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SOME THOUGHTS ON R.J. SEDDON AND THE EMERGENCE
OF NEW ZEALAND PATTERNS OF IDENTITY

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requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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ABBREVIATIONS

PD	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
AJHR	Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives
SP	Seddon Papers

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of the way in which the colonists who sparsely populated the isolated colony of New Zealand during the latter half of the nineteenth century viewed themselves and the society which was developing around them. The colonists were predominantly of British origin and while their migration from Great Britain implied a partial rejection of British society, this was probably tempered by an enhanced loyalty to the British nation state. This loyalty was born of their realisation that the society they were creating was dependent upon its political, economic and military power. But Great Britain was a distant source of protection and the British authorities were often unresponsive to the demands of colonists made over-anxious by the apparent vulnerability of their colony to numerous threats. Fears arising from the isolation and the smallness of their community seem a constant undercurrent in the attitudes of the colonists towards themselves and the world. In the first instance therefore, the realisation of dependence upon Great Britain, and the colonists' British origins seem to have encouraged them to emphasise their Anglo-Saxon solidarity. They did this by their loyalty to the British nation state and by asserting their innate "racial" superiority to other ethnic groups who appeared to threaten them.

These attitudes were probably strengthened by difficult communications within New Zealand. The colony was a land of forbidding relief and by 1870 there were only a few poorly constructed roads. Practically no railway track had been laid and coastal shipping, often the quickest and the most reliable means of transport, was still very slow and often haphazard in its operation.

The emergence of a New Zealand sense of identity had to await the development of a colony-wide society. During the 1870's, contact between the isolated communities within the colony was made easier by improved internal communications which seem to have encouraged groups with similar interests to recognise their common

experience.¹ Such a realisation would no doubt have prompted individuals to participate meaningfully within larger groupings than had previously been the rule within the colony.

Across the 1880's social and economic factors seem to have encouraged the growth of common-interest groups of supra-regional significance. One of the prime examples of this is the growth of city working class awareness under the impetus of economic depression. Also during this decade, the introduction of refrigerated transportation allowed the development of the dairying and frozen meat industries thus providing opportunities for men of modest means to establish themselves as small farmers. Subsequently they became a force in New Zealand society of considerable importance.

In the 1890's these emerging groups in colonial society received political recognition from the Liberals who drew much of their support from them. Liberal social and economic legislation seems to have given legal precision to a peculiarly New Zealand ethos. The Liberals were also fortuitously aided, however, by the return of prosperity to the colony after 1896. But New Zealanders still saw themselves as necessarily members of the British Empire and therefore any sense of New Zealand identity the colonists might develop was likely to be circumscribed by this larger loyalty. Nevertheless, in the limited fields of New Zealand's social accomplishments and economic prosperity, New Zealanders may have found scope to define themselves as superior Anglo-Saxons. In other words New Zealanders considered themselves healthier, wealthier and wiser than other Anglo-Saxons, and after the exploits of the colony's troops in the Boer War, braver too.

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1. See: Christopher B. K. Smithyman, "Attitudes to Immigration in New Zealand 1870 - 1900". M.A. Thesis, Auckland University, 1971, 5-9.

The development of these attitudes may be traced through the public statements of Richard John Seddon. However using Seddon as the central character in this thesis does pose some problems. While there is considerable material in the form of public addresses and parliamentary debates which reveals his public attitudes, this is not so for his private views, and it is therefore difficult to define the element of personal idiosyncrasy in his public opinions. A related problem is the parallel progress of his political career with developments in New Zealand society. In 1891 he became a Cabinet Minister and in 1893, Premier. The fact of his own success may have coloured his attitudes about New Zealand society; he was certainly a leading spokesman on the virtues of the Liberal achievement. These problems are to some extent compounded by the paucity of perceptive secondary sources dealing with Seddon. R.M. Burdon's book, King Dick, provides a generally useful account of his life but its approach is rather dated and sometimes superficial. A thesis by Janice Lockwood on Seddon's early political career is a particularly useful source of information for this earlier period of his life,² but there is a real need for an in-depth study of Seddon's role in the Liberal Government after 1890 and his relations with his fellow Cabinet Ministers.

But Seddon was given a central role in this study for several reasons. In many ways his progress to New Zealand and early life in the colony, which is traced in Chapter One, seem similar to the experiences of many of his fellow colonists. Secondly, his remarkable success in retaining power throughout his political career, probably rested largely on his ability to subsume the ideals and the prejudices of those he claimed to represent. This achievement required not an original mind but one sensitively tuned to the demands of the electoral majority. When appearing

2. Janice H. Lockwood (n. Dickson), "The Early Political Career of Richard John Seddon, 1879-1890. A study of a local politician and his constituency". M.A. Thesis, Canterbury University, 1965.

to lead therefore, he led in the direction the majority wished to go. Thirdly, his political career spanned critical years in the development of New Zealand society, especially during the 1890's when he became Premier, and undeniably the most important member of the Liberal Government. For these reasons the attitudes of this man, who seems to have been so much the embodiment of his age, provide a useful framework through which to study the emergence of a New Zealand sense of identity.

CHAPTER 1

IDENTITY RACIALLY DEFINED

It is the hypothesis of this chapter that the British colonists who settled New Zealand during the later nineteenth century felt an emotional necessity to define and re-emphasise their membership of the British nation.

An individual living within a complex society has many allegiances. The most basic of these are likely to be those relating to his family and friends, and to the various groupings within the local community of which he is a member. Viewed collectively these loyalties form a level of relevance for the individual; in other words the sum total of these loyalties define the individual as a member of the local community. Beyond the local community, however, there are often other institutions and groupings to which an individual may owe allegiance. These may relate to an area with a distinctive regional culture - quite a small area perhaps - or to an area as large as Scotland, Ireland, Wales or England. Such allegiances might form further levels of relevance. The ultimate loyalty for many Europeans in the nineteenth century was the nation state. Sometimes an individual might find specific loyalties in inescapable opposition to one another and such occasions could form crisis points for him. Generally, however, most of an individual's loyalties are probably compatible, either because they are satisfied at the same time or because various loyalties are emphasised selectively and individually, consequently any contradictory elements in them remains latent. Competition between different loyalties within one level of relevance may be reproduced on a larger scale when the different levels of relevance to which an individual adheres are in opposition. Like specific loyalties, it seems fair to assume that different levels of relevance will be emphasised according to their applicability to an individual's

needs at a given moment.¹

If we take an individual with such a gradation of loyalties living in Great Britain during the nineteenth century and move him 13,000 miles to the isolated and small colony of New Zealand it seems likely that the emphasis he gives to particular loyalties, but especially to different levels of relevance will change. The insecurity of the New Zealand colonists, resulting from the isolation and insignificance of their newly established communities, probably encouraged them to place especial emphasis on their Empire loyalty, or their loyalty to the British nation state. The particular relevance of the British army and navy and the British Government were seen as essential adjuncts to colonial survival. Other levels of relevance, however, such as those centred round abandoned village communities and regions may have seemed less relevant. Conceivably these loyalties were modified or discarded according to their current utility. In time, new allegiances peculiar to the colony emerged, but they did so within the framework of the colonists' Empire loyalty. By the 1890's the process of social development seems to have been sufficiently advanced to justify the term colony-wide society. This neutral term is more appropriate than the word "nation" to describe New Zealand society because loyalties attaching to colonial society as a whole were circumscribed by the reality of dependence upon the British nation state. Seddon's statements about New Zealanders suggest that the colonists defined themselves as New Zealanders in terms of those characteristics which they considered unique to themselves and distinguishing them from other Anglo-Saxons. These ideas will be discussed in Chapter Two.

It was suggested earlier that the New Zealand colonists may have placed especial emphasis on their loyalty to the British nation state because of its importance to their survival, but such a loyalty

1. See: Rollo D. Arnold, "The Opening of the Great Bush, 1869-1881. A social history of the Bush Settlements of Taranaki, Hawkes Bay and Wellington". Ph.D. Thesis, Wellington, 1971, 336-372.

seems to have placed the colonists in a quandary. From the modern viewpoint it seems apparent that the dominance of Europeans over other groups with whom they came in contact is to be explained by their superior technology and technological resources. Probably few colonists would have explained European superiority simply in these terms however, but many of the statements made by Seddon suggest that even if they failed to recognise the explanation, they had difficulty in escaping the reality. The reality was that the New Zealand colonists owed their dominance and continued control of New Zealand in the later nineteenth century to the technological and political resources of the British nation state but they had only a limited ability to influence the use of these resources. While they might be reasonably confident that their membership of the British nation would gain them its protection if the colony was attacked directly by another European power, there were other more subtle threats identified by the colonists against which British power provided little protection either because it was too blunt an instrument to deal effectively with the problem or because the Imperial authorities failed to recognise the apparent seriousness of the problems which agitated the colonists. It seems a fair hypothesis therefore, that the colonists, in the face of their helplessness, would emphasise the innate "racial" superiority of Anglo-Saxons over other racial groups. Such an argument, while re-emphasising their solidarity with the British nation also suggested that in spite of the isolation and smallness of their communities, the colonists were bound to prevail.

The first section of this chapter therefore, will briefly discuss Seddon's background in so far as it is significant to his racial attitudes. Some attempt will be made to analyse his personal attitudes although the shortage of material on this subject inevitably makes any conclusions tentative. It will be argued, however, that Seddon as a politician was constantly concerned with articulating the attitudes of the voting majority and consequently he provides a useful insight into some group attitudes of the time. His opposition to other racial groups

such as the Chinese, for instance, suggests that some colonists were defining themselves as Anglo-Saxons by a process of negative definition; they identified the out-group by a collection of traits which by implication the colonists did not share.

The second section of this chapter attempts to demonstrate the development of a New Zealand society by reference to the changing emphasis Seddon gave to his arguments against aliens. This process of growth slowly interposed between the colonists' loyalty to his local New Zealand community and his Empire allegiance, several levels of relevance somewhat similar to those which he previously held in his homeland. Such a development is demonstrated, for example, by the growth and increasing self-awareness of the city working classes which found expression in the accompanying growth of trade unions on a colony-wide scale. Another similar, if less precise development of this kind is revealed in the establishment of the dairy and meat industries on a large scale after the introduction of refrigerated transportation in the early 1880's. The small farmer interest group which emerged was to have considerable influence in New Zealand society. Both these groups had discernible attitudes to the Chinese and other aliens of a peculiarly sectional kind.

