

Commercial and Industrial Society in Great Britain and Ireland 1814-1824: A Study of Australian Immigrant Applications

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The difficult period of adjustment to peacetime conditions in Great Britain and Ireland between 1814 and 1824 has rightly received the close attention of historians in the last fifty years. It was an era of mounting political and social tension, of growing pressure for parliamentary reform, of radical upsurge which demanded improvements in working and living conditions for the lower classes. Any readily-accessible body of information about the problems which faced all sections of the population, in the various regions of the kingdom, is well worth considering. Personal commentaries by individuals or groups, subjected to contemporary pressures, are especially valuable. Fortunately a considerable body of such information, hitherto unused by scholars, lies in thirty volumes of applications to the Colonial Office, made by intending emigrants to Australia in the years from 1814 to 1824.¹ The value of this massive body of personal submissions is not only "quantitative" by providing information about applicants' ages, occupations, assets and places of residence, but also "qualitative" by frequently providing vital details about applicants' social backgrounds, working experiences, their particular problems and aspirations. From a detailed analysis of such documents, some interesting conclusions emerge. In general the views presented by earlier historians, of widespread distress and economic dislocation, are confirmed, but other features also appear, which show the complexity of the problems facing the most highly commercialized and industrialized society in Europe in a time of unprecedented recession. They also reveal the perplexities felt by those involved.

The applications show, for example, that London was beset by a commercial crisis that affected every facet of its business life; that even the wealthier agricultural areas were so badly affected that many of the rising class of prosperous capitalist farmers were forced to consider emigration in order to find outlets for their enterprise. They show too that in all parts of the kingdom, men, who had been in the forefront of economic advance, as progressive merchants, manufacturers and agricultural improvers, were particularly hard-hit by the drying-up of credit and the general recession.

How did these records come to be created? In 1814 the Colonial Office adopted a system by which encouragement was given to "settlers of substance, men of capital," to go out to Australia. The capital specified for qualification as a settler was £500, entitling the applicant to 500 acres of

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¹ The applications are mostly contained in the Colonial Office series of volumes of incoming correspondence, C.O. 201/74-160.

land and privileges — convict labour and rations for settlers' families and assigned convicts from the government store for a period of two years. For military and naval officers the capital provision was waived and many were able to go without possessing the means specified. For other categories of applicants, the capital requirement was fairly rigidly enforced.

In the decade that followed the Peace of 1814 the number of people who applied under these regulations was considerable, despite the generally accepted character of the Australian settlements as penal colonies. In the eleven years from 1814 to 1824 inclusive, 3,300 individuals submitted petitions or letters of application to the Colonial Office. More than 400 applied from Scotland, 2,500 from England and Wales and 300 from Ireland.² The information presented in the series of applications confirms to some extent the picture of widespread distress presented in a wide range of modern studies, from Elie Halévy's *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century* (1913) to recent works on English economic development by R. M. Hartwell, W. W. Rostow, Phyllis Deane, M. W. Flinn, and others, but the records also contain additional data which does more than merely corroborate what is already known about the state of the country in 1814-1824. They show, for example, such features as a heavy preponderance of comparatively wealthy farmers from Southern England among the agricultural applicants and an overwhelming proportion of applicants from the London area — over fifteen hundred, or more than one-half of the total. It is clear that the economic crisis was felt in the capital with particular severity, and that it affected all classes and occupational groups in that city much more acutely than has been generally realized.

The dislocation of commerce and manufactures, and the widespread financial instability and confusion which prevailed in London are attested by descriptive documents, self-presented "case-studies" of hundreds of applicants which illustrate in detail the economic setting to the metropolitan disturbances which began with the Spa Fields riot in 1816. Classification of the applications by occupational or trade groupings and by the applicants' means also indicates the stresses to which all sections of London's business and professional community were subjected in the post-war years.

Two reservations should be made in considering the following analysis; first, that through the restrictive capital provision, Australia was a field for middle class emigration; second, that the port of London had acquired a near-monopoly of the Australian shipping trade. This was a deterrent to many in other parts of the country who naturally chose emigration fields such as the Canadas and the United States for which ports of embarkation were much more accessible, apart from the consideration that the voyage out was much shorter, and the passage money as little as a seventh or eighth of the rates for the Australian voyage. These factors must have weighed

² For an analysis of the Scottish applicants, by occupation and region, see David S. MACMILLAN, *Scotland and Australia, 1788-1850; Emigration, Commerce and Investment* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967), Chapter 3.

heavily with many intending emigrants of the craftsman, small shopkeeper and labouring classes, and they should be kept in mind when the occupational classifications and regional distribution of the applicants (especially the preponderance of London residents among them) are considered.

Despite the "capital provision," of which many were ignorant, the petitions and applications of 1814-1824 included many from artisans and farm labourers, and thus bear out the traditional view of trade depression, but they also throw some interesting light on the economic conditions prevailing among the working classes.

In the eleven-year period, 1814-1824, the total number of artisans who applied numbered only 186, but of these 138 applied before 1821, prior to the peak-period for all applications, the years 1821-1824. This may have been due to wider publicization of the capital provision in Colonial Office advertisements, which only appeared in the press in 1821 and possibly deterred prospective applicants of this category, but it also reflected the severe trade depression of the years which followed the Peace, and the improvement in working-class conditions five or six years after 1815. As R. M. Hartwell has indicated in *The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England* (1967), conditions seem to have improved because of rising wages and falling prices after 1820. The fall in the number after 1821 may reflect this alteration, since from 1820 there is little of the desperation expressed in 1814-1820. Applications from utterly destitute artisans continued to come in considerable numbers only from Ireland.

A fact which emerges clearly is that London and the Thames and Medway ports and dock areas provided a very large number of the artisan applicants (73 of the total of 138 between 1814 and 1820 and exactly half of the fifty who applied in the following four years). Approximately two-thirds of these craftsmen and specialist workers were directly connected with the shipbuilding industry, and included shipwrights, sailmakers, ropemakers, fitters, boatbuilders, riggers, caulkers and "shipcarvers." Approximately one-third had been paid off from employment in the Medway naval yards or the Woolwich arsenal. The naval and armament industries of London and the Thames Estuary were badly affected, and the letters show the inability of the applicants to secure work in their own trades.

