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THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND

C. 1540 - 1583

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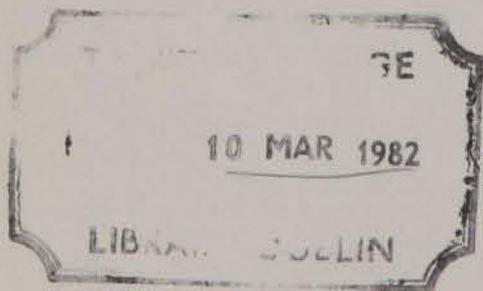
Ciaran Brady

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the University of Dublin, 1980.

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This thesis has not been submitted previously as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university. It is entirely my own work.

Seán Brody

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NOTE

In dating I have followed the modern system throughout. With the exception of a few archaic words, I have modernised spelling in quotations and allowed punctuation to be dictated by the sense. The contractions used in footnotes are generally as recommended in Rules for contributors to Irish Historical Studies (rev. ed., January 1968).

## INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of Tudor rule in Ireland has traditionally been concerned with precept rather than practice, with the aspirations of government rather than with its achievements, with the intellectual origins of policy rather than with its material results. The roots of this highly abstract mode of explanation may be traced to the rather crude sectarianism of the earliest attempts to recount the events of the century in a coherent fashion. For English protestant writers, like Barnaby Rich, or Irish catholic writers, like Philip O'Sullivan Beare and Peter Lombard, religion was the key which resolved all the confusion of events and allowed them to analyse the complex motivations of men into simple and irreducible elements concerning their faith in God.<sup>1</sup> Depending upon his religion, a man could be accounted a rebel or a loyalist, a patriot or an oppressor without any further investigation. Once the religious disposition of opposing groups had been uncovered, their practical interaction could be explained and, indeed, predicted with ease. The problem of interpretation, therefore, could be removed from the tangle of events, elevated to the level of a priori assumption and there resolved. The subsequent upheavals of Irish history with their strong religious overtones tended to reinforce this reductionist interpretation. It exerted a powerful influence over nineteenth century historiography, and even the more detached, professional history of our own century has not entirely escaped its spell.

Though academic historians in the past fifty years have been concerned with a good many issues other than religion, their

publication record displays a remarkably sustained interest in ecclesiastical themes. But more importantly, the tendency to seek an ultimate explanation for events in the realm of opposing religious ideologies has remained strong.<sup>2</sup> Even those historians, like Professor Quinn and Professor Canny, who have deliberately pursued the more secular issues of confiscation and colonisation, have been tempted to provide an explanation for the complicated course of Tudor rule in Ireland in terms of informing ideas. Professor Quinn has pointed suggestively to a number of Spanish and Italian intellectual influences which, he has argued, seem to have had some impact on the formulation of English policy toward Ireland.<sup>3</sup> More ambitiously, Professor Canny has attempted to pinpoint the period and to specify the manner in which these influences began to operate with decisive effects upon English government in Ireland.<sup>4</sup> For Canny, the origins of what was to be the forceful Elizabethan conquest are to be found in the irreconcilable ideological conflict between Englishmen and Irishmen which first became evident in the years between 1565 and 1576. Thus, even the most sophisticated and most scholarly of recent treatments retains within it structural elements with which the polemicists of the seventeenth century would have been entirely familiar.

The continuity of this ideological style of interpretation has been sustained by one silent and curiously untested assumption. A simple, one-dimensional relationship is held to exist between ideas and society which makes it possible to assume that once certain ideas or beliefs or world-views can be shown to have been held by particular actors, then the practical impact of these views may be easily read in the record of their actions. The

assumption is self-sustaining in a most gratifying fashion, for once ideas are held to be the motors of historical change, then every unexpected disturbance within the historical record may be accounted for by reference to some hitherto unnoticed ideological nuance, and the complete degeneration of any policy into outright violence can be neatly explained as the result of a clash of irreconcilable ideologies. There has of late been a proliferation of studies relating aspects of Tudor conduct in Ireland with subtle changes in English intellectual life.<sup>5</sup>

But for all its convenience this is a mode of explanation which must be questioned. In every political situation there exists an inevitable hiatus separating the process of conceptualisation from the process of execution, distinguishing the desirable from the merely feasible. An epistemological doubt necessarily afflicts every prediction of what may be realistically attempted and accomplished through policy. There are times when this gulf is easily bridged, when the policy-makers' perception of their problem and of the means of resolution available to them is reasonably in tune with the situation which actually exists. But there are other times when perceptions and realities are so much at odds as to create a complete discontinuity between the original intentions of policy and its eventual effects. Before any confident assertions as to the development of Tudor policy in Ireland are essayed, therefore, it is of crucial importance to inquire into the significance of such a gulf within the Tudor government structure in order to assess the extent to which it was capable of implementing any consistent policy at all.

Tudor government in England, it is now generally agreed, was a good deal more efficient than was once supposed.<sup>6</sup> But it was an efficiency of a most delicate nature, dependent upon the existence of a number of conditions which could not be created or reproduced at will. It was above all a government of relationships which derived its strength from its continuing ability to persuade established powers in the localities to accept and enforce its directives, and from its sensitivity to the interests and demands of the same localities. Throughout the Henrician and Elizabethan periods communications between the crown and the localities were maintained with sufficient success to create a practical consensus within the political nation. It was this consensus which enabled the crown to survive major dynastic, religious and governmental changes of the period without serious disruption, and which allowed the government to make its routine and occasionally extraordinary demands upon the country with a large degree of success. But the consensus was an extremely fragile one whose survival, as the revolts of 1536, 1569 and the crises of mid-century served to show, could never be complacently assumed. It was sustained only by the successful operation of a number of vitally important channels of communication.

Amongst these means parliament was the most formal.<sup>7</sup> Through parliament the crown communicated its most important commands to its subjects and elicited their support in the enforcement of those commands. In parliament also the subjects were given the opportunity to register an influence on matters concerning the commonweal and were grudgingly allowed a closely supervised but not insignificant role in the formulation of major policies of state. Other channels, however, were more important

for the maintenance of routine communications. The privy council was normally sufficiently large to reflect a number of regional interests.<sup>7</sup>

Councillors were often spokesmen for, or were available to lobbying by, special interest groups. More generally, the council maintained continuous links with the localities through the pricking of sheriffs, the appointment of commissions and the processing of a steady flow of information received from petitioners, plaintiffs, spies and clients. Similarly, the offices of the central administration acted as a kind of market-place where groups from different regions could compete for office, a reversion of office or the patronage of one in office.<sup>9</sup> The most important but least structured medium of intercommunication within the political nation was the court.<sup>10</sup> By attaching one of its scions to the entourage of a great courtier, a country family could expect to be kept in touch with the major political developments of the day and could assure themselves of powerful support in the pursuit of their own local interests.

These varied media served, to one degree or another, to permit a regular flow of information to pass between centre and periphery. They sustained the authority and practical effectiveness of the government and allowed the local powers the confidence to believe that their traditional privileges and concerns would be respected by their governors. In Ireland, however, such channels of communication existed either in a highly attenuated form or not at all.

There was an Irish parliament, of course, but even after the constitutional changes of 1541, which transformed it into a national institution, it remained an inactive and highly unrepresentative instrument of government. Had it been more frequently summoned and better attended, its value as a medium of intercourse between crown and subject would still have been seriously diminished by the restrictions of Poyning's law and its control by a non-native executive. In constitutional theory, after 1541 Ireland was an independent kingdom in its own right, but in practice Ireland's sovereign always ruled from England. The Irish council and the offices of the central administration were similarly unrepresentative and impervious to the influence of the vast majority of the local powers. Even to those who could exert some authority over them they had little enough to offer, for they were without the ready access to royal patronage which their English counterparts enjoyed. Finally, there was no Irish court. The viceroy might dispense a little favour of his own, but he offered only a most indirect avenue to any powerful court connection. For those in Ireland who sought to tap the crown's largesse in their own interests there was no short cut: they must needs compete with Englishmen at Westminster where socially, historically and geographically they were at a grave disadvantage to their rivals.

The very elements, therefore, which lent coherence and continuity to the Tudor polity in England were critically wanting in their Irish kingdom. Though the Anglo-Norman and Gaelic lordships of Ireland were, as I shall suggest later, much more closely integrated than might be supposed, theirs was a union which was altogether independent of the government which claimed authority

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over them all. Thus, as Henry VII was amongst the first to realise, it was impossible for the crown to maintain even the most routine administrative efficiency in Ireland without direct and continuous supervision from England.<sup>11</sup> It would have placed the Tudors' rudimentary administrative machine under severe strain to meet even this minimum requirement, yet their difficulties were grievously aggravated by an additional problem which they set for themselves in the years after 1534: the Tudors determined to pursue a consistent Irish policy.

The Tudor regime rarely made policy on its own. When the monarchs were compelled to make decisions of a general or national significance they normally had recourse to parliament to initiate the changes and looked to the conventional channels of communication as means of implementing and monitoring them. If they did not, as the experience of the government of Protector Somerset served to show, they ran a grave risk of encountering resistance and failure.<sup>12</sup> As a rule, however, the monarchs preferred not to make policy at all. They were accustomed, rather, to wait upon events, to react to issues only when confrontation was unavoidable and even then to make the least response possible. Yet, ironically, it was in Ireland, where their administrative tools were at their most deficient and where the possibility of organising and sustaining a political consensus was at its most hopeless, that the Tudors set about the implementation of their most ambitious policy. Their plan for Ireland was far more grandiose than any of the expeditions of Henry VIII's early reign, far more audacious even than Somerset's short-lived Scottish adventure. It entailed nothing less than the systematic extension of English law, government

and culture throughout the whole island.

There were differences, it is true, amongst English administrators in Ireland as to the policy best suited to meet this ambitious objective, differences which have allowed later historians to discern "tough" or "soft" variations in Tudor attitudes.<sup>13</sup> But even in terms of strategy considerable agreement prevailed. Certain extraordinary measures, it was generally accepted, would be required to bring the project to fulfilment. Early on the process was formally inaugurated by a significant constitutional change which raised Ireland from the status of an inferior lordship into an independent patrimony of the Tudor monarchy in its own right. Thereafter Gaelic and Anglo-Norman lords were to be persuaded to renounce their traditional autonomy and to accept the authority and protection of a common sovereign as equal subjects.<sup>14</sup> A number of special techniques were also considered expedient in order to bring this change of allegiance about. Complicated legal and tenurial arrangements would have to be finalised by means of diplomacy. The procedures of the English legal system were to be introduced to an unaccustomed populace by means of the extraordinary presidential councils which had functioned so successfully in the more lawless parts of the Tudors' other kingdom. Finally, the planting of ready-made pockets of English civility in the greatly underpopulated Irish landscape was to be encouraged wherever possible. Each of these options was canvassed on one occasion or another by the majority of those who proffered advice on Irish policy without any sense of inconsistency in terms of principle: they were merely different means of approaching the ultimate establishment of normal English society in Ireland.

The criteria of opportunity and feasibility did, however, create a practical rank ordering which lent an air of consistency to strategy even while allowing for some alterations in technique. Diplomacy was the easiest, cheapest and potentially the most promising of methods: plantation was risky, expensive and limited in scope. Inevitably, English policy was concerned rather more with the former than with the latter. But there were times when such an ordering could be entirely reversed: it all depended on the opportunities available. This flexibility within generally agreed parameters remained the chief characteristic of official English policy in Ireland until the close of the 1570s, and even then as disillusion with over-ambitious scheming deepened within government circles, the gradual extension of English law and social structures remained the explicit objective of English policy in Ireland.<sup>15</sup>

Treaty

The actual conduct of Tudor government in Ireland, however, forms a sharp contrast to this admirable theoretical consistency.<sup>16</sup> Its record is one of chronic administrative discontinuity, of rapid changes of government and of mood; of English viceroys turned desperate by the discharge of their office and others merely become disillusioned, of old Irish friends betrayed and new native allies turned traitor. Most of all the simple narrative of events conveys the inescapable impression of an ever rising tide of resistance and rebellion.

Between the 1540s and the early 1580s, the period with which this study is concerned, almost every undertaking of the Tudors in Ireland went badly awry. The attempt to recover the Anglo-Norman magnates from the excesses of bastard feudalism resulted only in four bloody and costly rebellions, culminating in the complete

destruction of one great house and the serious alienation of the other three. Efforts at enforcing the ideals of surrender and regrant were the cause of at least two major wars and innumerable lesser conflicts with the Gaelic Irish. Colonising enterprises either disappeared altogether or in surviving became wholly severed from their original inspiration. By the early 1580s the community of the Pale, the very group from whom the crown expected consistent support for its policy, had become dangerously alienated from the Dublin administration.

These adversities, moreover, occurred not within a context of any loss of resolution, but amidst a veritable intensification of endeavour. In the four decades English military and civilian presence in Ireland increased enormously and crown expenditure rose accordingly. Between 1540 and 1547 King Henry VIII despatched only £46,800 to Ireland - a mere £5,850 p.a. Under Edward VI, however, the cost of maintaining the military establishment rocketed to almost £24,500 p.a. Queen Mary's annual expenditure on Ireland was, despite several efforts at saving, even slightly higher. Though Secretary Cecil attempted to introduce some economy measures in the early years of Elizabeth, the transmission of English treasure to Ireland mounted steadily throughout the 1560s. Between 1564 and 1569 an average of £21,500 was sent to Ireland each year while the overall costs of the military establishment amounted to more than £25,000 p.a. In the crisis years between 1569 and 1573 more than £43,000 was being spent annually and throughout the 1570s the average annual cost of the military establishment remained in excess of £35,000. Rebellion in Munster in the early 1580s brought about a major increase in expenditure. Between 1579 and

1584 the upkeep of the queen's army cost more than £300,000. By the middle of the 1580s Elizabeth had spent some £900,000 on the government of Ireland and the aim of establishing English civility seemed as far as ever from fulfilment. For all their increased expenditure of energy and treasure in Ireland, the Tudor ambition of planting English law and order in the island appeared to recede further and further into the distance as the century advanced.<sup>17</sup>

This general impression of failure is not merely the product of a retrospective reading of the main events of the century. It is to be seen in the writings of contemporary government servants. It appears in its most detached form in the frequent complaints of counsellors about the crown's failure to maintain a stable administration or to pursue a line of policy with any degree of consistency.<sup>18</sup> It may be discerned more revealingly in the disenchanted later writings of experienced administrators such as Sir Thomas Cusack and Sir John Alen (former lord chancellors both), Sir Nicholas White, the master of the rolls and Sir Edward Fitton, the president of Connaught.<sup>19</sup> Most important of all, it occurs with increasing regularity in the papers of the viceroys themselves. Lord Lieutenant Sussex's later correspondence is that of a man bewildered and deeply oppressed by his own inexplicable ineffectiveness as a governor.<sup>20</sup> Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam's reveals a bitter and growing cynicism.<sup>21</sup> The memoirs of Sir Henry Sidney, the most ambitious viceroy of the 1560s and 1570s, record above all else his profound sense of failure.<sup>22</sup>

These disillusioned sentiments and the blighted factual background against which they were expressed do not fit easily with the notion of a deliberate evolution of policy, or "a pattern" of conquest, which ideological interpretations have conventionally

assumed. On the contrary, they seem to argue that whatever the ideological motivations of Tudor policy in Ireland, the policies themselves were simply too ambitious for the executive tools which attempted to implement them. They suggest, that is, that the gap between intention and action within the Tudor governing structure was a chasm abounding with difficulty. The following study is an attempt to investigate that suggestion. It is concerned to examine the methods by which the administration in Ireland sought to give effect to the ideal of establishing English civility in the island in the forty years or so after that ideal was formally enunciated in the parliament of 1541. It seeks to analyse the innovations to which a naturally conservative government was compelled to have recourse in order to meet its unprecedented commitments, and it attempts to assess the results, intended and otherwise, of those administrative innovations. In contrast to interpretations of an ideological character, the scope of this study is narrow and its mode of inquiry negative: it is concerned with means rather than ends and it seeks to uncover not the underlying intentions of English policy in Ireland, but what happened when the fulfilment of those aims turned out to be elusive in practice.

PART I: POLITICS

## CHAPTER I

The "Irish Polity" in English Perspective

Two developments in early sixteenth-century England were of crucial importance in determining subsequent events in Ireland. The first was, of course, the re-establishment of stable monarchical rule under the first two Tudors. It was this which again made possible sustained English intervention in Irish affairs, an intervention which soon made clear for the century to come the natural limits within which all future government action would be confined. The expedition of the earl of Surrey in 1520-21 is now recognised to have been of seminal importance in this regard. Surrey's experience made plain that any idea of reconquering Ireland by force was simply too ambitious to be contemplated by men of realistic political sentiments. From this lesson the intention of winning Ireland "rather ... by sober ways, politic drifts, and amiable persuasions, founded in law and reason, than by rigorous dealing" took root.<sup>1</sup> King Henry's famous prescription did not, however, amount to a specific political programme. It could allow as well of the most cynical Machiavellianism as of the sincerest humanitarianism. It did not rule out the occasional use of coercion, and it did not imply the universal application of conciliation. In practice it led to a blend of both. But it none the less fixed the parameters of any future policy toward Ireland. Because it was expensive, because it would not work, total conquest was abandoned as a reasonable political option: some less extravagant alternative would have to be found. This negative prescription was probably the one constant attitude displayed by the Tudor monarchs in regard to Ireland. It was a view to which

King Henry remained committed throughout his reign, and one which his successors continued to hold either by assertion or by implicit acceptance. Even in the later decades of the century, after so much experience of the risks it entailed, Queen Elizabeth made this limited commitment explicit in several periods of crisis. In 1599 at the height of the nine years war, she disavowed any intention of conquest by public proclamation:<sup>2</sup>

"We do profess hereby to the world", she declared, "that we are so far from any such purpose as the very name of conquest in this case seems so absurd to us as we cannot imagine upon which ground it could enter into any man's conceit ..."

It was in the context of this fixed limitation upon the range of possibilities available to the English government that the second, less obvious but almost concurrent, development of the early sixteenth-century assumed its significance. | This was the gradual emergence of a new and more sharply defined concept of policy. | Under the influence of the later Florentine humanists, numbers of intellectual Englishmen were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with traditional moralistic and personal explanations of social evil. They denied that society's recurring ills were providential and unavoidable and asserted instead that genuine improvements could be made to society by the application of man's God-given but practical intelligence. The assertion did not imply any challenge to the Christian tradition: indeed it was itself partially the result of a heightening of religious consciousness that took place in Northern Europe on the eve of the Reformation. Nor did it lead to a radical revision of the sources of evil in

the world. Yet from this intellectual premise it became possible to advance a new and specifically political reform strategy. If social problems could be analysed in a rational way, then the proposed solutions could be, and indeed ought to be, implemented by that part of the body of the realm charged with the responsibility of protecting the welfare of the whole community, the crown. The government of the realm could be seen, therefore, not merely as the defender of the community, but as "a potentially constructive agency through whose affairs the intelligence of its citizens as well as of specially designated advisors may be applied to the practical problems of the national community". Thus, in the 1520s and the 1530s, the King and his chief ministers were plied with a mounting number of treatises claiming to provide solutions for a variety of political and social problems. These propositions abandoned the hortatory style which was typical of medieval tracts, and presented a detailed and detached analysis of the problem under review and of the solution to be applied. In these treatises, and in their not infrequent endorsement by the royal government, "policy" and "policy-making" in the modern sense began to take shape.<sup>3</sup>

The significance of this development for Ireland was not direct; few of the early English counsellors showed any particular interest in Irish problems. But because it was at heart an intellectual process, it was capable of transcending the physical barrier of the Irish Sea and of taking root in the minds of many who confronted the myriad social and political evils of Ireland in their everyday lives. The men most influenced by this trend were, naturally, resident in the English Pale. Lawyers, government servants, ecclesiastics, merchants, they were themselves either

newly arrived English settlers, men who had been educated at the universities or at the Inns of Court, or men who had cause for regular intercourse with England.<sup>4</sup>

The five shires of Dublin, Kildare, Louth, Meath and Westmeath which constituted the Pale were the most English part of Ireland. The region was possessed of at least one respectable urban centre and numerous market towns. The first four shires enjoyed a reasonably stable agricultural economy. Arable rather than pastoral farming prevailed in the Pale, presided over by a substantial landlord group of lesser noble and upper gentry status. The instruments of English local administration continued to function with some effect in the shires and in the city of Dublin and the leaders of the rural and urban communities maintained close links with the central administration.<sup>5</sup>

The Pale, however, was not the bastion of surviving English law and custom which many contemporaries liked to suppose. The ditch which surrounded it offered no real defence against the invasions of the Gaelic Irish, and even its very heart was vulnerable to sudden attack. The city of Dublin retained several of the features of a frontier town until late in the century. Attacks upon the city by the Gaelic clans of Wicklow and Carlow were frequent in the early decades, and as late as 1573 the gaelicised Keatings of Kildare could execute a successful raid upon the city during which the central shopping thoroughfare of Dame Street was looted and burned.<sup>6</sup> Further from the city, along the borders of Louth, Meath and Kildare, such raids in pursuit of spoil were unexceptional, and violent encounters between raiding parties and local defence forces were common. The image of the lawless men

who lived without was indelibly etched upon the consciousness of the ordinary Palesman. His experience of the Gaelic Irish was continuous and vivid; memories of 1527, when Cahir O'Conor had himself ritualistically installed as king of Leinster at Tara, in the heartland of Meath, remained strong in the Pale.<sup>7</sup>

But the Pale was not only vulnerable to attack from without; it was also susceptible to inherent tendencies to decay. It is possible to draw a rough and ready distinction between its coastal and western counties.<sup>8</sup> Clearly the degree of concession to the modes of the Gaelic system was greatest in the borderlands; in Westmeath, still nominally part of the Pale, the social and economic practices of the great families, the Daltons, Dillons, Tuites and Tyrrells were indistinguishable from those of the degenerate Anglo-Norman lordships in the outlying provinces.<sup>9</sup> The symptoms of gaelicisation and of bastard feudalism faded progressively toward the east. The extent of landholding units, the size of households and the social and political influence of landlords generally decreased. But, though it is useful for analytic purposes, this geographic distinction within the Pale should not be over-emphasised. Intermarriage, linking families and interests from both areas, was common, and by this means several of the leading families of the Pale straddled the differences in social organisation with ease.<sup>10</sup> Many whose power rested upon the informal and illegal extortions of bastard feudalism also held crown land in counties Dublin and Meath which they exploited in an entirely legal fashion.<sup>11</sup> Dublin lawyers commonly acted as attorneys and agents for the great feudal magnates, and readily attached their interests to those of their clients.<sup>12</sup> Finally, geography itself tended to blur the distinction. No two cultures could be said to exist in a community which was separated by no

physical barriers and in which only a morning's ride lay between the peaceful and ordered settlements of the coast and the nests of bastard feudalism.

The continuity of the Pale with the less orderly regions of Anglo-Norman settlement was reflected in the writings of its own "articulate citizens". If few of them actually lived within the borderlands, several resided in a zone midway between the coasts and the borders. Not surprisingly, then, they drew no qualitative distinctions within the Anglo-Norman community. Their perception of the environment they occupied is clearly suggested in the metaphors to which they had most frequent recourse: decay and degeneration.

The Palesmen's analysis of their own situation was historical in form and racist in substance. They were, they believed, the surviving remnants of the great Anglo-Norman race which had commenced the conquest of Gaelic Ireland almost four centuries before, but had shortly after lost its spirit and had ever since been imprisoned in an unremitting cycle of decline. Though they condemned the evil conduct of the degenerate feudal magnates both on the borders and in the outlying provinces, they did not attempt to distinguish them generically as a group distinct from the Anglo-Norman survivors in the Pale. Indeed, their claim to attention was given its edge by their conviction that the very same process of corruption which had infected the provinces would at length engulf the entire race if the crown did not prevent it by a timely infusion of fresh English blood.

The classic exposition of the Palesmen's case was contained in a treatise written in the early 1530s by Patrick Finglas, a native of west Dublin and a baron in the court of Exchequer,

entitled "A Breviate of the getting of Ireland and of the decay of the same".<sup>13</sup> The greater part of Finglas's book was taken up by an interpretative narrative of the way in which the initial impetus of the Norman conquest had been dissipated and the would-be conquerors had been corrupted by gaelicisation. Isolated from their mother-country, the Anglo-Normans, Finglas argued, had been overwhelmed by the superior forces of their Gaelic enemies, and had succumbed to the native customs only in order to survive. But the surrender, he insisted, had neither been sudden nor willing, and the remaining descendant would respond readily if England would launch the conquest anew. This belief in the regenerability of the conqueror's blood was widely shared amongst Finglas's fellow-Palesmen, and although occasional expressions of dissent were made in the decades following the 1530s, it remained the predominant view of Anglo-Irish reformers.<sup>14</sup> It did, however, undergo a certain change in temperament. The "re-conquest" of the original Anglo-Norman colony came increasingly to be seen, less as an overt attack upon the Gaelic Irish, than as the establishment amongst them of the social and legal system which still survived amongst the uncorrupted survivors of the original conquerors. This "softer" attitude, which regarded the Anglo-Norman revival not in terms of the winning of territory, but of the re-establishment of social principles and values, was current at the time when Finglas wrote<sup>15</sup> and by the reign of Elizabeth, it had become the chief substantive prescription of the formal Anglo-Irish case. One of the most influential exponents of the revised version was Rowland White.<sup>16</sup> Descendant and current head of an Anglo-Norman family which held title to an extensive area of land in the Dufferin, White was anxious to gain government aid in the recovery of his patrimony. But he argued in

general that the aims of the crown would best be realised by a greater support for and dependence upon indigenous Anglo-Norman effort. English attempts to reconquer the island through the use of an army and without enlisting the support of the old community, White argued, had never succeeded, and had resulted only in the alienation of loyal subjects. In place of these futile efforts he proposed a detailed programme of reform and improvement that would revitalise the Anglo-Norman community and place it at the spearhead of English advance into Ireland. The assimilation of Gaelic Ireland would then occur, not through the physical force of English might, but through the exemplary force of Anglo-Norman prosperity and peace.

The writings of Finglas and White, as numerous surviving copies testify, were readily assimilated by Englishmen and were a crucial influence in the formation of government policy toward the great Anglo-Norman feudal magnates. Robert and Walter Cowley, father and son of a recently settled English family, were among the first to transform the Palesmen's outlook into specific policy recommendations for the English privy council in the 1530s.<sup>17</sup> In the 1540s Walter Cowley was among the most outspoken proponents of the case for the greater involvement of the Anglo-Norman community in the formulation and execution of government policy. It is to him that one of the earliest recorded proposals for the establishment of provincial presidencies with the support of the local magnates belongs.<sup>18</sup> The Cowleys' views were doubtless influenced by their adherence to the house of Ormond. But more detached figures also shared their outlook. Lord Deputy Grey, even in the aftermath of the Kildare rebellion, desired to encourage the border-lords of the Pale to extend the area under

English control, and Lord Chancellor Alen, though he remained deeply mistrustful of their attitudes, nevertheless conceded that their cooperation was essential to the advance of government authority.<sup>19</sup> The viceroalties of Sir Anthony St. Leger mark the high point of cooperation between the greater and lesser feudal lords and the government, but belief in the potential of the Anglo-Normans persisted into the reign of Elizabeth. Lord Deputy Sidney addressed the old community in the parliament of 1569-71 "as a nation derived from our ancestors, ingrafted and incorporate into one body with us ... yoked together under one obedience, English blood and English hearts."<sup>20</sup> Even in 1577, when English awareness of the intractability of the great feudal magnates had grown sharper, Lord Chancellor Gerrard remained convinced that the most corrupt of their number could be reformed by the firm administration of English justice within their territories.<sup>21</sup>

Confidence in the regenerability of the Anglo-Normans, however, did not lead to an underestimation of the difficulty of the task. The magnates' continuing exaction of a large number of Gaelic and feudal services from their subordinates, known collectively as "coyne and livery", was a constant source of outrage to Palesmen and English observers alike. Both groups agreed that the system of "coyne and livery" was the outstanding obstacle to the advance of English law in Ireland; both were agreed that the Anglo-Norman lords were among the chief maintainers and propagators of the system, and both agreed that any attempt to destroy it would have to begin with the Anglo-Normans.

Yet a determination to root out "coyne and livery" did not conflict with the prior assumption that those who most assiduously practised it were capable of salvation. For despite the virtual disappearance of several lesser families into the surrounding Gaelic environment, the great feudal nobility of Leinster, Munster and Connaught, to whom many smaller lords still paid allegiance, continued to display unmistakable traces of their common heritage with contemporary Englishmen. In the early sixteenth century, the earls of Kildare and Ormond were clearly feudal marcher lords of a type familiar in Wales and in the border-shires. Though they allied with the Gaelic Irish and assumed Gaelic customs when it suited them, they retained their own distinct cultural characteristics in their personal and social forms of conduct. They spoke English that was clearly comprehensible to English administrators and were accustomed to English attire. The ninth earl of Kildare, to judge from his library, seems to have aspired to an unusual level of civility.<sup>22</sup> Although they made use of Gaelic legal codes when it suited them, the Butlers and the Kildare Geraldines still applied English law within their own liberties.<sup>23</sup> Their methods of household administration and their offices of local government were Anglo-Norman in origin. Rents from ordinary leasehold property, let out in normal English fashion, continued to constitute a major part of their revenues.<sup>24</sup> Though partible inheritance was common amongst them, as indeed it was in many parts of England, primogeniture remained the rule in the transmission of social and political influence. This dualism, which deliberately blended their inherited legal framework with Gaelic or merely arbitrary modes of conduct, existed also among

the great feudal magnates of Munster and Connaught. Gaelicisation was naturally more advanced in the west, but the Desmond Geraldines and the Burkes of Clanrickard retained at least the external structures of Anglo-Norman local government, and there is evidence that they continued to lease some of their properties in an orthodox fashion.<sup>25</sup> The sixteenth-century earls of Desmond all spoke fluent English and assumed English attire when the occasion demanded.<sup>26</sup> Though they were probably the most "degenerate" of the four great families, the Burkes of Clanrickard preserved an identity distinct from the Gaelic septs which surrounded them. Ulick "na gceann", the first earl of Clanrickard, despite his formidable sobriquet, was regarded until his death as an alien overlord of the Gaelic Irish.<sup>27</sup> His son Richard acquired in the first earl's house an education which equipped him with a knowledge of English etiquette and an ability to write with a clear and individual style. The sobriquet which he earned from the annalists left his own cultural identity in no doubt: they named him "Risteard Sasanach".<sup>28</sup>

The obvious success of the great lords' adaptation to a hostile environment, and their ability to maintain some elements of their Anglo-Norman heritage and to discard others at will, underlined the expedient nature of their "degeneracy". Those who were sympathetic towards them believed that their lawlessness had been forced upon them, and that they would welcome the return of English law without demur. Sceptics argued that their surrender to Gaelic ways had been calculated, that they had greatly enhanced their individual powers thereby, and that only a determined government effort to detach them from their illegal practices

would reclaim them to their allegiance. But despite such differences in emphasis, most observers were agreed upon the nature of the Anglo-Norman decay. It was an essentially artificial effect and as such it was accessible to rational reform by the enforcement of a system of incentives and disincentives.

Recommendations of a policy through which such a system was to be given effect differed, of course, from opinions as to the disposition of the great lords. But the problem to be treated, it was generally accepted, was the familiar one of curbing the over-mighty subject.

The apparent familiarity of the problem greatly facilitated the understanding of those Englishmen who were attempting to come to terms with the complexities of the Irish problem. The initial steps were, at least, clear: the same means which had reduced the over-weening powers of the English feudal lords could be applied to the over-mighty subjects of the crown in Ireland. Such an approach, moreover, promised one further advantage. The power and influence which the great lords continued to enjoy within Gaelic society offered the hope that that highly unfamiliar problem might be rendered more susceptible to investigation by following the paths first laid down by the old conquerors.

The writers of the Pale, however, had little enlightenment to offer to those in search of a genuine understanding of Gaelic society. Though in recent years historians have discovered important subtleties within Gaelic social and political structures, though they have come to appreciate certain conservative elements which lent an unexpected stability to the Gaelic polity and though they are becoming increasingly aware of significant political developments within the Gaelic lordships in the later middle ages, little intimation of their discoveries is to be found

in the writings of the Anglo-Irish counsellors.<sup>29</sup> For them the Gaelic polity was stagnant, violent and lawless. The classic indictment occurs in the anonymous "report" from the Pale in 1515.<sup>30</sup> Gaelic Ireland, according to the writer, was made up of sixty independent countries ruled by captains

"that live only by the sword and obey to no other temporal person but only to himself that is strong, and every of the said captains makes war and peace for himself and holds by the sword and has imperial jurisdiction within his room ... and he that has the strongest army and the hardest sword amongst them has best right and title."

Few of his successors departed from the writer's bleak and dogmatic view of the Gaelic polity. Finglas and Edward Walshe were equally dismissive and even those like Sir Thomas Cusack, Rowland White and Richard Stanihurst, who adopted a more sympathetic attitude toward the Gaelic Irish themselves, had nothing good to say of Gaelic political forms. Their references were vague and impressionistic and were shortly concluded by a round condemnation of the entire system and a confident assertion that its corrupt customs would rapidly crumble before the superior strength of English law.<sup>31</sup>

This general vagueness and utter disapprobation was easily assimilated by English observers who followed the Palesmen in other matters. Writing in the early 1570s Edward Tremayne echoed the reports of 1515:-

"The Irish government as I at the least have conceived"; he declared, " is that one great lord possesses and rules a country ... he is followed of all warlike people of the same, viz., horsemen galloglasses and kerne and with these multitudes he uses the inferior people at his will and pleasure. He eats and spends upon them with man, horse and dog. He uses man wife or children according to his own list, without any means to be withstood or again-said, not only as an absolute king but as a tyrant or a lord over bondsmen ... So as, in short terms, a man may say the Irish rule is such a government as the mightiest do what they list against the inferiors."<sup>32</sup>

Tremayne merely summarised the conventional view of English administrators in Ireland. Whether they advocated a policy of coercion or persuasion, almost all were agreed with Sir Edward Fitton, who after a short experience in Connaught, concluded that the Gaelic polity was "not worthy to be called a commonwealth".<sup>33</sup> These and similar observations have sometimes been cited as conscious or unconscious justifications of a policy of coercion which had already been determined.<sup>34</sup> Yet the point made was essentially neutral. The Palesmen's odium, it has been recently argued, was deliberately reserved for the viciousness of Gaelic political practices; it did not imply a parallel contempt for other aspects of Gaelic culture or for the clansmen themselves. Certainly several Palesmen and Englishmen, including Tremayne himself, proceeded from such outright denunciations to advocate a policy

toward the Gaelic Irish that was peaceful and conciliatory in intent.<sup>35</sup>

The optimistic prognostications of these men were not asserted in contradiction to their gloomy analyses of Gaelic politics; paradoxically it was their very conviction that Gaelic society was in the throes of complete anarchy that made the problem of reforming it appear to be so simple and feasible. Because it appeared to be so utterly determined by the sheer play of violence, Palesmen and sympathetic Englishmen regarded the Gaelic system not as some exotic polity whose internal functioning was beyond their ken, but as a pathetic example of a society without law and as a salutary reminder of the indispensability of a sound legal system for the preservation of an ordered and peaceful society. The unqualified pessimism of their analysis thus bred an equally simple solution: the land of Ireland could be regained by England and the allegiance of the ordinary people won for the crown merely through the establishment of the English legal system throughout the entire island. On the question of the means by which this should be done, of course, no general consensus existed. Not everyone who accepted Tremayne's description of Gaelic Ireland agreed with his relatively mild prescriptions for assimilation, and few held fast to consistent strategic proposals for all circumstances. But the general point of the analysis was almost universally accepted: Gaelic Ireland presented no distinct cultural challenge. If a distinct polity had ever existed, it was now in such an extreme state of decay as to require no preliminary efforts to destroy it. The taking of Gaelic Ireland could be easily assimilated into the general campaign for the regeneration of English law and English civility within the Anglo-Norman lordships.<sup>36</sup>

Belief in the utter lawlessness of Gaelic society, then, led easily toward an understanding of the problem of Irish governance as an integrated and uniform whole. But it was altogether unnecessary for every Englishman to have followed the line of thinking traced here in order to have reached the same conclusion. For a solid manifestation of the essential coherence of "the Irish polity" existed before their eyes in a guise so unmistakable as to make much reflection upon it superfluous. This was the network of inter-ethnic faction which prevailed throughout the island. The outlook of experienced administrators in Ireland was dominated by the concept of faction. Its dominant influence continued to appal newcomers to office throughout the century; it was as much a scandal to Sir Henry Wallop in the 1580s as it had been to John Alen and his colleagues in the 1530s.<sup>37</sup> Those who reflected in general upon the problems of Irish governance were fully conscious of its crucial significance; it took a central place in the writings of the Anglo-Norman reformers of the 1520s and 1530s; it was the key idea around which Sussex formulated his "Opinion of the state of Ireland" in 1560; it was a major factor in Tremayne's analyses, and it formed the general background against which Sir Nicholas Malby presented his plan for "the Governance of Ireland".<sup>38</sup> But for the most part, the influence of factional alignment was so pervasive that it was simply taken for granted by working administrators as an intrinsic feature of Irish politics. Government officials then studied genealogies as they now scrutinise curricula vitae; they assessed men by their liveries as they now make judgements upon personal attire. A sound knowledge of the structure of the great factional alliances was adjudged to be an essential working tool for any administrator.

Everyone acquired it and applied it to any issue that confronted them. The understanding of factional politics was at once so necessary and so general that it is not surprising that it is only in a set of notes compiled to brief a novice about to assume his first service in the country that we get the most complete account of the state of factional alliances in Elizabethan Ireland.<sup>39</sup>

"All the factions as I could by my observation find" writes the anonymous instructor" depend upon two superiors, Geraldine and Butler. As these two have prevailed over the whole realm, so are diverse others sprung up almost in every family (or nation as they term them) and in every province; wherin two special over-rule the rest as the other two the whole."

The writer then proceeded to present a gazetteer of the ruling factions within the four provinces and of their lesser allies. In Ulster the two divided superiors were, of course, O'Neill and O'Donnell. "O'Neill and his followers are naturally Geraldines. O'Donnell and his naturally Butlers". The O'Neills of Clandeboy, Magennis, the MacCartans "do chiefly respect O'Neill and so are consequently Geraldine". The Scots of the Route paid a similar allegiance. The principal adherents of the O'Donnells were the O'Gallaghers, the O'Dohertys and the MacSweeneys, though some of the latter, the author noted, were divided from the rest and were Geraldines. He then went on to describe the remaining provinces in the same fashion. The two intermediate leaders of faction in Connaught were the Clanrickard Burkes, who were Butlers, and the Burkes of Lower Connaught, who were Geraldine in sympathy. The

several Gaelic septs of the province were divided in their allegiance between these two. In Thomond, the O'Briens were deeply divided among themselves but the ruling family looked to Clanrickard for support and were indirectly dependents of the Butlers; its rivals were, of course, Geraldine. In Munster the Geraldine-Butler rivalry survived the destruction of the Desmond lordship as the remaining families and septs continued to conduct themselves in their accustomed manner. Faction had taken root even within the Pale. County Dublin was predominantly, but not exclusively, Butler in sympathy; Kildare was, with small exceptions, Geraldine. Counties Meath, Westmeath and Louth were divided in their support of the great houses.

Though it produced a bewildering web of direct and indirect connections, the pervasiveness of faction none the less acted as an important simplifying agency. It made more intelligible the otherwise opaque political pattern of Gaelic and Anglo-Norman Ireland, and it offered a practical guide to those forced to tread a delicate path through unknown territory. Once a man's allegiance was known, his outlook and his future conduct might be predicted. An entire policy could be mounted and maintained upon such crucial information. Faction was the great homogeniser, the link that transcended and eroded the social and cultural differences of the land of Ireland.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, despite the ethnic premises upon which their argument was based, and despite their woefully inadequate understanding of Gaelic society, it became possible for Englishmen to comprehend the Gaelic and Anglo-Norman lordships, both conceptually and in real terms, as different parts of a single integrated political

system with one uniform and fundamentally simple problem.

Lawlessness, or more strictly the absence of English law, appeared to be the basic problem of the whole Irish polity; it arose and was perpetuated through the active collusion of the Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Normans, a collusion that was made manifest in the inter-ethnic factional system they had devised.

It was this understanding of the essential homogeneity of the Irish problem which underlay the English attempt, launched in 1542, to replace faction with an alternative inter-ethnic system, in which both groups held in mutual allegiance to a common sovereign. The passage of the act of kingly title in the parliament of that year ended forever Ireland's medieval constitutional status as an island divided between the English king's feudal vassals and his Irish enemies. Thenceforth all its inhabitants were recognised as equally his subjects.<sup>41</sup> St Leger, the lord deputy who presided over the parliament, immediately set about giving practical effect to its declaration of intent through widespread diplomatic settlements. But even after his particular strategy had been abandoned, the assumptions on which he operated were retained by his successors. It was evident, for instance, in Lord Lieutenant Sussex's grand progresses through the island, and in Sir Henry Sidney's whirlwind perambulations. Most importantly, it lay behind both men's quest for a more satisfactory form of surrender and regrant. But it was to be seen also in a number of less obvious ways: in the language of Crown proclamations and in the royal letters of praise and exhortation that were distributed frequently to the lords of the land; in the form of chancery documents and the parlance of administrators, and in the network of personal connections which the governors and chief administrators

established with the indigenous powers in the outlying parts of the realm.

The consensus which underlay this commitment to the unification of the realm of Ireland was not fortuitous and it was not dependent for its continued existence upon the happy coincidence of moral or ideological values amongst the governors. It was rooted more solidly in inescapable empirical realities. King Henry accepted the Irish crown not only because of the persuasions of St. Leger and his Irish counsellors, but because their argument coincided closely with the position he had assumed after Surrey's instructive expedition. Thus sustained by the crown's absolute eschewal of a thorough conquest, classic Tudor policy toward Ireland was based upon the Palesmen's analysis of the fate of their own ethnic group and upon an extension of that analysis to the disintegrated polity of Gaelic Ireland. The interpretation of Irish history in terms of the cancerous spread of lawlessness was not only intellectually persuasive, it was also empirically verifiable through the examination of the inter-ethnic alliances which existed for the perpetuation of the hated system of "coyne and livery". And it was an interpretation which was made all the more compelling because its policy prescriptions were moderate, inexpensive and simple. It had all the credentials of orthodoxy.

The emergence of a standardised policy aim within a generally accepted scenario did not, however, determine the evolution of a common strategy. The same belief in the unity of the realm which *sustained* St. Leger's patient and conciliatory fosterage also allowed of

Sussex's inflexible determination to see Shane O'Neill brought to heel, and of Sidney's attempt to impose a general tax throughout the country by a form of blackmail. Yet it must be stressed that these alternative strategies were linked by a common belief that underpinned them all. Their appearance was due to no basic change in outlook but to the belief that each was better designed than its fellow to fulfil the aim of bringing the ideal of a united and obedient kingdom of Ireland into reality.

