



**The Federal Redistribution 2008
Tasmania**



Public Objection Number 44

Elizabeth Perey

12 Page(s)

Denison - Inglis Clark more appropriate.



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19/09/2008 10:24 AM

To <tas.redistribution@aec.gov.au>
cc
bcc
Subject Denison - Inglis Clark more appropriate.

19th September 2008

Australian Electoral Commission's Redistribution Committee

I would much prefer the existing electorate of Denison be renamed Inglis Clark and I wish to lodge an objection to your decision to retain the name of Denison. I was extremely disappointed with your decision. So I am glad to have this opportunity to have a say.

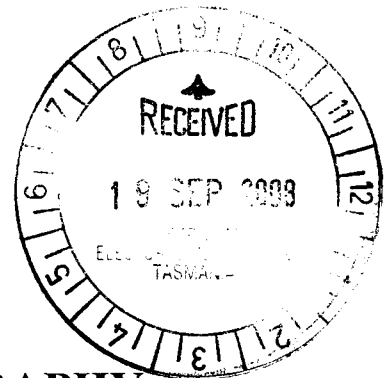
Andrew Inglis Clark was born and buried in Hobart. It is one of those strange quirks of history that it seems to have in the main ignored this fine man who played a large part in writing our constitution. It is high time Inglis Clark was acknowledged. He was one of our founding fathers! That an electorate be named after such an important Australian who contributed so much is long over due, and it is entirely appropriate and fitting that the electorate be Denison.

William Denison was an aristocratic British colonial administrator with out a great deal to recommend him as far as I can find from the research I have done.

Name changes have occurred in other places using the same guidelines - Wilmot to Lyons, and Darwin to Braddon for example.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Perey
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DICTIONARY OF AUSTRALIAN BIOGRAPHY

In 1890 he represented Tasmania at the Melbourne conference on federation and again at the Sydney convention of 1891. He had prepared a complete draft constitution for the use of this convention. He was a member of both the constitutional committee and of the judiciary committee, the only one of the 45 representatives to be on more than one committee. He was also a member of the sub-committee of four that completed the drafting of a bill to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia. Sir Samuel Griffith (q.v.) is generally believed to have taken the most important part in the drafting of this bill, but there is no

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doubt that Clark's special knowledge of the constitution of the United States must have been of great value. "That our constitution so closely resembles that of the United States is due very largely to his influence"

CLARK, ANDREW INGLIS (1848-1907), federalist and constitutional lawyer,

son of Andrew and Ann Inglis Clark, was born at Hobart, Tasmania, on 24 February 1848. He was educated at the Hobart high school, and on leaving, entered the office of his father, who was an engineer and iron-founder. He did not begin to study law until he was 24 years of age, and it was nearly five years before he was admitted to practise in January 1877. He first distinguished himself in the criminal court and later obtained a large general practice. Elected to the house of assembly for Norfolk Plains in July 1878, he was defeated in 1882 and was out of parliament for five years. In March 1887 he was returned for South Hobart, and at once became attorney-general in the Fysh (q.v.) ministry, which remained in office until August 1892. In 1890 he represented Tasmania at the Melbourne conference on federation and again at the Sydney convention of 1891. He had prepared a complete draft constitution for the use of this convention. He was a member of both the constitutional committee and of the judiciary committee, the only one of the 45 representatives to be on more than one committee. He was also a member of the sub-committee of four that completed the drafting of a bill to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia. Sir Samuel Griffith (q.v.) is generally believed to have taken the most important part in the drafting of this bill, but there is no doubt that Clark's special knowledge of the constitution of the United States must have been of great value. "That our constitution so closely resembles that of the United States is due very largely to his influence" (B. R. Wise, *The Making of the Australian Commonwealth* , p. 75). He had been sent to England to represent the Tasmanian government in a case before the privy council in 1890, and on his way home visited the United States. He afterwards twice visited America, and always took a special interest in it. From April 1894 to October 1897 he was attorney-general in the Braddon (q.v.) ministry, and in 1896 was responsible for the act which brought in the Clark-Hare system of voting in Tasmania. He resigned from this ministry on account of a difference with his colleagues and became leader of the opposition. He was not a candidate at the election of Tasmanian representatives for the 1897 federal convention, and did not approve of the bill in its final form. In 1898 he was made a judge of the supreme court of Tasmania, and in 1901 published a book, *Studies in Australian Constitutional Law* . He died on 14 November 1907. He married in 1878 Grace Paterson, daughter of John Ross, who survived him with five sons and two daughters. One of his sons, Andrew Inglis Clark, born in 1882, educated at Hutchins School, Hobart, and the university of Tasmania, became a judge of the supreme court of Tasmania in 1928.

