Labor in Politics
the state labor parties in australia 1880-1920
Edited by D.J. Murphy

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Labor in Politics
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D. J. Murphy
Abbreviations

AEHR Australian Economic History Review
AJPH Australian Journal of Politics and History
ALF Australian Labor Federation
ALP Australian Labor party
AMA Amalgamated Miners' Association
Amal WU Amalgamated Workers' Union
ARU Australian Railways Union
ASL Australian Socialist League
ASU Amalgamated Shearers' Union
AWA Amalgamated Workers' Association
AWU Australian Workers' Union
BHP Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd.
BIC Brisbane Industrial Council
CPD Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates
CPE Central Political Executive
F and SA Farmers and Settlers' Association
FMEA Federated Mining Employees' Association
GLU General Labourers' Union
HSANZ Historical Studies of Australia and New Zealand (up to April 1967)
HS Historical Studies (from October 1967; previously known as HSANZ)
ITUC Intercolonial Trade Union Congress
IVC Industrial Vigilance Council
IWW Industrial Workers of the World
JRAHS Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings
LEL Labor Electoral League
lib-lab Liberal-Labor
NLP National Labor party
NSWPD New South Wales Parliamentary Debates
OBU One Big Union
PLC Political Labor Council
PLL Political Labor League
PLP Parliamentary Labor party
PPA People's Parliamentary Association
PPL Progressive Political League
PR proportional representation
QCE Queensland Central Executive
QPD Queensland Parliamentary Debates
QPP Queensland Parliamentary Papers
QRU Queensland Railways Union
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Introduction

The Labor Parties in Australia

D. J. Murphy Editor
The Labor parties in Australia belong to a small group of political parties which are characterized by having trade unions directly concerned with their organization, administration, and selection of candidates. If the federal Labor party is included, there are in fact seven Labor parties operating in Australia. Despite the greater importance which has been increasingly attached to federal, as against state, politics since the first decade of this century it is in the state parties, known since 1918 as state branches of the Australian Labor party, that the real power resides.

While these state parties have close ties in their political attitudes and in their platforms, each one developed independently and has been conditioned by the economics, geography, and industry of the colony and state concerned and by the personnel who formed its executives and parliamentary parties during its first thirty years. For a number of years, those studying the Labor parties in Australia have assumed similarities among the parties which were not always there. In many cases the organization and tactics of the New South Wales party have been taken as the model on which it was assumed that other colonial parties developed and operated. Thus Louise Overacker, when discussing the New South Wales party, wrote: "While these institutions [pledge, pre-selection ballot, union affiliation] were being forged in the 'mother colony', parallel developments were taking place in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. The same problems arose, although not always in the same order, and for the most part the same solutions were found." It was not so much parallel developments that were taking place in the other three colonial Labor parties, as independent, though similar, developments based on the type of party being formed there.

A similar generalization has grown up about the relationship between the 1890 maritime strike and the formation of the Labor parties. In its simplest form, the thesis has been stated in this manner: there was a great deal of optimism and utopianism in the Labor movements of the colonies in the 1880s; this came to a head in a direct confrontation with capitalism in the maritime strike of 1890; the unions were defeated in the industrial field and turned to politics; the Labor party was therefore born out of or finally launched by the strike. Not all historians have accepted this thesis. What is revealed by a study of the separate colonies and the Labor move-
INTRODUCTION

ments at the time of the strike is that the simple causal relationship between the strike and the formation of the Labor party is open to doubt. It is argued in the chapters on Queensland and Victoria that the establishment of a Labor party and the nature of the party in each colony was unaffected by the maritime strike and in Queensland by the shearsers' strike that followed. Since it was to be a further ten years before Labor parties were established in Tasmania and Western Australia, the simple thesis does not hold good there. Only in New South Wales and South Australia, it is argued, did the strike bear some relationship to the development of the political party. Where the strike seems to have had some significance is in the interest it generated in the elections immediately following the strikes, when Labor parties in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia nominated candidates, for the first time, as organized political bodies. The hopes for the new Labor parties were reflected in the donations received for these election campaigns, which contrasted sharply with the poor response in subsequent elections. In further suggesting that the influence of the strike in the formation of the Labor parties has been exaggerated, it needs to be pointed out that far from encouraging unions to turn to political action, the effect of the strike, combined with the depression, was to reduce drastically the number of unionists in the colonies and, in their endeavour to survive, to turn many unions away from political associations which seemed costly, both financially and in the harsh retribution from employers that these associations had brought. The fact that the strikes, the depression, and the first organized attempt by Labor to enter politics all occurred within a few years should not be taken as concrete evidence that there was a causal relationship between the three events. The introduction of salaries for members of parliament in all colonies (except Western Australia) by 1890 was a mundane but crucial factor leading to Labor in politics.

Labor parties in Australia were the successors to the radical liberal political groups of the nineteenth century, but were not simply political organizations that carried on the traditions of liberalism. They had a different concept of society from that of the predominantly middle-class liberals. Geoffrey Marginson, in his study of Andrew Fisher as a colonial politician, demonstrates this difference. To Fisher, perhaps one of the most typical of the significant figures in the Labor parties in the 1890s, society was divided into two groups: the “labouring classes” and the “speculating classes”. The first group constituted the majority who received nothing like their fair share of the wealth produced nor of the opportunities to share in the other advances in society. The “speculating classes” he defined as: “The systematic swindlers, who promote land booms and mortgage banks, water the capital in prosperous times by multiplying it on paper by two or three, call it prosperity then rob the
poor to pay the interest thereon... the commercial men who in this commercial age do things they would revolt from in another age... the squatters and western landlords who exploit and manipulate the nomad western worker.\textsuperscript{2} Liberals could look down to the working classes and suggest reforms; the Labor parties, on the other hand, were a part of the working classes and looked out to the reforms that they sought to achieve. Their second major difference from the liberal political organizations was that political Labor parties represented a whole new dimension of political activity. A very broad historical analysis of western European government would show dominance by landholders, churchmen, and soldiers until the emergence of a commercial middle class from about the fourteenth century. By the close of the nineteenth century, this second group, in most of Western Europe at least, was reaching the height of political power; but at the same time the lower orders were beginning their movement towards political expression and the exercise of governmental power in their own right. In the Australian context, they channelled these desires almost wholly through the Labor parties. Again there was a difference, here, from the nineteenth-century liberal organizations. The one strength that the Labor parties commanded was their ability to present a united front to their opponents, the speculating classes. They had no economic power to carry them through. Consequently, the party organization became more important and though, in practice, the individual had ample room to move and to express his individualism, the theoretical freedom of the classical liberal to roam at will was not there.

The colonial Labor parties were primarily concerned with reforming the society in which they grew. They certainly contained socialists and through their influence adopted policies that were considered socialist. But despite this they maintained their original character of working men's political reform parties. In this regard, both the trade unions and the political Labor organizations reflected the influence of British practices and of British migrants who had gained experience in the trade union movement or in the Liberal party and who transplanted these political ideas to the Australian colonies. There is not much evidence to support the thesis that somewhere in the past there was a golden age when the Labor parties were pure and socialist, but that they lost this purity when they came under the control of scheming politicians bent on achieving their own personal power by crawling over the backs of the workers. In retrospect, what the various Labor parties sought may not appear to have been very radical or socialistic, but to contemporaries and to political opponents it was both of these. Certainly the parties were never revolutionary in their methods or demands, yet what they sought was a revolution in the social values of the colonies and they hoped to use the power of the state to achieve this. In the value they placed on state intervention,
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whether by instituting state business enterprises or by the state assuming the role of provider for the aged, invalid, and orphans, they were undoubtedly assisted by the Australian national acceptance of the state as having a greater positive role than would have been accepted in Britain or in the United States.

Both the colonial Labor parties and their political opponents regarded the establishment of state enterprises as socialism. What became confusing when the term socialism was raised was the vague and imprecise meanings given to it. To William Lane, writing in the Wagga Wagga Hummer in 1892, it was the "desire to be mates"; to the Queensland Worker of 1903 and 1904 it represented any and every desirable reform required; while to the Victorian Socialist party (which was a part of the Victorian Labor party) in 1907 "socialism means that the land, the railways, the shipping, the mines, the factories, and all such things as are necessary for the production of the necessaries and comforts of life should be public property". What the Labor parties were seeking was not so much a vague socialist society, but large significant changes in the economic and social organization of the colonies. In making some attempt to define the nature of the parties, however, it is worth recalling a paragraph of Henry Boote, who certainly was a socialist, in the manifesto he prepared for the Queensland Labor party at the 1912 state election which followed the general strike: "The Labour Party aims at no sudden revolution; no dramatic breaking down of existing institutions, but at such a gradual transformation of the evil features of our social system as will bring to pass a better state of things, more worthy of human nature and human genius." On the other hand the Labor parties wanted much more than a mere acceleration of liberal reformism even though they were to become the inheritors of nineteenth-century radical liberalism.

If anything, the Labor parties placed too much faith in the power of the state and understood too little the power of capitalism, bureaucracy, and the restraining conservative influence in each colony. In assuming that having a majority in the lower, popular house of parliament necessarily meant holding power, the colonial Labor parties sadly overestimated the real power which such a majority conferred. Labor in office did not mean Labor in power, though it did represent the opportunity for a significant advance by working people in the influence they could wield in their society. Labor governments did not mean the millennium had come, but they were to represent the means by which long-sought social reforms could be propagated and to a degree implemented.

The constitutional method of reform was slow and was to require more thought and hard, dull work than numbers of the parties' founders had contemplated. Moreover the speed with which changes could be implemented bore an obvious relationship to the practical fact of being in or out
of government. The seeds were sown very early for the continuing debate about how fully Labor should press its demands. In very simple terms the question was: should the Labor parties proceed with all possible haste on their quest for a socialist society or should they drop all efforts to obtain this ideal and merely continue to operate the mechanisms of the existing state? In practice the needs of the trade unions and others for immediate practical reforms provided for a middle road as the answer and for an agreement between propagators of the two points of view to maintain a single Labor party. Though the socialist groups established themselves as the guardian of Labor ideals, it was generally only in times of crisis that they were to try to take control of the administration of the parties.

Organizationally the Labor parties were to produce a new alignment of political groups. While political factions and groups in the colonial parliaments had been groping towards more cohesive party structures, it was to be the new Labor parties which formed the closely knit units in the lower houses. It became apparent to all the Labor parties as they moved into the parliamentary system that the one strength they each possessed was the capacity to present a single united front. Hence the necessity for a formal pledge from Labor politicians and a detestation of any who "ratted" or left the party, a feeling which seems to have been bitterly and heartily reciprocated.

