup>5</sup> After 1831 a similar campaign began in the frontier districts. Here it

<sup>1</sup> South African Almanack and Directory, 1831, p.176.

<sup>2</sup> Pringle, T., op.cit., p.224.

<sup>3</sup> G.T.J., March 7, 1833.

<sup>4</sup> Chase, J.C. (2), op.cit., p.173.

<sup>5</sup> Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.168.

was the newly constituted Graham's Town Journal which launched the campaign. Numerous editorials encouraged farmers to convert to this form of farming. The prices paid for the wool of those who had adopted woolled sheep farming were frequently published as evidence of the improved incomes which awaited such conversion. Correspondence with the various wool factors in London was also regularly published. As were hints on the improvement of stock and the treatment of disease.

In Albany, traditional farming practices were not strongly opposed to woolled sheep. For these readers the object of the newspaper was to prove the profitability of this form of farming and to show up the weaknesses of the alternative forms in the lack of markets. The Journal played strongly on the latter theme in 1833 following good harvests in the previous season. This had resulted in a glut on the market for most agricultural products and a resultant fall in prices to unprofitable levels. The editorial of March 28, 1833, pointed out that<sup>1</sup>

"Habit and prejudice have long opposed the growth of Wool in this Colony, but both are at length giving way to conviction. Every farmer in the Colony feels that the price of his present marketable produce is limited by the confined demand, - that he gets little more for his Cattle than the market price of the Hide and Tallow - that the butcher cannot take all his slaughter Sheep even in gift, - that a few days rain reduces the price of Butter and fat to less than the waggon hire for bringing them to market, - that if he reap even an average crop of Wheat, Barley, and Oats, they are hardly worth securing...the majority know well that those articles fall in price because they are of necessity chiefly consumed in the Colony; and that although the inhabitants of the towns, the troops, the vagrants and the wolves were to destroy ten times more than they do at present, they could make no sensible impression on the price of the millions of unprofitable Sheep which overspread the face of the country."

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., March 28, 1833.

Again in February, 1833, the Journal had written in editorial,<sup>1</sup>

"It cannot but afford the highest satisfaction to find that the inhabitants of this district are making such praiseworthy efforts to extend and improve the growth of fine Wool. We have seen numerous fleeces which have been shorn within the last few weeks that fully prove the great advancement made in this important article. It seems to be established beyond doubt that the climate and pasturage of this part of the colony are eminently suited to this profitable pursuit, and which is proved by the fact that Wool of some pure Merinos, bred in Albany, has been ascertained to be superior in fineness to that produced by the sheep imported.

We mention these encouraging circumstances to stimulate our farmers to increased exertion; there is still much to be done; and there is a great want of pure stock to answer the pressing demands of those who are now turning their attention to Sheep Farming."

This growing demand for pure bred stock needed to commence farming, or to increase the size of flocks already acquired, led a group of farmers and businessmen to form a joint stock company for the importation of merino sheep in 1833. This organisation was established on February 28, 1833 at a meeting in the Free Mason's Tavern in Grahamstown.<sup>2</sup> The founder members were Messrs. Maynard, Griffith, White, Philipps, Carlisle, Norden, and Godlonton. The enterprise, known severally as the Graham's Town Joint Stock Company and later as the Eastern Province Joint Stock Merino Sheep Association, was for 'the importation of pure merino sheep into this district'. It was seen that the failure of private capital to establish an importing business for the introduction of stud stock had been proved. At the same time it was appreciated that it was impossible for the majority of farmers to undertake the expense, privately, of importing stock because the high freight

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., February 14, 1833.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., February 28, 1833.

charges on live cargoes from Britain. The company was therefore proposed with a subscription of 400 £1 shares, these funds to be used exclusively for the purchase of merino rams from the flock of the British merino breeder, Lord Western. The sheep would be dispatched to Algoa Bay and Grahamstown, there they were to be sold as soon as possible after arrival to the highest bidder amongst the subscribers. The fact that over £300 was subscribed at the first meeting is an indication of the need seen in the district for such an organisation.

At this initial meeting, the formation of a Stud Farm was also discussed, and a committee was appointed to draw up a prospectus for such a farm. This prospectus was published on March 31, 1833.<sup>1</sup> Another subscription was issued of 200 £5 shares, and over £700 was raised at the first meeting. This money was to be used for the purchase of 100 ewes and an unspecified number of rams from the flock of Lord Western. The use of European shepherds was recommended and a request was made to Lord Western to choose these men, who were to care for the sheep on the voyage and on the farm in Albany. It was decided that only European shepherds were to be used on the association's farm. Use was made of Captain Campbell's farm outside Grahamstown, and the superintendence of this farm was entrusted to a commission of five chosen from the subscribers. It was hoped that such a farm would be able to provide a constantly increasing supply of pure-bred merino rams. Initially these would only be for sale to the members of the association, but it was hoped that the time would come when these rams would be more freely available for selling

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., March 31, 1833.

to non-members as well. After a lapse of five or six years, it was envisaged that the sale of pure-bred merino ewes could also take place at prices lower than those paid for imported ewes. In this way, it was hoped, the flocks of woolled sheep on the frontier could be increased more rapidly and at a lower cost than would otherwise have been possible.<sup>1</sup>

In January, 1834, the Journal published the correspondence which had passed between the chairman of the association, T.C. White, and the association's London agent, C. Maynard.<sup>2</sup> Maynard pointed out that with the exception of Lord Western's flock, few of the English merino flocks were pure bred. As the flock of the former could not be relied upon to supply the full needs of the association, he proposed that sheep from Saxony should be substituted. This move was agreed upon, as sheep were dispatched from Hamburg to London, to join those which were to be sent from there to the colony. The Journal announced the arrival of these sheep in May, 1834. The journey to the Cape was a particularly rough one. The London agent reported that the sheep from Hamburg had also been subjected to a very rough passage, so that they had not arrived in London in good condition. Over 30 per cent of the sheep were lost on the voyage to Algoa Bay. Only 69 of the 110 sheep bought in Europe survived the journey.<sup>3</sup> On landing in Algoa Bay the remaining sheep were kept on the premises of Mr D.P. Frances until they were again fit to undertake the journey to Grahamstown. As a result of the severe

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., March 21, 1833.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., January 30, 1834.

<sup>3</sup>Godlonton, R., The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, p.188.

losses sustained, the association decided to sell these sheep to cover their losses. They were duly sold in Grahamstown at prices varying between £38 and £15 per head.<sup>1</sup> Once more the government looked upon the activities of this association with a benevolent eye. These sheep and future shipments were allowed into the colony free from any duty.<sup>2</sup> The failure of this first venture called into debate the existence of the association. Here it was seen as being too valuable an organisation to disband after only one attempt and it continued to operate. By 1836 it reflected a balance in favour of its members of £556 in its accounts, and a dividend of £3.6s.6d. was declared,<sup>3</sup> despite the influence of the war.

The Eastern Province Joint Stock Merino Sheep Association was not the only organisation which was active in the importation of merino sheep into the frontier districts. Breeders like Griffith and Daniell, and the Grahamstown merchant, W.R. Thompson, were also responsible for the importation of sheep.<sup>4</sup> The famous Captain Robb also imported sheep from Australia into the Western Province, where many of these sheep were bought up by farmers from the frontier districts. The firm of Korsten, Scheuble & Chase was amongst the largest buyers.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the activities of these organisations and individuals in the importation of pedigreed and pure-bred stock, South Africa's

<sup>1</sup>Godlonton, R., op.cit., p.188.

<sup>2</sup>Cape Archives CPE 1/1/1 (unpaginated) Letter November 21, 1833 Colonial Office in Cape Town to Collector of Customs, Port Elizabeth.

<sup>3</sup>G.T.J., December 1, 1836.

<sup>4</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.323.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp.309-10.

development towards its wool industry was a slow transition from the hairy Cape sheep which formed the basis of the greater number of flocks. This involved little, or relatively small, capital outlays, other than the purchase of woolled rams. Capital was made available for the hastening of this transition from several quarters. The most notable of these was the slave compensation money, which became available to the farmers of the western districts after 1834. Owing to the small number of slaves in the east, this payment did not have any great effect in this quarter. Here it was the funds which were paid to farmers in compensation, or for expenditure from the war effort, in 1836, which were to provide a major source available for the purchase of woolled breeding stock. There was also income from the returns of the 'Kafir trade' which was being ploughed into sheep farming. Thus the year 1835 can be seen as a turning point in the development of the woolled sheep industry in South Africa.<sup>1</sup> Up to this point the industry was in an experimental stage. On the frontier, the late 1820's and early 1830's had shown the profitable nature of this form of undertaking. It required only the upheaval of the war in 1835, and the serious dislocation which this caused, to justify the benefits to be derived from this form of farming.

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<sup>1</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.177.

## CHAPTER IV

The outbreak of the Sixth Frontier War in December, 1834, brought to an end a period of relative stability and progress for the Albany farmers. Many of them were apparently unaware of the impending crisis and were not in a position to take the necessary defensive action of driving their flocks and herds, and carrying their worldly possessions, to the various points of safety. This was the first experience of warfare and invasion in the colony for many of these farmers. Up to now they had had to contend only with occasional depredations of their cattle and horses by Xhosa thieves. While stock losses attributable to this source were considerable, they were, nevertheless, on a far smaller scale, and while the thieves were allowed to escape undetected, the threat of personal injury was minimal. This outbreak was more extensive, spreading over virtually the whole of the eastern frontier from the Winterberg to the sea; in the initial onslaught twenty five colonists were to lose their lives.<sup>1</sup>

In order to understand the attitude of the farming community of Albany to this war, it is necessary to investigate the causes, for which two distinct interpretations have been offered. Whilst we agree with the more recent interpretation which takes into greater consideration the position of the Xhosa tribes in the events leading up to the war, it is, nevertheless, necessary also to consider the older interpretation to trace the attitudes of the colonists.

The expansion of the frontier of the colony into the territory occupied by the Xhosa and the systematic ejection of these people

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<sup>1</sup>C.O.503, p.336.

from land which they had come to consider as their own, has been suggested as the chief cause of grievance on the part of the Xhosa.<sup>1</sup> This process, which had its beginnings following the first continual interaction between these two groups in the 1770's,<sup>2</sup> was to be the cause of unrest which flared into war, or periods of intensive hostility, on nine occasions in the following one hundred years.<sup>3</sup> The Xhosa were to retaliate to the encroachment of their lands in the only way known to a primitive society, namely, the continual harassment of those who had taken it from them. This harassment was mainly to take the form of the theft of cattle from these colonists. This is not to suggest that there were not thefts of colonial cattle, by Xhosa, for their own sake. The close proximity of two people who were both stock farmers would have heightened the temptations on both sides to lift cattle belonging to the other group, and this was certainly the case. For the Xhosa, however, these thefts also represented a broader political motive.

The reaction of the colonial farmers to this stock theft can well be imagined. It is not in the nature of any man to suffer the loss of property lightly, and while they failed, or chose not to recognise, their occupation of farms along the frontier as a direct encroachment on to the territory of the Xhosa, there seemed little motivation for the loss of their cattle by Xhosa thefts other than the inherent propensity of the Xhosa to steal.

It is from these divergent views that the two interpretations

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<sup>1</sup>Macmillan, W.M., Bantu, Boer, and Briton, passim.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, p.4.

<sup>3</sup>Macmillan, W.M., op.cit., pp.25-6.

of the causes of the Sixth Frontier War, like those before it, stem. The only novel feature in the sixth war was the presence of the large group of English-speaking Settlers in the Albany district. This group was new to the situation which already existed on the frontier. Their presence here stemmed from an attempt to find a solution to the problem which existed on the frontier.<sup>1</sup> The original intention of forming a closely knit settlement had failed, and those who now chose to remain on the land clamoured for larger farms which were essential in a district such as Albany. The granting of these farms to the Settlers was, however, to place certain real, or supposed, stresses on the demand for land within the colony. Their presence also represented a far denser white population along the frontier than had existed in any of the previous encounters between the colonists and their Xhosa neighbours. There were thus far more colonists, the majority of whom still bore close ties with their mother country, who were in a position to suffer as a consequence of such hostilities. It was this fact which accounts for the prominence of this war, together with the fact that unlike their Dutch counterparts who had the experience of five previous encounters with the Xhosa, the Settlers were taken unawares by this outbreak.

While the loss of land and the barrier presented to their own expansionist drives for grazing land for their cattle were now the underlying motivation for Xhosa hostility towards their colonial neighbours, sight should not be lost of the fundamental assumptions underlying their needs for land. In Bantu society it is cattle

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<sup>1</sup>See supra, pp.11ff.

rather than land which represents the chief form of wealth. While small portions of land are required for the cultivation of crops, by far the greater proportion of land is required for the pasturing of herds of cattle. Thus while chiefs might not suffer the loss of land lightly for its own sake, it would only seriously reflect on his followers once it curtailed their ability to increase the size of their herds, or maintain those which they already possessed.

There is a tendency in South African history to over-estimate the political power of the chiefs. This stems from the historical evidence of some of the better known warrior chiefs, such as Shaka and Msilikazi who held total power and command over their followers. There is little evidence to suggest that the Xhosa chiefs living in close proximity to the colonial frontier were in a similar position.<sup>1</sup> Thus it was only in matters of common interest that these chiefs could call upon the support of their followers. This was to be particularly true in the events leading up to the outbreak of the Sixth Frontier War. The political power of these chiefs stemmed from their ability to draw their followers together for concerted activity in times of need. Such a need arose in 1834.

Following the Fifth Frontier War in 1818-19, on the eve of the arrival of the Settlers, when the Xhosas had supposedly been driven back beyond the Keiskama River, the governor, Lord Charles Somerset, had instituted the plan for a belt of neutral territory between the Fish and Keiskama Rivers. The original intentions of the governor would seem to have been to keep this area clear of both Xhosa and colonists. This was not to be. The measure lacked the

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<sup>1</sup>Macmillan, W.M., op.cit., p.82.

approval of the Xhosa chiefs, who resented this further alienation of their territory. They were soon to see the upper reaches of this area being appropriated by colonial farmers.<sup>1</sup> The chiefs Maqomo and Tyali re-established themselves and their followers in this neutral zone and were allowed to stay, on the condition of 'good behaviour'.<sup>2</sup> Maqomo was driven from this territory in 1829 following an attack he made on the Tembu refugees. While this affront to the chief could well have been interpreted as a good enough reason for war, hostilities did not follow, although it did lead to an increased incidence of stock thefts.<sup>3</sup> In 1832 he was allowed back into this territory, only to be expelled in the following year.<sup>4</sup> Galbraith describes the activities of the colonial troops who,<sup>5</sup>

"...drove men, women, and cattle across the river and burned the huts the Kaffirs had erected. This summary eviction occurred at a time of severe drought; consequently the tribes suffered heavy losses of cattle."

This military activity in 1833 was bound to have a cumulative effect in the Xhosa territory across the Keiskama River. That the chiefs Maqomo and Tyali, together with their followers, were now thrown back on the territory of the other Xhosa chiefs in a time of drought which extended into 1834, meant that the general overcrowding of both humans, and above all, livestock, resulted in heavy losses of the latter by all concerned.

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<sup>1</sup>Macmillan, W.M., op.cit., pp.81ff.

<sup>2</sup>Cory, G.E., The Rise of South Africa, Vol. II, p.343.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix I.

<sup>4</sup>Macmillan, W.M., op.cit., pp.90-1.

<sup>5</sup>Galbraith, J.S., Reluctant Empire, p.101.

In 1819, when the Xhosa army stood before Grahamstown, the wizard, Makandhla, predicted that the bullets of the white men would turn to water.<sup>1</sup> This had not proved to be the case and the Xhosa had suffered a severe defeat. While the idea of sweeping the whites from the face of the land reappeared amongst the Xhosa in 1856, this event was left entirely in the hands of the supernatural powers. It is difficult to imagine therefore, that at the outset of the war in 1834, the Xhosa could have seriously believed in their ability to clear the area along the frontier of its white inhabitants. It was rather a war of retribution for the replenishment of their herds which had been seriously depleted in the events of 1833-34.<sup>2</sup>

To add to the difficulties which now confronted the Xhosa tribes with regard to their colonial neighbours, they also faced an influx of refugees from the Mfecane which was taking place to the north, sending fleeing tribes and fragments of those which had been destroyed, pouring south into the lands of the Xhosa.<sup>3</sup> Already, at least one Xhosa chief had called for colonial assistance to fend off an attack by one of these groups.<sup>4</sup> The Xhosa tribes were thus caught between the encroachment of white colonists on the one hand,

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<sup>1</sup>Molema, S.M., The Bantu: Past and Present, p.102.

<sup>2</sup>Nothing in the activity of this war suggests that the Xhosa invasion was bent on the conquest of territory. The raiders entered the colony, captured colonial cattle, and then drove them back across the frontier to the relative safety of 'Kaffirland'. The alternative is to suggest that this attack was simply an impulse of rage. In this case the Xhosa struck at the most vulnerable aspect of the frontier community, their cattle, simply in revenge.

<sup>3</sup>Walker, E.A., op.cit., pp.175-6.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.182. In 1828 the combined colonial and Xhosa force had defeated the Amangwane beyond the Bashee River.

seeking more farming land, and on the other by black refugees seeking land on which to live. Many of the blacks, such as the Mfengu, were absorbed into the Xhosa territory as servants, but other groups were repelled and friction developed with those who had settled in close proximity to the Xhosa lands — such as in the case of the conflict between Maqomo and the Tembu in 1829. This pressure on the Xhosa lands from the north did much to heighten tensions in the years leading up to 1834, and while the disruptive forces of the Mfecane had begun to subside after 1823,<sup>1</sup> the full effects of this disruption were only reaped on the frontier after 1828, so that by the drought year of 1833 this factor helped to make the situation on the frontier critical.