The large-scale retrenchment in defence and Government expenditure was further reflected in London applications from Admiralty and Civil Services clerks (19 applicants), customs officials (17), former soldiers and sailors, including pensioners (158), "reduced" army officers, including commissary officers and surgeons (63), naval officers, including naval surgeons (58), and naval pursers and captain's clerks (12), and in a number of others from master-craftsmen and contractors who had been engaged in government contracts. In 1821, for example, W. Wright, building contractor, petitioned since his business was "reduced to nothing" due to the cancelling of his contract to maintain coastal defences, including Martello towers. A year earlier, Samuel Bird, master carpenter, also of London, stated that his

contracts for the army had been discontinued since his last assignment, the supervision of the building of barracks for the troops in Honduras. In 1824 George Adair of London, who had been collecting timber for the Navy in Sierra Leone, also reported that he was forced to emigrate due to the termination of his contract.

Table I
PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS
OF ENGLISH AND IRISH APPLICANTS TO SETTLE IN AUSTRALIA, 1814-1824
SHOWING NUMBERS RESIDENT IN LONDON AND ITS VICINITY

Occupation	Total of Applicants from England and Ireland including London	Applicants from London area
Farmers, bailiffs, "land-stewards", etc.	326	39
Former soldiers and sailors (of the ranks)	274	158
Farm labourers	268	46
Artisans	186	123
Merchants	126	83
Manufacturers	121	103
"Reduced" army officers including commissary officers	120	63
Clerks	125	122
Former naval officers (including surgeons and pursers)	97	58
Shopkeepers	89	48
Millers, tanners and brewers	88	45
Former farmers	63	27
"Gentlemen"	46	37
Solicitors	46	37
Surgeons	46	28
Mercantile Trainees	46	28
Schoolmasters	33	14
Legal Clerks	32	26
Master Builders	30	21
Clergymen	29	18
Shipmasters	29	24
Solicitors	23	17
Civil Service Clerks	23	19
Customs Officials	19	17
Skilled domestics (butlers, valets, chefs, etc.)	19	17
Builders	17	13
Shipowners	14	12
Civil Servants of High Rank	14	13
Barristers	14	10
Property owners	14	12
Engineers	11	7
Physicians	14	11
Landowners	9	3
Architects	7	3
Bankers	5	4
Unspecified occupations	487	250
Totals	2920	1557

Forty applicants from craftsmen in "luxury trades" indicated another aspect of the depression in London and its environs. Silver carvers ("at present little work for hands in our line of business"), gunsmiths specializing in fine pieces, perfumers, sculptors, engineers, ivory turners, chefs, musicians, valets, butlers and skilled tailors made application, all stressing the lack of work.

By far the largest occupational group were farmers — no fewer than 225 in eleven years, in addition to former officers of the army and navy who were farming, and from "land-stewards," land agents and farm bailiffs, making the total of those directly engaged in agriculture no less than 326. Thirty-nine gave London addresses, though few were London residents, since some intending emigrants moved to the capital and only made formal application when they came to book their passages. The distribution of the letters and petitions of the agriculturalists who wrote from their farms, describing their problems, throws some useful new light on the state of British farming. Fifty-six applied from Ireland (with concentrations of applicants in Counties Tipperary (10), Cork (9) and Londonderry (8). Interestingly, the majority of the remainder were from the Southern counties of England. Kent led among English counties in the number of its farmer applicants — 21 in the eleven-year period, with Devon second (19 applicants), and Somerset and Hampshire following closely with 16 each. Essex provided twelve, the same number as Yorkshire. Sussex and Surrey (11 and 7 applicants respectively) helped swell the predominance of the South. Over the rest of the country there was an even distribution with from two to five applicants from most of the counties, including those of large area such as Northumberland and Lincolnshire (5 applicants each), and smaller counties, such as Monmouthshire, Westmorland, Oxfordshire and Shropshire (2 applicants each). Wales supplied nine applicants, six of them from Glamorganshire. No farmers applied from Lancashire, Durham, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Herefordshire, Rutland or Suffolk. There were two applicants from the Channel Islands, both from Jersey.

It is interesting to note that of the three hundred farming applicants who petitioned, only 36 did so in the years from 1814 to 1819 inclusive. This was probably due to the increasing publicity given to Australian emigration from 1819.³ Even taking into account the inducements which must have had a strong appeal for farmers — free land grants, assigned convict labour and rations, — the sudden increase in the numbers who applied possibly indicates the seriousness of the farmers' situation from 1819 onwards, particularly the Southern counties. Something of a "vogue" for Australian emigration certainly developed among enterprising farmers in that region,

³ A particularly influential publication of 1819 was William Charles WENTWORTH'S *A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales, . . . With a Particular Enumeration of the Advantages which these Colonies offer for Emigration and their Superiority in many Respects over those possessed by the United States of America*. A second edition was published in 1820, a third in 1824, and several applicants during the period made reference to it in their letters and petitions.

and this was to persist until 1832, when the system of free land grants was abolished. The spate of literature on the Australian settlements between 1819 and 1832 found interested readers in agricultural circles, and it was natural that progressive young Hampshire farmers like John and Frederick Ruffy, sons of the proprietor of *The Farmers' Journal*, should be among the applicants to go out to a country where the crushing problem of high rents did not exist.

The contents of the petitions show the problems facing the farmer applicants, but their most striking feature, especially from 1820 onwards, was the intending emigrants' command of capital, often far in excess of the £500 required by the regulations. Of the 32 applicants in 1820, nine stated that they had £1,000 or more. A Gloucestershire applicant estimated his means as "upwards of £3,000" and a farmer of Chislehurst, Kent, affirmed that he had more than £2,000. Many wealthy agriculturists were intent on emigration, and most of these men of substance were drawn from the best farming areas of the Southern counties. Of thirty-one farmers who applied in 1821, there were eleven who claimed to have £1,000 or more. Three hailed from Surrey (one stating that he owned his own farm), three from Kent, including a "yeoman" of Thanet, who claimed to have lost £10,000, but was still "thriving"; one from Norfolk with £7,000 to £10,000, two from Devon, and two from Somerton in Somerset. In this year Irish farmer applicants and three from Northern England complained that they were "ruined," but the picture that emerges from the numerous applications from the South is that of prosperous men (or at least men who had prospered during the war), and who were not lacking for capital, even though several complained of the "injury" caused by the decline in agricultural prices, of "dullness" in demand, and the most frequent complaint, high rents.