The final section considers Seddon's racial attitudes in the 1890's and notes how the racial issue had by now attained a supra-sectional relevance which suggests that a colony-wide society had finally emerged. In other words, racial attitudes had attained a multi-layered significance. Firstly they seemed significant in the definition (even if negatively) of individual colonists as Anglo-Saxons. This argument retained its significance, but racial attitudes also began to assume a peculiarly sectional bias as different interest groups developed and defined their opposition to aliens. In the 1890's a third element in racial attitudes is discernible. The "race" purity argument which Seddon so strongly emphasised at this time revealed the emergence of a colony-wide level of relevance. Now aliens were also viewed as a threat to the colonists as New Zealanders.

I.

Seddon's progress from England to New Zealand seems fairly similar to that of many other colonists. He was born the son of schoolteacher parents in the village of Ecclestone, Lancashire, and his formal education ended at the age of twelve after he showed little "interest or aptitude except at mechanical drawing".² After working on his grandfather's farm for two years he took up an apprenticeship with a local firm of engineers and ironfounders. An early attempt at industrial action in the interests of higher wages resulted in his dismissal, so he journeyed to Liverpool in search of employment. While there he was stricken with smallpox and upon his recovery he was refused re-employment.³

In 1863, at the age of eighteen, Seddon responded to the lure of colonial gold, or at least the prospect of better conditions of employment for a tradesman. He worked his way to Australia where he was employed briefly in the Government Railway Workshops at Williamstown (near Melbourne) before going to the Bendigo goldfields as a prospector. It has been suggested by Burdon and Lockwood⁴ that Seddon's hostility to the Chinese resulted from his experience on the Victorian goldfields, but as practically nothing seems known of his experiences there, except that he was an unsuccessful goldminer,⁵ it is possible only to speculate about their nature.

Seddon arrived on the Victorian goldfields in the early 1860's. Serle suggests that the influx of Chinese onto the Victorian goldfields had reached crisis proportions by 1857 when the number of Chinese in Victoria doubled to 35,000. In that year there were riots at

2. R.M. Burdon, King Dick. A biography of Richard John Seddon, Wellington, 1955, 2.

3. Burdon, 40.

4. Burdon, 78; Lockwood, 158.

5. Burdon, 5.

Daylesford and on the Buckland field, and in 1861 the Chinese at Lambing Flat experienced one of the most extreme instances of persecution perpetrated against them in Australia. Serle argues that the main opposition to the Chinese was on the grounds of economic competition although this came to involve the larger question of whether the colony was established for the benefit of Europeans or Asiatics. An argument oft repeated later on the New Zealand goldfields was that the Chinese were "mere purveyors of our golden wealth to Chinese shores". The Chinese miners were accused of misusing water, of being ignorant of the law regarding goldfield usages and of re-working tailings left by Europeans who might subsequently have returned to them. Although they were condemned for this parasitic practice and their disinclination to prospect for new fields, when a group of Chinese hit on a rich gold strike called the Canton lead in 1857, they were driven from their claims by a group of Europeans.⁶

Hostility to the Chinese resulting from the widely held opinion that the Chinese camps were "stinking and squalid" and a likely source of epidemics⁷ was reinforced by their cultural and social distinctiveness. Perhaps most serious was the a priori assumption of sexual deviance based largely on observation of the extreme sex imbalance in the Chinese camps. Charges that they seduced "girls of tender years" and practised "peculiar and unmentionable immoralities too revolting to repeat",⁸ that is, sodomy, were often made.

As these attitudes to the Chinese were apparently widespread on the Victorian goldfields at the time Seddon was there, we may suppose that he accepted many of these popular notions, as he seems to have done in later life.

6. Geoffrey Serle, The Golden Age. A History of the Colony of Victoria, 1851-1861, Melbourne, 1963, 320-335 passim. The quotation is from Geelong Advertiser, 8 July 1857.

7. Serle, 327.

8. Cited by Serle, 328.

After his brief sojourn on the goldfields Seddon returned to his job at Williamstown and he was still working there when news arrived of gold discoveries on the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand. As his prospects for advancement in his present job seemed limited, in 1866 he decided to take advantage of the new opportunities that offered.⁹ Once again, however, Seddon proved an unsuccessful goldminer, but he established himself over the following decade as a storekeeper and a publican (although he went bankrupt in 1878)¹⁰ and developed quite a reputation as an advocate in the Warden's Court on the goldfields.

Seddon's progress to New Zealand certainly seems typical of the experiences of other goldminers who arrived in New Zealand, in so far as he had first tried his luck in Australia and subsequently migrated to New Zealand in search of new opportunities. The information Burdon supplies suggests that Seddon's motivation to leave Britain was at least as strong as the attraction of the Antipodes. But it must have been apparent in Australia, as it was in New Zealand, that the colonies were necessarily a part of the British Empire if Britons were to control it. Therefore it is not as contradictory as it may superficially appear that an individual who rejected some aspects of British society at the same time should manifest a loyalty to the British nation state, which may have been stronger than it was previously.

Neither is it surprising that Seddon's early opposition to the Chinese on the West Coast goldfields reveals similar attitudes to those noted in Victoria. Such an occurrence does not imply that the racial attitudes expressed in New Zealand at this time were Australian imports with little relevance to the local social experience. It suggests rather that the sense of insecurity, born of isolation and the smallness of the local British population was common both to New Zealand and the Australian colonies alike.

9. Burdon, 8.

10. Burdon, 40.

During his 1879 campaign for election to the House of Representatives Seddon opposed Chinese immigration to the local goldfields and on one occasion he pointed to the undesirability of the Chinese as colonists because of the experiences of California, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. He went on to urge that New Zealand must also introduce restrictive legislation if she was to avoid the deluge of "Asiatic Tartars".¹¹

In 1880, after his election to the House of Representatives, Seddon listed his grievances against the Chinese present on the West Coast. These grievances were very similar to those already noted on the Victorian goldfields. He noted for instance, a case of leprosy on the Kumara goldfield and suggested that this isolated occurrence was reason enough to exclude a "race that brought such diseases ... to taint the race that is growing up in New Zealand". On the goldfields the Chinese did not go out prospecting anew but "came like a flock of locusts after the white man had born the brunt of prospecting". They merely gathered together some gold and left. Nor did the Chinese pay taxes for they lived upon rice and fish which were non-dutiable. If the Europeans wished to return after the initial rush to re-work the field, they would find that the Chinese had left them nothing. Later in the same speech he referred to the injury the Chinese were doing to Victoria. In Melbourne itself the Chinese were actually becoming a curse, and the police were unable to deal with the resultant evil. As New South Wales and Queensland had passed restrictive legislation, Seddon was confident that the Chinese would first go to the

islands in the Southern seas ... and afterwards [they] would come to New Zealand and the people of the colony would find themselves suffering a very great evil by having these hordes landing on their shores. Prevention was better than cure The Chinese had done an immense deal of harm. They had injured the district he represented, and they did injury to any gold field they went to.¹²

11. West Coast Times, 3 December 1879, cited by Lockwood, 156.

12. PD 36, 1880, 97-98 (Seddon).

Frequent references of this kind to the Australian experience of the Chinese and also to that of California, (and later Hawaii) suggest an attitude of Anglo-Saxon "racial" solidarity in opposition to another, and apparently threatening "race". As New Zealand was younger than the Australian colonies and California it is understandable that the New Zealand colonists should draw upon the social experiences of these societies where they seemed relevant to their own situation. For many other social attitudes Britain was of particular importance. The implication in drawing upon the experience of the mother country and the new societies in the Pacific seems to be that the New Zealand colonists while revealing their sense of solidarity with their Anglo-Saxon fellows when threatened by an alien group, were prepared to learn from the mistakes already made by these societies and consequently they would ultimately develop a superior society.

The ideas which the colonists imported were applied to the reality which they perceived around them. Seddon's discussion in 1880 of the Chinese at Stafford, for instance, is couched in unoriginal language but nevertheless the arguments were relevant to West Coast society at that time. The population of Stafford had been reduced by half he claimed for the Chinese now had water-races there, and had "located themselves in such numbers that they had driven away the white population". The district now contributed less revenue because the Chinese often did not take out miners' rights and went away carrying gold without paying the duty. Not only had the Chinese driven the European population away from Stafford, "but they had their own stores - they did not intermix in any shape or form with Europeans". Seddon did admit, however, that the Chinese at Stafford "were working there for certainly a little less than the European population would have remained and worked for".¹³ Seddon expressing such widely held views justifies the contention that most of the attitudes he held as a politician were in the first instance popular, although they may also have

13. PD 36, 1880, 98.

commanded his personal conviction. It is useful to test further Seddon's reliability as a witness on the social attitudes of his contemporaries by attempting to establish what his personal attitudes towards aliens were.

Firstly his economic interests. Seddon for most of his career on the West Coast was not actually a miner, but he was largely dependent on goldminers, including the Chinese, for his livelihood. Provided Chinese miners were not actually driving away his European clients, his own business interests were unlikely to suffer. However Chinese exclusiveness of the sort that Seddon described at Stafford, which included establishing their own stores, might well have threatened his business interests. Seddon's other business dealings with Chinese were in his capacity as an advocate in the Warden's Court on the goldfields. He had done "nearly the whole of the Chinese business in the Courts [he stated in 1898]; it was very seldom they had any trouble or litigation but that I was the agent".¹⁴ Therefore in strictly business terms provided the Chinese were not present in numbers sufficient to repel Europeans, and they continued to have economic relations with Europeans, their presence would probably have been in his own interests.