Another factor which kindled strong resentment amongst the Xhosa was the operation of the Spoor Law and the 'patrol system'.<sup>2</sup> These measures were introduced as a means for regaining the cattle which had been stolen by the Xhosa. The terms of these regulations were such, that it was an easy matter for them to be abused by the colonists, and there is evidence that this was often the case.<sup>3</sup> Theal points out that the rules for the repatriation of stolen cattle varied, sometimes the equivalent number of cattle being demanded from the suspects, sometimes the equivalent value.<sup>4</sup> Xhosa cattle were seen as being inferior in breed and worth less than colonial cattle by the colonists, but needless to say, not by

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<sup>1</sup>Walker, E.A., *op.cit.*, p.176.

<sup>2</sup>Macmillan, W.M., *op.cit.*, pp.77-9.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p.78.

<sup>4</sup>Theal, G.M., *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.3.

the Xhosa. The usual demand of four Xhosa animals for each colonial<sup>2</sup> animal taken would certainly seem too high. Nor was there any set means of determining the exact number of cattle stolen from the farmers, or that in fact they had been stolen and not simply lost. As early as 1825 the Commissioners of Inquiry in their report on the proposed Chartered South Africa Company, had pointed out that,<sup>1</sup>

"It has long been considered by some of the most intelligent of the Dutch Boers, and those most experienced in the conduct of Commandoes, that expeditions against the Caffres for the purpose of retaliation should be discontinued, as only furnishing to these savages fresh pretext for more extensive plunder. No system is found to be so effectual in checking their enterprises as that which depends upon constant and vigilant protection of the objects of them. The habits of the Boers are averse to this system; and they are not unwilling to redeem the consequences of careless exposure of their property by a few days of active service spent in retaliatory expeditions against the Caffres, by which in former times they were the considerable gainers."

Nor would the habits of many of the Settler farmers seem to have differed from their Dutch counterparts. A letter in the Journal in 1834 pointed out,<sup>2</sup>

"...If we ride through Albany among the settlers, we find many of their kraals but very little better than those of the boers; and it is a well known fact that the greatest proportion of cattle that has been stolen from the settlers by Kafirs, have been those that have been suffered to stray away...I feel assured that had cattle been properly taken care of by day, and secured in a good kraal by night, that instead of having lamented the loss of eleven hundred head, the loss would not have amounted to one hundred. I believe the cases have been solitary where the Kafirs have stolen cattle in spite of the exertions of the herd to defend them;..."

With the increasing density in the occupation of land within the colony, it was becoming popular for the Dutch farmers to move

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXIII, p.203.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., March 13, 1834.

beyond the frontiers of the colony in search of grazing in times of drought. Dr John Philip recognised that this movement was inevitably onto the lands occupied by the border tribes and was largely in response to overstocking on the part of the farmers.<sup>1</sup> This overstocking became particularly severe following the depression in the colony after 1825 when the traditional market for frontier cattle in Cape Town dried up, and the needs of the garrisons and frontier community came to be met increasingly by the closer situated Albany farmers.<sup>2</sup> These larger herds were now also motivating the colonists in their demands for more land. At the same time, the growing demand for farm labour<sup>3</sup> was reinforcing the widespread assumption that if the Xhosa and other frontier tribes were dispossessed of their land, they would have less to spoil by their wasteful methods, and more of them would be free to ensure a plentiful supply of farm labour.<sup>4</sup>

For their part, the Xhosa were, through the curtailment of the expansion of their territory, made increasingly vulnerable to the effects of drought. The nature of their agricultural system was such, that periods of drought represented lean periods even under normal conditions, while the increasingly abnormal situation which was now developing made existence in these periods even more hazardous. Normally, an area of land was granted to the individual by the chief, for the establishment of his huts and gardens, while all other land represented communal grazing. They habitually

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<sup>1</sup>Macmillan, W.M., op.cit., p.115.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, pp.99-100.

<sup>3</sup>See supra, pp.107ff.

<sup>4</sup>Macmillan, W.M., op.cit., pp.144-5.

settled in one spot for between five and seven years, after which time the location of the hut and gardens would be shifted for health reasons and when the ground had become exhausted.<sup>1</sup> With an increasing density of population in a restricted area, the point was being reached by the 1830's, when it was no longer always possible to move , to a better located position. This resulted in reduced returns from the land in both the quantity of agricultural produce forthcoming from the gardens, and in a reduced supply of milk. An increased population density now also brought about a reduction in the amount of game available to supplement the diminished protein requirements from milk. In times of drought, or in poor agricultural seasons, the reduced food supply from their land could now easily fail to meet their demands. Bowker pointed out that at harvest the Xhosa divided their grain into two lots, one part to be kept for present use, while the other was stored in their underground granaries. The latter were never opened until after a certain period, and if the former amount was not sufficient to tide them over to the opening of the granaries, they starved, or lived off the land as best they could.<sup>2</sup> It was during this 'hunger time' that the greatest incentive to steal existed. The editor of the Journal commented on this in an editorial in February 1834,<sup>3</sup>

"It is necessity that in general drives the Kafir to the commission of depredations; hence we find that during a long drought, and in the winter months when a supply of milk fails, plunder is most frequent. Hunger induces him to prey upon the herds of the colonists, and he is too often tempted to the commission of this by the care-

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<sup>1</sup>Macmillan, W.M., op.cit., p.26.

<sup>2</sup>Bowker, J.M., Speeches, Letters, and Selections, p.52.

<sup>3</sup>G.T.J., February 20, 1834.

less manner in which cattle are suffered to roam the country without being guarded by proper attendants."

The theft of colonial cattle reached its highest level in 1834 since the war of 1818-19.<sup>1</sup> That these thefts were in part motivated by want, is borne out by the activities of 1833 when Maqomo and Tyali were driven out of the neutral territory with great stock losses; that this want had united the Xhosa in concerted effort under the leadership of their chiefs, so that these thefts can also be seen as being political activity, is borne out by the fact that they almost ceased entirely with the appearance of Dr John Philip on the frontier as envoy to the governor.<sup>2</sup> Boyce has suggested that it was to,<sup>3</sup>

"...the jealous feeling created by this [Maqomo and Tyalis'] expulsion, that we may trace the real origins of the Kaffer War of 1834-5,..."

This is certainly true, but it was the escalating process in which deed was matched with deed, which was eventually to result in the Xhosa incursion. It was natural that the increased tempo of stock thefts in 1834, should give rise to protest amongst the colonial farmers for protection and retribution. Colonel Henry Somerset, the Commandant of the frontier, was a man sensitive to the demands of the frontier community. His father, Lord Charles, had earlier chosen not to heed the demands of this group, with its strong ties with the mother country, and it had cost him dearly. His son, after his father's resignation in 1826, had chosen to remain behind in the

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> Macmillan, W.M., op.cit., pp.119ff. Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, p.47.

<sup>3</sup> Boyce, W.B., Notes on South African Affairs, pp.4-5.

colony with the lesson well learnt, that it paid to heed the demands of the frontier people. The arrival of a new governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban in 1834, coinciding with this spate of stock-thefts on the frontier, placed Somerset in an unenviable position. Retrenchment had reduced the forces available for the effective patrolling of the frontier to a level where this was now hardly possible,<sup>1</sup> and in order to appease the farmers the process of retaliatory raids was now stepped up against the Xhosa. This action by Colonel Somerset, following the delay in the proposed visit to the frontier by the new governor, for which the Xhosa were anxiously waiting, precipitated the crisis.<sup>2</sup> The activities of the patrol under Ensign Sparks which led to the wounding of the petty-chief Xoxo, was simply the last event in a series which was straining the relations between blacks and whites on the frontier.

The war, which can be said to have broken out on December 21, 1834,<sup>3</sup> did not take the form of a concerted attack on the colony by a single large body of men, as had been the case in 1819. It was rather a series of attacks by small raiding parties. Acting in this way, they were to a large degree successful in eluding all forms of harassment by the colonial troops. So successful were they that within a few days the frontier from the Koonap River to the sea had been thrown into a state of confusion. Some farm houses had been burnt, crops destroyed, and large herds of cattle had been driven off. For most of the Albany farmers, the outbreak of hostilities had come

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, pp.85-6.

<sup>2</sup>Macmillan, W.M., op.cit., p.125.

<sup>3</sup>Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, p.46.

as a surprise, in spite of the build-up in tension along the frontier over the previous months. The swiftness with which the Xhosa bands entered the colony enhanced the confusion. In all, little resistance seems to have been offered. The farmers living on the more remote frontier, however, who were in closer contact with the tribes living adjacent to them, seem to have been given prior warning by their servants. This warning enabled them to gather together in groups for their mutual protection, prior to the outbreak of hostilities.<sup>1</sup> Owing to the relative isolation of these farmers and the fact that military support was not forthcoming for their stand, their losses were to be as great, if not greater, than those of the Settlers and other farmers within the colony who had less warning of the impending storm. Where there was not ignorance about the impending attack, there was probably a fair amount of incredulity stemming from the defeat the Xhosa had suffered in 1819 and the belief that this had taught the Xhosa a 'lesson'. Others, such as the trader John Montgomery, who was in Grahamstown just before the outbreak heeded the warning of their Xhosa servants and moved to safer areas.<sup>2</sup> This news of the impending raids was short, where it was known at all. There would, nevertheless, seem to have been sufficient time to give many of the English and Dutch farmers the opportunity to escape to the various centres of refuge, such as Salem, Bathurst, and Grahamstown. Here there was more hope for their mutual protection than in isolated groups throughout the countryside. Some farmers

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<sup>1</sup>Coetser, P.P.J., Gebeurtenisse Uit die Kaffer Oorloge, p.1.

<sup>2</sup>Montgomery, J., The Reminiscences of..., p.80.

even managed to escape with their herds and flocks.<sup>1</sup> In general, it would seem that the fear engendered by the impending attacks was sufficient to cause families to flee to safety with a minimum of worldly possessions. Bertram Bowker, however, noted in his journal,<sup>2</sup>

"Then another order came from the Landrost that we were to leave all cattle and sheep and congregate at Bathurst. The Government would make good the cattle after the war. 'Do your best to save life' was the order....Many of the people had brought their cattle and there were a lot of oxen from the wagons. We could see our cattle 12 miles away with the glass. We brothers wanted to go and live with them but were not allowed to. We had been 4 days at Bathurst when the Kaffirs attacked the cattle..."

Thus there were certainly a large number of herds and flocks which were left unattended, to become prey to wild animals, as well as to the raiders. Of the animals which were driven to the safety of the various gathering points, many were lost to the invaders from the communal herds which were formed at these places. Commenting on their plight a contemporary author noted the following,<sup>3</sup>

"The most opposite causes had not unfrequently produced the same result of utter destitution. Many were attacked so suddenly, that they had not time to go into the house to take anything out....Others again had timely information of danger, regarded it as false alarm, and left everything behind them, in the vain expectation of returning in a few days, and finding it safe;..."

It is thus clear that the losses suffered by the frontier farmers in this initial onslaught can be divided into two distinct categories; the actual depredations of the Xhosa, and the loss of animals which were now allowed to stray, unattended, from the unenclosed frontier

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<sup>1</sup>Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, p.85.

<sup>2</sup>Mitford-Barborton, I., op.cit., p.61.

<sup>3</sup>Heavyside, J., in C.O.503 of 1837, p.304.

farms. It was perhaps natural that the frontier farmers chose to classify this second group of losses along with the first and to blame all their losses on the Xhosa. Undoubtedly, many of the cattle simply left on farms and allowed to stray, were collected by the raiding bands and driven into 'Kaffirland'. There would seem to have been a tendency, however, simply to 'write-off' all animals left on the farms, as losses, whether or not this was borne out by observation and fact. The farmers, once removed from their farms, seem to have simply entered their total stock holdings as losses.<sup>1</sup>

It is unnecessary to enter into the events of the war itself. A detailed study of the actual campaigns is adequately dealt with elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> It will suffice to say that this was a war of cattle. The Xhosa would seem to have been bent on the capture of cattle and evaded confrontation with the colonial forces as much as possible. In all but one isolated case, they spared the lives of women and children, and of the missionaries residing within their own territory. With the notable exception of the 'Kaffirland traders', very few white colonists were, in proportion to the population, to lose their lives. For their part, the colonial military forces, were slow in arranging a counter-offensive. This commenced on January 10, 1835,<sup>3</sup> and was then only a clearing operation within the colony. The offensive into Xhosa territory commenced on March 6, 1835.<sup>4</sup> During this period the Xhosa were given virtually a free hand in their

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<sup>1</sup>See *infra*, pp.158ff.

<sup>2</sup>Cory, G.E., *op.cit.*, Vol. III, Ch.II to Ch.VI.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p.98.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p.113.

depredations. The fact that the Xhosa did not give the colonial forces the opportunity of forcing a major confrontation, meant that the offensive into Xhosa territory very soon resolved itself into what Colonel Harry Smith<sup>1</sup> referred to as, 'Smithfield market cattle driving'. The major significance of this war for the frontier farming community lay, not in the loss of life, but in the numbers of livestock lost to the Xhosa and subsequently captured from them as compensation.

The agricultural population which now sought protection in the various centres, constituted a problem, both for the colonial authorities, and the populations of these centres. While many sought refuge with friends, this being particularly true of the English sector of the population, there were others who were now in a destitute condition and represented a burden on the community. To overcome this, the governor, on his arrival in Grahamstown on January 20, 1835, called for the creation of a 'Board of Relief' to administer aid to these destitute farmers.<sup>2</sup> This body was constituted on January 21, 1835,<sup>3</sup> by which time there was a considerable refugee population in Grahamstown. As early as December 26, 1834, Bathurst had been abandoned and some 900 people made their way in a convoy of 70 ox wagons towards Grahamstown.<sup>4</sup> It was the Dutch farmers from both sides of the Fish River who were to constitute the largest proportion of the recipients of the aid offered by the Board of Relief in

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<sup>1</sup>He assumed supreme command of the colonial forces on January 6, 1835.

<sup>2</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, p.296.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.304.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.302.

Grahamstown. This resulted from their closer proximity to the first attacks and their lack of family or friends who had not suffered a similar fate. There were also farmers from this region who were not aware of this aid, so that their numbers could have been considerably larger.<sup>1</sup>

By February, 1835, the Board had commenced activities. By this time there were between 1,500 and 2,000 individuals, drawn from the outlying areas, in Grahamstown, who were considered to be in need of support.<sup>2</sup> In addition to this group, there were in the outlying areas, smaller groups who were also in a destitute condition. There was also the large Khoi settlement on the Kat River which, through its close proximity to the frontier and its loyalty to the colonial cause, had suffered severe depredations. These groups were also to receive consideration. As a result of the Board only being constituted some time after the outbreak of the hostilities, temporary relief had already been offered by the inhabitants of Grahamstown to some 80 families, made up of between 300 and 400 individuals. This aid had been limited to what the local community could raise in the form of such essentials as food, bedding, and second-hand clothing.<sup>3</sup>

The chief functions of the Board were to investigate all claims for aid made to it, and to record the statement of all applicants. Only those cases which were in dire straits were to be helped. In the pursuit of this end, the Board had some difficulty in

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<sup>1</sup>Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, p.104.

<sup>2</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, p.304.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.295.

determining the exact plight of all the cases presented to it. In the case of dubious claims, only small grants were made, and initially no claims were made in cash. This was done to deter this aid finding its way into the canteens which, initially being closed as one of the measures of the emergency, had also reopened their doors in February, 1835. Later, cash payments were made to widows for the payment of rent or funerals. It was soon found that the recording of statements from each applicant was retarding the Board in the pursuit of its other functions, and on application to the governor, this function was dropped.<sup>1</sup> Once the Board had determined the validity of an application, a requisition was issued against the civil commissary for rations, or upon the clerk of the peace for accommodation, or upon the district surgeon for medicines or medical attention.<sup>2</sup> For the more distant encampments, not all these provisions could be rendered, and from the report of the Board it is clear that the aid given to these outlying areas had, of necessity, to be inferior to what was being offered in Grahamstown.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the requisitions made on the various government departments and officers, a separate fund was established. It was seen that the aid emanating from the government would, of necessity, be a temporary measure, and an independent fund would provide the board with the necessary funds to carry on its activities after this had happened. The Board raised £3,737 during the course of 1835<sup>4</sup> and £3,390 of this was spent in relief of the farming community during

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<sup>1</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, p.296.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.305.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp.305ff.

<sup>4</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, p.98.

the year.<sup>1</sup> During the same period over £16,000 was issued in the form of provisions and rations to the destitute.<sup>2</sup> By April 27, 1837, only 19 men, 26 women and 25 children remained on the ration list.<sup>3</sup> For the majority of those receiving them, rations ceased to be issued on January 31, 1836.<sup>4</sup>

This relief rendered by the Board was for the immediate alleviation of the destitute. It was simply an emergency measure which was considered as an unavoidable cost of the war for the colonial administration. It was essential that steps should be taken towards the normalisation of the war-torn economy and the rehabilitation of the farming community. To this end, the governor established the position of a 'Government Commissioner of Relief' on March 12, 1835.<sup>5</sup> This post was filled by Mr Hougham Hudson, the retired magistrate of Uitenhage.<sup>6</sup> The function of this officer was the distribution of loans, to enable the farmers to 'renew their occupations, upon however a diminished scale', as quickly as possible.<sup>7</sup> The funds made available to this officer were some £7,000 appropriated from the 'Storm Fund' which had been created in 1823 to assist in the relief of the Settlers.<sup>8</sup> From this sum

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<sup>1</sup>Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, p.104.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.249.

<sup>3</sup>L.G.595, p.56.

<sup>4</sup>L.G.50, p.172.

<sup>5</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, Despatch, D'Urban to Glenelg, 8.6.1836, No.30, p.295.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>For an account of the establishment of the Storm Fund see Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. I, pp.330-1. See supra, pp.67ff.

about 400 loans were made to sufferers to the extent of £6,792, no loan being in excess of £50.<sup>1</sup> The operation of the Commissioner in the case of these loans was for him to authorise the purchase for the applicant for the loan, such articles of stock, seed, or implements, as might be required. Security for the repayment of the loans was secured in the mortgage of land or moveable property. A schedule of all such purchases was submitted to the colonial office in Cape Town, where drafts on the Discount Bank were issued in favour of the persons being assisted.<sup>2</sup> Rations, clothing, and furniture were not considered amongst the items for which assistance could be given, other than in extreme cases.

