

ILLAWARRA

TO THE EDITORS OF THE SYDNEY HERALD.

Gentlemen, I will thank you to insert the following in your paper, trusting it may meet the eyes of the Colonial Government, and induce them to do justice to this long neglected district.

The district of Illawarra, lying within 35 miles of the town of Sydney, can now only be approached by a circuitous route of about 70 miles, and then only on foot or horseback; there is no public road even marked to the district, or through it — the inconvenience, annoyance, and litigation this causes to the inhabitants, you will easily conceive.

Was this the whole of our complaints, we might live in hopes, as this is a passive evil; but the next great cause of complaint is a positive one. The total neglect of our harbour, or rather bight, which, by the continued practice of throwing in the ballast, is in a fair way of being shortly, rendered useless. Were the vessels that frequent this harbour employed in the service of the Settler it would be some palliative for so serious an evil — but when I inform you that most of the vessels that frequent here are employed in the conveying of cedar from the Government lands (rendering this land of no value), and encouraging bush-ranging, cattle-stealing, and all the various evils attending a set of lawless people, who live in the bush, without any permanent place of residence. By this system, the Revenue has been defrauded of more than £100,000 (a large sum you will say), the thing will prove itself; the stumps of the trees remaining is one of these positive facts, which no sophistry can overcome. I have, in fact, much under-rated the actual amount — and this is to enrich the publicans of Sydney, and the sly grog-shops here; had

a moiety of the sum been laid out for the improvement of this district to which I think we have some claim, it would have run out a pier to the harbour, and made a macadamised road to Sydney — shortening the distance one half. I regret to say, the thing appears to be countenanced by the Government, and winked at by the Magistrate — not that I wish in the least to cast any censure on that worthy gentleman, he found us in this state, and we all know, to those not immediately interested, it is prudent to slide on as our predecessors have done. (1).

It is a great calamity to this district, that not one of its inhabitants are considered respectable enough to assist in forming a Bench; had that been the case (from their local knowledge) the evil complained of could not have existed for the long period it has. I see many whose integrity is not doubted, but their habits are not exactly of that class to rank as J.P. in this Colony. I find that credit is not lessened by the want of the emoluments are done away with, and the trouble and responsibility are ill paid by the honour. But query, might not these individuals be selected as Magistrates for this particular place, like the Mayor of a Town — their honours and influence to cease on leaving their district? I am led to this train of ideas, from the incompetent persons we have had, in the shape of Subaltern Officers, to fill that important situation; for although our much respected Magistrate does not come up to my ideas of perfection, it has been errors of the head and not of the heart; it is possible he has followed the fashion of the times, by being more lenient than our Settlers may judge to be right, or at least, the punishments have not been adequate to the crimes.

As our Magistrate is on the point of leaving this, for a more lucrative situation, I avail myself of the opportunity of giving this hint, that the evil may be corrected for the future, and not out of any disrespect or hostile feeling — on the contrary, I wish the Gentleman every success and doubt if we shall have a better. (2).

I am, Gentlemen, yours, etc.

An Illawarra Settler.

- (1) Cousins — "The Garden of N.S.W." at page 31 writes:
 "In that year (1834) the authorities made raids on the cedar cutters, thieves and recovered 50,000 feet of illegally cut timber.
 "In 1835 another new law was made, granting licences for cedar cutting, the licence fee being £4 a year with penalties amounting to from £10 to £50 for breaking the law."
- (2) Also page 86:
 "The year 1833 brought great changes to the district. The military Government had been removed. The 39th Regiment left N.S.W. and its place in Illawarra was taken by a resident magistrate, Mr. Francis Allman, on a salary of £150 a year. As his clerk was Mr. J. H. A. Bennett, who was paid £70 a year plus 6/3 acting as postmaster. A Court of Requests was established. Mr. Allman at one time was at Port Macquarie."

— A.P.F.