There were other factors beside this need for solidarity which were common to the Labor parties. They were all concerned with the practical questions of politics, and all wanted practical reforms instituted by men from their own social group (this is the clearest point to emerge from the debates at the six intercolonial trade union congresses between 1879 and 1889); they were suspicious of people of education but nevertheless prepared to accept these once their commitment to the broad social and political objectives of the party had been proved; the composition of the executive reflected the less than equal place accorded to women in Australian society; they were concerned to keep church and state separated and to make the provision of education a function of secular government; they accepted the belief in the superiority of the white man and were nationalist rather than internationalist in their outlook; and initially they had little interest in foreign affairs except where this involved White Australia or "the Chinese question". It was not surprising therefore that on the issue of conscription, which had nothing to do with the practical political questions of the state parliament, the party should find itself divided. Labor leaders had a faith in their ability to persuade potential supporters through pamphlets and newspapers and their members were prepared to accept high levies and personal financial sacrifices to try to provide Labor daily newspapers in each state. Temperance and the rejection of liquor figure prominently among the early goals. This
stemmed from a strongly held belief, perhaps utopian in its origin, that the working man drank liquor only to drown out the horrors of his surroundings. The more a Labor man felt himself committed to socialist ideals, the more he was likely to be a strong teetotaller. However the parties did not consist exclusively of either socialists or teetotallers and the liquor question was to become, until the 1920s, a pinpricking source of internal friction. The colonial Labor parties inherited the Australian dream of land settlement and in addition saw in this a further means of overcoming unemployment, the greatest fear of the working man. In their desire to prevent strikes and lockouts, the other major problem of employees, the parties turned easily and quickly to the idea of government-instituted conciliation tribunals and arbitration courts which would provide a fair solution to industrial disputes.

The nature of the parties depended in the long and short term on the capabilities of the parliamentary candidates, of the parliamentary leaders, and of the men who were to wield power as administrators. The parties had high ideals and high ambitions which could not always be matched by the calibre of those who were selected to translate the policies into practical legislation. This, as much as anything, was the source of the continuing debate, at times heated and violent, about the role of politicians in the party and whether these should be the masters or servants of the party. Few of the parliamentary leaders found they had the ability to be electorally successful, maintain good relations with the party organization, and implement totally the platform when in government — all of which were demanded by the Labor movement. It was one thing to pass resolutions at Labor conferences, but another for the Labor politicians to implement these when confronted by the broad power of capitalism and with intransigent Legislative Councils, only one of which has ever been abolished.

Much of the trouble with parliamentarians in the pre-World War I period must be related to the Labor parties' internal debate about the nature of their role in politics. All the parties, except perhaps that in Victoria, were concerned to obtain office as soon as possible in order to effect Labor reforms. The questions which the parties consequently faced were: Should the party sit on the cross-benches and give support to one of the factions in return for concessions to the party? Should it attempt to form some working alliance or coalition with liberals, or should it persevere until it could obtain office (only in the Legislative Assemblies) in its own right and with a clear majority? Although Labor parties were formed and operating as independent political units in the nineties, it was not until about 1910 that they had answered these questions and decided to stand alone; it was then that Australian politics became based on Labor versus non and anti-Labor parties.
While the normal order seems to be to look from the state Labor parties to the federal Labor party, in fact the reverse should occur in at least three of the states, Victoria, Western Australia, and Tasmania, where it was the influence of federal parliamentarians and the needs of Senate votes which assisted in the growth of these three state parties. J. C. Watson, W. G. Spence, G. F. Pearce, King O'Malley, and other federal politicians of the first decade of this century were as important in building the party in Tasmania, Western Australia, and Victoria as were state politicians and union organizers in Queensland, South Australia, and New South Wales. In the same way the cross-pollination of Labor ideas through itinerant miners’ and shearsers’ organizations was of tremendous significance in building the political organizations (as had been the intercolonial trade union congresses (ITUCs) of the eighties). The miners and bushworkers were the roving organizers of the new Labor parties and provided the finance, often through the Australian Workers’ Union (AWU), for newspapers and paid political canvassers. On the other hand although the role of the urban-based craft unions has not been seen as being so significant, it was the secretaries of the carpenters, printers, and similar unions in the capital cities who often provided the leadership for organizing the new parties. Nor should the role of the main urban centres in providing the ideas, newspapers, and administration of the new parties be underestimated. But in looking broadly at the unions’ role in forming the Labor parties it would seem to be the case that those who had a skilled trade with which to bargain did not see Labor in politics as being so important until the 1900s when the Labor parties were well founded.

The Labor parties were never to become exclusively trade union parties, though the unions had the greatest voice in determining policy and choosing political candidates. From the beginning the parties aspired to a broad base incorporating unionists, liberal radicals, mild reformers, lower professionals, farmers (often seen as rural workers), and small businessmen in urban and rural areas— in short, welcoming any person who agreed with the broad reform goals. Often the parties were to become the battleground for conflict between unions, but in the main the unions formed the sheet anchor of the parties, providing the finance and organizers needed in campaigning in local electorates or for state elections. From Labor governments, the unions obtained the substantial practical reforms they sought either through legislative or administrative actions. At the same time it should be noted that it was not a one-way path of unions assisting the Labor parties, for, as the various chapters show, the Labor parties in turn assisted in the growth of unions and, in government, provided the atmosphere for unions to expand their industrial strength.

In making any assessment of the Labor movement’s entry into politics there are two ways of viewing the Labor party. A theoretical model may
be set up showing how a trade union, working-class, or socialist party should act and the Labor party may be judged against this standard; or it may be judged on what it set out to achieve, the personnel who joined and were available to represent it at conferences and in parliament, and the environment in which it had to operate. The Labor parties became the only mass working-class parties in Australia to succeed because their reforming, radical, and nationalist aspirations, combined with a willingness to use state power, coincided with the aspirations of the urban and rural working man. Australian working men were not educated for the higher adventures in socialism (though the Labor press hoped to provide this education) and did not appreciate the power which they held industrially and politically. This power was available only when used in unity, but because of the diversity of views in the parties, and the uncertainty of the speed at which the parties should proceed with reforms, it was comparatively easy for their opponents and those who held economic power to play the political game of divide and conquer.

While there are characteristics which were common to the six parties, there were also differences. Labor in Politics attempts to reveal, in more detail than has been possible in earlier books, the separate development of each party. It has therefore not attempted to explore the relationship between the federal and state parties except where this has a bearing on a particular state at any one time. What becomes clear is that each state Labor party developed a character and structure that were dependent on the geography, type of migrant, and economics of the colony concerned, and on the aims and capabilities of those who sat on its executives and in its parliamentary Labor parties (PLPs). Consequently there was no one reaction to each significant issue like conscription or One Big Union (OBU), but six separate ones. Similarly there was no one method of trying to overcome the obstacle of the Legislative Council, but six separate ones, each ultimately dependent on the state constitution.

During the First World War, the Labor parties took a considerable beating. The depth of their roots in the state political systems was revealed by the swiftness of their recovery in the early 1920s when they were again forming state governments. It will be worth the efforts of later historians to see whether the characteristics outlined here continued for the following fifty years.

DJM
NOTES

1. Louise Overacker, "The Australian Labor Party", American Political Science Review, 43, no. 4
4. Ibid., p. 196.
5. Worker (Brisbane), 16 March 1912.
THE GLORIOUS 28th.

Conscription is defeated – *Australian Worker*, 2 November 1916
(Courtesy Australian National University Archives)
Present Day Methods of Fair Play

Rob Shaw, Truth Office, Melbourne

Labor Call, 6 December 1917 (Courtesy Mitchell Library)
THE ATTACK.

Worker (Queensland), 21 February 1918 (Courtesy Mitchell Library)
The Labor party in New South Wales came into existence after the defeat of the trade unions in the maritime strike of 1890, but before that it had a prehistory stretching well back in the nineteenth century. Between 1890 and 1920, three or four stages in the history of the party can be distinguished: a tumultuous formative period between 1890 and 1895; fifteen years of consolidation and considerable achievement from then until 1910; six years in which, after attaining power for the first time and discovering the limitations it had to face in the exercise of it, the party split; and finally a period in which the party recovered lost ground and, for the second time in its short history, tamed or sloughed off its more radical sections before regaining power.

The term, a Labor party, was evidently used before the party as a political organization came into existence, but in the sense that a party existed when there were distinct working-class interests and perhaps Labor ideals at the electoral if not at the parliamentary level of politics. Before 1890 these interests and ideals were formulated and translated to the political arena by individual representatives, by ephemeral organizations such as the Working Men's Defence Association and above all by the Trades and Labor Council (TLC). The prehistory of the party is the story of these first strivings towards representation, influence, and power.

Working men's organizations played a small part in New South Wales politics before the gold rushes. One of the earliest, "the closest approximation to working-class political organization" before 1850, was the Mutual Protection Association formed in Sydney during the depression of 1843. It consisted chiefly of working men who were unemployed or anxious for their jobs; they thought colonial manufacturing should be encouraged, the land laws reformed, public works launched, and the importation of convicts and cheap labour stopped or restricted while free immigrants were out of work. The association had its newspaper for a short time, ran an employment agency, and helped to get six of its members elected to the city council before it went out of existence after about a year's activity.

From then until the 1870s working men in the colony took political
action almost wholly in conjunction with and under the leadership of citizens of other classes, providing some of the members and the less prominent activists in the committees of candidates in elections and in the agitations and organizations, all of them ephemeral, for such things as land reforms, constitutional changes, and electoral reforms. More than thirty years after the Mutual Protection Association was formed, working-class political action was still of the same kind. The Working Men’s Defence Association formed in 1877 at the height of dissatisfaction with assisted immigration was as short-lived and ineffective as its predecessor. It was too disunited to survive and was absorbed into the newly formed Protection and Political Reform League of the 1880s.

In the early years working men did not often attempt to get into parliament and were rarely successful. One of the earliest elected as a representative of his class was James Hoskins, a miner, returned for the electorate of Goldfields North in 1859. Three of these goldfields electorates were set up in 1858, superimposed on other electorates, and only miners had votes in them. Since salaries were not paid to members of parliament at that time (they were not introduced until thirty years later), Hoskins’s constituents undertook to pay him an annual stipend. These electorates did not always choose working men as their representatives and even those they did choose, like Beyers – with Holtermann the discoverer of Holtermann’s nugget at Hill End — or Buchanan, had ceased to be working men by the time they represented the miners.