The functions of this officer were extended in June, 1835, when the governor undertook to arrange the sale of cattle which had been captured during the various campaigns. In order that needy farmers might also be allowed to participate in the purchase of these animals, the Government Commissioner was authorised to issue orders to farmers, who were bona fide losers of cattle in the war, at a rate of 15 per cent. It can only be assumed that this low rate was an attempt to discourage speculators from over-stating their losses, and to ensure that all claimants might be able to benefit by recouping at least some of their losses. In all, 824 orders were issued, amounting to £9,019.<sup>3</sup> The individuals who received the orders signed a receipt for the amount of the order, and this sum was then considered as part compensation for their loss of cattle. This was subsequently

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<sup>1</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, No. 30, Encl.2, p.332.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Encl.5, p.340.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Encl.2, p.332.

struck off their statements of losses against any compensation which might later be paid by the colonial or British governments. The fact that each claimant was allowed an order for only 15 per cent of his original claim suggests that, on one hand, the number of animals available for distribution was limited, so that this reduced rate would guarantee to each claimant some compensation; or, on the other, that the claims were inflated.<sup>1</sup>

The latter point is borne out in the sentiments expressed by the Government Commissioner,<sup>2</sup>

"The sufferers by the Caffre irruption have delivered to me their own statements of their losses...but their amount must not be considered exact, as the state of many of the documents prevents the amount of losses being ascertained with any degree of accuracy.

When the parties undergo a strict examination as to the correctness of their statements and the value of their property, very considerable reductions will take place, and some are likely to be disallowed. The impression on my mind is, that the sum may be reduced one-third; and if two-thirds are taken as the real amount of the losses sustained, I am humbly of the opinion it will be found nearly correct."

It was natural that the farming community would overstate its losses. The governor had stated his intention of requesting compensation on their behalf from the British government.<sup>3</sup> There was also the fact

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<sup>1</sup>L.G.47 is a list of the farmers who received orders to purchase captured cattle. It has a central column of figures which is untitled but which bears a strict ratio to the monetary orders issued, e.g.:

Name of claimant	36	£ 5 0 0
"	15	2 10 0

If this column is added, the total is approximately 59,600. The official claim for cattle recaptured in the war is 60,000. This would suggest that there were a considerable number of animals available for distribution.

<sup>2</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, No.30, Encl.2, p.332.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

that several farmers, like the Bowkers,<sup>1</sup> had been promised full compensation for their herds and flocks by the landdrost for Bathurst. Others, not being able to return to their farms during the war, were unable to ascertain the full extent of their losses and could thus not submit accurate statements. For them all, there was also a strong temptation to make the most of the opportunity of recouping themselves for the 'inconveniences suffered'.

The abstract from the register of statements made by applicants to the Board of Relief also pointed out that this was an imperfect summary of what had been lost and saved, as 'many of the statements are defective, and there are many severe sufferers who have not applied to the Board'.<sup>2</sup> This is borne out by the discrepancies which exist in the figures quoted by these two bodies.<sup>3</sup> The Civil Commissioner for Albany, Duncan Campbell,<sup>4</sup> interpreted the figures quoted by Hudson as correct, ignoring the note of caution sounded by the latter. In spite of being unable to undertake a personal inspection of the Albany district,<sup>5</sup> he considered that,<sup>6</sup>

"...from the knowledge I possess of the circumstances of the people, and of the statements they have made of their losses, I am disposed to think that, when due inquiry is

<sup>1</sup> See supra, p.151.

<sup>2</sup> C.O.503 of 1837, p.328.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Compare pp.328 to 329. See Appendix VIII.

<sup>4</sup> Macmillan, W.M., The Cape Colour Question, p.121 notes that Campbell was also a farmer who, following raids on his kraals outside Grahamstown in October 1825, wrote to Dr John Philip that he would have vengeance and 'a commando to teach them'. He rejected the idea of conciliation with the 'Xhosa and suggested that 'Powder and Ball, by G-d, is the only means of civilizing them'.

<sup>5</sup> C.O.503 of 1837, No.30, Encl.4, p.337, Campbell to Secretary to Govt.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., No.30, Encl.3, p.335, Campbell to Secretary to Govt.

made, they will be found in general not to have over-estimated them; and in this view of the case, I am fully borne out by the opinion of the Rev. Mr. Heavyside,..."

Campbell then went on to quote the figures of Hudson, and to calculate the value of these losses according to a rather arbitrary set of average values,<sup>1</sup>

Schedule of the Losses of Property sustained by the Inhabitants  
of the Districts of Albany, Somerset and Uitenhage  
by the Caffre War

<u>Description</u>	<u>Numbers</u>		<u>Value each</u>			<u>Total Value</u>		
			£	s	d	£	s	d
Horses	5,715	at	5	0	0	28,575		
Cattle	114,930		1	5	0	143,662	10	
Sheep and Goats	161,930			4	6	36,434		
Houses burnt	200		200	0	0	40,000		
	256		100	0	0	25,600		
Household goods	200		40	0	0	8,000		
Clothing			30	0	0	7,680		
Houses pillaged	300		30	0	0	9,000		
Waggon	58		25	0	0	1,450		
						<u>1,450</u>		
						£300,401	10s	
Amount of orders given by Comm. Hudson to 824 persons for the purchase of captured cattle						<u>9,019</u>	0	
						<u>£291,382</u>	10s	

These figures have been freely quoted by most historians without any heed to the warning note sounded by Hougham Hudson, or any consideration given to the figures published by the Board of Relief.<sup>2</sup> They have become the standard figures quoted in relation to this war. It must be stressed that they are probably highly inflated. This is borne out in considering the abstract from the register of statements

<sup>1</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, No.30, Encl.3, pp.334-7.

<sup>2</sup>See Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, p.72; also Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, p.91.

made before the Board of Relief. While this set of figures only reflected the losses registered down to December 31, 1835, they nevertheless cover virtually the whole period of the war. In the major area of cattle losses, the figure given here is for 51,722,<sup>1</sup> or slightly more than one-third of the losses registered with the Government Commissioner. This figure would naturally be lower, in that not all farmers were to seek relief with this board, but a discrepancy of this size suggests that the larger figure is suspect. This is particularly true if it is borne in mind that those seeking relief from the board had nothing to gain from overstating their case.

Hougham Hudson was very sceptical of the statements made by the farmers, and of Campbell who backed their cause. He realised the need for an unbiased approach in the handling of such claims, as is indicated in the following statements,<sup>2</sup>

"If it be your intention ere long to entrust me with other important duties and the completion of this business [determining the extent of depredations] should pass into other hands, I most humbly but strongly recommend that the person or persons Appointed should be entirely unconnected with the frontier or the Inhabitants thereof,..."

Again,

"...My Object in bringing this to your notice is to prevent any difference of opinion arising between me and the Civil Commissioner as we do not nor shall not think alike. -"

The need for a closer investigation, which was never undertaken, of all claims made by the agricultural community, worried Hudson. He proposed in October, 1835,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix VIII.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Hougham Hudson, 10.10.1835, Cory Library, MS920.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

"...Doing what has hitherto been impossible to do, viz. framing a Return of Losses sustained by each Individual According to the Statements and Estimates furnished by the parties themselves.<sup>1</sup> When this is Complete...I would suggest if I might be allowed humbly Suggest that a travelling Commission should Commence to inspect and value all the Houses and Buildings burnt and destroyed by the Caffers and in order that it might be properly performed I should recommend that the Government Commissioner, Accompanied by a Justice of the Peace and a Field Cornet of his division should proceed to each farm and examine every building destroyed....This being completed the Statements of the losses of Cattle should be compared with the Opgaafrol... and the strict examination of the parties themselves..."

He was also worried by the fact that claims did not differentiate between the livestock stolen by the Xhosa and that lost in the confusion of the war.<sup>2</sup> This raised the point, that if these animals had not been lost to the colony, certain unscrupulous individuals were obviously holding them. With the inefficient administration of the colony and the total absence of a police force, these thefts would have gone undetected indefinitely.

If no other figure was inaccurate, the figure quoted in the accepted table for sheep and goats lost would alone be sufficient to call the issue in question. Throughout the literature on the war there is little mention of the loss of these animals, and yet, according to this table they represent the highest figure of any type of animal lost.<sup>3</sup> A brief glance at the export figures and graph<sup>4</sup> of the wool exports from the eastern districts throughout the period of the war, indicate that there was no serious reduction in

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<sup>1</sup>This was done.

<sup>2</sup>Cory Library, MS923.

<sup>3</sup>See Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, and Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, for accounts of the war.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix II.

the quantities of wool exported. This implies that it was not the woolled flocks that were stolen or lost in any great numbers. It should be remembered that the sheep was largely alien to the husbandry of the Xhosa tribes, and certainly did not represent a form of wealth, as in the case of cattle. It would therefore seem unlikely that the Xhosa warriors would have risked their lives for the sake of sheep and goats. There was the additional factor, that sheep and goats cannot be driven over any great distance at speed or without rest. Thus it would have been virtually impossible to move flocks of stolen sheep and goats undetected, except when these flocks were found in the immediate proximity of the frontier. This is borne out in the evidence. Most of the farmers who professed to losing sheep and goats lived in close proximity to the Fish River.<sup>1</sup> Godlonton has suggested, that not many of the sheep were actually stolen. He wrote,<sup>2</sup>

"Some of them were left for weeks to wonder over the country, a prey to wolves [jackals] and wild dogs, or still wilder and more ferocious savages."

To this can be added the evidence of the colonial farmers themselves. Miles Bowker admitted to the abandonment of his farm near the Kowie after the war, in preference for sheep farming on the Koonap River, for the very reason that the Xhosa did not steal sheep,<sup>3</sup>

"Previous to the war our attention was chiefly turned to cattle farming, but as the greater part of those fell prey to the Kafirs in the War, we have since that

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<sup>1</sup>See C.O.503 of 1837, p.315ff.

<sup>2</sup>Godlonton, R., Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, p.189.

<sup>3</sup>G.T.J., August 8, 1839.

period turned more of our attention to sheep, as a stock less liable to become the prey of Kafir depredators."

Goldswain mentions the fact that the Leech family was left with only their sheep to drive into Salem in the opening days of the war.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1825 the Commissioners of Inquiry, reporting on the proposed Chartered South African Company, had pointed out that,<sup>2</sup>

"Flocks of sheep are in no danger from the plundering incursions of the Caffres, for they do not value them, but they are constantly exposed, even in the day time, to depredations from wild dogs and wolves."

This evidence suggests that a more plausible explanation for the losses that did occur, might be more realistically sought, in the lack of fencing and paddocking which was a feature of frontier farms. Animals could simply be lost in the thickets which were also a feature of every farm. Here, as Godlonton suggested, they either became prey to wild animals, or to the wandering bands of raiders, many of whom were probably vagrant Khoi. The remainder would be rounded up again by the farmers, on their return to their farms. It was certainly worth claiming them as lost, if, as the governor was doing, an appeal was being made to the British government for compensation.<sup>3</sup>

Another point which supports this argument is, that figures published in the Grahamstown Journal for the two decades previous to the war indicate a remarkably small number of sheep stolen by the 'Caffres'. Only 2,692 sheep were lost in this twenty-four year period, 2,059 of them in the space of a single year, which, again, is sufficient to make this figure suspect. In the same period

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<sup>1</sup>Goldswain, J., op.cit., Vol. I, p.74.

<sup>2</sup>Theal, G.M., Records, op.cit., Vol. XXIII, pp.209-10.

<sup>3</sup>C.O.279 of 1836, D'Urban to Aberdeen, pp.4ff.

38,467 cattle were reputed to have been stolen by the Xhosa.<sup>1</sup> The hypothesis can be put forward, that the high figure quoted for sheep and goat losses in the official documents, may well have been quoted in the hopes that this would encourage, or enhance, the chances of the farmers for receiving remuneration, particularly for these losses, in the face of the changing trend towards woolled sheep farming and the growing significance of wool in the British textile industry. The fact that sheep and goats were actually stolen by the Xhosa at all, suggests that these were taken to augment their food supply, following the disasters they had faced in the 1833-4 season.<sup>2</sup>

Again, had the captured cattle been distributed amongst the farmers on a pro-rata basis, according to the stated losses of this group, as was the case in previous wars,<sup>3</sup> then those who claimed most, would have stood to gain accordingly. What distinguished this war from its predecessors was, that this was the first war to occur on the frontier which was fairly well populated by colonists. The last war of 1818-19 had been fought prior to the arrival of the Settlers. Their presence on the frontier had changed several factors. Increased interaction with the Xhosa had resulted in their purchasing guns and ammunition from unscrupulous traders. This gave them more guns than they had enjoyed in any of the previous encounters, making them more of a force to contend with. Unlike the previous war, the Xhosa this time proved an elusive foe, who capitalised on the element of surprise. This they used to drive off the colonial cattle

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., August 30, 1838. These figures were reputed to have been extracted from colonial office records. They appear as Appendix I of this work.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, p.142.

<sup>3</sup>Boyce, W.B., op.cit., p.12.

deep into their territory in advance of the punitive forces sent after them. In this war there were more farmers to share in the spoils of the 'Kaffirland campaigns', but there was not a proportionate increase in the number of animals recaptured to meet the farmers' claims.

The official figure for the number of cattle captured across the Fish River from the Xhosa, is 60,000.<sup>1</sup> It is not clear whether this figure represents the total number of animals taken during the campaigns, or whether this was the total number of animals which survived from the total captured, and that were available for distribution amongst the farmers. Unfortunately, there would seem to be no record of an official commissariat count, of either figure, which has survived. Boyce considered this figure to apply to the total number of animals captured during the campaigns, and then that half this figure would be closer to the truth.<sup>2</sup> Governor D'Urban, in a despatch dated November 7, 1835, to the British colonial office, mentioned,<sup>3</sup>

"...There have been taken from them, also besides the conquest and alienation of their country, about 60,000 head of cattle, almost all their goats, their habitations every where destroyed, and their gardens and corn-fields laid waste."

Cory has suggested, that of this number, only a fifth were available for distribution amongst the farmers.<sup>4</sup> The rest were used by the colonial forces as a meat supply while in the field, or died of

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M. op.cit., Vo. II, p.127. See footnote, supra, p.158.

<sup>2</sup>Boyce, W.B., op.cit., p.xii.

<sup>3</sup>Cape of Good Hope Papers Relating to the Caffre War and the Death of Hintza, p.89, D'Urban to Glenelg, November 7, 1835.

<sup>4</sup>Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, p.219.

exhaustion from being driven hither and thither across 'Kaffirland' in times of drought. Goldswain mentions that up to 80 cattle died at a time in the Xhosa territory after being recaptured, owing to their eating tulip.<sup>1</sup> This plant remains green after the grass has died off, and would have been an irresistible lure to starving cattle reared on grazing free from this plant.

Heavy mortality occurred amongst the captured cattle once they had returned to the colony. A letter from W.M. Smith, the acting government secretary, to George Jarvis, the commissioner for captured cattle, of September 4, 1835, stated,<sup>2</sup>

"It having been represented to His Excellency the Governor that great mortality has commenced amongst the captured cattle now herding on the Tietsikamma plains in the district of Uitenhage, and that such anxiety is shown by the Inhabitants to purchase them, I am directed by His Excellency to inform you that under these circumstances the present moment appears to Him most favourable for their sale and as further delay can only increase the loss without answering any good purpose, I am consequently to request that you will be pleased to take steps to dispose of them should you not see any weighty objection of which His Excellency is not aware."

W.R. Thomson, in a letter to Jarvis, from the Balfour mission in August, 1835, requested that additional animals be sent to that place, as of the 186 cattle sent there for distribution to the members of the Kat River Settlement, only 139 had survived.<sup>3</sup>

Even if these losses are taken into consideration, then according to Theal and Cory,<sup>4</sup> there were twelve hundred head of cattle

<sup>1</sup>Goldswain, J., op.cit., Vol. I, p.110.

<sup>2</sup>L.G.597, p.29.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.20, Balfour, August 20, 1835.

<sup>4</sup>Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, p.219; Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, p.127.

available for distribution amongst the farmers. While this was not an inconsiderable number, it was certainly far short of the numbers which the farmers professed to have had taken from them. There is a possibility that large numbers of cattle were also lost in the frontier districts during the course of 1836. Theal mentions the outbreak of a cattle disease<sup>1</sup> amongst the herds of the Gcaleka in which thousands died. This could also have affected colonial herds in the proximity of the frontier. Alternatively, the number of cattle available for distribution to the frontier farmers might have been far larger, and the figure of 60,000 might apply. If this was the case, then this would certainly have been a fair compensation. Bearing in mind the warning of Hudson, on the overstating of claims, this would have meant a return of approximately two cattle for every three lost. It would seem more likely that the truth lies somewhere between these two points.

Another aspect which counters the accepted views of the severity of the losses claimed by the frontier farmers, is the rapid recovery that was made. Livestock numbers were to increase rapidly in the years after the war and a period of general prosperity would seem to have set in. In part this was assisted by the fact that 1835 was, generally, a good agricultural year throughout most of the area affected by the war. During the latter part of May and the beginning of June, 1835, the governor had dismissed the farmers serving with the colonial forces, in order that they might return to their farms to undertake the sowing of the winter cereal crops.<sup>2</sup> This was particularly relevant to the commandos

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<sup>1</sup>Probably anthrax.

<sup>2</sup>Cape Papers Relating to the Caffre War, op.cit., p.86.

which had been drawn from the western districts, but also applied to those from the frontier. The opportunity of return to their farms allowed the farmers to begin the rehabilitation of these properties along the frontier. Bertram Bowker recalled that,<sup>1</sup>

"We went from one place to another, to plough and sow each one's land so that we might have something to reap when the war was over. There were no cattle in Lower Albany to destroy crops as we were looking after all the cattle."

