

form of provincial constitution.¹ The government of New South Wales was but little disturbed by the provisions of this act, which practically continued the constitution of the Legislative Council of 1842.² The powers of that body were, however, considerably extended and the franchise was placed upon a more liberal basis. For the first time, the Council was empowered to impose customs duties on all importations, subject to a prohibition against discriminatory duties.³ An even more liberal concession was contained in the provision whereby the legislature was enabled to amend its own constitution in respect to the membership of the Council, the qualifications of electors and members, the number of chambers and the nominee or elective character of its organization, but such bills should be reserved for the signification of the royal pleasure. The Crown still retained, in a large measure, its control of the land revenue and the civil list of the colony,⁴ and the Council was further restrained from passing any legislation repugnant to the laws of England. A constitution similar in character to that of New South Wales, was conferred on the other three colonies of Victoria, South Australia and Van Dieman's Land, into the last two of which the elective principle was now first introduced. A commission was subsequently issued to the Governor of New South Wales, appointing him Governor-General of all Her Majesty's Australian possessions, in addition to a separate commission designating him Governor of each of the Australian colonies.⁵

The colonies were greatly dissatisfied with the limited concessions of the new constitutions, which virtually perpetuated the rule of the official bureaucracies from which they had been struggling to free themselves. The grievances of the colonial legislatures against the administration of Downing Street were intensely real. They were denied the complete control over their 'provincial revenues and taxation, appointments to the higher offices of trust and emolument were still subject to the dictation of the Secretary for the Colonies, the legislative powers of the Councils were unnecessarily limited even in respect to domestic affairs, and above all the irresponsibility of the local

¹Speech of Under-Secretary Hawes, *Hansard* 1849, vol. 105, p. 1125.

²Quick and Garran, *Annot. Const. of Aust.* p. 40.

³Section 27. ⁴*Ibid.* 14.

⁵Quick and Garran, *Annot. Const. of Aust.*, p. 41.