

**AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT**

**BISHOP EDMUND HOBHOUSE**

**Papers, 1847-1962**

**Reel M715**

**Miss Dorothy Hobhouse  
Burnham Abbey  
Maidenhead, Berkshire**

**National Library of Australia  
State Library of New South Wales**

**Filmed: 1968**

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Edmund Hobhouse (1817-1904) was born in London. His father Henry Hobhouse (1776-1854) was under-secretary of the Home Office (1817-27) and the Keeper of the State Papers. His brothers included the lawyer and judge Arthur Hobhouse (1819-1904), 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Hobhouse, and Reginald Hobhouse (1818-1895), archdeacon of Bodmin. His nephew Henry Hobhouse (1854-1937) was a landowner and a member of the House of Commons from 1885 to 1906.

Edmund Hobhouse was educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, and studied theology at Durham University. He was elected a fellow of Merton College, Oxford, in 1841 and ordained a priest in 1842. From 1843 to 1858 he was vicar of St Peter's-in-the-East, Oxford, and worked closely with Bishop Samuel Wilberforce. He was a friend of G.A. Selwyn, the Bishop of New Zealand, and was considered for the position of Bishop of Christchurch. Instead, he was selected as the first Bishop of New Zealand and was ordained by the Archbishop of Canterbury in September 1858.

Hobhouse arrived in New Zealand in January 1859 and attended the first General Synod in Wellington in March. He held the first diocesan synod in August 1859 and devoted much of his time in organising the parochial structure of the diocese of Nelson and improving the administration of endowments. He subsidised diocesan finances from his private income. He failed in his attempts to set up schools for Maori children, but he did establish a boy's school in Nelson. There were insufficient clergy, but he was able to recruit his former curate, R.H. Codrington, and his cousin H.M. Turton. He travelled extensively through his large diocese.

Hobhouse was poor at delegation and tended to overwork and his health deteriorated. His popularity declined, with accusations that he was intolerant and a high churchman. There were strains in his relations with Selwyn and he felt that the support of his clergy was inadequate. In August 1864 he announced that he would resign, but that he would remain in the diocese as a parish priest. The resignation took effect in 1865. The death of his wife led him to reconsider his decision and he left New Zealand in June 1866.

In England Hobhouse held the living of Beech Hill, near Reading, before re-joining Selwyn as Assistant Bishop of Lichfield in 1869. He was chancellor of the Lichfield diocese in 1874-75. He retired in 1881 and lived in Wells, Somerset, for the rest of his life. He was an active member of the Somerset Record Society and edited two of its volumes.

Hobhouse married Mary Elizabeth Brodrick in 1858 and they had two sons, Edmund and Walter. She died in October 1864. In 1868 he married Anna Maria Williams, the daughter of the Warden of New College, Oxford.

The papers of Bishop Hobhouse are now held by the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand.

# BISHOP EDMUND HOBHOUSE

## Reel M715

Note: The papers were filmed from right to left, with the title page at the end of the reel. There are no title pages for the bundles of letters and other papers which make up the collection.

### **1 Letters from Edmund Hobhouse to his family in England, 1858-64. (43 items)**

The bulk of the letters were sent to Hobhouse's sister, Eliza Hobhouse. There are also single letters to his brothers Henry and Reginald, Rev. David Williams (Warden of New College, Oxford), and Rev. E.H. Hansell. Some of the original letters are missing, but there are typed transcripts of all the letters, typed extracts from some letters, and occasional notes by Dorothy Hobhouse.