By September 30, 1835, there were 182 men employed in the cultivation of 309½ acres in the vicinity of Bathurst.<sup>2</sup> Farmers were now returning to their farms throughout the district. On September 27, 1835, H. James Lloyd reported to the Civil Commissioner, that he and his family, together with their cattle had returned to their location at the Fish River mouth.<sup>3</sup> He reported the presence of Xhosa spoor. This return to their farms was not without risk.<sup>4</sup> A truce had not yet been reached and small bands of Xhosa could enter the colony at will. On August 10, the governor issued orders for the recall of specified numbers of farmers for active duty, for a final onslaught on the Xhosa.<sup>5</sup> This onslaught was not necessary and by September, 1835, the Xhosa had agreed to come to terms with the governor.<sup>6</sup> The frontier farmers were still in an unsettled state, and alarming reports of Xhosa incursions continued to flow into Grahamstown.

<sup>1</sup>Mitford-Barborton, I., op.cit., p.65.

<sup>2</sup>C.O.2756 (unpaginated).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, pp.117-18.

<sup>5</sup>Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, p.204.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.208ff.

One such report stated that 100 Xhosa and a herd of stolen cattle were in the colony at Nottingham Party in October, 1835. This turned out to be one Xhosa and a Khoi, with a few cattle, proceeding to the Theopolis mission station.<sup>1</sup> Another phenomenon which now began to appear with increasing intensity, was a series of cases in which the owners of animals then in government pounds claimed, that these animals had initially been stolen by the Xhosa. For example,<sup>2</sup>

"I do here by certify on oath that a Black ox of mine lately taken by the Caffres is now in the Pound."  
signed Ann Mitchley.

George Jarvis, the civil commissary in charge of captured cattle, made a tour of inspection of the frontier districts during the closing months of 1835.<sup>3</sup> This was done to ascertain the progress being made by the farmers in their rehabilitation. He noted that in every part of the district of Albany the marks of the ravages and depredations were still apparent. There were, nevertheless, also signs of progress. At Bathurst the crops had advanced to a stage where he considered that the allowance of provisions could be stopped without occasioning any serious inconvenience. At Salem nearly all farms were reoccupied. Here the locusts were damaging crops. Along the Fish River little cultivation was taking place and locusts were also present. Jarvis commented,<sup>4</sup>

"...indeed, had it not been for the remarkable fineness of the season, and for the abundant and continual rains,

<sup>1</sup>L.G.141, p.201ff.

<sup>2</sup>L.G.597, p.45ff.

<sup>3</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, D'Urban to Glenelg, No.30, Encl.4, p.337ff.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.338.

there would have been scarcely a vestige of herbage left in the whole of this field-cornetcy, so completely has the whole country been filled with these destructive insects."

Along the Koonap River, it was seen that this area had been affected by the war right up to the conclusion of peace, so that little cultivation had taken place. This was the worst affected area along the frontier. Between the Koonap and the Winterberg, he reported,<sup>1</sup>

"There is not any part of the district which wears so cheering and enlivening an appearance as this quarter. The crops of grain of all kinds are luxuriant and abundant, and the most experienced amongst the farmers state that the present is far beyond a good average crop."

The farmers in this area had also had a good season the previous year,<sup>2</sup>

"...the inhabitants derived considerable assistance from being able to find a ready market for their last year's grain, at Camp Adelaide, at a remunerating price; and had it not been for the demand occasioned in that quarter by the supply of rations to the inhabitants of the Kat River settlement, many of the farmers would have been unable to have taken their grain to the usual market, owing to their great deficiency of the means of transport."

The shortage of cattle was generally felt throughout the settlements. It should, however, be borne in mind that the extent of cultivation, mentioned by Jarvis, would have been impossible without the presence of some animals for draught purposes.

There is a tendency to view the Albany districts as being devoid of all livestock during the greater part of the year 1835. This was not the case. The abstract of the Board of Relief pointed out that amongst those who had applied to this organisation for aid,

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<sup>1</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, D'Urban to Glenelg, No.30, Encl.4, p.339.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.339.

11,418 cattle, 1,186 horses, and 102,343 sheep and goats remained in the possession of their owners.<sup>1</sup> Certainly not all the inhabitants of the district had applied for aid to this body, and the remnants of their herds and flocks have gone unrecorded. Many of these animals were driven to the various gathering points by their owners. Here the oxen and wagons of these refugees were mostly conscripted into government service. Horses were also taken. The remaining animals were now sent out in communal herds to farms in the district under armed guards. Here they were kept for the duration of the war and those removed for commissariat use were credited to the compensation accounts of their owners. Goldswain entered his wagon in the commissary department in February, 1835, at twelve shillings and sixpence per day.<sup>2</sup>

After the war these claims for the use of farmers' property were added to those for the loss of their livestock to the Xhosa. On both counts the government was to default. The British government did not consider itself responsible for the loss of property through acts of war<sup>3</sup> and the Cape administration lacked the ready funds to make good its borrowing. This turned the colonists' eyes to the territory across the Fish River. It was seen, that if the colonial government could not provide compensation and repayment for its debts in money, it could do so in the lands which had been captured from the Xhosa. The terms of the peace had extended the British dominions to the Kei River. The governor decided on the

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<sup>1</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, p.328.

<sup>2</sup>Goldswain, J., op.cit., Vol. I, p.85.

<sup>3</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, Glenelg to D'Urban, pp.343-4.

resettlement of the clans within this territory and also decided to 'strengthen the European element on the border by allotting all the ground in the territory ceded by Ngqika in 1819 that was not in possession of the Khoi at the Kat River'.<sup>1</sup> Grants in this territory were to be made in lieu of monetary compensation. These grants were eagerly sought after by the farmers. Between May and December, 1835, 406 applications were made for land in this new province of Queen Adelaide.<sup>2</sup> A late entry on November 12, 1835, reads as follows,

<u>Claimant</u>	<u>Area claimed</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
E.D. Weinand	To a farm between the Fish River and Keiskamma.	All land in this section already appropriated.

Much of this territory was seen as fine farming land. Bowker noted in March 1835, that this country was in fine appearance following good rains, and that 'it will make excellent sheep farms'.<sup>3</sup> This land was seen as being 'far too good for such a race of runaways as the Kaffirs'.<sup>4</sup> The reversal of this policy by the colonial secretary Lord Glenelg in 1836, was bound to kindle a great deal of resentment amongst the colonial farmers.<sup>5</sup> Not only would these farms have helped to ease the growing demands for more land by the frontier farmers, but the fact that they were suited to the pasturing of sheep in many cases, would have assisted in the more rapid rehabilitation of many of the Albany farmers whose old farms were unsuited to this form of farming.

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, p.126.

<sup>2</sup>B.K.32, Claims for Farms in the New Province of Queen Adelaide.

<sup>3</sup>Mitford-Barborton, I., op.cit., p.115.

<sup>4</sup>ibid., p.116.

<sup>5</sup>C.O.503 of 1837, Glenelg to D'Urban, pp.1ff; p.44; also Macmillan, W.M., op.cit., pp. 173ff.

The Graham's Town Journal took a different view on the proposed granting of farms in the new province. It saw fit to advocate the sale of farms within this territory, rather than the disposal of this land by free grant. In two editorials during the month of October, 1835, it stated its case.<sup>1</sup> By giving this land to the farmers for agricultural purposes, rather than selling it to them, the Journal saw that the colonial government was being deprived of a possible source of revenue which could be effectively used for the supply of essential services to the community in general. It was pointed out that by giving this land to the farmers, this could affect the value of landed property within the colony. By December, 1835, the Journal stated categorically,<sup>2</sup>

"It is nonsense to talk of persons not having the means to pay for farms; we deny the fact."

That an organ, as influential as was the Journal on the frontier, could make such a statement, is a clear indication of the condition of the frontier farming community.

In summing up the effects of the Sixth Frontier War on the farming community of the eastern frontier, and Albany in particular, it is fair to say that this group were certainly the largest losers by the Xhosa irruption. A large number of their livestock were lost, either to the Xhosa or wild beasts. Many farmhouses and a good deal of their personal possessions were lost to the invading tribesmen, by the fire-brand and theft. There was, however, a tendency to overstate their case, both by the affected parties themselves, and

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., October 22 and October 29, 1835.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., December 3, 1835.

by subsequent writers of their history. There is also little doubt, that the compensation which they received for these losses did not meet the full amount, either in recaptured cattle or pecuniary gains. Having stated this, however, it is necessary to add immediately that this war had not come to an impoverished community. If their losses had been substantial, so was the amount they had been able to retain. The past emphasis laid on their losses has stemmed from the rage and indignation felt by these people, and through it, the bias it has given to the interpretation of their history. This war was a set-back in the development of the Albany farming community, but it was far from fatal. The Xhosa had not invaded the bank <sup>o</sup> balances of these farmers, and while there were those who had been rendered destitute by this incursion, by far the greater majority could begin again to piece together the basis of their wealth. The tragedy lies rather in the fact that they had failed to see clearly the causes of this irruption and to take steps towards the prevention of a repetition.

## CHAPTER V

The introduction of the new "treaty system" by the newly appointed lieutenant-governor Andries Stockenstrom, marks the beginning of the post-war period on the frontier.<sup>1</sup> The reversal of the schemes adopted by the governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, for the extension of the colonial frontier to the Kei River was resented by the frontier farming community. The abandonment of this policy meant the negation of their hopes of gaining farms in the fertile territory across the Fish River.<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly, it was also felt by the frontier commercial community, that the extension of the frontier would have brought a great deal more of their custom in the 'Kaffir trade' under colonial jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup> The disappointment of both these factions on the frontier resulted in unjustified hostility towards the new treaty system for the regulation of interactions between the colonists and Xhosa. The major feature of this new system was the regulation determining the repatriation of stolen cattle. The frontier community was loud in its clamour that this section of the treaty system did not work.<sup>4</sup> This view has subsequently been reiterated by historians sounding the colonists' viewpoint.<sup>5</sup> More recent research has, however, cast serious doubt on this

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<sup>1</sup>For a description of this system see Crankshaw, G.B., The Diary of C.L. Stretch: A Critical Edition and Appraisal, p.14ff.

<sup>2</sup>See *supra*, pp.172-3.

<sup>3</sup>Godlonton, R., Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, p.144ff.

<sup>4</sup>Bowker, J.M., *op.cit.*, p.107.

<sup>5</sup>Cory, G.E., *op.cit.*, Vol. III, p.219ff.

interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Evidence drawn from the diary of C.L. Stretch, the appointed colonial agent for the implementation of the system with the Ngqika tribe, indicates that all the cattle which were reclaimable in terms of the treaty, were returned.<sup>2</sup> This negation of the major area of discontent also casts doubt on colonial claims that the issue was a major obstacle to the progress of the frontier farming community. It is not suggested that thefts of colonial cattle ceased, but rather, that there was now a far greater incidence of them being returned to their rightful owners.

Thus, in spite of these political setbacks for the farming community, and the fact that the new treaty system was not fully effective in the curtailment of stock thefts, there was little besides natural occurrences to hinder the prosperous development of this group in the decade down to the outbreak of the Seventh Frontier War in 1846. Agriculture and pastoral farming had indeed flourished in the period up to 1845, and the greatest problem which faced the frontier community on the eve of the Seventh Frontier War was not a question of survival in the face of the Xhosa threat, but rather a question of finding markets for their expanded production. Commenting on the position of agriculture in 1845, the Graham's Town Journal, in criticising the failure of the government to seek and explore possible outlets for the colony's excess production, pointed out,<sup>3</sup>

"Agriculture is the root from whence springs our prosperity. Unless this flourish vain will be all the

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<sup>1</sup>Crankshaw, G.B., op.cit., p.87ff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.87.

<sup>3</sup>G.T.J., April 10, 1845. Editorial quoting Vattel's "Law of Nations".

ceaseless activity, extensive knowledge, and high intelligence, of the merchant - futile and unprofitable the skill of the mechanic."

On the eastern frontier the rapid development of woolled sheep-farming was adding reality to this statement.

Woolled sheep had played a relatively minor role in the frontier agricultural economy prior to the war. Their profitability was not doubted, but their numbers remained small. Cattle farming had always predominated. The war changed this, and it was now, in the post war era, that the woolled sheep assumed dominance. The reasons for this are not hard to find. In the first instance, as we have already seen,<sup>1</sup> wool was a commodity with a high export value. Britain was in a position to absorb all the wool produced by her colonies. These were given the incentive to produce by the removal of all tariff restrictions against the importation of colonial wool.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the transition to woolled sheep-farming was not a capital intensive process. Large flocks of Cape sheep already existed in the colony, and although these were hairy animals, they could be successfully cross bred with rams of the various woolled varieties. In this way flocks of woolled sheep could be built up relatively quickly, even if the wool from the initial cross-breds was of a very poor quality. This wool could, nevertheless, still be used for the manufacture of hats, mattresses, and for padding saddlery.<sup>3</sup> The Graham's Town Journal commented on the low capital outlay necessary for the commencement of woolled sheep-farming in the colony, as follows,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See supra, pp.117-8.

<sup>2</sup>Cape of Good Hope Almanac 1839, p.105.

<sup>3</sup>Cape of Good Hope Almanac 1839, p.53, 'Statement Respecting the Production of Wool from Cape Sheep by M. Van Breda'.

<sup>4</sup>G.T.J., October 7, 1841.

"Let it be remarked that there is no Colony where sheep farming can be commenced with so small a capital as here, nor any in which the returns are so considerable."

Cape ewes could be bought for two to three Rixdollars (3s. to 4s.6d.)<sup>1</sup> and by the late 1830's woolled rams were becoming more readily available from local breeders, such as Griffith and Daniell, for between three and twelve pounds each.<sup>2</sup>

While capital was not of the utmost necessity, it was nevertheless also readily available for hastening this transition.<sup>3</sup> Finally, and perhaps the most significant reason for the increased popularity of sheep farming in the aftermath of the war, was the simple fact, that the Xhosa were not sheep farmers.<sup>4</sup> Writing to a friend in England towards the end of 1842 J.M. Bowker expressed this reason why his family, and many others, had converted to sheep farming,<sup>5</sup>

"...the frontier inhabitants have, therefore, more decidedly turned their attention to the breeding of woolled sheep, as the Kafirs do not keep sheep, and, therefore, steal no more than the odd one for food, whilst on their plundering excursions within the colony. The export of wool has, therefore, increased within these last few years more than twenty-three fold..."

The Cape was not the only British colony which was now undertaking the production of wool. The Australian settlements of New South Wales and Queensland also entered wool production in the first half of the nineteenth century, and were to outstrip the Cape in production, in spite of the fact that woolled sheep had been introduced into these colonies much later than at the Cape. Thom, in

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., January 23, 1834.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., December 28, 1837; February 23, 1842. In 1842 Daniell was selling French X Australian Merino ram lambs for £12.

<sup>3</sup>See supra, p.137.

<sup>4</sup>See supra, pp.163-4.

<sup>5</sup>Bowker, J.M., op.cit., p.110.

looking for a reason for this tardy development of the Cape wool-farming industry, has suggested the necessity to protect Cape flocks from "gevaarlike en roofsugtige inboorlingstamme en skadelike roofdiere".<sup>1</sup> This under-estimates the influence of the Dago and Aborigine in Australian farming, and the cultural and economic background of the South African Bantu.<sup>2</sup> It must be conceded, however, that while the Australian farmer was subjected to continual harassment from the above mentioned sources, this situation never deteriorated into open warfare on a similar scale to the war of 1834-5 at the Cape. It is nevertheless difficult to support the contention, that this war at the Cape hindered the development of woolled sheep-farming.<sup>3</sup> The export figures for Algoa Bay do not reflect any decline in wool production during the course of this war, although during the following two frontier wars, in 1846-7 and 1851-3, a decline did take place.<sup>4</sup> Rather than a disruptive influence, the war of 1834-5, would seem to have stimulated the transition to woolled sheep farming along the frontier, or at least to have come at a time when its influence on the local infant wool-farming industry was negligible. The vulnerability of the cattle farmer during this war decided, not only the Settler, but also his Dutch counterpart, that woolled sheep farming could not only be undertaken with a relatively low capital outlay, but also with less hazard to their personal welfare.

Thom is more accurate in citing the large capital imports which

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<sup>1</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.174.

<sup>2</sup>Holden, W.C., The Past & Future of the Kaffir Races, p.223ff.

<sup>3</sup>See supra, pp.163-4.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix II.

flowed into Australia, the formation of farming companies, and the presence of wealthy individuals, as reasons for the earlier development of those colonies' wool production. Another important reason can be found in the fact that the wool industry of these colonies began soon after their establishment. This was not the case at the Cape. Here sheep had initially been kept for their mutton and fat. It required a major upheaval, such as the war of 1834-5 on the frontier, and the emancipation of the slaves in the older districts, to help break down the traditional conservatism of the Dutch sector of the population.

The Cape, lacking capital infusion on a similar scale to the Australian colonies, and already in possession of large flocks of hairy Cape sheep, had necessarily to face a period of transition. Thom has further argued that the Australian industry, not being delayed by this transition, was in a position to improve upon and adapt the European woolled breeds to local conditions more quickly.<sup>1</sup> This would, however, overlook some of the inherent advantages of the Cape sheep, such as a greater resistance to disease and the hot climate, which were not enjoyed by some of the British breeds.

The chief reason for the later development of the Cape wool-farming industry, in relation to its Australian counterpart, would, therefore, seem to have been the traditional conservatism of large numbers of the farming population, and the lack of a capital infusion on a similar scale to that in the Australian colonies.