Seddon's attitudes towards social relationships with the Chinese seem rather ambiguous. In 1880 Seddon claimed that he would sooner see his daughter dead than married to a Chinese. He thought that "there was not a parent who knew anything of the Chinese people who would permit any one connected with him to mix with them".¹⁵ Yet T.E.Y. Seddon, R.J. Seddon's son, describes the Chinese at Kumara in his autobiography as an

... hospitable lot. They gave us luscious ginger from greenjars, peanuts and crackers. It was most entertaining to watch their cooking operations, the smell of their cooking-oil perfuming the huts.¹⁶

14. AJHR, 1898, I-9, 80-81.

15. PD 36, 1880, 97 (Seddon).

16. T.E.Y. Seddon, The Seddons. An Autobiography, Auckland, 1968, 33.

In view of R. J. Seddon's statement, we must conclude that either he was a very neglectful parent, or he did not see the local Chinese as a "moral threat" to his own children. This evidence seems to suggest that if Seddon was conscientious in his bigotry, the difference in attitude evident between his rabid condemnation of the Chinese in public and his personal relations with the Chinese at Kumara, is to be explained by an unconscientious distinction he was making between the local Chinese and the Chinese generally. Presumably he did not assume that the local Chinese were his equals, but he did not see in them the symbolic threat which he associated with the Chinese "race" as a whole.¹⁷ Such an attitude would appear to be typical of Seddon's highly pragmatic mode of thought in which theoretical inconsistencies were of little importance. An alternative explanation may be that he was cynically exploiting the fears of his constituents for political gain. There seems no way of deciding definitively between the two explanations, given the available information, but it seems fair to conclude that his public pronouncements on the subject had considerable electoral support. Assuming this to be so there is still the problem of trying to explain the group attitudes which Seddon articulated.

Seddon was very outspoken in his support of the Chinese Immigration Prohibition Bill in 1880 during the House debate. In part his speech was a reply to some claims made by a previous speaker, Dr Wallis, member for Auckland West. A brief analysis of Wallis' statement helps explain Seddon's violent reaction. Wallis claimed to be "one of the antiquated people who still ... believe [d] that all men were children of two first parents". He went on to remind the House that

... the Chinese were not a savage barbarous people.
They were a people, in their own way, as civilised

17. Seddon's use of the term "race" is confused. While in scientific terms the Anglo-Saxon's, for instance, do not qualify as a separate "race" at all, Seddon and his contemporaries sometimes used it in place of "nationality", but more generally applied it loosely to what are better called "ethnic groups".

as Europeans. They were people who were civilised for thousands of years when the Caledonians, Anglicans, and Hibernians were Cannibals.

He also contended that the

anti-Chinese agitation was an American product. Certain blind and ignorant Protectionists in California, and certain loafers there, found that they could not compete with the industrious, temperate, and frugal Chinese, and they got up an agitation to expel the Chinese out of the country, so that those who were loafers and idle might be able to earn a living.

Furthermore, just as the American Continent had been opened up to take the surplus European population, Australasia might fulfil a similar role for the Asians who after all lived in the geographic neighbourhood. In support of this argument Wallis noted that ethnologically the Maoris were a "branch of the Chinese race".

They were descended from the Chinese, and connected with them far more nearly than with Europeans; and were they to exclude entirely from this country the very race to whom it originally belonged? ... He did not deny that respectable English people were above the average of Chinese people; but there were a vast number of bad people in the British Empire as well as among the Chinese race.¹⁸

In brief, Wallis denied the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon civilisation to that of the Chinese. Secondly, his claim that the anti-Chinese agitation was the invention of "certain loafers" overseas and that it had subsequently been imported into New Zealand, implied that its New Zealand supporters were also loafers who could not compete with the temperance, frugality and industriousness of the Chinese. Thirdly, Wallis called in question the right of the Anglo-Saxons to this country by suggesting that the Chinese might be justified in using Australasia as an outlet for their surplus population. This argument was reinforced by his claim that the Maoris were ethnologically related to the Chinese, and therefore by implication, the beneficiaries of a civilisation equal to that of the Anglo-Saxons. This seemed to deny Anglo-Saxons their

18. PD 36, 1880, 93-94 (Wallis).

altruistic role as "civilisers" and presumably left them with little other right to New Zealand than that of conquest.

Seddon was in total disagreement with Wallis' argument. He had been to a lecture on China, he stated, and some of the scenes described were

simply horrible: yet they were in accordance with the social laws of the Chinese Chinese civilisation was very crude Europeans were so far a superior race to the Chinese though belonging to the same species, yet of a superior class. There was about the same distinction between a European and a Chinaman as that between a Chinaman and a monkey. In his (Mr Seddon's) opinion, the same arguments could not be used in favour of Chinamen as could fairly be adduced on behalf of Europeans.

He claimed that if Wallis had a daughter who wished to marry a Chinese, he would soon recognise the difference between the two races. For his own part he would

... as soon see his offspring in her grave as see her united to a Chinaman. If the Chinaman was his equal, why should his feelings revolt against such an alliance? Simply because he thought the Chinaman inferior in every way, shape, and form; and he hoped that such an inferiority would never be tolerated here There was not a parent who knew anything of the Chinese people who would permit any one connected with him to mix with them.¹⁹

Dr Wallis' assertions about the Chinese and his explanation of the opposition towards them, gain in significance if compared with Smithyman's claim that as a result of contact with other racial groups the British colonists sought to explain the observable superiority of their technology, and tended to argue this deterministically on the basis of racial superiority.²⁰ By denying the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon civilisation to that of the Chinese, Wallis at once denied the Anglo-Saxons their destiny as civilisers of the world and this was especially so when coupled with the suggestion that China might be justified in seeing

19. PD 36, 1880, 97-98 (Seddon).

20. Smithyman, 10.

Australasia as an outlet for her surplus population. Then, to argue that the agitation was begun by those unable to compete with the temperance, frugality and industriousness of the Chinese, implied in a very personal way that any individual who was opposed to continued Chinese immigration to New Zealand was also unable to compete with the Chinese and was therefore an inferior Anglo-Saxon. The corollary of the argument was presumably that anyone who was an upstanding and industrious Anglo-Saxon would be able to compete with the Chinese. However such an argument neglected the fact that the colonists had come to New Zealand with the desire of bettering themselves socially and economically and this presumably applied equally to the wage labourer as it did to the petty capitalist. It must have been apparent to the New Zealand working classes at least, that in a situation of unregulated competition the Chinese (or any other group) who would take lower wages, either because they accepted a lower standard of living than the Europeans, or because they were single and had no wife and family to support, might re-impose the conditions of social and economic degradation by which the worst industrial areas of the Old World were characterised. Yet as Lockwood has noted,²¹ Seddon in 1880 was not a spokesman for the city working classes, but neither do the Chinese appear to have been competing directly with the goldminers whom Seddon represented. That this was so is indicated in Seddon's criticisms of the Chinese. Events at Stafford suggest that their presence was associated with the decline of the goldfield - they were after all working for a little less than the Europeans would have stayed for. Economic competition alone does not seem to have been sufficiently great to justify Seddon's hostility to the Chinese. The explanation of such hostility must lie elsewhere therefore.

One of the most notable features of West Coast society was the sex imbalance of the population. A predominance of males was a general feature of New Zealand society,²² but this was

21. Lockwood, 156.

22. In 1891 and 1896 there were about 80 females to every 100 males.

particularly so in the goldfield districts. In the West Coast county of Inanghaua, for instance, there were about forty females to every hundred males in 1878 and even in 1891 the number had risen to only about sixty females per hundred males.²³ Another feature of New Zealand society at the time seems to have been the somewhat muted social and sexual role played by females. This image is suggested in a description Seddon gave to a Maori audience in 1895 of what he believed to be the ideal qualities in a woman.

Mothers seek a great position for their daughters - go to great expense teaching them the piano and other accomplishments; but they do not teach them what all women should know - the position and the duties of a wife and mother, and to do what would be required of them in after-life [sic]. Now, there are any amount of girls who can sing and play the piano, do a little drawing, and dance to perfection; but if you asked them to cook some food, asked them to make their own underclothing, to knit you a pair of stockings, to mend your clothes, or even their own clothes, you would find they would not be able to do it.²⁴

In the absence of a stronger feminine social and sexual image it is possible that the stereotypical image of the "Chinaman" played an important part in the definition of the ideal Anglo-Saxon male. The importance of stereotypes lies in the fact that the characteristics ascribed to all members of the out-group are usually only characteristic of a few, so that the selection of the characteristics which make up the stereotypical image often indicate those attributes exhibited by some members of the out-group, but by which the in-group wishes to define all members of the out-group. By implication these unfavourable attributes are not shared by the in-group.

The possibility does not seem to have occurred to Seddon, as it obviously had to Dr Wallis, that a culture other than the one into which he was born, might offer an equally valid path of human

23. Calculated from Census of New Zealand, 1878, 1891.

24. AJHR, 1895, I-9, 40.

Free Lance, 7 January 1905, SP 3/64.

Although this cartoon comes from a later period it illustrates clearly enough the stereotypical image.



STILL THEY COME.

redemption. Members of other ethnic groups with whom he came in contact, therefore, would be judged in accordance with Anglo-Saxon social criteria. It is possible to imagine individuals within a society being judged against a hypothetical ideal of masculinity or femininity and being placed along an axis connecting these two poles, in accordance with how nearly they approached the ideal. We may assume that aliens would be judged in this same way except, as seems to have been so with the Chinese, it was the stereotypical "Chinaman", not individual Chinese, who was given a position on the axis. As has already been noted, males were numerically dominant on the goldfields and males played a dominant role in society. It is possible, therefore, that in the absence of a stronger counter-balancing feminine ideal image, the stereotypical "Chinaman" was used as an opposite against which the ideal Anglo-Saxon male was defined. This is probably to over-conceptualise groups of attributes, however, which in reality were not so neatly defined. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this argument it is a useful way to describe the process. It seems possible that the "Chinaman" would have been located towards the feminine end of the axis. The group of characteristics which would encourage such a positioning seem rather mixed. The distinctive clothing of the Chinese, their queues and racial traits, such as a light build could all be used to this end. An Australian had already asserted that they did not even fight like men "but used the open hand and scratched".²⁵ The fact that they often worked in gangs, coupled with their frugality, industriousness and temperance, could be made to suggest an image of spineless, timid, subservience. Other racial characteristics such as yellow skins and slanted eyes, coupled with a supposed propensity for long fingernails and the use of opium, added a sinister touch to the image which was apparently amply justified by their sexual habits.

With this image might be contrasted the Anglo-Saxon male ideal which seems to have emphasised such characteristics as a burly build and fair skin, an upstanding and individualistic approach to

25. Cited in Serle, 328.

life, coupled with a sense of fair-play and British justice. In individual terms, therefore, within the local community the fact of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority might be established in a manner easily comprehensible to people concerned more with observable realities than theoretical arguments. The positioning of the "Chinaman" towards the feminine end of the axis, coupled with the allegations of homosexual activity in the Chinese camps may have "justified" the a priori assumption of the interrelationship between homosexuality and the "Chinaman's" appearance.