Four other early working-class members of parliament may be noted at greater length: D. C. Dalgleish, Angus Cameron, Jacob Garrard, and E. W. O’Sullivan. Dalgleish won a seat in West Sydney in 1860, standing as a self-announced representative of Labor. Supporters in his electorate gave him a purse and a testimonial in which they said he had been “called from the ranks of Labor to represent [his] own class in the people’s House of Parliament.” He had come to Australia from Britain after refusing to renounce his membership of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, a condition of re-employment imposed by the employers after a lockout of the union. His views in the election were radical by contemporary standards: he favored “free selection, an elective Upper House, universal and purely secular education, [and] no state aid to religion” — all of them causes popular amongst radicals of a variety of classes and occupations — and in matters of more direct interest to working men, courts of conciliation in industrial matters and payment of members of parliament. Once elected, of course, he was relatively powerless to do much for the working class which he represented and had to take his place in the predominantly middle-class faction politics of the day.

The next representative of Labor to be elected was Angus Cameron, a carpenter by trade, secretary of the Progressive Society of Carpenters and
Joiners and its delegate to the New South Wales TLC. In June 1874 the
council decided that it should be directly represented in parliament and
Cameron, a member of the council’s parliamentary committee set up to
handle political organization for the elections of that year, was eventually
elected for West Sydney. The council paid him £3 ($6), soon raised to £5
($10) per week, as its representative. “He was expected to follow a broad
undefined Labor policy, to report regularly to the council and follow its
wishes on specific issues, a novel type of political control opposed to
accepted colonial notions of a parliamentarian’s independence. Cameron
himself subscribed to these general views and soon realized the ambiguity
of his dual role as a representative of West Sydney and of the Trades and
Labor Council.” In addition to that he said that he “deprecated class
legislation and maintained that Labor representation was not of that
character” and this, as Nairn comments, was “the kernel of the problem”
of labor representation at this time. In 1876 Cameron renounced his con­
nection with the TLC after disagreements with it about his course in
parliament, but he maintained his interest in Labor causes and worked
with the council from time to time, though not always harmoniously.

The third member who may be regarded as an early representative of
Labor was Jacob Garrard, elected in 1880 for Balmain, after standing
unsuccessfully for West Sydney in 1877. In that contest he said that
though he was “no railler against capitalism ... it was class legislation to
have a House composed of capitalists and squatters”. Garrard was a
member of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and its delegate to the
TLC, but unlike Cameron he was not advanced by the council to be its
representative in parliament, was not supported by it in his campaign, and
did not depend on it for his election. After his defeat in 1877, he
“widened his electoral appeal by his teetotalism and Orangeism and by
serving on the Balmain Borough Council” of which he was mayor in
1880. In parliament he played a leading part in promoting legislation of
interest to trade unions with the co-operation of the TLC, but when the
Labor party did enter parliament in 1891 he refused to join it. Like
Dalgleish and Cameron before him, he had become absorbed in faction
politics, and then as the factions were transformed into and displaced by
the Free Trade and Protectionist parties he continued as a member and
organizer of the Free Trade party.

E. W. O’Sullivan must be contrasted with these three men. He was a
journalist, one-time editor of the St. Arnaud (Victoria) Mercury and over­
seer of the printing room of the Sydney Daily Telegraph. After returning
to Sydney from Victoria in 1882, he was soon leader of the organized
printers and became the delegate of the Typographical Association to the
TLC. He stood unsuccessfully for West Sydney in 1882 as a self­
proclaimed representative of Labor and aired all the themes that he was to
take up during the eighties: “political democracy, anti-teetotalism, anti-immigration, trades unionism, industrial legislation, labor representation in Parliament and land reform in the interests of farmers and settlers”. As a member of the TLC and its president for six months in 1883, O’Sullivan argued from time to time that it should be engaged in broad social and political activity against the opposition of F. B. Dixon who replaced him as president of the Council. But what gave O’Sullivan his stepping stone into parliament was the Land and Industrial Alliance, not the TLC. In 1885 he was elected for Queanbeyan after a couple of years of work as a “moving spirit” in organizations such as the Democratic Alliance, intended as a workingmen’s political party; the Land and Industrial Alliance which was designed to bring farmers and workers together in a democratic movement; and the Protection and Political Reform League, a body intended to weld farmers, manufacturers, and labourers into a solid movement under the protectionist banner. Once in parliament he attached himself to the Robertson faction for a time and then set about organizing a protectionist group in the house and building up its support through protectionist organizations outside it. Throughout this period he saw himself, in Mansfield’s words, not “as the delegate of a single section, the trades unions, but as the spokesman of a wider people’s movement of which the trades unions were part”. “To the more single-minded defenders of union interests, he would seem, as a union advocate, too wide-ranging and at the same time, in his anxiety to avoid a clash of capital and labor, perhaps too accommodating.”

From the late seventies onwards it was increasingly clear that, though men could still get into parliament with the most rudimentary and ephemeral electoral organization, others were beginning to reach it who were prominent in and had the support of political associations of one kind or another. O’Sullivan’s political career illustrates the point. These associations were usually intended to do more than win elections for a given candidate; they were usually public bodies and they attempted, seldom successfully at first, to maintain more or less continuous activities and to develop a branch structure to build support for their causes across electoral boundaries. Between 1887 and 1889, party organizations had come into existence, primarily but not wholly for electoral purposes.

The TLC was different from associations of this kind and much more important for the future history of the Labor party. Nairn has given us a detailed account of the council from its formation in 1871 to 1891 when it played the leading part in launching a separate parliamentary Labor organization in the colony. One of the main themes in his story is that though the council rapidly became more than an industrial body it had the greatest reluctance to accept the implications of the political activities which it undertook or had thrust upon it. Early in its life, the council
stated its industrial objective: “to endeavour to harmonize the various conflicting interests of the whole body of workmen; and, . . . to endeavour to establish that reciprocity of action so essential at all times between the employer and employees; and, in the event of any misunderstanding arising, to endeavour to settle the same by arbitration in an amicable manner, if possible.” Nairn comments that the Council was designed to speak with more authority than individual unions, to be better equipped than any one of them to handle industrial questions in an expanding economy, to get more general and uniform industrial conditions, and to obtain wider support for unions in industrial disputes. It did not see itself remaking society; it was the champion and spokesman of labour in industry; it saw the advantages of arbitration in settling disputes but accepted that strikes were sometimes necessary.

In its first years, the council rapidly gained the support of the unions as its reputation grew. By 1874 it had decided that its effectiveness as a political pressure group could be increased if it had parliamentary representation and in that year it succeeded when its candidate, Cameron, was elected. This experiment failed, but not wholly; it showed that the council was not yet organized to cope with politics in the widest sense. It could get a Labor member elected. But the separation of the unions had thrown doubts on whether it ever could maintain control and discipline over him (or them) . . . The Council turned inwards to ‘industrial’ matters: ‘politics’ were to be abhorred. [But in time it was to discover again] that a firm distinction between industrial and political matters was impossible.” Throughout the eighties the council devoted itself to industrial questions: the extension of the eight-hour day, conciliating in disputes, settling strikes, promoting the formation of unions, helping to obtain alteration of the patent laws, arguing for the development of a system of technical education, and urging various clear-cut industrial reforms on the parliament, such as workers’ compensation and safety regulations. In all these activities it discovered it could also develop public opinion in ways more favorable to unionism. From time to time in the eighties, it cooperated briefly with other political organizations, notably through O’Sullivan’s activities, but by 1887 it decided it must remain aloof from them. Yet in 1887 the council could no longer confine itself to industrial action; the “limits of successful lobbying were being reached” and at intercolonial trade union congresses there was increasing pressure for direct Labor representation in parliament. The council was the organization best equipped to take the steps necessary to secure this representation and it had already begun to do so when the strike of 1890 and then the depression of 1891 to 1895 occurred, each drastically changing the environment within which the council was formulating its ideas.

The depression was the more drastic in its effects because of the long
period of prosperity and expansion which preceded it and formed the background to the growth of unionism in the seventies and eighties. From 1870 to 1890 all sectors of the economy prospered but in particular manufacturing and mining for both metals and coal. Factory employment rose steadily from 16,000 to 51,000; capital outlays by government on developmental works were large and about two-thirds of them went to wages, providing powerful support for the labour market; unemployment appears to have been low; it was relatively easy to obtain increases in wages; wage differentials for skill were low and the wages for unskilled and semi-skilled workers were extraordinarily high; average wages and prices fluctuated but the index of effective wages rose during the seventies, and, apart from some small variations, maintained a high level throughout the eighties. In the last two or three years of the eighties there was some reduction in general public expenditure and a slackening in construction and commercial activity, the effects of which were modified by good seasons, but “1890 opened with a bright outlook and a growing feeling that a general upswing was not far away”. When this upswing began, although it was confused to some extent by the economic effects of the strike in 1890, it continued until the later months of 1891, and then the depression began, just as the new Labor party in parliament was struggling to retain its unity and effectiveness.

II

“The little issue that is now dividing us, when the history of this Parliament comes to be written, will appear very small compared with the other great questions which will have been dealt with.” So spoke Cook, one of the thirty-six Labor members returned in the elections of June 1891, in the course of a debate shortly after the new parliament met. But it was not until 1895 and after two more elections that a united party existed with agreed rules for its collective action in parliament and in elections. The party soon became more deeply divided than Cook expected and its achievements were at first much smaller than he had hoped. The first split occurred in 1891 when, confronted with the tariff question, the newly elected Labor members failed to maintain their solidarity in parliament; the second, which developed late in 1893, was primarily between the parliamentary and extraparliamentary wings of the party.

The first step towards the electoral success of 1891 was taken in October 1889 when Brennan, a member of the parliamentary committee of the TLC, moved that the council should make arrangements to obtain parliamentary representation. A few months before this, a bill for payment of members had been passed. Brennan’s motion was agreed to by thirty-
five votes to three in January 1890, and the parliamentary committee then drafted a platform which the council accepted in April. The council sought approval of the platform by its affiliated unions but by May only seventeen had replied and only six of them approved it even though it consisted of typical trade union proposals.

The council had discovered by 1889 "that it could no longer carry out efficiently its essential reform tasks by means of its deputations, lobbying and general industrial policy", but lack of enthusiasm displayed by the affiliated unions and the opposition of some of them to the proposal suggest that it might have had much more modest beginnings than it had in 1891, if the maritime strike had not occurred.