Table II

SPECIFIED CAPITAL AT THE DISPOSAL
OF ENGLISH FARMING APPLICANTS, 1814-1824 *

Number of Applicants	Amount of Capital Stated
5	£ 10,000 or more
8	£ 8,000-£ 9,999
3	£ 7,000-£ 7,999
6	£ 6,000-£ 6,999
11	£ 5,000-£ 5,999
14	£ 3,000-£ 4,999
18	£ 2,000-£ 2,999
28	£ 1,500-£ 1,999
32	£ 1,000-£ 1,499
64	£ 750-£ 999
109	Minimum requirement of £ 500

* The total of £480,500 implied in these figures (which do not include farming applicants who did not specify their capital) represented a vast accession to the infant economies of new South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, in view of their lack of capital. R. M. HARTWELL, *The Economic History of Van Diemen's Land* (1949).

The drastic fall in prices affected not only the lesser tenant farmers, but also the leading "high farmers," such as Robert Scales, who owned 3,000 acres near Swaffham in Norfolk, and wished to take out £10,000. He considered in 1821 that his capital had decreased greatly since 1818 due to "the extreme depression which has taken place in the value of agricultural produce."⁴

The same pattern is to be seen in the applications of 1822, 1823 and 1824. Of one hundred and fifty-seven applicants no fewer than thirty-nine gave their capital at £1,000 or more, and ten of these were farmers in Devon, eight in Somerset, one in Dorset, one in Gloucestershire, four in Sussex and three in each of the fertile counties of Kent and Essex. Some had very considerable means, such as Thomas Anstey of Lympstone, Devon, worth £10,000. Anstey had "long wished to become an agriculturist on a grand scale," and was to achieve his ambition in Van Diemen's Land, for he secured an extensive grant of 2,000 acres in 1826, in addition to 1,000 acres on arrival in 1823. His wealth enabled him, on reaching Hobart, to become a proprietor of the newly-founded Bank of Van Diemen's Land. Another, John Hooke of Gloucestershire, "considerable farmer," had £1,000 capital and an annual income of £200 from bonds as well as a freehold estate yielding £440 yearly. A. T. Holms, of Ashburton, Devon, with more than £3,000, asked for 3,000 acres, to which he considered his capital entitled him.⁵

The "concentrations" of farmer applicants, from the wealthy Somerset, Devon and Kent areas, in the interval of eleven years, are impressive. Somerton, in Somerset, supplied no fewer than eleven — an example paralleled by the coastal district of remote Caithness in Scotland, where a group of substantial farmers applied in the same years.⁶ Clearly, the example of one or two adventurous individuals could stir the interest of their neighbours, and induce them to apply. Ashburton in Devon and its locality provided eight farmer applicants, three of them also being woollen-manufacturers. These West Country farmers were progressive as well as wealthy. John Goudell, an Ashburton applicant, informed the Colonial Office that he intended to take out an eight-horse-power steam engine, an advanced mechanical grist mill and a machine for raising water, and others in Devon referred to powered equipment they wished to take out.

Several farmers in the Southern counties of England, and in Somerset particularly, wrote of "dullness," "slackness," and "poor returns" in agricul-

⁴ Application, R. Scales, April 1821, C.O. 201/108.

⁵ A. T. Anstey, August 1822, C.O. 201/112; J. Hooke, November 1822, C.O. 201/112; T. Holms, October 1824, C.O. 201/159. It is possible that some, if not many, other applicants than the numbers given here possessed more than £1,000 of Capital. Some, in their applications, merely stated that they had "sufficient" capital to qualify them for permission to settle and for land grants, and gave the names of two referees as to property. This means that figures quoted cannot be regarded as recording fully the numbers of wealthier farmers who applied, but the comparatively large number of such people among applicants from the Southern counties suggests that in this area many had profited from the agricultural prosperity of the Wartime period.

⁶ See MACMILLAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 88, 99.

ture in their areas, but only four from the South reported serious losses. Peter Carne of Devon had lost heavily through "the badness and alteration of the times" and Edward Clark of Epsom, Surrey, attributed crushing misfortunes in 1820 to "blight and wetness" in the summer of 1816. J. Sharland, of Battle, Sussex, complained of excessive rent, which his landlord had refused to reduce "to meet the dreadful reverse of the times" with the result that tenancy had been lost. But this was the only instance of high rent being held responsible for failure among applicants in the South, and the fourth case of actual hardship there, that of Thomas Curry of Hampshire, was due to his entering a rented farm in 1816 "when there seemed fair prospects of success." The fall in prices had caused him to lose £4,000 by the end of 1822.⁷ By contrast, more than half of the Irish farmer applicants were in desperate straits, "driven to the utmost extremities," "utterly lost," "saddled with dear farms taken during the War," or, as most put it, succinctly, "utterly ruined."⁸ Some farmers in the Midlands, Northern England or Wales claimed to have lost heavily, and the number of those among them who complained of disastrous loss was proportionally much greater than in the Southern counties.

The tendency for agriculture to be worse affected in Ireland, Northern England, the Midlands and Wales than in Southern counties is reflected in the petitions and applications of forty-one "reduced" or half-pay army and naval officers who had taken up farming since the peace. Of the English applicants of this type, most had been disillusioned by the fall in prices, and lack of the expected profits. The impression given by their letters and petitions is that those who went into farming in the South had fared better than those in other parts of the country. William Bell Carlyle, naval surgeon from 1805-1815, took up a farm in Sussex in the latter year, and his application of 1822 made no reference to difficulties. In fact, he claimed to have an increasing capital of at least £1,500.⁹ Yet whether they farmed in the North or South, applicants of this category had obviously taken up this new occupation too late, as some complained, to benefit from the wartime boom. The year 1819 appears to have been the watershed between profitable and unprofitable operations in most cases.