The letters describe the voyage to Australia on the Collingwood, including landings at Malta and Egypt, conditions on the ship, his arrival in New Zealand, the state of the Church in the Nelson district, visits to Maori paha and gold diggings, the isolation of the clergy, the first diocesan synod, recruitment of clergy and the appointment of lay readers, the acquisition of books, family news, his household, travels to the remoter regions of the South Island, meetings with settlers, living conditions on sheep stations, the arrival of Rev. R.H. Codrington (1860), the causes of the Maori War and its effects on religious progress, the new province of Marlborough, the purchase of the west coast by the Crown and the extinction of native title, the condition of the Diocese of Nelson (April 1861), the views of Bishop C.J. Abraham on Maori matters, financial transactions, the provincial synod, the creation of the Melanesian Mission by Bishop G.A. Selwyn, Hobhouse's concern that extracts from private letters were published in England, his resignation as bishop and his determination to remain in the diocese.

### **2. Photographs of Nelson, New Zealand**

Five photographs of Nelson, including two street scenes and photographs of the original Christ Church Cathedral.

### **3. Miscellaneous letters of Edmund and Mary Hobhouse, 1859-65**

Mary Hobhouse (Sydney) to Maud Williams, 21 Feb.-11 March 1859: remoteness from friends in England; nomadic life; medical and dental problems; departure of Edmund for New Zealand.

Mary Hobhouse (Nelson) to Henry Hobhouse, 16 Feb. 1860: sends sample of New Zealand flax.

Edmund Hobhouse to Mary Hobhouse, 1859-61 (mostly Oct.-Nov. 1860): descriptions, sometimes in diary form, of his travels in the diocese; visits to sheep stations; services; descriptions of the landscape. (11 letters)

Mary Hobhouse (Nelson) to Maud Williams, 8 Feb. 1861: illness of her son; domestic duties; training school for servants.

Mary Hobhouse (Nelson) to Fanny, 12 Dec. 1861: thanks for sewing machine.

Diary-letters of Edmund Hobhouse, Feb.-April 1859: voyage from Sydney to Nelson; meetings with local clergy; provincial synod at Wellington; meetings with Bishops G.A. Selwyn, H.J.C. Harper and C.J. Abraham. (4 items)

Edmund Hobhouse to members of Nelson Diocesan Synod, 22 Sept. 1865: retirement as bishop.

Address presented to Bishop Hobhouse from parishioners of St Peter-in-the-East, [1858]

Bishop G.A. Selwyn (Auckland) to Edmund Hobhouse, 8 April 1864: Hobhouse's resignation as bishop and his intention of remaining in Nelson.

Edmund Hobhouse to Bishop G.A. Selwyn, 5, 7 May 1864: his resignation.

Sarah Selwyn (Auckland) to Eliza Hobhouse, 31 Aug. 1864: resignation of Edmund; his intention of remaining in England.

Lady Martin (Taurarua) to [Eliza Hobhouse], 1 Sept. 1864: resignation of Edmund Hobhouse; his severe comments on the immorality of the people of Nelson.

#### **4. Letters of Mary Hobhouse to her family in England, 1858-64 (mostly 1858-62). (74 items)**

Most of the letters were sent to her sister-in-law, Eliza Hobhouse. There are also a few letters to Harriet Brodrick, Mary Hobhouse (the wife of Arthur Hobhouse), her cousins Augusta and Louise and other relatives. Some of the original letters are missing, but there are typed transcripts of all the letters.

The subjects of the letters include the voyage to Australia, her stay in Sydney, first impressions of Nelson, requests for medicines, a piano and other goods, the colonial clergy, the difficulty of finding congenial company, news of the family in England, the first meeting of the diocesan synod (August 1859), the move from lodgings to her own home, servants, Edmund's meetings with Maoris, cooking, household duties, visits to Motueka, Edmund's tours of the diocese, the garden and orchard, the church school, Rev. R.H. Codrington, books, daily routines, descriptions of her house, the climate, conflict with the Maoris in Taranaki, her children Edmund and William, travels in the country, the distribution of clergy in the diocese, the provincial synod (Feb. 1862), relations with Bishop G.A. Selwyn, illnesses, visitors to the house, the diocesan synod (Oct. 1862) and Edmund's declining health (June 1864).