Clark exercised a great influence in Tasmania. He had a passion for knowledge, he was intensely interested in the welfare of his fellow-men, and his house was for long a centre of culture and learning in his native town. An excellent constitutional lawyer, he did good work in the Tasmanian parliament, and his learning and ability had much effect on the movement for federation.

The Mercury , Hobart, 15 November 1907; B. R. Wise, *The Making of the Australian Commonwealth* ; Quick and Garran, *The Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth* ; *Who's Who in Australia* , 1933; P. Mennell, *The Dictionary of Australasian Biography* .

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Denison, Sir William Thomas (1804 - 1871)

Birth:

3 May 1804, London, England

Death:

19 January 1871, East Sheen, Surrey, England

Cultural Heritage:

- English

Religious Influence:

- Anglican

Occupation:

- governor
- lieutenant-governor
- Life Summary
- Resources
- Abbreviations

Sir William Thomas Denison (1804 - 1871), by J. W. Beattie, courtesy of National Library of Australia. [nla.pic-an24166523](#). .

Image Details

DENISON, Sir WILLIAM THOMAS (1804-1871), governor-general, was born on 3 May 1804 in London, son of John Denison and his second wife Charlotte, née Estwick. Like his brothers Evelyn (Viscount Ossington) and Edward (bishop of Salisbury) he went to Eton; he later entered the Royal Military College, graduating in 1826 as a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. He worked on the Rideau Canal in Canada and won the prized Telford silver medal for an essay on timbers. He returned to England in 1832 and was the first editor of *Papers on Subjects Connected with the Duties of the Corps of Royal Engineers*. He also instructed engineer cadets at Chatham where he set up an observatory, and later as an Admiralty officer he supervised the building and repair of dockyards and other works at Portsmouth, Woolwich and Bermuda. In November 1838 he married Caroline, daughter of Sir Phipps Hornby.

In April 1846 Gladstone dismissed Sir John Eardley-Wilmot from Van Diemen's Land and appointed Denison as lieutenant-governor. Earl Grey, who succeeded Gladstone, endorsed Denison's appointment and had him knighted. After five months in the Colonial Office Denison sailed from Spithead and reached Hobart Town on 25 January 1847. He came with preconceived notions about punishment. To him its purpose was to deter: convicts were evil-doers and talk of their reform was 'maudlin sentimentality'. Since he believed that 'idleness ... is at the root of ninety crimes out of a hundred', he wanted imprisonment to be accompanied by enforced labour, the prisoners to be encouraged by the prospect of tangible rewards with provision for their separate confinement when not at work or meals or during their instruction. His conviction was that 'to everyman the full penalty which the law allots to his offence should be meted out'.

In the colony he found various systems of punishment had been attempted. He was also to find in Grey a superior who had studied the subject more than he had. Denison had to implement a

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system that he thought defective but, set in his opinions, he modified wherever he could. When he arrived some 29,000 of the colony's population were under sentence. Their number had increased sharply after transportation to New South Wales had been discontinued in 1840 and the Colonial Office realized that the flow must be temporarily arrested. In May 1846 Gladstone had suspended the transportation of males to Van Diemen's Land for two years. Grey endorsed this decision and on 5 February 1847 wrote to Denison: 'it is not the intention that transportation should be resumed at the expiration of the two years'. By mischance, 'under the present system' had been omitted after 'transportation', but Denison took the dispatch to mean what it said; he also read it to his Legislative Council and told Grey that it was desirable to carry out fully the intention expressed. When he realized that Grey had meant no more than a change in the system when transportation was resumed, he felt bound to implement the Crown's policy. Thus he became the head of those in the colony who advocated continuance.