But this is not to say that the strike was essential to the formation of the party, although the argument that it was has been attractive to those who have attempted to interpret the formation of the party in Marxist terms. Arguments of that kind must face two obstacles: the evidence that there was a growing demand for party political action in the interests of workers in both the intercolonial conferences of the trade unions and the TLC before the strike, and the lack of evidence of clear class-consciousness, of organization and action on class lines, and of any widely accepted assumption that there was an irreducible class conflict in society at this time. The strike began on 16 August 1890 and ended on 3 November with the defeat of the unions. For the time being the TLC gave little further consideration to its proposal for parliamentary representation, even though it was not in control of the strike. Many of the unions, which had been only recently formed, especially those of factory and service workers, were not as strong as the unions of miners and shearers and one immediate effect on the strike was to weaken them further or destroy them. More generally, as Gollan and Nairn have noted, it weakened or removed the "elements not conforming with the Trades and Labor Council" and exposed to the unions the "highly inflated view [they had] of their own strength" to make gains solely by direct industrial action. The immediate effect of the strike on the shearers was to convince them that all workers should be in unions and all unions united in one large organization and that unionism would be secure only if the Labor movement was established in parliament. Finally, whatever long-term significance may be attributed to the strike in sharpening the collective understanding of the working class, its main ideological effect was to weaken the idea that class cooperation was possible which had long been popular with many working-class leaders, especially those who had protectionist notions. Those with free-trade or socialist inclinations saw an opportunity to discredit protectionism and, emphasizing the class conflict character of the strike to the point of exaggeration, tried to discredit their opponents. But at a less intensely ideological level of argument, and one
much more plausible to the rank and file of the movement, the bitterness aroused by the strike, and the feelings of increased class antagonism that Labor leaders and publicists expressed, meant that when parliamentary representatives were elected they would be regarded as much more than the delegates of the TLC sent to parliament primarily to enhance its effectiveness as an industrial pressure group.

In October 1890, before the strike was over, a by-election was held in West Sydney which demonstrated the existence of a Labor vote, even though the candidate (Brennan) put up by a committee of representatives of the TLC and maritime unions not affiliated to it withdrew and the Council declared its neutrality in the campaign. The winner, A. G. Taylor, thought he was successful because he had championed “the holy and divine cause of labor as against capital”.

But this kind of individualistic representation was already outdated and not what Labor men wanted. The Australian Workman, organ of the council, and later of the Labor Electoral Leagues, argued two weeks later that “nothing less than the return of at least ten or a dozen staunch, educated and intelligent Labor candidates, who should form a third and neutral body, heedless of the claims of party, determined to obtain at any cost consideration for the justly discontented, can be of the slightest utility.” It went on to say that what was wanted was a group like the Home Rulers in the House of Commons, and that where the balance was nearly equal between the two fiscal parties, the “balance of power would be theirs, and they could demand and would obtain from both parties (equally desirous of their support) concessions on their own terms.”

In the meantime the parliamentary committee of the TLC advised that Labor electoral leagues be set up and that it should be asked to work out a plan of organization for them so that candidates could be chosen for the elections falling due in 1892. Council agreed and by March 1891 the committee had both rules and a platform ready for consideration and adoption by council. But already during January and February there was conflict in and out of the council between single-taxers on the one hand and protectionists and socialists on the other, and the argument, centred on one of the planks of the proposed platform, number 13, caused long debate in the council. Eventually the plank was adopted at an adjourned meeting and then the platform and rules and objects of the new organization were endorsed by a conference of union delegates.

What was at stake was not merely the plank, but the general course that the projected party would adopt on the fiscal question and in particular its tactics in relation to the Free Trade and the Protectionist parties and to ministries formed by them. The single-taxers were prepared to accept free trade as compatible with or an instalment towards what they wanted and were convinced that protection was a totally mistaken doctrine for the
working-class movement. The protectionists and socialists, whatever their own differences, thought that the doctrine of the single-taxers was unsophisticated and played into the hands of the conservative upper classes who, they believed, were most strongly represented in the Free Trade party. The future implications of the conflict were not clearly seen and a wordy and imprecise plank on land policy was adopted which later proved to be open to differing interpretations and provocative of strife in the party.

The new organization was called the Labor Electoral League (LEL), and its objects, as Black quotes them, were

1. To secure for the wealth-producers of the colony such legislation as will advance their interests, by the return to Parliament of candidates pledged to uphold the Platform of the League.
2. To secure the due enrolment (on the electoral lists) of all members of the League who may be entitled to vote in any electorate.
3. To bring all electors who are in favour of democratic and progressive legislation under one common banner, and to organise thoroughly such voters with a view to concerted and effective action at all Parliamentary elections in the future.

These objects in short proposed a colony-wide permanent electoral organization designed to select and pledge candidates and to arouse and lead the Labor voters.

The organization consisted of two parts: the branch structure in the electorates and a central committee. For the time being the parliamentary committee of the TLC acted as the central committee, but once branches had been set up one delegate from each of them and six from the TLC constituted the central committee. The treasurer and trustees of the TLC were to act as treasurer and trustees for the league.

Wherever possible a branch was to be set up in each electorate, and its work was to enrol voters, select candidates, and canvass and campaign for them. Each branch would choose its own officers (members of parliament could not be chosen for branch office) and enrol voters as members provided they accepted the platform. Membership was at the rate of two shillings (20 cents) each six months, and sixpence (5 cents) per member was to be sent annually to the central committee for its use. Candidates were to be selected by ballot of the members, and they had to accept the platform of the League, and to pledge that, if elected, they would sit on the cross-benches in parliament as an independent third party and resign when called on to do so by a two-thirds majority of electors.

The platform consisted of sixteen planks, and, although it was not the first, it was the one on which Labor candidates first stood in an election. Several of the planks proposed quite specific legislation, most of
it of an industrial nature: an eight-hour day; a workshop and factories act for various purposes; amendments of the Mining Act, the Master and Apprentices Act, and the Trades Union Act; repeal of the Master and Servants and Agreements Validating Acts, and extension of the Employers' Liability Act to seamen. The proposed reforms of the electoral system were specified in detail in the first plank. Other planks put more general proposals of an industrial or democratic character: for free, compulsory, and technical education for all; the election of magistrates; the reform of local government; the establishment of a department of labour, of a national bank, and of a national system of water conservation and irrigation; the execution of all government contracts in the colony and the stamping of all Chinese-made furniture. The twelfth, thirteenth, and sixteenth planks were declarations of principle rather than proposals for legislation: that the wage earner should get a fair and equitable return for his labour; that federation should be on a national not an imperial basis and with a volunteer defence force, and that the "natural and inalienable rights of the whole community to the land" should be recognized in legislation by "taxation of that value which accrues to land from the presence and needs of the community".

The reactions of many Labor men, especially the leaders and more active among them, to the strike of 1890 were summarized in the organization and platform. They clearly thought that they had not been given a fair deal and were now convinced that political as well as industrial action was necessary to secure it. The strike had convinced Labor men that neither governments nor parliaments could be expected to give their claims a fair hearing, let alone a sympathetic one, unless pressure were applied to them similar to that which unions had learned to apply to employers. Political representation of an ad hoc kind was not enough; it had to be organized both in and out of parliament, based on a platform and large enough to be a threat to any government that ignored it. Although there was a growing, if not wholly new, feeling of distinctness and intransigence in the movement, which socialist propagandists and organizations attempted to build on, this feeling was expressed more sharply in the rhetoric of public meetings than in the platform. It dealt with both industrial or trade-union demands and with others of interest to the working class which could not be obtained either by industrial action or by the pressure group activities of the TLC, but all its more or less specific planks were moderately reformist, negotiable, and, except for the single-tax implications of the thirteenth plank, devoid of abstract or large doctrinaire theories which might provoke hysterical reactions from their opponents and especially from those whom they expected to apply pressure to in parliament.

The platform and the organizational plan had scarcely been adopted
and a beginning made on the formation of League branches when in May 1891 the Parkes government, in office since 1889, was saved from defeat only by the casting vote of the Speaker. Parkes obtained a dissolution and the elections were set for the period 17 June to 3 July 1891.

Forty-eight Labor candidates went to the polls and thirty-six were returned, but not all of them were League candidates. Three or four unsuccessful candidates were reported to have had support from LEL branches although not selected by them; another was selected but not pledged. In Bourke, Langwell was selected and pledged, but to a platform which had been locally devised and which was a little different from that of the league. Many branches were set up in haste and even then the organization outside the metropolitan area appears to have been rudimentary and did not exist in many electorates. There was very little money for electioneering.

In the city, the Australian Socialist League (ASL) put up some of its own members as LEL candidates and decided, after a “warm discussion” to support other Labor men. This “scared the moderate section at the Trades Hall who endeavoured to have us officially repudiated” but failed. Single-taxers did likewise. Disagreements between protectionists, socialists, and single-taxers in the branches; the haste with which selections were made; the attempts of some candidates, first advanced under other labels, to obtain LEL selection as well, and the claims of some unselected candidates to be Labor men all make an enumeration of the members returned as properly selected and pledged candidates uncertain. Consequently estimates range from thirty-one to thirty-seven, but, since thirty-five were admitted to the first caucus of the party, that may be accepted as the number of properly selected members, whatever the process was by which they received endorsement and support in the campaign. Most of those returned were trade unionists, according to Ford, and only two were members of the Single Tax League and three of the ASL. As the returns came in and the success of the party was clear, Brennan forecast at an excited meeting of the TLC that “Labor would make itself heard in the next parliament with no uncertain sound... we were at the dawn of a new era and happier era for the workers of New South Wales.”

The Assembly at that time consisted of one hundred and forty-one members, and Labor’s thirty-five, with Langwell, gave the party a quarter of the members. The Free Trade party took forty-seven and the Protectionists fifty-one seats. Labor won just under 22 per cent of the valid votes cast, although Labor men contested only forty-eight seats, many of them in multi-member constituencies.
The new members held their first caucus meeting before parliament assembled and their second after the governor's speech. In these two meetings the first decisions were taken on the organization and tactics of the parliamentary party. A credentials committee was appointed to settle a dispute over the admission of members to caucus — Langwell was the only one refused — and the committee also had the newly devised pledge, acceptance of which would be a condition of admission in the future, referred to it for its opinion. The first caucus also decided not to choose a leader, but to appoint a managerial committee instead, consisting of Fitzgerald, Gough, McGowen, Sharp, and Houghton who was also appointed secretary to caucus. Davis was appointed whip.

