JULY MEETING:

At the July meeting of the Society Mr. W. G. McDonald (Coun­
cillor) spoke on "Paulsgrove," its owner James Stares Spearing, and
the Paulsgrove Diary.

Spearing came free to Australia in 1825, and soon afterwards
married a fellow-passenger, Mrs. Harriet Overington. He received
promises of two grants of 1000 acres each, covering Keiraville and
much of West Wollongong, Mount Keira and Gwynneville. He called
this property "Paulsgrove," and set up his headquarters near the
present site of the Mormon Church. A further 1920 acres promised
to his wife took in most of the land east of Princes Highway from
Fairy Meadow Beach to north of Bellambi.

Spearing, who had been a master miller in England, built a wind-
mill, and water-mills on Byrarong Creek (hence its alternative name
of Millbrook), and showed himself a versatile and enterprising agri­
culturist, ready to experiment with practically anything in the way
of crops. He also successfully ran sheep and cattle on the property.
Apparently he was the first to suggest the making of Mount Keira
Road. On the side he conducted a guerilla war with a neighbour, "a
person of the name of Smith."

In 1833-34 a free man (whose name is believed to have been
Webster) employed on the property kept what is known as the Pauls-
grove Diary—mainly a record of farming operations and the day-to-
day running of the property, interspersed with bits of local news
such as the drowning of Dan the Postman in the floods, the sitting of
the Court of Requests ("Nearly all the district there it would have
been a hard job to have found an honest man amongst the set"),
churchgoing ("Mr. Wilkinson preached a capital sermon on scandal­
isng and slandering and interfering with our neighbours. Very suit­
able to the Illawarra gentry") and odd items such as the whale
which came ashore at Bellambi and was claimed by the Crown as
Fish Royal (the Queen being entitled to the whalebone for her cor­
sets). There were also records of numerous expeditions with young
Marcus Spearing, and their determined efforts to exterminate the
local wild life.

Finally Webster "had a deuce of a breeze with Spearing," and
shook the dust of Paulsgrove from his feet. He was drowned a few
years later at Tumut.

Spearing himself in 1835 sold the properties to Colonel John
Thomas Leahy, who died in 1839. His heir-at-law, his brother Daniel
Leahy, conveyed them to Robert and Charles Campbell (to whom
the grants finally issued in 1841) on trust for sale. The Campbells sold
off the properties in comparatively small lots, the purchasers includ­
ing Roger Therry (afterwards Sir Roger, a Supreme Court judge) and
Edmund Geard. Spearing by this time had returned to England and set
up as a gentleman. He sounds like a man who deserved to succeed,
and one would like to know more about him.

ERRATUM—In the July Bulletin, by a slip of the pen, the Society
was said to have received a copy of the diary from the A.N.U. The
original diary is in the Ferguson Collection in the Australian National
Library, Canberra. We gratefully acknowledge receipt of a photostat
copy from the Library.