Denison had already antagonized some local leaders by his maladroitness handling of a situation inherited from Eardley-Wilmot. By 1844 the annual cost of the island's police and gaols had risen to £36,737. In 1846 the British Treasury agreed to pay two-thirds of it but meanwhile the six unofficial nominees in the Legislative Council had become so incensed by the cost that they had resigned in October 1845, thus depriving Eardley-Wilmot of a quorum in the council. He had promptly replaced them by six other nominees all validly seated pending decision by the Colonial Office on the fate of the so-called Patriotic Six. The Colonial Office decided that the Patriotic Six had a case; Denison was advised to select the six most suitable of the twelve councillors but was given no formal instruments to appoint them lawfully. Probably Grey expected Denison to submit his selections to London so that the appointments could be approved and the others disallowed. After fruitless negotiations Denison declared the seats vacant and filled them with the Patriotic Six; on 20 July 1847 they were sworn in despite the doubts of the chief justice, Sir John Pedder. The dislodged men appealed to Grey who ordered the disallowance of their appointments and the approval of those made by Denison. He was also instructed to enact a statute giving retrospective validity to all the Acts 'of the present Councillors'. But no such measure was carried, for doubts had so shaken Denison's confidence that on 30 July he had adjourned the council pending advice from London. He had acted impetuously, high-handedly and illegally but Grey chided him only for his 'errors of judgment'.

In 1846 the Legislative Council had enacted 'the Dog Act' (10 Vic. no 5), but its validity was successfully challenged in the Supreme Court in November 1847. Denison was disquieted when told that this decision adversely affected fifteen other revenue-providing local statutes and exposed about twenty more to legal challenge. All these could have been amended at once had the Legislative Council been able to function, but Denison decided to suspend his two judges and appoint 'others in their places'. The puisne judge, Algernon Montagu, had already exposed himself to criticism and was dismissed on 30 December, but Pedder defended himself successfully before the Executive Council. At a public meeting on 15 January 1848 'the arbitrary and unconstitutional proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor and his Executive Council' were vehemently condemned, and a petition was submitted to him for transmission to the Queen. 'The papers here', wrote Lady Denison, 'have never ceased predicting our recall', but Grey was content with a stern rebuke: he ascribed Denison's conduct to 'mistakes of judgment in a crisis of very unusual embarrassment' and avowed confidence in his ability.

The arrival of male convicts from May 1848 brought Denison more harassment not only from the Irish 'State prisoners' but also from the opponents of renewed transportation. Such colonial leaders as Richard Dry, Thomas Gregson and Michael Fenton, although prepared to return to the Legislative Council, were convinced that the burden on the colonial Treasury was intolerable.

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When Denison submitted the budget they rejected it but he decided to authorize government payments pending advice from London. Grey's advice would have disconcerted any man less self-assured than Denison: 'You are distinctly to understand that the course you have followed must not again be adopted should a similar case arise. You have taken upon yourself to contravene the fundamental law that renders the consent of the Legislature to the Estimates absolutely necessary'. An Indemnity Act was indispensable but since the Legislative Council was unlikely to pass it Grey decided to replace the dissentients by new members willing to approve the estimates. He gave the necessary instructions but enjoined Denison to avoid their use. Sir William was lucky. Three dissentients resigned and he replaced them with men on whom he could rely. The estimates were passed, but Denison's avowal that he had determined his course without consulting his legal advisers confirmed doubt of his knowledge of constitutional processes.

These shortcomings were offset by his zeal as an administrator. With competent help from such officers as James Bicheno, Peter Fraser, Adam Turnbull and Dr John Hampton, Denison put the surveys on a sound footing, encouraged the use of local resources and introduced better methods of agriculture. As a skilled engineer he was specially interested in building docks, harbours and bridges, draining swamps, digging canals and extending irrigation. He had inherited a depleted Treasury and £92,000 of debts. His main sources of public revenue were from land and customs duties. While convicts might lawfully be transported, Van Diemen's Land was excepted from the Waste Lands Acts imposed on other Australian colonies, but the appropriation of land revenue remained in the Crown acting through the lieutenant-governor and his Executive Council. Denison used this power to strengthen the land fund by selling and leasing crown land, thus acquiring the means to open new country, test coal discoveries and liquidate the colony's debt. He had less freedom with customs duties but he believed in free trade and his changes in the tariff schedules were deemed by the Colonial Office to be 'judicious'.