In a recent article on Australian racism Encel has noted the "special relevance" of the "sexual element in race prejudice" to Australia where the tradition of "mateship" is being critically examined. One suggestion is that it "reflects strong tendencies towards homosexuality, which are repressed and redirected because of strong social hostility towards it". "Mateship", Encel notes, "involves the exclusion of women from the circle of mates, and in the pastoral occupations where the tradition is strongest it also applies to Aborigines".²⁶ It seems possible that the argument might also be applicable to some sections of New Zealand's society in the later nineteenth century.

The sexual imbalance of the European population suggests that some Anglo-Saxon males may have found themselves in a situation where the prolonged absence of feminine companionship could have encouraged homosexual tendencies of a "second-best" variety. Homosexual tendencies resulting from a situation of sexual deprivation as opposed to homosexual inclinations caused by sexual "mal-printing" presumably, in fact, need not be associated with outward demeanour, but it seems possible that this distinction was not made by Seddon's contemporaries so that homosexual tendencies, regardless of their cause, were all assumed to be signs of effeminacy. Thus the "Chinaman" was effeminate in appearance;

26. S. Encel, "The Nature of Race Prejudice in Australia", in F.S. Stevens (ed.), Racism: The Australian Experience A Study of Race Prejudice in Australia, Sydney, 1971, Vol.1, 33.

therefore he was homosexual in inclination, regardless of the fact that if homosexual acts occurred among Chinese in the camps the motivation was presumably the "second-best" mechanism that may generally have applied to Europeans. The ideal Anglo-Saxon, however, was masculine in appearance and by definition was not homosexual. This Anglo-Saxon masculine ideal might have provided a definition to which the individual could conform thus providing himself with a sense of identity which emphasised his personal superiority over alien individuals with whom he came in contact in the local community, but also by implication, demonstrated the general superiority of the Anglo-Saxon "race" and gave some reassurance that the colonists would prevail in spite of the isolation and smallness of their society. If conformity to the common ideal was sufficiently widespread, this in itself might have provided some sense of security and belonging.

Besides the allegations of homosexual behaviour with which the Chinese were charged, they were also accused of having a lecherous craving for European women, but especially for "girls of tender years". The charge that the "Chinaman" was both homosexual and lecherous is not as contradictory as it might initially seem. The latter allegation may be partially explained as another by-product of the sex imbalance in the European population which encouraged a prurient delight in sexual fantasies, in which the Chinese were invested with peculiar and insidious charms (including opium) which some European women were unable to resist and with which Anglo-Saxon males were unable to compete. The prime significance of the accusation may lie, however, in its symbolic presentation of the Chinese "threat" to Anglo-Saxon racial purity. Seddon's repugnance at the prospect of mixed-marriages which has already been mentioned symbolised the "threat" in terms of personal relationships. Although the presence of this argument in 1880, supports the hypothesis that racial attitudes in New Zealand were first defined at the level of individual experience, this argument was to become more pronounced in the late 1880's, but especially during the 1890's in Seddon's statements, when the theme of racial purity was coupled with the

colonists' colonial and imperial destiny which was pictured largely in terms of racial superiority.

The presentation of the Chinese "threat" in personal terms, where the individual threatened is a close relation, usually a daughter, sister or wife, is characteristic of the charges of immorality made against the Chinese. In the 1880 debate, the earlier part of Seddon's reply which concerned Wallis' assertion that the Chinese "were a people, in their own way, as civilised as Europeans", hardly goes beyond a flat, but unsubstantiated contradiction of what had been said. Seddon soon reverted to the arguments against the Chinese based on the level of personal experience. It seems a fair assumption that for the majority of colonists, whose level of education was not very high, such a consideration was more easily comprehended than any theoretical argument concerning the relative merits of the Anglo-Saxon and Chinese civilisations. In fact such a consideration became irrelevant if Anglo-Saxon superiority was demonstrable at the level of individual contact even if it was only the stereotypical "Chinaman" to whom the colonist felt superior.

The initial assertion of the superiority of individual Anglo-Saxons to the "Chinaman" on the West Coast, may have been a self-perpetuating image which came to be accepted as a truism underlying subsequent arguments against the Chinese, even when these were expressions of group opinion rather than individual attempts at definition. Although on the West Coast a large number of Seddon's constituents were goldminers, the individualism of the miners suggests that their response to the Chinese would probably have been in individual, rather than group terms, except when they were sufficiently aroused to act as a coherent interest group for brief periods. Seddon's attitude towards the Chinese in 1880 reveals two things. Firstly, a goldfields ethos which was born of the process of definition whereby individual Anglo-Saxons asserted their superiority over the "Chinaman". Secondly, Seddon was representing a prominent local interest group upon those occasions when mining opinion was given precision by a specific issue. Lockwood could find no evidence in the local press that opposition to the Chinese

was such an issue in 1879. Fyfe, however, presents an example from Otago when opposition to the Chinese resulted in the 1871 petition from the Otago miners to Parliament opposing Chinese entry to the goldfields.²⁷ In general terms Seddon was the representative of the local community as a whole and this consideration was the determining factor of his political attitudes, as it was for most M.H.R.'s until the late 1880's.

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II.

By the late 1880's a broadening of Seddon's political concern beyond the local West Coast community is evident in his attitudes towards the Chinese. The intervening years were grey with the economic depression that plagued the colony into the mid-1890's. The realisation of their common plight, which was facilitated by improvements in communications within the colony during the last decade, seems to have encouraged the new solidarity among the city working classes which found one avenue of expression in group opposition to the Chinese. The relevance of the Chinese "threat" to the working classes was enhanced by the city-wards migration of the Chinese from the goldfields which was taking place across the

27. Frances Fyfe, "Chinese Immigration to New Zealand in the Nineteenth Century", M.A. Thesis, University of New Zealand (Wellington), 1948, 23.

1880's.²⁸ That opposition to the Chinese had become important beyond the goldfield districts by the late 1880's is revealed in the complaint by the member for Rangitikei, R.C. Bruce, that members of the House were obliged either to state their opposition to the Chinese, or be prepared for the issue to be used against them by unscrupulous opponents.²⁹

After the passage of the Chinese Immigration Act 1881 the Chinese received little mention in the House until 1887. Seddon then raised the issue of the number of Chinese in the colony and in Wellington, in particular. He demanded stricter supervision of Chinese sailors to ensure that Chinese were not entering the colony in excess of the numbers permitted in the 1881 Act and that those who were entering, had paid the £10 poll tax which was required of them.³⁰ The rumour that "a large number of young girls [were] in the habit of frequenting, for immoral purposes, the Chinese quarters in Wellington and other large cities in the colony", was also causing him particular concern as was the "sanitary condition of the Chinese quarters".³¹ Later in the same session he made further demands concerning the number of Chinese who had recently arrived in the colony and

28. Movement of Chinese to New Zealand Boroughs 1878, 1881, 1891, 1896:

		Chinese	
		Male	Female
1878	Boroughs	550	8
	Counties (excluding boroughs)	3824	-
1881	Boroughs	799	9
	Counties (excluding boroughs)	4140	-
1886	Boroughs	1519	18
	Counties (excluding boroughs)	2854	-
1891	Boroughs	1187	21
	Counties	2494	5
1896	Boroughs	1167	24
	Counties (excluding boroughs)	2481	10

From Census of New Zealand 1878, 1881, 1886, 1891, 1896.

29. PD 60, 1888, 33 (Bruce).

30. Not more than one Chinese to every 10 tons was allowed.

31. PD 59, 1887, 789 (Seddon).

requested statistics regarding the operation of the 1881 Act.³² He also wished to know the number of half-caste children of Chinese and European parentage recorded in the last census.³³

In 1888, discussion in the House gained added impetus from Australian events, particularly the arrival of the Afghan in April and the refusal of the Australian colonies to allow any of the 225 Chinese on board to disembark.³⁴ Its New Zealand passengers transhipped to the Te Anau but received a hostile reception at Bluff and Dunedin.³⁵ The debate of this session showed that a number of members had an acute awareness of what was being said about the Chinese in the press both in Australia and California. Perhaps the choicest morsel was produced by Alfred Cadman, subsequently a Liberal Cabinet Minister. He wished to lay upon the table a variously coloured map of San Francisco's Chinatown - "the various colours on the map indicat[ing] six different phases of Mongolian life": namely areas of general Chinese occupancy; Chinese gambling-dens; areas of Chinese prostitution; opium resorts; joss-houses, and sixthly, areas of white prostitution.³⁶

Seddon showed himself to be aware of Australian events by quoting from a Victorian newspaper to support his contention that the Chinese were not "unoffending strangers". In his opinion "they might be unoffending in small numbers but they were not unoffending in regard to a particular crime - I allude to youthful depravity and Prostitution". Published in the Victorian newspaper was the report of an inspector which revealed that in "one den there were from ten to fifteen mere children, girls aged from ten to fourteen". A Colonel Barker who managed a "certain Home" in Victoria reported

32. PD 59, 1887, 361.

33. PD, 62, 1888, 192 (Seddon).

34. PD 60, 1888, 147 (Hutchison).

35. Fyfe, 37, 38.

36. PD 60, 1888, 34 (Cadman).

that 1015 children in this age group had come to the Home in eighteen months and that three quarters of the ruin that had been caused was attributed to the Chinese.³⁷

He had opened his speech by denying the accuracy of any statistics which attempted to show that the number of Chinese in the colony was decreasing for he claimed they had increased by "very large numbers" on the West Coast of the South Island during the last three or four years and that this was also true of every town in New Zealand. To prove this latter contention he said "Go through Wellington, and you cannot go a hundred yards without seeing Shoo Foo, Lee Chow, Ah Fung, or some long Chinese name or other. Go through the streets of Wellington and you will encounter them in all directions. Why, they even patronised the foot-ball match".³⁸ Later in his address Seddon referred to the visit of the Chinese Government Commissioners to the colonies. They had come, he claimed, to ascertain the suitability of the colonies for Chinese immigration.³⁹ Their "report clearly and distinctly points out that the colonies are most desirable places for the Chinese, and points out that the condition of the Chinese in the colonies would be very much superior to that in their own country".