Just how and why these differing strategies came to be proposed and implemented remains, of course, the most vital issue of sixteenth-century Irish political history. But it is a question which can be greatly obscured by insufficient attention to the fundamental consensus upon which the various strategic proposals were based. A priori explanations of English policy in Ireland which emphasise predetermining ideological factors as the basis of differing executive strategies have their own internal weaknesses, but by discounting the significance of the general agreement upon the uniform nature of the Irish problem, they pre-empt consideration of the crucial process by which this initial consensus was lost at the point of execution. In doing so, it appears to me, they distract attention from a factor of immense importance. Every strategy for the establishment of the united Irish Kingdom was proposed, selected and implemented within a dangerously attenuated and highly unstable political and administrative framework which linked Ireland to England. By determining the selection of one strategy and its replacement by another, this loose and informal system of connections exercised a prevailing influence in the execution of policy in Ireland. It is the main argument

of this thesis that so inadequate a structure intervened decisively between the initial aims of English government in Ireland and its ultimate effects to create a situation which had never been anticipated.

## CHAPTER II

### The English Polity in Irish Perspective

Even after 1541 the constitutional relationship of the land of Ireland to the realm of England remained uncertain.<sup>1</sup> But some points were undisputed. Ireland, it was agreed, was neither a subordinate colony of the English monarchy nor a mere proprietary fief. It was a separate dominion, joined to England only in mutual allegiance to a single sovereign. The relationship was admittedly unequal, but as yet the difference between the two islands was not regarded as qualitative. The right of the English parliament to legislate for Irish interests was acknowledged in certain cases, but the extent of such jurisdiction was restricted. The king in his parliament of England could legislate for Ireland in such matters as concerned the general welfare of the whole of his lordship, in matters of commercial and currency regulation, for instance. But a large degree of autonomy was left to the King's other parliament at Dublin. The bulk of this body's legislation was of purely local significance, but major government legislation which had been passed through the English parliament was normally re-enacted in full in the Irish parliament. Declaratory acts, which confirmed English legislation en bloc, though not unknown, were unusual. Poyning's law had made no alteration to this traditional independence of the Irish parliament. Rather the act itself and its subsequent revision in 1557 tended to confirm the direct connection that existed between the sovereign and his parliament in Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

This constitutional dualism was reflected in the representative and administrative organs of the Irish government. With minor discrepancies the Irish parliament was a close replica of the English institution. In its qualifications for representation, its manner of convening, and its modes of procedure, it displayed characteristics identical with its English parent. Similarly, the administrative establishment at central and at local levels was based upon the English model. It was, of course, smaller in scale. It lacked the departments which were more closely attached to the person of the sovereign, and it developed more slowly than its English counterpart, but the Irish courts of chancery, exchequer, king's bench and common pleas shared the same powers and functions as the English courts, and their development in the later middle ages, closely paralleled the course which their English elders had taken. [All these parallels are not remarkable except in so far as they give expression to the vital assumption that underlay them. The land of Ireland was not an inferior appendage or colony of the realm of England. It was a distinct kingdom, a separate jewel in the crown of the Conqueror's descendants. Its connection with the other island existed only in their mutual obedience to the rule of a common sovereign.<sup>3</sup>]

There was, of course, one major difference. The king was not present in Ireland to oversee its governance in the way that he ruled in England. In strict constitutional theory his absenteeism was of no significance. His authority was as complete in Ireland as it was anywhere else in the lands under his rule. For practical reasons he had chosen not to reside in Ireland, but he had nominated a lieutenant, or a deputy lieutenant, who was

formally intended to act as chief steward of the lordship in the absence of the lord. The deputy's authority was derived wholly from the sovereign, and in theory at least, he could act only in accord with instructions laid down for him by the crown. He was the mere executive of the royal will.

Political reality, obviously, ran very much counter to these constitutional assumptions and to the administrative structures which had been build upon them. The Tudor monarchs, like most of their medieval predecessors, showed an interest in the governance of the western isle only in so far as its chronic turbulence threatened to upset their own domestic stability. The many other considerations which demanded their attention did not permit them to engage in a prolonged examination of Irish policy. But few of them, in any case, showed any personal interest in, or understanding of, the tangled state of that country's affairs. Henry VIII was perhaps the most personally interested of the Tudor monarchs. In the early 1520s he showed an unusually sustained concern in seeking a means of preventing the decay of his Irish lordship. But his enthusiasm, dampened first by a growing awareness of the complexity of the problem, and later by his own domestic difficulties, was soon dissipated. It revived again in the early 1540s but this spurt too was short-lived, and even while it lasted the king's capacity for concentration seemed greatly diminished. The young King Edward VI had little time to direct his attention towards Ireland. What opinions we know him to have held were impressionistic and superficial, derived mainly from the assessment of personalities and not unmixed with petulance.<sup>4</sup> Queen Mary, despite the significance of

her reign for Ireland, also paid little personal attention to the country's affairs. Her memorandum of political priorities, drawn up on the point of her accession, did not include the consideration of Ireland,<sup>5</sup> and her personal interventions in Irish matters, even granted the general paucity of records which she has left, were remarkably few. Elizabeth, whose reign is rich both in surviving sources and in developments in Irish policy was hardly more concerned. She certainly intervened more often than Mary, but her sallies were intermittent and irregular. Despite an occasional and surprising resolution, prevarication rather than decisiveness was the chief feature of her personal contribution to the problems of Irish governance. It existed from the beginning and increased progressively as her reign wore on; it was a source of growing exasperation to all who depended upon her will. Elizabeth showed little consistency in her own attitude toward Irish affairs, except in her constant admonitions against overspending and over-activity. Like the rest of the Tudors, she could boast no knowledge of the facts of Irish geography or history, and like them also she showed no interest in the possibility of touring her junior kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

But the Tudors did display one common response when a consideration of the problems of Ireland was forced upon them: an imperturbable conservatism. Though they all acknowledged the eventual reclamation of the decayed lordship to be a general aim of policy, this merely half-articulated impulse offered no real guide to action. Instead, when confronted with a given crisis - and such sudden confrontations were most typical of the Tudor experience of Ireland - their choice among alternative courses of action was determined by short-term and pragmatic considerations.

Such a predisposition worked strongly against any attempts at policy revision or innovation. Old solutions, or even half solutions were of necessity preferred. Since new ways of looking at the problem of Ireland began with this initial disadvantage, they were forced to assume a guise of immediate efficacy before they could compete for consideration. Tudor conservatism, then, did not form policy; it merely inhibited its formulation and development by imposing a framework of constraint which forced all policies into an old mould, and obliged new ideas to assume additional characteristics which were at best irrelevant, and at worst detrimental, to their real intent.

As a result of the monarchs' personal ignorance, and their studied unwillingness to become involved in the details of governing Ireland, responsibility for Irish affairs devolved upon subordinate servants of the crown who had no place in the constitutional theory, and had little capacity to assume the burden. The privy council, even when it had evolved as a relatively efficient governing organ within the realm of England, remained badly equipped for the conduct of Irish affairs. Sub-committees, the most obvious way of dealing with the problem, were occasionally established under Edward and under Elizabeth, but the intermittent nature of their appearance is itself a testimony to the council's chronic ill-attention to Irish affairs. They were invariably ad hoc bodies, set up to deal with pressing crises or to make some specific policy decisions.<sup>7</sup> Individual councillors, whose function was commonly to act as influential representatives of their own region, were hardly capable of forming useful opinions about a land of which they had no personal knowledge. With the exception

of the lord deputies, whose membership of the council was nominal, none of the Edwardian or the Marian privy councillors had ever visited Ireland; again excepting Sussex and Sidney, only one of Elizabeth's councillors, Sir Francis Knollys, had any personal experience of Ireland. Not surprisingly, therefore, the privy council as a whole showed an alarming disregard for, and ignorance of, Irish affairs. Even senior members, whose responsibilities demanded a concern for all the interests of the crown could remain remarkably ill-informed. Lord Treasurer Winchester, whose office brought him into frequent contact with "the sink" of Ireland, was extremely hazy in matters of Irish political geography, and hopelessly naive in his policy proposals.<sup>8</sup> His successor in the post, Sir Walter Mildmay, was no better. When charged with the task of over-viewing twenty years of government expenditure in Ireland, Mildmay limited his analysis to purely fiscal and administrative matters,<sup>9</sup> and despite his close relationship with an Irish lord deputy, Sir William Fitzwilliam, he showed no inclination to make more general proposals for political reform.<sup>10</sup>

The burden of maintaining a continuous interest in Ireland fell, consequently, upon the most regular attender of council sessions, the secretary of state. Indeed, the degree of attention paid by the council to Ireland at any given time was a function of the current political influence of the secretariat. Thomas Cromwell, it is now clear, had begun to consider the reform of Ireland as part of his general administrative programme even before the Kildare rebellion had forced the problem upon him, and until his death, he maintained a continued interest in the progress

of the reforms he had launched there.<sup>11</sup> Under King Edward, William Cecil revived Cromwell's interest in Irish reform, and was influential in the resumption of a more aggressive policy towards the Gaelic Irish of the midlands.<sup>12</sup> In these days he acquired the experience and established the connections which were to be of immense value to him under Elizabeth. Of all Elizabeth's servants Cecil was the one most continuously involved with Irish policy-making. He maintained a large file of Irish correspondence and to it he added copies of administrative records, maps, reform treatises and a large collection of genealogical information.<sup>13</sup> Cecil's role in the determination and implementation of Irish policy varied. During the viceroyalty of Lord Lieutenant Sussex, who preferred to retain for himself a monopoly of policy-making, Cecil limited his efforts to facilitating the lieutenant's aims. After Sussex's resignation in 1565, however, Cecil's role became more positive. He became more critical of the Irish administrators and himself chaired one of the rare sub-committees established for the formulation of a systematic policy.<sup>14</sup> He has sometimes been noted as a pioneer of colonisation, but in reality his outlook was a good deal more eclectic.<sup>15</sup> He favoured the policy of encouraging the Gaelic captains to make their submissions to the crown, and he was cautiously sensitive to any actions which might unnecessarily antagonise the Gaelic or Anglo-Norman lords.<sup>16</sup> He was, perhaps, most concerned with the performance of the administrative establishment at Dublin. In the first five years of his Elizabethan secretariat, commissions were twice despatched to inquire into the Dublin administration's efficiency, and in later years Cecil continued to keep a personal watch upon the conduct of individual

administrators. Sir Francis Walsingham, the other great Elizabethan secretary, also showed a genuine regard for Ireland. He maintained a large correspondence and sought to represent the Irish governors at council in the fairest light possible. He, too, doubted the efficiency of the Dublin administration and sent his own inspectors to probe the sources of its incompetence. As might be expected, Walsingham can be credited with a greater interest in a more radical reform of English policy in Ireland than the conservative Cecil. New reform proposals bulk larger in Walsingham's Irish file, and his heavy scoring of their pages shows that he paid careful attention to each.<sup>17</sup> But it would be wrong to attach to Walsingham a clear preference for any particular mode of policy. Like Cecil, he occasionally made his own points of emphasis, but in general, both men's opinions were those of active and responsible politicians, rather than those of detached observers, and as such were deeply coloured by a natural eclecticism. Their lack of commitment to any one line of policy was surely no fault, but neither was it the outcome of any conscious determination. It arose, rather, from the inherent difficulties of the secretary's position within the Tudor governmental structure.

The political demands made upon the secretaries office were immense. Cecil and Walsingham functioned not merely as senior administrators, but as grand political brokers, who grappled continuously with a bewildering number of personal and political interest groups, each one hostile to the other.<sup>18</sup> From such a mass of conflicting demands they attempted to formulate an agenda which, if it did not amount to a line of policy, did at least attempt to maximise the efficiency of the crown's response to the

varying interests it sought to satisfy. The claims which Ireland could make upon the secretaries' attention within this area were necessarily limited, and though both men showed a greater interest in Ireland than any of their colleagues at the council board, they were simply incapable of the sustained effort which the problem demanded. Inevitably, these over-worked officers were often negligent and inept. Ireland figures only once in the index to Conyers Read's study of Cecil's secretaryship, and only six times in the same author's comprehensive three-volume study of Walsingham; and though this is by no means an accurate reflection of the amount of time expended by both men upon Irish matters, it is at least a useful indication of the relative unimportance of Ireland in their work.<sup>19</sup> This negligence became extremely serious when the secretaries were indisposed or absent from Court. Until their return Irish matters were normally simply shelved, and Irish administrators prayed sincerely for a secretary's early recovery from ill-health. Once, Cecil cut himself badly while opening a packet from Ireland; it took him weeks to reply. Even when he found the time to pay heed to Irish demands, the secretary normally experienced severe difficulty in inducing the queen and her council to consider or give their assent to his recommendations. Elizabeth's tardiness was particularly notorious; Walsingham was less fortunate in his attempts to extract decisions from the queen than the avuncular Cecil, but even Cecil could be rendered powerless in face of Elizabeth's stubbornness. Surprisingly, in view of the extent to which their resources were strained, outright blunders on the part of the secretaries were rare. The most egregious bungle was Cecil's, whose careless submission to

Elizabeth of a discarded and grossly undercosted schedule for a presidential council almost ruined attempts to establish a presidency in Munster.<sup>20</sup> Ordinary misjudgements, however, were more common. Cecil and Walsingham occasionally misled their Irish correspondents by misinterpreting the mood of the queen and council; more seriously, they raised false hopes of money and supplies which they eventually proved unable to fulfil. Where even these great figures failed to maintain an adequate control over Irish policy, lesser men could make no impact whatsoever. Secretary Thomas Wilson figured little in the consideration of Ireland, and Secretary Sir Thomas Smith, despite his personal interest in colonisation exercised no influence in the formulation of general policy. During his tenure of office he complained incessantly of his own political impotence and even of his inability to secure a decision upon other men's propositions.<sup>21</sup> It would be harsh to criticise the secretaries for their relative lack of attention to Ireland. Their incapacity was not personal but administrative; the secretaryship was simply not equipped for the burden of formulating and implementing crown policy in Ireland which had been thrust upon it by default. With regard to Ireland, as in all other areas of policy, constant frustration and a not infrequent sense of despair were the occupational hazards of every man who held the office.<sup>22</sup>

Inevitably, these weaknesses at the level of policy-making were reflected and magnified in the subordinate ranks of executive action. In all spheres of activity, the means by which the Tudor government preferred to deal with a critical or stubborn problem were provisional and amateur. Even when it was feasible the extension of existing departments of government or the creation of

new ones was viewed with profound suspicion: it was administratively expensive and potentially dangerous. Thus the favoured means of coping with extraordinary or complicated situations was the delegation and dispersal of all responsibility for the matter into the hands of enterprising amateurs. The defects of this organisational diffidence were most obvious in the Tudor military establishment.<sup>23</sup> The number of officers permanently maintained by the crown was small indeed. The armies raised were almost always inadequate to their purpose and the reduction of the forces in employment at any given time was a major priority of the government. The number of troops made available for service in Ireland was always absurdly low. As late as the mid-1550s, the Irish viceroy had to make do with a total complement of 500 men, and even in the late 1570s a governor felt it incumbent upon him to promise to maintain peace in the country with an equally small force.<sup>24</sup>

Within these dates, of course, the crown was forced to go well beyond such unrealistic limitations. But the cheese-paring and amateurishness persisted in several other forms. Because of its almost incessant demand for reinforcements, the English garrison in Ireland suffered more than any other military service from the government's highly informal means of recruitment. The corruption and favouritism that was at all times involved in the pressing of men, worked systematically in the case of Ireland to create a shoddy and undisciplined garrison force. Men who could avoid impressment most commonly did so; those who accepted service in Ireland were often desperate, criminally involved or men from the wilder parts of the realm, from Wales or from the northern borders. The main priority of those who recruited them was to make a profit

from the operation. Often a recruiter captain saw his men no further than the port of embarkation where he placed them in the hands of another commander, or, if he had been paid for his service, simply let them go their own way. In either case, he had no personal interest in the fighting quality of the men he had collected. In Ireland, consequently, problems of undermanning and desertion were chronic, and the army's administrative structure possessed no sufficient means of resolving them. General musters were rare and inadequate, and the system of recording and verifying the soldiers' term of service in Ireland, offered ample opportunity for concealment and fraud.<sup>25</sup>

The system of pay also encouraged speculation. The men were paid irregularly, often after long intervals, and in between they were expected to survive on a number of small "prest" payments out of which they purchased their own food and supplies. The absurdity of a system which debited the soldiers for the arrows and shot they used while on active service need hardly be remarked upon, but the defects of the regulation went beyond the discomfort of the ordinary soldier and threatened to undermine the very raison d'etre of the army. A master of ordinance, who had to account for every shot from his armoury, would not be inclined to promote an aggressive martial strategy. Yet while it dampened enthusiasm for a general engagement in warfare, the government's insistence upon treating each servitor as an individual contractor rather than as a salaried employee. encouraged an unforeseen and unhealthy spirit of private enterprise amongst the soldiers themselves. Because of the potential risk of their relationship with the crown, the soldiers felt compelled to supplement their income by exploiting

to the full the resources of the community upon which they were placed. Through intimidation, or through collusion and integration with the civilian population, the soldier could acquire an alternative means of securing the profit denied to him in his official service.<sup>26</sup> The government's deliberate cultivation of amateurishness, thus, also bred an entrepreneurial spirit at all levels of the service, and enterprise bred corruption. A cleavage arose between the aims of the crown and the interest of the men sent to fulfil them, and a gap opened between the declared ends of government policy and its practical effects.

Traditionally, the civil establishment was a good deal more professional than the military. The responsibilities of the different offices of state were more formally designated and the interests of their holders were more closely linked to those of the crown. The administration at Dublin was the subject of a series of reformist efforts in the middle decades of the sixteenth century, and displayed the appearance of a reasonably competent bureaucracy. Yet serious deficiencies remained. The financial administration was poorly organised; its higher-ranking officials were over-worked while under-employment was common within its lower levels. The office of lord treasurer was largely an honorary sinecure, and the chief responsibility for the efficient maintenance of the Irish account lay with the vice-treasurer. Since, however, the vice-treasurer was also normally appointed treasurer-at-war and was a senior military officer to boot, he was unable to devote a consistent personal attention to the keeping of the administration's general account. The treasurers were necessarily required to further delegate responsibility to deputies of their own who were

not directly recognised by the crown. The degree of supervision which a treasurer might exercise over his deputy varied. In times of peace he might conduct fairly frequent inspections, but during periods of active military service the account might go unexamined for years at a time. This was the experience of Sir William Fitzwilliam, vice-treasurer and treasurer-at-war between 1559 and 1573. During most of this period Fitzwilliam not only held both treasurerships, but was also a captain of troops of horse and foot, a leading privy councillor, constable of Athlone, a lord justice and toward the end of the period even lord deputy.<sup>27</sup> In the space of thirteen years, his account was audited only twice - once in 1569, after almost a decade of neglect.<sup>28</sup> Under these conditions, Fitzwilliam inevitably lost control over the details of government receipts and expenditures for which he was officially responsible. He appointed as his deputy treasurer, one Launcelot Alford, who already held a post as clerk of the hanaper within *chancery*, but he also found it necessary to appoint a number of lesser deputies who reported on smaller accounts directly to him rather than to Alford. As a result of this delegation and lack of coordination, Fitzwilliam's accounting system became diffuse, cumbersome and prone to error. As early as 1563, when he was asked to produce a fair view of his financial affairs, it took him over a year to meet the request. The delay was due primarily to Alford's difficulty in collating the different sub-accounts, but it was upon Fitzwilliam that the responsibility for his deputy's tardiness was placed, and when the account eventually revealed a significant deficit, the outstanding amount was charged to Fitzwilliam.<sup>29</sup> The sum for which the treasurer was held bound to

make good after the audit of 1569 amounted to £7,000. It was a crushing debt which the royal waiver of £1,000 did little to ease.<sup>30</sup> Fitzwilliam was the most unfortunate of treasurers, but Sidney , during his short tenure of the office (1556-1559) also acquired a debt, and Sir Edward Fitton, who succeeded Fitzwilliam, managed only by strenuous efforts to avoid being held responsible for a serious imbalance pending on his account.<sup>31</sup>

The structural problems of the Irish financial administration were greatly exacerbated by the general fiscal policy of Tudor government. Ireland may have been, in the contemporary phrase, "the sink" of royal treasure, but the Tudors were ever churlish in the dispersing of their wealth. Irish demands for money had to pass along the circuitous route from the secretary to the council, from the council to the queen and from the queen to the lord treasurer. Disruption was possible and frequently occurred at each of these points; delay was normal. And even when all these obstacles had been overcome, when the sovereign's permission had been secured and the treasurer had procured the wherewithal, the satisfaction of the Irish government's needs remained uncertain; early in 1566, Sidney's first deputyship was almost crippled when the ship bearing his first major supply of treasure, sank.<sup>32</sup> The supply of money to Dublin, in short, was fitful, undependable and always late. In its absence, the Irish government was forced to resort to extraordinary and extremely unpopular expedients in order to maintain its sources of supply.<sup>33</sup>

Though negligence and incompetence were common, outright corruption amongst the highest ranks of the Irish financial administration was comparatively rare. The statute of 1496 which

reserved the vice-treasureship for English servitors appointed by the crown was generally enforced to good effect.<sup>34</sup> The strangers were naturally more impartial and their conduct of affairs was more easily subject to investigation; only one Irishman, Andrew Wyse, held the office of vice-treasurer in the century, and he was soon dismissed upon the disclosure of his irregular and possibly fraudulent practices.<sup>35</sup> Though the conduct of later vice-treasurers was the subject of repeated investigation, none was found guilty of corruption. The policy of introducing English servitors in the lower ranks of the financial administration was also actively pursued. By the early 1580s most of the important offices within the exchequer were in the hands of Englishmen. And again the incentive of honest state service seemed to have remained strong; no major scandal was ever uncovered. Yet if the peculation was small, or at least artfully disguised, the continuing inefficiency of the administration remained glaringly obvious. After several decades of reformist attempts, a report of 1578 could still reveal much evidence of negligence and under-employment in the court of exchequer. The administrative procedures of the court were slow and anachronistic. Its methods of revenue collection highly unsatisfactory and its control over the sheriffs and tax-farmers was inadequate. Sources of revenue were poorly investigated, and those which were known were poorly surveyed and underassessed. Arrearages were not followed up and casual revenues were given no systematic attention. The report discovered five offices which it claimed were superfluous and whose abolition would secure for the crown a significant saving in costs.<sup>36</sup>

The departments of expenditure and receipt were naturally those which were placed under the closest scrutiny from Westminster. The attention paid to chancery and to the two other courts of law was a good deal less persistent and so the level of efficiency was correspondingly lower. After 1556 the lord chancellorship, the highest office in the civil administration, was held by an Englishman. The crown's intent to maintain the office in the hands of English-born servants was, however, by no means as fixed as might be assumed. No less than three Irish-born officials were, at various times in the three decades following 1556, seriously considered for the post. Two performed the duties of a de facto lord chancellor for some time, the other simply rejected an outright offer.<sup>37</sup> Nor were the English-born chancellors of the period men of high political influence. Archbishop Curwen seems to have held the post as a sinecure, and Sir Robert Weston, though he was extremely conscientious of his charge, tried to avoid responsibility for major political decisions. Only William Gerrard, who became chancellor in 1576, chose to exploit the potential for high political power inherent in the office. Because of the relative inattention paid to chancery by the English government, it is difficult to attempt a fair assessment of the efficiency of the court. We are, for the most part, dependent upon the casual comments of other officials and passing observers, and such references were rarely untouched by general bias and personal animus. But some of the more regular allegations do seem to have reflected actual conditions. Chancery officials, it was commonly said, were intermarried or closely allied with powerful families in the Pale whose interests they

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served before that of the state. The one general review of the personnel of chancery supports the charge: William Gerrard's file, compiled in 1576, discloses that most of the members of the court were Palesmen and that they were themselves either scions or dependents of the great Pale families.<sup>38</sup> On the basis of this investigation, Gerrard lent his support to the inference that normally accompanied the fact; the majority of chancery officials, he concluded, were partial and corrupt. Supplementary evidence also exists to corroborate other allegations. The records of the court, it was said, were frequently embezzled and were generally neglected: the records, we know were allowed to rot, not a few had perished before the end of the century.<sup>39</sup> The officials, it was alleged, were ignorant and unlearned; only a handful have left a record of their attendance at the universities or at the inns of court.<sup>40</sup> Similar changes can also be corroborated in the same way against the judges and officers of the courts of king's bench and common pleas.<sup>41</sup> Their inactivity is indicated by the extraordinary notice given to circuits whenever they were instituted; their partiality may be suggested by their names (Aylmer, Barnewall and Dillon predominated) and their corruption can be illustrated by a few outstanding cases. Perhaps the best known instance of judicial corruption is the notorious execution of Nicholas Nugent, chief justice of common pleas, by Sir Robert Dillon, chief justice of king's bench, on a trumped up charge of treason.<sup>42</sup> Dillon and Nugent were bitter rivals, and the trial and execution amounted to no more than murder for revenge. But a less well-known prelude to the event is even more indicative of the extent and the contagion of corruption. Dillon's animosity

towards Nugent had been greatly exacerbated by the latter's recent promotion to the highest position in the civil-law court. Nugent, as everyone knew, was inexperienced, unlearned and, worse, a cousin to the baron of Delvin, a noble hostile to the servants of the crown in general and to the Dillons in particular. But he overcame all these objections because, for a mere £100, he had purchased in advance the recommendation of the most important officer in the civil administration: Lord Chancellor Gerrard.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, the secretariat of the Irish administration remained underdeveloped. A secretary of state was not appointed in Ireland until 1560.<sup>44</sup> Until then the functions of the office were divided between the clerk of the Irish council, a figure of minor political importance, and the viceroy's private secretary, whose primary concern was to serve the interests of his master rather than those of the state. After 1560, however, matters did not improve greatly. John Challoner, the first secretary of state, regarded his official duties as a distraction from the numerous private enterprises which he had on hand. He soon tired of the post and ceased to exercise its functions; not until the appointment of Geoffrey Fenton as joint-secretary in 1582, did the office acquire any political significance.<sup>45</sup>

The continuing weaknesses and inadequacies of the Tudor central and regional administrations were in themselves only the symptoms of the profound instability, which for much of the century, afflicted the very source of all executive power, the crown. With the collapse in the later years of Henry VIII of the early Tudor effort to contain and reduce faction, factionalism revived anew to threaten the stability of the monarchy. Now,

however, the potency of the resurgent factions was greatly enhanced by the very efforts which the crown had made to subdue them. The future of the dynasty, the religion of the community, the social and economic state of the commonwealth, the foreign policy of the realm, all the great national issues which in the 1530s had seemed to form the foundations of the new centralising state became the playthings of faction in the decades immediately following. Though the fundamental ends of interest - office, political influence, material gain - remained the same, the symbols which tied individual interests together, acquired the national and ideological tone of the great issues of state. The influence of no one faction, of course, remained constant; factions decayed or were destroyed by their rivals, and successful attempts were made to revive an autonomous state-centred interest. But the ideal of a strong monarchical state was never realised. Even in the comparatively stable reign of Elizabeth, factions retained their pervasive influence, fuelled by the queen's whimsicality and by her obstinate refusal either to marry or to name her successor. The dynastic crisis of mid-century offered the great factional networks a place at the very centre of the realm from which they were not to be ousted.<sup>46</sup>

The succession question is only the most obvious case in which the interests of faction intervened decisively to influence the affairs of state.<sup>47</sup> The same process can be traced, to one degree or another, in a whole range of issues with which the crown was obliged to deal. It can be discerned in the development of official religious policy, and it can be seen at work, in the Edwardian period at least, in the formulation of

government social and economic policy. It was apparent in Somerset's Scottish campaign, in the Dudley intervention at Newhaven and in Leicester's later adventure in the Netherlands.<sup>48</sup> But it was also deeply influential in determining the crown's attitude towards one of its most intractable difficulties: the problem of governing Ireland.

The Irish question was ideally suited to the politics of faction. It was a problem of genuinely national importance to whose solution the government was explicitly committed, but for which no official strategy had been devised. It was, moreover, an area of government responsibility which seemed to offer an opportunity for both glory and profit to those who were prepared to assume it. It is not surprising, therefore, that the competition of rival groups can be observed behind the formulation of different Irish policies. The repeated abandonment of one approach in favour of another, from Grey to St. Leger, from St. Leger to Bellingham, from St Leger to Sussex, and from Sussex to Sidney, can all be interpreted in these terms. Historians have already explained some of the earlier oscillations; the causes of later changes and their consequences will be treated of below.<sup>49</sup> But before the mechanism of the competitions can be investigated, the pre-conditions out of which the rival propositions arose need to be examined.

Policy recommendations, or attacks on policies already in operation in Ireland, could not be formulated as mere assertions from a platform of ignorance. Those who included the Irish question as part of their general factional programme needed some source of informed and dependable counsel. But since there existed no official channel through which information about Ireland could be

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received and processed at Westminster, the means which they adopted were necessarily informal. To answer their need, English statesmen looked to the number of Irish reformers, both within and without the Dublin administration, who incessantly pressed their ideas and their suits upon the crown. They became patrons to these reformers and established thereby an unofficial and highly personal network of communication with Ireland. Control over this unofficial intelligence system and the recommendations which it produced, lay at all times, with the men of power at court. Thus, when the great men made their choice among the submissions, it was not the inherent worth of an idea that determined their decision, but its immediate strategic value and the personal dependability of the man who proposed it. Similarly, the fate of an Irish reformer's proposal hung on the relative influence of the patron who chose to advance it. It became inextricably linked with the patron's own personal ambitions, and was consequently a target for attack by his enemies and rivals. Under these conditions, the formulation and implementation of Irish policy could be determined by factors wholly extraneous to the actual situation in Ireland itself.

The influence of the Irish counsellors who played the most significant role in the formulation of policy for Ireland was not determined by their status within the Irish administration. Two of their number, Sir John Alen and Sir Thomas Cusack, had held office as lord chancellor, but their influence as advisers predated and continued long after their tenure of the office. Sir Nicholas White was master of the rolls; Lucas Dillon was successively attorney-general and chief baron of the exchequer. Walter Cowley was a surveyor general, John Symcott was a chief remembrancer in

the exchequer and three others, Rowland White, Edward Walsh and Edmund Tremayne, held no official post whatsoever.<sup>50</sup> Though some of them shared certain views in common, they did not constitute a uniform school of thought, and the character of their proposals was no measurement of their influence. Alen and Cusack, who received the highest rewards for service, were gravely at odds in their respective opinions. Nicholas White enjoyed easy access to Burghley, but so did John Symcott, a man with little sympathy for White and his views. While some displayed a reasonable consistency in making their submissions, the advice of others varied considerably in relation to the circumstances in which it was offered.

It was neither the originality nor the quality of their ideas that made these men politically important, but their connection with men of real political power at court. Cusack first came to the attention of Thomas Cromwell, but he very soon became associated with the anti-Cromwellian Norfolk group. Under Edward he was on good terms with Northumberland, and he survived a period of eclipse under Mary to return again to favour under Elizabeth through the good offices of Northumberland's son, Lord Robert Dudley. He continued to be associated with Leicester and his adherents until his death in 1571.<sup>51</sup> Cusack's arch-rival, Alen, was more consistent in his friendship towards Cromwell, and in the 1530s he was the secretary's most influential adviser on Irish affairs. He, too, suffered his periods in the wilderness, in the mid 1540s and again under Mary. But he enjoyed the support of Secretary Cecil under Edward, and his credit revived again under Cecil's auspices in the early years of Elizabeth.<sup>52</sup> Nicholas White's dependence upon Cecil's patronage was notorious. The two

men first met in the early 1560s, when White was at court representing the interests of the earl of Ormond, and from then on the friendship flowered. Through Cecil's influence, White became special councillor to the first Munster presidency, seneschal of Wexford, a privy councillor and finally master of the rolls in chancery. The connection between the two lasted for almost thirty years and survived several serious conflicts of interest.<sup>53</sup>

Burghley showed no comparable loyalty to John Symcott, another of his protégés who served for a short time in the Irish administration in the early 1570s. This Englishman's ambition for personal advancement was a shade too obvious, but he was also without a vital advantage which enabled White to survive his periods of adversity. He was without connection in Ireland.<sup>54</sup>

Without some Irish connection, no government servitor could long withstand the charged atmosphere which surrounded the Dublin administration. No privileges, no favours, no recommendations, no protection would be afforded to him; his very person might be physically endangered.<sup>55</sup> Such pressures did not inevitably force would-be counsellors into a whole-hearted allegiance to either of the great Irish factions, but the most influential of them were, to some degree at least, linked with either the Butlers or the Geraldines. In some cases, the attachment was unequivocal. The two Cowleys, Robert and Walter, both of whom were rich sources of advice in the 1530s and 1540s, were well known to be spokesmen of the Butler interest.<sup>56</sup> Nicholas White began his career as an attorney for the earl of Ormond, and though he was for a short time estranged, he soon reverted to his early adherence.<sup>57</sup>

The allegiances of the two greatest counsellors, Alen and Cusack, were less obvious and more complicated. But that they should have become associated in any way with either connection, is highly indicative of the degree to which Irish politics was dominated by the concerns of faction. Neither began his career as the spokesman of any vested interest; both indeed, were highly critical of the power which the great houses wielded in Ireland. Yet gradually, while in pursuit of their own independent and conflicting aims, both were compelled to assume a closer identification with one of the great factions. Of the two, Cusack's experience was the simplest. For him, the destruction of the house of Kildare and the Geraldine league did not mark a successful phase in the policy of reducing the power of the feudal magnates for which he had agitated; it merely compounded the original problem. Far from ending the power of the magnates, it had resulted in the triumph of one great house. His original aim could be realised only if this inadvertent result could be undone. On the basis of these reflections, Cusack became a Geraldine sympathiser: simply because he was anti-Butler. In the 1540s and early 1550s he associated with and furthered the interests of the scattered and leaderless Geraldine group in the hope that he might construct a counter-balance sufficient to forestall the over-weening power of the Butler interest. These pure and consistent motivations, however, inevitably became obscured in the complex political manoeuvrings that followed upon the return of the exiled earl of Kildare in 1554. In the 1560s, Cusack found it impossible to differentiate his own position from that of the resurgent Geraldines. By the time of his death, his identification with

the Geraldine interest was complete.<sup>58</sup>

John Alen's experience was less straight-forward. At the outset, Alen was only slightly less hostile toward the Butlers and their protégés than he was toward the Geraldines. His concern was for the establishment of the independent authority of the Dublin administration. But events in the early 1540s forced an unwelcome change of strategy upon him. Then the individuality and unresponsiveness of the viceroy, St. Leger, threatened to deprive the lord chancellor of the political and administrative power, which he believed to be rightfully his by virtue of his official position. To meet this threat to the formal authority of the administrative establishment, Alen deemed it necessary to invoke the support of the only other significant group whom the deputy's conduct had seriously alienated, the Butlers. By 1545 Alen had entered a conspiracy with the earl of Ossory and his agent, Walter Cowley (a man whom he had previously reviled), in a joint effort to unseat St. Leger. His participation was not entirely willing, and when the plot collapsed Alen resumed his hostility toward Cowley. But he was to engage in a precisely similar plot against St. Leger in 1550. After 1556 he joined with the newly returned earl of Ormond in mutual attachment to the man who finally supplanted St. Leger, the earl of Sussex.<sup>59</sup>

This dependence upon an Irish connection inevitably influenced the character of the advice which the counsellors offered. In their selection of problem areas, in the timing of their submissions and in their nominations of persons for service, they naturally took account of the interests of those who favoured them. This personal bias was in turn perceived by the English statesmen

who sought them out. But the recognition of their prejudice worked rather to the advantage of the Irish advisers at Westminster than otherwise. It enabled those English groups interested in Ireland to assume with confidence that the policy being proposed to them was acceptable to, and would enjoy the support of, a major power-group in Ireland. A bridge between factions was erected.

Irish policy, therefore, both in its formulation and development, and in its acceptance and execution, was deeply coloured by the interests of faction. In place of the formal inter-administrative structure that had never been satisfactorily established, there arose an informal, covert and highly unstable system of inter-factional alliances in which rival groups in both realms joined with their opposite numbers, in collaboration towards ends mutually agreed upon for very different motives. It was the counsellors who provided the element of theoretical or strategic consistency and lent some coherence to these alliances of convenience. But the key responsibility for the practical establishment and routine maintenance of inter-factional cooperation and for the eventual attainment of the mutually agreed aims, could be assumed only by the chief office of executive authority in Ireland, the viceroy.

Theoretically, the mere cipher of the king's will, the lord deputy (or occasionally, the lord lieutenant) was, in actuality, the chief locus of power in Ireland, and it was toward control over the office that all who desired to exercise an influence in Irish politics aimed. The responsibilities of the king's deputy were extremely wide. He was a soldier: commander-in-chief of the garrison and the local militia, charged with the protection of the

lives and properties of the crown's subjects against the inroads of the Gaelic Irish. He was the chief executive of the civil administration, and was held responsible for the maintenance of bureaucratic efficiency and the prevention of corruption and abuse. Though normally not trained in the law, he was the highest judge in the land, the ultimate arbitrator of all disputes. When he heard cases at the council-board or in "Castle Chamber" (the Dublin administration's version of "Star Chamber") his judicial powers were absolute.<sup>60</sup> But the greatest area of the deputy's authority was normally only implied rather than directly stated. This was the portion of his oath which required him "to give true and faithful counsel for the queen majesty's profit". The formal instructions granted to the deputy were often of the vaguest and most general character. Vast areas of discretion were left to him, and when explicit instructions were included in his brief, the deputy himself had normally taken a hand in their drafting. It was not only the routine business of administration that was left to the judgement of the deputy, but also major decisions of patronage and of policy. Only occasionally, when a deputy's entire career was being subjected to hostile investigation, was his authority to make such high-level decisions without prior references to his superiors called into question.

In view of its autonomy and its wide powers of discretion, it might seem surprising that the Irish office should have been so notoriously unpopular amongst politically ambitious Tudor Englishmen, and yet, undoubtedly, it was.

The exceedingly small number of candidates who either sought or gained the position is itself testimony to its general lack of attraction to English servitors. Between 1540 and 1580 almost

everyone who showed any interest in the Irish office was given the opportunity to realise his ambition. But for others even the thought of going to Ireland was anathema: amongst the charges made by Lord Clinton against Sir William Paget in 1553 whom he alleged had plotted his ruin was, Paget himself recounted, "that I did what I could that he might have been sent into Ireland".<sup>62</sup> Those who actually assumed the viceroyalty seemed very soon to have regretted their decision. Sir James Croft had hardly taken office, but as he confesses in his autobiographical notes, "I became a suitor to the king to leave the office". His experience in Ireland left no impressions upon him, other than those of frustration and indebtedness.<sup>63</sup> Others were less discreet in their expressions of distaste for the post. Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam and Lord Lieutenant Sussex both repeatedly entreated their revocation during their tenure of office; "I was not made for Ireland!", Sussex once exclaimed in desperation. Sir Henry Sidney's memoir, written in 1583, gives a very clear impression of his thorough disillusion with Irish service,<sup>64</sup> and lends support to the story that his valediction to Ireland in 1578 was an incantation from the Book of Psalms:-<sup>65</sup>

After Israel went out of Egypt,  
 the house of Jacob from a barbaric people,  
 Judah became his sanctuary,  
 Israel his dominion.

Such bleak sentiments were founded on experience; the Irish viceroyalty was an extraordinarily arduous and unrewarding task. Between 1534 and 1579, two viceroys died from the exertions of the office.<sup>66</sup> One was executed on a charge of treasonable conduct

during his period of service; in 1591 only premature death saved another from the same fate.<sup>67</sup> Even for those who survived, the Irish duty could exact a severe physical toll. The Irish climate and the demands of his office greatly exacerbated Sir Henry Sidney's tendency towards gall stones. He underwent three operations for their removal during his first two years of service.<sup>68</sup> His Irish experience also seriously damaged Sussex's health. He became susceptible to attacks of fever and to frequent attacks of migraine. His troubles seem also to have temporarily affected his mental health.<sup>69</sup> Service in Ireland could also bring grievous financial difficulties in its wake. A wealthy noble like the earl of Sussex found it possible to bear the burden of the unofficial and unaccountable costs of his office without serious discomfort, but lesser men like Bellingham, Drury and even Croft, were crippled by debts contracted during their period in office.<sup>70</sup> Sidney claimed that his great expenses in Ireland had grievously depleted his patrimony; only Fitzwilliam's remarkable longevity enabled him to overcome the heavy debts he had accrued.<sup>71</sup>

Yet, as Edmund Tremayne well understood, no man ever took service in Ireland "without his own good agreement".<sup>72</sup> For all their gravity such risks did not deter the small number of men anxious to take service in Ireland any more than equally dangerous possibilities deter the politically ambitious today. Despite their complaints, the great viceroys of the mid-sixteenth century, St. Leger, Sussex, Sidney and Fitzwilliam, all sought office assiduously, accepted re-appointment and fought bitterly to retain their position against their competitors. They sought service in Ireland because they believed that they had found ways of

triumphing over the worst problems which plagued the viceroy; their disillusion arose only when their particular mode of operation failed to function as they had expected.

The immediate challenge which every deputy confronted upon arrival in Ireland was the problem of faction.<sup>73</sup> The Irish factions, as we have seen, were deeply rooted; they had extensive ramifications and they exercised a pervasive influence even within the Dublin administration itself. No deputy could ignore them; each had to find some means of establishing his ascendancy over them, or at least of coming to terms with them. For deputies who were themselves the creatures of faction, however, the initial problem was less grave than might be supposed. There arose a natural tendency among the viceroys to surmount the challenge by linking their own interest group with an Irish faction, with whom they could establish satisfactory relations. They sought to function, that is to say, as practical lynch-pins of the inter-factional alliances whose pre-conditions had already been established on both sides of the Irish Sea. The mechanism by which they operated the inter-factional system was relatively simple: the deputy would supply his Irish allies with access to influence at court and with such favours as land-grants, licenses, letters of credit, etc., as he could provide; in return he would receive the allegiance and support necessary to enforce his authority throughout the land. On these terms, it was possible to conceive of a stable and consistent style of interfactional politics. But in practice a number of factors, most of them beyond the deputy's immediate control, threatened at any time, to disrupt the stability of the system.

One factor lay in the deputy's inability to assess the potency of either of the groups within the system over any significant time span. Should the English group with whom he had become identified, falter or lose influence, the viceroy could soon be deprived of essential access to power and could find his own conduct of affairs made subject to hostile investigation by his factional rivals. Alternatively, should the group whom he had chosen to patronise in Ireland fail to provide him with the executive effectiveness he sought in the localities, his authority could soon be undermined from within. Inevitably, such dangers were inter-related. Loss of influence in England could lead to the desertion of his Irish allies; his lack of success in Ireland might well provide the basis for a general attack upon his patrons at court. Weakness on either side, thus, could result in the collapse of the viceroy's administration, and the governor could not expect to exert a determining influence over either.

But even discounting the possibility of their outright failure, the viceroy's allies might still provide him with a source of insoluble difficulty. Neither group's aims were stable; they were not safely predictable, and they were not inevitably compatible. Indeed, the one constant attitude that both groups shared in common was the belief that their own interests were not necessarily dependent upon the fate of any particular lord deputy. The court factions were the most erratic. Because their motives for promoting a policy were fundamentally irrelevant to its substantive content, they could, and actually did, perform diametric changes of attitude as tactical manoeuvres in the labyrinthine politics of the court. The dilemma upon which their

unexpected and irresponsible change of outlook could place the viceroy appointed through their patronage could be extremely painful. He must choose between his policy and his patrons, and either choice carried with it a high risk of personal failure. Changes of heart amongst the Irish factions were not so common. But the interests of these indigenous groups were equally difficult to predict, and the risks attendant upon their desertion just as fatal. The Irish factions made constant demands upon their governor-patrons. Some, like the suits advanced by the great earls, were high and demanded serious attention, but even the most minor contained an inherent test of the viceroy's goodwill and ability. Negligence of these lesser demands might ultimately provoke the same threat as a direct insult to an earl. More seriously, the factions themselves were not inherently stable. The governors' performance was monitored not simply by the leaders, but by the leaders' rivals as well. An over-tolerance on the part of the leadership could easily lead to a bolt from within the faction and a dangerous challenge to the viceroy's authority.