The most important decisions were those concerning the pledge of solidarity and the tactics of the party in the coming session. The pledge, according to Black's recollection of it, was "that in order to secure the solidarity of the Labor Party, only those will be allowed to assist at its private deliberations who are pledged to vote as a majority of the party, sitting in caucus, has determined. [and] Therefore, we, the undersigned, in proof of our determination to vote as a majority of the Party may agree, on all occasions considered of such importance as to necessitate Party deliberation, have thereto affixed our names." Eight members, all protectionists, protested that they had pledged themselves to their constituents to vote for protection if the question arose, and they might be prevented from doing so by this pledge if a majority of caucus voted for a free-trade policy. The difficulty was temporarily shelved by a proposal to move in the house that the fiscal policy of the colony remain unaltered until a referendum had been held. This was intended mainly as a promise that the party would try to avoid taking a collective decision on the fiscal question in order to get protectionists to sign the pledge.

The party also decided to support the Parkes ministry in the house, because the governor's speech had promised legislation to enact seven of Labor's sixteen planks.

The disagreement in these first two caucuses between the protectionists and the others foreshadowed a division in the party which was soon to be made public by the members themselves and to reduce its effectiveness in the house. One member — Mackinnon — left the party at once when he refused to accept the proposal to move that the fiscal question he referred to a referendum.

The election had made a major change in the situation of the two older parties in the house. The Protectionists and Free Traders both needed some support from Labor — the Free Traders under Parkes to remain in office, Dibbs's Protectionists to displace them — and at first it seemed that Labor would vote solidly for one or the other. Early in the debate on the address-in-reply Dibbs moved an amendment of no-confidence in the
ministry and Labor members, including some who were protectionists, made it plain that they intended to support Parkes. Black himself announced that Labor would remain independent of both parties but would give its support to either, depending on whichever offered the best terms — the tactics advocated by the Workman — and other members echoed his views. But Edden said he felt he was pledged to his constituents to vote for protection and Gough that, having been opposed to Parkes’s ministry in the preceding parliament, he could not now support it. Davis, the whip, said that the party intended to remain solid even if one or two little branches, like Edden, had to be stripped from the main trunk.

The Protectionists in opposition had another tactic open to them besides bidding for Labor’s solid support — namely, to try to divide Labor members on the fiscal question. If they could be split, the question was to discover how much support the Protectionists could draw away from the ministry. Garvan, a Protectionist, moved an amendment to Dibbs’s motion that was designed to find out, and Parkes announced that it too would be regarded as a motion of censure evidently in the hope that Labor men would stand by their caucus decision to support him even though the fiscal question had been raised. Garvan’s manoeuvre succeeded; Morgan, Sheldon, and Scott said they were pledged to their constituents to vote for protection and that they would therefore vote with the opposition despite the caucus decision to support Parkes. Scott adding that he had originally intended to support the ministry in the division on Dibbs’s amendment. Eight Labor men voted for Garvan’s amendment and five for Dibbs’s amendment, including Langwell on both occasions. Three who voted for Garvan’s amendment — Scott, Sheldon, and Edden — voted with the main body of caucus against Dibbs’s amendment. Since there is some obscurity about who left the party at this time, we may assume that they were those who voted on the opposite side from the main body of caucus in motions that raised the fiscal question in the rest of the session. This left twenty-seven in caucus. The decision in caucus had been not only to support Parkes against both Dibbs’s and Garvan’s amendments but also that those who did not had “severed their connection with the party”. This established the principle that only those who stuck by the decisions of caucus could claim to be regarded as the true Labor party.

When Parkes was displaced a few weeks later, it was not as a result of a successful manoeuvre by Dibbs to divide the Labor party further but as a result of the refusal of the party to agree to Parkes’s demand that his Coal Mines Regulation Bill be recommitted so that an eight-hours clause that had been inserted in it in committee might be removed. When defeated on this, the Parkes government resigned and Dibbs took over on 23 October.
1891. From Parkes's point of view the support of the Labor party must have seemed totally unsatisfactory: the party had shown that it could be divided by motions from the opposition but that it could not be coerced by the leader of the party it supported.

Dibbs promised Labor a programme of legislation similar to that which Parkes had offered but made it clear that he intended to increase the tariff. Caucus decided to support his government and agreed that it would give a solid vote one way or the other when the tariff came up for consideration. When it did, the Labor party in caucus voted sixteen to eleven in favour of not altering the tariff. By now Parkes had resigned as leader of the Free Trade party and had been replaced by Reid, who moved that the tariff question should be held over until a referendum on it could be held under the amended electoral law. This manoeuvre perhaps had been suggested not only by the original caucus decision to submit the question to a referendum, but also by the request of the central committee of the LEL to its branches to say whether or not they favoured the submission of all questions of national importance to a plebiscite for decision, leaving the details to be worked out in parliament. Reid's motion put pressure on Labor to block Dibbs's proposal to raise the tariff. Consequently it was treated as a direct attack on the ministry.

This threw the Labor party into turmoil both in caucus and in the house. According to Hutchinson, the party was "about ten days trying to come to a decision as to what we should do" and in the house Labor men attacked one another bitterly. Scott tried to argue that, because Labor had not put forward its referendum proposal when Garvan's amendment was before the house, they could not now be expected to vote for such a proposal when Reid brought it forward. Fitzgerald — one of the management committee — said angrily that he would not allow himself "to be dragged at the chariot wheels of any single-taxer". Williams, Hutchinson, and Johnston said they were protectionists who had supported the late Free Trade ministry in accordance with the caucus decision and went on to say that now the single-taxers and free traders in the Labor party should do the same for the Dibbs government if it meant anything to sink the fiscal question. But Black pointed out that caucus had decided by a majority to vote for Reid's motion and Rae and G. D. Clark confirmed this. In short, those who wanted to continue supporting the Dibbs government were arguing from the earlier caucus decision against the later one. Sharp announced his withdrawal from caucus and Cann supposed that he would put himself out of it by voting for Dibbs. McGowen — a protectionist — voted for Reid's motion and was regarded as a model Labor man for it.

If the vote against Reid's motion did automatically put members out of caucus, this meant that the eight who had left the party were now joined
by nine more members, or ten if the one paired with them is included. This left seventeen members in caucus, or eighteen if Langwell is included in the list. But again, what was particularly important was that those who voted for Reid's motion as caucus had decided could claim that they were the true party and that the others were the seceders, a term which Nicholson used of himself, indicating that those who voted for Dibbs conceded the claim of the others to legitimacy. In two more divisions on Dibbs's customs duties bill early in the new year, the split was confirmed and Dibbs remained in office with support from eighteen members of the party and Langwell. The first session ended shortly afterwards in April 1892.

The split in the parliamentary party was rapidly translated to the LEL. The Australian Workman referred to Kelly and Cotton as blacklegs and traitors even before the vote on Reid's motion was taken. Meetings in branches of the LEL, particularly in the Sydney area, were heated as they debated whether to censure their members or to express confidence in them. The central committee of the league called for unity in the party and asked all Labor members to meet with it early in January 1892. Twenty-two of them did so but the meeting broke up in disorder, with rumours of the formation of a new Democratic party.

In this situation, the LEL held its first annual conference, at which delegates from twenty-two of the forty branches and eleven from the TLC met and revised the objects, platform, and rules of the league. Eight of the branch delegates were socialists "or sympathisers" and seven were single-taxers.

The objects were materially altered only in one respect — the first became: "to secure to the wealth-producers of the colony such legislation as will enable them to retain in their own hands the full produce of their labor." The platform was altered by adding to the controversial thirteenth plank a prohibition of further alienation of Crown land; by adding some details to the plank that government contracts should all be let in the colony; and by adding three new planks: for the popular election of all school boards, for the abolition of the upper house and its replacement with the principle of the referendum, and for the prohibition of the use of camels as beasts of burden.

The rules of the LEL were amended in a number of particulars. It was agreed that the central committee of the league would consist of one delegate from each branch, that the TLC's representation on the committee would be reduced from six to three, evidently without first securing the TLC's agreement to that change, and that the central committee, rather than the council, should be the tribunal for the settlement of disputes in the league. A motion to exclude women from membership of the league was defeated and all adult residents were to be eligible, but no one...
was to belong to more than one branch. The branches were given power to write their own rules on the admission of new members. The platform was to be altered only at the annual conference, and proposals for alterations were not to be dealt with by the central committee but submitted to the branches themselves through central committee well before the conference. A lengthy rule prescribed the way in which branches would select candidates for elections. The selection was to be made by ballot of financial members of at least three months' standing and those selected would be required to give a written pledge that they would not only uphold the platform and resign if called on by a two-thirds majority of the electors — the old requirements — but in addition that they would not contest the seat if not selected, and that they would vote in parliament as the majority in caucus decided or resign their seats. The relatively weak provision of resigning if called on by two-thirds of the electors was retained against a proposal — one which threatened to make members of parliament much more manageable by branches — that they should resign their seats if called on to do so by a two-thirds majority of financial branch members. Finally two motions on the split in the parliamentary party were carried: one for reuniting it on the basis of the platform and the agreement to submit the fiscal question to a referendum; the other calling on branches to ask their members to resign if they had voted against the decision of caucus. In February, Trenwith, a visiting Victorian Labor leader, tried to negotiate an agreement between the two sections of the parliamentary party and the extra-parliamentary organization but failed.

The revision of the rules on the relations of the central committee to the TLC and on the pledges required of candidates caused the most disturbance in the organization, although there can be little doubt that at the branch level different factions wrangled to use or rewrite the rules to benefit themselves. But at the centre a quarrel broke out between the executive committee and the TLC over the new rules. Watson, who had been in the TLC throughout most of its life and was by now its vice-president, was anxious that the council — which he thought should be unified instead of split into single-tax, free-trade, and protectionist sections — should sever its connection with the LEL, so that politics could be kept out of it and the parliamentary committee again freed to do its work.\(^2\) But the council eventually decided that no change should be made in the constitution of the central committee, tried in vain to take back the books and funds of the league, and finally, several months later in July 1892, reached an agreement with the central committee that made the President of the TLC the ex-officio chairman of the central committee, gave council six other representatives on the committee, and continued its power of veto over alterations proposed in the platform.\(^3\)
These arguments in the organization outside parliament made it clear that the parliamentary split was, as Nairn has emphasized, only part of a wider and more complex division within the party. Apart from the disagreements of free traders, single-taxers, and protectionists about the fiscal question and their parliamentary tactics, there was the struggle between what may be called the trade union and the political wings for control over the organization. This was settled, for the time being at least, both by the agreement which gave the TLC the influence it wanted in the central committee of the LEL and by the steady enrolment of unionists in league branches. The union movement would remain in politics. And finally there was a difference, the full dimensions of which had not yet been revealed but which had been touched on in the conference, about the position of the parliamentary party in relation to the league organization. The conference had accepted a tougher pledge, and had not only given recognition to caucus and the binding nature of its decision but had also indicated that when a member broke his pledge to vote as caucus agreed the extraparliamentary organization — evidently at the branch level — would be expected to deny him preselection. It was the quarrel over the pledge and between the parliamentary and extraparliamentary sections, chiefly the branches, of the party that continued the conflict in it through 1892 and 1893.