Combining farming with manufacturing or trading was seldom sufficiently profitable to induce applicants to remain in Britain. John Clacket, farmer of Kent, with more than £1,000, "the most extensive candle manufacturer in Canterbury," was losing heavily in the general depression in trade, as was John Haine, farmer and cattle jobber of Glastonbury, Somerset, who petitioned in 1823, assessing his cash in hand at more than £5,000. Men who

⁷ Carne, 1 January 1817, C.O. 201/88; Clark, February 1820, C.O. 201/101; Sharland, February 1822, C.O. 201/113; Curry, February 1823, C.O. 201/148.

⁸ For typical cases, see the applications of R. Baillie, Kircubbin, County Down, October 1820, C.O. 201/101; and J. Tray, Drogheda, April 1820, C.O. 201/102.

⁹ B. Carlyle, March 1822, C.O. 201/112.

combined agriculture with manual trades such as Thomas Rowland, farmer and carpenter of Compton Dusdon, Warwickshire, were also hit hard by the falling-off in business, and decided to emigrate to the Antipodes.¹⁰

"Land agents," "land stewards" and farm bailiffs, echoed the complaints of other groups directly connected with agriculture, the degree of their desperation depending on whether they wrote from Ireland or from Northern, Midland or Southern England. A. C. Morris, land steward from Dublin, presented in 1822 a dismal picture of his own and others' lack of success in farming due to collapse in prices and "the misery attending the landed interest in this country." Most Irish applicants in these categories had scant capital, though Morris had the required £500, and R. Macaulay, a land agent and Yeomanry captain who applied in 1820 had the sizeable sum of £8,000 at his disposal. Men like Macaulay and the brothers John and Thomas West, who held leases of large farms in County Londonderry and had £4,000 between them, were exceptional among the applicants from Ireland, whose usual statement regarding the capital requirements was "no means" or "slight capital," "ruined," or even "destitute."¹¹ Some sixty applicants stated that they had been engaged in farming before entering their present occupations, — ranging from manufacturer to undertaker, and from army commissary clerk to naval purser. Their number and variety indicate the extent of the movement of population from the land, and the disruption of the lives of many by the wars and the agricultural depression.

Lacking capital, agricultural labourers were prevented from applying for land grants, but over the period 268 petitioned for permission to go out. More than half were destitute Irish peasants, and of the remainder, thirty lived in the areas of Kent, Somerset and Devon. Since many emigrant farmers with capital from these areas stated that they intended to take out farm-workers, passages to be paid by their employers, this is further evidence of the comparative affluence of the farmer-emigrants from the West Country and the South. Few of the farmers from the North took out workers and A. J. Boyles, son of a Yorkshire yeoman, was exceptional, when he applied in 1823 to take out two ploughmen, a shepherd, a carpenter and some servant girls.¹² A freeholder in his own right, with a £2,000 in capital over and above the value of his land, he was far from typical of the applicants from Northern England and the Midlands, who were almost all tenant farmers, with the minimum requirement of capital. Fortunately for many, the Colonial Office accepted applications if the required sum was made up by an equivalent in goods — including agricultural implements, and even household effects — a practice that was open to considerable abuse.¹³

¹⁰ J. Clackett, October 1820, C.O. 201/101; T. Rowland, April 1822, C.O. 201/112.

¹¹ A. C. Morris, October 1822, C.O. 201/113; R. Macaulay, December 1820, C.O. 201/102.

¹² A. J. Boyles, July 1823, C.O. 201/148.

¹³ In 1822 Dr. James Peddie, Minister of the United Associate Synod wrote to Alexander Waugh, Minister of the Scots Church in London, that "Captain Dixon

The crippling lack of capital in Ireland was shown by the inability of farmers to meet the capital requirements. Twenty-eight of the fifty-six farmers who applied were in this position, and two of the five Irish landowner applicants had experienced heavy losses. W. Thomas, with an estate in County Cork, magistrate and land agent for Lord Stanhope's estates, ascribed the reduction of his capital to a "mere £2,000" to an improvement scheme for the embankment of 11,000 acres of land from the sea in Wexford. The projectors "failed from the insufficiency of capital to complete the work, the sea destroyed it and a capital of £40,000 was washed away." William Fitzgerald, a landowner in Kerry, and an active barrister, complained in 1824 of his inability to carry on in either capacity due to the "utter falling-off in all agricultural, commercial, industrious and legal pursuits in Ireland because of the dearth of cash and credit," and the story was repeated often, with heart-rending details by one hundred and fifty others, more than half of the Irish total.¹⁴

Most numerous and desperate "group" petitions and applications came from Ireland. Examples were the eighty-one persons from Templemore, County Tipperary, in March 1819; a group of eighteen gentlemen and farmers in County Limerick in 1824; nine families of Roscrea, County Tipperary in 1822, all adherents of the Church of England and with capital averaging £100 to £150 for each family; a Dublin group of eight families, headed by an architect and inventor, who blamed the "wretched depression of every kind of trade in this unhappy country" for their plight.¹⁵ A group from Nenagh, Tipperary, had a joint capital of more than £5,000 and proposed to take out servants, artisans and farm labourers. Their reasons for seeking to emigrate were the difficulty caused by the widespread depression and the impossibility of educating their families properly for lack of financial means. There were numerous group applications by distressed and destitute labourers and peasant farmers, especially in the near-famine seasons of 1817-1818 and 1821-1822.

The unsettled political state of Ireland provided its quota. In January, 1820, C. Farrell of Mullingar petitioned since he feared "reprisals and injury." He had informed the Government of seditious activities in 1819. Interestingly it was minuted on his petition that the strictest inquiries should be made regarding his property. Another informer, A. Farrell of Dublin, possibly a relation, was a linen and yarn inspector. He was "fearful of death"

(a shipmaster engaged in the Von Diemen's Land trade), states that the valuation of property is commonly made by including books, furniture, clothes, etc., even to a snuff box." Peddie, C.O. 201/113.

¹⁴ W. Thomas, April 1823, C.O. 201/149; W. Fitzgerald, February 1824, C.O. 201/159.

¹⁵ T. Sutherland, March 1819, C.O. 201/96; A. J. Bethell, February 1822, C.O. 201/112; A. Standish and L. Harris, April 1822, C.O. 201/112.

when he applied in 1823.¹⁶ Other Irish applicants claimed intimidation. Typical was John George, farmer, of Clonmel, Tipperary, threatened with murder and arson because he had secured the conviction of labourers who attacked his father's house. The establishment of a police corps in Ireland was given as a reason for their distress and desire to emigrate by eight applicants who held yeomanry commissions and had been "reduced" when the police functions of their regiments were terminated.