The existence of these interfactional and intrafactional pressures rendered improbable the viceroy's aim of establishing himself as a stable link between the interest-groups of both kingdoms. In reality, the deputies tended to gravitate in one of two directions. One method was to abandon as hopeless, the possibility of maintaining links with a court faction from afar, and to attempt to construct a more dependable position within the factions of Ireland. The group which had most need of, or desire for, government support was to be chosen for patronage. It would be granted the usual favours, and its interests would be treated

with particular concern until, gradually, the faction would so identify its interests with those of the Dublin government that it would cease to exist as an entity independent of the state. At the same time, the universal success of the patronised faction would undermine the power-base of its rivals and render their followers ready to accept the same state-centred patronage. The factional configuration of the realm would be transformed; the viceroy would no longer be the nodal point of competing factions, but the leader and spokesman of a united Irish interest whose claims upon the attention of the sovereign would be comparable with those of native English groups. Naturally, such a restructuring of the factional system would be an extremely gradual process. The absorption of willing allies and the reduction of not-so-willing ex-rivals, would demand a great amount of diplomacy and tolerance, and most of all, a great deal of time. Though it made brief appearances later on in the century, this view of government as a gradual process of integration was most closely associated with Sir Anthony St. Leger. St. Leger launched his attempt under unusually favourable circumstances which will be recounted below, and though in later years troubles began to crowd in upon his scheme, it was not its inherent weakness that determined its collapse, but the emergence of a radically different approach towards the solution of the viceroy's problem.

Where St. Leger had regarded English factionalism as a threat to be avoided where possible, others saw it as the natural mode of political behaviour, and they concluded that an Irish deputy should seek to overcome the dangers it confronted him with not by mere avoidance, but by capitalising upon the equally strong

advantages it appeared to offer. Irish policy should not be simply effected by the interests of one particular faction; it was to be so closely bound up with them that no heedless volte-face could catch the deputy unawares. This was a major shift in emphasis which radically altered not only the new governors' conduct in Ireland, but the very way in which they approached their change in the first place. From the beginning, their analysis of Irish problems and the solutions they proposed were presented in a simple pre-packaged format, which made certain explicit demands and made equally explicit promises of achievement in return. The time-span envisaged for their operation was in all cases short; sometimes a precise time-table was supplied. What was presented, then, was an articulate programme of action so precise and promising in its claims that it might be absorbed by any court faction as an integral part of its general policy for the realm. Such a programme gave a faction a clearly defined set of issues and a representative figure, in the person of the deputy, which, if it succeeded, offered the possibility of a significant increase in power and influence. It offered the viceroy's an assurance that they would have the consistent support of a powerful faction behind them in their efforts to pacify Ireland. This "programmatic" style was first displayed in the viceroyalties of Sussex and Sidney. It was, it should be emphasised, a re-orientation of strategy rather than a revolution in attitude. It arose from the particular strategic problems of the viceroy's position, and it came unaccompanied by any ideological justification. Its origins were practical: it simply seemed a better way of organising a government. Thus, in their

respective programmes, Sussex and Sidney showed little disagreement with St. Leger's generally conciliatory and assimilative outlook. They displayed no radical shift in attitude towards the native population, and though their emphasis had been fundamentally changed, both men attempted to retain part of St. Leger's old policy towards the Irish factions.

But when all the qualifications have been made, the emergence of this new administrative style still marks a turning point in Irish history. The change it heralded was irreversible. Though elements of St. Leger's approach were to be seen in the short governorships of Sir Nicholas Arnold and Sir William Drury, and though Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam evolved a curious operative mode of his own, it was the style of Sussex and Sidney that was the dominant characteristic of English rule in Ireland between the mid-1550s and the 1580s. Moreover, while its original intentions were limited, its eventual consequences were revolutionary. Amidst the hectic round of programmes executed by Sussex and Sidney, the gradual processes generated by St. Leger were given little time to set; the gains they had made were soon lost. For good or for ill, therefore, it was the programmatic governors who made events. Under their rule a new political reality was actively shaped in Ireland in place of the one which St. Leger had allowed to evolve. Through their separate encounters with the programmatic governors, the attitudes of Palesmen, Anglo-Normans and Gaelic Irish towards English rule in Ireland, were all fundamentally and irretrievably altered. It is with the origin and development of this style of government, and with its impact upon the different communities of Ireland, that the rest of this study is concerned.



## CHAPTER III

St. Leger: Government as Process

In a curious way, Sir Anthony St. Leger has often been regarded as an extremist. In the nineteenth century, the author of surrender and regrant was an object of profound dislike to many nationalist historians as the most subtle and most malevolent of English governors in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> His offer of title to a few select lords and his recognition of political and territorial claims which they could not make good, was seen as a cynical exercise in the strategy of divide and conquer. As soon as the greedy chieftains had accepted his overtures, they were themselves cut down by those whose standing within the lordships were threatened by the new agreements. Thus consumed in a series of internal wars, Gaelic Ireland was made ready for easy exploitation by the invading English. In recent times, however, St. Leger's reputation has undergone a complete revolution. Far from being the pioneer of English conquest, he is now viewed as the great exponent of the attempt to unite Ireland with England under a common Tudor monarch in the most peaceful and conciliatory way possible.<sup>2</sup> He was not simply a humanitarian, but a renaissance humanist whose entire policy was based upon optimistic assumptions about the ability of human nature to advance to civilisation through education. St. Leger was not gratified by the disorder that followed upon surrender and regrant arrangements; he was disillusioned.

This latter view is founded upon a far superior knowledge of the contemporary documentation, it is less influenced by a present-minded bias and its interpretation is much closer to the truth than

the old conspiracy theory. Yet in spite of its general superiority, it remains remarkably similar in form to the earlier argument. Both interpretations project an unrealistic inflexibility upon St. Leger's Irish policy: both assume that surrender and regrant as presented in 1540-41 was, whether its aims were sincere or disingenuous, St. Leger's one definite plan for governing Ireland. Neither gives the deputy any credit for learning from experience. Their formal similarity is evident in the almost symmetrical sets of emphases which the two views exhibit. For the first, the initial conciliatory phase in the early 1540s was of small importance, a mere prelude to the long period of coercion which it ushered in. For the second, it is this early period which is most demanding of the historian's attention as an illustration of the once happy possibilities that existed for Anglo-Irish relations. The later decades of the sixteenth-century mark only a long and bleak epilogue of moral and intellectual bankruptcy. Both arguments, that is to say, portray the century in sharp colours; they gloss over the grey area of transition that existed between the two extremes.

Yet it is in this grey area, in the years between the parliament of 1541 and St. Leger's final recall in 1556, that the real significance of the failure of the original conception of surrender and regrant is to be found. Between July 1540 and June 1556, Anthony St. Leger dominated Irish politics. He served as lord deputy for eleven of those sixteen years, and for a further two and a half years, the Irish administration functioned in complete accord with his methods. Only for the months between April 1548 and August 1550 was any attempt made to depart from the course he had set.<sup>3</sup> Even then, the aims of the departure were

limited; St. Leger's general policy was not repudiated and his past conduct was not impugned. For this reason it is imperative to study St. Leger not as the optimistic reformer of 1540-41, but as a man who soon learnt that matters were more complicated than they had originally appeared, and who revised his expectations to accord with his experience.

Surrender and regrant had certainly encountered trouble. Within a few years of their conclusion, every settlement made by St. Leger had become the focus of serious disputes for which there appeared to be no easy solution. The policy's most salient difficulty lay in the failure of its constitutional arrangements to reflect the real distribution of power within the lordships. Within months of his being officially recognised as lord of the O'Tooles, Turlough O'Toole was dead, killed in a feud with his cousin Turlough Mac Shane O'Toole. Turlough Mac Shane was tanist of the clan, and the new lord had died in an attempt to suppress the opposition to his recently acquired political status which had gathered around his putative successor. The death of the chief destroyed St. Leger's early hopes of uniting the O'Toole septs within a stable lordship. Turlough's son, Brian, was recognised by the crown as his father's successor and remained loyal to the original agreements. But the supporters of Turlough Mac Shane remained unreconciled and "in such sort that no man's goods in those parts were in safety within three miles of Dublin."<sup>4</sup> St. Leger had even less success with the O'Byrnes. Though the clan went some way toward meeting his conditions by appointing a sheriff for their country from amongst their own number, it remained so immersed in internecine strife that the deputy could

find no sufficiently authoritative leader with whom to conclude an agreement.<sup>5</sup> In 1541, on the other hand, Cahir Mac Art Kavanagh held sufficient sway over his people to enter into negotiations with the government. He attended parliament in that year and was knighted by St. Leger. In 1543 he concluded a treaty with the deputy and for some time after relations between the Kavanaghs and the government were cordial. In the late 1540s, however, Cahir became estranged. Official complaints about the misdemeanours of his followers against other subjects of the crown went unheeded for so long that the government felt compelled to launch a punitive expedition against him. When it did, he responded by seizing the royal ward at Ferns and declaring himself in open rebellion.<sup>6</sup>

Similar difficulties destroyed the force of the original agreement made with the O'Briens of Thomond. In 1542, Murrough O'Brien, the first earl of Thomond, had acceded to a settlement which allowed his title to revert not to his own son, but to his tanist, his nephew, Donough O'Brien. Even this cautious arrangement, however, was unpopular amongst the O'Briens, and trouble broke out almost immediately within the ranks of the ruling family. Donough was unable to maintain his authority as tanist, and when he actually succeeded to the earldom in 1552, he was without the confidence of the majority of his clansmen. His desire to restrict the succession of his own son, Conor, lay at the root of his troubles. Since he himself had come to the title through the tanistry, he had no right, it was felt, to exclude future tanists from the succession. In 1553, Donough was fatally injured in a clash with the current tanist, Donnell O'Brien, and his death consigned the entire original settlement to oblivion,

Donnell was elected chief of the O'Briens and set about expelling Conor from the lordship.<sup>7</sup>

The most significant succession dispute to arise out of surrender and regrant arrangements was that concerning the O'Neills of Tyrone. The details of the case are too well-known to be rehearsed once more; it is sufficient to say that they conform to the general pattern. By the early 1550s, Conn Bachach, the first earl of Tyrone, had begun to doubt the wisdom of the original settlement which had conferred the succession upon his eldest son Matthew. By this time Shane, his younger son, had proven himself by intrigue and by military exploit to be the clan's choice as tanist, and Conn was under pressure to change his will accordingly. The prescriptions of 1542 had become increasingly irrelevant to the political realities of Tyrone in the 1550s.<sup>8</sup>

Along with its failure to stabilise the distribution of power within the Gaelic lordships, surrender and regrant was also unable to reduce the recurrence of conflict between one lordship and another. Each formal indenture was intended to confine the ruling clan within the limits of its own country. Conn O'Neill was induced to forswear his traditional suzerainty over his lesser neighbours, the O'Neill ur-rithe. Henceforth O'Reilly, MacMahon, Magennis and Maguire were to hold their lands directly of the crown, and any rents or services owed to the O'Neills were to be converted to cash payments or English custom. Separate indentures were issued to the ur-rithe to confirm their independence.<sup>9</sup> Thomond made a similar concession when he surrendered the title of O'Brien "and all claims where he might pretend of the same".<sup>10</sup> Cahir Mac Art Kavanagh agreed that he should renounce "in the lands of others

beyond the bounds of his own country exactions called coyne and livery ... or other impositions whatsoever for any pretence but should live content with (his) own revenues".<sup>11</sup>

Such provisions, however, were void from almost the very beginning. The Kavanaghs, the O'Tooles and the O'Byrnes continued their attacks upon the Pale and upon each other without respite. The internal war amongst the O'Briens rapidly spilled over into territories beyond the borders of Thomond. MacGillapatrik of Upper-Ossory did not allow his elevation to the peerage to interrupt his long-standing feud with the O'Carrolls: within months of making his submission he was under arrest at Dublin for breach of its provisions.<sup>12</sup> Most serious, however, was the failure to contain Conn O'Neill. As early as July 1543, O'Neill was in conflict with O'Donnell over the ownership of Inishowen and the castle of Lifford.<sup>13</sup> St. Leger succeeded in temporarily quelling this dispute but other troubles soon followed. In 1549, Maguire complained of several spoils and murders committed upon his people by O'Neill.<sup>14</sup> In the face of mounting allegations the government eventually deemed it necessary to arrest Tyrone.<sup>15</sup> But the earl's removal from the scene did not relieve pressure upon the ur-rithe; it simply gave Shane O'Neill the opportunity to demonstrate his competence in protecting the traditional interests of the clan.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, surrender and regrant was a financial failure. St. Leger hoped that a subsidy of eight pence per ploughland might eventually be assessed upon every Gaelic lordship that entered the scheme, in addition to ordinary crown rents. He expected before long to net an annual revenue of £2,000 by this means.<sup>17</sup> But by 1548 the government was in receipt of dues from only six

minor Irish captains whose collective contribution was valued at little more than £200 p.a.<sup>18</sup> A slight improvement occurred in the early 1550s, but the great lordships of O'Brien and O'Neill remained non-contributory and crown properties in the provinces outside Leinster remained unsurveyed.

All these disappointments have rightly been attributed to the naïvety of the original conception of a scheme which imposed an inflexible framework upon an essentially fluid situation. There was undoubtedly some rigidity in the initial approach, but the charge can easily be overstated. Some awareness of the complexities of the Gaelic system was displayed from the beginning. Amongst the O'Briens, the O'Tooles and the Kavanaghs, the existence of tanistry was recognised and the succession of a tanist endorsed.<sup>19</sup> Again, no definite ruling was imposed in regard to the distribution of land: in the agreements made with the O'Tooles and the Kavanaghs, responsibility for determining ownership of land was left entirely to the clan itself.<sup>20</sup> The extent of the lands granted to O'Neill in Tyrone was, in contrast to the explicit terms of the agreement on other matters, left deliberately vague.<sup>21</sup> The government was clearly concerned to grant Oonn Bachach title to no more property than he could legitimately lay claim to amongst the O'Neills as captain of their nation. Finally, despite the expectations raised by others, St. Leger himself was cautious about the financial gain that would result from the treaties. "The country is without money" he realised, "and the people so gross and ignorant" that it was impossible to establish a regular system of payment immediately.<sup>22</sup> The financial benefits, he recognised, would at first be small and irregular; the profitability of the plan would be realised only when

its political and constitutional elements had first taken root.

Yet even the disappointment of these moderate hopes did not induce St. Leger to forsake his purpose altogether. His response to initial failure was the logical one: he simply carried the flexibility which he had been prepared to assume from the outset, one degree further. Towards the feuding O'Tooles, he extended an unusual tolerance. Brian, the son of Turlough, continued to enjoy the government's favour. He was maintained in his manor of Powerscourt, and became the only Gaelic Irishman to be chosen as sheriff of Dublin. But St. Leger also attempted to reconcile the followers of Turlough Mac Shane by accepting their succession from the rest of the O'Tooles.<sup>23</sup> Following St. Leger's advice, Lord Deputy Croft assumed an impartial attitude toward the warring factions of Thomond. He was prepared to concede the force of Donnell O'Brien's claim to be chief of the clan, and effected a temporary partition of the country to the satisfaction of both sides. St. Leger upheld this approach during his last viceroyalty, and when Donnell sought to have his position permanently recognised by the crown, St. Leger promised to write in his support.<sup>24</sup> The deputy also attempted to renew good relations with Cahir Mac Art. In 1550 he accepted Cahir's submission and licensed him to go to England "as he wishes it".<sup>25</sup> In 1554 he ennobled Cahir as Baron of Ballyan and recognised him as captain of his kindred, "and all other inhabitants of the countries of MacDavid More, Edmund Duff and the Duffrey". Significantly, the patent was granted for life only, and no provision was made for Cahir's progeny. Instead, his tanist, Murrough, was recognised as such by letters patent as a sign that the government was willing to

countenance his succession to the baronage in the event of Cahir's death.<sup>26</sup> In like manner, St. Leger came to recognise the realities of the situation in Tyrone. He re-established friendly relations with Conn Bachach, and took his favourite son on to the government payroll; Shane never forgot the friendship which the deputy extended towards him.<sup>27</sup> In accepting Shane into his household, St. Leger displayed once again, his receptiveness to change and his willingness to allow the instability of the Gaelic lordships to subside from within. Though he had been forced to look again at the working of his policy of surrender and regrant, the revisions he proposed were far from radical. The time necessary for a stable ruler to emerge and the degree of tolerance demanded of the government had been seriously underestimated; the process of settlement, it was now clear, would be a little more troublesome and a little slower.

St. Leger's commitment to non-violent settlement, moreover, was not doctrinaire. In addition to revising his time-scale, the deputy was also willing to allow the government a more active role in determining Gaelic Ireland's progress toward civilised life. He did not, that is to say, oppose the establishment of colonial settlements amidst the Gaelic lordships when circumstances were favourable. Though he had long sought to reconcile the O'Mores and O'Conors to the crown, it was St. Leger himself who actually presided over the first effort to establish a plantation in Leix-Offaly.<sup>28</sup> In the aftermath of Bellingham's campaign in the midlands, it is arguable that the deputy had little other alternative. But St. Leger voiced no opposition to the plan, and it is worth noting that he himself had strongly recommended and continued to defend the policy of garrisoning by which Bellingham

had secured his victory.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the deputy gave his support to a number of smaller colonial enterprises undertaken by close associates. His own private secretary, John Parker, established a small colony at Carrickfergus with his approval.<sup>30</sup> Marshal Bagenal's enterprise at the Newry enjoyed his support, and St. Leger himself acquired a holding of his own within the lordship of the earl of Desmond.<sup>31</sup> Admittedly, these were marginal cases which affected the governor's overall design in no significant manner; they are adduced here only as further evidence of the flexibility and eclecticism of St. Leger's approach to the complexities of Irish government.

This, undoubtedly, was an admirably statesmanlike response to the problem; but it was by no means a simple one. For it contained within itself a number of serious implications concerning the general character of St. Leger's administration. Continued confidence in the feasibility of such a tolerant and gradualist strategy was based upon certain key assumptions about the kind of administration which was to carry it out. It assumed, for instance, that the government could maintain its own stability during the period in which the gradual process of integration would take effect. It was envisaged, that is, that St. Leger or men who shared his outlook would remain politically important in the eyes of the crown. Secondly, it presupposed that the Dublin administration would not be compromised by its association with local figures of unstable or declining political influence: it assumed that the administration or individual administrators would independently attain sufficient power and prestige within Ireland to allow them influence over any new forces that emerged within

the lordships. / Such preconditions did not necessarily determine a strategy but, taken in conjunction with the general royal injunction to maintain his government in the most economic manner, they inclined St. Leger in one particular direction. | By establishing for himself a personal following within the community of the Pale, and by ensuring that those who were attached to his administration became men of wealth and credit within the Pale, St. Leger attempted to convert his constitutional authority as governor into real political power at local level. | The local, administration-centred clique thus formed provided him with sufficient leverage to act as an independent third party within the framework of factional politics and offered an indigenous and immediately relevant source of authority to the revised version of surrender and regrant which he sought to purvey.

St. Leger's viceroyalty has often been noted as a period of unusual amity between the royal administration and the community of the Pale. His reputation was high during his period in office and was greatly enhanced by nostalgia in the years after his departure. The basis of his popularity was in part ideological: it was under his regime that some of the chief Palesmen "policy-makers" of the 1530s found positions of influence in government. St. Leger's closest political adviser was the Palesman, Thomas Cusack. Cusack has been credited with the authorship of the surrender and regrant scheme, and he was certainly responsible for the most influential exposition of the idea.<sup>32</sup> Despite its initial setbacks, Cusack remained the plan's most consistent advocate and he fully accepted the modifications which the deputy felt required to make. He was a regular spokesman for and defender of St. Leger's policies, and was rewarded for his loyalty by rapid promotion to

high political office. On St. Leger's recommendation, he became successively a privy councillor, master of the rolls, keeper of the great seal, lord chancellor, and finally crowned his career by becoming joint chief governor of the realm as lord justice in 1552.<sup>33</sup> Throughout the period he was the deputy's chief agent in negotiating with the Gaelic and Gaelicised lords. Sir Thomas Luttrell, chief justice of the common pleas, was another of St. Leger's Palesman supporters. He had offered advice to St. Leger during the latter's official inquiry into the Irish administration in 1537, and he served as a senior member on a number of important government commissions during St. Leger's viceroyalties.<sup>34</sup> John Travers, the master of ordnance, was a third Irish-born confidante of St. Leger who, despite his military background, loyally supported the deputy's peaceful policies, and whose plans for small-scale colonisation were in turn supported by the deputy.<sup>35</sup> Gerald Aylmer, chief justice of king's bench, also came to attach himself to St. Leger's cause, and as lord justice with Cusack in 1552 acted as chief executor of the absent viceroy's policies.

The connection between St. Leger and some reform party within the Pale, however, should not be exaggerated. The deputy himself believed that he enjoyed the support of none of the Irish-born members of the council except "poor Sir Thomas Cusack", and with some justification.<sup>36</sup> Only Cusack's loyalty was unwavering. Luttrell was discreet in his allegiance, and Aylmer came over to the deputy only after a personal dispute with St. Leger's chief opponent on the council, lord chancellor Alen.<sup>37</sup> Some of the most articulate reformers of the 1540s remained the deputy's sworn enemies.<sup>38</sup> In fact, St. Leger was much more dependent for support

upon men from outside the Irish council and upon Englishmen who came to Ireland in his train than has been noted. With the exception of Cusack, the men with whom he took closest counsel were English. John Parker and John Goldsmith both came to Ireland with St. Leger in 1540, the former as the deputy's private secretary and the latter as newly appointed clerk to the Irish council. It was to these men that St. Leger confided his most pressing concerns. It was these whom he chose to defend his administration at court against the most serious allegations, and who were most detested by the deputy's Irish enemies as "men of liberal speech and character" who would take no scruple "to cloak men's actions". But St. Leger's third henchman, Thomas Agard, was the most distrusted of all.<sup>39</sup> Agard had been in Ireland since the summer of 1535 when he was sent by Cromwell to inquire into the affairs of the Dublin administration. He soon attached himself, however, to the household of the vice-treasurer, Sir William Brabazon and used his influence with the secretary to discredit Lord Deputy Skeffington and then Lord Leonard Grey, in order to further his master's ambitions. As deputy of the vice-treasurer, Agard grew odious not only to Grey and his supporters, but to the governor's opponents as well. He acquired an evil reputation as "a sharp receiver and a slow payer", and it was alleged that he profited greatly at the expense of the crown from his privileged position in the financial administration.<sup>40</sup> Yet despite the general odium that surrounded him, Agard had little difficulty in attaching himself to St. Leger. Though he had conducted two separate investigations into the Irish financial administration, and though he was almost certainly aware of Agard's repute, St. Leger

appointed him to be chief accountant of his household.<sup>41</sup> He employed Agard regularly as an agent in England, and forwarded his suits for reward. In 1547, upon the deputy's suggestion, Agard was appointed treasurer of the mint newly established in Dublin to undertake King Henry's policy of currency debasement; it was a position which offered ample scope to his talents.<sup>42</sup>

The connection which Agard establishes between Brabazon and St. Leger is revealing. For although temperamental differences separated the calm lord deputy from the hot-blooded vice treasurer, the links which held them together were far stronger. Agard was not the only dependant the two held in common. Sir Thomas Cusack was well known to be a protégé of Brabazon's in the 1530s, and his later attachment to St. Leger involved no loss of the treasurer's friendship.<sup>43</sup> A number of lesser figures also supported the bridge of alliance. Sir William Wise, an alderman of Waterford, was a personal contact of St. Leger who rendered the deputy much useful service in reporting upon the activities of the Butlers in southern Leinster. His son, Andrew, whose preferment Wise had committed to St. Leger, received employment in the administration in the office of the treasurer, and rose rapidly to become Brabazon's personal deputy, the post Agard had once held. As he did so, the connection between the Wises and the Brabazons was sealed by Andrew's marriage to the treasurer's daughter, Anne.<sup>44</sup> In 1551, in an unprecedented decision, he was joined with his father-in-law as joint vice-treasurer. Walter Peppard provided a further link between the treasurer and the deputy. A merchant who, with Brabazon's help, had bought his way into monastic property, Peppard was willing to offer his services to St. Leger. He surrendered large parts of his lease to the possessions of St. Mary's in Dublin, in order that

land near the capital could be made available to provide residences for the provincial magnates who had entered into surrender and regrant arrangements. But in return, he received the deputy's support in furthering his other enterprises, in developing his trading interests and in extending his hold over the large Geraldine manor of Kilkea. (The manor had originally been leased to Brabazon who in turn alienated it to Peppard). Peppard continued to remain loyal to St. Leger, and in the final years of the viceroyalty, acted as the main financial stay to the deputy's tottering administration.<sup>45</sup> In a less obvious fashion, a number of other figures like Francis Harbert, John Travers and even John Parker, provided inter connections between the deputy and the treasurer. It is not surprising, therefore, that both men's enemies regarded St. Leger and Brabazon, not as separate threats, but as a close conspiracy united by a mutual desire to defraud the crown and the community.<sup>46</sup>

The basis of their alliance, in part, was political in the narrowest sense. Both men had looked for the removal of Lord Deputy Grey, and both had been active in the attack that finally led to his dismissal and arrest. Brabazon, it was said, had sought the viceroyalty for himself, but he acquiesced peacefully in St. Leger's appointment, and continued to accept the role of second-in-command with ease.<sup>47</sup> It was on St. Leger's specific recommendation that Brabazon was preferred over Chancellor Alen to act as lord justice in the deputy's absence.<sup>48</sup> Despite their occasional differences, most notably over the treatment of the O'Conors, the two men's collaboration was generally harmonious. St. Leger never spoke ill of the treasurer's service, and Brabazon

was never implicated in any of the several plots to secure the deputy's removal. The strength of their continued alliance was founded, however, not upon politics, but upon a fundamental agreement about fiscal policy: both were convinced that the Irish revenues were unable to supply the administration's needs, and that continued subvention from England was essential to the government's survival. Such a pragmatic consensus inevitably affected their strategic outlook. It allowed Brabazon to assent to St. Leger's generally peaceful mode of operating, as it enabled St. Leger to occasionally endorse the brief and inexpensive forays of the treasurer. But their alliance was reinforced by a further agreement upon how the fruits of the Irish revenue were to be employed. St. Leger and Brabazon, for reasons of their own, were both anxious that the crown's wealth in Ireland should be used for purposes other than the maintenance of the royal establishment.

Sir William Brabazon, it seems, had never been a trustworthy, nor a particularly trusted, servant of the crown. Within two years of his appointment as vice treasurer, his conduct in office had already aroused the suspicion of some of his colleagues on the Irish council, and prompted King Henry to write in admonition to him.<sup>49</sup> The protection of Cromwell, his patron, enabled him to survive these charges and the first audit of his accounts was carried out in 1538 without remark. But a second audit, held in 1540, revealed some startling abuses. Brabazon, it appeared, had kept no formal record of the several sums he had received from England nor of their discharge as payments in Ireland. With only personal letters of the late lord privy seal concerning these transactions to show in his support, there seemed

no way of passing the treasurer's account other than by accepting his good-faith. Though his accounts could be made to balance, there existed no ultimate check upon the figures he produced.<sup>50</sup> This was only the most outrageous example of Brabazon's contrived negligence. It had been alleged that he had sold off the chattels of several dissolved monasteries at prices well below their value. But again, no formal record had been kept and the purchasers could not be located; there remained only the figures which Brabazon himself chose to enter into his account.<sup>51</sup> But for all the suspicion that hung over him, no definite charges of corruption could be brought against the treasurer, and the accounts had, after all, been balanced. The crown, with some prompting from St. Leger, chose to place the best interpretation on matters, and after some sharp words to the treasurer, let the affair drop.<sup>52</sup> When such striking instances of misconduct went unpunished, it is not surprising that less demonstrable charges, that he engrossed, under-leased and selectively distributed crown lands, went unheard. A third, rather slipshod, audit carried out in 1548 did not probe very deeply, and from then until his death in 1551, Brabazon carried on in his office<sup>53</sup> undisturbed by any awkward questions about his accounting procedures. It was not, indeed, until 1554 that the first thorough inquiry into the Irish financial administration was authorised by the crown.

Thus, for almost twenty years, during a crucial period in which the Irish revenue was greatly augmented by the confiscation of monastic properties and attainders of the Geraldine rebellion, the Irish financial administration was allowed go its own way without any significant interference from England, and the vice-treasurer was left free to take what advantage he might from the

windfall. He appears to have made the best of his opportunities. Though the monastic and Geraldine confiscations alone were expected to bring in an additional revenue of almost £9,200, and though the pre-1536 revenues were estimated to amount to £4,900, average annual revenue in the years 1541 to 1547 amounted to only a little over £11,000 and showed an overall decline in the period. As the expenses of the administration mounted steadily, domestic revenues not only failed to increase, but displayed an alarming instability.<sup>54</sup>

Actual revenue receipts wavered uncertainly throughout the 1540s simply because the amounts due were not being collected. Between 1540 and 1547, arrears to the sum of £18,640 were allowed to accrue upon the crown revenues alone.<sup>55</sup> Responsibility for the shortfall lay with the treasurer who, as general receiver, was supplied with a troop of horses for the specific purpose of collecting and distraining for rent. Under Brabazon, however, the soldiers were redundant; for the treasurer, it was said, was accustomed to lie "at Dublin ... not calling for any more than has been brought to him already."<sup>56</sup> Brabazon's lassitude as receiver contrasted markedly with his energetic conduct as lord justice, but it is clear that reasons other than mere laziness underlay his inaction. Several of his closest associates figured prominently upon his lists of arrears; between them, seven accounted for more than £1,000 of the total figure.<sup>57</sup> The arrears, moreover, had not recently grown; some were outstanding upon the very first instalments of crown leases. Nor were the debtors themselves in desperate financial straits. They were, rather, enterprising land speculators who sought to accumulate capital in order to expand their holdings of crown lands, and so to turn the new found wealth of the crown even further to their advantage. The arrearages, thus, were

only symptoms of a booming property market. Crown holdings were being bought and leased at a remarkable rate. But the demand for crown lands was not simply due to their superabundance; they were also being offered at prices far below their intrinsic worth.

The unrealistically low prices at which crown properties were being placed on the market in the 1540s were ostensibly the products of administrative confusion. But again, as in the case of Brabazon's accounting methods, a smoke screen of administrative incompetence was employed to obscure practices of a more dubious nature. Despite the work of the commissioners who in 1540-41 surveyed the extent of monastic and Geraldine confiscations, no formal survey of crown lands in Ireland existed. A crown surveyor was salaried from the civil list, but though he carried out a number of discrete surveys of particular holdings, the post was for the most part, superfluous. The surveyor's irrelevance was due to the fact that he enjoyed no official liaison with the exchequer. He was not commissioned to make new surveys for the issuing of new leases, and any revaluations he made to surveyed property were not communicated to the exchequer. Conversely, the exchequer did not submit its own records of survey, the extents of 1540-1541, for periodic revaluation, but continued to make out new leases upon the old surveys. Thus there existed two types of survey record in the 1540s, one up-to-date, but of no practical importance, another quite obsolete, but in everyday use.<sup>58</sup>

Apart from their inevitable anachronisms, the extents upon which the officers in the exchequer continued to depend contained two major defects as survey records. In the first place, they did not essay an accurate estimate of the value of the properties to potential lessees, but offered only an assessment of the current

use-value of the lands. They were, that is, no more than preliminary notes towards a more precise financial estimation.<sup>59</sup> The second difficulty followed directly from the first. As accounts drawn up for the purposes of the crown, the extents offered as the total annual value of each holding the sum remaining after the clerical pensions and annuities, which the crown was obliged to pay, had been deducted. But though the crown remained responsible for the payment of pensions, it was to these net totals that exchequer officials referred when issuing a lease. In fact, the sums were extracted from the extents and entered into an account book which became the basic reference work of the exchequer; the provenance of the figures and their true significance were lost.<sup>60</sup>

It is improbable that senior members of the Dublin administration could have been unaware of the degree to which the crown was being deprived of its revenues by these practices. Indeed, an attempt by the surveyor to secure possession of the old extents for his office was rapidly defeated by the exchequer, and no suggestion that its administrative processes were in need of overhaul was ever expressed by the department's senior officers.<sup>61</sup> It seems clear that the consistent undervaluation of the revenues was due not simply to administrative chaos, but to a widespread conspiracy to defraud the crown.

No attempt to deflect public revenues for private profits could have been launched within the administration without the complicity of the chief financial officer of the crown, the vice treasurer. From the initial survey of crown lands, through the commission for issuing leases, to the collection of rents and the final making-up of revenues actually leviable, Brabazon was deeply involved at every crucial stage in the process by which the new

crown holdings were placed on the property market. No one got rich on crown lands in Ireland without Brabazon's good will. It is not surprising that he was remembered by posterity as a most popular man within the Pale.<sup>62</sup> Naturally, the treasurer looked first to his own interest. He himself held a number of leases of the crown, and from each he made a substantial profit. Through his agent, Lawrence Townley, he took a lease of the Cistercian Abbey of Mellifont for an annual rent of £316.13s.4d, though it had been estimated in the extents to be worth £324.19s.6d.<sup>63</sup> He procured a grant in perpetuity of the site of the monastery of St. Thomas, near Dublin, for a rent of only 18s.5d. p.a. though it had been surveyed to be worth £14.12s.0d.<sup>64</sup>, and he paid no entry fine. He received a lease of several rectories of the abbey of Baltinglass for a rent of 40s., even though their combined total had been surveyed to be worth more than £75 p.a.,<sup>65</sup> and he leased several rectories of St. John's Hospital for £15 under the survey value.<sup>66</sup> Finally, the treasurer acquired a number of leases of the Kildare attainder for a total of £12.6s.8d. under their estimated value.<sup>67</sup> By these means, Brabazon laid the basis of one of the great Anglo-Irish noble families which has survived down to our own day.<sup>68</sup>

Brabazon's fraud could not have been perpetrated without the connivance of the other chief officers in the exchequer, but their cooperation seems to have been cheaply bought. Chief Baron Bathe secured a discount of at least £8.16s.8d. on his leases.<sup>69</sup> The leases of the chief remembrancer, Henry Draycott, are difficult to trace, but it seems from what is evident that he deserved his later reputation as an honest servant. His acquiescence seems to have been secured by the grant of a number of leases far in excess of what an official of his status would normally have expected.<sup>70</sup> The

truly grand risks were taken by Brabazon's closest associates. Thomas Agard leased the monastery at Bectiff for at least £14<sup>71</sup> below the survey and St. Mary's Abbey at Trim for £16.<sup>72</sup> He soon alienated his holdings, however, and invested the profits in older and safer crown holdings in the Pale. Walter Peppard also attempted to use monastery lands as a stepping stone to further enterprise, but with less success. He was one of the early planters of Leix-Offaly, whose costly investment came to grief in the rebellions of the mid-1550s. But Peppard's first investments in religious properties were very different. He was one of those fortunate speculators who received favourable leases from the monasteries on the eve of the dissolutions.<sup>73</sup> In the late 1530s Peppard enjoyed the farm of the lands of St. Mary's Abbey of Dublin for about half its estimated worth. He had the lease confirmed to him by the crown,<sup>74</sup> but he seemed uncertain of his title and proved willing to alienate his interest gradually in return for alternative opportunities.<sup>75</sup> He received a lease of the priory of Glasscarrig (Co. ~~Kilkenny~~ <sup>WEXFORD</sup>) for some £10 under the survey value and he was also granted leases of lands of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Co. Kildare.<sup>76</sup> But his real interest lay in the broad acres of the Geraldine attainder. In 1543 he procured a lease of the manor of Kilkea and several lesser properties on the borders of Kildare and Offaly. The lease was set at £85 p.a., but even the extremely conservative Geraldine survey estimated the lands involved to be worth more than £100.<sup>77</sup> The potential inherent in these rich but relatively unused and undersurveyed lands was very great if sufficient effort was made to develop them; Peppard had already begun on the course that would lead to his ruinous plantation efforts in the midlands.

The involvement of men like Agard and Peppard in Brabazon's scheme naturally raises suspicions about Lord Deputy St. Leger's association with the fraud, but in reality the connections were much closer. Sir Thomas Cusack, the great bridge between Brabazon and the deputy, was himself deeply involved in property speculation in his native county Meath. He received a lease of the priory of Lismullen, whose lands he had in farm since before the dissolution, for £5 below the survey value.<sup>78</sup> He fell into arrears from the beginning and he seems to have used the capital thus saved to make a downpayment of £168.13s.4d. for a grant in perpetuity of monastery lands in Trim, Scryne and Londreston, which was only 77% of the twenty-year valuation normally charged for the granting away of land.<sup>79</sup> In 1547 he was granted Lismullen in perpetuity for a payment that was ostensibly the conventional twenty-years purchase price, but which was calculated on the underestimated records of the extents.<sup>80</sup> In the same year also, he received a grant of the Abbey of Multifarnam, but the payment exacted amounted to less than 53% of the twenty years' valuation.<sup>81</sup>

St. Leger's other close associate, John Parker, was comparatively late in entering the scramble for crown lands, but he none the less, secured his own quota of profitable leases. Immediately after his arrival in Ireland, he acquired a number of small interests in monastery properties in Dublin and Wexford<sup>82</sup> and in 1542 a lease of the site and lands of Selsker Abbey in Co. Wexford.<sup>83</sup> His lease, fixed for twenty-one years at £98, was more than £8 below the valuation. In the following year Parker received a grant of the small priory of Rosbercon (Co. Kilkenny) for a downpayment of £44, and procured a lease of the priory of Holmpatrick (Co. Dublin) for £9.10s.10d. under the survey.<sup>84</sup> In 1547, however, he achieved his

greatest coup by acquiring a grant of Selsker Abbey and its lands for the ludicrously low payment of £285.15s.5d.<sup>85</sup> An annual rent of 15s. was retained as some way of disguising the exchequer's extravagance, but it was of little concern to Parker who soon sold his interest in the property on the open market. How much profit he made on the transaction is impossible to estimate. Like Agard and Peppard, Parker's interest lay in other fields - and he was ultimately to be no more successful than Peppard - but the profits he drew from the new crown lands provided the necessary foundation for all his later enterprises.

Lord Deputy St. Leger, therefore, was surrounded by men who were profiting greatly from the systematic undervaluation of crown revenues - even his own brother, Robert, turned a profit from his purchase of the Manor of Kill for £271.<sup>86</sup> It was impossible that the deputy could not have been aware of what was going on around him. But St. Leger not only acquiesced in the Brabazon system, he wholly approved of it. He constantly supported the treasurer's pleas for the extra subventions from England which were necessary to support such a wasteful administration. He wrote repeatedly to Westminster in Brabazon's favour and recommended the suits of Agard, Peppard, Parker and Cusack for the leases and grants which allowed them their profits.<sup>87</sup> But most important of all, St. Leger himself became deeply involved in the whole conspiracy. The first grants of monastic land which he acquired for himself, at Grany in Co. Kildare and from the Observantine friary at Trim, were pegged just below the twenty years purchase price.<sup>88</sup> But these only lent an air of superficial respectability to the deputy's other transactions. Even at the time that he acquired them, St. Leger was already in possession of a number of other crown lands which he enjoyed at the

particularly low leases which his predecessor, Lord Leonard Grey, had been given. The new deputy showed no desire to surrender these leases for revaluation but was rather inclined to emulate Grey's example. By 1556, St. Leger was one of the chief holders of undervalued crown property in Ireland. He held the Abbey of Mullingar for £43.13s.2d. under the survey, the friary at Louth for £69 and the Abbey of Ballyboggan for £28 below the official estimate. Taken together, St. Leger's crown leases were £195 p.a. under the surveyed value. The deputy, moreover, was not only the grandest of profiteers, he was also the slowest of payers. In 1556, on these undervalued properties alone, he was more than £2,000 in arrears; the total sum due on all his landed interests in Ireland amounted to almost £5,000.<sup>89</sup>

By his exploitation of grossly underestimated crown properties, by his chronic defaulting upon his personal arrears, by his support for and protection of fellow-speculators and by his stony refusal to engage in any administrative reform, St. Leger at once epitomised and completed the general conspiracy within the Dublin administration to divert the revenues from the coffers of the crown into the hands of private speculators. The depth of his personal interest in the malversation is evident; but the widespread effect of his support for such a scheme is more significant. Only a handful of the most influential political and administrative figures involved in the corruption have been examined here, but a host of other examples might also be cited. The contagion spread everywhere: almost every grantee or lessee who appears in the patent rolls or *fiants* of the period profited to a greater or lesser extent from the systematic neglect of the revenues by the officers of the crown. In 1554 a commission of inquiry estimated

that the crown's revenues had been depleted by over £2,100 p.a. by these undervalued leases alone.<sup>90</sup> The greatest beneficiaries - the Gaelic and Anglo-Norman lords who occupied monastic property and paid little or no rent for it - have long been recognised.<sup>91</sup> But their's are only the most glaring examples of the opportunities for gain made available to anyone with sufficient wealth or influence to invest in crown lands. It was an enterprise which bound the exchequer official and the gentleman of the Pale together in mutual self-interest. And there remains a further group - the largest - whose gains from the great conspiracy must remain unknown: the extent to which the new landlords chose to pass on a portion of their profits to the rest of the community in the form of lower rents and cheaper alienations is inestimable. Certainly the margin of their own gains was sufficiently wide to enable them to act generously without incurring serious loss. For arrivistes, anxious to establish themselves as persons of note within a settled community, the popularity which generosity bought was socially desirable; for men whose fortunes were founded upon a crime it was politically necessary. All of the new men mentioned here, at any rate, won respect; all of them were integrated into the community of the Pale, some of them even became its spokesmen.<sup>92</sup> The source of their wealth, moreover, was never exposed; no loyalist opposition arose within the Pale to expose their felonies to the crown. These general considerations counted especially with the deputy. The largesse of the confiscations offered his administration the vital opportunity to establish itself as an independent source of authority and influence within Ireland. Through the various distribution of the profits involved, St. Leger was able to purchase a

fund of goodwill sufficient to preserve his credibility against the challenges which his generally passive administration occasionally faced. Misappropriation of crown revenues seemed a small price to pay for such political stability. St. Leger's almost universal popularity, the era of good feelings between the Dublin government and the community of the Pale which persisted throughout his vice-royalties was sustained by pervasive corruption and founded upon fraud.

The disclosure of St. Leger's personal corruption does not, of necessity, cast doubt upon the sincerity of his commitment to a policy of conciliation. It is just as possible to argue that his patient courtship of the unstable Gaelic lordships necessitated these arrangements for his own personal security as it is to suggest the reverse. It is more natural, however, to assume that both motives coalesced happily in the deputy's mind without any sense of incongruity. As is so common in matters of conscience, public benefit and private interest seemed to coincide conveniently for him. In acting in this fashion, St. Leger was merely choosing one particular manner of responding to the complex pressures which acted upon the viceroy within the framework of Anglo-Irish politics. In the light of the tragic experience of his predecessor, he had decided to bolster his position by constructing for himself an interest group of sufficient independence and authority to withstand attack from enemies on either side of the Irish Sea.