In these two years unemployment was high and increasing, wages were falling steadily, and both tendencies continued through 1893 and even longer for some sections of the workforce, particularly the unskilled and those in the pastoral industry. The depression of the nineties was as important as the strike of 1890 in the early years of the party, particularly in strengthening the antagonism which workers felt towards employers and in extending its range. Manufacturing employment, particularly in metal and railway workshops and clothing and woodworking industries was cut by 20 per cent between 1890 and 1893; coal production for consumption fell from 4 to 3.3 million tons (ca. 4.1 to 3.4 million tonnes) between 1891 and 1893; the pastoral and building industries suffered drastic reverses with consequent loss of jobs for the unskilled; public capital formation was dramatically reduced, and finally in 1893 there was a banking crisis which immediately disrupted trade and commerce in New South Wales. The depression weakened the union movement and added to the pressure on the parliamentary party. Some of the smaller unions collapsed entirely or withdrew from the TLC. The council was dissatisfied with the “failure of the parliamentary party to take any effective action to deal with the economic crisis” or to protect the leaders of a major strike in Broken Hill from arrest and prosecution by the Dibbs government. It was too divided to be effective in the house on questions that were of the utmost concern to the unions in particular and workers in general. The
simple unionist reaction was that those who did not vote to condemn Dibbs's actions against the strike leaders when the question was put to parliament were scabs, and the TLC singled out four of them whose "execrable conduct" it viewed with contempt.\(^5\)

The question was put when in September 1892 Reid moved that the government did not have the confidence of the house and Labor members moved two amendments to this and all three motions were defeated. What matters is not to determine how each Labor or alleged Labor member voted but to notice that Labor organizations outside parliament thought that any Labor man who voted to keep Dibbs in power when he was using the power of the state on the side of employers against union leaders had betrayed his mates and the Labor movement. The incident hardened the determination of the extraparliamentary organization to have its members under close control. And the temper of the feeling was well summarized a few weeks later when the *Australian Workman* editorially castigated the LEL branches for not being tough enough with the "Labor rats".\(^6\) It also showed only too clearly the powerlessness of Labor parliamentarians at this time as the second session of the parliament dragged on into 1893. In December Reid again moved a censure on the financial administration of the treasurer and failed by a handful of votes. In the opening months of 1893 there were three divisions on control of the business of the house and one which raised the protectionist question again on the cost of letting contracts in the colony for the supply of cast iron pipes. Dibbs survived all of them with support from men elected as Labor members, although close examination of the divisions suggests that they were not voting as clearly defined blocs of the kind that emerged in the first session. But towards the end of the session in June 1893 the old split in the party may be detected once more, at least in divisions in which Protectionists and Free Traders were opposed most sharply.\(^7\) Nonetheless, twenty-one or perhaps twenty-four or twenty-five of the original members and Langwell met and elected Cook as their leader in October 1893, to the surprise of the central executive of the LEL.\(^8\)

But this incomplete reuniting of the party was not to last and it collapsed under pressure from the organization outside parliament. The second annual conference of the LEL in January 1893 ratified the settlement of 1892 between the central executive and the TLC and spelled out its view that the party in parliament should "be a distinct party and not be allied to any other party"; it should also "elect a chairman to preside over their meetings, the same to be the leader in the House", a point which was raised but lost in conference the year before; further, Labor men in caucus should "expel any of their members from their party who do not abide by the rule of the majority in caucus".\(^9\) The pledge itself was left as it had been decided in the previous conference.
But in August and October 1893 the central executive of the league met on the initiative of the country unions and decided to take matters further, in planning what was to be done to prepare the party for the next general election. The executive decided to call a special unity conference for November, that a fighting platform of six planks would be defined within the general platform, and that conference would also be asked to deal with a proposal that the parliamentary party must be solid on all questions. The executive also proposed that there would be no objection to a candidate stating his fiscal or any other views, but if he pledged himself to the constituents to vote in any other way than as caucus decided he was not to be recognized as a Labor candidate. New branches of the league were already being formed, evidently as a result of the decision of the executive in August or of country unions like the shearers to send roving organizers — men like Hughes and Holman — into the country. The executive advised all branches to increase their membership from unorganized labor and to accept as members trade unionists who could show their union clearance cards and who accepted the LEL platform.

The unity conference met on 9 and 10 November 1893. Over two hundred delegates were present on the first day, but the numbers fell slightly on the second as both city and country delegates went back to their jobs. All sections of the labor movement were represented: the parliamentary party by Cook; the TLC by four men, in addition to those it had on the central executive of the League which was present as a whole. It consisted of the president of the TLC, six members of the parliamentary committee, and about fifty delegates from “nearly every Labor League in the colony”. In addition, each league branch was directly represented by up to four delegates depending on its membership, and this added about another fifty-five men to the conference. Trade unions were similarly represented directly, sending about sixty-five delegates. Twelve of these were members of parliament — from both sides of the split of 1891, plus Langwell and Schey, who had not been in caucus. About a dozen of the union representatives were shearers and perhaps a similar number came from — or represented — country unions; the rest were from city-based unions. And included among these delegates were “almost every man whose name is associated with Labor agitation in the city or the country” and representatives of the single-tax movement and socialist organizations, among them men like Holland and Holman who were from the new, more moderate socialist generation of Labor men. Single-taxers were in a minority in the conference.

The figures are of importance because it was later argued that the conference was made illegitimate by the inclusion in it of direct representatives of trade unions, of all members of the central committee of the league, and by the haste and disorder with which it was conducted — or, as
Black put it, it was packed with the proxies of unsuspecting league branches and delegates of non-existent branches. There was some disorder from time to time — at one point Cook insisted that those who were not socialists were not to be regarded as "faddists" and the report says that this "strong statement" made "the chamber fairly bristle with points of order, none of which were, however, successful". The chairman, Watson, in fact seems to have managed the debate fairly and firmly, and although the gag was moved often enough — and not always by members of the central committee — it was not always carried. Holman, one of the more important members of the executive at the gathering, attempted to reply to the charge that the socialists had packed the conference, but the Worker did not publish the letter he sent it because, in the editor's opinion, it was too abusive. Holman's defence was, however, detailed enough to be plausible, naming six delegates who had no right to be at the conference, five of them opposed to the central committee; denying that he was himself on the credentials committee, and saying elsewhere that no more than four or five of the proxies had been nominated by the central committee. Holman insisted that the conference had been called for the one day, a holiday, and that a minority of delegates had tried to delay the taking of decisions to the following day after many of the delegates had gone back to work. As he saw it, the question for the future was "simply this": "Are the workers themselves, gathered in Conference, to decide what the Labor Movement shall be, or are some twenty or thirty of them, chosen from their ranks (in most cases by pure accident) some three years ago for the purpose of performing one particular part of the duties of the cause, to elevate themselves to the position of perpetual dictators of the Labor Movement?" It is most likely that the central committee set out in conjunction with the TLC to apply the strength, discipline, and attitudes of unionists more fully within the political organization and that this bore fruit at this conference to the discomfiture of those who felt themselves secure enough in the branch structure to insist upon their independence or to promote their own particular causes, single-tax or whatever it might be. Even if all the members of parliament who were present, all the representatives of country unions, a half of the remaining union representatives and two-thirds of all LEL delegates are counted as opposed to the central committee and the TLC, it seems likely that the committee and council could count on over sixty votes in a conference in which most of the recorded divisions totalled less than a hundred votes. Whether that was so or not, the proposals of the central committee were put through with only minor alterations.

A fighting platform of six planks was defined and passed, a ballot being taken to decide the order of the planks. The platform was almost identical with one the central committee had drafted before the conference. The
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planks were debated one by one and several times the chairman had to rule amendments and motions out of order on the ground that the conference was not empowered to alter the platform of the party, but only to determine the wording of fighting planks drawn from it. Land value taxation was one subject which gave rise to considerable debate, and it was finally adopted as the first plank and as a summary of the thirteenth plank of the general platform. The principle of the eight-hour day caused sustained argument between city and country unionists, the latter claiming that legal limitation of a working day to eight hours was unworkable in the country. The city unionists and the central committee wanted it and the plank was added — as the sixth in the platform. The other planks caused less disagreement.

The pledge was the subject of a long debate. Holman, acting for the central committee, put forward a strongly worded declaration of principle before discussion of the platform and the pledge began. It referred to solidarity and traitors to the cause presumably in the hope that the discussion of the pledge would be less emotional. The motion was carried but later on another motion put by Holman was lost and a much tougher motion was carried condemning Sharp, Fitzgerald, Johnston, and Kelly as traitors to the cause. The discussion of the pledge, although warm, was consequently reasonable and the proposal of the central committee was carried after amendment. The resolution was

(a) that a Parliamentary Labor Party to be of any weight must give a solid vote in the House upon all questions — affecting the Labor Party, the fate of the Ministry, or calculated to establish a monopoly or confer further privileges on the already privileged classes — as they arise, and

(b) that accordingly every candidate who runs in the Labor interest should be required to pledge himself not only to the Fighting Platform and the Labor Platform, but also to vote on every occasion as the majority of the Parliamentary Labor Party may in caucus decide.