Agents of the Government were also found among the English applicants, notably James Antony of Manchester, "late of Woodhouse" who had "done something for my country (in the way of secret service) or in other words as a spy, in consequence of which I am foully treated, persecuted and abused."¹⁷ As in Farrell's case, no unusual consideration was shown for services rendered.

The English "group" applications were fewer than those from Ireland, and all came from the working class. In 1818 fifteen labourers and craftsmen of Bodmin, Cornwall, mostly unemployed, petitioned, and three years later, twelve in Penzance, "all agriculturists or mechanics" made application. According to a St. Ives applicant in 1819, a cooper by trade, the whole trade and commerce of Cornwall had been paralyzed by the failure of the Fishery, a statement borne out by group applications between 1823 and 1825 from Truro, Lostwithiel and Falmouth.

The largest English group to apply jointly were ninety people in Staffordshire, "fifteen whole families, eleven single men and a widower," chiefly farmers, carpenters, millwrights and workers in the iron works. The Midland counties appear to have been particularly badly affected in 1814-20 and sent in over sixty applications from the working class and fifty from ex-soldiers, a number far greater than the relative proportion of the area's population to that of the rest of the country. Some asserted that "trade was so bad that they could not live." A group of "mechanics of the lower class" in Nottingham in 1819 complained of acute distress due to high prices and very low wages.¹⁸ From Durham too came group petitions indicating desperate conditions. In 1820 twelve artisans, builders and wheelwrights applied among fifty petitions from workers in county Durham between 1814 and 1821. An application from Castle Barnard there in 1820, from a clerk, five craftsmen, including a hatter and a watchmaker, made a point of expressing loyalty to the constitution, stressing that "none of your servants acknowledges the radical Reform doctrine to be orthodox." Other districts from which groups applied were the West Riding of Yorkshire, the Deal district of east Kent, Longtown in Cumberland, Plymouth and eastern Essex.

¹⁶ C. Farrell, January 1820, C.O. 201/101; A. C. Farrell, April 1823, C.O. 201/148.

¹⁷ J. Anthony, May 1823, 201/148.

¹⁸ J. H. Babbet, December 1818, C.O. 201/88; S. Becker, October 1821, C.O. 201/106; G. Marsden, September 1821, C.O. 201/106.

Table III
GROUP PETITIONS TO SETTLE IN AUSTRALIA, 1814-1824

Date	Area	Nos.	Reasons for Applying
1815	London	26 persons	Trade depressed
1816	London	32 persons	Financial distress
	Plymouth	52 persons	"The Peace"
1817	London	93 persons	"Falling-off in trade"
1818	Longtown, Cumberland	38 persons	Unemployment and low wages
	Tipperary	75 persons	Destitute
	Dublin	43 persons	Distressed and unemployed
	Belfast	16 families	Impoverished
	Nottingham	74 persons	High prices, low wages
	Bodmin, Cornwall	15 persons	Unemployment
	1819	Tipperary, Ireland	81 persons
1819	Nottingham	16 persons	High prices, very low wages
	Plymouth, Devon	14 persons	Low wages
	Eastern Essex	38 persons	Low wages
	Staffordshire	90 persons	No employment
	1820	Longtown, Cumberland	18 persons
1820	Durham	12 persons	"Desperate"
	Castle Barnard, Durham	8 persons	No employment
	Otley, Yorkshire	50 families	Depression in trade, hardship
1821	Deal, Kent	40 families	"Impoverished"
	Plymouth, Devon	21 persons	No employment
1822	Tipperary, Ireland	9 families	Depression in trade
	Dublin	8 families	"Wretched depression"
	Tipperary	7 families	Financial losses
	Penzance, Cornwall	12 persons	No employment
1824	Limerick, Ireland	18 families	General depression
	Truro, Cornwall	16 persons	Falling-off in trade
	Lostwithiel, Cornwall	10 persons	No employment
	Falmouth, Cornwall	12 persons	High prices
	Plymouth, Devon	16 persons	No employment

Joseph Pinsent, merchant and economic theorist, who sent in schemes for the development of the Australian settlements, wrote on behalf of "numerous labourers in husbandry, shepherds, masons and carpenters" from Essex who wished to go out, paying their own fares, since they saw no prospects of improvement in the depression which had settled on their district.¹⁹ The same hopelessness drove many in Cumberland to emigrate, and in 1817-1818 sixty applied from there, mostly labourers, since wages were "inadequate for human subsistence."²⁰ Plymouth, "principally depending on War for trade," provided three group petitions from craftsmen, labourers and dock-yard workers.

Group petitions came from London in 1815-1817, from craftsmen, clerks and shop assistants. Hundreds of shopkeepers in the capital were

¹⁹ W. Savage, April 1820, C.O. 201/102.

²⁰ T. Dixon and others, February 1820, C.O. 201/96; August 1820, C.O. 201/96; M. Pennington, June 1821, C.O. 201/108; J. Pinsent, June 1821, C.O. 201/107.

badly affected by the dearth of custom and as late as 1822, when there was some recovery, many wrote that they had "no other prospect than emigration to save them from the workhouse."

After farmers and artisans, merchants (126 applicants), and manufacturers (a total of 121 not including millers, tanners and similar processors) formed the next largest categories of applicants. The most striking feature of mercantile and manufacturing applications is again the preponderance of London. Of 45 merchants who applied in 1814-1820, 29 were in business there and 3 in Lisbon, trading with London.

Of London applicants, twelve were in wholesale, nine were timber merchants, four dealt in leather, three in wine and one in linen. One described himself as a "Russia merchant" and two as West Africa Merchants. Seven were "agents" or "brokers." The flood of applicants was probably due to London's near-monopoly of many overseas trades until 1820, and the four years which followed saw a more even distribution of merchant applicants. Of the total of 81, London provided 54, Liverpool 4, Dublin and Belfast 3, and the remainder were singly from a range of English and Irish towns. There were also applications from Bangalore (5) and from English merchants in Hamburg (4), Lisbon (3) and Bruges (2). The preponderance of London continued, in diverse trades — cotton (7), grain (5), timber (5), corn (5), tallow (2), wine (3), linen (2), and West India dyestuffs (2), East India produce, wool, olive oil and tar (1 engaged in each). Ten described themselves as "agents" or "brokers" and dealt in goods as varied as coal, butter, ivory, teak, and supplies for the lumber camps of Miramichi in New Brunswick. In addition to merchants in the period, there were forty-six applications from young men who were "trainee merchants" or "learning commercial pursuits." Applications of mercantile clerks were also largely drawn from London — 122 out of a total of 125 and they included 23 clerks who had worked in the West Indies. Clearly, the decline of the West Indies Sugar Trade and of other fields of enterprise was taking its toll in British commercial life.