His decision to adopt this strategy was greatly facilitated by the destruction of the Kildare interest in the late 1530s. For the collapse of the Geraldine League allowed him to greatly enlarge the purview of his own interest group simply by extending some tolerance and some favour towards the surviving Geraldine

remnants.<sup>93</sup> His intent was not, as his enemies later alleged, dynastic; St. Leger had no desire to establish himself as a surrogate Kildare. Rather, he chose to patronise the weakest of the two great factions in order that they would in their own interest lend effectiveness, or at least credibility, to his authority in the areas under their influence.<sup>94</sup> His aim, that is, was to associate the revival of Geraldine fortunes with the Dublin government's goodwill and to extend the influence of that goodwill by reviving the Geraldines. For this reason St. Leger recommended and secured the recognition of James Fitzgerald, the usurper of the Desmond lordship, as the thirteenth earl of Desmond and ultimately granted him the prestigious position of lord treasurer within the Dublin administration.<sup>95</sup> For the same reason he welcomed the return of the exiled earl of Kildare and appointed him to a prominent place upon the Irish council.<sup>96</sup> Lesser Geraldines, like the Berminghams of Carbery and the Nugents of Delvin were admitted to the deputy's favour.<sup>97</sup> The O'Neills and other Gaelic members of the faction learned to place a greater confidence in his aims. Survivors of the Kildare administrative group in the Pale came over to him. Yet the deputy's attachment to the Geraldines was strictly limited. His closest advisers, as we have seen, were Englishmen, and many of the Palesmen whom he chose to patronise were no friends to the house of Kildare: no prominent Geraldine was given a place of real influence within his entourage. His encouragement of the Geraldines was merely of a piece with his complicity in the dispersal of crown lands and his placid toleration of sudden alterations within the Gaelic lordships. Each was an integral part of his attempt to create a dependable power base for the crucial

period during which the delicate process of integrating the separate lordships into the new kingdom of Ireland was to mature.

As a general strategy the deputy's approach had obvious weaknesses. In the short term its political and financial achievements were small, slowly won and uncertainly retained. The abuse of crown revenues upon which it relied to such an extent entailed risks deadly enough to blast not only St. Leger's Irish administration, but his whole career. It produced a formidable array of embarrassing and damaging evidence upon which enemies might prey. And worse, it inexorably aroused the enmity of the most powerful faction in the land: the Butlers. Butler animosity towards St. Leger was not long in making itself evident. It appeared as early as 1543 and mounted steadily in the remaining years of King Henry's reign.<sup>98</sup> The most serious challenge to St. Leger came in the middle of 1546, when Lord Chancellor Alen, who had grown increasingly estranged from both St. Leger and Brabazon, allied himself with the Butler opposition. The case then drafted by Alen and presented at court by the Butler protégé, Walter Cowley, concentrated effectively upon St. Leger's fundamental vulnerabilities.<sup>99</sup> It reviewed the deputy's failure to make any significant progress in extending surrender and regrant arrangements and it revealed the degree to which the original agreements had become unworkable. In pursuit of false allies, Alen and Cowley suggested, St. Leger had forfeited the friendship of the crown's true subjects, and in particular he had unnecessarily alienated the earl of Ormond. This general political failure had been accompanied by a financial one. The great promise of the new royal revenues had not been realised; the crown's wealth was being wastefully dispersed. The plaintiffs went further: the poor performance of the royal government, they

suggested, was due more to the wilfulness than to the negligence of the deputy. How had St. Leger, Alen asked rhetorically, "exerted himself in the King's Majesty's service, and how has he administered justice in the things by him ordered? What grants and rewards ... has (he) taken of the King's Majesty's subjects? " He left it to Cowley to make the tenor of such an allegation explicit, but the implication was clear enough. Alen and Cowley recommended that a commission be established to inquire into St. Leger's conduct as viceroy.

Yet despite the seriousness of these allegations and the influence of those who advanced them, St. Leger's position was not so weak as it might have appeared. He defended his administration in detail on a number of levels - political, financial and personal - but each response boiled down ultimately to a simple denial of the charges and an assertion that his critics could not improve upon his labours.<sup>100</sup> Such an ultimately simplistic defence posture was feasible because his enemies' allegations were, at heart, double-edged. They denigrated his military and political inaction and his failure to improve the King's revenues, but it was by no means obvious that their own belligerent recommendations would be any less burdensome, in the short-term at least, upon the royal treasury. They charged him with partiality and bias, but their own factional connections were undeniable. They hinted at his personal corruption, but they could only hint, for Ormond, Cowley and even Lord Chancellor Alen had taken a share in the lavish distribution of crown lands.<sup>101</sup> St. Leger replied to Alen's hints about his malversation simply by implying that the Chancellor himself was not above suspicion, and there was no response.<sup>102</sup> In so serious a matter, neither side was prepared to call the other's bluff. For

these reasons, St. Leger's position proved resilient against the Butler offensive, and the campaign to unseat him issued, in fact, in disastrous consequences for the Ormond group. Cowley was disgraced at court, dismissed from his offices, jailed and compelled to write ignominious retractions and apologies.<sup>103</sup> Inevitably, he implicated Alen in the conspiracy, and the chancellor too was removed from his office and for a brief period placed under arrest.<sup>104</sup> Ormond, who was in London to press the case, was, along with twenty members of his household, mysteriously poisoned at his lodgings at Holborn.<sup>105</sup>

St. Leger's survival of the 1546 attack is a reflection of the degree to which his strategy had already begun to take effect in Ireland. His contention that his opponents were merely "factious" elements was greatly enhanced by the support which the majority of the Irish council and the community of the Pale showed for him throughout the affair. In the light of the general popularity of his rule, and of the fact that such popularity had been achieved with relative economy, the Henrician council's decision to dismiss the Butler allegations was easily made. St. Leger was already beginning to take on an appearance as the agreed representative of the minor kingdom's loyal subjects.

The deputy's chief weakness lay still, however, in his continued vulnerability to changes of government in England. A prominent member of what has been discerned as a conservative pro-Norfolk party in his own county of Kent, St. Leger found himself dangerously exposed in Ireland upon the triumph of the Seymours at the accession of Edward VI.<sup>107</sup> The changes in the composition of the Edwardian privy council, first under Somerset and later under Northumberland, account for both of St. Leger's revocations in 1548

and 1550. Significantly, however, these dismissals exercised a progressively limited effect upon St. Leger's Irish interest. The appointment of Sir Edward Bellingham as deputy was accompanied by the rehabilitation of Alen and Cowley and the abandonment of the peaceful persuasions by which St. Leger had attempted to woo the O'Mores and the O'Conors. But no purge of St. Leger's supporters within the administration, comparable to that which had attended upon Grey's removal, ensued. Apart from some murmurings about the deputy's lack of enthusiasm in matters of religion, no attempt was made to discredit his administration. There was no suggestion of conducting an inquiry into his financial affairs. St. Leger was himself soon restored to favour and employed in the service of the crown elsewhere.<sup>107</sup> He continued to be involved in Irish affairs. Throughout this period St. Leger was allowed to retain his leases upon crown lands in Ireland which he held as viceroy.<sup>108</sup> Despite his attack upon the O'Mores and the O'Conors and his generally energetic campaigning in Ireland, Bellingham's viceroyalty did not entail a repudiation of St. Leger's policy of conciliation. Bellingham's use of force was strategic: it was intended to reinforce rather than to renounce the government's commitment to uniting the different communities of the land under the Irish crown. Thus Bellingham maintained and even extended St. Leger's links within the Gaelic and Anglo-Norman lordships and enabled St. Leger to resume his own habit of rule in 1550 without any sense of dislocation.<sup>109</sup> The second interruption of his Irish service brought even less disturbance. Sir James Croft was particularly charged to curtail the massive Scottish migration into the north-east, but his campaign in Ulster apart, Croft made no deviation from the characteristic lines of St. Leger's policy. The two men had collaborated

harmoniously in the months before Croft's appointment was finalised, and the new deputy continued to be guided by St. Leger's closest counsellors. He made Sir Thomas Cusack his chief minister.<sup>110</sup>

The factors underlying the continuing acceptability of St. Leger's strategy, were clearly revealed in the circumstances of his final appointment as viceroy in 1553. Though the appointment was not finalised until the accession of Queen Mary, the decision to return St. Leger to Ireland had long been under consideration by the Edwardian privy council as part of its general campaign of financial retrenchment. Following the discovery of serious corruption and maladministration within the court of wards, the duke of Northumberland established a major commission to inquire into the general administration of crown finances.<sup>111</sup> As appendages to this central inquiry a number of lesser commissions were planned to investigate the administration and expenditure of royal treasure at Berwick, Calais and Ireland.<sup>112</sup> Preliminary research into the costs of Irish government carried out by the privy council in 1552, yielded some startling results. A questionnaire submitted to the Irish council demonstrated clearly that St. Leger's absence from Ireland was invariably accompanied by a major increase in government expenditure there, with no appreciable increase in revenues.<sup>113</sup> Though they were unexciting, and though they seemed to be unproductive, St. Leger's methods of government were unequalled in their economy. The council once again endorsed the peaceful and piece-meal strategy which the economy implied and determined upon St. Leger's re-appointment.<sup>114</sup>

Yet the considerations which lead to this decision were also responsible for the despatch of a two-man commission to inquire into the state of the Irish financial administration which arrived in Ireland one month after St. Leger in December 1553.<sup>115</sup> Such an investigation inevitably posed a threat to the viceroy's system, but to begin with, the danger was not insurmountable. The initial findings of the commissioners, Sir Edmund Rouse and a professional auditor Valentine Browne, were moderate. Their first report, presented to the privy council in April 1554, decried the under-leasing of crown properties and the inefficient administrative procedures of the exchequer.<sup>116</sup> Their examination of the public accounts exposed a large deficit, and resulted in the dismissal and imprisonment of the vice-treasurer, Andrew Wise.<sup>117</sup> But their report retained a highly general tone both in its revelations and its recommendations. It did not specify which lands had been under-leased, by what extent, or who had been the beneficiaries of the differentiations. It implicated neither the deputy nor any other official outside the treasury and the exchequer in the maladministration that had been uncovered, and it did not essay any general comments upon the workings of the Dublin administration. It made no suggestion of corruption. The commissioners' moderation can be explained in familiar terms. By the time he submitted his report, Rouse had succeeded to Wise's office and had already come to a good understanding with the deputy. In replacing Wise, he inherited not only the conventional perquisites of the treasurer's office, but also the castle and town of Athlone which Brabazon had gained possession of. He was soon, moreover, to attempt to extend his Irish holdings by participating in a new colonisation scheme in Ulster, in partnership with St. Leger's ally, John Parker. By the

middle of 1554, then, the Rouse-Browne commission was no more serious a challenge to St. Leger than that posed by the audit of 1547.<sup>118</sup>

Almost immediately, however, St. Leger's fortunes took a marked turn for the worst. Rouse's rapport with the deputy aroused the suspicion of his superiors in London. His performance as treasurer became the subject of unusual and unfavourable attention by the privy council, and in October he was replaced as a commissioner by a young but well-placed courtier, Sir William Fitzwilliam.<sup>119</sup> Fitzwilliam's credentials were a clear indication of his high influence. He came armed with letters of credit from King Philip and Queen Mary, instructing the deputy to appoint him to a position of seniority upon the Irish council.<sup>120</sup> In addition to this, Fitzwilliam was to be granted the unusual office of deputy-chancellor, and was to be made a senior member of the commission to grant crown leases.<sup>121</sup> The new commissioner proved to be unwaveringly hostile to St. Leger. He corresponded secretly with Westminster, reporting upon the deputy's failure to curb either the Scottish migration or the growing rebelliousness of the midlands Irish. He revived the investigation of the government's financial affairs, and in collaboration with Valentine Browne, produced a series of reports by the middle of 1556, which were designed to prove the deputy's personal culpability in the mismanagement of the Irish revenues.<sup>122</sup> St. Leger's reputation for economy, the reports attempted to show, was unfounded: in the last two and a half years of his viceroyalty, he had consumed more than £66,600 of royal treasure. During the same period, arrearages had been allowed to pile up, and the deputy had made no effort to stem the decay of royal revenues. St. Leger himself had profited from the negligence and many of his associates had grown rich from it.

In form and in content, Fitzwilliam's allegations were nothing more than the old Butler case refurbished. So St. Leger made his characteristic defence: he had done his best under difficult conditions, no one could have achieved more for similar costs, and, of course, his critics were motivated only by personal malice.<sup>123</sup> "If Sir William Fitzwilliam's malice toward the lord deputy", he declared righteously, "had not been such as to deface him the further by his friends, to wrought that no good service might be done in this, then much of the enormities might have been redressed, for the said deputy is well able to prove that his (Fitzwilliam's) friends have been the bearers of some of the chiefest malefactors and have had them in their houses".<sup>124</sup>

This time, however, the deputy's refusal to be drawn was not to prove as effective as it had been in the past. This was, in part, because the political and financial credibility of his administration had, in real terms, deteriorated significantly in the years between 1553 and 1556. During this time, the plantation of Leix-Offaly had been completely overrun by the resurgent O'Mores and O'Conors, and the clansmen threatened the borders of the Pale daily.<sup>125</sup> Though he seems to have made some effort to deal with the Scots in the north, St. Leger's supplies of men and equipment were pathetically inadequate to deal with a problem of such magnitude. The migration continued and the council at Westminster became increasingly alarmed.<sup>126</sup> The state of the Irish revenues had also declined seriously during these same years under the supervision of Sir William Wise's "unthrifty son".<sup>127</sup> Whatever malice informed the gloss which Fitzwilliam placed upon his researches into the Irish financial administration, the evidence of waste and overspending which he produced was undeniable.

But these short-term difficulties were not alone sufficient to undermine the strong basis of support which St. Leger had constructed over the years. In the mid-1550s there occurred also a qualitative change in the nature of the political challenge which the Irish lord deputy confronted. Fitzwilliam had been accompanied on his journey to Ireland by the young ninth earl of Ormond who had resided at court since the death of his father.<sup>128</sup> The return of the earl was certainly the signal for the revival of Butler opposition to the deputy and very soon relations between the earl and St. Leger were strained. But the limitations of Butler opposition had already been clearly delineated. The young earl had not engineered his own return, and on arrival he had not assumed his father's mantle as the leader of all opposition to St. Leger. From the beginning it was evident that some other force which possessed more influence than the Butlers had ever enjoyed, was, through the encouragement of the Butlers and the revival of the fiscal inquiry, engaged upon a systematic attempt to unseat the deputy.

Ormond's return had been predated by a number of significant interventions on the part of the crown into St. Leger's administrative group. Late in 1553 Nicholas Bagenal was replaced as marshall by a newcomer, George Stanley, who remained aloof from the deputy and soon formed a close relationship with Fitzwilliam.<sup>129</sup> In June 1554 St. Leger was instructed to reinstate Sir John Alen as a member of the Irish council and to allow to him a twenty-one year reversion on all his leases as a sign of royal favour.<sup>130</sup> Four months later came Fitzwilliam, and it was through the new commissioner rather than through his noble travelling companion that the pressure upon St. Leger continued to mount. In July 1555,

Fitzwilliam superseded Chancellor Cusack as keeper of the seal.<sup>131</sup>

Cusack was summoned to London and sequestered from his office pending the investigation of questions arising out of the examination of Wise's accounts. With him also went Walter Peppard, John Parker and Richard Aylmer, each of them suspected of peculation.<sup>132</sup>

And at the same time, in response to Fitzwilliam's allegations, an investigation into St. Leger's private financial affairs was begun by the auditors of Wise's account.<sup>133</sup> Thus, by early 1556, with Brabazon and Agard dead, with Wise, Cusack, Parker and Peppard in custody, and his own personal affairs under serious scrutiny, St. Leger found himself dangerously isolated at Dublin.

His administrative clique had been shattered, but his predicament was more grievous still: at the same time as the case against him mounted, a number of reform proposals which closely resembled the critical recommendations urged by Fitzwilliam from Dublin were being promoted in the name of a man to whom Fitzwilliam was related by marriage, Thomas Radcliffe, Lord Fitzwalter.<sup>134</sup> For the first time in his Irish career, St. Leger found himself threatened not simply by opposition within Ireland itself, nor by personal or factional enemies within England, but by a group whose interest in Ireland was impersonal and direct, whose primary concern was neither to elevate the Butlers nor to ruin the deputy, but simply to gain opportunity for their own service on behalf of the crown.

Why Fitzwalter first became involved in Irish affairs is a matter which has often engaged the imaginations of historians. The young courtier who had served Mary well on the eve of her accession, during Wyatt's rebellion and as her ambassador to King Philip seems to have looked upon Ireland as his opportunity to do

some crowning service by which he might attain high political influence and perhaps secure relief from the heavy debts which hung over his patrimony.<sup>135</sup> It is possible that he learned something of Ireland through his brother-in-law Fitzwilliam, who had some experience of the land even before his journey there in 1554.<sup>136</sup> It is even possible that his intention of doing something in Ireland was fixed by his experiences at the court of King Philip.<sup>137</sup> All of this is conventional speculation; but it might be permissible in this context to add one further piece of speculative evidence concerning the Radcliffe connection with Ireland in the years before 1557, if only because it tends to complement the interpretation of St. Leger's regime outlined here. In 1555 Fitzwalter's father, Henry the second earl of Sussex, finally rid himself of his "unnatural and unkind wife" by divorce. The complaint of the earl against his wife was ostensibly that she had engaged in sorcery, but there is reason to suspect that more earthy<sup>e</sup> matters intervened between the earl and his countess. At any rate, when in 1559, the divorced countess next appears in the records, it is as a distressed wife suing for the release from the Tower of her second husband, the unlucky former Irish treasurer, Andrew Wise. If we may discount the possibility that the countess began her liaison with the broken and heavily indebted Wise after his imprisonment in 1554, we must conclude that it had existed long before the earl secured his divorce. This would certainly have made the old earl aware of the Irish administration and the great gains to be made therein, but did young Fitzwalter first learn of St. Leger's dark doings in Ireland and of the opportunities that existed for those who would expose them from the braggings of his step-mother's paramour?<sup>138</sup>

It is, perhaps, a matter of little moment. Of far greater importance than the personal origins of Fitzwalter's interest in Ireland are its consequences. The disclosure of St. Leger's personal involvement in the corruption of his administration, his obvious failure to deal adequately with the most pressing problems of government and finally a late suggestion that his attitude towards revived catholicism was ambiguous, combined to make Fitzwalter's offer of a new and better government in Ireland overwhelmingly attractive to the Marian privy council. In the spring of 1556, they determined upon St. Leger's dismissal.<sup>139</sup> The significance of the change, however, is less obvious than might be supposed. Fitzwalter's alternative plan for Irish governance as set out in the "Remedy for the reform of the north and the rest of Ireland", an argument prepared before his appointment, and in his official instructions marked no ideological turning-point.<sup>140</sup> Purposely designed to contrast with the deficiencies of St. Leger's performance, the reforms they proposed were essentially quantitative: more action, more results, more honesty. Thus the expulsion of the Scots from the north, the suppression of the rebellion in the midlands and the rebuilding of the plantation there, and a complete overhaul of the financial administration were Fitzwalter's main issues of emphasis. Behind them lay no intent to significantly alter the government's attitude to the Anglo-Normans or the Gaelic Irish. The aim of uniting the communities of the island under the crown and the strategy of achieving this end through a combination of surrender and regrant and occasional exemplary plantation remained untouched. It was natural that it should be so. The new programme was not based upon a detached intellectual analysis of the weaknesses of St. Leger's strategy; it was drawn up by a group of

pragmatists who had spotted the practical vulnerabilities of the deputy's current position and were anxious to exploit them in their own interests.

But despite the superficial nature of the change in strategic terms, a qualitative shift of major importance had taken place. In promising rapid, effective and inexpensive solutions in contrast to St Leger's piece-meal efforts, Fitzwalter and his colleagues clearly eschewed the old viceroy's mode of operation. In part their decision was deliberate: none of them planned to stay long in Ireland, service there was at best a stepping stone to higher things. But their action was also partially unthinking. | It contained the unspoken assumption that the programme of integration was ultimately independent of the patient waiting process which St. Leger had attached to it, and could be successfully executed without delay. | Fitzwalter's neglect of the experienced considerations which underlay St. Leger's revised strategy inevitably made his own prescriptions for action simplistic and myopic. St. Leger had been lazy, self-indulgent and corrupt; more energy, more selflessness and more honesty were all that were necessary to fulfil the aims he had originally set himself. Yet haste in execution, St. Leger had early realised, was counterproductive; less, rather than more action was the essential precondition to the fulfilment of the aim of integration. For all their short-term acuity, St. Leger's rivals had failed to grasp this point. Thus in May 1556, when St. Leger was at last recalled to meet his auditors and Fitzwalter assumed office as viceroy, there occurred a change of major consequence for the future of English rule in Ireland of which no one was fully conscious.

## CHAPTER IV

Sussex: Government by Programme

## (i)

However insensitive and ill-informed he may have been at the outset, Sussex's\* appreciation of the complexities of Irish governance deepened and matured in time. As early as 1557 his understanding of what needed to be done in Ireland had broadened considerably and he was busy badgering Queen Mary to assent to a general plan for the reordering of the realm through a revival of surrender and regrant and the establishment of a number of colonial settlements.<sup>1</sup> By 1560 he was able to present Queen Elizabeth with a careful analysis of the current state of her Irish kingdom and to make a number of detailed recommendations for its reform.<sup>2</sup> This was an examination informed by a profound awareness of the strength and ubiquity of faction. The Butlers and the Geraldines, he now realised, exercised sway over all parts of the land; there were few local powers who were not aligned in some way with either group. But within this web of faction and the conspiracy of lawlessness which sustained it, Sussex could espy some rays of hope. There existed within both camps a number of subordinate powers who had already demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the system and were ready to embrace the laws and governance of the crown in return for a recognition and defence of their independence. The effect of their desertion, Sussex was certain, would be cumulative; the happy example of one would lead another in the same direction until the factions would eventually wither away.

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\* Fitzwalter did not succeed to his father's title until May 1557. Since, however, this chapter is not entirely chronological in organisation, I shall, for simplicity's sake refer to him as Sussex throughout.

Sussex's confidence was further bolstered by an additional certainty that one of the great factions would not resist this self-immolation, but would, under certain conditions, actually welcome it. The Butlers were "for the most part of English blood or name, or of the Irish reduced already to English government or of such of the Irish that continue in their obedience and at present seek to receive their estates from the Queen Majesty and to be reduced to English government".<sup>3</sup> The earl of Ormond was willing to relinquish his authority over his factional subordinates if his outstanding position within the realm would be recognised and guaranteed by the crown in some other way. Only the earl of Kildare and his Geraldine group seemed to pose any serious challenge. But its power, too, should soon be eroded if the crown extended independent recognition to selected inferior lords within the group, "making some to be viscounts, some to be barons" and encouraging all "to give over their Irish customs and to receive their estates from the Queen Majesty and to depend upon the crown."<sup>4</sup>

The process of anglicising the Gaelic Irish and de-gaelicising the Anglo-Normans would, Sussex realised, be a long one. But its mechanism was essentially simple. A short period of energetic activity on the part of the crown which would demonstrate its seriousness of purpose, its genuine benevolence towards those who would offer obedience and its determination to root out those who would not, would be sufficient to set the process in motion. Its momentum would thereafter be self-sustaining. During this same crucially important initial period, Englishmen were to be planted in strategically chosen waste or confiscated lands both as a means of defending the new settlements and of providing the Irish with an example of the benefits that awaited them when their assimilation

had been completed. Sussex himself offered to establish and to furnish one of these exemplary colonies. But his interest once again lay in the early phases of the plan, for the colonies, like the arrangements of surrender and regrant, were expected to be self-sufficient once they had been securely established.

The ideas outlined in 1560 were more fully developed in a magisterial treatise which the lieutenant presented as the summary of his seven years' experience of Ireland at the end of 1562.<sup>5</sup>

This time the focus of his analysis was more narrow. The existence and disappearance of faction was presumed, and Sussex concentrated instead on a detailed exposition of the actual means by which the assimilation of the Gaelic and Gaelicised regions was to be engineered. The government's chief instrument of operation was to be the presidential council. Two conventional councils, enjoying approximately the same legal powers and physical strength as those currently in operation in Wales and in the marcher lands of the north of England were to be established in Munster and Connaught. For the troubled province of Ulster, however, the character of the presidency was to be significantly different. The president was to have a greater entertainment and a greater retinue: his budget was to be five times as large as those allowed to his colleagues in the other provinces. His civil and military authority and his powers of discretion were correspondingly larger. The Leinster chain and the Gaelic countries surrounding the plantation in Leix and Offaly were to be the responsibility not of a president, but of an English captain whose powers of discretion were even wider than those allowed to the Ulster president and who was to be permitted to accept Gaelic modes of procedure in certain circumstances. Some territories, like O'Reilly's country were to be excluded from any

president's or captain's jurisdiction and were to be allowed answer to the chief governor alone, as a sign of the government's good faith.

The political flexibility which these different approaches implied was given further expression in a number of interim "constitutions" which Sussex attached to his plan for the use of his regional officials.<sup>6</sup> These legal codes which were to be applied amongst the Gaelic Irish by the presidents and captains alike, were composed of a blend of English and Gaelic legal procedures. The English mode of trial, sentencing and punishment was to be employed for the most serious offences, but lesser offences - and among these Sussex included the exactions of coyne and livery - were to be determined in accordance with Gaelic custom. Brehons were to be admitted to plead in such cases and were to be allowed fees from the courts for their attendance. The content of English practice within these constitutions was to be increased only gradually. Even in predominantly Anglo-Norman areas Sussex was prepared to be patient. He wished to see the Kilkenny Statutes and the other laws prohibiting the adoption of Gaelic customs revived, but he also desired to see them moderated before being put into execution. The penalties for offenders were to be greatly reduced and the presidents were enjoined to use tact in the interpretation of their duties, lest they should unnecessarily estrange the magnates. By way of conclusion, Sussex anticipated the argument that only a pure and severe execution of English law could bring peace to Ireland: such harsh dealing, he replied, would only dispel the great store of good-will toward the crown which he knew already existed and would in any case be both expensive and unsuccessful.

In their grasp of complexity, in their moderation and flexibility, and in their conviction that the process of acclimatising Ireland to English rule would be an extremely gradual one, Sussex's writings seemed but a systematic articulation of the views which had guided his predecessor. It was as though St. Leger had directed the earl's pen as he wrote. Yet there is no reason to suppose that Sussex's expressions were insincere or that they were merely ephemeral concessions to conservatism. The earl continued to hold to his mature views long after he had left Ireland. In his correspondence with Fitzwilliam in the early 1570s, he regularly counselled the new deputy to "follow the old course and enter not into any new actions".<sup>7</sup> If anything his insistence that the government should establish a firm rapport with the existing local powers seemed to have increased. The Irish nobles, he conceded, were not as orderly or as obedient as the English, but they were fundamentally loyal, and he warned Fitzwilliam against unnecessarily provoking them, "lest by ruining them a worser sort of people shall have their way".<sup>8</sup> On this basis Sussex not only defended the earl of Clanrickard against the allegations of President Fitton, but argued that patience and toleration be extended to the unruly earl of Desmond; and he not only sought to preserve the interests of his old ally Ormond, but recommended high political office for his old enemy, Kildare.<sup>9</sup> In the late 1570s he was the sole member of the privy council to explicitly defend the Irish magnates' continued practice of coyne and livery, and the arguments he advanced in their cause were simply rehearsals of those he had employed in 1560 and 1562.<sup>10</sup>

Sussex's intellectual progress was doubly impressive. His propositions were not particularly original - the contents of state papers seldom are - but they displayed an unexpected ability to comprehend problems of bewildering complexity. Sussex, it appeared, had developed St. Leger's responses into concrete propositions. Where St. Leger's approach had been informal, expedient and highly personal, and subject to the weaknesses that accompanied each of these characteristics, Sussex had attempted to draft a systematic and impersonal programme which seemed still to retain the essential flexibility which the government of Ireland demanded. But Sussex's unexpectedly profound reflections are remarkable in a second less happy way: they make a sharp contrast with the earl's conduct and reputation as lord lieutenant in Ireland. They hardly appear to be the creations of that forceful, but unthinking, ambitious, but unsuccessful viceroy who has become known to posterity.

(ii)

Though Sussex's viceroyalty, as we have seen, heralded no qualitative change in the government's understanding of the Irish problem, his appointment in 1556 has appeared none the less to mark a decisive turning point. From this date onward, the English crown's intent to secure effective control over the entire island appears to have acquired a rapidly accelerating momentum. The sources of this impression are in part accidental. In contrast to the rather spare and intermittent documentation of St. Leger's years, the evidence available for Sussex's Irish service is rich

in detail. We know much more about what the lieutenant set out to do, when and how he did it, and what he actually achieved, than we do about any previous viceroy. Sussex's image, then, as a hyper-active and over-ambitious governor may in part be an historian's chimera, founded upon the accidental survival of sources. But it is much more than that. We know so much about his activities because Sussex himself was anxious that his own superiors and indeed everyone interested in Irish affairs should be fully informed about him. Thus in addition to the normal correspondence of state, Sussex commissioned a number of formal accounts of his doings and appointed an officer from the civil list to compose them.<sup>12</sup> These formal narratives, which bore a resemblance to the res gestae of medieval knights, were deliberately designed to broadcast the glory of the lieutenant's service. They recounted his efforts and eulogised his achievements in a tone wholly incongruous with their real significance. Sussex himself was not above contributing personally to the fabrication of his own reputation. During his years as viceroy he composed a number of newsletters which greatly exaggerated the significance of the actions they reported. The account he sent to King Philip in April 1557 of the planting of Leix-Offaly is a good example.<sup>13</sup> Directed at a reader who was hardly in a position to check the facts, it contrived to give the impression that no plantation had ever before been established in the area and that Sussex had single-handedly carved the settlement out from the chaos inhabited by the O'Mores and the O'Conors.<sup>14</sup> It claimed also that the plantation was now fully secured, a prayer to the future that proved to be no more accurate than Sussex's interpretation of the past. In 1562 the Lieutenant sent to England a detailed narration of his service in Ireland since his arrival in 1556 which reached

the eminently satisfying conclusion that "all the rebellions which I found in Ireland be now subdued, the knots and maintenances broken, the principal persons of the realm brought to acknowledge such obedience as heretofore they have not done and all the realm remains in quiet".<sup>15</sup> In 1565 his final state paper as lieutenant of Ireland was suitably enough another long account of his services which, while decrying the actions of his successor, reached the same gratifying conclusions.<sup>16</sup>

These formal perorations to Sussex's glory, however, were frequently accompanied by a somewhat strident tone of urgency in his more personal correspondence. Almost anything, it appeared, that the Lieutenant wished to attempt was of pivotal importance. The security of everything achieved thus far depended upon it; the surety of all that was yet to be done was guaranteed by it. Through this kind of rhetoric the two queens and their councillors found themselves frequently browbeaten and even blackmailed into giving their assent to the viceroy's latest schemes. Thus Queen Mary was promised that if she would assent to the major outlay of treasure and munitions necessary to carry out the plantation of the north-east coastline, then the whole realm would be quieted by the example of her gracious action, "her laws would be executed and her commandments obeyed; she shall be feared as a sovereign and her great subjects shall no longer be as princes, but shall gladly follow the laws of their sovereign". But if the queen could not be brought to act, then Sussex professed to see no course available to him other than to resign rather than see "Her Majesty's treasure so consumed ... and myself impoverished in vain".<sup>17</sup> If the queen would allow Sussex to determine the succession in Thomond as he saw fit, then Sir Donnell O'Brien, "the only stay of all the rebels in

those quarters", would be banished and the rule of the crown would be established throughout the territory; but if she would not, "Her Majesty's authority will forever be cast out of those quarters."<sup>18</sup>

Queen Elizabeth was subjected to similar pressures. Aply supported by his deputy Fitzwilliam and his brother Sir Henry Radcliffe, Sussex mounted a powerful campaign to persuade the new queen to maintain her predecessor's commitment to government policy in Ulster, Thomond and the midlands, and to ignore mounting criticisms of the viceroy in Ireland. Sussex's work, they urged, was on the point of fulfilment; only the subversive conspiracies of the Geraldines could forestall it. If Elizabeth would only extend to her viceroy support sufficient to complete his stated aims, the factional opposition would be disheartened and dissolve.<sup>19</sup> And once again the threat of resignation was appended. For if Elizabeth withdrew her confidence, Sussex could see no other way to rule the country, "but to give the government thereof to the earl of Kildare; for it is certainly true that an English governor and an earl of Kildare do so ill agree in this land as during both their abodes here there can be no increase of revenue or diminution of charge".<sup>20</sup> The best examples of Sussex's methods of persuasion are to be found in frequent attempts to secure the queen's assent to his determination to destroy Shane O'Neill. On each occasion the argument he advanced was the familiar one. The eyes of the whole country were fixed upon Shane's challenge to the crown's authority. If his impudence was severely chastised, then all rebellious conspiracies would be scotched; but if Elizabeth flinched from strong action, the whole realm would be consumed in revolt. Shane's destruction was, as everything else had been, "a matter all making or marring. If Shane settle all be overthrown;

if Shane be overthrown all is settled".<sup>21</sup>

These notes upon what might be termed the rhetoric of Sussex's viceroyalty are perhaps superficial; but they none the less suggest a number of grave contradictions which appear to have afflicted the earl's attitude towards his Irish service. The intimidating tone of urgency with which he pressed his demands seems, for instance, to be curiously at odds with the patient flexibility he appeared to prescribe in his treatises. Or again, his practical emphasis upon the efficacy of the unique achievement is hard to reconcile with the gradual processes which his more detached analysis seemed to espouse. The discrepancies are more than implicit; they appear openly in the pages of the viceroy's grand treatises. Each was prepared and submitted in the context of a campaign which Sussex was currently fighting for the implementation of some specific, immediate policy, and each was explicitly premised upon the successful completion of that action. In 1560 all depended upon the removal of the earl of Kildare from Ireland; in 1562 everything was to follow upon the destruction of O'Neill. In both cases it was assumed that the government's difficulties arose directly from some elemental cruxes or "knots" whose dissolution would allow the business of government to flow freely once more. In neither case was this assumption examined. The treatises contained, moreover, yet another paradoxical characteristic: each had a timetable and a detailed costing attached to them. In 1560 the process of establishing obedience to the crown throughout the entire country was expected to take three years, by which time the initial outlay would have already begun to be recouped. In 1562 the timetable was reduced to a mere year and a half, though the estimated outlay had been substantially increased.

Such puzzling contradictions help reveal a novel element which Sussex introduced implicitly into his apparently whole-hearted adoption of St. Leger's strategy. The problems of Irish governance were, it appeared, capable of being organised in a ranking order. A set of primary problems existed, and no extension of English influence in Ireland could be achieved until they had first been confronted. But once they had been discovered and resolved, the long impeded progress of anglicisation would smoothly take its course. These primary problems were not necessarily of a single type: different circumstances generated different problems. But they shared one common characteristic. Each constituted, both in practical and in symbolic terms, a test case of the crown's determination to fulfil the long-term aims implicit in the Kingship act of 1541. The most pressing task which faced the government in the immediate future, therefore, was to locate these issues within the dense web of the Irish polity, to resolve them and to institute the appropriate arrangements for the great process of assimilation that was expected to follow upon their resolution. This was the task which Sussex reserved for himself. By presenting his selection of primary problems within the context of a systematic programme of reform, and then by getting rid of O'Connor, or of Kildare, or of MacDonnell, or of O'Neill, Sussex could claim to be performing the most crucial service for English government in Ireland. What remained would be epilogue. The administration of the gradual process of anglicisation was a secondary task which might be performed by inferior officers in accordance with the overall plan which Sussex had already drafted. His successors would merely be the executors of a general strategy which he had first conceived and had through his own campaigns made possible.

Sussex gave little thought to problems which might arise after his foundations had been laid. He simply assumed that none would be of sufficient import to disturb the inexorable pattern which he had set in motion. On no account, at any rate, were they to be allowed divert his successors from the plan which he had laid down for them. What the government needed above all, he insisted, was a fixity of purpose, "a resolution of a settled government to be directed to a certain end whereby every governor might keep on course ... (and) whereby the matter intended might take effect, and not by tossing to and fro be entangled in a labyrinth, losing one year what was holden in another".<sup>22</sup> For Sussex, the formulation of a programme, its initiation and its rigorous implementation was of such great importance as to over-rule the cautious fear that any single plan for the government of Ireland might cease to be relevant or useful. Content was subordinate to form; ultimately the substance of a programme counted for less than the appearance of the programmatic style.

The sources of Sussex's silent strategic innovation are not difficult to discern. They lay partly in the case made by his supporters against St. Leger. With apparently little effort on St. Leger's part, the majority of the Irish lords had remained at peace with the crown for most of his regime; it spoke well of their intentions. Yet St. Leger had signally failed to suppress a number of serious disturbances which had arisen in the north, in the midlands and in Munster in the last years of his service. His failure exercised a deleterious effect throughout the country. It discredited the crown in the eyes of many; it threatened the loss of that general store of good-will. The impression that this degenerating situation was the result of administrative incompetence

and negligence was strengthened by the knowledge that St. Leger and his associates had actively despoiled the crown of its wealth in their own interests. St. Leger was simply not doing his duty; he was corrupt. If this was so, then it needed only a little honesty and a little energy to recoup what dishonest stewardship had let go to waste. Once a determination for reform was again made the hallmark of English government, the rest of the work would be easy. Sussex's Irish service took on something of the air of a moral crusade.

Confidence in the accuracy of this rather naive analysis was, however, further buttressed by its very great desirability. To the newcomer, unknown in Ireland and unwilling to stay overlong there, the two-tiered approach to the government's problems had undoubted practical advantages. It provided Sussex with a simple schedule of duty which enabled him to cut clean through the complicated skein of Irish political life. It offered ample opportunity for his ambition: to him would go the credit for laying the foundations of a new commonwealth in Ireland through strategic skill and daring military endeavour. He might, moreover, achieve all this relatively quickly and go on to greater and more glorious exploits elsewhere. After all, Sussex was not, as he frequently observed, made for Ireland. The programmatic approach brought with it one further advantage: it greatly simplified the governor's administrative problems. Since the targets he set himself were clearly defined, discrete and essentially military, Sussex had no need to concern himself with the long term problems of establishing an effective power-base in Ireland which had so exercised St. Leger. Because his problems were pre-selected and limited, he had no cause to seek further counsel from others and no desire to divert himself by

listening to additional problems or grievances. He needed neither an influential native advisory group nor a broad basis of support amongst the population in order to lend authority to his policies. He required simply a tightly organised executive group who understood his plans and shared his fortunes to give effect to his will. In the long term an administration so impervious to outside influence ran the risk of alienating the loyal community. But its operation in Ireland was designed to be short-lived, and any estrangements could expectedly be made good in the period of patient assimilation that was to succeed it. Thus the urgency of Sussex's rhetoric and the premature trumpeting of his achievements were not simply gratuitous; they were the stylistic symptoms of an apparently temporary, but drastically novel approach to Irish government.

(iii)

One clear sign of a change in the disposition of the government in the years after 1556 was the virtual disappearance of general political thinking. With the exception of the lieutenant himself, few others attempted to gain the attention of the crown by means of a political treatise. The era of policy-making seemed to have come to an end. This might appear to have been a purely accidental phenomenon: many of the old policy-makers, like the Cowleys, Justice Luttrell and Baron Finglas, were dead, or like Sir Thomas Cusack, out of political favour. But in reality the change was more significant. Many of the theorists who survived, found themselves out of favour for no reason other than that they were such. Edward Walshe, who had been highly critical of St. Leger and who had looked forward hopefully to Sussex, was disagreeably surprised and

embittered by the earl's attitude. He found his ideas coldly received and himself excluded from any significant favour. Early in the reign of Elizabeth he looked to Cecil for support, and though his suit seems to have resulted in an improvement in his personal fortunes he remained politically uninfluential.<sup>23</sup> His experience was shared by a far more eminent figure, the former lord chancellor, John Alen, who, after a brief rehabilitation in 1556 was again ignored and died before a similar suit to Cecil could bear any fruit.<sup>24</sup> Rowland White, another framer of political propositions, whose views on the planting of the north-east coastline coincided closely with Sussex's also found himself out of sympathy with the viceroy and soon joined the ranks of his opponents.<sup>25</sup>

The advice which was accepted by the Dublin administration was of a different character. The counsel tendered by Alen during his brief hey-day was strictly practical. It concerned the means by which the new plantation in the midlands could be constructed and supplied in the early months of settlement, how the Pale was to be defended from attack during the same period, how the soldiers were to be billeted, how the viceroy's household was to be victualled.<sup>26</sup> The advice offered at the same time by Alen's brother, Thomas, was of an equally practical nature.<sup>27</sup> James Barnewall, the attorney-general, who was one of the few advisers whose influence actually increased in these years, confined himself to offering information about the minutiae of logistics.<sup>28</sup> Building materials, transport facilities, barrels, beeves and pipe-staves were his stock-in-trade. Only once, in anticipation of the 1559 parliament, did he raise his head to consider more general issues, and when he did his advice was not heeded. The decline in general strategic thinking was a direct consequence of

Sussex's methods of operation. Whether it was contained in the crude formulations of 1556 or in the most sophisticated propositions of 1562, the programme which the earl intended to enact in Ireland was prearranged and unalterable. He pre-empted all discussion on matters of general principle. He lent an ear only to those who could facilitate his aims by offering immediately applicable advice; those who disagreed with his policy or who sought to direct his attention elsewhere were unwanted and went unconsulted.

This severe pruning of his advisory group was but one aspect of Sussex's general attempt to construct a uniform and highly disciplined chain of command. The earl's arrival in Ireland was accompanied by a major displacement of personnel at all levels of the Irish administration. Displacement was greatest, naturally enough, within the highest ranks of government. The attack upon St. Leger involved not only the replacement of the deputy, but the sequestration of Lord Chancellor Cusack and the appointment of Archbishop Curwen in his place. The coming of Sussex brought about the replacement of the discredited treasurer, Sir Edmund Rouse by Sir Henry Sidney.<sup>29</sup> A new master of ordnance, Jacques Wingfield, was joined with the recently appointed marshall, George Stanley, at the head of the military administration.<sup>30</sup> Only four of the twelve councillors who regularly attended council meetings between 1556 and 1558 had been councillors under St. Leger, and only one of that number, Sir John Travers, held their seat under Sussex by virtue of their official capacity.<sup>31</sup> Real power on the council and on the commissions it authorised was concentrated in the hands of a select few who were either related to the earl or who were closely identified with him: his brother Sir Henry, his two brothers-in-law, Fitzwilliam and Sidney, George Stanley and Archbishop Curwen.