One of Denison's abiding interests was education. He found that 6060 of the 9767 children in the colony between 4 and 14 were receiving no schooling. To meet this urgent need he introduced a bill in the council providing for an annual tax of 5s. on each free adult and dividing the colony into school districts, each controlled by a committee elected annually by those who paid the tax. His bill was rejected by the council. With characteristic pertinacity he reintroduced it twice but in vain. In 1853 he had to agree to a bill which threw the cost of schools on the colonial Treasury and provided for the control of education by a board whose secretary was the inspector-general, Thomas Arnold. The most acrimonious part of the debate on schooling was religious instruction. Sectarianism was rife and kept at high pitch by the Anglican Bishop Francis Nixon, and the Presbyterian leader John Lillie. As a staunch Anglican, Denison frowned on such rivalries and favoured the scripture lessons of the Irish National system. The Church Act of 1837 (1 Vic. no 16) provided stipends for clergy of the Churches of England, Scotland and Rome, their entitlement dependent on the governor's approval of their appointment. Since each Anglican priest had to be licensed by the bishop, the head of the state and the head of the church clashed, but the secular arm prevailed.

Constitution-making was a preoccupation of Earl Grey but, despite his clarity and understanding of the subject, he sought local opinion from the colonial governors. Denison did not fail him. On 15 August 1848 he recommended that, when the constitution of Van Diemen's Land was revised, it should provide for a bicameral legislature. Denison's report to Grey also included a derogatory appraisal of local society. His dispatch was confidential but it was laid on the table of the House of Commons and thus reached the colonial press. He was already unpopular for his advocacy of transportation and his overbearing methods, and this diatribe fanned the flames of

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local dissatisfaction. Grey, although partial to the bicameral system, decided to retain the unicameral system and the Constitution Act of 1850 (13 & 14 Vic. c. 59) empowered the establishment of a Legislative Council of twenty-four members, one-third appointed by the Crown and two-thirds elected.

Denison duly drafted a bill for the election of sixteen representatives, distributing them in a manner calculated 'to neutralize the radical tendencies of the towns'. In April 1851 he remarked, 'I do not despair of getting a Council in which the Government will have ... a very strong minority despite all the storm getting up about transportation'. He belittled the leaders of the Anti-Transportation League which was formed at Launceston in January 1849 and by 1851 had developed into the Australasian League for the Abolition of Transportation. Underestimating its strength, he declared that were the question abstract he would be the first to pronounce against it, but he shared with Grey the view that cessation would injure the island's economy.

In the elections each of the sixteen constituencies returned an anti-transportationist. Nomination to the other eight seats was left to Denison, subject to confirmation by the Colonial Office. They included Peter Fraser as acting colonial secretary, Adam Turnbull, Valentine Fleming and Francis Smith. Grey and Denison attached great importance to the choice of the permanent colonial secretary. The former appointed Henry Chapman, who took office on 5 April 1852 when the relations between Sir William and the elected councillors were deteriorating. To Denison the gold rush to Victoria increased the colony's dependence on convict labour. The elected councillors, bent on implementing their constituents' mandate, planned to offset the exodus by subsidized immigration. On 14 September a motion requesting the Queen to revoke the Order in Council, in which Van Diemen's Land and Norfolk Island were listed as places to which the empire's felons might be sent, was carried in the council by 16 votes to 4. For supporting the motion Turnbull and Chapman were both deprived of office. Denison commented in such terms on the motion that the council passed a motion of no confidence in him, and resolved that a copy be sent to London for publication in *The Times* and *Daily News*. Yet Denison was not without supporters. He was in the sixth year, the normal term of a governor, and the pouch which conveyed the no confidence motion also held a petition with 2220 signatures to extend his term.