The petitions of the mercantile group present a dismal picture of depression and instability in London. There were other reasons why Londoners should figure so largely among the applicants. All five commercial firms which led in the Australian trade in 1819, were London concerns, and of the eight leading firms by 1824, seven were based in London, and one in Leith, Scotland. Significantly, regular sailings from the Scottish port after 1822 promoted emigration from the surrounding area of the Lothians and Fife, and the only considerable concentration of Scottish merchants and manufacturers to go out was drawn from Leith and Edinburgh.²¹

London was the country's largest port, and it was natural that it should suffer most after the Peace from the decline of trade, and the cutting-back

²¹ MACMILLAN, *op. cit.*, chapters 4 and 5.

of military and naval expenditure in the area around the Thames Estuary. One-third of the capital's merchant applicants reported heavy losses or utter failure in business. A few were former military and naval officers who had the misfortune, like their farming ex-comrades, to set up in the unsettled years of the Peace. Anthony Fenn Kemp, a captain of foot turned merchant, was forced to suspend payments after he had shipped a large investment of manufactured goods to Bordeaux in 1814 "in conformity to the Duke of Angouleme's tariff." Abrogation of the tariff had caused him ruinous loss.²² Many others found to their cost that the end of the War did not automatically mean the resumption of a thriving trade with France, Germany or the Baltic. Many were still suffering from serious wartime losses. Henry Thomson, an "extensive shipper and foreign merchant" of London, had lost heavily at the capture of Curaçao in 1807 and in 1816 was forced to set up as a public accountant to earn a living. He had been offered land in Canada or New Brunswick in compensation, but had declined it. William Dunn, who had suffered from the seizure by the French of merchandise and warehouse property in Spain in 1808, had received some compensation (possibly because he had "assisted H. M. Ministers most frequently in a financial point of view"), but it was insufficient to justify him in continuing as a trader.

Seven of the merchants who claimed to have been ruined had been running wholesale houses, and all attributed their failure to bad debts. A. Aaron, a Congo River merchant, stated that he had lost a "handsome fortune" in the "transition of trade" and "deterioration of manners with regard to payment" after 1815.²³ Many were obviously so bewildered by the ruin that overtook them through the insolvency of others, the falling-away of long-dependable markets, and the collapse of London houses of accepted solidity that they could not even hazard estimates of the value of their own or others' assets. Henry Blanchard, asked by the Colonial Office to value the goods of an intending emigrant, refused to undertake the task "as every kind of commercial property in London is now reduced to a mere imaginary value," and twelve merchant applicants confessed that their affairs were in such a state of confusion through insolvencies, falling prices and uncertain markets, that they could not even estimate an approximation of the capital they could command.²⁴

"Foreign traders" were among the heaviest losers, due to the added uncertainties of demand, duties, and political conditions abroad. John Kerr, Russia merchant of London, had "crushing losses," which he estimated at over £35,000 because of the high tariffs on Baltic timber entering Britain and the failure of both Russian and British associates to pay their debts. "Having borrowed as much as £18,000 on occasions from Messrs. Harman and Co.," his total capital was reduced to £12,000 by 1820. Charles Osbourne of London, who imported Mediterranean produce and wines, stated

²² A. F. Kemp, February 1815, C.O. 201/78.

²³ A. Aaron, January 1819, C.O. 201/95.

²⁴ H. Blanchard, August 1820, C.O. 201/101.

in 1820 that he had lost £27,000 through the falling-off in demand for wines, olive oil, raisins and sulphur in the four years since 1816.²⁵

Some firms realized that the prospects of recovery were slight, and many junior partners resolved on emigration. Richard Taber, whose father was a prominent West India Merchant, applied to go out in 1820 with family backing to the extent of £1,000 in coin. John Wilkinson, member of a long-established mercantile and shipping house which had entered the Australian trade since the War in an attempt to find employment for its ships, also applied in 1820, and stated that he was prepared to invest up to £15,000 in woolgrowing in the colony. John Ackerman, Baltic Merchant, applied to send out his son, seeing little prospect of improvement in that trade, and undertook to provide "some thousands of pounds, servants, artificers etc." should the young man receive a grant of land.

Manufacturers also saw prospects of developing markets and supplies of raw materials in Australia. In 1821, a Birmingham applicant, "the largest button manufacturer in Europe, and the greatest consumer of mother-of-pearl," wrote that he would attempt to secure supplies of this commodity in the South Seas when he arrived in the colony. In Liverpool, the important firm of Aspinall Browne decided to concentrate on the Australian trade in 1822 and the senior partner, Richard Aspinall, applied to go out with £14,000 of merchandise, and machinery for a distillery.

Several merchants and manufacturers expressed strong anti-American feeling, due to bad debts and war losses. Richard Brooke, London merchant and shipowner, wrote in his application in 1820 that he knew many in his circle who preferred to emigrate to Australia rather than North America, in order to "weaken the hands of our mortal enemies, the Americans, by taking from them those means of obtaining wealth and population they have too long enjoyed."

For most of the numerous London merchants who had lost everything the only recourse as far as emigration was concerned was to North America. Those who contemplated settlement in Australia, except for a few who secured financial backing from relations or friends, were men who had not lost heavily, or who had been able to salvage something from the wreck of their fortunes. Some stated that they intended to take out "investments" of gunpowder, spirits, textiles and other goods in constant demand in the colony. In some cases these consignments, or shiploads, were valued at several thousands of pounds.

Farmers made up one in twelve of the total number of applicants from England and Ireland in 1814-1824, and merchants about one in twenty, as compared with relative proportions of these occupations of one in four and one in five among Scottish applicants. The prevalence of Scottish farmers and merchants was reflected by 1835 in the strength of the Scottish element among Australian agriculturists, pastoralists and mercantile men.