Changes of lesser import were also registered at lower levels of the civil administration. John Goldsmith, the clerk of the council, was given an open-ended leave of absence from his post. He never returned, and the office was filled by a newcomer, Ralph Coccerell.<sup>32</sup> In chancery, Launcelot Alford, a personal servant of Fitzwilliam, became clerk of the hanaper.<sup>33</sup> There were replacements also upon the bench. On king's bench, Gerald Aylmer, the chief justice, was removed on the grounds of senility and his place given to John Plunket.<sup>34</sup> In the common pleas, John Bathe, who had been appointed chief justice by St. Leger was dismissed and replaced by a protégé of Sussex, Robert Dillon.<sup>35</sup> In 1559, Barnaby Scurlocke, was removed from his post as attorney-general for insubordination, and his place given to the more pliant James Barnewall.<sup>36</sup> Numerous changes took place within the exchequer. The second remembranceship and the clerkship of the common pleas both changed hands,<sup>37</sup> and two new men, Francis Barney and John Durning, appeared to fill vacancies as clerk of the pipe and usher respectively.<sup>38</sup> Auditor Jenyson, who had also been implicated in the scandal of 1556, was dismissed and replaced by Gabriel Croft.<sup>39</sup> In the informal financial administration there was, of course, a complete turn over of personnel. Robert Holdich became Sidney's deputy as treasurer, Launcelot Alford became Fitzwilliam's when he succeeded to Sidney's office and Francis Barney served as a deputy to Auditor Croft.<sup>40</sup>

The same pattern occurred within the ranks of the military establishment. In addition to the new appointments at the most senior administrative levels there were further changes in high command. The earl of Kildare was removed from authority in Leix-Offaly and Sir Henry Radcliffe was appointed as lieutenant there in his stead.<sup>41</sup>

Thomas St. Laurence, Lord Howth, was relieved of his responsibilities for the defence of the Pale by Marshall Stanley.<sup>42</sup> Edward Larkin, St. Leger's appointment as governor of Carrickfergus, surrendered his position to William Piers.<sup>43</sup> The fort at Stradbally was newly occupied by William Portas,<sup>44</sup> Henry Sidney took up residence at Brabazon's castle at Athlone and Henry Stafford replaced James Walshe as constable of Dungarvan.<sup>45</sup> Lower down replacement was even greater. Though the number of captains entertained by the crown increased substantially, the proportion of experienced officers actually dropped: only nine of a total of twenty-eight captains known to have served under St. Leger continued under Sussex.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the extent of the turnover, it would be wrong to assume that Sussex was engaged upon a systematic purge of Anglo-Norman or of older English elements within the Irish administration. The Palesmen suffered most from the reshuffling of positions, but they were by no means entirely excluded from places of influence. The majority of civilian administrators continued to hold on to office without any dislocation, and those who were removed were frequently succeeded by their fellow countrymen. Several Palesmen, like John Travers, the new justices Plunket and Dillon, James Barnewall and James Dowdall became particularly trusted and responsible executives of the viceroy.<sup>47</sup> Nor was a consistent effort made to exclude St. Leger's old adherents. In the army, captains like Nicholas Heron, Francis Cosby and Henry Colley, were retained in positions of trust by Sussex.<sup>48</sup> In the civil administration, officers like Henry Draycott, the chief remembrancer, and Michael Fitzwilliam, the surveyor continued to enjoy the favour of the governor.<sup>49</sup> Sussex was even ready to extend his goodwill towards

John Parker, St. Leger's trusted servant, but his offer of friendship was soon rebuffed.<sup>50</sup>

The motive behind these administrative changes was neither racial nor political; it was concerned solely with Sussex's desire to emphasise that retention of office depended upon the personal loyalty of each servitor to the viceroy. By dismissing unfriendly or insubordinate officers, by placing his own favourites in high positions, and indeed by ostentatiously renewing the patents of many who already held office under good behaviour,<sup>51</sup> Sussex made it clear that it was through personal allegiance to him and through the obedient execution of his directives that a successful career within the Irish administration was to be pursued. It was an effective way of ensuring the smooth flow of policy from the level of decision-making to that of executive action. In broader terms, however, it threatened to make the administration dangerously insensitive to the needs of the community within which it operated. Even before it began to implement any of its declared policies, then, Sussex's government was in danger of alienating much goodwill through its organisational structure alone. The risk was made even more serious by the fact that these policies entailed the imposition of a number of serious demands upon the very community which the administration was now less able than ever to accommodate.

(iv)

Whatever promises he held out for a balanced or almost balanced Irish budget in three years or a year and a half, Sussex's plans always entailed a substantial increase in government expenditure in the immediate future. The settling of Leix-Offaly, the expulsion of

the Scots, the reduction of Shane O'Neill, all involved a considerable enlargement of the military garrison and a corresponding increase in the money, munitions and victuals necessary to maintain it. At the beginning of 1556, St. Leger had attempted to make do with a garrison of 500 men, but immediately upon his arrival Sussex doubled the number. By the middle of 1557 there were 1500 men on active service in Ireland, and by the middle of 1558 the number had risen to 2,500.<sup>52</sup> In 1559 the garrison was reduced by 1,000, but the campaigns against O'Neill necessitated further increases.<sup>53</sup> Between 1560 and 1563 there was an average of 2,000 men in pay each year in Ireland.<sup>54</sup>

The cost of maintaining this enlarged garrison was immense. Between 1556 and 1558 the costs of the military establishment alone amounted to almost £73,000.<sup>55</sup> The wage bill for the garrison for the twelve months between December 1562 and December 1563 amounted to over £23,400.<sup>56</sup> The total cost of Sussex's administration between 1556 and 1565 amounted to over £322,000, almost half of which was accounted for in the first three years of Sussex's government.<sup>57</sup> Throughout this period revenue yields failed to attain the levels which Sussex had anticipated. In 1560 Sussex estimated that the revenues would net over £12,000 within a year, and in 1562 he was confident that they would begin to yield an annual £18,000 within eighteen months.<sup>58</sup> But the total domestic receipts for the years between 1556 and 1565 (inclusive) amounted to no more than £43,000, an average of less than £4,500 p.a.<sup>59</sup> Sussex was, therefore, forced to rely heavily upon subvention from England to meet his ordinary running costs. The crown's contribution was generous. During the same ten-year period, some £270,000 of royal treasure was transported to Ireland to support the

viceroys' needs.<sup>60</sup> But in spite of the crown's ultimate acceptance of financial responsibility, actual instalments of treasure were irregular and inadequate. Sussex's large receipt between 1559 and 1564 spread out in a series of piece-meal and sometimes useless payments. It came in 36 instalments, half of which were under £200 each. Only eleven amounted to £1,000 or more. The following table lists the effective injections of treasure he received during this period:-

Sept.	1559	£6,000
April	1560	£15,000
May	1560	£3,000
May	1561	£17,000
August	1561	£2,000
March	1562	£20,000
July	1563	£5,000

The next major instalment of cash (£11,000) was not received until December 1564, by which time Sussex was no longer in Ireland.<sup>61</sup>

In practical terms, therefore, Sussex's government was continuously in arrears to the country and to its own servitors. Between March 1560 and September 1562, for instance, the viceroy owed more than £20,700 to his own soldiers.<sup>62</sup> At the close of his viceroyalty in May 1565, despite several recent issues of treasure, his soldiers were still owed some £32,200 for their service.<sup>63</sup>

In the absence of regular and adequate subvention from England, Sussex was compelled to find short-term ways of easing his immediate financial predicament. One possible alternative was wholly orthodox, and was indeed a declared aim of his first Irish programme. This was the thorough reform of the incompetent and corrupt financial administration. In 1556 Sussex had come with a

separate set of instructions devoted entirely to the enumeration of reforms that were to be introduced within the Irish administration.<sup>64</sup> Further commissions were appointed in 1559 and 1560 specifically to inquire into the functioning of the exchequer.<sup>65</sup> But their reports, which echoed the findings of the original Rouse-Browne commission of 1554, only revealed how little progress had been made under Sussex. In 1560 the commissioner, Gilbert Gerrard, introduced the order book of the English exchequer into the Irish court and compelled the Irish officers to comply with its procedures.<sup>66</sup> But any benefit it may have brought was not registered in the official figures. Annual revenues showed no significant increase and arrearages continued to mount. In 1563, Auditor Croft estimated that the crown was owed some £30,000 - or more than six times the average annual receipt - by its lessees.<sup>67</sup>

For this failure to carry out the reformist pledges of 1556 Sussex must take the principal responsibility. The lieutenant and his two treasurers were much too busy with the military priorities of his programme to bother over-much with tedious administrative reforms. They continued the practice of delegating mere accounting to subordinates, and the abuses that went with the habit continued also. There was, in any case, nothing particularly glorious about the dogged pursuit of financial retrenchment; nor could their efforts be expected to bear fruit in the immediate future. For these reasons Sussex, having made some show of concern in the early months of viceroyalty, relegated administrative reform to the ranks of second-order problems for the attention of his successors. He looked instead towards more immediate and less troublesome expedients which would supply the financial support of the order he required.

One expedient was not of Sussex's own devising at all. He merely imported it from his own superiors in England: debasement. Queen Mary and her councillors had been willing to despatch to Sussex the large sums he demanded only because the money which they transported to Ireland was of significantly less intrinsic worth than the value they placed upon it. The idea of supplying Ireland with debased currency was first applied in a systematic way by King Henry VIII.<sup>68</sup> The original aim of the policy seems to have been merely to preserve the exchange rate between England and Ireland which, under the pressure of merchants' transactions was in danger of moving against England's advantage. The inherent potential of the policy, however, was obvious, and in the difficult 1540s it began to be used increasingly as a means of curtailing the rising cost of governing Ireland. From the mid-1540s the number of debased coins shipped to Ireland increased sharply in quantity and decreased sharply in quality. Under Edward some £94,000 in coins of 4oz. fineness was minted for Ireland, and only a major protest from the Palesmen aided by Lord Deputy Croft himself, brought about a respite.<sup>69</sup> In January 1552 an immediate devaluation of current base moneys to face value was authorised and the English council issued a commission for the minting of a large quantity of Irish coins of a respectable 9oz fineness,<sup>70</sup> but it was never put in operation. As in other spheres, the reforms planned under Northumberland were put into operation under Mary, and in September 1553 some £30,000 of 7oz. coins were at length minted for Ireland - the first of such quality to be sent to Ireland in a decade.<sup>71</sup> The good intentions, however, did not persist. Even under St. Leger some £13,000 of the dreaded 3oz. quality were issued.<sup>72</sup> But it was with the coming of Sussex that the policy of debasement really got

under way. Between March 1556 and April 1558, a total of £85,000 of 3oz. fine coins were shipped to Ireland: it was an unprecedented record.<sup>73</sup> Worse, while she relentlessly disgorged debased coins in Ireland, Mary was careful to bring Northumberland's plans for revaluation and retrenchment to fulfilment in England. As a result the exchange rate between the two kingdoms increased drastically; in the last months of her reign it reached an unprecedented ratio of two to one.<sup>74</sup>

By this time, Sussex had grown seriously alarmed at the worsening state of the Irish currency and its effects upon the economy of the Pale. In the early months of Elizabeth he appealed to the new government to undertake the complete rehabilitation of the Irish currency by a massive recoinage, and he was greatly disappointed with the half-hearted devaluation which the crown eventually decided upon.<sup>75</sup> But despite his awakened concern, Sussex was largely responsible for the damage which had been inflicted. The grand instalments of base money had been shipped to Ireland in response to his heavy demands, and Sussex, who placed the short-term needs of his programme above everything else, had accepted the quality of the currency sent him without demur. Unlike Croft he gave no thought to the damage which it visited upon the community. This again was a secondary problem which later men could cope with after the foundations of his great work had been laid. It was only when it became clear that his own presence in Ireland would extend longer than he had originally supposed that he became agitated about the problem of the currency. But the motive of his later anxiety was the same as that which underlay his initial complacency: a primary concern that his own chosen programme should not be disturbed.

Sussex's fundamental disregard for the needs of the local community in matters which concerned his own primary objectives is even more clearly evident in the steps he took for the victualling and the billeting of his troops. Some obligation to subsidise the governor's retinue had been conventionally acknowledged by the country. But the nature and extent of this obligation remained uncertain. It was accepted in practice that the viceroy had some share in the prerogative right of purveyance, and sheer military necessity was sometimes allowed to be sufficient reason for the governor to make extraordinary demands on the community. But equally, the governor had been expected to take up provisions at normal market prices when occasion permitted or to make good any losses sustained by the country through compulsory purchase. So his rights in the matter of supply remained vague. Significantly, the governor and the countrymen chose not to employ the explicit term "purveyance", but had resorted to a much more general and ill-defined word "cess"<sup>76</sup> Most English governors seemed to have exploited some part of the cess during their sojourn; but since their use of the power was occasional and moderate, the issue remained politically insignificant.

For Sussex, however, whose presence in Ireland was uniquely expeditionary, the exploitation of cess was not simply to be an occasional expedient, it was an integral part of his administrative method. Sussex was, from the outset, fully aware of the great advantages which the taking up of victuals for his army at purveyance prices offered him. Sir John Alen, for one, had drawn his attention to it and had provided him with detailed instructions as to how it might best be exploited. Cess early, was Alen's

advice, "that men knowing their charges may have it in readiness ... and rather cess too much than too little and perhaps then an augmentation can be made."<sup>77</sup> Sussex took the advice. Barely a fortnight after his arrival he proclaimed a cess for the supply of the midlands forts. Four months later, he cessed again - this time on a grand scale. In the following March he ordered more victuals to be taken up for the forts, and in October he proclaimed yet another general cess upon the whole of the Pale. This was the pattern which Sussex was to follow throughout his stay in Ireland. Between 1556 and 1563 he commandeered over 41,500 pecks of grain from the country in this fashion.<sup>78</sup> These general cesses, for which figures alone survive, were, moreover, only the most obvious and least onerous portion of the total supply burden which Sussex's expanded garrisons placed upon the country. The obligation to board and lodge the soldiers, their dependents and their animals was a good deal more continuous and more oppressive.

The total long-term cost of the cess in all its ramifications is extremely difficult to estimate, and the response of the Palesmen to the maintenance of soldiers whose presence in the country was for purposes other than their defence is a question yet more involved. Both problems will be considered in a later chapter.<sup>79</sup> In the long term, cess helped fundamentally alter the attitude of the Palesmen towards English government in Ireland. In the short term however, the ubiquitous presence of Sussex's soldiers, and their manifold oppressions provided the clearest indication to the Palesmen that an ominous change had occurred in the disposition of the government in the years after 1556. The cess became the symbol of Sussex's single-minded and exclusive administrative style; it became the focus of protest for all who rejected his programmatic strategy.

(v)

The first signs of resentment within the Pale did not take long to emerge. One of Sussex's earliest proclamations on the cess acknowledged that tension and acrimony had already arisen between the soldiery and "the people (who) in many places rather flee the towns when they see them coming, than minister any reasonable aid to them".<sup>80</sup> There was trouble, apparently, in the parliament of 1557, where one lawyer was arrested and imprisoned for denying the viceroy's prerogative powers,<sup>81</sup> and Attorney-General Scurlocke's dismissal seems to have been due to the support he gave to a protest against the cess.<sup>82</sup> There were protests of a more violent nature also: "the people be weary and irk of us", wrote Sidney in February 1557, and he adduced instances of soldiers who had already been killed in affrays with the citizenry.<sup>83</sup>

Sussex's response to the rising tension was minimal. He issued a proclamation urging calmness, and during a time of poor harvest he imposed export control upon grain.<sup>84</sup> But he took no direct steps to ease the burdens of the countrymen, and his refusal to act provoked a spate of protests to the crown against the viceroy's government in general. The strategic thinkers Edward Walshe and Rowland White made their feelings known; "the soldiers", Walsh complained bitterly, "have done more harm to the country than ever the Irish did".<sup>85</sup> Far more weighty protests, however, came from the most powerful members of the Anglo-Norman community. At the end of Queen Mary's reign both the earl of Desmond and Archbishop Dowdall of Armagh submitted formal complaints to the privy council about Sussex's conduct in government.<sup>86</sup> The substance of their grievances was similar. Both expatiated upon the extent of the

oppression which the soldiers visited upon the country and the willing complicity of the viceroy in their actions. Dowdall, who had witnessed the sack of his cathedral city by Sussex's soldiers was particularly enraged. "The realm", he declared, "was never in my remembrance in worse case than it is now." Prices were never so high; goods were never so scarce. The country was so bereft of its own food supplies as to be on the brink of famine. Already, Dowdall testified, people had died of starvation.<sup>87</sup>

Both Dowdall and Desmond, however, pressed their case further. Sussex's army was not only oppressive, but it failed also in its principal duty to protect the loyal subjects of the crown from attacks by the Irish rebels. Far from reducing the number of incursions suffered upon the Pale, Sussex's government had actually escalated the level of violence. Both the official policy of the viceroy and the unofficial freebooting of the soldiers had unnecessarily provoked a number of Gaelic septs who had hitherto remained at peace. And they had exacted their revenge upon the Pale. The borders of the Pale had been wholly wasted in parts by their ravages. The loyal community, Dowdall declared, had never been so besieged since the time of the Kildare rebellion. This universal waste and oppression was all that the queen's great outlay of treasure had procured. "It sorely grieves all the queen's friends", the archbishop concluded, "to see what her government doth spend daily on Ireland, and it every year rather worse than better - though you be otherwise informed".<sup>88</sup>

On the basis of this general criticism of Sussex's administration Dowdall and Desmond proffered an alternative policy of their own. What they recommended, in effect, was a return to the old gradualist methods of St. Leger. The idea that permanent gains

could be achieved by sudden and forceful action, Desmond argued, was false and unproductive. It simply put the Gaelic Irish on their guard and made any progress toward anglicisation impossible. It was necessary rather to delegate responsibility for this policy into hands of local powers whom the clansmen already respected and who would be capable of exerting a continuous supervision over them. He recommended that the earls be appointed presidents in the regions in which they were already powerful influences and that lesser lords in the area be appointed to their presidential councils. In all major matters of policy, of course, the presidents would remain at the bidding of the viceroy.<sup>89</sup> Dowdall professed to be personally sympathetic to Sussex's attempt to put an end to Ireland's rebelliousness by military action. But as a policy he believed it was simply unrealistic. It was too expensive and it provoked unnecessary trouble. Considering "the nature of that country and the rudeness and frowardness of that barbarous people" it was wisest to proceed only with the utmost caution and patience, "for who so ever would take the rule of Ireland in hand, he must according to the gospel forgive until seventy times seven". His case was nothing more than the conventional wisdom which had underpinned the original policy of surrender and regrant, and it is not surprising that Dowdall suggested that St. Leger be recalled to court to consider his argument.<sup>90</sup>

Of the two submissions, that of the venerable archbishop made the greatest impression upon the Marian council. Dowdall was summoned to Westminster to substantiate his claims, and Sussex was sufficiently alarmed to return to defend himself in person. The archbishop's case, he claimed was short-sighted and sectionally interested. It concentrated only on immediate difficulties and

ignored the great work that was currently in progress in Ireland. It was blind to the higher interests of the crown and unwittingly served the interests of those who would subvert the state. This was a reasonable case for the viceroy to make. But it was immeasurably strengthened by entirely fortuitous circumstances: within months of each other Dowdall, Desmond and Queen Mary herself died. By a quirk of fate the respectable foundations of the Anglo-Norman protest had been undermined in a ~~twice~~<sup>91</sup>.

Yet, despite the disappearance of the challenge, Sussex, with the support of his subordinates in Ireland, continued to press his case upon the new Elizabethan government. His work in Ireland, he affirmed, was at every turn opposed and subverted by a small group of conspirators whose end it was to have all power in Ireland for themselves. They would not rest until Sussex's government had been destroyed, and he in turn would not resume office in Ireland until he had authority to crush them. At the core of this conspiracy were the Geraldines, and at its head the earl of Kildare. It was Kildare, Sussex claimed, who was behind all attempts to thwart his efforts in Ireland, and his motives were patent: for the earl had declared himself ready to banish all the English from the island by force and to have himself crowned king of Ireland.<sup>92</sup>

Kildare had good reason to be unhappy with Sussex's government. It had entailed his exclusion from high political favour, and Sussex the earl was well aware, had been responsible for forestalling his suit to regain certain lands and rights omitted from the grant restoring his patrimony.<sup>93</sup> The idea that Kildare should be made governor in Ireland remained, moreover, a popular one amongst the Anglo-Irish.<sup>94</sup> Kildare, however, showed no overt antagonism to Sussex in the years after 1556. He took no part in the formal

presentation of complaints against the governor, and he accepted the crown's ruling on his suits without demur. It would, of course, be naive to assume that the earl was cowed by Sussex's treatment simply because no direct evidence has survived to the contrary. He almost certainly used his wide influence within the Pale to foment opposition to the viceroy's proceedings. But whatever resentment he may have harboured in his breast, it is highly unlikely that it went as deep as Sussex and Fitzwilliam alleged. Neither then nor later did it appear that Kildare entertained ambitions for the governorship; indeed his later compliance under Sidney seemed to indicate quite the contrary. Sussex's hard evidence for the conspiracy consisted, in fact, of the dubious testimony of an English soldier whose Irish wife claimed that her brother heard talk to that effect amongst the retainers of the earl of Desmond, and the third-hand bragging of a Scottish mercenary.<sup>95</sup> Still, the fact that Sussex should have deemed it useful to create such a storm over the rumours is in itself, significant.

His allegations might partially be explained as a form of paranoia; a symptom of the degree to which his administration had become detached from the reality which surrounded it. But the consistency with which he promoted rumours of this nature suggests that Sussex's motives were somewhat more deliberate. The espousal of a conspiracy theory simplified matters in a number of ways. It conveniently fused, for instance, opposition to Sussex's administrative <sup>methods</sup> with opposition to the government's general aims, and thus quietly implied that there was no difference between the aims which Sussex set himself and the means by which he set about achieving them. This fusion of aims and means also helped establish a clear-cut and rather invidious set of alternatives: if the queen

would not accept Sussex and his methods, then she must settle for the government of Kildare with all the evil that it implied.<sup>96</sup> The men and the methods were inseparable; and as Sussex made clear in his memorandum of 1560, Kildare and himself would never coexist happily in Ireland. Finally, the elevation of general discontent with his administration into one grand conspiracy paid a subtle compliment to the viceroy, for only a programme of the most decisive and fateful character could engender such a response. The existence of a conspiracy acted as a confirmation of the significance of Sussex's work. Thus, far from persuading the crown to caution, opposition in Ireland should have the effect of increasing its determination to execute its own - or more correctly - Sussex's declared aims. It was with this persuasive psychological appeal that Sussex won the support of the cautious Elizabethan councillors to his aggressive administrative methods. In the autumn of 1560, he returned to Ireland as lord lieutenant, his enemies worsted and his own plans for action endorsed, enjoying as much confidence in the eyes of Elizabeth as ever Queen Mary had shown in him.<sup>97</sup>

A satisfactory result indeed; but in reality Sussex's tactics led nowhere. For heeded or not, articulate or sullen, resentment in Ireland continued to rise and to spread, until it grew to resemble one of those primary problems which needed immediate treatment before anything else could be done. Yet it was precisely the kind of problem with which Sussex's finely honed administrative machine was incapable of dealing. The lieutenant could stifle Anglo-Irish criticism abroad, but he could not suppress rising resistance at home. This was a cost which Sussex seemed willing to bear. Should he succeed as planned in the execution of his designated tasks, then his stay in Ireland would be short and the bitter-

ness he provoked would be swallowed up by the glorious memory of his grand achievements. It was unfortunate, therefore, for Sussex that the same tendency toward chronic intractability manifested itself in the very issues which he had taken it upon himself to solve.

Yet it was almost inevitable that it should be so. For the more accurate his initial selection, the more, that is, the issues he chose were indeed the primary problems he supposed them to be, the more they reflected the complex interlocking nature of the Irish polity, and the less they lent themselves to Sussex's simple individuating administrative techniques. The steady spread of general resentment and the growing intractability of specific problems, thus, closely paralleled each other, each bearing testimony that the lieutenant's analysis of how to operate in Ireland was simply wrong. But Sussex's response to these ominous warnings was entirely negative. Encouraged by the short-term tactical success of his embattled self-justifications, he continued to insist that the solution to each selected problem was essentially simple and that only malevolence and subversion made it appear otherwise. But the more he urged his simple, energetic solutions, the less relevant they became to the real issues at stake. Increasingly, Sussex became embroiled in a series of pointless attempts to enforce his will by military action which obscured and ultimately obliterated his original intent to find genuine solutions for real problems. This was to be his experience with every major problem he tackled in Ireland from 1556 on.

## (vi)

In 1556, the most promising and the most outstanding of the problems which Sussex set himself to solve, was the re-establishment of a plantation in Leix-Offaly. The reconstruction of the midlands plantation was crucial in a number of ways. The crown had already committed itself to establishing an English colony in the midlands, and its plans had been upset only by the continuous rebellion of the O'Mores and the O'Conors.<sup>98</sup> The resettlement was, therefore, a test case of the government's determination to enforce its declared aims. In more practical terms, the failure of the earlier effort at plantation had incurred a substantial loss of investment, and the rebellion which ensued continued to inflict mounting losses upon both the crown and the community of the Pale. For considerations of finance and local defence, then, as well as for reasons of grand strategy, the implementation of the government's earlier commitment in the midlands was imperative. It was one of those primary problems whose practical and symbolic significance were of equal import.

Sussex's plan for Leix-Offaly, however, envisaged no bloody conquest. His "Instructions" of 1556 and the "orders for the consignment" of the two countries drawn up around the same time make it clear that his central aim was the speedy construction of an integrated and self-sufficient community.<sup>99</sup> Despite their outlawed status, the Gaelic clans were assigned to a relatively generous portion of the territory to be planted. Allotments were to be made to the head of each extended family group who was to be allowed to administer further sub-divisions after the Gaelic fashion. Provision was made for the gradual extension of English law amongst the clansmen and for the construction of schools and churches within

their territory. It was expected that the process of anglicisation could commence within a year of the founding of the plantation. The core of the new settlement, however, was to be formed by a group of English planter-captains whom Sussex had recruited for the express intention of regaining and defending the territory. The captains were each to be allotted a strategically selected site from which they could exercise surveillance over the surrounding countryside.<sup>100</sup> But their function was to be of short duration. They were not conquistadores who would wield a permanent authority over a subject population, for the integration of the clansmen into this model English community was clearly envisaged in the "orders". They were, rather, a vital segment of that tightly knit executive group upon whom Sussex depended to do his bidding and to uphold his authority in the crucial period during which the foundations of the new order were being laid. Thereafter, their military utility was expected to become redundant. Sussex's ends, that is to say were orthodox: assimilative rather than repressive. His method of execution was his sole innovation. Yet it was to be a decisive one.

Sussex moved to implement his plan with deliberate speed. By the end of 1556 an impressive progress through the two countries had been sufficient to persuade the leaders of both clans to submit without a major confrontation, and Sussex had returned to Dublin to draft the legislation organising the territories as shires of the crown.<sup>101</sup> His hopes, however, were soon dispelled. Almost immediately after his departure, Connell O'More and Donough O'Connor broke their pledges. They refused to answer the viceroy's summons and began joint preparations to repulse his attack. Disillusioned, Sussex proclaimed them traitors; the hope of establishing Queen's County and King's County cheaply, speedily and peacefully had gone

forever.<sup>102</sup> The campaign that followed yielded no satisfactory result. Sussex besieged and captured the O'Connor's major stronghold at Meleek, forcing them to withdraw to their fastnesses on the banks of the Shannon; and in Leix his captains captured and executed Connell O'More. But the clansmen were far from beaten. On its march homeward, Sussex's expeditionary force was harassed by the resurgent O'Conors right to the borders of the Pale.<sup>103</sup> And in the territories themselves, the infant settlements were plagued by the raids of outlawed woodkerne, battenning upon the support and protection of the native inhabitants who had nominally accepted the terms of the new order.<sup>104</sup> Though the parliament of 1557 had passed all the necessary legislation, the two new shires existed at the close of Queen Mary's reign merely as legal fictions; not a single fiant had been passed offering title to land in either.<sup>105</sup>

The new reign brought no improvement. Sussex himself, disheartened by the failure of his original plan and the futility of his attempt to impose it by force, lost interest; Leix-Offaly was delegated to his brother who was sufficiently equipped to maintain only a holding action against the continuous raids of the clansmen. In the early 1560s, therefore, the guerilla war deepened and grew more bloody. Not until 1563 did Sussex again turn his attention to the beleaguered plantation, and by then the gap which separated the optimistic prognostications of 1556 from the prevailing reality had become clearly evident. Though the fiants he passed in that year contained conditions of residence in accordance with the spirit of the "orders", the original ideal of creating a model English community had been brought no nearer realisation in the intervening years. Undeveloped, undermanned and in a permanent state of siege, the

plantation remained a mere congerie of military outposts, apprehensively preparing for the next onslaught of the unsuppressed and unreconciled natives.<sup>106</sup>

Sussex's attempt to establish a plantation in the Ulster was even less successful. The north-east coastline which had recently been the target of massive Scottish migration, was another of the vital problem areas which the viceroy isolated for immediate treatment in 1556. His plans for the north, moreover, were of equal ambition with those he laid for Leix-Offaly, for he was concerned not merely to expel the Scots, but to establish a number of self-sufficient colonies along the coastline which would secure the territory permanently for the crown.<sup>107</sup> In the summer of 1556 a rapid march northwards brought Sussex victory against the Scots in his first military engagement in Ireland. The Scots were badly mauled, and Sussex believed that he had permanently ended their challenge. He hastily despatched his plans for colonisation to the Marian council and impatiently awaited its approval.<sup>108</sup> But even before the council had time to consider his proposals, the Scots were reported to have returned, apparently in even greater numbers, and had renewed their alliance with the disaffected son of the earl of Tyrone, Shane O'Neill. The projected colonies would have to await yet another military expedition. In the spring of 1558 Sussex indeed secured the consent of the crown to an ambitious amphibious operation which aimed at stopping the flow of migrant Scots by attacking their home base in the Hebrides. In attempting it Sussex over-reached his resources: plagued by mishap from the outset, the expedition was brought to a halt by a combination of bad weather and fever, having executed no more than a few raids upon the outer-isles.<sup>109</sup>

Sussex continued to press his plans upon Elizabeth, but the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis removed any immediate threats which the francophile Scots may have posed to English security, and the incentives to heeding the viceroy's urgings were consequently diminished. The council, instead, favoured the extension of a de facto toleration to those Scots who had already settled, and instructed Sussex accordingly.<sup>110</sup> His hopes for military achievement thus ended, Sussex lost interest in the entire problem. He showed no interest in the possibility of establishing his colonies through reaching a peaceful accommodation with the Scots. This was an avenue he left free for the speculation of independent operators.<sup>111</sup> As in the case of Leix-Offaly, Sussex's ends were inextricably fused with the means which he adopted to achieve them. And ultimately it was the means which mattered most to him. For once his original tactics had failed or grown obsolete, Sussex abandoned the end itself as unattainable. This inflexible insistence upon the enforcement of old decisions and strategies long after they had ceased to be relevant, is even more striking in the area in which the viceroy's true failure did not immediately become obvious: in his attempts to uphold his original decisions concerning succession disputes in the Gaelic lordships.

Sussex, as we have seen, was no opponent of the principle which underlay the policy of surrender and regrant. His argument with his predecessors was tactical, even psychological. The sovereign grace with which the crown offered security to those who had usurped without title its lands in Ireland was worthy of the highest respect: it was not to be besmirched by cowardly concessions to impudent resistance. Sussex's noble regard for the honour of the crown was admirable, but it was also personally advantageous. So

righteous an attitude may have been temperamentally suited to the earl, but it also greatly simplified his position. It gave him a fixed principle upon which to make decisions without delving deeply into the intricacies of each particular issue, a principle which admitted of the one solution which Sussex knew best how to administer: the imposition of the crown's will by force. It was, moreover, an honorable stand which afforded to the viceroy the opportunity of contributing to his own glory while defending that of his sovereign.

It was, at any rate, the principle which guided Sussex in selecting which of the many issues of surrender and regrant should be reserved for his special attention. Thus for the lesser Gaelic clans, like the O'Byrnes and the O'Tooles, amongst whom the process of surrender and regrant had not yet been brought to fulfilment, he could spare little effort. These were minor problems which could be handled without much difficulty in time; and so he ignored them, delegating all responsibility to captains who were required only to keep the clans under control by whatever means they might. This delegation of all political authority in the areas to purely military commanders was to be of grave long-term consequence.<sup>112</sup> But the short-term results of Sussex's own selection were hardly less serious.

The first area in which Sussex elected to defend the honour of the crown by upholding the original and now disputed succession arrangement was Thomond. There, despite the circumspection of St. Leger and Croft, and their recognition that the first succession settlement had grossly misunderstood the real distribution of power amongst the O'Briens, Sussex came easily to the decision that Conor O'Brien, the third earl, was the rightful heir to the entire

O'Brien property and all the rights that went with it. Conor's case was strong in law. He was the eldest son of the second earl, Donough, who had enjoyed such status, and had been nominated by his father as his sole heir. Failure to support him, it was arguable, could cast the whole principle of primogeniture into disrepute.<sup>113</sup> Sussex's predecessors, it is true, had not been overscrupulous on this point. The succession of the first earl had not been determined on grounds of primogeniture, and St. Leger and Croft had both been willing to consider further compromises of the principle in order to attain real political stability within the region.<sup>114</sup> But not so Sussex. It was not simply primogeniture, but the whole authority of the crown that was at risk, for the earl's enemies were aided and abetted in their rebellion by the great subverters of all English authority in Ireland. The government, therefore, had no choice but to support the earl or to concede its impotence. In honour of the crown, then, as well as in the interests of Conor O'Brien, Sussex marched into Thomond in June 1558, expelled the rebel Sir Donnell and formally installed Conor as earl.<sup>115</sup>

It was a very fine performance, which was amply reported upon in Sussex's characteristic fashion. But very soon, what was by now becoming the classic response to Sussex's forays, made itself evident. Having tactically withdrawn during Sussex's presence in the area, Sir Donnell and his supporters returned after his departure and resumed their campaign against the third earl. In 1559 they met with and defeated Thomond and his ally, the earl of Clanrickard, in a pitched battle at Spancel Hill.<sup>116</sup> A further, minor intervention by the government in 1560 procured only another temporary relief for the earl. But for the

remainder of Sussex's Irish service Thomond was engulfed in a bitter internal war between the earl and a large number of his clansmen who rejected his claims to govern them. Peace came to Thomond only when Sussex's successors conceded to Sir Donell O'Brien the independent status which the lieutenant had regarded as unacceptably compromising to the crown's honour and to his own.<sup>117</sup>

Sussex's folly in Thomond is overshadowed by a far more notorious demonstration of his almost pathological stubbornness: his determination to destroy Shane O'Neill. The story of Shane's relations with the government hardly needs retelling.<sup>118</sup> But the extent to which its course was dictated not by the crown nor by Shane himself, but by the lieutenant's determination to have his own way, needs to be emphasised. In constitutional terms the succession dispute in Tyrone left a good deal more room for manoeuvre than had apparently remained available in Thomond. It is true that Matthew O'Neill, the baron of Dungannon, had been recognised as Conn O'Neill's eldest son and successor as earl in the patent of 1543. But sufficient evidence appeared to exist to call Matthew's legitimacy into doubt, and so it was possible that the original patent might be invalidated on strictly technical grounds without reflecting any discredit upon the crown or upon the principle of primogeniture. In political terms, the weakness of the baron and his following and their unpopularity amongst the O'Neills was undeniable. Matthew had outlived his putative father, the earl, by less than a year, and his two sons continued to survive only under the protection of the Dublin administration.<sup>119</sup> The need to accommodate the government's attitude to these political realities had long been recognised by St. Leger, and Sir Henry Sidney, during

his short period as lord justice in 1558-59, had endorsed St. Leger's view by entering into a personal bond of friendship with Shane.<sup>120</sup> The newly formed council of Elizabeth followed this lead. Since they acknowledged Shane to be "the person legitimate in blood" and that he was now "in quiet possession" of all his father's properties, they advised that he be allowed succeed to his father's title without further delay.<sup>121</sup>

This, however, was not Sussex's opinion. His government, he declared, had determined in favour of Dungannon from the beginning. The late baron had served the crown loyally until his death, while Shane had been embroiled in several treasonable conspiracies with the Scots during those same years. To abandon the baron's sons now simply because Shane had murdered their father and usurped his rightful place in Tyrone would not only be dishonorable in itself, it would destroy the confidence of any Irishman who had ever contemplated placing his trust in the crown. Sussex refused to be part of the betrayal, and he begged to be removed from office should he be required to pursue a conciliatory approach towards Shane.<sup>122</sup>

In the event, Sussex did resume office under Elizabeth with instructions to institute negotiations with Shane.<sup>123</sup> He did so, however, without enthusiasm, giving no indication to O'Neill that the crown was willing to consider conceding his demands for recognition and arguing continuously that any accommodation would only lead to further trouble. The council reconsidered; and at the end of the year Sussex was summoned home to present his case anew. Armed with his first major treatise on the general reformation of Ireland, and sustained by the general conspiracy theory which both he and Fitzwilliam had assiduously cultivated, Sussex

posited the problem of Shane O'Neill in the broadest possible context. It was not just a matter of determining a local succession dispute, Shane's resistance to the government had already acquired ramifications which spread throughout the entire realm. He was a shining example to all who wished to throw off their allegiance to the crown; he was the chief encourager of the midlands rebels and of the dissident O'Briens; he was the trump card of the Geraldine conspiracy. Sussex's case was attractively simple, for it seemed to promise an instant solution to all manner of difficulties in Ireland, both general and specific. Both parts of his argument were mutually sustaining: Shane's removal was imperative, if the grand Geraldine conspiracy was to be smashed; but in practical terms, it was also easy. Thus a single and none too costly military expedition seemed to offer the key to destroying all resistance to the crown in Ireland.<sup>124</sup>

Not a very profound analysis, to be sure, but it was sufficient to persuade the privy council to give Sussex his head, for the time being at least. He returned to Ireland in the autumn of 1560 with instructions to proceed against O'Neill by force.<sup>125</sup> This was the argument which the lieutenant was to employ with declining plausibility over the next three years. Increasingly, the rooting out of Shane, and that alone, became the one primary problem which Sussex felt called upon to solve. That done, everything else would simply fall into place; all would be "settled". The execution of a single military objective became the sole justification of Sussex's presence in Ireland, the one item on his personal programme. Thus far had the internal logic of his administrative techniques progressed.

Each year between 1560 and 1563 Sussex made war on O'Neill, each year without any success. In 1560 he greatly underestimated the difficulty of the task, and his undermanned and undersupplied army was forced to retire without ever encountering Shane. In 1561 a much larger expeditionary was attacked in the rear by Shane's kerne and put to flight. Following this disaster the privy council temporarily withdrew its confidence from the lieutenant. Negotiations were reopened with O'Neill, and early in the following year he was summoned to attend at Court. During 1562 Sussex could do no more than launch a few unofficial raids on Tyrone in the hope that he might encounter his enemy by chance. But in 1563, following another strenuous campaign to persuade the council to his side, he was permitted to fit out the largest expedition ever to go in search of O'Neill. It yielded no better results than the campaign of 1560: having spent the summer months scouring the country in search of O'Neill, Sussex's army was at length forced to retire through lack of supplies. It caught no glimpse of Shane. This was to be Sussex's last operation in Ireland. It exhausted him physically and it ravaged his nerves; but more important, it ruined him politically.<sup>126</sup>

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Sussex's claims to credibility as the crown's chief officer in Ireland were inherently fragile. They depended upon his continued ability to convince his superiors that his chosen policies responded to the real needs of the crown and to represent all criticism of his administration as self-interested and malicious. He had enjoyed considerable success on both grounds, but in neither

case were his capabilities unlimited. Sooner or later, the burden of his own manifest failures would have brought him down. But even before this extreme had been reached, his individual style of government became vulnerable to attack from an unexpected quarter. Sussex had perfected the technique of insulating himself from Irish-based criticism for a limited but not inconsiderable space of time. What he was unable to insure himself against, however, was a systematic attempt to undermine his reputation at the very source of power itself, the royal court. His lack of preparedness is understandable. Sussex's style of government was in all ways unlike his predecessor's, and was designed to be proof against the weaknesses which had brought St. Leger to ruin. Thus, Sussex was completely detached: he deliberately avoided entangling alliances with resident local interests whether English or Anglo-Norman, and he kept himself free of any personal dealings in crown properties. He was not only honest, but appeared to be so as well. Again, Sussex was active, and appeared to confront all major challenges to the authority of the crown without flinching. He pre-selected his problems, of course, and succeeded thereby in obscuring the perspective of his none too well informed superiors. But even if his incompetence were to be ultimately revealed, he might, for a time, expect to appear dogged and committed in their eyes. For these reasons, Sussex could realistically aspire to command the confidence of his sovereign for as long as he fended off the assaults of his Irish critics. But Sussex assumed too easily that these precautions shielded him from the dangers to which St. Leger had fallen victim. He over-estimated the security of his position at court, because he failed to anticipate the over-riding influence which a royal favourite might exercise in any

matter that concerned his own interest.

The emergence of Lord Robert Dudley's interest in Irish affairs can be dated with reasonable accuracy. It appeared in the middle of 1560, as the first debate on the problem of Shane O'Neill was in progress, and continued to mount steadily until at last Dudley achieved his intent: the destruction of Sussex's administration and the establishment of one of his own protégés as governor of Ireland.<sup>127</sup> Through Dudley's influence, the earl of Kildare, whose reputation had been so tarnished, was rehabilitated, and his offers to bring O'Neill to obedience by peaceful means and to induce him to visit England, were listened to attentively at court.<sup>128</sup> When, after Sussex's failures of 1560-1561, Kildare made good his claims and O'Neill came to court, it was Dudley who acted as the former rebel's host and escort.<sup>129</sup> Despite his submission, however, his pledges for future good behaviour, and his assurances to Lord Robert that he would act only at his bidding, Shane's visit proved to be something of a disappointment. Once back in Ulster, he resumed his characteristic attitudes and Sussex was again able to win over the privy council to his way. As a lever for discomfiting Sussex, Shane was, as yet, a singularly rough-hewn instrument.

