



James Macandrew, the son of a merchant, Colin Macandrew, and his wife, Barbara Johnston, was baptised in Aberdeen, Scotland, on 18 May 1819. Little is known of his early life; he is said to have attended Ayr Academy and worked for some years in a merchant's office. As

Aberdeen was a stronghold of the Free Church movement within Scottish Presbyterianism, Macandrew may have been influenced by it before migrating to London to train in commerce. There he became an active member of the Free Church of Scotland, and in 1845 joined the London branch of the Lay Association of the Free Church of Scotland (later the Otago Association), which was promoting the cause of a settlement in New Zealand on both Wakefieldian and Free Church principles. He married Eliza Hunter Reynolds, the daughter of a merchant, on 17 October 1848 in London, and soon persuaded several of her family to emigrate with him. In partnership with her brother, W. H. Reynolds, he chartered an iron-hulled schooner, the *Titan*, filled it with goods and family, and set sail for 'the New Jerusalem', arriving in Otago in January 1851.

Macandrew's energy, enthusiasm and vision enlivened the little village of Dunedin. He believed that commerce was second only to religion in promoting human happiness. While Reynolds took the *Titan* on a successful trading voyage, Macandrew established their mercantile firm in competition with Johnny Jones of Waikouaiti. He tried to found a bank, proposed a system of cheap credit for farmers, and saw prospects of profit in coastal shipping and in immigration contracts. The ship *Endeavour*, built for trade with the Clutha district, was wrecked while uninsured, but later ventures proved more successful. Macandrew used his political influence to obtain subsidies for bringing immigrants to Otago. Reynolds made two trips to Melbourne and one to England to recruit immigrants; the partners had an interest in three ships (the largest of which received a government subsidy of £4,000 a year) and inaugurated a monthly Dunedin–Melbourne service before Reynolds withdrew from the partnership in 1858.

Macandrew was elected to the Otago Provincial Council in 1853 and to the General Assembly in the following year. He was appointed to the Waste Land Board, and was its chairman in 1857. Land policy was the key to the province's growth and land sales the main source of its revenue. Within the original Otago block little accessible land was left, but Southland remained undeveloped. Its settlers were discontented with the government in Dunedin, believing that it favoured the older-settled areas nearer the capital. Talk of secession from Otago was in the air. To head it off, and to raise capital for the government, Macandrew pushed through the 1856 Land Sales and Leases Ordinance, under which 600,000 Southland acres became available in lots of 2,000 acres or more. At the same time he hoped that his shipping business would benefit through immigration subsidies and a new market for Australian sheep.

By the end of the 1850s his interest in politics had outrun his concern with business, and Macandrew set his heart on succeeding William Cargill as superintendent. By that time Macandrew had an impressive political reputation. He was an elder of First Church and the leader of Cargill's faction on the provincial council. He had founded in 1856, with William Cargill and his son John, the *Otago Colonist*. On the council he defended a high land price, the Scottish and Presbyterian character of the settlement, and the importance of education (third only to religion and commerce in promoting progress). In 1860 he entered the lists for the superintendency, promising to spend lavishly, to build railways and roads, to dredge the harbour and to reclaim the tidal mudflats. He also proposed a new system for selling land, and higher wages. Seldom can an unopposed candidate have promised so much.

With typical impetuosity he did not even wait for the council elections to be completed before choosing his executive. He also enlarged the Waste Land Board, appointing several runholders. In his inaugural address to the council he ignored the contentious issues of the

past – land and education – and outlined a dazzling future. But the problems would not depart. As one of his first official duties he headed to Invercargill to dampen the growing enthusiasm for a separate provincial government. Although he promised to redress all grievances, his failure to provide a steamship service to Oreti weakened his authority and caused many to suspect his motives. In 1861 Southland seceded.

Despite the superintendent's dizzy dreams and giddy rhetoric, during its first session in 1860 the council endlessly debated the old issues. Later in the year, however, Macandrew seemed to lose all interest in public affairs. He refused to go to Auckland for the General Assembly or even to convene the Otago executive. Rumours about his financial plight abounded, fed by W. H. Cutten, later an associate of Julius Vogel and editor of the *Otago Witness*. Still, when the council convened in December, Macandrew was in his best form, proposing plans to build three steamers for the Dunedin–Panama run, and a scheme for importing salmon. He announced that he would resign at the end of the session. It was not to be. The council chose a committee to investigate the public accounts and Macandrew filed for bankruptcy. He later claimed that in 1860 alone he had lost over £40,000.