Victorian gold relaxed the contention between governor and governed in the island. Sir John Pakington wrote to Denison on 14 December: 'Transportation would be disarmed of its terrors ... if offenders should long continue to be sent to the Island in the immediate neighbourhood of the gold colonies of Australia'. Before this dispatch was sent the *St Vincent* had sailed from London, the last convict transport to eastern Australia. Denison did not cavil at this decision. He thought it unwise but it had been made by superior authority and he conceived it his duty to address himself loyally to the new situation. Thereafter his administration evoked general approbation.

One of his first actions was to ask the Colonial Office to give Van Diemen's Land equality with the mainland colonies in drafting its constitution. This request was granted and a new document was prepared by a committee elected by the Legislative Council on 25 April 1854. As passed on 31 October the Act (18 Vic. no 17) provided for a bicameral legislature: the Upper House was to have fifteen elected members and the House of Assembly thirty. Denison had kept in touch with the committee; he told it of the objections in London to the corresponding bill from New South Wales, with the result that Van Diemen's Land, although last of the four Australian colonies to draft its new Constitution, was first to win royal assent.

The end of transportation brought the island under the Waste Lands Act of 1842 and its regulations, a consequence that Denison and his legal advisers had overlooked. When it was

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pointed out by the Colonial Office, all the conflicting local regulations were suspended, but financial consequences were more serious. The Treasury commissioners in London decided to cease their annual contribution of £24,000 to the maintenance of the police and gaols; after hard bargaining Denison won agreement on a progressive reduction from 1 April 1854. More imperative was the sharp increase in the cost of living and in government salaries and wages. Governor and council agreed that the economic consequences of the gold mania could be offset only by increasing the colony's work force. Their immigration schemes did not please the Land and Emigration Commission in London and had to be revised, but a later plan which promised a steady stream of free people was accepted. Denison's resolute support of it helped to close the breach that had divided him from the council. This healing process was accelerated by his opposition to the Victorian Act to prevent the influx of 'Vandemonian' convicts with tickets-of-leave or conditional pardons. Denison secured some redress but the Victorian Legislative Council retained the substance of its defensive measure. Despite this lack of co-operation he sent troops to Melbourne when the *émeute* at Eureka led Sir Charles Hotham to invoke his aid.

The one questionable official act in Denison's last year in Hobart was his appointment of Valentine Fleming as chief justice when Pedder resigned in August 1854. The Colonial Office had preferred Thomas Horne but yielded when Denison emphasized 'the zeal, energy and courage with which Mr. Fleming had supported the Government'. One of Sir William's last official actions was to commend a petition from the Legislative Council that the island's name be changed to Tasmania. The request was granted and took effect on 1 January 1856. On 13 September 1854 Denison had acknowledged the dispatch appointing him governor of New South Wales. On 9 December he received two commissions, each dated 20 September, one as governor of New South Wales, the other as 'Governor-General in and over all our Colonies of New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia'. He sailed with his family for Sydney on 13 January 1855 after cordial farewells.

In his first year as governor-general, the Crimean war turned Denison's attention to the defence of Sydney against sea-borne attack. He strengthened the batteries at Dawes Point, hastened the building of a fort on Pinchgut (Fort Denison), installed other harbour batteries and provided for their manning by trained gunners. He then examined the Surveyor-General's Department and concluded that it required drastic overhaul. The death of Sir Thomas Mitchell relieved him of 'a great difficulty', and Colonel George Barney was appointed surveyor-general. Public works were scrutinized and three commissioners appointed. In June the commissioner for railway construction sought Denison's advice on the vital issue of railway gauge. In July 1852 the directors of the Sydney Railway Co. had decided on a gauge of 5' 3" (160 cm) but in 1853 changed it to 4' 8½" (138 cm) which was used on the Sydney-Parramatta line opened by Denison in September 1855. Meanwhile the 5' 3" (160 cm) gauge had been adopted in South Australia and Victoria. The governor-general, unlike the Colonial Office, ignored the problems that would arise when lines differing in gauge reached the several borders.

As in Tasmania, Denison continued his interest in education. His visit to the two Orphan Schools at Parramatta led to a report from William Wilkins and two other inspectors 'to correct the minor evils of management' and plan for betterment. The Benevolent Society also attracted official attention but its honorary secretary, George Allen, resisted intervention. In March Denison wrote to his mother: 'I have been hard at work for the last few days scheming out a plan of education'. His plan, presented to the Executive and Legislative Councils, was the same scheme for local school rates that he had tried to establish in Tasmania and had the same fate. He was able, however, to encourage the development of the infant University of Sydney and the Sydney

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Grammar School.