Dudley, however, had other options available. In the very months when he was ostentatiously entertaining O'Neill, the favourite was also busy gaining an audience for a group of Irish law students who had drafted a lengthy statement of the grievances of the Pale for presentation to the privy council.<sup>130</sup> Though more detailed and more narrow in scope, their case was essentially the same as Archbishop Dowdall's.<sup>131</sup> Sussex's military government had oppressed the loyal subjects of the Pale beyond toleration. His troops were

a source of untold misery to the ordinary people. He had wasted rather than defended the Pale. The students' allegations were received with the utmost gravity by the privy council who summoned them for interview upon at least three occasions. Though they were at length admonished for their impertinence by a short spell in the Fleet, their charges and the information they produced to substantiate them proved to be a serious embarrassment to Sussex.<sup>132</sup> The lieutenant was compelled to reply to each of their allegations in detail, and to give assurances that genuine grievances of the Palesmen would be carefully examined at Dublin.<sup>133</sup> At the end of the affair, some councillors, including Secretary Cecil and the Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon remained unconvinced by Sussex's insistence that the charges were wholly without foundation.<sup>134</sup>

Dudley determined to press his advantage. In the following May, he forwarded to the council a letter he had received from the leading gentry of the Pale at once disowning the impudence of the students and endorsing their complaints.<sup>135</sup> More importantly, he extended his patronage to an older and more experienced agent whom the Palesmen now despatched to represent their grievances and to seek the establishment of a commission of inquiry, William Bermingham. Bermingham who had already acted in collusion with the students, repeated their charges.<sup>136</sup> But he developed the Anglo-Norman case in one significant respect: it was not the Pale alone, he declared, which suffered from the huge burden imposed by Sussex's adventures, his army daily wasted large sums of the crown's treasure through sheer negligence and downright corruption. Bermingham claimed that an investigation of the army would save the crown some £30,000, half of which would be made good through

the uncovering of inaccuracies and discrepancies in the muster rolls.<sup>137</sup> It was, he suggested, this dual opportunity of profiting simultaneously from the crown and the community that undermined any sense of urgency amongst the soldiery. Their real interest lay in inaction; the completion of their work would only spell an end to their gains. Seen in this light, the grievances of the Pale and Sussex's obvious lack of military success were merely symptoms of the same malaise which had its roots in Sussex's over-large and idle army. It was an outrageous suggestion; but it was also alarmingly plausible. To find out for itself, the council determined in July 1562 to send a commission to investigate the condition of the army in Ireland.<sup>138</sup>

It was then that Dudley executed his most important coup. The man nominated as the crown's commissioner in Ireland was yet another of his protégés, Sir Nicholas Arnold. Arnold's connection with the Dudley interest stretched far beyond Lord Robert's rise to favour at the court of Elizabeth. He had risen to prominence in local affairs in his native Gloucestershire under Northumberland, and he had been forced into exile under Mary for his part in the conspiracy organised around Northumberland's family. Under Elizabeth, the recovery of his own political career had paralleled Dudley's rise to influence. He again assumed his place amongst the political elite of his shire, and he served with Sir Henry Sidney upon the council in Wales. It was in his Irish service, however, that Arnold's allegiance to the Dudley interest became most evident.<sup>139</sup>

Arnold, at first, appeared to be sympathetic to Sussex's difficulties, but as Sussex soon discovered, the commissioner's friendliness was no more than a guise to cloak his true intentions.<sup>140</sup>

By the end of the year the two men were bitterly estranged. Throughout the winter of 1562-3, Arnold worked meticulously, seeking out evidence by which to test Bermingham's allegations. He scrupulously studied the muster-master's accounts and examined the captains' for verifications of their service. He took counsel with the leading spokesmen of the Pale and heard the evidence of those countrymen who had grievances to report against the army.<sup>141</sup> When he finally submitted his report in the summer of 1563, his findings were all that Sussex had feared. Though his researches were still only superficial, Arnold concluded that he had uncovered sufficient evidence of abuse to justify a further and far more extensive inquiry into the complaints of the Palesmen. Not only the captains, but the ordinary soldiers and the husbandmen would have to be systematically interviewed before an accurate estimate of the true extent of the crown's losses in Ireland could be reached. The council accepted his recommendations, and in October Arnold was appointed on a joint commission with Sir Thomas Wrothe to resume his investigations in Ireland.<sup>142</sup>

The new commission's powers, however, were even wider than he had expected. In addition to re-examining the army's accounts, the commissioners were directed to hear and to try all allegations of abuse made against the soldiers and to ensure that the soldiers were punished and the citizens compensated in cases where the charges were proven. They were required to investigate the general administration of the Irish revenues and in particular "to inquire what commodities and profits have been taken of the counties of Offaly and Leix yearly, since the beginning of our reign". The investigation of Sussex's financial performance would prove embarrassing enough, but the commissioners were empowered to inquire

into far wider aspects of his record. Sussex's claims to have enforced a widespread respect for English law and to have ensured allegiance to the new "orders for religion" were to be tested. His record in defending the Pale from marauders and in pursuing and punishing the culprits was to be checked. The commissioners were to be free to offer advice to the lieutenant in dealing with Shane O'Neill, and they were to devote particular attention to Shane's complaint that Sussex had made an attempt to have him poisoned, "in such sort as Shane O'Neill may in reason perceive how grievously do we take such a horrible attempt". An investigation of such breadth not only questioned Sussex's ability as a manager of money; it seemed to make the question of his overall capacity to govern open to doubt. In the hands of a partial commissioner, it constituted a deadly challenge to his survival as viceroy.<sup>143</sup>

In the sixteenth century a commission of inquiry was an almost certain way to ruin a man, innocent or guilty. By the autumn of 1563 there appeared to Sussex to remain only one hope of salvaging his credit as governor. He must secure the immediate defeat of O'Neill, or at least convince the queen and her councillors that an unequivocal victory over the rebel was imperative. But Dudley had already anticipated this last plea, and had pre-empted it. Even as Sussex prepared to launch his last major assault on Ulster in the spring, the council's resolution to support him was already being eroded by doubt.<sup>144</sup> The council's last-minute reservations about attacking O'Neill coincided with the return of Sir Thomas Cusack to high political influence. Following the discovery of his involvement in the land speculations of St. Leger's time, Cusack had spent some years in disfavour. He had been re-admitted to the Irish council in 1558, but his membership continued

to be junior and the heavy debts charged against him by Auditor Browne continued to hang over him. It was not until the spring of 1562 that Cusack presumed to offer any advice to the English council as to the government of Ireland. Thereafter, however, his fortunes underwent a rapid improvement. In March 1563 his suit to be allowed attend at court was granted, and Cusack was immediately accorded a place of high influence in the privy council's reconsiderations of Irish policy.<sup>145</sup>

Though he dealt not with matters of cess, or any of the other complaints specifically directed against Sussex, Cusack challenged the lieutenant on the very issues which he himself had designated as the priorities of his administration. He counselled a more flexible approach towards the dispute in Thomond, and a more sympathetic attitude towards the earl of Desmond who had been detained in England on Sussex's advice since 1560. But most of all he urged a renewal of the conciliatory overtures which had been made to O'Neill in 1562. On all these issues Cusack carried his point. The council began to consider offering new terms to Sir Donnell O'Brien. Desmond was released from confinement and despatched to Munster with a commission of peace whose articles had been devised by Cusack. And in August Cusack himself was returned with plenipotentiary powers to make peace with O'Neill.<sup>146</sup>

The timing of his return was propitious; for by then Sussex's grand campaign was already grinding to a halt through lack of supplies and lack of success. There was a little excuse to forestall the peace mission. Cusack opened negotiations immediately, and in September signed a treaty which assented to almost all of O'Neill's major demands. His claim to the title of O'Neill and to all the rights that went with it was acknowledged. His disputes

with the lesser clans of Ulster were to be submitted to arbitration, and his suit to be made earl of Tyrone was to be again submitted for the favourable consideration of the privy council. As a token of good-will, the government undertook to withdraw the garrison which Sussex had installed at Armagh. It was, as the historian Bagwell noted, a treaty in which Shane appeared to gain everything and to yield nothing. Four months later, it was ratified by the queen at Windsor.<sup>147</sup>

Sussex's collapse at the end of his 1563 campaign, the treaty at Drum Cree and the almost simultaneous arrival of a new commission of inquiry effectively ended the earl's Irish service. In the following months he withdrew altogether from the concerns of government and waited only for his recall which came, at length, in April 1564.<sup>148</sup> His place as chief governor was assumed by Commissioner Arnold, who was appointed lord justice in the same month. Sir Thomas Cusack was made acting lord chancellor, through Dudley's influence it seems, for he looked anxiously to his patron to have the appointment confirmed.<sup>149</sup> Under Arnold, the earl of Kildare was re-appointed to military responsibility in Leix-Offaly and assumed foremost place with Cusack upon Arnold's council.<sup>150</sup> Lesser men enjoyed rehabilitation. John Parker, who had undergone a second disgrace through suspicion of his participation in the Palesmen's complaints, was returned to favour.<sup>151</sup> Even the broken Andrew Wise returned to service in Ireland as secretary to the new commissioners.<sup>152</sup> Dudley appeared to have captured Irish government for his own interests.

The favourite's tactics were not remarkable; they were the same as he had employed elsewhere on different areas and upon different issues.<sup>153</sup> But what is worthy of note is the fact that he

chose to exercise them with such consistency and with such determination in Ireland. Ireland's general attraction to the favourite seems clear enough. As an extensive area of government involvement and expenditure, it was useful to acquire a substantial following there. It might be seen as a kind of extension to the great Dudley interest in the west country and in Wales. But such a moderately useful aim hardly justifies the trouble which Dudley went to in systematically undermining the crown's government there. Since an alliance had already been offered to him, extreme tactics hardly seemed necessary. The most crucial factor in turning Dudley's attention to Ireland was contributed, in fact, by Sussex himself. For it was Sussex who first gave clear articulation to the idea that the government of Ireland was a single, arduous, but essentially simple problem. It was Sussex who isolated a number of key problems upon which alone, he claimed, the entire settlement of Ireland depended and who suggested thereby that Irish service could be short-lived, dramatic and even glorious. It was Sussex who transformed the drab processes pursued by St. Leger into a brisk and stream-lined programme of action. It was Sussex, that is, who elevated the Irish question from a matter of mere local administration to a level of national importance. For Dudley, therefore, intervention in Ireland offered not simply the addition of another regional connection to his livery, but another challenge in his struggle for the highest political stakes, another Newhaven, another marriage question. Thus it was that Sussex unwittingly converted the Irish problem into a matter of far greater importance than he himself could control.

## (viii)

Sussex's legacy to Dudley, however, remained ambiguous in a number of critically important respects. Despite the succession of the favourite's protégés to the highest political offices, the bulk of Sussex's administrative establishment remained untouched. The army in particular constituted a daunting threat to the security of Arnold's new regime. Fitzwilliam, its most senior officer, refused to yield up his accounts either as vice-treasurer or treasurer-at-war, and his fellow captains followed his example.<sup>154</sup> Though they had undoubtedly retained private accounts of their service, they refused to deliver any evidence by which the accounts of the clerk of check might be tested. Without these records, no detached assessment of the army's official muster-rolls could be essayed, unless the commission chose to admit the depositions of the rank and file. This was a clumsy, undependable, time consuming and socially distasteful method of auditing accounts. But Arnold was ultimately forced to have recourse to it. The captains complained both collectively and individually: it was outrageous to have their word tested against the evidence of mere foot-soldiers, it was a clear proof of the malice that underlay all of Arnold's dealings with them.<sup>155</sup> Arnold's fellow-commissioners, Sir Thomas Wrothe and the auditor William Dixe, were disquieted, and the privy council, to whom all the complaints were directed, became concerned that the commission should not waste more money through delays than it might reclaim through the checks. The commissioner's zeal brought no credit to the lord justice.<sup>156</sup>

Arnold himself was convinced that the captains' attempts to cripple his administration went far beyond their obstruction of his commission's proceedings. They had, he believed, sought to discredit his government by deliberately provoking trouble amongst the Gaelic Irish. He alleged specifically that Sir Henry Radcliffe had intrigued with the O'Mores and the O'Conors to procure renewed rebellion in the midlands.<sup>157</sup> Later investigations revealed that some of Radcliffe's men had, in fact, spread rumours amongst the clansmen, and it is true that the captains made much play of the renewed disorders in their complaints against Arnold.<sup>158</sup> But the notion that the captains could have so manipulated the Gaelic clans in their own interests is inherently implausible. The susceptibility of Arnold's regime to political disturbance was indeed a legacy bequeathed by Sussex; but it derived from sources more complex than the machinations of a few conspiratorial captains.

Because Sussex himself had so consistently fused ends and means, his enemies' assaults had never been limited solely to criticism of his administrative methods. Implicitly, and as the attack developed explicitly, it contained the added charge that the lieutenant's methods had failed because they were directed towards a policy which was in itself unnecessary and nefarious. This argument had been most clearly expressed by Sir Thomas Cusack, but Arnold himself was compelled to support the view. His assent was never simply a matter of principle, an impartial rejection of Sussex's analysis. For Arnold was dependent for his own survival upon the support of those interests who had been most threatened by the lieutenant's policies. Thus his own attitudes had not only to be different from Sussex's; on the most

important issues, they had necessarily to be the exact opposite.<sup>159</sup>

This enforced dialectic effectively characterised Arnold's regime.

Sussex's encounter with the Palesmen entailed, for instance, that Arnold could have no large cesses, no extensive billeting, no substantial army. He was forced to depend more heavily, consequently, upon the general hosting of the Pale. It was a cheaper and more popular expedient; but it was also unwieldy and inefficient. Under Arnold, the government's military prowess was so diminished that it was hard pressed to snuff out the latest revolt of the gravely depleted midland clans. Of more serious consequence was Arnold's necessary alliance with the Geraldine interest. It entailed, admittedly, some real advantages. The earl of Kildare from being the most dangerous opponent of the Dublin administration, became its foremost supporter. He rendered sterling service to Arnold in suppressing the revolt in the midlands.<sup>160</sup> But the friendship with Kildare brought less happy consequences. It immediately rekindled the old Geraldine-Butler feud and set in motion a whole series of disturbances in which one side attempted to improve and the other to defend its position of influence. In Thomond, internecine war erupted once more, as the Clanrickard Burkes rushed to the support of the earl and the earl of Desmond sent forces to Sir Donnell, each side hoping to make an end to the matter for once and for all.<sup>161</sup> In Clanrickard itself, the earl was reported to be deeply aggrieved at the aspirations which Arnold was rumoured to have cast upon his legitimacy, and was suspected for the first time in his career, to be contemplating rebellion.<sup>162</sup> But it was in Munster that the most serious disturbances took place between the Butlers and the Desmond Geraldines. Tension had mounted between the two families

since the return of the earl of Desmond late in 1563. Throughout 1564 Ormond complained repeatedly about attacks on his lands, and towards the end of the year he began to hint that he might be forced to act in his own defence if the justice did not see fit to intervene. Arnold was naturally unwilling to act decisively on the earl's behalf, and so Ormond made good his threat. In January 1565 he surrounded a large retinue of the earl of Desmond near the hill of Affane on the border between the two earldoms, and then attacked. In the ensuing affray he captured and carried off Desmond himself as a prisoner.<sup>163</sup>

This outbreak of uncontrolled feudal warfare was even more painfully embarrassing to Arnold than the revolt in the midlands. It is arguable that Ormond wished it so; it is clear that he was chiefly responsible for the battle at Affane.<sup>164</sup> But the Butlers can be credited with manipulating the Geraldines no more than the captains can be presumed to have surreptitiously motivated the clansmen. A more positive impetus was at work in both cases. A general release of aggression from all who had suffered constraint and repression under his rule was Sussex's most damning political bequest to Arnold. The knowledge that their own stubborn resistance had contributed to the overthrow of the iron-fisted governor coupled with the realisation that Arnold was pitifully dependent upon support in Ireland induced them to press for more and soon. This reaction is evident in the revitalised aggression of Sir Donnell O'Brien, in the new self-confidence of the earl of Desmond and even in the pathetic attempt of the O'Mores and the O'Conors to redraw the boundaries in Leix and Offaly. But in no instance is it more obvious than in the case of the man who had done most to secure Sussex's ruin: Shane O'Neill.

It was the queen and her council who gave Shane the opportunity to test the extent of his new found power. The letters patent of January 1564, confirming the peace of Drum Cree differed slightly from the original agreement which Cusack had drafted. One clause - that which released O'Neill from any obligation to attend upon the chief governor until a final agreement had been reached - was omitted.<sup>165</sup> Since Sussex had withdrawn from the government, and since no governor had ever been able to procure Shane's attendance against his will, the omission was a trifling one. The privy council admitted as much to Cusack and confessed that the changes had been made only to save the honour of the queen.<sup>166</sup> But Shane's real objection to the alterations soon became clear: it was not so much the content of the patent which displeased him, as its general tone. The formal treaty was more dignified and more condescending towards O'Neill than Cusack's original draft: Shane wanted the entire patent invalidated and the articles which he had signed endorsed verbatim. It was, as the councillors well knew, an impossible demand, and they urged Cusack to persuade O'Neill to relent.<sup>167</sup> But throughout 1564 Shane's demands grew more importunate. He not only wanted the original articles ratified, he pressed also for the prompt concession of his two major suits, the grant of his father's title and the grant of an English wife. The unfortunate Cusack did his best to persuade each side of the others continuing good-will. But increasingly his diplomatic manoeuvres were outpaced by Shane's actions. He renewed his pressure upon the lesser chiefs of the province and he began again to enforce his claims upon the O'Donnells. Then, under the guise of doing "some notable service whereby he might be the better accepted of the queen",<sup>168</sup> he moved against the Scots of Clondeboy. His early efforts were indecisive,

but in April 1565, he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the MacDonnells at Glensesk. He continued to claim that his action was motivated to show his good intentions to the crown. But he refused to give up the Scottish chiefs he had captured and he immediately began colonising Clandeboy with his own people.<sup>169</sup>

Against all this, Arnold and Cusack were powerless to act. Though the evidence mounted increasingly to the contrary, they continued to insist upon Shane's trustworthiness. Early in 1565, when Calvagh O'Donnell came to Dublin to protest at the treatment of his son at the hands of O'Neill, Arnold attempted to suppress the complaint. But, unlicensed, Calvagh journeyed to court to present his grievances directly to the queen. His lurid account of Shane's conduct coincided with the first news of O'Neill's victory over the Scots. Together they reconverted the council overnight to Sussex's old view: Shane would not be dealt with by conciliation.<sup>170</sup>

Almost everything had gone wrong for Arnold. His commission moved slowly and had as yet produced no results. The resentment of the army mounted daily against him and even his fellow commissioners openly dissented from his actions. He had permitted Gaelic rebellion, feudal warfare and now these alarming developments in Ulster to flourish uncontrolled; within a year his administration was entirely discredited. Arnold's failure placed Dudley in a particularly awkward position. He needed desperately to change his agents, but he must none the less, avoid conceding even a retrospective victory to Sussex. He needed a man who could at once retain the allegiance of the majority of his Irish allies and still act decisively to chastise those who went too far. He needed a

man whose reputation and experience would be sufficient to command the confidence of the crown in any action he undertook in Ireland, and who would yet remain amenable to the will of the favourite. He needed, that is, an alternative Sussex in his camp. He looked to Sir Henry Sidney.

## CHAPTER 5

Sidney: Government by Contract

## (i)

Though his own experience in Ireland had almost ruined him, Sussex continued to exert a decisive influence over the government of Ireland in the fifteen years following his departure in April 1564. Either directly or indirectly, deliberately or quite unknowingly, Sussex played a crucial role in determining the character of each successive administration down to 1579. In some cases, his involvement was clear and simple: his contribution to Sir Nicholas Arnold's disgrace has already been noted, and he was to play an equally active, but more positive part in sustaining the administration of his brother-in-law Fitzwilliam in the years 1571-1575. But the most remarkable indication of the earl's continuing ability to influence events in Ireland emerged during the years in office of his most energetic and most ambitious rival, Sir Henry Sidney. Part of Sussex's continuing authority Sidney was perfectly willing to grapple with. He was ready to match the earl's past promises and to confound his current criticisms. But by far the greater part of the influence which Sussex retained over Irish government was so subtle and intangible in nature that the new deputy could hardly have been able to assess its dimensions. For despite its apparent calamitousness, Sussex's period in office, the aims he set himself, the techniques he employed, and even the means through which he came to grief, cast a continuing spell over all further considerations of crown policy in Ireland. The great promise of the lieutenant's work and its great failure presented a challenge to all who remained concerned with the task of reforming Ireland. It set

standards and posed problems to which Sidney was compelled to respond in each of his periods as viceroy.

One challenge Sidney had anticipated from the outset and was fully prepared to meet. The factional struggle, he knew, must continue. Though his own return to Ireland had been strongly rumoured as early as March 1565, and though he himself was provisionally informed of his appointment in May, confirmation of the queen's decision remained uncertain for most of the year.<sup>1</sup> Arnold's troubles in Ireland had begun to take their toll on the Leicester interest, and as they deepened the reputation of the latterly discredited lieutenant began to rise.<sup>2</sup> By mid-summer, Sussex was again campaigning to be allowed return for one last effort against O'Neill and there was a strong possibility that Sidney's appointment would be cancelled. Only in October did the council, persuaded by Leicester that Sussex would be as extravagant and as unsuccessful as he had been in the past, fix its resolve to despatch Sidney to Ireland.<sup>3</sup> But even then the Leicester group had lost ground. On October 6, Cecil could write, not without spleen, that "the Queen Majesty's favour toward the earl of Leicester be not so manifest as it was".<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth had grown mistrustful of the obvious manoeuvrings against Sussex and had begun to react sharply against them. She gave at least one formal indication of her growing displeasure: in the first draft of his instructions it was assumed that Sidney would succeed to Sussex's title as lord lieutenant, but he went to take up office as a mere deputy.<sup>5</sup>

Sidney himself was fully aware of the deterioration of his position. In one of the last letters he penned before setting sail for Ireland in December he urged his patron to remain on his guard against Sussex and his friends and not to abandon him.<sup>6</sup> Leicester,

indeed, continued to defend his new Irish agent against criticism at court, but Sidney's own most urgent task was to secure himself against the evil which Sussex's surviving Irish interest might work against him. He did so in the self-same way as Sussex had established himself in 1556: he set about establishing a dependable administrative clique of his own. Sidney's reshuffling of positions of responsibility did not, for the most part, involve the introduction of large numbers of inexperienced English adventurers into the Irish administration. At the highest conciliar level, those to whom he looked for support were not new men, but those who had been ousted by Sussex and had served under Arnold. Thus, the earl of Kildare remained the most senior member of the Irish council and retained the high military responsibilities which Arnold had assigned to him. Sidney stressed the importance of the earl's contribution to the government of the realm and recommended that his service be acknowledged by some reward or title.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Sir Thomas Cusack was continued by Sidney in the high position of influence he had held under Arnold and recommended for favour.<sup>8</sup> Francis Agard, whose father had been so closely allied to St. Leger, became one of Sidney's most trusted advisers, and Nicholas Bagenal, who had left Ireland during Sussex's rule and spent some time with Sidney in the west country, returned to Ireland to become a member of the council.<sup>9</sup> When Sidney did add a new man to his council, he bore a name laden with connotation: Warham St. Leger.<sup>10</sup> Of the group upon whom Sussex had depended, only two, Fitzwilliam and Robert Dillon, continued to serve on Sidney's council.<sup>11</sup> Sidney made apparently few changes within the civil administration, though his appointment did witness the return to Irish service of St. Leger's discredited auditor, Thomas Jenyson.<sup>12</sup>

But it was within the ranks of the army that the most complete revolution appears to have taken place. Over 90% of Sidney's captains were new to Ireland. With the exception of Fitzwilliam, none of Sussex's most senior officers remained in pay.<sup>13</sup> The change, however, was hardly the result of a deliberate purge; few of Sussex's captains wished to remain in Ireland after the treatment they had been subjected to by Arnold's commission. But a systematic attempt was made to have the more responsible military offices left vacant for Sidney's dependents. Marshal Stanley was clearly forced out of office by Nicholas Bagenal.<sup>14</sup> Jacques Wingfield, Sussex's "false apostle" who had allied himself to the Leicester group following his disgrace for a display of cowardice against Shane O'Neill in 1562, returned with Sidney fully rehabilitated as master of ordnance.<sup>15</sup> There was a new clerk of check to replace the corrupt Mathew King and a new clerk of ordnance.<sup>16</sup> Sidney also attempted to execute a purge amongst the constablings. Thus he replaced Henry Stafford with Ralph Morton at Dungarvan, Hugh Lippiat with Francis Cosby at Philipstown, and Henry Radcliffe with Henry Colley at Maryborough, and appointed a new man to Cosby's old charge at Monasterevan.<sup>17</sup> These changes were not made simply for novelty's sake. Both Cosby and Colley were old servitors who had served their time under St. Leger, and Sidney placed similar confidence in an equally experienced soldier, Nicholas Heron, whom he retained in the crucially important ward at Leighlin.<sup>18</sup> Neither in the civil nor in the military departments, was any "colonisation" of the Irish administration undertaken by Sidney. In reconstructing his executive, the new deputy was doing no more than emulating the precedent set by Sussex, and like Sussex, his motives were neither racist nor appropriative: he

sought merely to facilitate the transmission of his authority.

Sidney's imitation of Sussex, was even more directly flattering: he not only adopted the lieutenant's administrative technique, he commandeered his programme of reform, lock, stock and barrel. Sidney's formal set of instructions is a most impressive document.<sup>19</sup> It is the longest and most comprehensive briefing given to any governor in the century. Almost every aspect of government responsibility - law and order, financial reform, the organisation of the garrison, the propagation of religion - receives serious consideration and detailed practical directives were given to the deputy for action within each category. It is, however, easy to be deceived by the apparent thoroughness of the new instructions. Though they are replete with the rhetoric of reform, their substantive ideas are no more original than those which Sussex had promoted in years past. Thus, despite the apparent freshness of the decision to institute presidential councils in the provinces, Sidney's practical understanding of the character of the presidencies to be established, was no different than that which Sussex had envisaged in 1562. Admittedly, Sidney at first appeared to think that the martial presidency which Sussex had reserved for use in Ulster might profitably be extended to Munster also.<sup>20</sup> But his first set of instructions drafted for the new president showed clearly that he had accepted Sussex's civic model.<sup>21</sup> His views of the president's powers and responsibilities were identical with Sussex's, his projections of the council's security requirements and even his estimate of its charges were almost the same.

A similar lack of originality was evident in Sidney's views

about plantation and colonisation. He believed that the attempt to construct a model English community in Leix-Offaly, should be persevered in. He deplored the degeneration of the plantation there into a number of besieged military outposts, arguing that the money currently consumed by persistent warfare, would be better expended upon "the building of houses and towns and the setting up of husbandry".<sup>22</sup> He shared Sussex's views about the settling of the north-east coast, believing that "the surest and soonest way" to deal with the Scots was "to inhabit between them and the sea whereby ... all hope of succour may be taken from them" and then to proceed to their utter expulsion.<sup>23</sup> For some time, Sussex's old plan to establish a number of nucleated settlements at strategic points along the coastline had been independently canvassed by William Piers, the man whom Sussex had placed at Carrickfergus.<sup>24</sup> The deterioration of the situation in the mid 1560s, had made Piers' proposals increasingly attractive to the privy council, and in incorporating the scheme into his own programme of government, Sidney was merely following suit.<sup>25</sup>

What is true of the central planks of his programme applies with equal strength to its other elements. Its financial proposals were derived wholly from the proposals made by Gilbert Gerrard and Sussex in 1561.<sup>26</sup> The doctrinal and liturgical directives were based upon the earliest religious instructions given to Sussex at the time of the succession.<sup>27</sup> The clauses relating to the reform of the army were drawn up from the recommendations made by Sir Nicholas Arnold at the time of his first commission of inquiry.<sup>28</sup> Finally, on the issue which had dominated Sussex's last years in Ireland and which had ruined Arnold's credibility, Sidney's views

were emphatically orthodox. Shane O'Neill, he believed, might in the end be brought to obedience, but it was certain that he could only be taught to know his fault by force. Clearly then, Sidney's instructions constituted not "a programme of striking originality"; but an excellent summary of the conventional wisdom of the day.<sup>29</sup> In so far as they reflected Sidney's own thinking on Ireland, they demonstrated simply that he had absorbed the experience of others and that his own understanding of the problems of Irish government was well-informed and up-to-date.

That they should have been so is not surprising. By 1565 the major theoretical work of general policy formulation had been completed with some difficulty and some personal anguish by the earl of Sussex. However disappointing his own personal performance, Sussex, it appeared, had performed a great service to Elizabeth by delineating the major problems which her government in Ireland faced and the means by which they might be solved. His theoretical reviews had been at once so broad and so detailed that there seemed to be few places at which they might be improved. They had rapidly acquired an unchallenged status of orthodoxy. In a curious way, Sussex's personal fate had strengthened rather than weakened the appeal of his ideas. The sources of his practical failure as governor seemed too obvious to demand profound inquiry. The man simply could not put down O'Brien, subdue O'Neill or control his own captains. His, it readily appeared, was a tactical not a strategic deficiency. Arnold's inability to maintain his own authority by rejecting Sussex's methods and returning to St. Leger's old ways seemed to confirm this complacent analysis. It seemed unnecessary, therefore, for the privy council to seek out the inherent conceptual difficulties of Sussex's style of operation.

They needed only to look for someone who would fulfil his prescriptions in a more competent fashion.

The obvious disparity between the promise of Sussex's proposals and the inadequacy of his personal performance was basic to Leicester's decision to promote Sidney as a candidate for service in Ireland. Though he was in many ways an unknown quantity, Sidney's real attraction lay in that his talents seemed to correspond neatly with Sussex's clearest deficiencies. Unlike Sussex, "Sir Harry" was popular in the Pale; in 1562, at the height of the cess controversy, the Palesmen had called for his appointment in place of Sussex.<sup>30</sup> Sidney, again, had a peculiar relationship with O'Neill which offered the best opportunity of discovering whether Shane's professions of loyalty were genuine or not.<sup>31</sup> In Wales, Sidney had shown himself to be a competent and reforming administrator, and his service there was unblemished by any disclosures of corruption or negligence which had so embarrassed Sussex's Irish government.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, Sidney had shared much of Sussex's experience in Ireland. He had been vice-treasurer under Sussex until 1559, and had served as lord justice in Sussex's absence on four separate occasions.<sup>33</sup> During this period, Sussex confided with Sidney on all matters of policy, and in 1559, when the lieutenant hoped to resign his post, it was Sidney whom he recommended in his place.<sup>34</sup> Despite the influence of faction, Sidney held fast to his original experience with Sussex, and throughout the early 1560s continued to approve of the lieutenant's general methods.<sup>35</sup> His draft instructions of 1565 merely underwrote his consistency. At a time when Sussex's reputation as a strategist was again in the ascendant, they suggested that Elizabeth could expect from Sidney all the gains to be reaped by the reappointment of Sussex without

any of the practical risks which that decision would necessarily incur.

Sidney, moreover, promised not only to be more efficient than Sussex, but also to be more economical. With the aid of information which he procured both officially and secretly from sources in Ireland, he drew up a schedule which promised to maintain a less costly military establishment than either Arnold or Sussex. By written agreement, Sidney bound himself to maintain a garrison costing not more than £1,288 per month.<sup>36</sup> No increase in men or wages was to be made without prior permission from Westminster and permission was to be sought only in the most urgent case. If it were possible to maintain his numbers at the prescribed levels, Sidney calculated that the costs of his administration would amount to less than £15,500 p.a., a figure which was more than £4,600 below Sussex's costs in 1563.<sup>37</sup> Sidney's charges, moreover, were to be of limited duration only. He promised to have fulfilled all the undertakings of his instructions within three years of taking office, after which time annual expenditure in Ireland would be greatly reduced.<sup>38</sup> If there was any originality in Sidney's promises of service, it was surely to be found here. In Sidney, Elizabeth seemed to have found a man who embodied all of Sussex's qualities without any of his weaknesses.

Of the two factors which influenced the privy council in their decision to appoint Sidney - his proposals and his personality - the latter was of immeasurably greater importance. To the councillors Sidney's promotion of Sussex's ideas was a reassuring indication that his own views were sound and that he was unlikely to run the government aground as Arnold had done, through the wrong-headed application of outmoded policies. But Sidney's soundness on matters

of policy was never in itself sufficient to secure his appointment to office. It was his ostensible ability to reassert the authority of the government over O'Neill, in Munster and in the Pale, and to do so in the cheapest possible way that was the crucial determinant of the decision. Leicester's sudden volte-face, his abandonment of the passive Arnold and his promotion of the aggressive Sidney was, therefore, a clever tactical manoeuvre. In changing his agents he managed at once to acknowledge the force of Sussex's theoretical analysis and to salvage the political victory he had won over the lieutenant in 1563-64.

\* For Sidney, however, this personalisation of the Irish chief governorship had several important consequences. Though his proposals for reform were unoriginal, and though they were subordinated to more personal elements in his campaign for office, they were none the less of crucial importance to him. They were so partly because Sidney genuinely believed that the government of Ireland needed these remedies. He had, on several previous occasions, expressed his concern for reform long before he had acquired an interest in ousting Sussex from Ireland, and it is clear that he believed the time to be opportune for decisive action. But these indifferent considerations aside, the implementation of a programme of his own was personally important to Sidney for the very same reasons which had once motivated Sussex. Sidney, not Sussex, was now to be the architect of the new Irish commonwealth. It was to be through his endeavour that the most stubborn obstacles to English rule in Ireland were to be overcome and the foundations of the new peaceful order laid. The personal glory would be his and the net political gain would be Leicester's.<sup>39</sup>

Yet the very personalisation of the Irish office worked strongly against this intent. For despite the lofty tone of his instructions, the council's decision to appoint him in no way signalised its support for the immediate implementation of Sidney's programme. The programme, like Sussex's was indeed a good one; and the council sincerely intended to authorise its enactment before long. But its immediate concern, as ever, lay with the urgent and the expedient; the ordering of affairs in Munster and most important of all, the disciplining of Shane O'Neill. Thus, their great promise notwithstanding, the attainment of Sidney's general objects - the establishment of presidencies and nuclear colonies - was subordinate to and dependent upon his ability to fulfil the short-term expectations which had finally determined his appointment. From the beginning, therefore, a sharp dichotomy existed between the aims of the governor and the priorities of his superiors. The strain which this situation imposed upon the deputy was further exacerbated by a second evil consequence of his highly personal struggle for office. The bitterness and animosity which had characterised the campaign to overthrow Sussex remained to haunt Sidney after he had taken up office. His government was both susceptible and extremely vulnerable to the most petty of personal criticisms. Arguments that had counted strongly in his favour as a candidate could easily be turned against him in office. Every minor miscalculation could now be inflated into a massive blunder; every hazard of fortune was amenable to explanation simply in terms of the deputy's personal incompetence; every political decision could be made suspect of malice and partiality. Sidney took office then, suffering from pressures that were both extraneous to and inherent in the terms of his appointment. Their ability to mould his viceroyalty was first demonstrated in the striking contrast that

arose between the all but complete support he received in his campaign against O'Neill and the entire lack of encouragement he encountered in every other effort he made to implement his promises.

(ii)

Once he had decided that no progress could be made through negotiations with O'Neill, Sidney's advice to proceed with force in Ulster was unanimously endorsed by the privy council. Sir Francis Knollys was dispatched to confer with him on how best this was to be done, and the new commissioner supported all of Sidney's recommendations.<sup>40</sup> Though they entailed radical departures from his original estimates, Sidney's demands for more troops, munitions and victuals were accepted with little complaint. His ambitious plan to establish a garrison at O'Neill's rear in the Derry was approved of and a complicated series of arrangements undertaken to facilitate it.<sup>41</sup> Sidney's requirements were lavish and money, as ever, posed a problem, but the campaign was nevertheless given priority over all other matters at Westminster. The councillors haggled, devising the most economic means by which Sidney's needs could be met, but in the end he got almost all he asked for. A reinforcement of 1,000 men was sent to the ordinary garrison with the promise of a further 1,000 if necessary.<sup>42</sup> The expedition to Lough Foyle was fully equipped and financed from England. The campaign was budgeted to last for a year and a half and Sidney was authorised to spend up to £35,000 in its course.<sup>43</sup> Total open-handedness in a Tudor government, of course, was not to be expected, and as the campaign wore on, Westminster's enthusiasm flagged

somewhat. But the resolution to support Sidney was never abandoned, and despite the disappointments of 1566, extensive preparations for a further year's campaign were being made when news of O'Neill's death arrived at court.<sup>44</sup>

The area of royal largesse, however, was severely defined; for at the very time when Sidney was receiving sustenance and encouragement in his war in the north, his attempts to launch his chosen policies elsewhere met with coolness, obstruction and rebuff. His failure to establish Warham St. Leger as president in Munster, is the most notorious of Sidney's disappointments. It is sometimes explained simply in terms of the sovereign's personal whim. Elizabeth, it is said, was willing to overthrow all of Sidney's carefully laid plans out of her special favour to "Black Tom Ormond".<sup>45</sup> But the deeper significance of the St. Leger affair may be grasped if it is seen in the context of a whole series of incidents in which the deputy's intentions were forestalled by royal displeasure.

Sidney's attempt to replace Sussex's constable at Dungarvan with an appointee of his own was quashed.<sup>46</sup> His appointment of Thomas Stucley to the constableness of Leighlin following the death of Nicholas Heron was nullified.<sup>47</sup> His representations on behalf of William Piers were shelved.<sup>48</sup> His replacement of Marshal Stanley by Nicholas Bagenal was hotly disputed and the issue was resolved only when Stanley decided of his own accord to relinquish service in Ireland.<sup>49</sup> In ecclesiastical affairs, Sidney suffered from a similar lack of influence. His recommendations of Terence Danyell for the see of Armagh and Hugh Brady for the see of Dublin were simply passed over.<sup>50</sup> Even innocuous attempts to fill places in the army left vacant by Sussex's appointees were

greeted with suspicion and deferred.<sup>51</sup> Sidney showed some sympathy to Sir Nicholas Arnold in his difficulties and he was charged with conspiring against Sussex.<sup>52</sup> He praised Sir Thomas Cusack and the earl of Kildare for their efforts on his behalf and he was rebuked for being "guided in the government by councillors of Irish birth".<sup>53</sup> He attempted to arrange an exchange of some lands between Bagenal and Stucley and he was suspected of fraud.<sup>54</sup>

Sidney was convinced as to the source of all these frustrations. He was, he felt sure, the victim of continuing factional intrigue. He was by no means entirely mistaken. Throughout 1566, Sussex and his ally the duke of Norfolk, were active in spreading rumours at court about the deputy's lack of success. Sidney, they sneered, had coveted the title of lieutenant and was bitterly aggrieved because it had been refused to him.<sup>55</sup> He had gone to Ireland only to continue the slandering of Sussex. He spent his time furthering the work of Arnold and had no intention of performing any service there.<sup>56</sup> It was even alleged that he was too cowardly to confront O'Neill.<sup>57</sup> Sidney was driven to fury by these slights. Despite assurances from Cecil and even from the queen herself that all bitterness had been assuaged at court and that Sussex and Leicester were now joined in amity, Sidney appealed continually to be allowed return to face his adversaries.<sup>58</sup> He even challenged Sussex to a duel.<sup>59</sup>

Sussex was undoubtedly willing to do Sidney what damage he might in 1566, but it would be as wrong to assume that Elizabeth was wholly given over to the Norfolk interest as to believe that she had been seduced by the charms of the earl of Ormond. The very circumstances of Sidney's appointment had been enough to arouse her caution. A protégé of one faction replacing a senior member of another was

bound to allow his decisions to be coloured by considerations of interest. Elizabeth was anxious to minimise the disruption which Sidney might cause by curtailing his powers of patronage. It was not whimsicality, but a reasonable desire to preserve some administrative continuity that prompted Elizabeth's caution, and for this the machinations of Sidney and Leicester were themselves of equal importance with those of Sussex and Norfolk. The queen's attitude, therefore, was sensible enough, but it carried with it some serious implications for the success of Sidney's plans. For what was simply a matter of discretion in controlling appointments to office, became one of grave political consequence in determining the government's attitude toward the faction-ridden Anglo-Norman nobility.

Since the rival Butlers and Geraldines had each come to align themselves with one of the major factions at court, a change in governor under these circumstances threatened not merely administrative discontinuity, but political revolution: Elizabeth moved to preserve the status quo. Before he left for Ireland she wrote to "Harry" secretly, in a friendly and almost intimate manner:<sup>60</sup> "Make some difference", she warned, "twixt tried just and false friends. Let the good service of well deservers be never rewarded with loss". Both the tone and the timing of the queen's secret missive were deliberate. Both made it clear that her judgement was influenced neither by personal favour to Ormond nor to Sussex, but by the traditional maxim of state that old friends were best. The Butlers, she went on to intimate, had always been loyal supporters of the Tudor crown. She did not wish to see them unnecessarily alienated through the employment of policies and officers sympathetic to their enemies. Her determination in this

regard was heightened by her awareness that the impending change of direction proceeded not from any reason of state but from the logic of factions: "If I had not espied though late 'leger de main' used in these cases", she told Sidney, "I had never played my part. Nor if I did not see the balances held awry, I had never myself come into the weigh-house".<sup>61</sup>

At first, Elizabeth held her hand, waiting to see if Sidney would heed her warning. She grudgingly accepted St. Leger as Sidney's man in Munster and contended herself with a liberal dispensation of favour to Ormond.<sup>62</sup> Leases were renewed to him, outstanding royal debts were repaid to him, the privileges and liberties revoked by Lord Justice Arnold were restored to him.<sup>63</sup> His claims for compensation and damages against Desmond were favourably entertained; his claim to imprison captured followers of Desmond was upheld.<sup>64</sup> Elizabeth's attitude fully exposed the vulnerability of Sidney's position. He could expect to receive the support and encouragement that were his due as governor only in so far as he concerned himself with the pursuit of the short-term goals of the crown; elsewhere he must watch his own ambitions slowly evaporate in the face of immovable royal prescriptions. Sidney attempted to make the best of his situation. He deliberately deferred action on several of the instructions sent to him concerning Ormond's affairs and he attempted to conceal Desmond's continuing misdemeanours. He wrote pressingly to Cecil and the council on Desmond's behalf. Desmond, he believed, was genuinely well-intentioned, but his current situation was precarious and the queen's continuing coldness could well drive him to distraction. His financial situation was desperate; if Ormond were permitted to collect upon all the damages he claimed, it would only provoke

Desmond to hazard everything in an outright rebellion which neither the government nor Ormond could contain.<sup>65</sup> Sidney was playing for time, hoping that Elizabeth's mistrust might eventually melt away and that his own good service elsewhere would procure sufficient credit for him to have his way in Munster.