The words in clause (a) from “affecting” to “classes” were accepted by Holman as an addition to the central committee’s proposal and this alteration liberalized it. A further resolution, intended to tell branches that they could not accept any man as their candidate if he gave any pledge to the electors except to vote according to the decision of caucus, was amended after a fairly heated discussion. The motion was put as a way of sinking the fiscal question; the amendment narrowed the range of the original motion by specifying that no candidate could be accepted if he pledged himself to the electors to vote on the questions mentioned in the resolution of conference in any way other than as a majority of caucus decided. The amended motion meant, in short, that branches had to
pledge candidates to observe the terms of the pledge designed for the parliamentary party, but that they could not prevent them making pledges to the electors on the fiscal question until that too was included in the subjects on which caucus or conference had declared itself. The amendment may have seemed like a defeat for the central committee but only to the extent that the branches were left with a little latitude that caucus itself could easily deny to its members, on pain of expulsion, if it was so minded. Finally, a proposal from the floor that the LEL incorporate itself, in effect, in the Australian Labor Federation (ALF) was defeated by being replaced with a motion that members of the federation resident in a district should be entitled to all league branch benefits. This was an important concession to but not a victory for country delegates, especially those from Young, that is, those representing shearers and general labourers, who had talked earlier of absorbing the LEL branches into the ALF. Spence in the *Worker* and the *Australian Workman* approved of the conference as a whole, although a little later on Holman and three other delegates from the central committee had a hard task convincing the annual conference of the Shearers' Union that it should accept the decisions made in November.

The November conference took place in the middle of the third session of the fifteenth parliament. Early in the session, Labor men had been divided into three sections by the Australasian rights purchase bill (which was intended to give a monopoly, as some saw it, to a private Melbourne firm to provide electricity to Sydney from water power in the Grose and Colo rivers), but apart from this the members of the party had generally been in agreement. The November conference, according to Black, put a bombshell amongst them and from then to the end of the session in December the party in parliament was again sharply divided. But by this time what the old Labor members were doing in parliament was of no great importance: the party outside parliament was preparing for the election and was determined that the members it elected next time should toe the line.

The most important business of the third annual conference of the LEL held in March 1894 was to consider the work of the unity conference of November 1893 and reach agreement with the branches about it. The branches, entitled to one delegate each, sent sixty-nine representatives and the TLC seven. The pledge defined at the November conference was agreed to, after a proposal to go back to the pledge of 1892 had been defeated. Country branches, according to one delegate, had accepted the decisions of the November conference in other respects but they had dissented from its pledge. A proposal to put one representative of the parliamentary party on the central executive for each ten members of the party in parliament was carried, and another, to exclude TLC delegates
from it, was defeated. This meant that the executive now consisted of one
delegate from each branch, six from the TLC, and one for each ten men in
the parliamentary party. The power of the executive in the organization
was enlarged but still subject to conference: besides its power to settle
disputes, it was empowered to interpret the constitution and rules of the
party, to check on the genuineness of new branches, and to repudiate
those not working in conformity with the platform and the pledge and to
grant or refuse endorsement to candidates selected by the branches. The
secretary — evidently without the authority of a rule — told all branches
they must supply signed duplicates of the candidates’ pledges to the
central office. The eight-hour plank was amended, to conciliate country
deleagues, by adding the phrase “where practicable” to it.

The decisions of the 1894 conference did nothing to conciliate the
Labor members, who were reported to be in a furore about them. In
April 1894 the Labor members published their own manifesto as a reply to
the manifesto of the November conference and, in effect, the conference
of March. Nineteen members signed it, or authorized Cook as leader to
sign it on their behalf, and thirteen others were said to have refused to
sign the revised pledge of the LEL. Davis, Kirkpatrick, and McGowen were
the only ones prepared to sign the revised pledge. The TLC attempted to
reconcile parliamentary members to the league after a meeting in which
the central committee had been described as insulting and domineering,
but the parliamentary members tried to insist that sitting members should
be entitled to be re-selected as candidates and submitted their own draft
pledge, and the proposals for reconciliation failed. Late in May the TLC
gave up its attempts to mediate between the parliamentary members and
the central committee. In June the secretary of the central committee
reported that seventy-two of the eighty-four branches of the League had
endorsed the pledge of the March conference, that four refused to ask
candidates to sign it, and that eight gave no reply. The executive
declared bogus the four refusing to endorse the pledge. The minutes of the
metropolitan Denison branch, formed a few weeks before the November
conference, indicate that some of the branches had first to survive internal
splits and expulsions before their loyalty was accepted by the central
committee.

The party went into the election of 17 July 1894 irremediably split but
now on lines that had little in common with the split of 1891. Ostensibly,
the split was between the parliamentary and the extra-parliamentary
sections of the organization, but the situation was more complex than
that. The complexities, hinted at in the conferences of November and
March, were made more obvious in the election. The TLC had not only
failed in its attempts at mediation; it was also on the point of dissolving
itself and being re-created as the Sydney district section of the ALF.
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was increasingly weak and poor, as a consequence of economic conditions in the colony and the withdrawal or collapse of smaller unions and, in relation to the pledge, at least as it applied to particular men, it was internally divided. Houghton, Black, and Schey were good Labor men in the eyes of the TLC and should be supported even though they had refused to sign the new pledge. The central committee, or rather its propaganda committee, which appears to have done much of the election work, clearly had its opportunity; it decided that Schey, Houghton, and Black had to be opposed and Cook as well, and, since they evidently commanded the loyalty of their branches, new branches had to be set up, prepared to take central committee — that is, “solidarity” — candidates. This caused some controversy both at the time and afterwards, country branches in particular and the Australian Workman taking the view that Black, Houghton, and Schey should not have been opposed. The same pattern appears to have been repeated elsewhere: in Ashburnham electorate, a central committee solidarity faction split one of the branches at the last minute in the campaign and ran their own candidate after the other four branches selected Gardiner and refused to insist that he sign the solidarity pledge. In Barwon likewise the committee put up its own candidate — S. A. Rosa of the Australian Socialist League (ASL) — when the shearers there put up their own man and refused to pledge him as the committee required. The result was to split the Labor vote — a common result according to the committee’s critics — and let W. N. Willis win what was regarded as a Labor seat. The Barwon people claimed in justification that several other candidates ran unopposed as ALF men.

In the election for a house now reduced to one hundred and twenty-five members, each returned for single-member seats and elected on a one-man-one-vote principle as a result of the new electoral act, passed in 1893, the central committee claimed to have sixty-eight candidates. This was about twice the number of “other Labor” men, many of whom were described as ALF candidates, although by this time many of the sitting members had begun to drift into the Free Trade and Land Reform League. The central committee claimed fourteen men returned, once the results were final, while the other or independent Labor group consisted of eleven, or twelve counting Gardiner among them and allowing for the disqualification of Willard. The Free Traders had fifty-eight members and the Protectionists forty, including independents of each kind. LEL candidates took 16 per cent of the total valid vote, and independent Labor candidates 9 per cent, in all 25 per cent of the vote was compared with 22 per cent in 1891. Only four of the LEL — that is, central committee’s — candidates had been members of the previous parliament: McGowen, T. M. Davis, Cann, and Kirkpatrick. All but two of the twelve independent Labor men had been members before and most of them were returned by
country electorates, while most of the "solidarities" were returned for city and suburban seats.

In the contests the two wings seem to have avoided — or been unable to mount — challenges to one another except in a few constituencies where the contest had symbolic value, like Hartley where Cook was opposed by one who was probably an LEL candidate who took 1 per cent of the vote while Cook took 47 per cent of it. Of the sixty-eight or seventy league candidates, only fourteen had contests with non-league Labor candidates, and a similar proportion of the others had no league opponents, even if the candidates, like Rosa, whose cause was hopeless are counted. In fact only four more seats might have been won by the LELs had there been no competing Labor candidate and had all the Labor votes gone to league men — Barwon, Newtown, Leichhardt, and Quirindi. The rest were either won by Labor men of one label or the other or could not have been won anyway had the Labor vote not been divided. What clearly mattered most was that the league branches, with only a few exceptions, had remained loyal to the central committee. But the two papers, the *Worker* (which had long since shown its partiality for the parliamentary party in its quarrel with the central committee) and the *Australian Workman* both blamed the committee for Labor's defeat by insisting on the solidarity pledge of the November conference. Holman and his clique in the propaganda committee of the central committee were thought most to blame. The committee immediately declared the *Workman* bogus.

Shortly afterwards the plan for a political Labor federation, which had been approved at the Intercolonial Trade Union Congress (ITUC) at Ballarat in 1891 but not acted on in New South Wales, was revived, primarily with the backing of the Australian Workers' Union (AWU), which was Spence's Amalgamated Shearers' Union, renamed after it had absorbed the General Labourers' Union (GLU). The TLC was absorbed into the new Sydney district council of the ALF. Rae, from the Riverina district council of the federation and a leading figure in the AWU, proposed reorganizing and decentralizing the central committee of the LEL, and the district council later proposed that a new United Labor Party (ULP) should be organized to supersede or complement the league. This appears to have been a move designed to forestall a drift of country members to the Farmers and Settlers' Association (F and SA). Several of the early Labor independents with protectionist inclinations and sitting for country constituencies, Gough, Sheldon, Vaughn, Nicholson, and Newton, had drifted into the F and SA before the 1894 election. But it also suggests that the country unions were uncertain of their course, and their indecision was bound to be seen by the parliamentarians and the central executive as a threat to the future of the parliamentary party.

At the next LEL conference, in January 1895, a motion was carried
that the ALF take up the same number of representatives on the central committee of the league as the old TLC had, and that members of the New South Wales section of the ALF and of unions not included in the federation be accepted as members of the LEL branches. This was one of the first signs that a reconciliation might be effected. In April and May 1895 there were further negotiations between the LEL and the country organization of the ALF and finally, under the guidance of the AWU, the two organizations were merged and the Political Labor League (PLL) was formed. The breach between the city and country wings of the Labor movement was averted and with the merger the dispute over the pledge was ended. The new league adopted a modified version of the pledge which settled dispute on the question for years to come.

The new pledge was: "I hereby pledge myself not to oppose the selected candidate of this or any other Branch of the Political Labor League. I also pledge myself, if returned to Parliament, on all occasions to do my utmost to ensure the carrying out of the principles embodied in the Labor platform and on all questions, and especially on questions affecting the fate of the Government, to vote as a majority of the Labor Party may decide at a duly constituted caucus meeting." Although it was accepted as a compromise, it meant that now the "parliamentarians were responsible not merely to themselves or their individual leagues but to the movement, speaking through a representative conference". It was equally important that the central executive was reconstructed, although its powers were unchanged. It was reduced in size to eleven members, of whom the president and secretary and seven others were to be elected by the annual conference and the other two were to be delegates of the New South Wales section of the ALF. Membership was extended to include members of affiliated unions and other unions with which special arrangements were made. The executive could take part in the annual conference but not vote. The leader and secretary of the parliamentary party were made members of the executive, ex officio, at the 1896 conference, and all parliamentary members were put on it by the 1898 conference but allowed only five votes.