Denison presided on 14 May at the opening of the Sydney branch of the Royal Mint. Later he pressed the Colonial Office to give the new coinage the title of 'Coin of the Realm'. This was done in 1863 and by 1868 the Australian sovereign was legal tender throughout the Queen's dominions. Denison also enjoyed the mental stimulus of (Sir) Edward Ward and William Jevons, officers of the Mint, and the two naturalists, Joseph Elsey and Sir Ferdinand Mueller, who in 1856 went with (Sir) Augustus Gregory's North Australian Expedition from the Victoria River to Brisbane. On their return Denison reported to London: 'Of this great continent, more than three-fourths is an absolute, howling wilderness', an astonishing deduction from the explorers' careful statements.

On 24 November 1855 Denison proclaimed the Constitution Act (17 Vic. no 41). With responsible government impending he was again sworn in as governor-general on 19 December under his new commission. His Executive Council ceased to function, although its members continued as heads of government departments and public business went on as usual. In need of advice, the governor-general constituted a provisional Executive Council of four 'gentlemen unconnected with party politics on whose impartiality and intelligence [he] could safely rely'. He soon found them inadequate and on 21 February 1856 gazetted (Sir) Edward Deas Thomson, Campbell Riddell and later Francis Merewether as members of the provisional council. In accepting appointment Thomson stipulated that the council should do nothing 'which was not absolutely necessary ... until the formal appointment of a responsible ministry', but much remained to be done before the Constitution became effective. The new parliament was to consist of an elected Legislative Assembly and a nominated Legislative Council. The first business, therefore, was the election of the new Legislative Assembly.

Since Denison declined to nominate the members of the Legislative Council until he had the advice of an Executive Council supported by a majority in the Legislative Assembly, he had to abide by the result of this election held between 11 March and 19 April. Thirty-four 'Conservatives' and twenty-four 'Liberals' were returned and Denison commissioned (Sir) Stuart Donaldson to form a ministry. On 29 April Donaldson and his colleagues were sworn in as members of the Executive Council but the new ministers did not immediately take over their public departments. Had they done so, they would have become entitled to salaries with offices of profit under the Crown and obliged to resign and seek re-election. But no writs for such elections could be issued until the Legislative Council was created.

This complicated problem was happily solved when the existing departmental heads agreed to carry on until the Legislative Council was constituted, the parliament had met, the position of the ministry confirmed and provision made for the holding of elections for the vacated seats. Meanwhile the Executive Council, with Denison and his 'ministers without portfolios or salaries', prepared to nominate the members of the Legislative Council. On 29 April the names of suitable persons were listed, great care being taken to give representation to the various parties, creeds, classes and interests in the community. By the new Constitution their number was to be not less than twenty-one, but thirty-three took their seats when the Legislative Council was opened on 23 May. Soon afterwards Thomson and his colleagues were released and on 6 June Donaldson and his colleagues took the prescribed oaths of office and received their commissions. They were re-elected to the assembly and the establishment of responsible government in New South Wales was complete.

Throughout this transition Denison had been the leader. 'An unwilling instrument', he did not

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favour the change, but it had been so ordained and he implemented it with even temper, clarity of mind and expression, and a complete mastery of ways and means. Yet his insistence that the Executive Council 'should be recognized as the Governing Body' and that responsible government as it existed in England had not been established in New South Wales, brought some sharp exchanges between him and some of his ministers. His doubts were later strengthened by evidence of little 'instinct of party'. In private letters and sometimes in dispatches, Denison was harsh on his ministers: 'I have now been working responsible government for three years and a half ... I have had five sets of Ministers besides numerous individual changes; not one single measure of social improvement has passed, and the only Acts of importance that have stood the ordeal are those of very questionable advantage'.