Thus in the autumn of 1566, Sidney did what was expected of him and opened his campaign against O'Neill. But, as with Sussex, it was Sidney's "luck not to light upon him".<sup>66</sup> Instead, his lengthy and uncertain attempts in Ulster only intensified his other difficulties. As the preoccupation with the war against O'Neill grew, so the gap between the aims of the crown and the ambitions of the deputy widened. Sidney's competence as a governor came to be judged by observers, friendly and unfriendly alike, by his ability to deal with Shane. This was a narrow gauge of success and, as Sidney knew, an unrealistic one. "With what peril shall I follow the fortunes of the wars", he complained, "when every accident, though ne'er so well intended, yet following out not so fortunate shall seem a jealous suspicion to the canker conceived".<sup>67</sup> As the campaign dragged on, Sidney's sensitivity to the common criticisms and slanders of court became obsessive. "A governor", he declared, "is no longer to be detained than maintained".<sup>68</sup> His demands to be allowed return home grew incessant. By winter of 1566-67, following his own failure to reconnoitre O'Neill and the disaster at the Derry, he believed his situation to be intolerable and he wrote earnestly to Leicester and to Cecil, begging recall or employment elsewhere.<sup>69</sup> In January his discomfort reached its pitch in a wail: "For God's sake", he entreated Cecil, "take me out of this world".<sup>70</sup>

O'Neill's elusiveness was threatening to absorb all of Sidney's surplus energies and to render him, as it had left Sussex, incapable of acting effectively upon any of his other chosen policies. But there was worse to come: next to the queen and to his enemies at court, Desmond himself turned out to be the greatest obstacle to Sidney's hopes in Munster. Disappointed with Sidney's failure to protect him, the earl had returned to reliance upon his own resources. He had gathered a large army and had begun to reassert his power in west-Munster by force. He resumed his bush warfare with the Butlers and he actively supported the rebels in the midlands.<sup>71</sup> Reports of these mischiefs at court, suitably embellished by Ormond, further weakened Sidney's credit with the queen. Her irritation with his slackness in Ormond's causes turned to anger in the belief that Sidney was willing to allow his private interest in Desmond to undermine the peace. "We think surely since your going from hence you are entered into some great mist or darkness of judgement ... (and) are like to enter into so great errors for the government of that realm as are not to be suffered in one that is appointed to govern as you are".<sup>72</sup> Through the winter of 1566-67, Elizabeth's displeasure steadily increased. St. Leger was forbidden from dealing in Ormond's affairs and in December was withdrawn from Munster altogether.<sup>73</sup> By early 1567 the queen's suspicions against Desmond had hardened into certainties. She was now convinced that Desmond was wholly responsible for the feud with the Butlers, and that matters "hitherto on the part of the earl made doubtful were very true and manifest and only delayed by him to avoid due punishment here".<sup>74</sup> By his recent disorders, she reasoned also, Desmond had forfeited his recognizance of £20,000 to keep the peace. On April 3rd, she ordered his arrest.<sup>75</sup>

Long before then, however, Sidney had accepted defeat. As early as August he had warned Leicester that he could not continue to shield the earl indefinitely.<sup>76</sup> Weeks later, he disclosed that he had entirely abandoned Desmond and that he awaited his inevitable rebellion.<sup>77</sup> This was a radical departure from the original pre-suppositions with which Sidney and Leicester had originally conceived of the establishment of a Munster presidency. It involved the abandonment of the Geraldine alliance which had worked so well in the past and marked Sidney's acceptance of the insurmountable will of the crown. Sidney himself felt the need to justify his decision and he sent a special messenger to Leicester "in order that you may see the mutability of men and how my opinion is altered for the Desmond and why".<sup>78</sup> By January the choleric Sidney has cooled down somewhat. Setting out upon his Munster circuit, he knighted Desmond's brother John and placed him at the head of a commission of peace within the Desmond lordship; but anticipating the imminent directive from Westminster, he arrested the earl himself outside Kilmallock. Sidney's plans for Munster, like his hopes for Ulster, seemed thus to have ground to a halt.<sup>79</sup>

But suddenly the deputy's fortunes changed. On June 1st Alex MacDonnell landed near Carrickfergus with 1,000 galloglas which he had promised to transfer to Shane O'Neill in return for the release of his hostage brother, Sorley Boy. Shane was confident that an agreement could be reached, but things went badly wrong. There was no junketing and no drunken brawling; but on the second day of negotiations, as the two men talked in an open field with only five bodyguards apiece, MacDonnell suddenly drew a dagger and slashed Shane's throat, "and those five that were with him went not back to tell no tales". The galloglas immediately set upon

the scattered remnants of Shane's army.<sup>80</sup> Unknown to himself, Sidney's chief obligation had been discharged by other men's hands. For this Sidney could claim no direct credit, but he could assert that his own efforts against O'Neill had been indirectly responsible for Shane's last desperate actions. He had served well in the north; but more important, he had grudgingly allowed his own aims elsewhere and the interests of his allies to be systematically over-ridden by the royal will, and so he remained her majesty's fully accredited viceroy when this piece of good fortune fell to him. Thus, by a combination of luck, hard work and sheer acquiescence in defeat, did Sidney's first term end in sudden and unexpected success.

(iii)

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the elimination of Shane O'Neill. The English government's previous failure to subdue him had become a serious international embarrassment - an indication to foreign observers of the essential weakness of the regime.<sup>81</sup> It had become an obsession at Westminster, and all other schemes, Sussex's and Sidney's alike, had been subordinated to it. O'Neill's death, therefore, presented the government with an unprecedented opportunity. For the first time since the beginning of the reign it was given the chance of implementing a general policy of reform in Ireland. The singularity of the situation was not lost upon the privy council. A special sub-committee on Ireland was established and Sidney was instructed to report to it.<sup>82</sup> Equally aware of the sudden revival of his original opportunities, Sidney promptly dispatched an agent with his proposals. His new recom-

mendations amounted to little more than a qualified restatement of his initial aims.<sup>83</sup> He proposed that the Scots be expelled from the north-east through the enterprise of English adventurers or through the efforts of captains recently discharged from the Irish garrison. The intended colonisation, however, was to be limited to the area currently inhabited by the migrant Scots. The captains of the Gaelic Irish who had co-operated in the campaign against O'Neill were to be received by the queen and allowed to resume their lands under English tenure. Sidney wanted the province surveyed and a comprehensive rental drawn up. A resumption of the sovereign's rights as chief lord in the area would, he argued, net a substantial gain in revenue. At this stage, however, Sidney had no intention of destroying the political power of the Irish captains or even the authority of the O'Neills. He recommended that Turlough Luineach, Shane's successor as captain of the O'Neills, be elevated to the peerage and that he be given suzerainty over all the inhabitants of Tyrone. Far from being a threat to the government, Turlough, he believed, would act as an effective means of containment. "To keep the O'Neills from combination nothing can work a better effect than to give Turlough Luineach a charge and superiority over the rest."<sup>84</sup> Turlough would never aspire to Shane's ambitions and his concern for his own uncertain position would make him a firm ally of the government. He would, Sidney believed, welcome and lend support to a president who might be established at Armagh. The continued toleration of Gaelic captaincies, Sidney admitted, was not ideal, but it was the only realistic way to commence the reduction of the province to English order. "So as that which is wished for and cannot be perfected may by preparation be made after to succeed, for that

which no particular prescription can be made by virtue of the diversity of the 'circumstances'.<sup>85</sup> The echoes of Sussex's gradualism were unmistakable.

Initially, Sidney's proposals were well received. Lord Treasurer Winchester, a prominent member of the sub-committee promised to further Sidney's plans in whatever way he could.<sup>86</sup> Secretary Cecil planned to visit Ireland in order to hasten matters.<sup>87</sup> Even Elizabeth forgot her former displeasure and graciously allowed of his request to return home.<sup>88</sup> Such goodwill augured well for Sidney's plans, and he confidently set about making preparations for their imminent execution. He journeyed to assure Turlough of the crown's favour, and hinting strongly that he would be created an earl, secured the captain's agreement to the establishment of a presidential council.<sup>89</sup> He appointed the dean of Armagh, whom he hoped to have made archbishop, to ensure the maintenance of good relations with Turlough and he commissioned Thomas Fleming to undertake the survey for the proposed rental.<sup>90</sup> Sidney made similarly careful preparations in the south. Though Desmond remained under arrest at Dublin, he fully countenanced his countess's efforts to uphold the earl's interests in the lordship. He confirmed and extended Sir John's official powers and he left Warham St. Leger, now established upon his own land within the lordship as an unofficial agent in the province, awaiting the time when he would be officially recognised as president.<sup>91</sup> Sidney, it is clear from his proposals and his preparations, had held fast to Sussex's seminal analysis, and looked to presidencies as the key instruments of social reform in Ireland. The lucky accident of O'Neill's death appeared to have blotted out all the frustrations and disappointments of his first months in Ireland, and

Sidney responded as though he had regained all the opportunities lost since 1565.

But despite his careful preparations, the real attraction of Sidney's proposals continued to rest upon superficial rather than substantive issues. It depended, that is to say, upon his newly won store of prestige at Westminster, and as such it was inherently unstable. Even by the time he had arrived at court, the euphoria that had greeted first reports of Shane's end had subsided. Sidney found himself coldly received and his achievements denigrated.<sup>92</sup> As the aura of victory palled around him, he began to appear once more as a controversial man of faction whose propositions were to be viewed in that light. Elizabeth's intuitive caution revived accordingly, and she began again to systematically dismantle the preparation which the viceroy had made in Ireland for his future programme of reform. On her orders, the lords justices, Fitzwilliam and Weston, dismissed Sir John of Desmond from his commission in Munster, procured his arrest by stealth and despatched him and the earl from Dublin to the tower of London.<sup>93</sup> Again on her instructions, they reversed Sidney's policy in Ulster. Dean Danyell was passed over for the see of Armagh and the bishopric of Down, which Sidney had hoped to restore to Meyler Magrath, was bestowed as a sinecure upon Elizabeth's chaplain, John Merriman.<sup>94</sup> At the same time, they refused Turlough Luineach the de facto recognition as captain which Sidney had allowed him. They censured his use of the title of "O'Neill" and insisted upon his re-submission to the government.<sup>95</sup> Elizabeth also encouraged Turlough's rival, Hugh Mac Neill More, and demanded far harsher treatment for Shane's former supporters than Sidney had intended.<sup>96</sup>

In the midst of these reversals, Sidney was struck down by serious illness.<sup>97</sup> He had suffered grievously from gall-stones during his Irish service, but two months after his return from Ireland, his condition worsened. He was forced to withdraw from court and remained indisposed at Penshurst until he passed a stone "the quantity of a nutmeg". He did not recover from his ordeal until the late spring of 1568. In his absence, the privy council was inundated by a variety of diverse and often mutually exclusive schemes aimed at exploiting the opportunities that seemed to exist in Ireland. Winchester, with his eye upon the purse, wanted the least change possible. The military establishment was to be reduced and the problem of the north was to be solved by generous and loose understandings with the indigenous powers. Colonisation was to be undertaken only with their cooperation. The <sup>Lord</sup> Treasurer was seriously worried by the arrest of Desmond and he wanted him returned home quickly. Kildare, he believed, was a man of great potential service who should be encouraged with favour and appointed to oversee the arrangement of affairs in Ulster.<sup>98</sup> At the other extreme, Vice Chamberlain Knollys agreed with Sidney that the opportunity should be taken to establish an English colony in the north; but, perversely, he wanted an agreement made with the Scots in order to expel the Irish.<sup>99</sup> Even where there was agreement that colonisation should be directed against the Scots, serious differences arose over the extent of the area to be planted and the treatment of the native Irish freeholders and tenants within it. Proposals were made to have the entire area east of the Bann cleared for a thorough English plantation.<sup>100</sup> Some sought to have portions of the coastline and some islands farmed out to them as a fief; and Cecil,<sup>101</sup> on the other hand, paid serious

attention to the moderate propositions of Rowland White, who argued for the integration of English and native settlers in pocketed agricultural colonies.<sup>102</sup> The council, moreover, did not limit its considerations to schemes for Ulster. A plan to farm the fishing of the south and south-east coasts which involved the confiscation of much coastal land in the Desmond lordship, was entertained,<sup>103</sup> and the personal projects of Sir Peter Carew, who laid claim to lands in Munster and Leinster and even in the heart of the English Pale, were given full encouragement.<sup>104</sup> And while the debate over plantations raged, Sidney's plans to establish a new territorial settlement under the aegis of presidential councils disappeared from view.

It was only the rapid deterioration of the situation in Ireland during Sidney's absence that determined the council's decision to recall him to service in the spring of 1568. The removal of Sir John of Desmond had only exacerbated existing centrifugal tendencies within the lordship. A dangerous power-vacuum resulted and Desmond rapidly became a battleground for warring factions. The Butlers, led by Ormond's brothers, took advantage of the rising anarchy by increasing their raids upon Desmond's territories. The lordship grew in danger of total disintegration as a new leader, James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, took it upon himself to defend the Geraldine inheritance from all outside encroachment, feudal and governmental alike.<sup>105</sup> In Ulster, Turlough Luineach, disappointed of Sidney's promises, took matters into his own hands. He made his peace with the Scots, began importing large numbers of mercenaries and formed an alliance with the MacDonnells of the north-east against the government from whom they feared a mutual threat.<sup>106</sup> They were soon joined by O'Donnell,

himself embittered by the lack of favour he had received since the killing of Shane O'Neill.<sup>107</sup> Against these ominous developments the lords justice were powerless to act. With a greatly reduced garrison and an acute shortage of cash, they could only bluster at Turlough's suppression of the lesser Ulster septs and they could not stem the flow of Scots. Their belated attempts to ameliorate the situation failed ignominiously, and by early 1568 they faced a powerful combination of Irish and Scots poised on the brink of outright rebellion.

It was this sudden reappearance of crisis in the north that occasioned Sidney's recall. Once again, the immediate reason of his appointment lay not in the specific appeal of his ideas which more than ever lay buried under competing and confusing propositions, but in the urgent needs of the government: the tension between the long-term ends of the governor and the priorities of his superiors which had vitiated Sidney's first term in office remained. If anything the situation facing the deputy seemed worse. The council's failure to endorse a positive programme was accompanied by an (increased insistence upon economy.) The emphasis of the instructions he received in August 1568 was almost entirely upon financial retrenchment.<sup>108</sup> No grants were to be made without a new survey; rents were to be raised where possible, and entry fines were to be increased. A commission of arrears was to see that all debts were followed up and that all debtors were distrained upon. The garrison was to be maintained at 1,500 men. Sidney was to appoint no more captains until all the pensioners on the civil list were given places of employ.

These injunctions were entirely negative and constricting. No guidance was given to the deputy as to which of the different projects he should favour and which he should reject. The responsibility of fashioning a coherent plan of government out of these scattered ideas and putting it into operation effectively, remained with the deputy. The dangers of Sidney's position were such that it is at first sight difficult to see how he was willing to resume office under these terms. But Sidney had learned from experience. The principle of economy, he knew, was a basic priority of the crown. No governor could survive who was not willing to subordinate himself to it. Equally, the inability of his own particular schemes to win consistent support at Westminster had been made patently clear to him. If he had power, he must accommodate himself to the irreducible realities of his situation. He must shed his factional image by appearing to welcome indiscriminately the offers of all who wished to adventure in Ireland and who had been given license by the crown. Only then would the suspicions that he was motivated by malice and factional interest be dispelled. These were harsh conditions under which to operate. But their demands were greatly mitigated for Sidney by his belief that there was to hand an instrument which would allow him to meet his extraneous commitments and to institute his own chosen policies authoritatively. The means in which Sidney placed so much confidence was a parliament.

Sidney had first sought to reconvene parliament in 1566, but the meagre revenue it then promised was not thought to be worth its potential trouble, and so the idea was shelved.<sup>109</sup> O'Neill's death, however, significantly altered the situation, and before he left Ireland in June 1567, Sidney was instructed to consider possible

proposals for legislation. In 1568, when Sidney's return was again made certain, the Irish council transmitted a large selection of draft bills for the inspection of the deputy and the privy council.<sup>110</sup> The legislative programme they fashioned out of this vast compendium could be divided into two main categories.<sup>111</sup> In the first, were bills of a purely financial nature. Besides the renewal of the subsidy, it was planned to introduce an import duty on wines which would yield an estimated £6,000 each year. It was proposed to gain a revenue through the regulation of certain trades and by controlling the export of certain enumerated goods. These measures were typical of Tudor domestic legislation and were consistent with the main emphasis of Sidney's instructions.

But for Sidney, the most important proposals lay in the second category. "The principal reason that Sir Henry Sidney called a parliament" was, according to Sir John Davies, the attainder of Shane O'Neill.<sup>112</sup> The O'Neill attainder was certainly of major importance. By reasserting the crown's title to the earldom of Ulster, it endowed the government with the right to dispose of a vast territory in whatever way it thought fit. But the renting of Ulster formed only part of Sidney's general plan to reorganise the tenure of land throughout the country. Alongside it were three other bills of confiscation which entitled the crown to large sections of territory in Munster and Leinster. Of wider significance, however, was a bill to turn "those countries that be not yet shire-grounds into shire-grounds ... that Her Majesty's law may have full course . . . throughout the realm."<sup>113</sup> In support of this aim, Sidney selected a series of ancillary measures prohibiting coyne and livery, fosterage and Gaelic forms of arbitration both within shire-grounds and without. Finally, to give order to the major changes thus set

in motion, there was a bill vesting all powers of negotiation and settlement with the Gaelic and gaelicised captains in the hands of the lord deputy and council alone.<sup>114</sup>

None of these bills were original in substance; their real novelty lay in the context within which they were framed. To the crown, Sidney explained the importance of these measures in a manner that made them seem all of a piece with the purely fiscal part of his programme. The leasing of O'Neill's lands in Tyrone, at a mere penny an acre would yield £700 p.a. alone; but in other less conservative estimates, Sidney was prepared to value the entire rental of Ulster at £5,000 p.a.<sup>115</sup> Greater gains could be made elsewhere. The extension of the subsidy to the new shire-grounds would transform that modest income into a handsome £7,500 p.a. Re-grants of lands under royal patents could expect to net an initial lump sum of £2,000, while the new rentals to be acquired thereby, could yield an annual £13,500.<sup>116</sup> By presenting his policy goals in these terms, Sidney paid obeisance to the Tudor insistence upon the primacy of economy; but he none the less exploited it to win support for a scheme which he regarded as (a social and political priority: the establishment of provincial presidencies.) For shiring, the assessment of subsidy and the collection of new rents could be achieved only through the effective extension of the government's executive arm. The importance of presidencies was crucial and the ends to which they were to be directed were clear and simple: they were to realise the gain already inherent in the situation in the provinces. Their establishment was no longer to be seen as a costly exercise or even as an end in itself, but as the completion of a process already set in motion. Presidents were both immediately essential and economic. This emphasis upon

presidencies not simply as instruments of social reform, but as the coping stones to a new financial structure worked its desired effect at Westminster. By the time he left for Ireland, the council had decided to appoint presidents in both Munster and Connaught and the Munster president's instructions were already drafted.<sup>117</sup>

Sidney's success in securing support for his own plans did not, of course, entail the abandonment of the other projects which the council had entertained in the months previous. The council had already endorsed the idea of establishing colonies in Ulster and in Munster in principle, and it was expected that Sidney would lend support to any authorised expedition. Sidney, indeed, had no desire to suppress individual enterprise. The more projects he incorporated into his programme, the greater his basis of support in England and the less vulnerable he became to criticism as the agent of an exclusive faction. Though it might make matters more difficult to control in Ireland, the toleration of a heterogeneous English enterprise greatly buttressed the deputy's position at home. So, just as he bowed to the economic priorities of the crown, Sidney accepted and even encouraged the speculative adventures of others. The attainders and confiscations of his legislative programme offered large scope for colonial experiments in Munster and Ulster, and in practical terms Sidney was anxious that the opportunities on offer should be availed of. He recommended that the propositions of Warham St. Leger and Jerome Brett, which planned to take advantage of the troubled situation in Desmond be accepted by the council;<sup>118</sup> he gave firm support to Sir Peter Carew's efforts in Meath and Idrone, and he authorised Jacques Wingfield to survey those portions of land in Munster "which I would take to farm".<sup>119</sup> In the north he continued the unyielding attitude set by the lords

justice toward O'Neill and the other Ulster chiefs. He made it clear that he no longer felt bound by his earlier understanding with Turlough, and refused to accept him to grace until he had acknowledged the crown's unlimited rights in the province.<sup>120</sup>

Large stretches of Ulster, he suggested to the privy council, might easily be planted by enterprising Englishmen to the profit of the queen and the adventurers alike. At the same time, however, he continued to suggest the advantage of the rental plan he himself had promoted in 1567. "If Her Majesty will not go through with the planting ... I can save her £5,000 a year and have a large rent promised but I will not be bound for payment or counsel that course."<sup>121</sup>

This ambiguity over Ulster was typical of Sidney's revised outlook. In order to maintain his own authority, he was prepared to accommodate any course that had received sanction at Westminster. Thus, while he regarded the winning of rents from the settled population as the best available policy, he was not committed to it to the exclusion of any other approach. He would support limited alternative enterprises so long as they displayed some chance of success and so long as they did not conflict with his own general aims as governor. The character of Sidney's new government, thus, was neither predominantly "tough" nor "soft"; it was essentially eclectic. His was an assumed eclecticism, founded upon his experiences in Ireland in 1566 and at court in 1567; it was designed to give him the greatest possible autonomy and stability in the execution of his own chosen programme.

Sidney's attempt to contain this diverse English enterprise in Ireland within the framework of a single governmental programme was an exceedingly dangerous undertaking. But he made every effort

to minimise his risks. He planned to restore order in Desmond by returning Sir John and by reappointing St. Leger to a position of authority.<sup>122</sup> He wanted Ormond sent home to quell the growing discontent of his brothers, and he sought to placate Kildare by having his long-awaited patent of restoration passed for him.<sup>123</sup> The preamble to the O'Neill attainder expatiated upon the common interests that linked the governor and the old colonial community, and the bill itself contained a provision protecting the right of Anglo-Norman claimants in Ulster.<sup>124</sup> To reduce friction to a minimum, Sidney was even prepared to enter into a dubious victualing contract which promised to ease the burden of supply on the Pale.<sup>125</sup> At the same time he pressed hard for decisive action at Westminster. The rapid establishment of his presidents and other people's projects in Munster and Ulster might scotch the rebellions there before they had time to develop; they might at least prevent a national alliance from taking shape.<sup>126</sup> Even as he took ship, he impressed Cecil and Leicester with the urgency of sending presidents to Munster and Connaught, "for as fast as I shall mend Ulster, they will mar if there be no resident authority". For the north-east he urged the immediate acceptance of a plantation offer, and complained strongly against the council's inability to make up its mind.<sup>127</sup>

But despite his pleadings, his friends at Westminster let him down. Sidney was unlucky in his timing. He left for Ireland as the major problems which had dominated the first decade of Elizabethan domestic politics were about to reach their climax; as Cecil wrote in apology shortly after, "the business of the Scottish queen secludeth all audience from other causes".<sup>128</sup> In this atmosphere Sidney's demands for aid in Ireland seemed to have lost their

urgency. Six months after he had arrived in Ireland nothing had been done to further his plans in Munster. Though Ormond had indeed been instructed to return to Ireland, the earl was allowed dally at court, leaving his family's response to the activities of Sir Peter Carew in the hands of his more volatile and less politically responsible brothers.<sup>129</sup> Sir John of Desmond remained in the Tower, and Sidney's failure to secure his release was exploited by Fitzmaurice to increase his hold over the Munster Geraldines. It was, he declared, a sign of Sidney's fundamental impotence. The deputy was no longer able to defend the Geraldines and had come only to do Ormond's bidding in the province.<sup>130</sup> His appeal transformed Fitzmaurice from a mere contender for power within the lordship into a leader of a united Geraldine revolt.<sup>131</sup> And as this occurred, Sidney remained yet without his greatest single need: a president in Munster. Cecil's inadvertent submission of an unrealistically low estimate of costs to the queen had lost valuable time. She stuck fast to it, and the first presidential nominee refused to serve under such conditions. A second candidate was found, but by the time Elizabeth was persuaded to consent to a more liberal budget, he was dead.<sup>132</sup> After this run of luck the privy council grew despondent. Not until November 1570 was the idea again revived.<sup>133</sup> By the time a president actually arrived in Munster, Sidney's recall had already been determined. ①

The same indecision crippled Sidney's plans for the north. Despite the amount of time expended upon their consideration, the privy council balked at giving definite sanction to any of the colonial projects submitted; but neither would it give any ruling upon the plan for large-scale renting within the province which

Sidney continued to promote. This governmental diffidence over Ulster was fatal: Turlough Luineach, unimpressed by Sidney's hardened attitude, continued to import Scots and to enforce his will upon the lesser lords of the province, ensuring himself against any onslaught that might be made upon him in the future.<sup>134</sup> Finally, in the Pale parliament met amidst the tension generated by Carew's claims against the popular "commonwealthman", Sir Christopher Cheevers, and opposition proved to be far greater than Sidney had anticipated.<sup>135</sup> The value of his financial proposals was whittled away, and his attempts to rush through his tenurial legislation were blocked by the introduction of a host of private and commonwealth bills. Outside parliament there was further trouble. The victualling contract collapsed almost immediately, through inadequate financing from Westminster, and Sidney was forced to cess his troops in the country.<sup>136</sup> The country resisted: Dublin city refused to meet the rate, and Sidney arrested the mayor. "I fear my lord deputy and the people here are altered in disposition of misliking far from that I have known", wrote Sir Nicholas White.<sup>137</sup> There was worse to come. At the end of the first parliamentary session Sir Edmund Butler, whose opposition in the commons had already brought him into conflict with the deputy, quit Dublin altogether to join his brethren. By June, the Butlers were "out" in open alliance with the Geraldines.<sup>138</sup>

The unprecedented union of these immemorial enemies transmitted a shock of panic to Westminster which at last provoked the councillors into action. Sidney finally received the extra men and munitions he had long requested. But this new spurt of energy was made only in response to sudden emergency. There was no further decision upon presidents or upon colonial enterprises. In the

meantime, Sidney had to make do. He himself took responsibility for containing Turlough Luineach in the north and he appointed Humphrey Gilbert as colonel in Munster with full authority to suppress the rebellion there.<sup>139</sup> He abandoned all hope of establishing a peaceful tenurial reorganisation and recommended that the opportunity be seized to launch a full-scale confiscation. "Your Highness hath land here in good store", he told Elizabeth, "but there want good people to inhabit it". If the queen would be answered for her newly gained territories, she "must send people to occupy them". He suggested that Gilbert and his men be paid off with some of the lands they had won in Munster.<sup>140</sup>

But with his original programme already in tatters, Sidney lacked the influence to gain a favourable response from the privy council for the radical alternative he now proffered. A long campaign would be too expensive and its outcome too uncertain to gain its assent. In any case, a more persuasive interpretation of the causes and aims of the rebellion was already being advanced by Sidney's most influential Irish critic, the earl of Ormond. The spread of the rebellion and its duration, Ormond argued, was due entirely to Sidney.<sup>141</sup> His failure to curb the Geraldine dissidents, his indiscriminate support of plantation schemes and his harsh proceedings against the crown's loyal subjects in Munster were sufficient to incite reaction. Having once provoked the crisis, Sidney failed to take the conciliatory steps which would have most easily resolved it. Instead, he had pursued a policy of exploitation which had unnecessarily prolonged the war. Ormond's views were not in themselves as weighty as they might have been under different circumstances. Elizabeth was angry with the Butlers, and she promised Sidney full support in pursuing them to an

unconditional surrender. The argument that Sidney's military policy was unnecessary became decisive only when it became apparent that the costs it involved were far too high.

The price of repression was indeed enormous. To meet the rebellion in Munster, the privy council was forced to transport 600 fully equipped men from England. The reinforcements proved effective, but by the time of their discharge early in 1571, they had cost the crown some £7,300.<sup>142</sup> To quell the Butlers and to defend the Pale against the incursions of Turlough Luineach, Sidney was forced to forego his promise of an early reduction in garrison strength and to maintain an establishment of over 2,000 men. Its annual charge ran to almost £40,000.<sup>143</sup> By March 1571, the crown had spent some £148,000 since Sidney's return to Ireland in 1568 and there were still some £73,000 in debts outstanding.<sup>144</sup> On top of all this, the auditors report upon Fitzwilliam's massive ten year account, which Sidney had long delayed, came out finally in the summer of 1570. Its disclosures were appalling. For the decade ending June 1569, the costs of administration had amounted to £348,000, almost 90% of which had been met out of the English treasury.<sup>145</sup> The bulk of this expenditure had occurred during Sidney's period in office and the increase in Irish revenues during that time had been marginal. The conclusion was inescapable: Sidney's practice of government was intolerably prodigal. And once this understanding had been acquired his recall became almost inevitable. The decision, however, was deferred until the rebellion in Munster had been satisfactorily suppressed. But Sidney himself, exhausted by his efforts and disgusted by the lack of support he had received in his attempts to implement his programme, was anxious to be rid of office. He pressed repeatedly

for his recall, and when at last he returned to court in the spring of 1571, he was icily received. "Melius merui", he concluded.<sup>146</sup>

(iv)

Sidney's second term in office marked a decisive turning-point in his attitude towards service in Ireland. Sir Nicholas White's insight was acute: Sidney's relations with the queen's Irish subjects had altered significantly. Sidney himself agreed. He no longer felt optimistic about the possibility of winning the ordinary people to English ways. Everyone in Ireland, he feigned to believe, was irretrievably estranged from English government and confirmed in a subversive papistry. He could conceive of no policy that would reduce them to order and obedience.<sup>147</sup> Back in England he renounced all interest in dealing further with matters of Ireland, and urged his patron Leicester to leave him free from all future entanglements.<sup>148</sup> He sought alternative service as Elizabeth's ambassador to the Spanish Netherlands.<sup>149</sup> Sidney's deep disillusion is understandable. The attempt to maintain a varied set of policies within the framework of a single, centralised programme of reform had not only failed, it had proved disastrous. As chief governor he had been failed on all sides. In responding to Sidney's return to Ireland, the Gaelic and Anglo-Norman leaders had made no distinction between the programme of social and tenurial reform which he had regarded as central and the peripheral private enterprises which he had been prepared to tolerate. His own careful social and political arrangements appeared to be all of a piece with the blatantly exploitative adventures in one general conspiracy to reconquer the land by force. They reacted against both

with equal ferocity. At Westminster his own friends had deserted him by failing to authorise any of the projects they had forced upon him, or even by supplying the means by which his legislative enactments might be given practical application. One lesson seemed clear: the attempt to implement any general programme of reform from the centre of power which both he and Sussex had variously essayed was, like the attempt at a thorough conquest, simply impracticable.

The chief casualty of this failure of the central government was the traditional conception of the presidency. In the explosion that followed upon Sidney's attempt to impose his patch-work programme, all hope of establishing conventional presidential councils in the provinces evaporated and a new hybrid institution began to emerge. Sidney, like most who reflected upon Irish policy, regarded the common law as the chief medium of social reform within the country and looked to the presidency as the means by which the law was to be planted and maintained in the outlying provinces. From the beginning the presidency was to be an organ of civil administration; the commission of oyer et determiner was to be its vehicle of operation. Initially, it was expected that the president himself would of necessity be a martial man, but he was to be accompanied by two civilian counsellors and was required to consult with the chief landholders of the area when sitting in judgement.<sup>150</sup> In theory the president's main responsibility was to be the enforcement of a civil code; in practice, however, it became something quite different.

The first official sent by Sidney into Munster in 1569 was not, as he had hoped, a president, but the colonel of a military expedition, whose task was entirely military and whose instructions

bore little relation to the civil responsibilities of the classical presidency. Humphrey Gilbert ruled not by common law and scarcely by law at all, but by ruthless coercion.<sup>151</sup> In Connaught, where late in 1569, Sidney actually succeeded in having a conventional presidency established, the results were bitterly disappointing. The new president, Sir Edward Fitton, began immediately to enact his duties in strict accordance with the theory. He held sessions throughout Galway and executed all manner of malefactors and idlemen. He rode roughshod over the local customs, commanded the booking of the entire population and ordered the abolition of unreformed religious practices.<sup>152</sup> Fitton made it clear that he would not be bound by traditional forms of influence and patronage. He adopted a deliberately cool attitude towards the earl of Clanrickard and gave open countenance to the earl's known enemies. Fitton's impolitic proceedings greatly inflamed tempers within Clanrickard, but when he attempted to pursue the same tactics amongst the O'Brien's in the far more unstable lordship of Thomond, he encountered insurmountable opposition. Thomond refused either to meet him or to grant him supplies; and Fitton was unable to force him.<sup>153</sup>

This simple act of defiance immediately exposed the president's fundamental impotence, and the discontent which had spread throughout Connaught since his arrival in the province now exploded. Though there were few instances of outright resistance, Fitton's attempts to proceed with his operations were crippled by a general refusal of the countryside to feed his meagre retinue. Forced to rely on the townsmen, he withdrew first to Galway and then to Athlone, and impotently watched his office melt away as his men gradually deserted for want of food and clothing.<sup>154</sup>

Fitton drew stark lessons from his experience.<sup>155</sup> The conventional presidency, he came to believe, was wholly unsuited to the Irish situation. English law was neither respected nor understood by the people, and its palpable weakness in the face of resistance had only brought it into further disrepute. The president claimed to have levied some £9,000 in fines and recognizances, but had failed to collect any; his efforts to do so had simply aroused derision. English law, Fitton argued, would never be effective in Ireland until it had sufficient military support to enforce its authority. "It is not our mere will that will make them yield ... power is the thing that must bridle them".<sup>156</sup> Fitton's chief justice, Ralph Rokeby, echoed his opinion. The natives, Rokeby believed, would never be weaned to English law and government by "leniety and gentleness": "It is not the mace nor the name of a lord president and council that will frame them to obedience. It must be fire and sword, the rod of God's vengeance that must make these stubborn hearts and cankered hearts to yield for fear".<sup>157</sup> Fitton estimated that a force of at least 300 men would be necessary to serve the presidents needs.

There was something of a paradox here. The problem of supply had already crippled Fitton's small presidential retinue. He could reasonably expect no increased support from the central government. So how was this vastly increased force to be maintained? To this conundrum, the president advanced a remarkably simple solution. A larger force, he suggested, would lead to a more equitable distribution of the burden of supply both socially and geographically. It could be disposed throughout the province in such numbers as the president now maintained with him in any one area, but the powerful landholders, who had hitherto resisted all demands with

impunity, could now be compelled to assume their share of supply by the threat that the entire presidential force might be brought to bear against them. A big establishment would thus solve its own supply problem while enabling the president to enforce his decisions authoritatively.<sup>158</sup>

While the Connaught president was formulating this argument in rather straitened circumstances at Athlone, something very similar had already been put into practice by Colonel Gilbert in Munster. For Gilbert the problem of billeting a large force upon the countryside had been a necessity from the beginning. Faced with both a problem of supply and the danger of alienating large numbers by his exactions, Gilbert attempted to overcome both problems at once, simply by regarding a willingness to grant provisions as a declaration of loyalty. In doing so, he converted a mere logistic expedient into a general policy of government. The yielding of purveyance was held to imply a de facto assertion of allegiance to the crown, and Gilbert for all practical purposes, was willing to respond to it as such and to offer his protection in return. He exploited, that is to say, coyne and livery in the most traditional and familiar fashion. Fresh from his successes in Munster, Gilbert pressed the lessons of his own experience upon the council.<sup>160</sup> He described at length the kind of man who would operate most successfully as the agent of the crown in the outlying regions. The new style president was not to be obstructed by legal scruples. He should be severe and ruthless in the enforcement of his own will and yet honest and consistent in his dealings with the native inhabitants: "for though he once betray his faith they will never afterward trust him". He must also treat the natives with courtesy and respect:

"for they are naturally the proudest and disdainfullest people that live". But he must be adamant in his decisions. Mercy once refused was never again to be offered. Justice and the form it took was to be exercised at his discretion. Allegiance was to be exacted personally - even spectacularly - and was to be maintained in the most traditional of ways: coyne and livery. In short, the presidents were to transform themselves into a faithful image of the most successful surviving species of their environment: the Anglo-Norman feudal magnates.

It is probable that Sidney was aware of these developments in the provinces; he certainly had access to information from both Fitton and Gilbert. But their individual experiences hardly seemed relevant from his particular perspective. On the contrary, they seemed to point to a further disintegration rather than a consolidation of the central governor's authority. The first real synthesis of the lessons of 1568-71, for both presidents and governor alike, was produced instead by an unknown and relatively lowly figure, Edmund Tremayne. Tremayne had been sent to Ireland in July 1569 to report to the council upon the joint Butler-Geraldine rebellion which had just broken out. His account of Sidney's proceedings was highly favourable and he seems to have served for a time as the deputy's private secretary. He returned to England with Sidney in the spring of 1571. But he retained a keen interest in the affairs of the western realm thereafter.<sup>161</sup> He was sent again to Ireland as a special agent in 1573 and between 1571 and 1575, he penned a series of "advices" upon the reform of Irish government. By the end of 1571, however, Tremayne's fundamental ideas had already been clearly worked out.<sup>162</sup>

His review of recent Irish policy was both critical and constructive. The attempt to employ English law alone, as the singular weapon of reform in Ireland was, he maintained, doomed from the start. Irish modes of government left the magnates "so absolute in their authority, so licentious and gainful, as whosoever should be suffered to rule after this sort will never rule after the English manner".<sup>163</sup> In comparison to their current situation, the common law had little to offer the great lords and they would continue to resist its introduction until they were compelled by other means to accept it.

Yet, though the failure of peaceful attempts at anglicisation was obvious, the traditional means of coercion were also clearly inadequate. The history of the Anglo-Normans gave a salutary warning. A renewed conquest no matter how forceful its original impetus, would soon be contaminated by the Gaelic order and would shortly decay, for "the sweetness and gain of the Irish government hath been such that it hath rather drawn our own nation to become Irish than any way wrought the reformation of the Irish to reduce them to English law".<sup>164</sup> The recent experiments in colonial enterprise had also proved unworkable. "None will come from hence but such as have nothing to begin with, and such doing no good at home and getting no thrift at home will never do any good here".<sup>165</sup> Rumours of such enterprises had only provoked the rebellions of 1569-1571; they would have the same effect in the future. "Few will inhabit there but we shall demand more men in wages to keep it than we shall pay in rent".<sup>166</sup> In any case, like the Anglo-Norman settlements, the new colonies would soon decay, "and within less than a descent become as Irish as the worst".<sup>167</sup> No, Tremayne concluded, the only way to reduce Ireland into a peaceful and

obedient realm was the way of conciliation. "The Irish government is never to be reformed till the common law have its course".<sup>168</sup>

But how, given the experience of 1569-1571, was this to be done, Tremayne's answer was as simple as it was ingenious. [ The key to the magnates' strength lay in their uncontested exercise of their traditional powers of "coyne and livery". ] This extensive system of obligations enabled the lords to maintain large private armies which effectively guaranteed their own privileged position by intimidating the countrymen into providing for all their needs. These private armies provided the basis of a massive and deeply rooted system of oppression against which English law alone could offer little resistance. The only way in which the crown might overcome the challenge of the great lords was to beat them at their own game. What the queen needed, that is , was "an army so great that she may say she will (have) no army but her own, her ... sword shall stunt all strife and her will shall determine all causes, and therefore all lords and rulers of countries to give over all (their) forces".<sup>169</sup> [ The strategy of this grand expeditionary force was simple: it would operate through intimidation, not through overt violence. ] Divided amongst the governor and three presidents, the army would proceed into the provinces and secure the assent of the great magnates to a number of key conditions. They were to be brought "to declare the limits of their tenantry and who be their tenants ... and that known, then might such a composition be made by the good allowance of the same lords that there should certainly be known what they should receive and what the tenants should pay". These composition arrangements, Tremayne submitted, should be generous and impartial. Care was to be taken that the lords be genuinely compensated for and powers they were to

surrender. As much as possible was to be done to ensure their peaceful acquiescence in the scheme.<sup>170</sup>

There was, however, to be one further condition included in the proposals made to the magnates which was designed to guarantee their compliance. The great lords were to yield to the officers of the crown the same services they were accustomed to exact upon their inferiors. They were to give "coisire", or purveyance, or cess to the troops of the grand army. Like Fitton and Gilbert, Tremayne argued that the very size of the army would be sufficient to procure its own means of sustenance. But the ends of these tactics, he was anxious to point out, were not primarily exploitative. "This is not to oppress the good subjects, but rather to protect them from evil".<sup>171</sup> The country, which was already sorely burdened with the extortions of the magnate's retainers and galloglas, would readily embrace the far lighter demands of the English army. Even then, its use as a tactic was to be limited in time and in scope. "The army I mean (is) not so much for holding them in obedience as to wring them thereby so hard, as for their ease they should desire to be loosed by some composition to remove the garrison. And the composition won - partly in money and partly in provision as the country will bear - will grow to such a sufficient revenue as I suppose will find in garrison a sufficient army to keep this realm in continual obedience".<sup>172</sup> The great lords, that is, were to secure a commutation of coyne and livery from the crown in just the same way as their tenants had received it from them.

This, it might seem, was nothing more than Fitton's ideas writ large. But Tremayne was insistent that his scheme be launched on a national scale and not simply left to the discretion of semi-autonomous local officials. It was imperative that the queen be

seen to give her willing approbation to the plan as a new national policy: "As Her Majesty is the natural liege sovereign of both realms, so should there be made no difference of subjects so far forth as both shall show like obedience to her causes".<sup>173</sup> It was important also to secure in advance the cooperation of the earls of Ormond and Kildare who were to use their great influence in propagating the scheme amongst their dependents. Finally, a centralised approach was to be preferred for purely tactical reasons. The scheme was to be first introduced in the English Pale where cess was already in operation and where a demand for a financial commutation had already been voiced. The successful conclusion of a composition here would secure an immediate increase in revenue, and the crown's initial outlay in fitting out the grand army would already begin to be recouped. More important, the success of the plan in the Pale would act as an example to the other provinces of the benefits to be derived from compliance. A sort of domino reaction would be precipitated, and one by one the provinces would gradually follow suit.<sup>174</sup>

The composition scheme seemed comprehensive in its uses. It appeared to provide a means of implementing permanent social and legal arrangements rapidly and on a general scale. It promised to do so, moreover, with the minimum cost to the crown and with the promise of a handsome return. Most important of all, its very adaptation of the prevailing mode of politics in the gaelicised areas seemed to guarantee its continued success. "Composition for cess" augured well, because it seemed to transform necessity into virtue.

The general idea of "composition", of course, did not originate with Tremayne. The commutation of feudal dues and the transformation of the royal prerogative of purveyance into a fixed cash payment had for long been proposed and applied in England itself. But the peculiar synthesis of these policies and their special application for Ireland devised by Tremayne none the less marked a crucial stage in the evolution of Tudor experience of Ireland. The lesson that English laws and customs would never be introduced peacefully and easily into the country had now been fully absorbed. It was clear that some expense and some concession to local modes of conduct would have to be consented to before any progress would be made. Yet the new plan retained many of the most attractive characteristics of the old optimistic prognostications that had encouraged Sussex and, for a while, Sidney. Here was a strategy whose costs were limited and could be clearly assessed at the outset. It was, moreover, one which divided naturally into two distinct phases: a primary phase in which the most crucial and most dramatic work of enforcement was to take place, and a longer more mundane period in which the recently contracted obligations were to be refined and maintained. It was, as Tremayne echoing Sussex argued, a strategy which demanded only "a set purpose" on the part of the crown to ensure its success, and promised great glory to the man who would initiate it.<sup>175</sup> Here in form, if not in substance, was the classic programmatic approach, which Sussex had enunciated and which appeared to have collapsed under Sidney, alive again. Thus, when Tremayne actually presented his ideas to Sidney, it is not surprising that the former deputy, notwithstanding several recent refusals to return to Ireland, began again to campaign for reappointment in 1572.<sup>176</sup>

Under different circumstances the attractions of the new strategy might have been sufficient to bring Sidney back to power. But in the early 1570s the standard of competition was more exacting than ever. Elizabeth, too, had been shaken by the crisis of 1569-71, and had drawn her own lessons from the experience. She resolved never again to tolerate a comparable expenditure of royal treasure in Ireland. The country's affairs were henceforth to be administered with the minimum cost and with the least possible recourse to Westminster. In this forbidding atmosphere, two alternative strategies had emerged both of which paid more respect to the queen's fiscal conservatism than Sidney's novel propositions. One was that of the new lord deputy, Fitzwilliam, who attempted to cut public expenditure to the bone while working towards private settlements in Leix-Offaly and Clanrickard and for the victualling of the garrison in the Pale.<sup>177</sup> The second was that of the enterprising earl of Essex who gained acceptance for his colonisation project in Ulster simply by undertaking to absorb most of its costs himself and to begin paying a rent to the crown within two years.<sup>178</sup> Both methods had their own internal weaknesses and tended to come into conflict with one another. But they co-existed with mounting tension throughout the early 1570s and jointly, through their mutual recriminations and self-justifications, clouded Sidney's field of opportunity.