The year 1835 can, therefore, be seen as a turning point in the history of sheep farming at the Cape. This year marked the end

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<sup>1</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., pp.174-5.

of the experimental period.<sup>1</sup> The progress of this new farming trend was not uniform. There were still many farmers after the war who chose to return to cattle farming, and there were undoubtedly many more who could not afford a direct transition, so that 'mixed' farming became popular. The suitability of certain areas for sheep farming also influenced their importance in relation to the rest of the frontier. Lower Albany now lost much of its importance as more and more farmers sought land to the north-west of Grahamstown. It was the suitability of the area now known as the Cape Midlands for woolled sheep-farming, as much as the fact that the original inhabitants began adopting this form of farming, which gave impetus and added importance to this area. Again, it was not only that the Dutch inhabitants of this area now became woolled sheep-farmers, but rather that their English counterparts moved increasingly into the region to pursue this form of farming, which enhanced its importance. This tendency was greatly facilitated by the beginnings of the Great Trek. This phenomenon allowed men such as Collett, the Bowkers, and Howse, to buy into this area of upper Albany and Somerset, which was now being vacated by the original Dutch owners. Ayliff, reminiscing on the activity of Howse at this time stated,<sup>2</sup>

"The years 1836-7 saw a very extraordinary event transpire and one which tended to make Mr. Howse one of the most extensive landed proprietors in this part of South Africa. The event was called by the Colonial name of the 'Trek' and consisted of a move from the Colony for the interior parts of the Continent by thousands of the wealthiest and the most worthy of the Dutch Inhabitants - ...Mr. Howse's very extensive acquaintance with the Dutch colonists...was the cause of numbers of those applying to him to become the purchaser of their farms, several of

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<sup>1</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.177.

<sup>2</sup>Ayliff, J., Memorials of James Howse esq., p.30ff.

which he bought -, and as the Colonial Government had in the first instance granted the said land to the Dutch farmers they were sold at a very low price to Mr. Howse - The principal part of the land he thus bought was situated between Graham's Town and Fort Beaufort - the high road running for a distance of nearly twenty five miles through his land."

The Bowkers were also to acquire property in this area at this time.<sup>1</sup> James Collett was also established as a sheep farmer on the Koonap River by 1839.<sup>2</sup> Thom is to some extent misled in believing that the move of woolled sheep-farming into the Cape Midlands after 1835 represents the rapid acceptance of this form of farming by the Dutch farmers.<sup>3</sup> It was only in 1842 that the Graham's Town Journal noted the beginnings of a transition on the part of the Dutch farmers of Somerset away from their former modes of farming towards woolled sheep-farming.<sup>4</sup>

To gain an impression of the increasing importance of sheep farming on the eastern frontier, consideration should be given to the returns of livestock published in the Cape Blue Books. Here it is necessary to point out the inaccuracy of these figures, and also to note that the magisterial districts quoted altered their boundaries during the period under review. By 1837 the districts of Somerset and Graaff Reinet had been reduced in size, some of their area being incorporated in the newly created districts of Colesberg and Cradock. These figures nevertheless give some idea of the general trends.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mitford-Barborton, I., op.cit., pp.67-8.

<sup>2</sup>Collett, J., Diary and Accounts Book of... [unpaginated].

<sup>3</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.308.

<sup>4</sup>G.T.J., February 3, 1842.

<sup>5</sup>Cape Blue Books, C.O.5975ff.

TABLE III

Census of Sheep Numbers in Various Frontier  
Districts Between 1833 and 1845  
(Cape Sheep Included)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Somerset</u>	<u>Graaff Reinet</u>	<u>Cradock</u>	<u>Colesberg</u>
1833	104,000	671,243	609,381		
1834	104,000	671,243	542,000		
1835			404,705		
1836			701,399		
1837		106,900	170,000	200,000	460,000
1838		239,553	434,869	276,398	414,032
1839	160,000	253,000	440,000	280,073	596,179
1840		304,670	357,360	315,783	817,346
1841	244,452		412,512	350,000	873,104
1842	310,869	455,848	451,350	380,000	843,654
1843	369,929	449,319	473,627	388,500	863,950
1844	428,586	556,819	500,000	400,200	1,052,467
1845	451,860	580,687	440,671	405,200	1,025,735

From these figures it is calculated that there were approximately 1,320,000 sheep on the frontier at the outbreak of the Sixth Frontier War in 1834 and 2,900,000 prior to the outbreak of the Seventh Frontier War, in 1845. Thus the sheep population of the frontier districts had more than doubled in the decade between the Sixth and Seventh Frontier Wars - an increase of 220 per cent. The fluctuation in the figures between 1834 and 1838 may be attributed to the effects of the Sixth Frontier War and the Great Trek.

As we have suggested, the reasons for this rapid expansion of the flocks along the frontier can be found in the growing awareness of the profitable nature of woolled sheep-farming. Writing in 1843 Chase emphasised the profitable nature of this form of farming.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Chase, J.C., Cape of Good Hope and E.P. of Algoa Bay, p.170ff.

He suggested, that on average, two acres were required for pasturing a sheep. His suggestion that a ninety per cent lambing rate could be expected, appears somewhat over optimistic, as was his suggestion that the mortality rate could be confined to below seven per cent, per annum.<sup>1</sup> The examples he used to indicate the profitability of sheep farming also seem a little too optimistic, one case revealing a capital appreciation of £681 over a two year period from an investment of £750.<sup>2</sup> The Graham's Town Journal also quoted the financial records of certain farmers to indicate the profitable nature of this pursuit.<sup>3</sup> In December, 1836 it revealed the records of one Mr. B. Meintjies. Three years previously he had purchased 700 Cape ewes, for which he paid 700 Rixdollars (certainly a good bargain). He subsequently purchased a few rams from Lieutenant R. Daniell. He then did not increase the size of the flock by adding new stock to it but sold off wethers from it. By 1836 the flock numbered 1,600 ewes, which had then been purchased by Daniell for 9,414 Rixdollars (£700). In addition to this sum Meintjies had also sold 1860 pounds of wool from this flock in Grahamstown on December 21, 1836, for which he received 16d. per pound (£124).<sup>4</sup> He had thus received approximately £825 from this venture, from which could be deducted the cost of the sheep of £52 10s. This amount does not cover the cost of the rams or any additional expenses which he might have incurred, but it gave a fair impression

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<sup>1</sup> Chase, J.C., *ibid.*, p.181.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.184.

<sup>3</sup> See *supra*, pp.132ff.

<sup>4</sup> G.T.J., December 22, 1836.

of the message which the Journal was attempting to convey to its readers, and particularly the Dutch community. Writing in 1843, the editor commented,<sup>1</sup>

"We believe that when the profits of sheep farming are calculated on an average of years at from 12 to 15, and under favourable circumstances, as high as 20 per cent upon the actual amount of capital invested therein, we are not very wide of the truth."

Another factor determining the rapidity of the spread of woolled sheep-farming, and directly related to the profitability of this industry, was the price set for this commodity in the British market. This was particularly relevant as the Cape producers very soon outstripped the very small local demand for their product.<sup>2</sup> In the international market Cape wool had to compete against the better quality wools from Australia and Europe. The collapse of the Cape's preferential wine tariff in 1838 hastened the decline of this export industry, which had already begun to decline by 1834, following the emancipation of the slaves.<sup>3</sup> The collapse of the wine trade placed great economic importance on the growing wool industry. Theal suggests that it was the merino sheep which saved the country from general bankruptcy.<sup>4</sup> This was to have far reaching political consequences in the colony, in that this gave credence to the developing 'separatist movement' in the east. By March, 1838, the Journal commented,<sup>5</sup>

"It appears to be a conclusion now generally arrived at by all acquainted with the capabilities of this country

<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., May 11, 1843.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, p.120.

<sup>3</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., VOL. II, p.83.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.193.

<sup>5</sup>G.T.J., March 29, 1838.

that Wool must become, and continue to be its staple export... It is quite evident, that notwithstanding all improvements which have been made to this branch of rural economy, still that we have done no more than made a commencement."

The fall of wine and the development of the wool industry are perhaps no more eloquently explained than in the figures quoted by Chase,<sup>1</sup>

TABLE IV  
Annual Value of Wine and Wool Exports  
Between 1834 and 1841

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wine</u>	<u>Wool</u>
1834	£ 93,744	£ 9,806
1835	96,027	16,186
1836	83,147	26,169
1837	99,633	22,172
1838	102,583	26,627
1839	96,995	30,190
1840	78,533	45,985
1841	67,832	48,839

In the figures quoted in the official Blue Books, the final eclipse of the wine industry came in 1842, when the value of wine produced and exported amounted to only £43,141, as compared to the value of wool exported, which amounted to £72,497.<sup>2</sup>

The decline of the wine industry, and the resultant increasing dependence on wool as the major exportable staple of the colony, made the question of the improvement of the quality of Cape wools imperative. This issue was made all the more pressing by the setback the colony received through the emancipation of the Hottentots and the freeing of its enslaved population, and the resultant decline in the labour force,<sup>3</sup> together with the exodus of thousands of her

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<sup>1</sup>Chase, J.C., op.cit., p.180.

<sup>2</sup>C.O.5984.

<sup>3</sup>Marais, J.S., The Cape Coloured People, p.180ff.

white population in the Great Trek. While this had not resulted in any serious decline in the wool production of the colony,<sup>1</sup> it had affected the production of wine, cereals and other foodstuffs.<sup>2</sup> It was generally accepted that if this problem was to be overcome, white emigration from Europe would have to be encouraged. This need was heightened by the reluctance generally felt to increase the flow of black immigrants from across the Fish River.<sup>3</sup>

By virtue of the composition of Cape flocks, the improvement of the quality of wool was a slow process. In 1842 most Cape wool was still of a low quality, and it was to remain subordinate in quality to that of Australia and the Argentine for the rest of the century.<sup>4</sup> Improvement was forthcoming, if slow, and the Graham's Town Journal became a great protagonist for the cause of wool improvement. In August, 1836 the editor noted the improvement in the quality of Cape wools which was reflected in the better prices being paid on the London market for this commodity. While the highest prices had been paid for German wool, which reached 2s.9½d. per pound, the best Cape wool had sold for 2s.7d. per pound.<sup>5</sup> Needless to say, this was not indicative of the bulk of Cape wool, but the editor took the opportunity to stress the importance of wool and the concentration of farmers on quality rather than quantity. In 1837 was, however, forced to comment,<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>2</sup> See *infra*, pp.193ff.

<sup>3</sup> See *infra*, pp.208ff.

<sup>4</sup> Thom, H.B., *op.cit.*, p.187.

<sup>5</sup> G.T.J., August 18, 1836.

<sup>6</sup> G.T.J., May 11, 1837.

"It is with great regret we learn that returns from London by the last arrivals give a very unfavourable account of the Wools exported last season from this part of the colony. We have seen quotations by which it appears that several bales shipped by a house at Graham's Town did not realise in the London market the prices paid on the spot. This wool is spoken of in the accounts from the Brokers as being amongst the worst wool ever exported. We have long warned our wool growers of the evil consequences which must inevitably result from the sloverly manner in which a great deal of wool has been sent to the market; and we would again impress on them that it is quality and not quantity which should be the primary consideration. A bad character in the London market will be of serious consequence, and the fact now stated now calls upon our traders as well as our growers for the exercise of the most vigilant precautions in their future proceedings."

In 1838 a London wool-broking firm commented to a Grahamstown merchant-house that,<sup>1</sup>

"It appears to me inexplicable how such extreme irregularities can be produced in the same flock; for instance, one bag exceedingly short and unwashed, - another half washed, and a third long in staple and clean washed. Surely a method may be adopted by sheep owners to avoid having such an incongruous mass of wool sent to this country under one head in one consignment. Prudence would rather dictate another course, viz. to send the washed wool under one mark, - send the greasy under another, as by so doing, the consignment would receive ocular demonstration of sending long wool to this country, instead of that short, hairy, filthy class of wool we occasionally receive from thence."

As late as 1843, a report in the Journal called for the classification of Cape wools, as it had been realised that even the best wools sometimes fetched far lower prices simply owing to the selection of a poor sample from the bales. It observed that farmers were already separating the wool from different flocks but indicated that this was not enough, and that sorting and classification of each individual fleece was called for.<sup>2</sup> In a circular published by Joseph S. Christophers, Wool Merchants, London, and reprinted

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., March 29, 1838.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., September 21, 1843.

in the Journal in 1845, it was again pointed out that,<sup>1</sup>

"Many known good Cape flock-masters feel surprised their Wools do not meet the prices of their neighbours. This is partly accounted for by the better sorting, which if not done in the colony must be done here. The loss to the purchaser on that which does not suit him, and the expense of resorting might all be retained in the pocket of the Cape colonists, if this department of the business were better attended to."

Thom has pointed out that another problem to be overcome was the traditional practice of shearing the sheep twice annually. This practice was not widespread in the 1830's and 1840's, and really only became fashionable following the Eighth Frontier War in 1853.<sup>2</sup>

Bowker commented on this,<sup>3</sup>

"This is the worst thing that ever happened to the country. There have been less lambs, poorer sheep and more mange ever since it began."

This practice was to continue fairly generally down to 1875, and a lasting complaint against the quality of South African wool was, that it was too short.<sup>4</sup>

Another handicap to improving the quality of Cape wool was that the whole marketing structure as Thom has indicated, was not orientated towards the promotion of quality consciousness.<sup>5</sup> While all but the most discerning flock-masters were prepared to sell their wool on their farms to travelling merchants, at an average price, there was no great incentive to concentrate on the quality, rather than the quantity, of wool produced. Even amongst those who were in a position

<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., January 2, 1845.

<sup>2</sup>Mitford-Barberton, I., op.cit., p.70.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.70.

<sup>4</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., pp.190-91.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.187ff.

to export their wools directly to the London markets, there was very often a tendency to concentrate on quantity rather than quality, as was pointed out by the Journal in 1845,<sup>1</sup>

"It should always be remembered that here, where inland carriage is considerable, and a market distant, a reduction in bulk is of the first importance; and hence the necessity of improving the quality to the utmost degree of perfection of every article of export. This is not sufficiently considered by our wool-growers. They are too apt to estimate the value of their clips by the number of bales, and not by the quality of their contents - and hence the result is too often a disappointment, and very serious loss. We hazard nothing when we say that this colony is capable of producing wool fully equal in intrinsic value to any in the world... Comparing our advantages with those of other wool-producing countries, it may safely be affirmed, that for want of due care in washing, sorting, and packing, our flock-masters suffer a loss of not less than from 2d. to 3d. per pound, in the London markets, upon their entire clips."

The same leader article pointed out, that while Australian wool had sold for up to 1s.10d. per pound in London in September, 1844, the best Cape wool had only fetched 1s.5½d. per pound. Other complaints lodged against the Cape wool farmers were for the frequent presence of dirt in their wool, and for the presence of 'stick hair' resulting from first and second crosses with Cape sheep which was mixed with purer wools.<sup>2</sup> The logical outcome of these complaints was that Cape wool retained a bad name in the London market for the greater part of the period down to 1850. As the Journal was quick to point out, the fault did not always lie with the Cape producers, but often with the London buyers who were not sufficiently discriminatory in their inspection of Cape wool.<sup>3</sup>

"It is a fact, notorious here, that our most careful and furthest advanced flock-masters do not meet either with the reward or approval to which they are entitled."

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., January 16, 1845.

<sup>2</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., pp.180-1.

<sup>3</sup>G.T.J., January 16, 1845.

It was, however, accepted that Cape wools had yet to gain a good reputation in the British market.<sup>1</sup> The exertions of the better farmers were being hampered by the slower transition and adoption of accepted techniques by the rest of the farming community.

There is no clearer indicator of the rapid progress of the woolled sheep industry in the frontier districts than the annual record of exports from Port Elizabeth.<sup>2</sup> The volume of exports grew from 79,848 pounds in 1835, to 2,085,064 pounds in 1845. Throughout this period the demand for wool remained strong in the British market with prices ranging between 1s.2d. and 1s.8d. for the better quality Cape wools, and between 6d. and 1s.3d. for the poorer sorts.<sup>3</sup> A good example of the expansion of the woolled sheep industry can be found in the farm diary of James Collett. During January, 1839, he delivered to George Wood, a Grahamstown merchant, 2,860 pounds of wool for which he received 11,75 pence per pound, or approximately £140. In January, 1844, he sent 9,601 pounds to Grahamstown, and while no price is given, it may be assumed that it would have sold for approximately 1s.3d. or for a total of £600. By 1845, he had decided to undertake the export of his wool clip directly to the London market. This consignment of 9,810 pounds was despatched per 'Harriet' from Algoa Bay on January 15, 1845.<sup>4</sup>

The rapid development of woolled sheep farming had to a great extent eclipsed all other forms of farming activity on the frontier

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., January 16, 1845.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix II.

<sup>3</sup>These figures are not calculated but are taken as the highest and lowest prices quoted in the Graham's Town Journal throughout this period.

<sup>4</sup>Collett, J., *op.cit.*

in the years following the 1834-5 war. It is thus difficult to gain a clear picture, from the sources available, of the development of these other spheres. Thom has stressed, that while wool production had increased in importance, the other products of sheep farming, namely, mutton, skins and tallow, had not lost their importance, but had rather been overshadowed.<sup>1</sup> Much the same can be said for the rest of agriculture.

A useful source for gathering information for the overall picture of agriculture during the period 1834 to 1846 is the weekly quotations of Grahamstown's market prices. These were published regularly in the Graham's Town Journal.<sup>2</sup>

On the value of the Grahamstown market Godlonton pointed out that,<sup>3</sup>

"Every village...has it Market...These markets are but indifferently attended, except that held at Graham's Town, which from the great competition amongst its numerous traders, and the demand for produce, occasioned by the

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<sup>1</sup>Thom, H.B., op.cit., p.178.

<sup>2</sup>This information has been processed to give a monthly average price for each of the selected commodities. These monthly averages have been plotted as graphs to indicate the price fluctuations over this period. Also plotted are graphs using the same material, but subjected to a thirteen month moving average, to remove any seasonal fluctuations. In this way the medium term trends can be clearly recognised. The agricultural products which have been chosen for this study are potatoes, wheaten meal, butter, and oat hay. These appear with some regularity throughout the period under consideration in the weekly quotations. Three of these represent basic food stuffs, and thus indicate trends in the cost of living of the small population group divorced from food production on the frontier, as well as the income levels of farmers adopting their production. The military commissariat was the largest purchaser of oat hay on the frontier, and while most of its supply was provided by private contract, its purchases would indirectly have affected the price of this commodity on the market. Two notable omissions appear, namely meat and wool. Most wool was sold directly to brokers or merchants and little found its way on to this market. Most cattle were also sold by private contract to butchers, and at no time do livestock prices feature on the lists quoted by the Journal. (See G.T.J., August 17, 1837.)