In 1857 he had written: 'The work of the Government is taken out of my hands, and placed in those of responsible Ministers as they are termed, so that I have less to think of in that way than I used to have; but I manage to make work for myself'. The Aborigines posed one of many important problems in Tasmania. He had moved their remnants from Flinders Island to Oyster Bay and done what he could for their comfort. In New South Wales he was made pessimistic by reports on 'the native question'. In September 1858 he wrote to the Colonial Office: 'The physical peculiarities of the race, their want of stamina to resist the slightest access of disease, seem to render their gradual extinction a matter almost of necessity when coupled with the unproductiveness of the females'. Bulwer Lytton replied: 'I can only press upon the local Government the consideration that it is our duty, on Christian no less than on political grounds, not to relax our efforts in despair'. This dispatch reached Denison while he was engrossed with the establishment of Queensland, where the Aborigines were more numerous and militant and their relations with the whites most inflamed. For those who remained in New South Wales he was quick to redress abuses that came to his notice but he never seemed to detect their spiritual malaise.

Denison doubted the wisdom of separating Queensland from New South Wales; the original decision of the Colonial Office placed the Clarence and New England districts in Queensland but Denison was able to have the boundary line changed to its present position. When the colony was established in 1859, he was given 'the very important duty of inaugurating [it] by appointing the Legislative Council and summoning the first Legislative Assembly'. With help from Sir George Bowen, Captain John Wickham and officials conversant with the Moreton Bay district, he discharged those duties and the first parliament of Queensland opened on 22 May 1860.

Denison was invariably addressed as governor-general. Apart from his lapse on uniform railway gauge, he took an active and informed interest in many matters of intercolonial concern. According to Professor J. M. Ward, 'although he himself doubted whether a Governor-General were needed in the colonies, he succeeded, before the commencement of responsible government, in making significant use of the "titular pre-eminence" which had been conferred upon him ... The most conspicuous of his successes was his contribution to the agreement of the colonies and Britain for the maintenance of steam postal services between Australia and the United Kingdom. He also eased the wrangling over tariffs that had followed the opening of the River Murray, and was active in bringing about a measure of intercolonial agreement concerning ocean lighthouses'.

The introduction of responsible government in New South Wales coincided with Denison's appointment as governor of Norfolk Island. His association with the island had begun while he was in Hobart. From August 1846 to January 1853 the administration of this penal station had reflected the capacity of the civil commandant, John Price, to inspire dread. Denison upheld

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Price's regime but in 1852, alerted by the condemnatory report of Bishop Robert Willson, he decided that the penal station ought to be abandoned. His recommendation was approved in London where the Colonial Office suggested that the island was 'fit for the reception of a small body of settlers now existing at Pitcairn Island'. Denison was authorized to control their removal and resettlement. The *Morayshire* was chartered and the whole community of 194 landed on Norfolk Island on 8 June 1856. Unfortunately Denison's initial instructions directed that, apart from certain public reserves, the island was to be vested in the Pitcairners. This was not intended by the imperial authorities and the position was speedily clarified by the Colonial Office. When Denison visited the island in 1857 each family was given fifty acres (20 ha) in fee simple on the clear understanding that the title to all land not thus granted remained in the Crown. But the mischief was done. George Nobbs and other islanders insisted that 'it was not with this understanding we left Pitcairn'. Their claim was untenable in law and in reason but it remained a persisting grievance. As governor of Norfolk Island Denison described himself as a colonial Solon. He welcomed the free hand given him in what he described as 'a singular little autocracy'. He gave their chief magistrate a code of rules, supplied their immediate wants and took a benign interest in their welfare.

When the native ruler and the missionaries in Tonga sought his help against French intrusion, Denison was unmoved but he supported the establishment of coaling stations on the projected steam postal route between Panama and Sydney, and for strategic reasons favoured the annexation of New Caledonia. By contrast his attitude to the maintenance of British rule in New Zealand was firm and sustained. He admired the Maoris but actively supported Governor Gore Browne. In April 1860, when hostilities began over the 'Waitara Purchase', he was quick to supply military assistance and to recommend his own ideas for fighting the Maori. Similarly on the outbreak of the Indian mutiny, he successfully advised the dispatch of the 77th Regiment to Calcutta. He also proposed that they be strengthened by the local company of artillery but, after endorsing the suggestion, the Legislative Assembly refused to authorize the expenditure. Denison gave the assembly what he described as a 'sharp answer'; it was regarded as an affront to the House and was countered with a stiff rejoinder.