It seems probable that Seddon's concern over the Chinese issue in 1888, now that it had become important beyond the goldfields, reflects once again that blend of political pragmatism and personal prejudice which was evident in his attitudes at the beginning of the decade. His arguments are basically the same, but some of the examples of Chinese infamy have changed to suit the new circumstances.

37. PD 60, 1888, 35 (Seddon).

38. *ibid.*, 35.

39. Although Fyfe can find no evidence that the Chinese Commissioners visited New Zealand, their visit to the other colonies in 1887 signifies, she suggests, an awakening of the Chinese authorities to the position of their nation in world affairs and an acknowledgement that Chinese in foreign states were still subjects of the Empire and, therefore, their welfare was its concern. Fyfe, 75.

The theme of Chinese immorality involving "girls of tender years" is more explicit than previously. Criticisms of Chinese standards of hygiene seem to have resulted mainly from their entry into the business of fruit and vegetable production and retailing. Such arguments emphasised present and future dangers to New Zealand society, but the specific dangers that the Chinese were seen to represent to a sectional interest group such as the city working classes were given special mention. Seddon noted, for instance, that hundreds of men were leaving New Zealand and then asserted he could prove "that in a great many instances the labour which a number of these men would perform is being performed by Chinese".⁴⁰

As in 1880, the arguments are again presented at the level of personal experience. The "Chinaman" might sell your wife unhygienic fruit or seduce your young daughter, and behind the fear of cheap labour competition lurked the spectre of the outcast families of the unemployed, degraded by poverty and hollow-eyed with starvation. Was there a "capitalist" so insensitive to human misery that he would employ the "Chinaman" in place of his own countrymen? Seddon made frequent play on the fact that there were such men and in one simple stroke, the social degradation associated with the Old World and the "capitalist", was linked with the uncivilised barbarity of the "inferior races".

Seddon stands condemned by his own inconsistency regarding his attitudes towards the assimilation of the Chinese already in New Zealand into the local society. As has been noted, in 1880 he condemned the Chinese at Stafford for their exclusiveness and failure to "intermix", but he deplored the possibility that they should marry European women and in 1888 he was critical because some Chinese had attended a football match. He also used the fact that Chinese were moving into the towns and new sorts of employment against them. Such chronic inconsistency surely makes a mockery of his much flaunted concern for British justice and the Englishman's sense of fair-play.

40. PD 60, 1888, 35 (Seddon).

During the 1880's the small farmer interest groups began to become recognisable elements of New Zealand society as a result of the introduction of refrigerated transportation earlier in the decade which made the large British market available for dairy and meat products. Although it is difficult to discern any coherent group sentiment towards aliens as is revealed among the city working classes, if a report from the Masterton correspondent of the New Zealand Farmer in 1887 is any indication, prejudice towards the Chinese was widespread throughout New Zealand society. This report also reveals a hostility to Chinese attempts at farming using European methods which matches Seddon's criticisms of other Chinese for participating more widely in European society. The correspondent noted that the Chinese were rapidly monopolising some kinds of employment. The towns of the Wairarapa had long been supplied with vegetables grown by the "yellow-skins", and now the Chinese had begun growing fruit. He found it surprising that

some people seem just as willing to buy apples polished with a piece of John Chinaman's dirty underclothing as to patronise their own countrymen, who endeavour to keep themselves decent and respectable.

The correspondent said he would await with interest to see if the Chinese were as successful at fruit-growing as they were at kitchen gardening. He thought it likely, however, that they would have more difficulty in keeping the various pests in check than they anticipated. But he expected that they would "not be slow to adopt European remedies, especially if they have none of their own".⁴¹

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41. New Zealand Farmer, October 1887, 309.

III.

In 1890 the Liberal Party came to power in New Zealand and R.J. Seddon became a Cabinet Minister for the first time. The Liberals claimed to be a party of the small people and it seems that they rode to power on the support of the colony-wide sectional interests which were emerging in New Zealand society; in particular labour and the small farmers.

Seddon's interest in the Chinese issue in 1888, when it had become important beyond the goldfields, suggests a change of emphasis which recognised the new socio-economic groupings. Previously he had been a stout upholder of the parochial interest of his constituency and we may assume that this association was continued, but now new levels of relevance were interposed between the local community and the central government. Growing outwards around the individual in the local community, an increasingly complex net of institutions and interest groups might claim his loyalties.

This thesis has been concerned with indicating two broad levels at which loyalties seem to have developed in New Zealand. The first was that of the local community and region, at the centre of which lay the level of individual relevance. It has been argued that the Chinese on the West Coast were important, first of all in the basic process by which individuals defined their own identity and their identity as Anglo-Saxons. Subsequently, opposition to the Chinese attained a wider importance as a reaction from emergent supra-regional, sectional interest groups to an apparent threat to their specific interests, and in the 1890's the issue attained a colony-wide significance.

Seddon's stance in opposition to the Chinese, and by the 1890's other Asiatics as well, was a combination of a studious regard for the aroused prejudices of the working classes and an attempt to use the issue against his political opponents. The theme of racial purity had become predominant in the arguments for excluding Chinese and as will be shown, this was a recognition not only of

the threats the Chinese had been seen to pose in the past, but also of the emergence of a new supra-sectional, colony-wide awareness. It will be argued that this new colony-wide level of significance, especially in the latter half of the 1890's was a reflection of the realisation by New Zealanders of their own superiority and that of their society, not just to Chinese, but to other Anglo-Saxons as well. Two levels of definition seem discernible; the first defined the colonists as Anglo-Saxons who through innate superiority were superior to the "inferior races" such as the Chinese and other Asiatics; the second definition defined New Zealanders as Anglo-Saxons, superior both to the British and to the populations of the older colonies because New Zealand had the opportunity of learning from the social experiences of these other societies and it was thought, had thus avoided the mistakes they had made. This argument is best described as "environmental" for as New Zealand was integrally dependent on Britain and the Empire militarily, economically and politically the only fields in which New Zealanders could really claim special distinction were in those of social legislation, and after 1896, in the colony's prosperity. This latter argument will be dealt with later; the rest of this chapter will consider the "race" purity argument as it related to colony-wide awareness.

The Liberals showed a desire to insulate New Zealand society from all manner of foreign contamination which seemed likely to degrade it. An attempt was made in W.P. Reeves' Undesirable Immigrants Bill to exclude the degraded elements of the Old World as well as the "inferior races" of Asia with their centuries-old barbarity. Seddon was more politically astute in his definition of "undesirables" and after Reeves' departure in 1895, he introduced the Asiatic Restriction Bill which, as its title suggests, concerned itself with the narrower field of Asian immigration. In this way Seddon avoided the gross inconsistency which Reeves' attempts to exclude Anglo-Saxon "paupers" implied. Their absence from the colony was the chief difference which distinguished poor Anglo-Saxons who wished to emigrate to New Zealand from many already

within the colony. In spite of this however, Seddon was prepared to argue in favour of refusing entry to the "off-scourings" of London, which was the same argument that Reeves put forward, but stripped of the precision given it in the Undesirable Immigrants Exclusion Bill 1894. In 1896 Seddon contended that the "Pilgrims" who settled Canterbury would also have refused Russian Jews, "Chinamen" and Assyrians permission to settle:

... circumstances in that respect had not altered in the least since their day. It must be remembered that Russian Jews were a very inferior race, not at all like the Jews in England and the colonies; and steps must ~~be~~ taken to keep out all such people. (Applause.)⁴²

It may be, that as this was apparently an isolated statement, little weight can be attached to it, but the distinction Seddon chose to make between the Russian and English Jews is reminiscent of his attempt to associate the Irish with Anglo-Saxon racial destiny in 1880. On that occasion he was replying to some remarks by Colonel Trimble, member for Grey and Bell, who had commented that the cry of "inferior race" had been raised against the Irish. "There were other Irishmen in the House besides himself; ... had they not heard it stated that the Irish did not deserve to be placed on a level with the grand Anglo-Saxon race?" Seddon deplored the suggestion that the "English people considered the Irish an inferior race to themselves. His opinion was that there never was in the breast of a true Englishman any such feeling".⁴³

Seddon may have been motivated to this denial by a genuine feeling of equality with the Irish, but there were also sound political reasons why he should have wished to associate the Irish with Anglo-Saxon racial superiority. Irish-born individuals made up a considerable element of the West Coast population. In Inangahaua County for instance they represented 24% of the total population while in Grey County they were 21% and in Westland County

42. West Coast Mail, 8 May 1896, SP 3/10, 99.

43. PD 36, 1880, 96-7 (Seddon).

nearly 20%, according to the 1878 Census.⁴⁴ Nevertheless it seems probable that the British nation state was more important to Seddon than the cultural differences between the Irish and the English. The argument shows a characteristic pragmatic disregard for theoretical consistency, certain "races" might be absorbed into the Anglo-Saxon fold or, as seems to have been the case with Maoris and other Polynesians, awarded "honorary" Anglo-Saxon status pending their cultural "uplift".

Seddon's attitudes towards the Maoris seem somewhat equivocal. The Maoris were a sizable minority of the New Zealand population in the 1890's⁴⁵ and their right to live in New Zealand could hardly be denied, but Seddon made it clear during his 1895 tour of the North Island tribes, that they were not to be allowed to hinder the "progress" of European society.⁴⁶ In return for selling their lands to the Government so that they could be utilised by Europeans, he promised the Maoris two things; firstly, the possibility of participating in European society and sharing European aspirations - in other words, the possibility of their assimilation⁴⁷ (on terms of equality?) into European society, and secondly, the means whereby this could be accomplished. The Government was prepared to provide roads and, if the Maoris provided the land, build schools.⁴⁸ Seddon was not offering to "pamper" the Maoris but was appealing to that grand Anglo-Saxon virtue of individual initiative and self-help which he also enshrined in the Old Age Pensions Act 1898. If Seddon's Maori audiences had not by then realised what was required of them, he frequently pointed out that only the sympathetic Liberal Government stood between them and the 600,000 strong, land-hungry Europeans.⁴⁹

44. Census of New Zealand 1878.

45. In the 1896 Census of New Zealand the Maori population was 39,834.

46. AJHR, 1895, G-1.

47. See *ibid.*, 8, 18, 38, 39, 40.

48. See *ibid.*, 39, 47, 70.

49. See *ibid.*, 4, 12, 18, 26, 45.

Seddon noted on several occasions the equality of natural abilities between European and Maori. He had no hesitation in saying that "mentally, physically, and with cultivation" Maori youths were capable of holding the "highest positions in the land".⁵⁰ Using his fellow Cabinet Minister, James Carroll, as an example, he noted that "in his face, in his thoughts, and in his form there are the two races united". Neither was it found that the "two bloods quarrelled".

