

unconnected with New Zealand, to take evidence and determine the site. One Commissioner to be appointed by each of the above named Governors.

The full resolutions, as Carter explained, 'never appeared in print' but were embodied in a resolution put before the House by Domett on 20 November, except for the final provision which was withdrawn to 'allow an address to the Governor to be subsequently introduced in its stead'. Carter gives an excellent summary of the debate,⁸ amendments proposed and lost, personalities, the white anger of Stafford, who although a Nelson member was not a party to the agreement and known to be unwilling to rock the Auckland boat, the vital support of Fitzgerald, and final victory by 24 to 17 at two fifteen in the morning.

As Carter had said, the resolution, as carried in the Legislative Council nine days later, was to 'leave the decision on a site for the seat of Government in some suitable locality on Cook's Straits to the arbitrament of an impartial tribunal'. Dr David Monro, as Speaker, signed the copy of the resolution which was sent to Grey under the signature of Frederick Whitaker, Chief of the Executive and privately a strong Auckland supporter, with the suggestion that the Governors of three colonies would 'readily lend their aid in the selection of such Commissioners'. The resolution had anticipated the steps necessary to implement the decision with the requisite financial authority to acquire a site and erect buildings for the offices of Government, meetings of the General Assembly and the Governor's residence.⁹ Grey was enjoined to exercise haste as 'continued delay in the settlement of this question will only tend to keep alive those feelings of rivalry and jealousy between different parts of the Colony... which threaten at no distant period... [its] dismemberment...'

The Auckland reaction was to be expected, but the protest from Otago at this juncture was a little surprising. The Otago vote in the House was divided, five in favour and four against.¹⁰ Now, in a printed memorial, Otago asked the Governor to 'Suspend Taking Action... for the Removal of the Seat of Government... until after the next election'. The province's grievances would not be remedied simply by the proposed change. It was claimed, by some convolution of thought, that in 'making the Government of Auckland more difficult, the Removal will in Reality leave the Ministry less time to attend to the affairs of Otago'. It was, Otago considered, 'exceedingly undignified' to invoke the assistance of Governors of neighbouring colonies 'to adjust a purely domestic affair...'.¹¹

To Auckland it was not merely undignified but 'unconstitutional'. Whitaker's friends in the Provincial Council, on 28 December, in a special session between Christmas and New Year,