A bizarre series of events followed. The committee of investigation reported on 22 December, but three days earlier the provincial council requested the governor, Thomas Gore Browne, to remove Macandrew from office. He did so, but not until March of the following year. In the meantime much had happened in Dunedin. Towards the end of January 1861 Macandrew was arrested for debt, after a suit had been brought against him by Nathanael Chalmers, a creditor who had lost heavily. He was taken to gaol, but almost at once issued a proclamation in which, on the grounds that there was no proper accommodation for debtors in the Dunedin gaol, he declared his own house to be a gaol. Believing that he was not disqualified from the superintendency by bankruptcy, he continued to govern from his commodious residence, Carisbrook House. However, the governor issued two proclamations in March, one removing Macandrew from office, and the other declaring Carisbrook House not to be a gaol. Macandrew was returned to the Dunedin gaol. The speaker of the council, J. L. C. Richardson, issued his own proclamation, giving notice that he had assumed the office of acting superintendent; it also declared a new stone building recently erected to be a public gaol.

Richardson believed that Macandrew had been using public monies to stave off his personal financial crisis. Legal cases later made it clear that he had defrauded several citizens. But as they were prominent squatters his popularity with 'the democracy' was not affected. He had also borrowed heavily, notably from Jones; he was forced to execute 'an assignment of all my property to trustees for the benefit of all my creditors.'

Macandrew might have been down, but he was not out. When Richardson called an election to fill the office of superintendent, Macandrew entered the lists and campaigned from gaol. He rested on his record, admitted no vice but poverty, and declared his difficulties to have arisen from 'having paid more regard to public interest than to my own.' Indeed, the auditor of public accounts had decided that none of the charges warranted criminal prosecution, lending colour to Macandrew's claim 'that whatever may have been my errors, my family and myself have been the principal sufferers'. He was attacked by his own paper, the *Colonist*, as well as by Cutten's *Witness*. But he had his friends, chiefly among the farmers and the artisans. He was nominated by Robert Miller, a candlemaker, and John Sibbald, a tailor, while a farmer, John Graham, toured the country districts on his behalf. The artisans and mechanics of Port Chalmers held several riotous meetings and burnt his enemies in effigy. He won on the voices

at the nomination meeting, but one of his opponents demanded a poll. Here, in a three-cornered contest, Macandrew gained 189 votes, a good second in a very low poll to Richardson's 292 votes.

Eliza Macandrew and the family moved to a farm at North East Harbour, on which Macandrew's brother-in-law held the mortgage. His old enemy, Cutten, humiliated him further by publishing in the *Witness* the names of all those who had voted for him. On his release Macandrew joined his family, devoting himself to his small farm and paying off the mortgage on it. He gave up commerce, but he had become addicted to politics. In 1863 his friends at Port Chalmers, across the harbour from his farm, returned him to the provincial council. Then, in 1865, he had some revenge on the Cargills. He had suffered badly from the competition of Edward Cargill's shipping partnership with Jones. Edward Cargill, in turn, suffered severe losses, and resigned from the General Assembly seat of Bruce in South Otago. His younger brother John ran for election, but Macandrew entered the lists and won handily. He remained in the House of Representatives for the rest of his life.

By the time Macandrew turned his attention back to provincial politics, gold had fostered an expansionist mood in the province. The pedestrian Thomas Dick had been a satisfactory superintendent since 1865, and many thought he would be returned unopposed in 1867. Rumours began to spread, however, that Macandrew would once more contest the office. This was too much for Cutten, by now a proprietor of the *Otago Daily Times*. He published the official report of the events which had led to Macandrew's dismissal in 1861. At the rowdy nomination meeting Macandrew attacked the 'squattocracy' and criticised Dick's lethargy: 'We should have wharves, railways etc. and three times the population we have now, and employment for them all. ... where are the millions that have been dug out of the bowels of the province?' There had been growing support for the idea that Otago should secure separate colonial status, to prevent its wealth from being squandered on the North Island wars. Macandrew endorsed this demand, declaring that 'we have two governments, and so need to dispense with one.' He carried the nomination meeting decisively, but a poll was demanded. To the horror of the *Otago Daily Times*, and of Otago's runholders, Macandrew trounced Dick everywhere but in some of the goldfields towns.

The government in Wellington expressed its disapproval by refusing to delegate to Macandrew the powers normally given to superintendents, including control of the goldfields. Nothing could have united the province more quickly. With the support of a unanimous council, and after a novel plebiscite which gave him a vast majority (8,307 to 177), the Stafford government backed off and Macandrew seized control. He was to retain the superintendency until the abolition of the provinces.