When you look at his person you see a wholesome blend; the two races are there working in harmony together. It shows that the European and the Native race can mix with satisfactory results, and the product of such union is apparently free from sickness of body or sickness of mind.⁵¹

Seddon did not always adopt such a favourable attitude towards the Maoris however. In 1896 he charged that swatters in the North Island, "rather than employ union shearers had their work done by Natives".⁵² In this passage Seddon seems to suggest that the Maoris were a source of cheap-labour competition in the same way that he described the Dalmatians.

In 1902 Seddon made his notorious "Papawai Speech". The Wairarapa Star reported the speech and in a subsequent editorial defended Seddon's statement against criticism from the Australian, Daily Telegraph. According to the Star's report, Seddon said:

... If General Kitchener had five-thousand well-trained Maoris in South Africa, and gave them their own way, telling them to put down the Boers, he thought the Boers would soon go down. (Applause.) With the Maoris, war was war, and they were never afraid to hurt their enemies, who never troubled them again.⁵³

Upon occasion it seemed the Maoris were as "civilised" or as "uncivilised" as Seddon wished them to be. This latter quotation

50. AJHR, 1895, G-1, 38.

51. *ibid.*, 26.

52. Kumara Times, 4 April 1896, SP 3/10, 62.

53. Wairarapa Star, 5 April, 1902.

prompts the thought that the Maoris were as uncivilised as the Europeans. Generally, however, as even this last quotation suggests, Seddon's attitude towards the Maoris in the 1890's was patronising, rather than hostile.

The Dalmatians who came to New Zealand during the 1890's primarily as gumdiggers, were not so strongly condemned by Seddon as the unfortunate Chinese. In 1899, for instance, it was Seddon's opinion that not much could be said against the "Dalmatian race - as regards physique, character, and industry", but their influx created an "industrial disturbance" and injured "our settlers and settlements".⁵⁴ In other words the Dalmatians were seen primarily as an economic threat on this occasion.

It does not seem possible to rank Seddon's attitudes to different ethnic groups on the basis of any one general explanation such as that of assimilability which Smithyman suggests,⁵⁵ for while the Dalmatians might receive a favourable ranking on this basis, it would probably be less true of the Maoris and Polynesians. Here the explanation seems to lie firstly in the fact that the Maoris were already in New Zealand and by 1890, European political and military dominance had been established over them. Secondly, particularly later in his premiership, Seddon claimed that the expertise gained by New Zealanders in governing the Maoris made them the natural choice to control a Pacific island empire. He demonstrated his own grasp of how to handle Maoris when he told the citizens of Suva at a banquet in 1900 that:

After twenty-five years' study of the Maori race, and having taken a deep interest in Polynesian questions, I have come to the conclusion that it is best to keep them clear of revenue and expenditure; finance should be controlled by the Government independent of the natives Generation after generation have been taught to look to the chiefs, and the chiefs look to their superior, the Ariki. To give powers to men who do not understand them

54. PD 110, 1899, 466 (Seddon).

55. Smithyman, 11.

must land you in confusion. I am speaking now after and experience of twenty-five years of the subject, and I say, leave them well alone. I say the government ought to be in the hands of the Europeans.⁵⁶

It hardly seems possible to go beyond the two explanations just offered in accounting for his attitudes towards the Maoris for, as usual, Seddon was thoroughly pragmatic, which often meant highly inconsistent.

His pragmatism was clearly revealed in 1896 by a reference he made to the manner in which the Europeans had penetrated New Zealand, intended to demonstrate that the evils which had resulted to China following British penetration, placed the colonies under no obligation to allow Chinese immigrants unrestricted entry. He noted that "we forced ourselves on the Natives" of New Zealand and "... with us came the rum bottle, and with us came the Scriptures, and soon the Natives found themselves in a worse position than they were when civilisation, when the Bible, and when the rum bottle came amongst them".⁵⁷ He seems to argue that what happened in the past was unfortunate, but the present generation were not obliged to supply redress. This could be applied equally to the results of European actions in both New Zealand and China.

It seems Seddon exploited opposition to the Chinese during the 1896 election campaign with two main purposes in mind. The first was to discredit his rival for the leadership of the Liberals, Sir Robert Stout, and the second, to smear the Opposition party and its leader Captain Russell.

The basis of Seddon's attack on Stout was the accusation that he was attorney to a mining company which gave "Chinaman preference over Europeans as to working in the claim". In conjunction with

56. [E. Tregear], Rt. Hon. R.J. Seddon's Visit to the South Sea Islands, Wellington, 1900, 421-22.

57. PD 93, 1896, 471 (Seddon).

this occurrence Seddon found it "passing strange" that Sir Robert Stout had spoken at an anti-Chinese meeting in Wellington, and Seddon believed that he was an office bearer in the Anti-Chinese League.⁵⁸ The accusation seems a rather crude attempt to discredit Stout with the city working classes by suggesting, not only that he was racially disloyal, but also, by associating him with capitalist exploitation and cheap labour, force Stout into a position of opposition to the Liberals. In spite of the fact that the Liberals were probably not such a coherent group as the party label implies, during the 1896 campaign Seddon seems to have attempted to present the Liberal Party, and presumably himself as its leader, as the defenders of the New Zealand way of life against the representatives of capitalist exploitation which was how he characterised the Opposition party.

It was probably better political wisdom to select an issue such as racial purity for an election campaign than the anti-liquor agitation, which may have generated as much determined opposition as it gained active support. While presumably not all New Zealand voters shared Seddon's hostility to the Chinese and other Asiatics, few were likely to be personally antagonised by the issue. The political neutrality then, of the race purity issue for the great majority of the electorate, may have been one of its greatest assets and the employers it might antagonise, by definition, were an unpopular minority. Even if Stout could prove he was not a capitalist exploiter of cheap labour, presumably the attorney, Sir Robert Stout, was nearer that image than the goldminer, Dick Seddon.

In April 1896 Seddon attacked Russell saying "It was now admitted by him that capital was in the colony, but not invested. This proved the Premier's contention that a deliberate attempt had been made by capitalists to starve workers into subjection". He claimed that in the North Island the squatters employed "Natives" rather than union shearers.⁵⁹ In May at Otaki he commented "it

58. Kumara Times, 4 April 1896, SP 3/10, 62.

59. ibid.

was curious throughout to observe the weakness displayed [sic] by the Conservative party for aliens". He noted that when the Liberals attempted to check the number of Austrians coming to the gumfields they were opposed by the "Conservatives".⁶⁰ The following month he attacked Russell saying he "had expressed himself in favour of Chinese labour". Seddon supposed that the "select few" took this position because they wanted "Chinamen" as servants for they would take lower wages than Europeans. He then quoted a speech of Russell's to the effect that in a situation of competition between Europeans and Chinese it would simply be a case of the "survival of the fittest" and as the Chinese were able to live on rice while the Europeans needed beef "the Chinese were able to do menial services on the ~~cheap~~; therefore they were a superior race".⁶¹

The conscious irony of this latter statement suggests the whole problem of the racial superiority argument. If Anglo-Saxons were superior they were surely fittest to survive, yet in a situation of unregulated labour competition they were apparently unable to compete with the Chinese and other "inferior" races. It was not surprising, therefore, that Anglo-Saxon superiority was defined by those traits which distinguished them from Chinese and other "inferior" races. Racial traits were an obvious means of distinction, so were cultural characteristics, but underlying all the arguments, the basic fears born of insecurity and isolation never seem far from the surface. The argument rather went in circles: the fact that Anglo-Saxons ruled made them superior, and because they were superior, therefore they would continue to rule.

In 1899 Seddon told his fellow parliamentarians that

... you should be pleased at coming from a race ... that at the present time dominates the world: but if you allow these people to come in the result will be an intermixture, and what does this intermixing mean? It means the decadence of your own race.⁶²

60. West Coast Mail, 8 May 1896, SP 3/10, 99.

61. Lyttelton Times, 6 June 1896, SP 3/10 [no page number].

62. PD 110, 1899, 466 (Seddon).

Besides the fact that this statement suggests an element of uncertainty about the permanence of Anglo-Saxon dominance, it seems curious that Anglo-Saxon and Maori blood produced the "wholesome blend" in Carroll mentioned earlier, but Anglo-Saxon and Asian blood would cause a decadent intermixture.

The Liberals' concern for insulating the New Zealand way of life was displayed in several of its aspects by a rather original argument Seddon put forward for excluding the Japanese. Noting that a scourge had come over Queensland, he commented that he knew there were Japanese who had ticks [cattle ticks?] and while he questioned which of the two was the worst, he concluded both were "exceedingly injurious to the country". Seddon said an Order in Council had already been passed to prevent the tick being introduced into New Zealand and every care would be taken to "protect our colony and our cattle from infection and the spread of this evil. "But there was also a greater motive for excluding the Japanese. "I say, surely while we are protecting our cattle we have the same right, and a much greater right - the Divine right - to protect our women and children and our girls of tender years".⁶³ With commendable concern therefore, Seddon was prepared to protect New Zealand's cattle, "women and children, and ... toilers" from the ravages of tick and Japanese.

The occasion for Seddon wanting to restrict Asian immigration generally, rather than just that of the Chinese, seems to have been provided by two events; firstly, the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty in 1894, and secondly, the visit of two Hawaiian officials to New Zealand in 1895 or early 1896.