<sup>3</sup>Godlonton, R., op.cit., p.196 (Introductory Remarks).

consumption of the military, attracts nearly the whole of the growers, who prefer in general making a journey thither - sometimes of several hundred miles - to disposing of their goods at their own homes, even should they realise the same prices. To the Dutch-African farmer a journey to market is rather an excursion of pleasure than a matter of toil and difficulty."

In 1834 some 2,409 wagons visited the Grahamstown market and the value of produce sold there amounted to £22,635 4s.6d.<sup>1</sup> During the year July 1, 1836 to June 30, 1837, the market register recorded transactions valued at £27,038 6s.4½d.<sup>2</sup> While in the three months ending July 31, 1845, transactions to the value of £7,210 took place.<sup>3</sup>

From the study of the various products under review, a general upswing in prices in the period down to 1839 is revealed. The combination of the exodus of large numbers of Dutch farmers, together with a series of poor agricultural years, fostered this trend. It should, however, also be borne in mind that this upward trend in prices began before the outbreak of the war in 1834. In June, 1839 the Journal reported that,<sup>4</sup>

"...since the disastrous irruption of the Kafirs all the chief necessaries of life have advanced in price at least 100 per cent."

As to the inflation during the war, Goldswain noted that,<sup>5</sup>

"Before the war Meal was from 24 Shillings to 30 Shillings per Muead 180lbs. but as soon as the war comenced it rose to 90 Shillings per Muead, and all that I was able to get was 45 lbs."

Hudson was also to complain that his salary was insufficient to meet his expenses during the war,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Godlonton, R., op.cit., p.196.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., August 17, 1837.

<sup>3</sup>G.T.J., August 14, 1845.

<sup>4</sup>G.T.J., June 13, 1839.

<sup>5</sup>Goldswain, J., op.cit., Vol. I, p.79.

<sup>6</sup>Hougham Hudson (Cory Library MS936).

"In March, 1835 Sent for to Graham's Town Appointed Government Commissioner with £200 a Year with House rent of £50 in addition to my pension - when my expenses... from the high price of everything during the war... amounted to full £50 more."

The cause of this inflation during the war was not hard to find. The increased numbers of troops and burgher forces on the frontier created an additional demand, while the conscription of wagons and other means of transport by the military, together with the general state of uncertainty, resulted in a drastic reduction in the supplies reaching this area. The excess cost of the war over the normal annual expenditure of the military of £96,000 was £154,000.<sup>1</sup> It may safely be assumed that a fair proportion of this expenditure was incurred on the frontier, in the purchasing of stores by the commissariat, together with services from the frontier community,<sup>2</sup> and the payment of the troops. A large proportion of this additional liquidity would have flowed directly into circulation resulting in a demand-pull inflation.

The agricultural season of 1837-8 was one of drought. Many springs dried up and it was reported, that, 'Along the coast many farms are very nearly destitute of water; and, if rain should not fall very shortly, must be abandoned'.<sup>3</sup> By the following September it was reported, that while many of the early sown crops had been lost to a drought, showers of rain had subsequently fallen and crops, particularly along the coast, were looking promising although rust was attacking the wheat crops.<sup>4</sup> These falls of rain had

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, p.127.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, pp.172-3.

<sup>3</sup>G.T.J., March 8, 1838.

<sup>4</sup>G.T.J., September 27, 1838.

increased the demand for maize seed. It was selling '...in the last few days at the unprecedented price of 28 Rixdollars per muid'.<sup>1</sup> In spite of these rains the wheat harvest, much of it being lost to drought and rust, fell short of an average crop.<sup>2</sup> Not only was the crop deficient in the east, but many of the producers in the west of the colony had also curtailed their production. This was owing to the anticipated labour shortages following the abolition of the period of apprenticeship of the freed slaves.<sup>3</sup> The movement of the Voortrekkers from the Winterberg area had curtailed production in this, the chief growing area of the frontier.<sup>4</sup> These factors all contributed to driving up the price of cereals. Wheaten meal rose to 60 shillings per muid on the frontier (in Grahamstown), while in Cape Town it sold at 40 shillings per muid.<sup>5</sup> Similar price increases can also be traced in the marketing patterns of butter and potatoes on the frontier.<sup>6</sup>

From the above information and the general price trends, it would seem that the 1837-8 and 1838-9 agricultural seasons were exceptionally poor. Coming at a time when the frontier districts were recovering from the war, and when there was a movement of producers out of the colony, it was inevitable that the prices of most agricultural products should peak during this period. There was also the additional factor, namely a reduction of imports of

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., September 27, 1838.

<sup>2</sup>G.T.J., February 21, 1839.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>See Appendix IV and V.

cereals into the frontier districts, owing to the curtailment of production in the western districts following the emancipation of the slaves.

In contrast to this, the year 1839, and the agricultural season 1839-40, were exceptionally good. By October, 1839, the Graham's Town Journal was raising the question of what was to be done with the surplus crops which had been produced in the frontier districts. This surplus was seen as being partly, an over-reaction to the failures of the two previous seasons, and the higher prices which had resulted.<sup>1</sup> A suggestion was made for widening the infrastructure of the colony. It was realised that if products, such as wool, which were then exported in a raw state, could be worked up in the colony, this would encourage immigration. This, in turn, would boost consumption of locally produced foodstuffs, thus alleviating the problem. This was not, however, a short term solution. Rather, it was suggested, farmers should aim at the production of a wider variety of crops, so that surpluses would be less likely to occur in such magnitude. It was further suggested that a foreign market should be found to absorb any excess produced within the colony. Here Mauritius was seen as being ideal as it could absorb all surplus grain and beef, provided shipping rates could be kept low.<sup>2</sup>

The bumper crop produced in 1839 had come about as a result of good and regular rains throughout the growing season. The Journal pointed out that,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., October 3, 1839.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

"...the superabundance of oathay is such that when taken to market it scarcely realises the bare value of its conveyance thither."

The steady rains were, however, to have a detrimental effect on sheep, for early in 1840 it was reported that an outbreak of an epidemic, similar in character to sheep-rot, had been reported from 'Mancanzana, Bavian's River, parts of the Konap, together with most of the high lying regions'.<sup>1</sup> It was later reported to be 'Geel Siekte'.<sup>2</sup> It was also an unprecedented year for scab.<sup>3</sup> Collett noted when shearing his sheep in December, that there were a considerable number of broken fleeces. This would have resulted from the animals running high temperatures. He was to lose a considerable number of sheep to what he termed, 'the sickness'.<sup>3</sup> In March, 1840, he recorded that a great number of his 'October lambs' were stunted in growth 'principally owing to the late sickness of the ewes'.<sup>4</sup> By January, 1840, he noted that his flocks were showing signs of improvement.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, there is no record of the exact number of fatalities.

The abundant rains of 1839 were to continue through 1840. In November of that year there were again reports of 'unusually large returns'.<sup>6</sup> The Journal commented,

"There has never been so fine a lambing season as the past and the increase in the quantity of woolled sheep,

<sup>1</sup> G.T.J., January 16, 1840.

<sup>2</sup> G.T.J., January 23, 1840.

<sup>3</sup> Collett, J., op.cit., entries of December, 1839.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., entry March 3, 1840.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., entry January 4, 1840.

<sup>6</sup> G.T.J., November 26, 1840.

and consequently, the weight of wool, will be beyond any former precedent...It is calculated that this year's clip will show an increase of at least 30 per cent on any former year."

Collett observed that his ewes had produced more lambs than he had expected.<sup>1</sup>

The agricultural season 1840-1 was, once again, a good one. Crops were generally plentiful throughout the colony and the season was marred on the frontier only by the appearance of large swarms of locusts. By June, 1841, Collett was in the fortunate position to be able to write that his pasturage was good, notwithstanding the ravages of the locusts.<sup>2</sup> Good rains throughout the winter of 1841 allowed the pasture of farmers along the Koonap River and upper Albany to recover from this scourge. During the course of 1841 and 1842, swarms of locusts were to affect all areas of the frontier. During November, 1841, swarms were again reported from the Tarka, Winterberg, Kat River and Peddie areas.<sup>3</sup> Many swarms were destroyed either by burning the bushes they settled on at night, or by driving flocks of sheep over them while they were still in the hopper stage of development.<sup>4</sup> During December, 1841, the Kat River Settlement suffered severely from swarms which destroyed large areas of crops relied upon by the inhabitants for their subsistence.<sup>5</sup> Bathurst and lower Albany were visited by the swarms during the course of December, 1842, and the maize crops were destroyed.<sup>6</sup> The effect of

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<sup>1</sup>Collett, J., *op.cit.*, entry for August 10, 1840.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, entry for June 1, 1840.

<sup>3</sup>G.T.J., November 11, 1841.

<sup>4</sup>G.T.J., November 18, 1841.

<sup>5</sup>G.T.J., December 10, 1841.

<sup>6</sup>G.T.J., December 13, 1841.

these swarms was particularly severe as drought had now set in, making pasture scanty. Fortunately, the winter crops of cereals had already been reaped.<sup>1</sup>

The drought in the agricultural season 1841-2 had the effect of again pushing up the prices of agricultural produce on the frontier. Most of the colony was affected by this drought. The Journal reported the loss of livestock as far away as the Long Kloof.<sup>2</sup> Collett, as early as October, 1841, noted that his sheep were falling off in condition as a result of the dry conditions.<sup>3</sup> By November, the 'Boers [were] Tracking for Pasture'.<sup>4</sup> The springs supplying water to Grahamstown were also affected so that water became very expensive and that obtainable 'very often impure'.<sup>5</sup> Rains followed in May, 1842, over much of Albany and this allowed for the cultivation of winter cereals. The Journal noted that,<sup>6</sup>

"The extraordinary high prices obtained for all kinds of farming produce is a powerful stimulus to exertion..."

The winter cereal crop for 1843 was generally favourable and assisted in reducing prices once more. The price of meal had risen steadily between 1840 and December, 1843.<sup>7</sup> The general condition of most livestock seemed also to improve, although there were reports of severe sheep losses owing to the cold weather in the Sneeu-berg

<sup>1</sup> G.T.J., December 13, 1841.

<sup>2</sup> G.T.J., May 12, 1842.

<sup>3</sup> Collett, J., entry for October 14, 1841.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., entry for November 27, 1841.

<sup>5</sup> G.T.J., April 28, 1842.

<sup>6</sup> G.T.J., May 26, 1842.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix III. G.T.J., August 17, 1843.

during August, 1843.<sup>1</sup> Collett reported the loss of several lambs owing to the cold weather and snow.<sup>2</sup> There were also serious recurrences of the locust infestation, and crops of maize were again destroyed in lower Albany.<sup>3</sup> By October, 1843, it was reported that the whole area from the Orange River to the sea was infested with locust swarms.<sup>4</sup> There was also a report in June, 1843, of an outbreak of 'hoof and tongue' disease which was described as being '...extremely prevalent amongst horned cattle'.<sup>5</sup>

A regular rainfall during 1844 ensured that the 1844-5 season was a particularly good one for all branches of agriculture. Heavy rains falling in October, 1844, had, however, caused some damage. It was reported that the Howison's Poort road was rendered impassable by wash-aways, while 'nearly every dam in the neighbourhood has been destroyed'.<sup>6</sup> Commenting on the state of agriculture the following April, the Journal pointed out that crops were so abundant in lower Albany the previous year that many farmers contemplated letting ground lie fallow in absence of a suitable price for their produce. This is borne out by an examination of the quoted market prices.<sup>7</sup> The editorial advocated the cultivation of cotton, stating,<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., August 17, 1843.

<sup>2</sup>Collett, J., entries for August, 1843.

<sup>3</sup>G.T.J., November 9, 1843.

<sup>4</sup>G.T.J., October 26, 1843.

<sup>5</sup>G.T.J., June 1, 1843.

<sup>6</sup>G.T.J., October 24, 1844.

<sup>7</sup>See Appendix III to VI.

<sup>8</sup>G.T.J., April 3, 1845; See *supra*, pp.93ff.

"It is utterly vain for them [farmers] to confine their efforts to the growth of produce merely for home consumption. They must look beyond this. They must fix their attention steadily upon an Export trade - and when they have secured this they have the British Islands for their markets, and an unlimited scope for the industry, intelligence and enterprise of the whole community."

Further in the interior, 1844 proved to be a year of drought. Collett noted in August, 'Cattle getting very poor and some few already dead - Pasture burnt up'.<sup>1</sup> He was fortunate as rain fell during October.<sup>2</sup> This drought extended into 1845, and by October of that year, the Journal reported that in the Tarka district,<sup>3</sup>

"...not less than 7,000 head of cattle have perished from want of pasturage, while many farmers have lost nearly their entire flocks of sheep...many hundreds of lambs have been killed to save the ewes, and where this has not been done both have perished from disease and poverty."

In Albany, 1845 presented a fairer picture, although further experiments carried out with the cultivation of cotton had failed.<sup>4</sup> This had been owing to poor germination, attributed to the quality of the seed and the cold weather during October. The young plants had also not stood up well to the wind. More success was achieved in the cultivation of flax, but here the 'grub and caterpillar have been a great source of annoyance'.<sup>5</sup> Other crops fared better and reasonable harvests were reaped. There were reports of an outbreak of glanders disease amongst the horses of Uitenhage in October and advice was given to destroy all affected animals.<sup>6</sup> This did not

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<sup>1</sup> Collet, J., op.cit., entry for September, 1845.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., entry for October 1, 1845.

<sup>3</sup> G.T.J., October 9, 1845.

<sup>4</sup> G.T.J., November 20, 1845.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> G.T.J., October 9, 1845

contain the disease; by January, 1846 it had spread, and was reported to be as widespread as 'Kaffirland'.<sup>1</sup>

From the above discussion it appears that agricultural prices for the produce sold on the Grahamstown market fluctuated very much in accordance with the weather conditions enjoyed by the frontier. This could be expected in a free uncontrolled economy. As, however, we can also take this fluctuation of the market prices as an indicator of the general welfare of the frontier's agricultural community,<sup>2</sup> certain aspects become clearer. With the exception of the bumper years of 1839 to 1841, prices generally remained at higher levels than those ruling immediately prior to the outbreak of the Sixth Frontier War in 1834.<sup>3</sup> These large movements in the prices of produce, as revealed in the cases of wheaten meal, oat hay, and potatoes, resulted almost entirely from the size of the harvests of these products in respective seasons and the consequent fluctuations in the amounts available to the market. The lack of an export market for these products, and their limited requirements as food, in the case of potatoes and wheaten meal, in the staple diets of the colonists, would suggest further that the demand for these products was relatively inelastic. If this was the case, then it would follow that farmers' incomes from these sources were directly linked to these prices. Higher prices would, therefore, indicate

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., January 31, 1846.

<sup>2</sup>This assumption is based on the fact that this community was fundamentally an agricultural one. While it was also largely self-subsistent in the provision of foodstuffs, this market provided the major outlet for surplus which provided the only pecuniary income for many. The welfare of the pastoral farmers was also closely related to the weather, as has been discussed above, so that, while their incomes were not related to this factor, it also gives some indication of their state of progress.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix III to V.

higher incomes from these sources. Farmers would thus have profited from indifferent seasons rather more than from good ones, or disastrously poor crops. An investigation of the prices of these products on the Grahamstown market in the period under review would suggest therefore, that on average, farmers' incomes in the period 1835 to 1845 increased from these sources.

It should be borne in mind, however, that other factors were also involved in the agricultural scene on the frontier in the period 1835 to 1845. It is fair to say that no farmer was entirely market orientated and the majority of farmers maintained a certain amount of self-sufficiency. The market demand for agricultural produce was, therefore, largely confined to meeting the requirements of the urban settlements of Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, and the non-agricultural populations of the other hamlets on the frontier. In addition to this there was the demand created by the military. The farming undertaken on the frontier had, particularly in the period under review, become increasingly 'mixed', with the introduction of woolled sheep on many farms. The enhanced value of sheep generally, encouraged farmers in their husbandry.

Butter reacted along basically similar lines to the market prices for the agricultural crops already quoted. This is an interesting phenomenon, as butter also featured throughout this period in the lists of exports of colonial produce shipped from Algoa Bay.

TABLE V  
Export of Butter from Algoa Bay  
between 1834 and 1845<sup>1</sup>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Av. Price per lb.</u>
1834	53,705	£ 1,517 0 0	6 3/4d
1835	37,822	1,848 0 0	11 3/4d
1836	60,339	2,412 0 0	9 1/2d
1837	128,931	4,681 0 0	8 3/4d
1838	67,299	4,380 0 0	15 3/4d (?)
1839	82,420	4,091 0 0	11 7/8d
1840	123,063	4,881 0 0	9 1/2d
1841	264,405 *	9,806 0 0	9d
1842 (to Oct. 10)	62,522	2,967 0 0	11 7/8d
1843	51,339	2,892 0 0	13 1/2d
1844	54,743	1,843 0 0	8d
1845	84,635	3,512 0 0	10d

(\* Figure quoted by J.C. Chase, op.cit., p.164. This figure probably included the quantity shipped to Cape Town, which would not strictly constitute an export figure.)

It would seem that, in spite of these exports, butter tended to fluctuate in sympathy with other commodity prices on the Grahamstown market. It will be seen from the graphs,<sup>2</sup> that this fluctuation tended to be greater than for certain other commodities, such as wheaten meal, or potatoes. Another important aspect of the price of butter was that it did not fall to its pre 1834-5 war level during the whole of the period under review. Again, this can be seen as a reflection of the fact that exports of butter reduced the overall quantity available for sale on the Grahamstown market.