²⁵ J. Kerr, September 1820, Osbourne, October 1820, C.O. 201/102.

Table IV
CAPITAL AT THE DISPOSAL OF MERCHANT
AND MANUFACTURER APPLICANTS, 1814-1824 *

	<i>Number of Applicants</i>	<i>Capital Claimed</i>
Merchants	6	£10,000 or more
	5	£8,000-£9,999
	16	£5,000-£7,999
	22	£3,000-£4,999
	28	£1,500-£2,999
	25	£1,000-£1,499
	36	£ 500-£ 999
Manufacturers	4	£12,000 or more
	5	£5,000-£11,999
	21	£2,500-£ 4,999
	14	£1,500-£ 2,499
	24	£1,000-£ 1,499
	18	£ 500-£ 999

* The capital contained in these figures, a minimum of £500,000, represented a considerable accession to the slender capital resources of the colonies.

The English applicants were much more diverse in their occupations, and this was particularly marked among the manufacturers, 121 of whom applied in 1814-1824. The total does not include a number of millers, tanners and brewers who carried on business in country districts, but of those engaged in other forms of manufacturing, the major concentration — 103 in number — was in the London area. Cork and Belfast provided 2 each, as did Birmingham, Liverpool and Lisbon. The preponderance of London was overwhelming, and the diversity of the industries represented among its applicants was impressive.

The serious peace-time decline in the shipping trade of the Thames at this time is indicated by some of these figures, and by further applications from the Medway towns, 7 block-manufacturers from Dartford and 2 from Gravesend, as well as by petitions from 4 owners of wharves on the river — 3 of them at Wapping, and from rope and sailcloth manufacturers.

The London manufacturers who applied were mostly men who commanded the requisite capital of £500. A third of them had considerably more, some half-dozen possessing £5,000 and above. Most referred to losses and lack of demand but they were far from being ruined. Some wished to take out stock, machinery, and skilled men, to resume operations in the Antipodes, though the majority intended to take up farming on their land grants. Some were inventors and technical innovators like Dawson Cowgill of Wandsworth in 1820, a miller who had "devised and installed certain improvements in the machinery of my establishment which have in these last three years been followed by many in the trade throughout the country," and Thomas Stace, London paper manufacturer, who stated in his petition of

Table V

CLASSIFICATION OF MANUFACTURER APPLICANTS, 1814-1824

<i>Type of Manufacture</i>	<i>London Applicants</i>	<i>Applicants from Outside London</i>
Distilling	12	3
Shipbuilding, ancillary, etc.	8	11
Barge-building	3	—
Guns and pistols	3	1
Printing stationery, etc.	3	1
Sugar refining	3	1
Silks	3	—
Linens	3	2
Wines	3	2
Hats	3	1
Saddlery and harness	2	1
Footware	2	1
Glass	2	2
Brass-fittings	2	1
Woollens	2	4
Steam engines	2	1
Iron goods	2	1
Coach springs	2	—
Brick-making	1	2
Brewing	11	18
Milling	16	25
Tanning	14	16
TOTALS	105	94

1822 that he too had developed “mechanical improvements” in the manufacture of writing papers. Stace, whose contracts with the government had expired, intended like Cowgill and three of the London distillers who applied, to take out machinery and set up business in the colony.²⁶

Like many merchants, some manufacturers ascribed their reverses to the Peace. Apart from those who had flourished through supplying the Army and Navy, there were others, such as Thomas Walker of London who had set up a large establishment at Kensington during the war for the manufacture of “British Wines.” The importation of Cape wines in bulk, and the resumption of the Bordeaux wine trade after 1815 had “killed the trade completely” by 1820.²⁷

Manufacturers’ applications from places other than London recounted experience ranging from slight loss to bitter ruin. Charles Rudd, leather and woollen manufacturer of Rochdale, reported that he had lost several thousands of pounds through the poor demand for his products. His plight was shared by others in the same line of business, but they were still able to assess their means at sums in excess of £1,500. H. Ball, a woollen manufac-

²⁶ D. Cowgill, February 1820, C.O. 201/101.

²⁷ T. Walker, May 1821, C.O. 201/108.

turer of Sidbury, Devon, employing 300 workers, calculated that he had lost £12,000, but his means were still considerable when he applied to emigrate in 1821. On the other hand, John Fenner of Dublin, for whom Sir Charles Forbes, the London banker made application in 1821 had expended £25,000 "in manufactures in the neighbourhood of Cork, to the advantage of the people employed by him, although to his own ruin."²⁸

The serious decline in the overseas and coastal trades is also to be seen in the applications of shipowners and shipmasters, especially from London and the Thames ports. Of 14 shipowners who applied, 12 were London residents, as were 24 of the 29 shipmasters. Several masters owned their own vessels, and intended to take them out to the colony, because of the lack of employment for tonnage in home trades, and a number of these owner-masters had large resources, apart from their ships. An example was Captain Samuel Nolbrow of London, who wished to take out his ship "Jessie," which had been engaged in the Mediterranean trade, with cash and property worth £10,000.²⁹

Others were not so affluent; William Robinson, shipmaster and part-owner in vessels to the extent of £1,500, found the Thames-Scheldt trade so slack that he sold out all his shares and applied in 1821 to go out to farm in Van Diemen's land with no more than the bare £500 that was stipulated, since he had to pay off numerous debts contracted on unprofitable voyages.³⁰ Charles Pinson, shipmaster, who applied in 1820, stated that he had operated his own ship in the West Indian and Mediterranean trades for seven years, but had been forced to sell the vessel because of lack of freights. Those with really large investments in shipping suffered even more severely. Benjamin Cock, prominent London shipowner, who had owned several vessels engaged in the Baltic and North German trades, as well as shares in others, trading to Spain and Portugal, West Africa, the Canaries and Savannah, and in barges and wharves, stated in 1819 that he was almost ruined, since all of these interests were so badly affected by the "slumbering state of trade and the lack of freights." William Degraives, also of London, senior partner in the firm of Degraives Lane and Co., which had "been used to returns to the amount of half a million sterling" in its extensive trade with France, wrote in 1821 that he had recently been forced to sell for £1,200 "a fine brig of the first class," costing £2,400 in 1817. A few owners even contemplated entering the South Sea whale fishery, using Australia as a base of operations.