The Anglo-Japanese Treaty sought to provide reciprocal rights of residence, trade and the acquisition of land for the subjects of the signatory powers.⁶⁴ The individual colonies were given until August 1896 to indicate whether they wished to be included

63. PD 93, 1896, 470-1 (Seddon).

64. A.T. Yarwood, Asian Migration to Australia. The Background to Exclusion 1896-1923, Melbourne, 1967, 6.

under the Treaty. Seddon made it quite clear in the House that the Government would "allow August next to arrive, and we shall not then have that treaty applied to New Zealand".⁶⁵

The visit of the Hawaiian officials occasioned Seddon considerable concern. During a meeting at Nelson in March 1896, he described his discussion of the "Japanese question" with these officials. They told him that the Chinese had competed with the Kanaka, and then the "Japs" came and were looked upon in "comparison with the Chinese as the stoat and the ferret to the rabbit. He feared the stoat and the ferret and weasel would in time prove worse than the rabbit". The Japanese had begun to undersell the Americans and neither the "Chinese nor the Kanakas could compete with them They had increased from 10,000 to 26,000 in about three years". Seddon remarked he had read an article describing the effects on the "higher civilised peoples of the influx of Asiatics" and further, he saw a potentially "grave danger" from the Japanese in Hawaii, where under the Republic, if the "Japs" became supreme, "they [the Empire] might have opponents, and opponents capable of fighting, between the Southern Colonies and Canada".⁶⁶

The fact that the Japanese were apparently competing successfully with the Americans, Chinese and the Kanakas, coupled with recognition that they were opponents "capable of fighting" suggests that Seddon recognised the rise of the new industrial Japan which had defeated the Chinese in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5 and established itself as a nation which Great Britain found worthy to court as an ally. The Japanese were purely a hypothetical threat to New Zealand because in 1896 there were insufficient of them in the colony even to gain separate mention in the Census of that year, but they were one more of those "inferior races" threatening the grand New Zealand destiny.

65. PD 93, 1896, 470 (Seddon).

66. The Colonist, 17 March 1896, SP 3/10 [no page number].

CHAPTER 2

NEW ZEALANDERS ENVIRONMENTALLY DEFINED

In 1880, Sir George Grey described his vision of New Zealand's future. It was a future closely associated with the Anglo-Saxon origins of most of the colonists and although he envisaged that New Zealand would become a nation in its own right, his apparent inability to distinguish its future role from the more general Imperial and Anglo-Saxon mission to civilise the world, is significant. At the time New Zealand could hardly be described as one society, and certainly, whatever its future prospects, it was obviously dependent upon the British connection and seemed likely to remain so for some considerable time.

Grey noted that "... New Zealand was very limited in extent" and comparatively soon it would be "filled up with inhabitants sufficient in number ultimately to people the country with their descendents". Care was necessary, therefore, to ensure that the population introduced into the country was of a satisfactory character to "make New Zealand a great nation - a great nation with a small territory, but exercising a very powerful influence indeed throughout the entire Pacific". With the exception of the small European colonies of Australia, the New Zealand colonists were surrounded by "semi-barbarous races, whom they might ultimately influence greatly".¹

Grey's vision was essentially racist. For the great "liberal", the maintenance of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority was an integral part of his concern to improve the lot of the underprivileged. The New Zealand colonists may have had a great civilising role to perform in the Pacific, but it seems apparent that they were to reform by example from afar, or as rulers, not by allowing the "semi-barbaric races" to mingle in their society.

1. PD 36, 1880, 103-4 (Grey).

As has been noted, smallness, isolation and insecurity appear as underlying facts in the development of loyalty patterns within New Zealand in the later nineteenth century. It has been argued that, in the first instance, racial attitudes were formed in the colony at the individual level of relevance and that subsequently, these assumptions formed underlying themes over which specifically sectional attitudes were developed. Although it is difficult to judge how important racial attitudes in themselves were to the generation of a colony-wide sentiment over-arching sectional and regional loyalties, they do seem indicative of the emergence of such a loyalty. The primary definition of a colonist was as an Anglo-Saxon and this definition embraced racial characteristics which ensured the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race. This image was, perhaps, given precision by the establishment of personal superiority over aliens in the local New Zealand community. New Zealanders also shared the pride all Britishers took in their mighty Navy and the economic and political power of the Empire. But within this broad definition, which involved the fundamental realisation of the colony's dependence upon the Empire, it will be argued there was a narrower, largely socio-economic definition which defined the colonists as New Zealanders within the Anglo-Saxon fold. This socio-economic definition in the late 1890's seems essentially an expression of the exuberance of prosperity coupled with the pleasant belief held, at least by the Liberals, that New Zealand led the world in its social legislation, and by implication, in the worth of the society which these measures had helped create. Aliens were opposed because they threatened this special achievement but also because racial contamination was likely to degrade the larger Anglo-Saxon destiny in which New Zealanders participated. Expressed another way, as New Zealanders came to believe that they were superior Anglo-Saxons, they accounted for this superiority in environmental terms. By extension, however, this argument also suggested the development of future racial differences for environmental determinism was a common explanation of the racial differences which already existed. For instance, in 1893 Seddon thought that in New Zealand,

... with our climate, with our present population,
and with other advantages we had, we must in years

to come, if we preserved intact the race we had here now - we must and should be the first people in the Southern seas: in fact, he questioned whether he might not go further afield.²

It was argued in the debate over federation with Australia that eventually the climatic and environmental differences between the two areas would encourage the development of distinctive racial types.³ It was New Zealand's socio-economic superiority that would be the ultimate determinant of its superior destiny.

Earlier, the appearance of a social hierarchy of dependence upon the other Anglo-Saxon new societies of the Pacific and on Great Britain was remarked upon. Seddon made frequent references to the social degradation of the Old World and New Zealand's progressive socio-economic state. It was his contention in the late 1890's that the

... policy of his Party was not one of revolution, but one of progress, equality, fair distribution, and justice. (Hear. Hear.) The condition of the people and the country was improving, and that was why they Opposition party could not dislodge the Liberal Party (Applause.) He had been called an autocrat. He sprang from the people, he worked for the people, and if he was an autocrat the people had made him that. It was his opponents that desired to jump on the people and instead to grind them down as they were in the Old World (Applause.). They held the Government and lived in the hearts of the people, hence they were tyrants and autocrats.⁴

In 1898, when discussing the Old Age Pensions Bill he thought

a county that looks well after its aged must gain the respect of the civilised world. The social law which applied to the individual applied to the State. They must take a lesson from the Old Country as to the poverty existing there, and avoid it Let the colony avoid the workhouse and the misery attached to it. (Applause.)⁵

2. PD 81, 1893, 337 (Seddon).

3. See for instance PD 69, 1890, 586 (Russell).

4. Untitled newspaper clipping 1897/98, SP 3/18, 3.

5. Wairarapa Star, 4 May 1898.

The implications of New Zealand's social and physical environment were most apparent in Seddon's verdict on the British soldier when compared with his colonial counterpart. He believed that in "guerilla warfare ... the British troops [were] rather slow, and ... the only ones that will be found to effectually cope with this kind of fighting will be the colonials", although the British soldier had in "no way deteriorated".⁶ In 1902, when in South Africa, he noted that over the matter of imperial federation

they are slow to move in the Mother Country, but I believe myself that the colonies are the quickening spirits with their wider experience and not suffering from the environment of the Mother Country. I say that progress and advancement must come from the colonies.⁷

Although, as has already been pointed out, Seddon was pragmatic in his arguments and the sort of theoretical speculation that led to a discussion of the rise and fall of empires was foreign to him, nevertheless this idea seems to have had quite wide currency at the time and its recognition is implicit in some of his arguments. The fact, for instance, that progress and advancement must come from the colonies and his frequent references to the social degradation of the Old World carry this implication. It is within this theme of colonial renewal that opposition to aliens was also expressed. The stagnation and decay of Chinese society was a matter frequently commented upon,⁸ although Seddon does not seem to have expressed such views explicitly. But if such an idea was current it would be yet another reason for excluding the contaminating influences of the Chinese environment whether these were leprosy, immorality, gambling, opium smoking, insanitary habits, or an inability to live as free, honest men actively participating in a democratic society.

It is less obvious how the theme of colonial renewal explained the apparent superiority that New Zealanders felt over the older

6. Tregear, 420.

7. Johannesburg Star, undated, SP 3/27 (1902).

8. See PD 36, 1880, 92 (Hutchison), for outline of argument.

Australian colonies. Seddon, as may be imagined, ascribed this to their tardiness in following New Zealand's example in social legislation and thus presumably, in eradicating Old World contamination which may have crept in. But the Australian colonies needed no lessons in excluding the Asian "menace" for their restrictive legislation in most instances had preceded New Zealand's. While visiting Australia in 1902 Seddon noted with heavy-handed didacticism that those who adversely criticised "Advanced Liberalism" did so because they did not understand the "A.B.C. of it".

... instead of destroying confidence, or ignoring the rights of property, or depreciating its values, no better security ever obtained because the greatest title they could give, the best security they could have was that conferred by God's own people. The reason why a title by statute was regarded as better than any other was found in that it was secured by representatives of the people.⁹

Following his return to New Zealand after the Celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee he took great delight in telling his audiences of the "ignorance of people in England and America regarding the condition of affairs in New Zealand". Nevertheless he had:

no hesitation in saying that New Zealand was the most favoured colony of the Mother Country. From the enquiries made in respect of it he was sure that there was a general feeling towards it, and towards them which the colony itself could scarcely conceive.¹⁰

It was also his impression that

we could do good work here, for in the Mother Country, they were looking to the New Zealand Parliament, and in Great Britain, America and the other colonies they were copying our laws, all of which redounded to the credit of our people, whose Government were simply carrying out their demands and behests.¹¹

The fact that the functions of the New Zealand Government were circumscribed by the reality of dependence meant that in other

9. Untitled newspaper clipping, SP 3/14, 7-8.

10. Waikato Argus, 9 April 1898, SP 3/18, 34.

11. Christchurch Press, March 1898, SP 3/18, 15.

respects New Zealanders still saw the Mother Country as the "superior spot on God's earth".¹² New Zealanders amply demonstrated that this was so by their enthusiastic participation in the Boer War.