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<sup>1</sup> See respective copies of the Cape of Good Hope Almanac and Blue Books, C.O.5976-5987.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix IV.

This was particularly true of the favourable seasons between 1839 and 1842. Alternatively, the relatively stable price of this commodity between 1835 and 1838, indicates that the chief source of supply was not severely affected by the war.<sup>1</sup> The peaks in butter prices on the market between 1839 and 1842-3 indicate the accentuated scarcity within the frontier districts. This is also revealed in a fall in exports, although contracts and other commitments would not have allowed these figures to fall too rapidly.<sup>2</sup>

It is very difficult accurately to gauge the progress of the frontier cattle farmers in the period 1835 to 1845. The figures which are available<sup>3</sup> prove to be highly erratic and cannot be seen as accurate. This was the period of the Great Trek and large herds of cattle were constantly on the move throughout the frontier districts. Albany, which had a large English-speaking population which did not participate in the Trek, reveals a fairly steady increase in cattle numbers, but this is an exception.<sup>4</sup> For the greater part, however, it is perhaps incorrect, as has been pointed out above,<sup>5</sup> to consider the cattle farmer as a predominant, specific type of farmer in this period. There was, rather, a community of farmers on the frontier who still persisted in a form of semi-subsistence farming, in which cattle played a role along with agriculture. Woolled sheep

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<sup>1</sup>Chase, J.C., *op.cit.*, pp. 55, 164. Uitenhage district was the chief source of butter production in the eastern districts, and did not bear the brunt of the Xhosa attack in 1834-5.

<sup>2</sup>See Table, p.205.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix VII.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>See *supra*, pp-177ff.

were, however, since the 1834-5 war, coming to play an increasingly significant part in the agricultural economy of the frontier districts.

Thom has suggested that the period after 1835 can be seen as one of expansion and intensification in agriculture.<sup>1</sup> Expansion was to come in the form of the Great Trek, while there was now a general intensification of method and carrying capacity undertaken on colonial farms in response to the demands of woolled sheep farming. The frontier was now fixed with a greater permanency,<sup>2</sup> so that for the immediate future, at least, there was no prospect of obtaining new farms in what had been, and was again, Xhosa territory. The sale of many farms in the colony by Dutch farmers who were trekking into the interior, did much to allay any immediate land shortage. As many of these farms were situated in areas ideally suited for sheep farming, there was an infusion into these areas of a new type of farmer who could fully exploit the situation,<sup>3</sup> and in the limited capacity which nature would allow, pursue a certain amount of intensification. If nothing else, there was now a move towards specialisation on many farms, 'mixed' farming giving way to intensified sheep breeding. This intensification and specialisation was, however, a slow process.

The loss of a considerable number of white colonists to the Great Trek can not be seen, other than in the immediate short term,

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<sup>1</sup>Thom, H.B., *op.cit.*, p.318.

<sup>2</sup>In terms of the abandonment of the province of Queen Adelaide, the Fish River was fixed as the new frontier, with the inclusion in the colony of the Winterberg and Koonap regions beyond it. The concept of the 'Neutral' territory was now abandoned.

<sup>3</sup>See *supra*. pp.182-3.

to have caused any great reductions in the production capacity of the frontier farming community. This was rather a strategic loss which saw a reduction in the capacity of the frontier to defend itself. The emigration of these Trekkers was, nevertheless, to cause considerable alarm along the frontier and efforts were to be made to obtain emigrants from Britain to fill the 'vacuum' created by their exodus.<sup>1</sup>

Of greater significance to the frontier farming community was the growing demand for labour. It was this demand which was partly responsible for the activity involved in trying to encourage an emigration scheme from Britain. That this scheme was unsuccessful reduces its significance in the economic sense, and attention is rather focused on the available labour supply.

One of the major events of the Sixth Frontier War was the migration of the Mfengu into the colony in search of protection and opportunity.<sup>2</sup> These people were initially viewed by colonial farmers as a blessing. General orders issued in September, 1836, stated,<sup>3</sup>

"Lieut.-Colonel England is also requested to make it known to the several Authorities within his District, that it is desirable at the present moment that passes to Kaffirs to enter the Districts of Albany and Somerset should be restricted as far as possible."

While the entry of Xhosa into the colony was discouraged, the Mfengu were seen as friendly and encouraged to seek employment on farms in the colony. Many of these people were recruited by the burgher forces during the war. George Jarvis reported to the Civil

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<sup>1</sup>Theal, G.M., op.cit., Vol. II, pp.193-4.

<sup>2</sup>Cory, G.E., op.cit., Vol. III, p.144ff.

<sup>3</sup>L.G.141, pp.171-3.

Commissioner in May, 1835, that some 40 families of Mfengu had followed the second division into town. Many had come with farmers in order to take up service with them, but had later become dissatisfied. They were now squatting on the outskirts of Grahamstown, and Jarvis noted,<sup>1</sup>

"There has been some anxiety manifested by many of the Inhabitants to take these people into their Service, and I have been obliged to exert some Authority to prevent their being taken away without passes and before entering into proper Contracts with the persons intending to employ them, and there cannot be any doubt that that the whole of them will very soon be provided with Masters."

One group of Mfengu had been settled in the Tzitzikamma region, the other was situated in close proximity to Fort Peddie in the 'ceded territory'. Bowker noted in a letter to the governor in October, 1837, that 'such is the demand for Fingo labour towards Cape Town, that nearly one thousand applications for fingoos were made in one day, '. The demand for these people to serve as labourers within the colony was certainly great.

This demand came in the wake of the passing of Ordinance No.50 in 1828 and the unsuccessful implementation of Ordinance No.49 of the same year.<sup>2</sup> Added to this was the potential disruption of the emancipation of slaves in 1834. These factors combined to create a fluidity in the labour structure of the colony which had not existed before.<sup>3</sup> It was with this background of events that the demand for Mfengu labour should be seen. Superimposed on this was the growing demand for labour by the farming community. In the

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<sup>1</sup>C.O.2756, Jarvis to Campbell, May 26, 1835.

<sup>2</sup>See supra, pp.113ff.

<sup>3</sup>Marais, J.S., op.cit., pp.180-4.

western districts, in the wake of emancipation, labour was still required mainly in the cultivation of vineyards and cornfields. In the east, and to a lesser degree in the western districts, there was a growing new demand for labour. This was related to the increasing popularity and spread of woolled sheep-farming. Prior to this, the demand for labour on the frontier had centred on labourers to act as herders and to assist in cultivation. Woolled sheep, however, required far more attention than had been lavished on the flocks of Cape sheep and herds of cattle. The shearing of these flocks and the periodic washing of their fleeces ensured a demand for labour over and above the shepherds. The situation now arose where the labour requirement of the frontier farming community was to ebb and wane according to seasons and the time of year. The system of monthly contracts introduced in terms of Ordinance No.50 of 1828 meant that it was no longer necessary for farmers to hire the full complement of their labour requirements in advance. Marais is correct in suggesting that this system increased the incidence of vagrancy amongst the Khoi population, but does not go so far as to suggest that this was not entirely voluntary.<sup>1</sup> While farmers complained bitterly that the new system increased vagrancy and the incidence of theft associated with it, they chose to ignore the benefits they derived through its operation. These short contracts were particularly conducive to the farmers, as this period revealed a general rise in labour costs,<sup>2</sup> particularly of Khoi workers. The Graham's Town Journal saw that this arose, in part, from the better

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<sup>1</sup>Marais, J.S., op.cit., pp.182-3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.185ff.

wages received by many of the Khoi who had served in the Cape Corps during the war.<sup>1</sup> The wages of Xhosa and Mfengu workers still varied. While Collett could still procure most of his labour requirements at a rate of one cow per annum,<sup>2</sup> it was estimated, in 1841, that this type of labour could be hired in Albany at between 2s.6d. and 6s. per month, with food and lodging.<sup>3</sup> In terms of the price of cattle, this would have varied between one and three cows per annum.

Ordinance No.49 had not been repealed in 1829,<sup>4</sup> and Xhosa continued to enter the colony during the period 1836 to 1845 in search of employment. One of the chief functions of the Resident Agents, appointed in terms of the new treaty system, was to regulate the flow of this labour supply, and to issue the passes necessary for the legal entry of Xhosa into the colony.<sup>5</sup>

Thus the labour supply necessary for the smooth operation of the farming activities of the frontier community was forthcoming. That most of it was to come from across the Fish River, in the form of Xhosa and Mfengu workers, caused the frontier community to worry over the strategic implications rather than its cost. This is not to suggest that this was an entirely reliable source. The supply of this labour tended to be greater in poor agricultural seasons, when the Xhosa saw in colonial employment the opportunity to

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<sup>1</sup>G.T.J., August 25, 1836.

<sup>2</sup>Collett, J., *op.cit.*, *passim* to 1845.

<sup>3</sup>C.O.5984, p.188.

<sup>4</sup>See *supra*, p.114.

<sup>5</sup>Cory, C.E., *op.cit.*, Vol. III, p.376.

augment their food supply. As these were periods when the demand for labour within the colony was slack, this did not improve the situation. Alternatively, when the seasons were good, and there was a strong demand for labour within the colony, the Xhosa and Mfengu had less incentive to enter into employment. This situation continued down to 1845.

It is clear that the frontier agricultural community progressed rapidly in the period between 1835 and 1845. The wealth of this community came to rest increasingly on the income derived from woolled sheep-farming, but this is not to suggest that the other branches of agriculture necessarily languished. It was rather that they were now eclipsed by the new dominance of wool. The progress of this community rested also on the amount of labour which was forthcoming. If this was sometimes erratic, there would, nevertheless, seem to have been sufficient available not to hamper the progress of this farming community.

This then was the situation which existed on the eve of the outbreak of the Seventh Frontier War in 1846. As a community, the frontier farmers were now familiar with both the Xhosa 'threat' across the Fish River, and with their agricultural surroundings. This war was not to take them by surprise, as had been the case with the previous war, and its effects were considered as being less serious.

## APPENDIX I

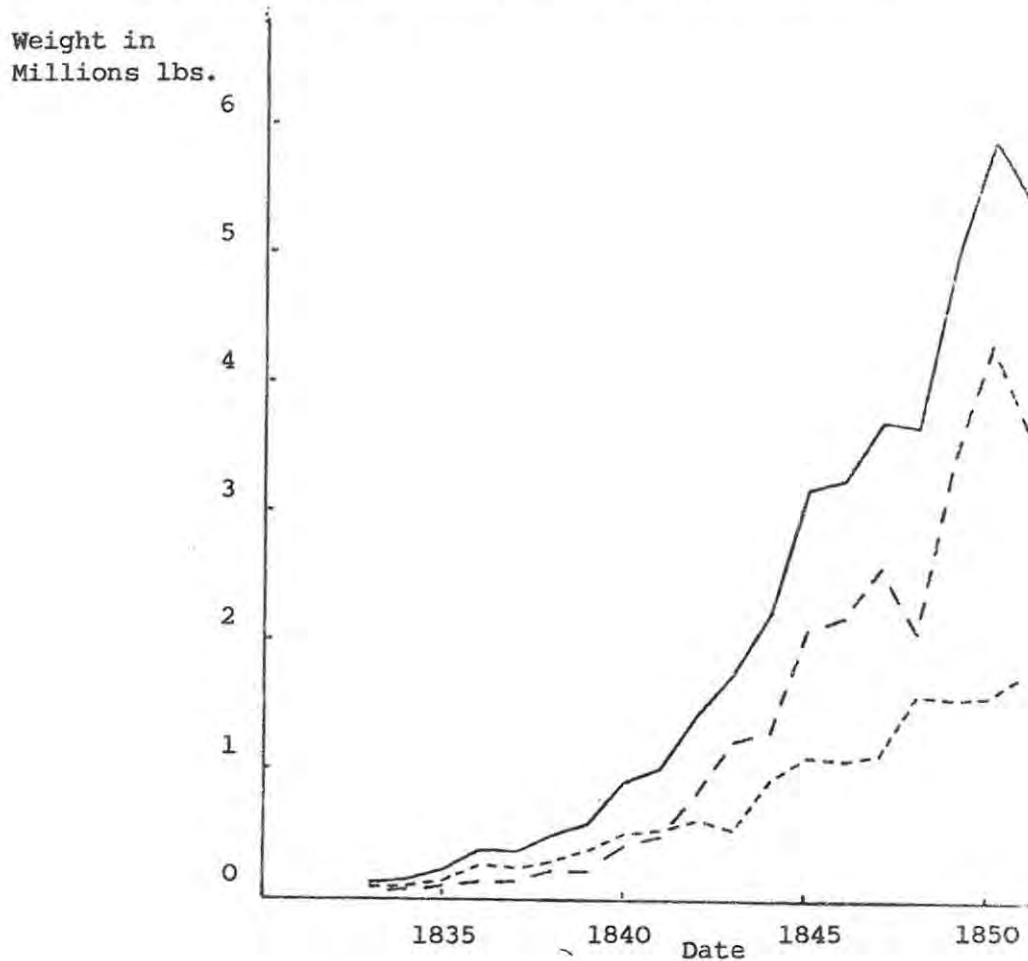
LISTS OF KAFFIR DEPREDATIONS 1810-1834

<u>Year</u>	<u>Cattle</u>	<u>Horses</u>	<u>Sheep</u>
1810	1,950	43	55
1811	2,468	39	
1812	302	18	
1813	1,008	128	3
1814	763	15	2
1815	800	83	
1816	729	18	
1817	844	108	
1818	1,004	21	
1819	12,412	178	2,059
1820	476	7	
1821	294	4	
1822	2,537	54	
1823	2,044	92	
1824	2,009	20	
1825	1,525	62	
1826	1,276	85	406
1827	2,126	76	
1828	752	51	41
1829	7,021	273	62
1830	2,259	61	
1831	980	50	
1832	493	111	
1833	1,095	120	
1834	7,037	147	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Stolen	54,204	1,864	2,682
Recovered	<u>15,737</u>	<u>594</u>	<hr/>
	38,467	1,270	2,682

(Source: Graham's Town Journal, August 30, 1838.)

## APPENDIX II

## WOOL EXPORTS FROM THE CAPE BETWEEN 1833 AND 1846



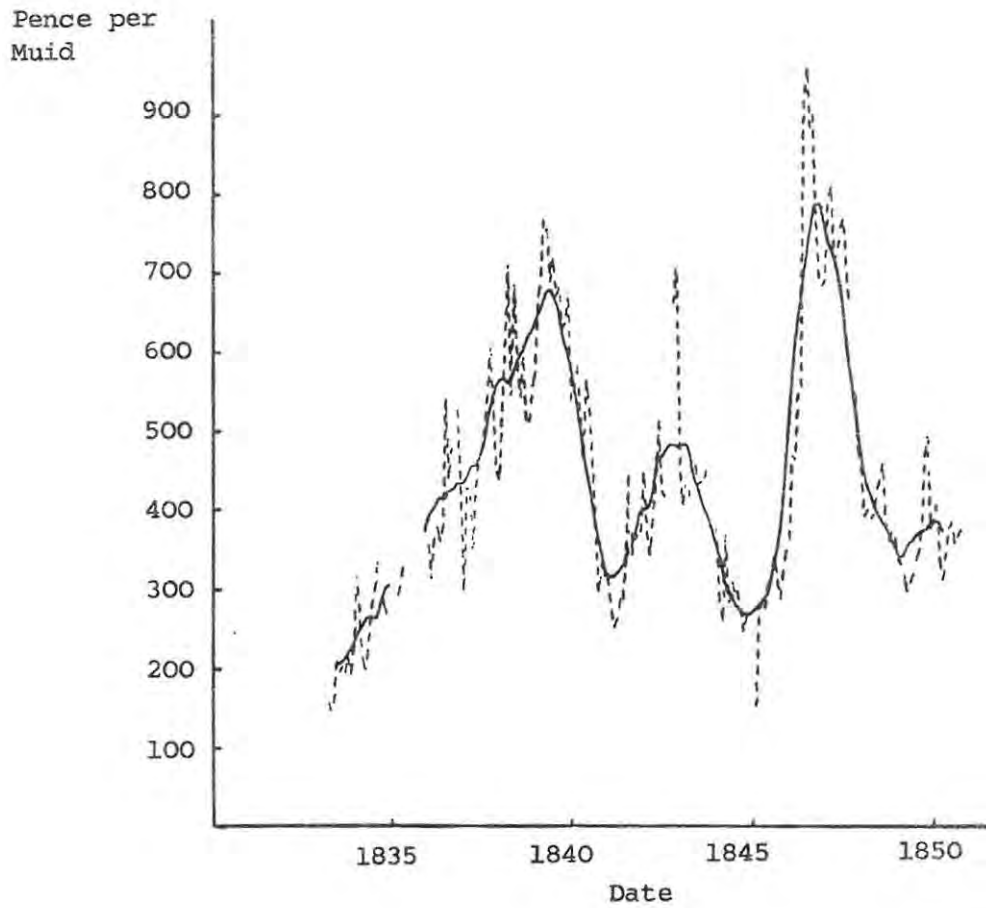
Key: ——— Total  
 - - - Exports via Port Elizabeth  
 . . . Exports via Cape Town

<u>Year</u>	<u>Cape Town</u>	<u>Port Elizabeth</u>	<u>Total</u>
1833	73,324 lbs.	39,753 lbs.	113,077 lbs.
1834	89,062	54,831	143,893
1835	136,020	79,848	215,868
1836	256,629	116,574	373,203
1837	227,833	123,991	351,824
1838	286,246	201,508	490,754
1839	377,639	208,338	585,977
1840	509,579	401,521	911,118
1841	536,979	479,828	1,016,807
1842	616,807	811,986	1,128,793
1843	534,377	1,220,380	1,754,737
1844	936,269	1,297,677	2,233,946
1845	1,109,554	2,085,064	3,194,602
1846	1,082,191	2,188,637	3,271,158

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Almanac, 1855.)