The rest of his political life exhibited the same mixture of visionary dreams, considerable achievement and frequent failure. He espoused, in 1868 and 1869, the cause of South Island separation, but to no avail. Thwarted on that front, he urged reunification with Southland, and was successful in bringing it about in 1870. But he had no success in pressing for amalgamation with Canterbury. In and out of season he denounced the iniquities of the government in Wellington. When Julius Vogel brought down his expansionist budget in June 1870, Macandrew in the House of Representatives vainly demanded authority for Otago to launch an equally ambitious programme. After the session he returned to an almost royal welcome; the drinking and speechmaking went on for hours (he thought 'five or six tumblers of toddy' essential to his eloquence); and a flotilla of small boats escorted him home across the harbour.

Macandrew had always been as great an advocate of growth as Vogel. He advanced the cause of the University of Otago and endowed it with 100,000 acres; he played a major part in the foundation of its medical school. He backed the campaign for a girls' high school. But economic advancement was closest to his heart. He persuaded a provincial council dominated by his opponents to vote a large sum for immigration, and held out a fantastic prospect of settling Highland crofters in Fiordland and Stewart Island. Eternally optimistic about the abundant resources of Otago, he sent surveyors to its west coast, talked of a railway through the Southern Alps, and played a part in establishing the luckless settlement at Martins Bay. More practically, he brought about the construction of a graving dock at Port Chalmers. In 1870 he told the council: 'several millions of industrious people might find the means of comfort and independence within our borders'.

Land policy aroused the deepest divisions within Otago. Macandrew's reputation did not stand too high in some quarters. As Matthew Holmes explained: 'If you stood well with, or were a political supporter of the Superintendent, you could get all you wanted.' Further, set against his quite recent past, his position in the 1870s was a complete about-turn. Although in 1867 he had courted the voters with a radical attack on the squatters, he was quickly drawn into alliance with them. The link was his appetite for public works, which the runholders also favoured to drive up the value of their land. Donald Reid emerged as the leader of a democratic land movement and challenged Macandrew for the superintendency in 1871. The main question at issue was the Vogelite expansionist programme, for Macandrew, inconsistently enough, had now thrown his support behind Vogel so that Otago should get its share of the spoils. Dunedin, Southland and the mining districts voted decisively for Macandrew and the policy of expansion. Reid carried the districts where the land issue was urgent and retained a share of power, in spite of Macandrew's victory, as the dominant figure on the provincial executive.

Secure again in office, Macandrew rewarded his supporters with public works and did what he could to help the bankers and the runholders. In 1872 he was able to strike a blow against Reid. E. W. Stafford briefly led a new ministry in 1872, and selected Reid as a minister. Macandrew took his chance to remove Reid from office in the provincial government. He then gave the runholders control of the provincial executive and the Waste Land Board. Easily enough, Macandrew retained the superintendency in 1873, still in alliance with the runholders and in pursuit of Vogelite objectives.

Yet there was an air of unreality in the alliance between Macandrew, the separatist, and Vogel and the runholders, for the latter increasingly saw the provinces as obstacles to progress. When it came, the move to abolish provincial governments, at first in the North Island, broke across these divisions and brought Reid and Macandrew, enemies in all else, to the same side in the House of Representatives. Then Vogel expanded the proposed abolition to include the South Island provinces. Macandrew fought this with all his stubbornness, rousing his supporters to unrivalled exuberance of protest. But the political world of Otago, which he had dominated for much of his career, was swept away in 1876. That world had always been too divided, and its government too often ineffectual, to survive.

Although Macandrew was one of the last to abandon faith in the provinces, he soon found gainful employment in central government. After the 1877 election he joined the ministry led by Sir George Grey as minister of public works, and continued to borrow and spend despite the gathering clouds of depression. He retained his faith in expansion; however, through his persistence he did more than any other man to bring about the rejection of Vogelite policies

and to create a climate for retrenchment. He also effectively destroyed his own political influence. From time to time he continued to pursue new issues with his old tenacity. He held office once again, very briefly, in 1884 in the first Stout–Vogel ministry. But if his colleagues in the House tired of hearing him recite the virtues of Otago, the electors of Port Chalmers loved him still.

To the end he remained a devoted member of the Free Church, walking up the steep hill to Pukehiki for divine service each Sabbath when he was at home, and resisting with all his domineering magnetism the introduction of such papist practices as hymns. His wife, Eliza, celebrated for her charitable works, had died long since, in 1875, after a painful illness. They had had nine children, all of whom survived Macandrew, who died on 24 February 1887 from injuries sustained when he was accidentally thrown from a carriage outside his house. He left a modest estate. His five sons were to divide up the proceeds of the sale of stock and farm implements; one daughter was to receive a house and another a cottage; the proceeds from his insurance policy were to be divided between all four daughters, and held 'in their own right and...beyond control of their respective husbands.' He was mourned as Otago's tribal chieftain, a reminder of a glorious past, and a man who contained within himself many of the warring impulses of this new society.

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