It has been argued by Jebb¹³ that New Zealand's participation in the Boer War, and the local patriotism it engendered, was an important reason for keeping the colony out of the Australian Commonwealth in 1900. However this does not appear to have been so and the reasons against this argument will be discussed shortly. It certainly seems to have been an occasion for an immense display of patriotic fervour, but the reasons for this were probably varied. The popular jingoism associated with Britain in the late nineteenth century was given clear expression in 1897 during the Jubilee celebrations. Seddon's attendance at the celebrations was the first of his two pilgrimages to Great Britain which gained him such an immense amount of popularity. In 1899 in the debate on whether to send a contingent to the Boer War he expressed the sentiments which apparently endeared him to so many throughout the Empire. He noted that two years ago representatives from throughout the world gathered to honour the Queen, and those who participated in the Jubilee pageant learnt what "our Constitution really meant",

... not only that, but we proved that, though far distant and under many climes, there is a bond between her children and liege subjects which can never be severed; and, as we sent out our troops to take part in that Jubilee, and as they were admired by our kindred at Home, and by those of other nations, ... so will the world yet recognise that on the battlefield; and when the necessity arises for that valour which distinguishes our race being displayed, there will be no hesitation, no holding back, on our part, and that to the death shall we prove true to our race, and prove that we are akin. I say the civilised world, whilst wondering, will admire and applaud.¹⁴

12. Waikato Argus, 9 April 1898, SP 3/18, 34.

13. Richard Jebb, Studies in Colonial Nationalism, London, 1905, 90, 91.

14. PE 110, 1899, 77 (Seddon).

Prosperity had returned to New Zealand in 1896 and this fact no doubt added to the exuberant atmosphere which surrounded New Zealand's participation in the War.¹⁵ Preparations for the battle suggest all the innocent pleasure of a Boy Scouts' Jamboree and may have reflected the fact that a generation of young colonists had grown up since the Anglo-Maori Wars. New Zealanders were proud of their large contribution to the Boer War, especially as it was a greater contribution per head of population than that made either by the Australians or the Canadians.¹⁶ New Zealanders were also apparently braver than their Australian counterparts, Seddon claimed his chief difficulty had been refusing many of the young New Zealanders who wished to go and fight;

... none of them came back like the thirty New South Wales Lancers. (Applause.) They must take a serious view of the question. The contingent, in his opinion would do honour to the race from which they had sprung. (Applause.)¹⁷

The issue was also one which proved that in the event of need the Mother Country would defend the far-flung colonies of the Empire, a fact which New Zealanders must have found particularly reassuring.

The question with the unthinking may arise Seddon thought as to what is the connection between the colonies and the Empire. I say it is a connection so closely interwoven with our interests, so inseparably bound are we together, that if you take from the Empire her colonies you weaken that Empire. If, on the other hand, you keep together the Empire is strengthened. Take it on sordid grounds if you like, and we know how much to us is the Empire. We know, of course, what she is doing for us each and every day of our existence. The British flag is our protection; without belonging to the Empire where would New Zealand be?¹⁸

15. See Seddon to Reeves, 3 April 1902, Reeves 1/-, 1, 2.

16. 6000 troops were sent from New Zealand in 10 contingents. This is approximately 8 soldiers per 1000 of the total population. Canada sent 2 per 1000. Cited K.H. Richards, "The Seddon Ministry 1893-1906", M.A. Thesis, Canterbury University, 1946, 193.

17. Auckland Star, 29 November 1899, SP 3/23, 19.

18. PD 110, 1899, 77 (Seddon).

It is a useful corrective to Seddon's attitude, however, to note the reaction of the member for Matakura, Robert McNab, to the prospect of New Zealand troops going to South Africa. He agreed it would be a very popular move but thought New Zealand would have been equally popular had she sent a contingent to fight in the Soudan or the north-west province of India.

Any operations by which the New Zealanders can get an outlet for their surplus energies, whether it is with the rifle or under the old English methods we hear of, is always popular. It is the smell of blood to the Anglo-Saxons that makes the campaign so interesting.¹⁹

In the late 1890's Seddon's attitudes towards Great Britain and the other colonies seem a strange blend recognising the environmental superiority which New Zealanders thought they had achieved, coupled with the idealised subservience which had long characterised the colonists attitudes to the Mother Country. The colonists were a part of the British nation but members of New Zealand's society and it was this combination of loyalties which seems to have made it a remote possibility that New Zealand would ever have joined the Australian Commonwealth.

Considerable discussion has taken place over why New Zealand did not join the Australian Commonwealth in 1900. Wood and Arnold have given Seddon a prominent role in preventing this occurrence while Fairburn has disputed this conclusion.²⁰ If the hypothesis posed in this thesis, that by the late 1890's New Zealanders had come to define themselves as a distinct and superior group of Anglo-Saxons as a result of their environmental superiority, is correct, then this would militate against their incorporation into the Commonwealth. Already in 1891, New Zealand's first Liberal Premier, John Ballance, had argued that Federation would not only deny New Zealand a voice in London, but it would also be tantamount to an act of disloyalty

19. PD 110, 1899, 88 (McNab).

20. Rollo D. Arnold, "New Zealand in Australasia 1890-1914", M.A. Thesis, Melbourne University, 1952, 149; Miles Fairburn, "New Zealand and Australasian Federation, 1883-1901: Another View", New Zealand Journal of History, 4, 2 (April 1970), 24-29; F.L.W. Wood, "Why did New Zealand not join the Australian Commonwealth in 1900-1901?" New Zealand Journal of History, 2, 2 (October 1968), 115-129.

as the term "Commonwealth" should not be applied to any part of the Empire, but to the whole Empire. "He went on to ask, after

Having lost all our powers, our revenues, our Legislature, what would be the result? Our opinions would be manufactured in Australia [he answered rhetorically], and we should find that a powerful Press would dominate us in this respect, and poor New Zealand would be entirely left out in the cold.²¹

Arnold has noted that one of the more prominent New Zealand organisations with Australian affiliations, the Trades and Maritime Council, lost much of its New Zealand support during the great Maritime Strike of 1890. The spread of the Strike prompted the moral, that New Zealand was likely to gain only Australian problems from such a connection.

There are two things to note about Seddon's attitudes towards Federation. The first is that while in Australia during 1897 he was careful not to commit himself on the Federation issue but he did say that if the movement for Federation reached New Zealand "he should have no hesitation then in placing before the people of New Zealand what Federation meant".²² If we may judge by what seems to have been Seddon's characteristic political technique, it is probable that he would have done this. Popular support for Federation was apparently never sufficient within New Zealand to push Seddon into supporting the issue. It is worthy of note, however, that following his return to New Zealand in 1898, he told an audience that "We suffered considerably by being classed with Australasia, and he would ask our journalists never to use that term again. Stand by New Zealand, which at Home was the most popular of any of the colonies".²³ Secondly, there may well have been some uncertainty regarding the role that a new Australasian government would perform. In the near future it seemed unlikely to fulfil the military and political role of the British Government and thus command the loyalties which accompanied

21. PD 73, 1891, 69 (Ballance).

22. Untitled newspaper clipping, 7 February 1897, SP 3/14, 7.

23. Christchurch Press, 28 March 1898, SP 3/18, 15.

this role, and as has been noted, New Zealanders apparently saw the socio-economic achievements of their society as being superior to what had been achieved in Australia. It may have seemed unlikely, therefore, that the new government could perform the role of the New Zealand Government, especially as it was to incorporate a number of competing economies, and it would have an Australian majority.

A cursory glance at New Zealand's pattern of exports between 1885 and 1905 indicates the growing importance of the British market in absolute terms, and in the percentage by value of New Zealand's exports it took.²⁴ This pattern gives some support to Fairburn's

24. Total Values of Exports to the United Kingdom and the Australian Colonies (excluding Tasmania).

1885	£
U.K.	4,906,907
Australia	1,308,701
1890	
U.K.	7,401,350
Australia	1,586,074
1895	
U.K.	7,045,646
Australia	1,038,844
1900	
U.K.	10,259,342
Australia	1,830,939
1905	
U.K.	12,087,818
Australia	2,268,373

From New Zealand Statistics, 1885-1905.

claim that it was "not Seddon but both the timing of its economic fluctuations and the restructuring of its economy since the early eighties, [which] had at every turn made New Zealand the most improbable prospective partner in a federation of the Seven colonies".²⁵ Fairburn's argument, perhaps, has too much the jar of cold economic rationality, but New Zealanders did not give their loyalties without reason and the compelling reasons which bound New Zealand to Great Britain and the Empire have already been noted. New Zealand's pattern of trade across the period would have strengthened the colonies dependence on Great Britain. This was hardly so in regard to the Australian colonies and it seems most unlikely that Seddon would ever have asked the question regarding them which he asked about New Zealand's membership of the Empire: "without belonging to the Empire where would New Zealand be?"

25. Fairburn, 159.

The Spectator, 25 February 1904, 5P 3/64.



“ And was it for THIS, that New Zealand sent her sons to Africa, to fight and die ?”

A POSTSCRIPT TO A NEW ZEALAND DRAMA

The events following the Boer War posed the problems which had long agitated New Zealanders in their own society - capitalists and aliens; their own worth and the destiny of their society and the Empire to which they belonged.

In an attempt to re-open the Rand goldmines, Sir Alfred Milner proposed to introduce Chinese to man the mines. Seddon was ardently opposed. "To the capitalists and shareholders who are living in other countries, it will not matter at all". While it was not contended that "unskilled white labour can compete successfully with the black in the lower fields of manual industry ... the white man can and does do double the work of the black man". Seddon felt that an adequate labour force could be obtained from the agricultural districts of England, Scotland or Ireland. "They would do double the work", and you would be colonising the Transvaal with Britishers.

... Take the converse, - ... the population of your country will be composed largely of Boers, largely of Chinese, together with a number of Rand mine owners who are not of British origin. Is this what we anticipated when jointly the self-governing colonies took a responsibility on themselves, and made the greatest sacrifices possible for Empire and justice?²⁶

The integrity and solidarity of the Empire had been called in question and with great gusto that monstrous enemy, the Boer nation, had been crushed so that a pure Anglo-Saxon society could flourish. Could it be, however, that New Zealand's blood sacrifice, the gallant deeds of her brave and upstanding young men were all for naught? Was the Transvaal to become a land of non-Britishers and foreign capitalists, exploiting cheap Asiatic labour? "Was it for THIS, that New Zealand sent her sons to South Africa, to fight and die?

26. Seddon to Major F.R. McDonald (Johannesburg), 15 March 1904, SP 3/17, 3, 5.

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II. UNOFFICIAL

- A. MANUSCRIPT
- B. NEWSPAPERS
- C. THESES
- D. SECONDARY WORKS
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