Of the 74 items, 22 are undated or incomplete fragments of letters. Many of them deal with purchases of books, prints, clothes, drapery, groceries, flower seeds and other goods undertaken in England by Eliza Hobhouse on behalf of Mary Hobhouse.

There is also a letter from Sarah Selwyn (Auckland) to Eliza Hobhouse (9 Aug. 1847) relating to the health of Selwyn's father and an explanation to accompany a map of the diocese of Nelson (1861).

#### **5. Letters of Caroline and Charles Abraham, 1859-1902. (5 letters)**

Caroline Abraham (Wellington) to Eliza Hobhouse, 1859-64: arrival of Edmund Hobhouse in New Zealand; family news; her visit to Nelson (March 1862), the home of Edmund and Mary Hobhouse; Edmund's health; his resignation and Bishop Abraham's visit to Nelson (Aug. 1864). (4 letters)

Bishop Charles Abraham (Bakewell) to Anna Hobhouse, 17 Dec. 1902: seeks news of Edmund; Abraham's health; books.

#### **6 Letters to Edmund and Anna Hobhouse, 1869-1905, and to Dorothy Hobhouse, 1955-62. (23 items)**

The correspondents include Bishop G.A. Selwyn (Lichfield), Sarah Selwyn (Lichfield), Bishop C.J. Abraham (Lichfield), Edmund Hobhouse (Beechill), George Brodrick (Oxford), S.J. Selwyn (Henley-on-Thames) and John G. Lonsdale (Lichfield). The letters mostly deal with news of their families and old friends, including the death of Edmund in 1904, with occasional references to New Zealand. The correspondence of Dorothy Hobhouse relates to her work on the life of her grandfather and the Selwyn Family. There are typed transcripts of some of the letters.

#### **7 Obituaries and correspondence on the death of Edmund Hobhouse, 1904-5**

Obituaries of Edmund Hobhouse published in the *Wells Journal*, *Nelson Diocesan Gazette*, *Guardian* (by R.H. Codrington), *Times* (London), *Morning Advertiser*, *Bristol Times*, *Lady's Pictorial*, *Bristol Mercury*, *Truth* (London), *Daily Mirror*, *Clifton Society* and *Western Chronicle* (by R.H. Codrington). There are also some obituaries of Hobhouse's brother, Lord Hobhouse, who also died in 1904.

R.J. Kingsley (Nelson) to Rev. W. Hobhouse, 20 June 1904: death of Edmund Hobhouse.

R.H. Codrington (Chichester) to Anna Hobhouse, 21 Aug. 1905: thanks for memoir of Edmund Hobhouse.

Stephen Hobhouse (London) to Henry Hobhouse, 9 Aug. 1905: thanks for memoir of his great-uncle.

*In Memoriam: Edmund Hobhouse*, reprinted from the *Guardian*, 27 April, 4 May 1904. (8pp)

A.F. Kirkpatrick (Cambridge) to Anna Hobhouse, 26 May 1904: resolution of Selwyn College Council on death of Bishop Hobhouse.

Laura Mules (Nelson) to Edmund Hobhouse, 24 April [1904]: death of his father. (copy)

Rev. F. Ault (Nelson) to Dorothy Hobhouse, 19 Aug. 1957: sends obituary of Bishop Hobhouse in *Nelson Diocesan Gazette*.

## **8. Memoirs of Edmund Hobhouse**

Typescript copy of 'Outline of my life' by Edmund Hobhouse, undated (21pp). The document covers the years 1817-58 in some detail, but has only a few lines on his time in New Zealand and nothing on his later life.

The document is accompanied by 18 photographs and drawings of Nelson, including a pen and ink drawing by Mary Hobhouse, a photograph of Bishopdale (1880), two pen and ink drawings of a house in Nelson rented by Bishop Hobhouse, a photograph of Maitai Valley, five photographs of gold diggings in New Zealand, and a pen and ink drawing of Christchurch Cathedral.