Sidney did his best to clear the way. He used his special influence as an authority on Irish affairs to criticise Fitzwilliam's administration and eventually succeeded in having a set of serious allegations brought against his much aggrieved brother-in-law.<sup>179</sup> He obtained and exposed confidential information about the administration's poor financial performance.<sup>180</sup> He promoted false

rumour about his own imminent reappointment in order to undermine the deputy's power of command.<sup>181</sup> Such a campaign against Fitzwilliam was easy enough to sustain. The deputy's approach was inherently prone to breakdown, and by the end of 1573, with renewed outbreaks of rebellion in Clanrickard, Desmond and Ulster, the point of collapse seemed imminent. The querulous Fitzwilliam unwittingly contributed to Sidney's campaign. He quarrelled violently with Fitton and Essex, and he was not above sending pungent and offensive exonerations of his own conduct to the council, and on occasion to the queen herself. By the summer of 1574, angered by slanders and frustrated by lack of support, Fitzwilliam was more than anxious for his own recall.<sup>182</sup>

The campaign to undermine Essex, however, was less easy. Essex's offer was attractive, and the earl was more influential and less vulnerable to criticism than the unfortunate Fitzwilliam. Again, Sidney used his authority to advise against the extensive powers of autonomy Essex sought in Ulster and succeeded in having them curtailed.<sup>183</sup> He seems to have participated in Leicester's furtive efforts to have the whole enterprise quashed, and Essex was certain that the two were responsible for the queen's decision not to appoint him deputy in place of Fitzwilliam once the latter's revocation had been determined.<sup>184</sup> But despite all the doubts cast upon Essex's personal competence, his limited, but concrete offers remained more immediately attractive than the general propositions outlined by Sidney. After two years, Essex promised, the Ulster plantation would begin to yield an annual rental of £5,000 which would soon recoup any outlays the crown was prepared to make in its support.<sup>185</sup> On the face of it, Essex's offer seemed difficult to surpass.

Neither Tremayne nor Sidney had been prepared at the outset to supply a precise estimate of the costs of their intended operation or the time necessary to give it effect. Rumour had it that Sidney would need 10,000 men for his purpose, and Fitzwilliam was certain that the proposed scale of operations was far too grandiose to gain acceptance at Westminster.<sup>186</sup> Even Sidney's first competitive tender, which projected a minimum force of 2,300 men costing £30,000 for an unstated period of time, contrasted poorly with Essex's simple offer.<sup>187</sup> The council's attitude in comparing the alternative schemes was summed up by Burghley: "note by this (Sidney's scheme) no territory is won and by the former both territory and subjects are".<sup>188</sup> It was the need to supercede Essex's highly competitive offer that forced Sidney to make final amendments to his already dangerously simplified plan. His revised proposal, shorn of the careful qualifications that had characterised Tremayne's presentation, was terse and to the point. Like a victualler bargaining for his contract, Sidney promised Elizabeth to render Ireland entirely self-sufficient within three years for a total of just £60,000.<sup>189</sup>

Sidney achieved this reduction of time and costs in his typical way. The number of troops required was cut to a mere 1,100. These were to be divided evenly amongst three presidents, leaving a task force of 350 with the deputy. The men were to be paid in English sterling as the favourable exchange rate would grant them an automatic discount on all goods purchased in Ireland. Payment was to be made monthly so that the cess prices could be met on demand. Mounting indebtedness would thereby be prevented and a stable relationship maintained between the queen's price and the market. The £60,000 required was to be paid over to the deputy in twelve instalments of £5,000 each to be sent at regular intervals.

Any extraordinary expenses were to be met from these instalments alone, and Sidney hinted that even the amount fixed would begin to grow superfluous to his costs after the first year.<sup>190</sup>

This drastic simplification of Tremayne's plan was as dangerous as it was characteristic. It was prompted by no concern to improve the substance of the plan, but only by a desire to enhance his appeal at court. It was a move that was at once essential to the political competition in which he was continually engaged, and totally irrelevant to the demands of the situation in Ireland. As ever, it exposed him to risks which Sidney had always seemed willing to assume. It provided his enemies with the easiest possible measure by which to gauge his performance, quarter by quarter; and worse, the terms of his "contract" made the success of his service more than ever dependent upon the vagaries of Westminster. But the appeal of the new programme both to the man who was to implement it and to the government which was to reap its benefits was undeniable. Sidney's appointment was finalised in July 1575, and in August his instructions, drafted in close accord with the terms of his offer, were presented to him. Sidney was promised the imminent appointment of two new presidents and the chancellorship, vacant since 1573, was to be filled by one of his own colleagues on the council in Wales, William Gerrard. As a concession, the earl of Essex was to be allowed remain in Ulster as president under the authority of the deputy.<sup>191</sup>

(v)

Sidney landed at Drogheda on September 8, and immediately began to put his plan into operation. Representatives of the gentry and merchants of the Pale were summoned and informed of the proportion of cess which the deputy deemed necessary for the supply of the army in the coming year. The government, he told his audience, was no longer able to bear the major portion of the victualling, as it had done in recent years; the community would henceforth be obliged to increase its contribution. The estimated requirement was enormous:<sup>192</sup>

<u>Wheat</u>	<u>Beer Malt</u>	<u>Oat Malt</u>	<u>Oats</u>	<u>Beeves</u>
6,200 pks.	4,500 pks.	9,000 pks.	13,300 pks.	3,500

The Palesmen made the expected response and Sidney followed through with his alternative proposal. If the Palesmen would accede to the abolition of all personal exemptions and agree to the conversion of cess into a low monetary tax, he would undertake to abolish the practice of cessing altogether. This was a finely calculated bluff. Tremayne had argued that the burden of the cess had been artificially inflated both by the corruption of the cessors, and by the large number of exemptions, or "freedoms", given to private persons by governors in the past. Both abuses could now be corrected at once. The "new freedoms" which had been acquired under a statute of 27 Henry VIII and reaffirmed by the parliament of 1557, allowed that those bound to attend hostings were discharged "from all coyne and livery and of carting and cartages" which would otherwise be assessed upon their lands.<sup>193</sup> Since service at hostings, however, applied to those with land valued at above £20 p.a., and since only those with considerable wealth and influence could acquire the inquisition

and certification necessary to gain exemption, it was clear that these freedoms were the preserve of a privileged elite.<sup>194</sup> The existing resentment of the majority could easily be channeled against this group by Sidney's simple argument: if the burden were more equitably distributed, it would be lighter all round. There was a further inducement: since the cess now demanded amounted to a charge of over £9 on the ploughland, and since other cesses in times of scarcity had been almost as high, Sidney's offer to commute all charges for a fixed cash payment of a mere £2.13.4 per ploughland seemed generous in the extreme.<sup>195</sup> These attractions were enough to convince Sidney that he could rely upon the support of "the major and wiser sort", and he set out upon his provincial circuit in full confidence that an agreement could be reached.<sup>196</sup>

But Sidney had chosen an unlucky time. Bad harvests in two successive years had been followed by a visitation of plague that crippled economic activity.<sup>197</sup> Only some of the delegates appointed to meet him actually risked the journey to Drogheda, and the unrepresentative nature of the meeting augured ill for the success of Sidney's plan. In his absence the country simply refused the proposed cess, and Sidney, now genuinely anxious to secure a winter's supply, cut his demands in half.<sup>197</sup> This concession, however, only underlined the artificiality of the earlier assessment and lent further support to the popular suspicion that the cess had been inflated only to coerce the Palesmen into making an agreement against their better interests.

Since his appointment, doubts had been expressed in Ireland about the assumptions underlying Sidney's government. Nicholas White was uncertain about "this rule by composition", and he warned Burghley that if Sidney had, as was rumoured, undertaken the govern-

ment of Ireland on the basis of a private contract, he could expect little support from the community.<sup>199</sup> Now the crudity of Sidney's attempt at blackmail tended to confirm the Palesmen in their fears and they reacted sharply against him. Within weeks the potential support Sidney believed existed had evaporated and a solid front of opposition began to form against him. It became impossible to collect even the moderate cess he had settled for. Tension between the ordinary soldiers and the countrymen increased. Those with freedoms simply ignored the proclamation abolishing them and the leading gentry circulated a petition seeking the right to present their grievances to the crown.<sup>200</sup>

Crisis was reached in the autumn of 1577, when the Palesmen refused either to yield another cess or to consider an offer of composition, but demanded to be allowed send agents to present their case at court.<sup>201</sup> Sidney ignored the request, but he could not discount the widespread disregard of his proclamations ordering the abolition of the freedoms and the collection of cess. The matter had now become essential not only to the success of his scheme, but to his continued authority as governor. As winter approached, however, the Palesmen dug in their heels. In a number of meetings held with the governor before Christmas, they remained fixed in their determination to resist a financial commutation. Sidney, they alleged, was attempting to forge a major change in the relations between the queen and her subjects by this ruse, and had had recourse to coercive methods because there was no legal or constitutional justification for the action he sought to undertake. They would not yield under the threat of force to some innovation which might yet become a greater burden upon their posterity. They offered, however, to find an alternative

means of easing the government's supply difficulties.<sup>202</sup>

For Sidney, of course, any alternative to his own composition scheme was totally unacceptable, but Chancellor Gerrard was perturbed by the Palesmen's arguments. Though he insisted that Sidney was acting within his rights as the representative of the sovereign, he was nevertheless anxious to reach a practical compromise. He asked that the cess now demanded be granted in cash or in kind and in return promised to persuade the deputy to agree "that hereafter no cess should be imposed but by parliament or grand council or by direction from Her Highness ". At the same time, he welcomed the Palesmen's attempts to find an alternative means of supply and assured them that he would further any truly workable plan.<sup>203</sup> Already, therefore, a fundamental difference existed between the chancellor who sought to discover some mutually satisfactory way of victualling the garrison, and the deputy for whom the enforcement of the original scheme was an essential prerequisite to the success of his national programme of composition. For the moment, however, the cleavage remained obscure. The Palesmen rejected Gerrard's overtures and their agents, Barnaby Scurlock, Richard Netterville and Henry Burnell, left for England without license in February 1577.<sup>204</sup>

To travel to court without license upon a mission that challenged the official interpretation of the queen's prerogative and, worse, her claim to her subject's wealth, was a perilous undertaking at any time. But the agents' audacity is an indication of their confidence in the strength of their case. The climate at court was unusually favourable. The Palesmen could count on the support of the earls of Ormond and Kildare, now resident there. They could count too on the unnerving effect which trouble in the

English Pale always produced upon the privy council. Burghley, informed by the unsympathetic White, remained cool towards Sidney's proceedings, and even Walsingham, from whom Sidney expected full support, advised caution.<sup>205</sup> But these were minor advantages: the greatest blow to Sidney's credibility in the eyes of his superiors was dealt in Ireland even before the agents set sail.

Sidney had set about the reorganisation of the provinces with great optimism and energy. This time there were no initial frustrations. The presidents had arrived on schedule, and the death of Essex in <sup>c.B.</sup>September 1576 allowed Sidney to assume personal responsibility for the most delicate operation in Ulster. On the surface, progress was rapid. Sidney negotiated his composition arrangements with the greater and lesser lords of each province and obtained assurances that they would obey the newly established presidents. By the autumn of 1576, he had *to a med.* the entire country and could boast that even the most lawless area of Connaught would bear their own charges within two years.<sup>206</sup> Almost immediately, however, the deputy was confounded by an outburst of resistance that spread rapidly throughout the provinces. In his haste towards success, Sidney had fatally damaged the delicate mechanism upon which the plan of general composition was planned to function.

The success of composition, according to Tremayne, depended upon the careful use of persuasion backed up by force. A sufficient desire for change, he believed, existed within the lordships to allow a peaceful adaptation to presidential rule if the matter was handled carefully. Though the threat of force was to be used at the outset to gain a hearing from the new proposals, it was imperative that any suspicion of long-term exploitation be

assuaged.<sup>207</sup> Tremayne's concern that the crown be seen to be impartial and benign was founded upon the experience of 1569-71. Sidney shared the experience, but he did not absorb all its lessons. His attachment to composition was the same as to any other programme of reform he had attempted in the past: he accepted it as a practical means of implementing a conclusive settlement which would bring him the glory of having pacified Ireland. As with his earlier espousals, his selection of composition was founded on no ideological commitment, but on a cool assessment of the strategic possibilities open to him. His attitude towards Ulster was again a touchstone. There, despite the hard-won successes of his composition negotiations, he was still willing to welcome an enterprise akin to Essex's if it might be deemed to have some chance of success.<sup>208</sup> As governor in Ireland, Sidney was committed in principle, neither to coercion nor to conciliation, but merely to efficiency. Whatever plan of reform he adopted, Sidney was primarily concerned that it should appear to be effective. His programme should be seen to be in operation; the terms of his contract should appear to be honoured. Accordingly, Sidney approached the composition plan with an eye for those characteristics which would give the earliest indication that his work was actually yielding results. And in terms of the composition, the only way he could demonstrate an early success was to show an immediate return on investment. Thus the financial arrangements took paramount place in all the negotiations he undertook, and the immediate yielding of tribute was understood to be an essential condition to any further agreement. Besides demanding the annual rents which the original plan envisaged, Sidney made it clear that he would hold the freeholders liable for arrears on any religious

properties occupied by them, and to make the point, he commissioned the first general survey of monastic sites in Munster and Connaught.<sup>209</sup>

The early presidents, it is true, had successfully fused their political and economic aims, but the crisis within which they had worked had been particularly suitable for such hurried improvisations, and their impact, in any case, had been localised and temporary. Sidney's scheme, on the other hand, was both general and permanent in its application, and it was deliberately imposed. The exploitative image, which Tremayne had sought to avoid by concentrating responsibility for the plan in the hands of a central governor rather than in semi-autonomous presidents, reappeared, now made all the more sinister by its apparent authority. In these circumstances, a breach in understanding arose between Sidney and those with whom he attempted to negotiate. Throughout the country a rumour became current: Sidney, it said, had come to take the land to farm.<sup>210</sup> This general distrust imposed a mounting strain on the delicate chain of compositions which Sidney had forged. Thus, when the earl of Clanrickard's sons burst out in rebellion, Sidney found himself confronted with the imminent collapse of his scheme.

Significantly, Clanrickard's attempt to justify his sons' actions was based entirely on economic grounds. Sidney, he claimed, had rejected the equitable fine which Fitzwilliam had placed upon his country for the spoil of Athenry and imposed an enormous demand of £6,000 in cash. He had charged the earl and his immediate family with arrearages on monastic lands totalling £10,000 and had threatened them with more. He had over-ridden Clanrickard's claims to immunity and imposed cess upon his demesne

lands. The earl himself had been forced to sell his plate in order to meet the deputy's charges. Sidney's exactions were so great, he pleaded, that they had given rise to the fear that the deputy was minded to bring the entire lordship into ruin. His sons had risen out in desperation to salvage their inheritance.<sup>211</sup>

No less significant than the attempt of the Galway Burkes to generalise their case as a struggle against exploitation was the response they elicited from their neighbours. Sidney's financial squeeze threatened every lord in the province to a greater or lesser extent, so the charge that the composition plan was but another form of English rapacity provided a ready platform for a general call to resistance. The Galway freeholders rallied to the Mac an Iarlas, but more important, their rebellion lent further encouragement to growing discontent with Sidney's overhasty proceedings in Munster. The landholders of Cork and Kerry banded together to refuse <sup>President</sup> Drury either a cess or a composition. Desmond, who acted as their spokesman, wrote to Burghley, Leicester and the privy council complaining of the evils suffered by his people at the hands of Drury's soldiers. "The intolerable burden that the subjects bear here", he warned Burghley, "do so alienate and discourage their heads that I fear great inconvenience thereby to ensue", and hinting at the general resentment aroused by Sidney's personal motivation, he concluded, "private gain will bring nothing to perfection in this realm, but rather an overplus of charges".<sup>212</sup>

These disturbances posed a serious threat to Sidney's tenure of office. Elizabeth's enthusiasm for his plan had cooled almost immediately after his departure, and her disenchantment had been deepened by Sidney's early admission that his initial costs would

be rather larger than he had originally expected.<sup>213</sup> Walsingham had much trouble in extracting even the earliest instalments of treasure from the royal purse, and in the second year the queen began to default.<sup>214</sup> Now, the recurrence of general resistance was painfully reminiscent of 1569. The queen drew the parallel, and she blamed Sidney for it.<sup>215</sup> So when the agents of the Pale arrived in London, they were after some initial bluster treated with unexpected mildness. To Sidney, on the other hand, Elizabeth wrote sharply: "The bruit is now that you have taken the whole land to farm and finding the same not to bear the ordinary charge of the garrison and other necessary payments, you have imposed this large cess ... You gave us hope to diminish our charges and increase our revenue, but we find the former still to be great and the latter ... is much decayed".<sup>216</sup> To have caused such a stir throughout the country at a time when a Spanish attempt upon the coast was believed to be imminent was, Elizabeth implied, the height of irresponsibility. It was rumoured she had a mind to revoke him.<sup>217</sup>

The queen's reception of the agents convinced Sidney of the seriousness of the threat he faced from within the Pale itself. The leverage upon which Tremayne had counted had indeed materialised, but it had worked in reverse. The Palesmen now appeared as the major obstacle to the whole scheme of composition and its fate seemed to hinge on his ability to discredit their agents. Sidney, therefore, concentrated his efforts on restoring his reputation at Westminster. He dispatched his most trusted agent, Edward Waterhouse, to court to vindicate his actions; his son Philip was drafted into the cause, and in July 1577, Lord Chancellor Gerrard was sent, armed with accounts, records and testimonials, to give a full dress presentation of the government's case.<sup>218</sup>

Sidney himself emphasised the exemplary importance of his work in the Pale. The success of his efforts in the rest of the country he asserted, depended upon it. If his actions there were not upheld, then his ability to govern the rest of the country would be greatly endangered. But the struggle in the Pale, he continued, was not simply a matter of principle, "but one of the exchequer and the treasury in the Tower. It is not to be so lightly sacrificed".<sup>219</sup> The composition money in the Pale was a useful source of revenue in itself. But it was far more important; it was "the foundation that I have chiefly to build on".<sup>220</sup> Concessions to the Palesmen now would risk the destruction of a plan that was already beginning to bear fruit. "As confidently as I can conceive of anything", Sidney told Walsingham, "I am persuaded that if Netterville had not been sent, I had before this time assured Her Majesty of above 10,000 marks of increase in revenue yearly ... for I held a straighter hand in the matter of cess rather to bring them to a certain rent".<sup>221</sup> Walsingham transmitted the message to the queen: "Your subjects dwelling outside the English Pale and now grown to composition with your deputy for such lands as they hold by usurpation would brake off", he warned, if Elizabeth withdrew her support from Sidney; the loss to the crown would be immense.<sup>222</sup>

This counter-attack brought some relief. The agents were re-examined by the privy council and placed under close arrest in the Tower. Sidney's conduct was formally exonerated, and he was authorised by the queen to take all necessary steps to bring the Palesmen to submit.<sup>223</sup> He made the most of his victory. The representatives of the Pale were summoned to Dublin, informed of the queen's anger at their recalcitrance and imprisoned in the Castle, pending an acknowledgement of their fault and an allowance

of the composition. At this, the opposition faltered, and though he was unable to gain a full submission, Sidney did win their consent to a year's composition on the terms originally proposed.<sup>224</sup>

The Palesmen had clearly gone too far in upholding their privileges so boldly upon an issue which touched the royal prerogative, and Sidney had benefitted from Elizabeth's characteristic reaction. Yet Sidney could not make matters appear as unequivocal as he would have them. The agents in the Tower soon withdrew from the exposed position they had originally occupied, confessed their fault, conceded the queen's right to impose cess through her deputy and reconstructed their case by emphasising only the practical abuses from which they had suffered. The cess had been unprecedentedly high, and Sidney had demanded it at a time of genuine scarcity when the difference between the queen's price and the market had been at its greatest ever known. The annual loss to the country they estimated to be over £6,500. On top of this, came the informal extortions of the soldiers themselves whose cost to the country was incalculable. The deputy had not raised a finger to curb these abuses and he had not even attempted to ease the country's burden by making full use of the corn-leases incident to his office. His proposal of composition, on the other hand, was by no means as generous as he made it out to be. The new subsidy would work out at around 9d. per acre, but the current lease value of an acre within the Pale, was only 12d. Thus, "the landlord by these means shall become not only a base freeholder on his own land, but also should be left only 3d. rent out of an acre by the year. Again, since cash was chronically scarce, "it is likely that in time corn and cattle, the principle things that the country breedeth and bringeth forth to bear charges withal, would

grow so cheap as it (sic) would become little worth and so would the payment of 5. marks be as chargeable as their present burdens are".<sup>225</sup>

To prove that their complaint lay only with Sidney's abuses, the agents presented an alternative scheme of feeding the army without significantly increasing the costs of either the queen or the country. They offered to supplement the pay of 1,000 soldiers by 1d. (st.) a day, thus making it easier for each to buy supplies at reasonable prices. At the same time, they renewed an offer first made to Fitzwilliam to undertake a victualling contract themselves. The new penny subsidy, they argued slyly, would be largely recouped by the profits to be made from the victualling.<sup>226</sup>

These proposals made welcome room for the compromise which the queen and her council were anxious to reach. But more importantly, they reinforced a doubt ever present during Sidney's viceroyalties that the evils of governing Ireland were not inherent in the situation, but were derived directly from Sidney's unique propensity to stir up trouble. Suspicion of private interest inevitably haunted this man whose appointments to office had always been won amidst an atmosphere of personal rivalry and competition. Elizabeth had never fully trusted him and on each occasion had given assent to his proposals only out of sheer expediency. Now the possibility arose that Sidney's procedures were no longer the most practicable, but were, in fact, detrimental to the best interests of the crown. The promise of a general composition seemed great, but it was now by no means certain that his costly and disruptive methods were the only means of realising its fruits. The Palesmen argued strongly to the contrary, and the private accommodations which Drury had successfully concluded in Munster in the wake of the collapse of the formal composition added

silent support to their case. With the prospect of these local political and financial settlements already on offer, one question became obvious: was Sidney's forceful and provocative conduct as chief governor really necessary? The suggestion that Sidney had, in fact, become superfluous was for the first time made explicit neither by the Palesmen nor by his enemies at court, but by his own chancellor, William Gerrard.

Though Gerrard had been a close colleague of Sidney's on the council in Wales, he had never been an unquestioning supporter.<sup>227</sup> After Sidney's departure for Ireland he had continued to press his own reforms upon the privy council and it is possible that he sought the presidency for himself.<sup>228</sup> It was while he was at Westminster presenting a long discourse on the defects of the current Welsh council, that the decision to send him to Ireland was made.<sup>229</sup> The Chancellor's initial views about Ireland had much in common with Sidney's. He supported the deputy's use of the prerogative, his attitude towards the Clanrickard rebellion was severe in the extreme and had little affection for "the filthy people" in general.<sup>230</sup> But his views were at once more extreme and more moderate than the deputy's. The problems facing the government in Ireland, he believed, were a good deal more profound than any previous governor, including Sidney, had seemed to appreciate.<sup>231</sup> Lawlessness was endemic not merely in the gaelicised areas, but in the English Pale itself. There the Anglo-Norman lords and the newly settled English captains raided each other and oppressed the ordinary people with impunity. The number of retainers held by some of the gentlemen was as large as any outside the Pale, and none would easily be brought to dispense with them. Until the English Pale itself, he argued, had first been reclaimed and reformed, "the

policy to wade further to gain territories is as it were, to suffer the parts at home to burn and to seek to quench a fire far off".<sup>232</sup>

Recent governors had failed to grasp this point. In their haste towards a final solution they had built their ambitious schemes upon the shakiest foundations and each had in turn suffered collapse. The attempt to establish English law in the provinces by peaceful means had been a failure from the outset, but more forceful methods had been more expensive and more dangerous. The maintenance of the English army had of late become so burdensome that the lawful rule of government had grown indistinguishable from the oppression of the over-lords. Expediency and military necessity had obscured the bed-rock of common law upon which alone good government was founded. The over-employment of martial law had brought the entire English legal system into disrepute. Attempts to impose English rule immediately and conclusively by force or by intimidation had prevented the pure virtues of the common law from being made manifest to the ordinary people. Haste had secured superficial gains only; impatience had been the ruin of policy.<sup>233</sup>

To this rather pessimistic statement of the problem, however, Gerrard proposed a surprisingly moderate solution. Since past governors had over-reached themselves and failed, it was now imperative to withdraw from the unrealistic aims they had set themselves. Plans for large-scale expansion were to be abandoned. The Pale was first to be regenerated, and this done the government's main vehicle of expansion was to be neither military nor diplomatic, but judicial. The inherent attraction of English law was to be used "by little and little to stretch the Pale further" until at last the entire country had been encompassed.<sup>234</sup> Gerrard rejected the argument that the law would be powerless against the degenerate Anglo-

Normans and that "the sword must go before to subdue these".

"For can the sword teach them to speak English, to use English apparell, to restrain them from Irish exactions and extortions and to shun all the manners and the orders of the Irish, No, it is the rod of justice that must scour out these blots. For the sword once went before to settle their ancestors and in them yet resteth this English nature to fear justice. So as justice without the sword may suffice to call them to her presence."<sup>235</sup>

Gerrard's attitude towards the Gaelic Irish was more ambivalent.

While the reconstruction of the old colony was under way, he believed that a policy of containment was best pursued; he was even willing to recommend the use of force against them when necessary. But he nevertheless believed that good example and persuasion would in time "win the Irish to love and embrace English government".<sup>236</sup>

On this basis, Gerrard advanced major practical recommendations for administrative reform. A new decentralised structure based on the division of the country into judicial circuits was to be established. Three circuit judges were to act under the general supervision of a lord justice, but upon most issues each was to be autonomous in his own sphere. Leinster, the most important area of government attention, would be the joint responsibility of the lord justice and the lord chancellor; the circuits of the other judges were to be limited to those areas now thought most amenable to the introduction of English law. The garrison was to be reduced to the amount of troops necessary to protect and maintain the prestige of the circuit judges. Gerrard was confident that any extraordinary requirements would be met with the cooperation by the local sheriffs and senechals and,

when necessary, by the earls of Ormond and Kildare.<sup>237</sup>

However practicable Gerrard's proposed scheme was in the long-term, its immediate implications for Sidney were grave. If the militarist approach was to be abandoned in favour of more limited juridicial aims, the lord deputy, as the director of a centrally organised programme of reform was clearly obsolete. Gerrard himself was the first to make these implications concrete in the matter of the composition. Unlike Sidney he had always maintained a distinction between the real grievances of the Palesmen and the manner in which they presented their case. Even before he left Ireland to defend his governor, the chancellor's independent opinion was well known to the Palesmen. He had publicly condemned the abuses of government officials; he had even approved of a jury's indictment of cessors, "the worst officers in all the land".<sup>238</sup> Not without reason was he "suspected overmuch to favour (the Palesmen's) cause".<sup>239</sup> For Gerrard the conflict with the Palesmen had nothing to do with Sidney's grand plan of composition. Thus, when their agents dropped their challenge to the prerogative, he ceased to oppose them, and going far beyond the letter of his instructions, formally accepted their alternative offer.<sup>240</sup>

If this in itself were not fatal to Sidney's chances, the chancellor had recourse to one further argument certain to lead to the deputy's disgrace: he talked of costs. Past methods of government had been woefully extravagant, not merely because they had been futile, but because they had been pursued to the neglect of far more immediate sources of gain. While the governors pursued their lofty ambitions, negligence and corruption on the bench, in the exchequer and throughout the entire civil administration had allowed secure revenues to fall away. Despite the queen's commands, slovenly record-keeping,

half-hearted enforcement and downright embezzlement continued in every department. The costly pursuit of new sources of revenue elsewhere was quite pointless when the government could not even exploit those nearest to hand.<sup>241</sup> Gerrard, of course, did not lay the blame for all these faults upon his immediate superior; he wrote of methods of administration rather than of personalities. But at one point he made his meaning absolutely clear: "If Her Majesty be minded to continue the deputy", he warned, "then expence and surpluage must be thought on".<sup>242</sup>

By the time he made these insinuations, their relevance was fully appreciated at court. The general resistance provoked by Sidney's measures had imposed a heavy strain on his strictly limited resources. The original estimates which had been insufficient from the start, now proved to be wholly inadequate to the demands he was forced to meet. By Michaelmas 1577, Sidney had exceeded his original costing by over £14,000 and was almost £9,000 in debt.<sup>243</sup> Gerrard's arguments, then, simply confirmed a view that was already taking shape at Westminster. By the beginning of 1578, even Sidney's closest supporters had lost confidence in him. The normally sympathetic Secretary Wilson wrote sharply: "It is told me that grievous exaction are used under your government after a very strange manner ... And great pity it were that Her Highness's prerogative, which is sacred and very honorable being well used, should be a colour or pretence to some private gain without public profit".<sup>244</sup>

Waterhouse was despondent, and Walsingham urged that he accept defeat gracefully by reaching an amicable agreement with the Palesmen. By May, Sidney's revocation was determined, and instructions, drafted in accordance with Gerrard's recommendations, were being prepared for a new lord justice.<sup>245</sup>

A Retrospect : Government in Ireland 1556-1578

"It is a strange desire to seek power and to lose liberty; or to seek power over others and to lose power over a man's self"

Francis Bacon, "Of great place", Essays (Everyman ed.) p. 31.

(i)

In the summer of 1578 a watershed in the course of Tudor attempts to govern Ireland appeared to have been reached. The new government established in August was a clear reaction against Sidney's methods. Thenceforth, power was to be divided between the lord justice, the lord chancellor, the circuit judges advocated by Gerrard and an autonomous president in Connaught. All were men of limited expectations. Priority was again given to the reform of the financial administration. Gilbert Gerrard's proposed reforms were revived, and the substance of the new lord justice's instructions was based on those given to Sir William Skeffington almost fifty years before. Costs were to be curtailed and existing sources of revenue were to be better exploited, but no spectacular increase in wealth was anticipated. In general, the instructions were loosely conceived. Wide discretionary powers were granted to the chief officers but no explicit programme was underwritten. The new establishment was clearly an attempt to sever the administration of Irish affairs from the machinations of English domestic politics and to allow the appropriate processes of management to emerge from within. It was a major change of direction.

Sidney's departure, therefore, might well appear to mark the end of an era. His career in Ireland had displayed a systematic pattern of development that transcended his personal history and embraced a general type of administrative practice. Under Sidney the "programmatically style" attained its most succinct and most terse statement; and all the paradoxes inherent within it were made fully explicit.

(ii)

In 1556 a unique and fully developed strategy of governing Ireland was brought to an end. Over the previous fifteen years, Sir Anthony St. Leger had evolved an administrative technique that had transformed the chief governor from being solely the representative of the crown in Ireland into the leading spokesman of a uniform Irish interest. Through diplomacy, through patronage and not least through his connivance in the massive appropriation of crown revenues, St. Leger had gradually extended his personal influence over the whole country. In the power-vacuum created first by the fall of the Geraldines and later by the fortuitous eclipse of the Butlers, he had constructed for himself a basis of support amongst the native inhabitants which enabled him to exert an influence over developments in the country neither by force nor by simple conciliation, but by the sheer reflexes of interest. Increasingly, that is to say, St. Leger established himself as a surrogate Kildare, who was possessed of most of the power and few of the weaknesses that had normally belonged to that position.

Patiently, and not without some difficulty, he had succeeded in eroding away the indigenous sources of opposition to his rule. Even the dangers of his active participation in the unauthorised exploitation of crown lands, upon which so much of his influence depended, had been successfully neutralised. When the fatal challenge to his regime was made, it came neither from Ireland, nor even primarily from the royal government, but from a clique of ambitious young adventurers who unexpectedly acquired a positive interest in capturing the government of Ireland for themselves.

This unusual independent desire to be sent to Ireland arose, in part, from their superficial and short-sighted examination of how St. Leger operated as governor there. On looking towards Ireland in the mid 1550s, they saw a number of salient political and military problems which the administration there seemed incapable of dealing with in a prompt and efficient manner. On looking again, they saw that the administration's political and financial practices were both highly compromising and legally dubious. On the strength of these two observations they made a seductively simple analysis. The problems of Irish governance, they concluded, were capable of sub-division into two distinct categories. There existed a number of primary difficulties which needed to be resolved before any further progress could be made. Then an impersonal and efficient administrative structure needed to be imposed upon the country to consolidate and develop the authority which the ruthless removal of the most outstanding challenges to the will of the crown had already gained. With the defeat of the most dangerous threats to English rule and the installation of the reformed and extended administrative framework throughout the country, the natural tendency towards peace and

order, which had sustained St. Leger's corrupt and negligent regime for so long, would then take its course. Ireland would be reduced to English ways by the same exertion of central authority and the same administrative implements which had brought the most outlying parts of the realm of England into conformity.

The attraction of this analysis, however, was greatly enhanced by the private advantages which it seemed to bring to those who would give it effect. It offered a statesman a classic opportunity to implement a wide-ranging reform policy comprehensively and conclusively. The new strategy could be easily conceived and expounded. The primary problems to be resolved were quite palpable and the instruments of administrative reform were close to hand. The entire operation was capable of being organised into an explicit programme of action. The time needed to remove the old obstacles and construct the new order could be readily estimated and an assessment of the costs of the work of clearance and reconstruction could easily be made. And by way of conclusion to every set of proposals submitted for inspection, the same promise could be confidently advanced: this done and the governance of Ireland would cease to exist as a problem and become a matter of routine administration. Such an approach not only seemed to offer glory to its undertakers when the task had been completed, it seemed also to grant them the greatest possible political autonomy within the bare framework of time and costs during the period when the work was underway.

In theory, this government through pre-designed and pre-selected programmes of reform constituted the most complete delegation of authority that the crown could grant to its public servants. It represented Tudor rule at its most flexible

Under its terms any prospective candidate for service could present his own analysis of the Irish problem and offer his own solution. General conciliation and downright force, colonisation and composition through intimidation - the whole range of the "tough-soft" spectrum espied by historians - were equally acceptable in principle. A governor might pursue mutually contradictory policies at once; he might eschew past opinions, turn on his old friends and befriend his old enemies without demur from Westminster, once the terms of his programme had been sanctioned. (But the appearance of autonomy was deceptive.) The ignorance and indifference of the crown which had permitted the submission of reform programme in the first place pertained only to means and techniques; the fundamental conservative imperatives to preserve political stability and administrative economy remained unalterable. Thus whatever theoretical attraction a programme might have, it would nevertheless be judged in practice by the degree to which it honoured or offended against these basic principles. (A judgement in terms of the amount of trouble aroused or of treasure spent was easy enough for the most neglectful sovereign to make; it was never long in forthcoming. Though ostensibly heuristic in spirit, the farming out of the government of Ireland was in fact the very opposite. By elevating their level of interference from the plane of concrete policy-making to the more manageable sphere of guiding principle, the sovereigns consolidated, rather than diluted their control over affairs in Ireland.)

Their concern with the preservation of these basic principles, moreover, was progressive. As the treasury's disbursements mounted over time, the crown began to look not merely for greater savings, but for a positive increase in revenues which would recoup past

losses. Initially, this increasing financial concern was a major inducement to the formulation and acceptance of programmes, but as the programmes themselves faltered, it became the major impediment to their recovery. The outlay of capital and confidence which the new plans normally required placed their authors in a peculiar relationship with the crown. The notion that a personal obligation was placed upon the governor by his appointment was inherent in the process from the beginning, but it became increasingly more apparent during Sidney's viceroalties and was made bluntly explicit in the simple contract arrangement of his last Irish service. Then, the strict interpretation of the contract and Sidney's failure to honour its terms over-rode all other considerations. Though Sidney could point to a definite financial improvement in his last years, though he could promise real profits in the future and argue that earlier gains had been forestalled only by accident, Sidney had clearly defaulted on his promise. His net return was a loss, and for that there was no forgiveness.

The concern with the maintenance of political stability was expressed in a less fluid and almost dialectical fashion. Though the royal government might be willing to contemplate a revolution in policy, it was determined not to abandon those subjects whose loyalty had long been proven or to embrace too readily those whose past records had been dubious. Thus the sanctioning of many programmes of action might not always entail the authorisation of its most practical implications. A governor might find his whole operation suddenly proscribed because its implementation tended to change the traditional relationship of the government towards particular interests. Sussex had experienced something of this frustration under Mary when the highly respected Archbishop

Dowdall brought his administration under critical examination. But again, it was the late comer, Sidney, who suffered most from these constraints. No matter how impartial his concern, he could expect to be supported in no policy that conflicted with the interests of the trusted Butlers or did much to improve the standing of the Geraldines. For all their apparent originality and autonomy, the programmatic governors were no less free of the basic concerns of the crown than any other royal servant.

Inevitably, the strain of their paradoxical position began to influence the content of their programmes. Gradually, short-term effectiveness and superficial achievement took precedent over the objective needs of the situation. Sussex more than once succumbed to the temptation to exchange the genuine attainment of his ends for a shabby and sometimes sordid conclusion. His government finally collapsed through his unnecessary and obsessive attempts to destroy Shane O'Neill. But it was under Sidney that the process reached its ultimate stage. Increasingly, his programmes were designed around the simple end of showing political and financial results of an immediately tangible nature, and the methods he adopted to achieve those ends became fundamentally militaristic and coercive in form. As a result, Sidney's projections gradually became devoid of any political, ideological or even factional consistency. They oscillated freely from open conciliation to outright conquest. Often they were so confused and so interchanged as to preclude differentiation; sometimes, as in the cases of Carew and Essex, they were but willing concessions to circumstance; on occasion, as in his sudden compulsions, to destroy Desmond and Clanrickard, sheer opportunism intervened and there were no projections at all.

In Sidney, the administrative remissness that had spawned programmatic government rebounded upon the crown with a vengeance. The delegation of authority within narrow, but implicit limits led progressively towards the explicit acceptance of those constraints and to their transformation into the principal ends of policy. But this progression did not complete a circle; it precipitated a spiral. Consistent and direct policy-making at Westminster on the basis of the determining principles of economy and stability might have laid the foundations of a stable, if imperfect, Irish policy. But in the hands of independent adventurers for whom service in Ireland was a private enterprise, such implicit guidelines appeared not as the mandates of conservatism, but as the sole criteria of success to whose end any means whatever might be employed. Thus did an administrative theory, founded on simple and irreducible premises, produce a volatile and highly opportunistic executive practice.

There remained a further paradox. Being poorly informed and preoccupied with other affairs, the queen and council were ill-equipped to make a rational choice between competing programmes, each offering to bring about the same conclusive result. To simplify matters, they made their choice in terms of personnel. There was some logic in the practice. The personalisation of policy greatly facilitated the channelling of information to and fro, and the allocation of responsibility. It gave an area of manoeuvre to the crown which a more centrally directed policy would have precluded: when a policy went badly wrong, it could be abandoned simply by replacing the governor. But the costs of this administrative short-cut were immense. It transformed the Irish office into one more target for the competition of court rivals, and

seriously compromised the possibility of an independent and objectively based Irish policy. At court, the quality of each governor's service tended to be assessed not by any objective standard of competence, or by the nature of the problem he confronted, but by the current political status of the interest group to which he belonged. This constant exposure to irrelevant and often slanderous criticism, greatly distracted the governors. It rendered them extremely vulnerable to the machinations of opposition groups in Ireland who readily supplied their enemies in England with damaging information about the state of affairs in the country. The combination of accusations at court and opposition in Ireland was fatal: neither Sussex nor Sidney could overcome it. The sum effect of these influences was to place every policy, whatever its promise, under the constant threat of random discontinuity and sudden death.

This evil was by no means the fault of the crown nor of the system at court alone; for the governors themselves knowingly undertook the risks of the system and adapted themselves to the challenge. Sussex and Sidney both constructed in Ireland a microcosm of the competitive world of connection from which they had come. Both took care to magnify the importance of their achievements and to see that their endeavours were well publicised at home. Each openly criticised the defects of his predecessor and his successor. Both formed a working alliance with one of the two great Anglo-Norman factions, and both constructed a minor clique of their own within the Irish administration. Most important, both realised that the allowance of their service at court took precedence over all considerations within Ireland and framed their actions accordingly. Each took pains to ensure that their actions

were interpreted in the most favourable light at court. Each tended to minimise the importance of the obstacles they confronted and to exaggerate their ability to cope with them. To give concrete demonstration to their over-arching claims, each displayed a marked tendency to abandon a cautious procedure in order to hazard a spectacular coup. In sum, the governors themselves came to regard Ireland less as a specific problem in itself than as a mere appendage to the politics of court; and their own programmes, founded upon this shaky dualism, became increasingly less relevant to the situation in which they were meant to apply.

Again, it was Sidney who brought these tendencies to their fruition. Sir Henry was never able to exert the influence which the noble earl had enjoyed both in England and in Ireland. The very circumstances of his first appointment eliminated the possibility of his universal acceptability and a reputation for ruthless ambition and controversy dogged him throughout his career. If he could never command total respect at court, his influence with the Anglo-Norman factions was also far less secure than Sussex's had been. The alliance with the Geraldines which had helped undermine his predecessor and had given him his initial popularity was based more on promise than performance. Under the strain imposed by Sidney's concessions to the crown's political conservatism, it soon deteriorated. It was, in any case, incapable of offering him the kind of support which Ormond had lent Sussex on both sides of the Irish Sea. In his relative isolation, Sidney was driven to rely on his own resources. He attempted to compensate for the weaknesses on his flanks by making vastly inflated promises which temporarily brought him the support of the crown. But the exclusiveness of his promises only intensified his isolation, and by 1577

his power-bases in England and in Ireland had grown too narrow to bear the increased pressures he sought to place upon them. His failure in that year represented the essential weaknesses of the programmatic approach writ large. In 1562-63 Sussex had run aground when it was claimed that he had perverted the general goodwill of the sovereign for her subjects; in 1577, Sidney faced universal resistance because it was believed that he had taken the whole land to farm. That an administrative method that imposed the most fundamental constraints and impediments on its executors should have provoked the alarming impression that the government of Ireland was left prey to the most dangerous of free-booters, is, perhaps, the highest irony of the period. But that Sidney should have fallen through a combination of the same forces and over substantially the same issues that had brought Sussex to ruin, was not ironic: in so far as he brought to maturity the assumptions and techniques enunciated by Sussex in 1556, it was inevitable.

(iii)

The turning point of 1578, however, was never attained. A quarter of a century of programmatic rule had left a deep imprint upon the country. It had prevented the government from formulating a stable policy towards each group in Irish society, and it had generated within the Gaelic Irish, Anglo-Normans and Palesmen alike, a profound uncertainty about their relationship with Her Majesty's government. It had exploded the controls moderating traditional Anglo-Norman rivalry leaving each of the great houses unsettled and some of them desperate. It had oppressed the community of the Pale to such an extent that the most loyal

subjects of the crown in Ireland grew seriously estranged from their own governors. And it had belied the promise of 1541, flooding Gaelic Ireland with a host of settlers and lawless adventurers of a type with whom the clansmen were already familiar. In short, under Sussex and Sidney, the credibility of the Dublin administration as the impartial dispenser of justice in the realm had been deeply mortgaged in the eyes of every group in the island; and despite Gerrard's late attempts at salvage, the loss of confidence was already irredeemable. Within months of its establishment, the new decentralised government was blasted by the eruption in rebellion of one of the groups who had suffered most from the inconsistency and incompetence of English rule in Ireland in the previous two decades.