The last few weeks of his governor-generalship were clouded by an acute difference with his cabinet on the control of the great seal of the colony. The matter in issue, which related to a grant by the Crown of certain realty in Sydney that had escheated to Her Majesty in 1845, had been in debate between the law officers of the Crown in London and Sydney for years. It was brought to a head when on 8 September 1860 the secretary of state enjoined Denison to have the relevant deed, as approved by the law officer of the Treasury, perfected without further delay and delivered to the appropriate trustees. This action required the impressment upon the relevant deed of the great seal that was in the custody of the colonial secretary who was the prime minister, Charles Cowper. The ministry was opposed to the deed of grant as presented and argued that, by a convention of the Constitution, the control of the great seal of the colony was vested in it. 'My Commission', replied Denison, 'gives me authority to keep and use the Great Seal of the Colony and I am answerable to the Queen for the use I so make of it'. In obedience to his specific instructions from the Colonial Office, on 21 January 1861 he requested the delivery of the seal so that he might complete the deed.

As he had booked his passage to sail on 22 January 1861 for his new appointment as governor of the presidency of Madras, time came to his rescue. Cowper surrendered the seal and his ministry's resignation with it. Sir William promptly impressed the deed and returned the seal to the colonial secretary together with an intimation that he declined to accept the resignation. The government acquiesced but promptly requested a direction from the Queen that the great seal of

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Denison - Inglis Clark more appropriate.

the colony should not be used in future except on the advice of the colonial ministry.

Denison and his family arrived in Madras in February. They found the heat oppressive and several of the younger children were sent to relations in England. He made his country home at Guindy Park, about five miles (8 km) from Government House, his main residence, but his refuge was at Ootacamund in the mountains about 7500 feet (2286 m) above sea level. There, among his other interests, he took an active part in the development of a Chinchora (quinine) plantation which became a boon to the natives.

Although the governor-general stood between him and the India Office, Denison was entitled as governor of Madras to communicate directly with the secretary of state for India. He continued his tireless correspondence with his superiors, often questioning the wisdom of their policy but always doing his best to implement it if his suggestions did not prevail. He remained zealous and efficient as an administrator, encouraging agriculture, extending irrigation and canals, promoting public health and advocating railways. He opened a school at Guindy for the children of his servants but never attempted to master the language and his comments upon the Hindus as a people were far from complimentary. While acting viceroy of India for six weeks in 1863 he altered policy by sending decisive reinforcements to an expeditionary force engaged with a troublesome tribe in Peshawar.

Denison's term in Madras ended in March 1866 and he returned to England by way of the Suez Canal which he examined and reported upon as an engineer. In 1868 he was appointed chairman of the inquiry into pollution of rivers in Britain. He gave many public lectures, some of which were published, and his eminently readable *Varieties of Vice-Regal Life* appeared in two volumes in 1870. He died at East Sheen, Surrey, on 19 January 1871. Lady Denison survived him until 1899. Of their thirteen children two had died in New South Wales.

In private life Denison was deeply devoted to his wife and children, his parents and his brothers. His first outdoor hobby in Hobart was his garden and in Sydney he had an aviary. His favourite pastimes were riding, fishing and shooting. As an ardent and informed conchologist he collected eight thousand species of Australian shells. He also had an interest in geology. In his big library he kept abreast of current literature and natural history. As a skilled engineer he turned readily to practical subjects and breathed fresh life into the scientific societies in Hobart and Sydney. But he remained unversed in philosophy and other humane disciplines that might have conditioned his severe judgments, quick temper and sense of personal superiority. An Anglican by faith, he was also a fervent fundamentalist to whom Darwinism was anathema. At a time when the spirit of Socrates was animating the discussions of accepted teaching and practices, Denison's limited vision and rigid mind made him insensitive to 'winds of change'.

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Print Publication Details: C. H. Currey, 'Denison, Sir William Thomas (1804 - 1871)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* , Volume 4, [Melbourne University Press](#), 1972, pp 46-53.