Few shipmasters (with the exception of owner-masters), or ships' officers who applied had more than the basic requirement of capital. Those who did have considerable means had all been engaged in the West or East India trades. William Ostler of London, applicant in 1822, captain of an East India free trader, had £3,000 in cash and several houses and shops. Harris

²⁸ Sir Charles Forbes, January 1821, C.O. 201/106.

²⁹ S. Nolbrow, April 1820, C.O. 201/102.

³⁰ Macintosh and Degraives, September 1821, C.O. 201/107.

Walker, also of London, had commanded the convict transport "Maria" which had also been engaged in the China and India trades, and had a capital of £3,000. Three more London shipmasters who had captained East Indiamen claimed to have as much, — one assessing his capital at £16,000, apart from holdings in government stocks.

The serious depression in the building trade in London is reflected in the applications of builders (30 applicants, 13 from London), architects (5 of the 7 who applied were from London), and of craftsmen engaged in the building trades — bricklayers, carpenters, etc. (of the 48 who applied, London supplied no less than 32). The crisis in the London building trade was felt far beyond the boundaries of the capital. John Hill Blanchard, who owned a large brick-work at Southampton, supplying the London builders, applied in 1821 because of lack of demand for building materials. In all occupational classifications, residents of London figure to a much larger extent than might be expected, considering the distress that was prevailing in other areas, and particularly in the manufacturing districts of the Midlands and the North. Even when due allowance is made for the counter-attractions of emigration to North America for those who lived in places from which the Western ports were more accessible, it is obvious that the capital was experiencing an economic depression of great severity throughout these eleven years. The London proportion in the figures, almost half the total for the whole of England, Wales and Ireland — seems remarkably high, even when the city's very great population is taken into account — 1.6 millions against a total of 21,008,000 for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland in 1821.³¹

Physicians, surgeons, barristers, attorneys, solicitors, schoolmasters and architects all complained of the lack of cash and the failure of clients to pay their accounts. This collapse of credit and confidence was particularly marked in the capital, and its results could be seen in a number of hopeless submissions from debtors of the professional class who sought to emigrate. In 1821, a group of 37 debtors, some of them lawyers, and all of them in prison, actually presented a group petition for permission to emigrate and for land grants. Seven other lawyers in London claimed to be destitute, and many professional men confessed in their applications that they were deeply in debt. Something of the financial confusion prevailing in London was shown in the application of George Price, a solicitor, in 1822. Price wrote: "By the fatal effects of the late Stamp, Insolvent and New Street Act and Cash Payment Acts the most profitable of my clients are either ruined or dispersed to different parts of the town, deterred from bringing their ill-principled debtors to Justice, and obliged to take the benefit of the Act themselves." Price had been obliged to accept goods in lieu of his fees from many clients, and found himself in possession of variegated merchandise to the value of some £4,000.

³¹ B. R. MITCHELL and Phyllis DEANE, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, at the University Press, 1962), pp. 8, 19.

Three London schoolmistresses who made a joint application referred to continual difficulties in obtaining payment of fees from parents, and the high costs of maintaining their Clapham establishment. William Smith, a follower of the Lancastrian System, stated in 1817 that all sources of support for his work in Stepney, donations and contributions, had "dried up completely" since 1815. James Smith, another teacher in London, who applied in 1817, blamed the increasing number of charity schools for lessening his income to such an extent that he could not carry on his school.

Reduction in the public service aggravated the problems of unemployment and lack of spending-power in London, and it affected officials of high rank as well as clerks and other lesser functionaries. In 1820 a group application came in from a Principal of the Foreign Post Office, a Controller of the Aliens Office, an Exchequer official and an ex-Superintendent of Telegraphs in the Channel Islands. John Peevor, another victim of the economies of 1819-1820, had served in the War Office for thirteen years, and had been "reduced" at the age of 33 with a pension of £133. This, with the yearly interest on £4,000 held in trust for his wife, enabled him to plan to become an "extensive agriculturist" in the colony.³² T. Roadknight, another applicant in 1820, had held "a superior rank" in the Bank of England for twelve years until "reduced" in 1819. Subsequent years brought further cuts and applications from high officials in the Transport office, the Board of Customs, the Treasury, and the Admiralty.

Former naval officers were among the more affluent applicants. Nine claimed to have £2,000 or more, and one, a post-captain, had £7,000. Wartime prize-money probably helped to build up such accumulations, and several had property investments. An example was John Cawley, a lieutenant, who had houses and shops in London to the value of £3,000, and another half-pay officer of the same rank, in Bath, had a yearly income of £200 from rented houses and more than £2,000 in ready cash. A few of the military and naval officers had prospered in occupations taken up since being discharged or going on half-pay. An on half-pay naval purser, who applied in 1823, had set up as a merchant in Bombay in 1818, and stated his capital as £12,000. Thomas Cookson, who had served as purser in East Indiamen, and latterly, as an army commissariat officer of high rank, was another of the wealthy applicants of this category in 1820. He had chartered the ship *Caroline* for Australia and intended to take out at least £5,000 in coin, as well as livestock, agricultural implements,³³ seed, and building materials, labourers, craftsmen and domestic servants.

The most remarkable feature of the information gleaned from the series about the effects of the Peace and its aftermath on the social and economic structures of Britain is the prominence of Londoners. With the

³² J. Johnston, August 1820, C.O. 201/101; P. Mulgrave, July 1820, C.O. 201/148; T. Cookson, April 1820, C.O. 201/101.

³³ J. Cawley, April 1820, C.O. 201/101; W. H. Hamilton, June 1823, C.O. 201/148; T. Cookson, April 1820, C.O. 201/101.

exception of the few "clusters" of farmer applicants in the Southern and Western counties of England, and of the labourers' and craftsmen's "group applications" and petitions referred to earlier, there are no clear signs of a strong impulse towards emigration to Australia in any part of England or Ireland other than London. The preponderance of applications and petitions from the metropolis in all the significant occupational groups, except farmers, is so overwhelming as to be convincing proof of the widespread economic ills which beset all classes of citizens in that vast urban and commercial complex.