## APPENDIX III

MARKET PRICE FOR WHEATEN MEAL SOLD ON THE  
GRAHAMSTOWN MARKET IN THE PERIOD 1833 TO 1846

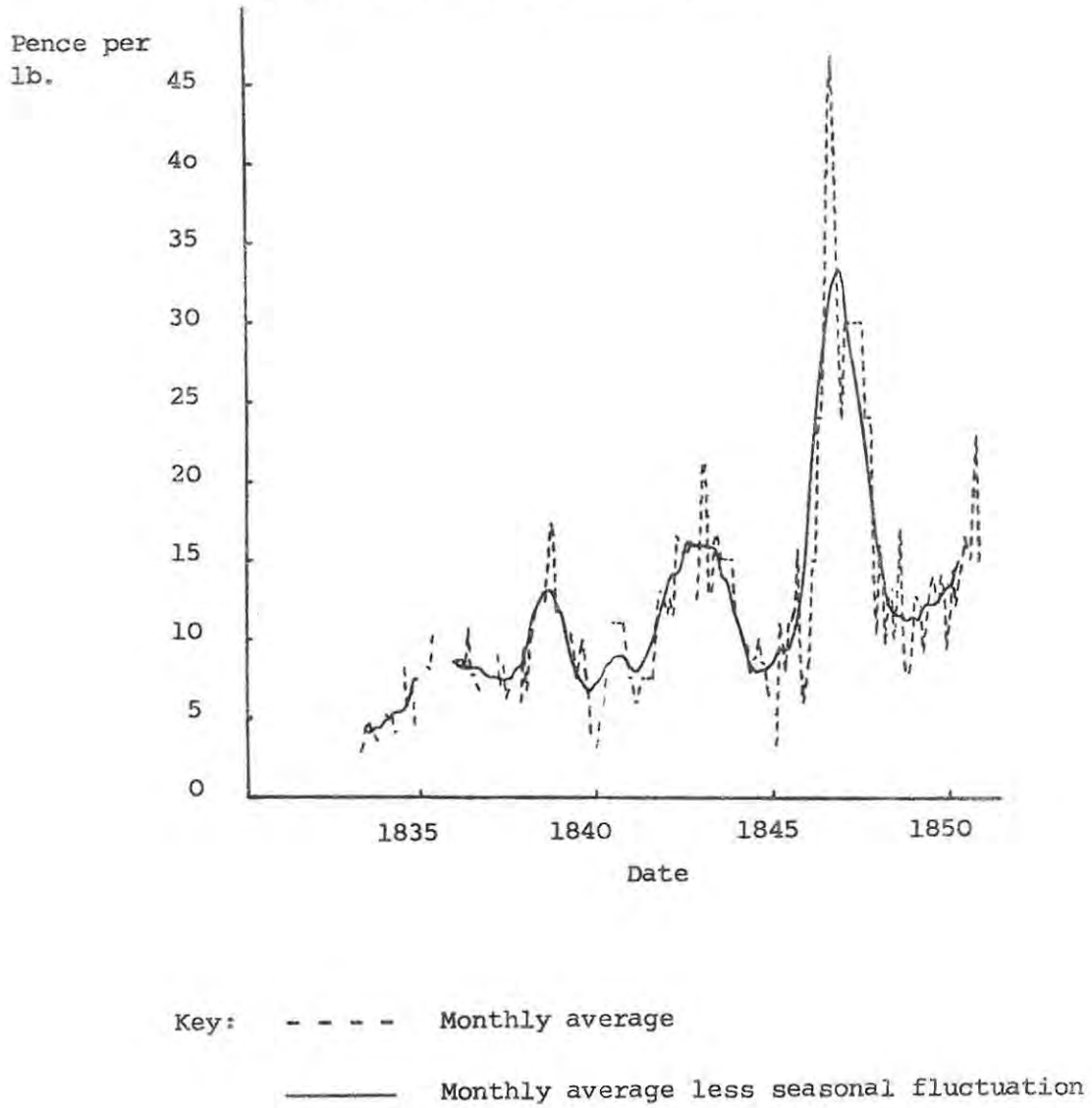


Key:     - - - - Monthly average  
          —     Monthly average less seasonal fluctuation

	J		F		M		A		M		J		J		A		S		O		N		D					
	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D		
1833	15	00	0	00	14	01	12	03	12	12	17	06	16	04	16	11	16	01	18	00	16	01	19	01				
1834	26	03	21	09	17	11	16	08	19	06	22	10	24	09	27	09	0	00	24	00	22	06	0	00				
1835	0	00	0	00	24	04	26	05	28	05	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00		
1836	29	08	26	03	30	04	31	06	30	00	31	11	45	00	36	08	40	10	0	00	43	10	35	09				
1837	24	11	35	08	35	08	29	03	35	09	38	03	39	06	42	00	45	06	50	03	43	08	37	03				
1838	36	06	43	10	51	04	59	01	45	06	57	00	49	09	45	02	49	06	42	09	42	09	46	06				
1839	48	00	55	10	58	00	63	11	62	09	57	04	59	10	55	10	56	10	52	06	53	00	57	01				
1840	44	08	45	10	48	08	43	09	38	09	47	01	44	00	38	08	32	00	24	09	28	01	26	03				
1841	26	03	23	08	21	00	22	00	24	00	24	00	28	04	37	00	28	09	30	04	30	09	31	00				
1842	37	03	31	00	28	07	32	06	37	00	42	10	35	03	34	09	35	03	0	00	55	00	59	00				
1843	37	04	33	11	36	07	34	10	0	00	38	04	36	01	36	04	36	09	38	06	38	11	0	00				
1844	31	08	23	09	21	09	30	08	23	08	25	09	24	08	24	11	23	00	20	06	22	06	0	00				
1845	0	00	12	09	23	01	23	09	23	01	25	10	26	01	28	06	26	00	24	00	27	01	29	03				

APPENDIX III (Continued) - WHEATEN MEAL

APPENDIX IV  
 MARKET PRICE FOR BUTTER SOLD ON THE GRAHAMSTOWN  
 MARKET IN THE PERIOD 1833 to 1846

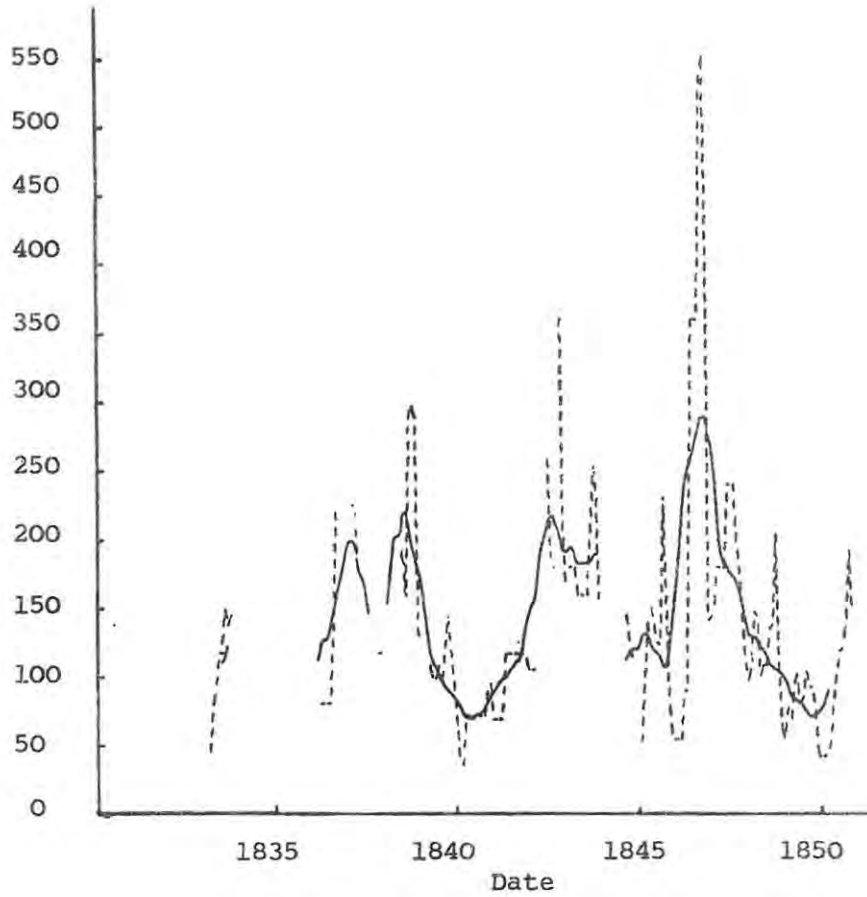


	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D
1833	0 03	0 00	0 03	0 03	0 03	0 05	0 05	0 04	0 04	0 04	0 04	0 05
1834	0 05	0 05	0 05	0 04	0 04	0 00	0 09	0 06	0 00	0 07	0 04	0 00
1835	0 00	0 00	0 08	0 08	0 11	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00
1836	0 09	0 09	0 09	0 08	0 11	0 08	0 08	0 07	0 07	0 00	0 00	0 00
1837	0 00	0 09	0 09	0 07	0 08	0 06	0 07	0 00	0 06	0 00	0 06	0 09
1838	0 07	0 10	0 11	1 00	0 00	0 00	1 00	1 03	1 05	1 04	0 12	1 00
1839	0 00	0 09	0 00	0 10	0 09	0 08	0 09	0 10	0 08	0 07	0 04	0 00
1840	0 03	0 05	0 05	0 08	0 00	0 11	0 11	0 11	0 11	0 11	0 09	0 08
1841	0 08	0 06	0 06	0 08	0 08	0 08	0 08	0 08	0 10	1 01	1 01	1 01
1842	0 11	1 01	0 11	1 04	1 04	1 03	1 03	1 03	1 04	0 00	1 01	1 04
1843	1 09	1 09	1 01	1 01	1 04	1 04	1 03	1 03	1 03	1 03	1 03	0 11
1844	0 00	0 07	0 00	0 10	0 08	0 09	0 09	0 10	0 08	0 08	0 07	0 06
1845	0 00	0 06	0 11	0 10	0 08	0 11	0 11	1 00	1 04	0 09	0 06	0 00

## APPENDIX V

MARKET PRICE FOR POTATOES SOLD ON THE GRAHAMSTOWN  
MARKET IN THE PERIOD 1833 to 1846

Pence per Muid



Key: - - - - Monthly average

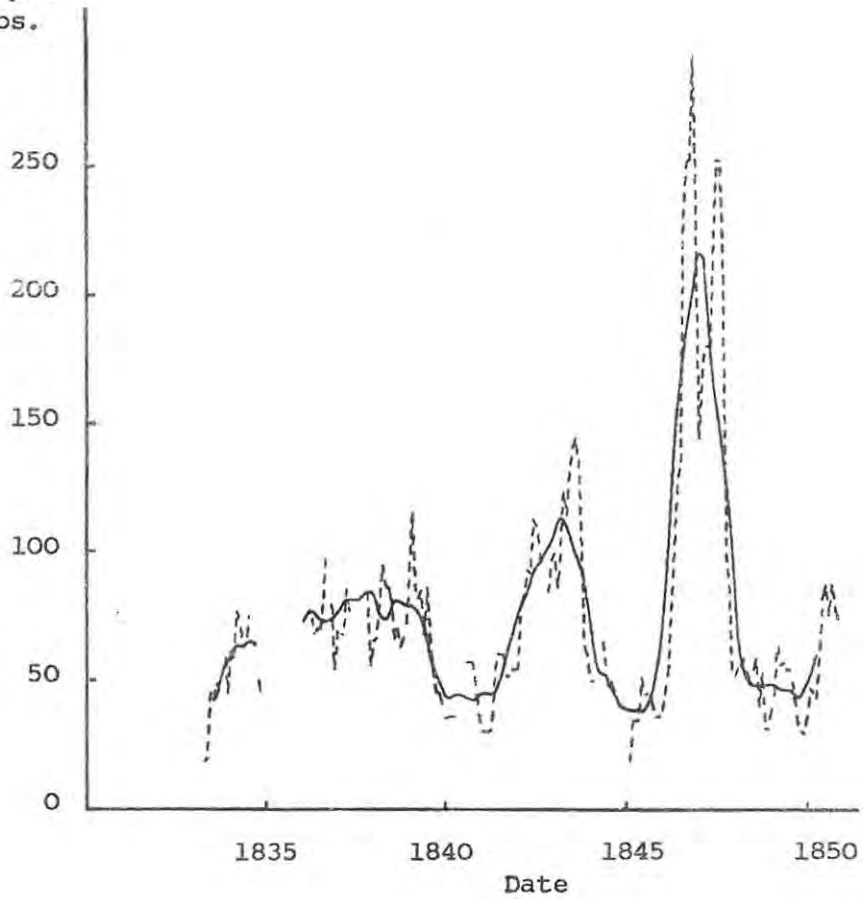
— Monthly average less seasonal fluctuations

	J		F		M		A		M		J		J		A		S		O		N		D	
	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
1833	4	06	0	00	3	09	6	07	7	10	9	09	9	09	12	06	11	05	12	00	0	00	0	00
1834	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00
1835	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00
1836	0	00	0	00	0	00	6	09	6	09	6	09	6	09	10	08	18	04	0	00	18	04	0	00
1837	0	00	18	9	18	09	15	05	14	03	0	00	13	06	0	00	0	00	0	00	9	09	9	09
1838	0	00	7	04	0	00	0	00	0	00	15	00	16	01	13	03	24	04	24	09	24	00	10	10
1839	0	00	0	00	0	00	9	00	8	03	8	03	9	00	8	03	10	01	12	00	10	00	0	00
1840	5	11	3	06	3	00	6	00	6	00	6	00	6	00	6	00	6	00	6	00	7	06	7	11
1841	5	09	5	09	5	09	5	09	9	09	9	09	9	09	9	09	9	09	9	09	9	09	9	05
1842	8	09	8	09	8	09	0	00	0	00	22	00	21	06	15	00	15	00	0	00	30	00	17	02
1843	14	01	15	00	15	00	15	00	13	03	13	03	13	03	13	03	17	01	21	00	19	01	12	06
1844	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	0	00	10	06	0	00	12	00	10	06	9	06	0	00
1845	0	00	4	05	8	04	11	08	12	06	11	06	10	05	10	03	19	02	13	02	7	01	4	10

## APPENDIX VI

MARKET PRICE FOR OAT HAY SOLD ON THE GRAHAMSTOWN  
MARKET IN THE PERIOD 1833 to 1846

Pence per  
100 lbs.



Key: - - - - Monthly average  
 ——— Monthly average less seasonal fluctuation

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D	S D
1833	1 07	0 00	1 12	1 07	1 08	3 09	3 06	4 01	3 10	4 04	4 10	3 09
1834	5 01	4 10	6 04	6 02	5 03	5 03	6 01	6 04	0 00	1 06	3 10	0 00
1835	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00	0 00
1836	6 04	0 00	6 04	6 04	5 08	5 10	5 10	6 07	8 01	0 00	6 07	4 06
1837	5 09	5 08	5 08	7 01	6 04	0 00	7 10	0 00	11 03	0 00	7 00	4 08
1838	5 05	5 06	6 07	7 10	7 01	7 01	6 08	5 06	5 10	5 03	5 07	6 00
1839	7 08	9 07	7 00	6 09	7 01	5 08	7 01	5 08	4 06	3 09	3 09	3 04
1840	2 11	3 00	3 00	3 00	0 00	3 09	0 00	4 09	4 09	4 09	4 00	3 01
1841	2 06	2 06	2 06	2 07	3 09	5 00	5 00	5 00	4 03	4 03	4 06	4 06
1842	4 06	6 06	5 11	7 08	7 07	9 04	9 01	8 03	7 08	0 00	7 00	8 00
1843	8 03	7 01	8 03	10 03	9 05	10 10	11 08	12 00	11 03	8 06	5 03	4 11
1844	4 01	4 02	4 03	0 00	5 05	4 08	3 11	4 01	3 09	0 00	0 00	0 00
1845	0 00	1 06	2 10	2 10	2 11	4 03	3 08	3 09	3 08	3 02	3 00	3 00
1846	3 02	4 00	4 08	6 08	8 10	10 09	11 03	19 02	21 00	21 00	24 06	20 00

APPENDIX VI (Continued) - OAT HAY

APPENDIX VII  
 CATTLE NUMBERS IN THE FRONTIER DISTRICTS  
 IN THE PERIOD 1836 to 1846

<u>Year</u>	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Somerset</u>	<u>Uitenhage</u>	<u>Graaff Reinet</u>	<u>Cradock</u>	<u>Colesberg</u>
1836			40,957	44,735		
1837		14,000	40,957	11,648	27,977	33,940
1838		21,379	10,500	24,939	31,161	26,435
1839	25,000	22,500	10,500	25,000	31,017	48,801
1840		25,151	10,500	25,277	39,000	64,206
1841	41,901		10,500	28,500	39,500	69,314
1842	46,429	42,270	10,500	38,109	40,000	82,946
1843	50,520	38,973	16,500	37,627	41,950	73,827
1844	54,574	37,254	16,650	40,000	42,000	80,523
1845	58,550	39,419	16,650	33,092	42,500	85,684
1846		18,155	30,625	25,413	24,417	65,266

(Source: Imperial Blue Books on South Africa, C.O.5978 to C.O.5988.)

## APPENDIX VIII

ABSTRACT FROM THE REGISTER OF STATEMENTS MADE  
BY APPLICANTS FOR RELIEF TO THE BOARD OF RELIEF  
IN GRAHAMSTOWN, UP TO 31st DECEMBER 1835

Number of State- ments of Appli- cants for Relief recorded in the Register	Number of Individuals included in these State- ments	Number of Houses		Live Stock lost by Applicants				Live Stock saved by Applicants			
		Burnt	Pillaged	Cattle	Trained Oxen	Horses	Sheep & Goats	Cattle	Oxen	Horses	Sheep & Goats
1,239	5,697	325	261	42,615	5,115	1,772	112,735	6,860	3,144	1,119	99,878

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- 1829 300 Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Trade, Harbours and Navigation.
- 1831 73 Accounts of Imports from the Cape of Good Hope, 1812-1831.
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