Meanwhile it had been apparent that there might soon be another election. After the election of 1894 Dibbs resigned without meeting the new parliament and Reid formed a ministry which included Cook, who had briefly been the leader of the parliamentary group of Labor men. The solidarity Labor men appointed McGowen as their leader and Griffith as secretary. In a house of 125, Reid, with a party of 58, needed support which he obtained from both the independent and the solidarity Labor men, after offering them an attractive programme. The solidarities maintained their cohesion in divisions in the house, but the independents did not — Schey and Wood voted much of the time with the Protectionists;
Brown, Black, Edden, Fegan, and Bavister voted with the solidarities; and Gardiner and Newman voted more often with the Free Traders and Cook. In May 1895 Reid put forward measures designed to fulfil his election promises of reducing tariffs and introducing direct land and income taxes. When the upper house rejected the Land and Income Assessment Bill, a machinery measure, chiefly because the government refused to allow it to lower the level of exemptions, Reid went to the country in July, calling for reform of the Legislative Council and insisting on direct taxes.

The reunited Labor party went into the election on a platform that had been revised a little at the annual conference. The plank on electoral reform was altered to take account of amendments that had already been made to the electoral law in 1893; abolition of plural voting, the adult male franchise, the registration of voters, and single-member constituencies of approximately equal numbers of electors. The plank on camels was dropped and an addition recommending the "total exclusion of inferior alien races" was made to the one calling for identification of Chinese-made furniture. The old land tax plank was rewritten, to make it much less doctrinaire: it now read

(a) abolition of the further sales of state lands
(b) the destruction of land monopoly by the taxation of the value of land exclusive of improvements thereon
(c) absolute tenant rights in improvements.

The local government plank had a clause added to it proposing that municipalities be empowered to set up industries and institutions as an extension of the principle of government employment. Apart from rewording and rearrangement, the rest of the platform stood substantially as it had been in 1892.91

The party fielded forty-seven candidates and had eighteen elected, five of them without opposition. Country branches had difficulty finding candidates and the central executive was unable to help them for want of funds.92 There were, in addition, eleven independent Labor candidates — none of them opposing PLL candidates — and of them four were elected. Shortly after the election the Labor League gained a further seat in a by-election, to give it nineteen members in the seventeenth parliament. The Free Traders had taken sixty-one seats, or sixty-two including an independent, and the Protectionists forty-one. Most of the independent Labor men of the preceding parliament who stood again as independents and were returned joined either the Protectionist party (Schey, Wood) or the Free Traders (Cook, Bavister, Fegan, Hollis, Newman). Black, Edden, and Brown rejoined the PLL in time to be elected on its platform. The party's share of the vote dropped to 13½ per cent, as compared with 16 per cent cast for LEL men in the preceding election, but since five seats it
won were uncontested and it had many fewer candidates than in 1894 the results could not be considered a sign of declining strength in the electorates. Another 3 per cent of the vote went to independent Labor candidates, a drop of 6 per cent on their figure for 1894.

III

For fifteen years after the turmoil accompanying its formation the party steadily consolidated its position in the politics of New South Wales and managed to avoid any new splits. Its successes were both parliamentary and electoral. The vote cast for it increased in each election from 1901 onwards and from 1895 it won an increasing number of seats in the lower house. It remained in a third party position until 1904 and then took the opposition benches as the second largest party after the decimation of the Progressives in the election of that year and their subsequent disintegration in parliament. Labor’s growing strength is demonstrated in table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1894</th>
<th>1895</th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1904</th>
<th>1907</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1913</th>
<th>1917</th>
<th>1920</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor vote as % of total valid vote</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor members elected</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor members as % of all members</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


And in Labor’s view of its own history, its successes in the parliament were as important as the increases in its number of members and proportion of the popular vote. The Reid ministry, in office from 1894 until September 1899, needed Labor’s support to remain in office and obtained it by passing much legislation Labor demanded. In 1899, the party decided it could expect more from Lyne and withdrew its support from Reid’s ministry which was replaced by Lyne’s and then, in March 1901, by See’s ministry. The Reid and Lyne ministries appointed five Labor men to the Legislative Council before the end of 1900.

George Black, the main pamphleteer of the party and recorder of its
NEW SOUTH WALES

contemporary history, argued that "against Eight Democratic Measures passed during the thirty-five years which preceded the advent of the Walesian Labor Party, we can place thirty Democratic Measures passed inside thirteen years after that Labor Party became an active political force." In addition to the legislative measures which he claimed it had initiated, he listed a string of lesser reforms: the party had

succeeded in purging Parliament by killing jobbery and corruption . . .

to a great extent banished sectarianism from political contests;
democratised Parliament and its successive Ministries; . . . succeeded in bringing about at least nine great Departmental Reforms . . .
greatly improved the tone of elections . . .
gained for Labor an entrance even to the Upper House;
[and] . . . won for the workers direct representation on the benches of the Arbitration Court and on several commissions . . .

The successes of the party in federal politics were no less important. The party had won 18 per cent of the vote in New South Wales and six of the state's seats in the House of Representatives in the first federal election in 1901. In 1903 its vote rose to 21 per cent and it won another seat; in 1906 it won 38 per cent of the vote and eleven seats. It won none of the Senate seats for the state until 1910 but its share of the vote in that part of the elections also rose steadily in the period. The federal parliamentary party had made as good use of its third party position as the state parliamentary party and took, or was given, credit for much of the Deakin government's legislation. These successes gave the party confidence from about 1905 onwards that it would soon be able to capture power in the state, and it was supposed that then a period of much greater legislative and administrative reforming activity would begin.

In the early years of the party, those who talked of it as part of a wider Labor movement which they described in class terms easily supposed that Labor's share of the vote would grow very rapidly and soon become much larger than the proportion won by the other parties, provided the electoral system was thoroughly democratic. Writing in 1893 George Black argued that "when representation is general and voting on an equality, then it must be conceded that as the wage-earners, and those whose interests are indissolubly bound up with theirs, constitute 80 per cent of the community, Labor cannot be fairly represented with less than 112 out of 141 members". And he went on to explain that Labor's numbers were lower than they should have been even under the old electoral system, because the press was antagonistic and unfair. The tasks which the branch organization of the party was designed to carry out were to select true Labor men as candidates, to ensure that Labor voters in electorates were identified, enrolled, and went to the polls, and to counteract the propaganda of the
non-Labor press.

Neither enrolment nor voting was compulsory before 1920. The electoral rolls were prepared by collectors appointed by Clerks of Petty Sessions and were brought up to date at annual revision courts, a procedure which made careful organizational work at the branch level essential, even when the police were given the job of compiling rolls annually in 1900. The act of 1893 and subsequent amendments removed the property qualification for the franchise, ended plural voting, and progressively eased the residence requirements, although in 1901 many itinerant workers were still disfranchised by a requirement that they be resident six months in a district before registration. The act of 1893 also introduced elector’s rights current for three years at a time, that is certificates of the enrolled individual’s right to vote. The branches were repeatedly exhorted to ensure that their voters had current elector’s rights because they would be denied their votes if they did not. The rights were abolished in 1906. Women were enfranchised by an act of 1902 and voted for the first time in 1904.

The numbers of electorates and of enrolled electors indicate the size of the task facing the branches. In the 1891 elections there were 141 electorates; for the elections of 1894, 1895, 1898, and 1901 there were 125 electorates, and 90 electorates for the elections from 1904 onwards. The average number of enrolled electors for the period of the elections 1894–1901 was as set out in table 2 and the number holding valid elector’s rights was usually about 80 per cent of this figure.

Table 2. Number of Enrolled Electors 1894–1901 in Electorates Contested by Labor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1894</th>
<th>1895</th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>3,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on data compiled for Hughes and Graham, Handbook, in Department of Political Science, A.N.U. and on a classification of electorates used in returns of the convention election, 1897, in which some urban areas, e.g. Newcastle, are listed as country. The number of electorates contested by Labor in each group varied from election to election.

Few of these seats could be regarded as safe Labor seats, especially when third and even fourth candidates might enter contests and, given first past the post counting, make the results quite unpredictable. Only 2 seats – Broken Hill and Sturt – were won with over 55 per cent of the valid vote in each of these elections and only 8 other seats out of the 125 were held continuously by Labor men in each of the four elections.

44
In the later nineties and in the following decade, it was a common observation that the branches of the PLL were weak and ill-organized and flourished only when there was the excitement of selecting candidates and campaigning for them. In its annual report to the PLL conference of 1906, the executive commented that the work of enrolling voters was much neglected by both unions and local leagues, and in 1908 J. H. Catts wrote at length on the importance of keeping the electoral rolls up to date, arguing that "anything is possible under voluntary enrolment if leagues will do the work efficiently. There is no party organisation so able to undertake this work as the Labor Leagues." Enrolling voters, securing new members for the branch, raising funds, and carrying on the propaganda work of the party were activities that could all be carried out between elections and could not be left until an election was imminent without clashing with the work of the campaign, but the reports of branch activities in the labor press and the admissions of individuals discussing organizational problems at conferences all suggest that in many branches this basic work was often neglected until the last minute and left to be done — and consequently often not done at all — by a handful of enthusiasts.

The normal cycle of branch activity was to have an annual meeting usually with what was reported to be a large or good attendance, at which office bearers and delegates to conference were elected and branch business conducted, to be followed throughout the year by monthly or fortnightly meetings, usually thinly attended, for routine business and by occasional socials, dances, fêtes, debating, and speech nights, particularly if some Labor notable was visiting the district. Apart from the social aspect of these gatherings, they also provided opportunities for fund raising and gave members some training in public speaking. Some branches — probably a minority of them — took part in municipal as well as state and federal elections and so had other occasions to keep their members active, but if no elections were scheduled the normal round of branch activity appears to have been sluggish. Needless to say, some branches went out of existence for quite long periods; others seemed to spring into life only when an election was imminent, while others managed to flourish without faltering, to judge by reports of their activities in the Worker. The membership of the branches shows the same kinds of fluctuation and consequently estimates, even those made by contemporaries in the organization, of the numbers of members and branches are highly unreliable.

But it is nevertheless worth while to attempt to determine the extent of the branch structure. Only a few reports exist which give numbers of branches: 45 in 1891; 40 in 1892; 84 in 1894 before the split, after which at least four were declared bogus; 313 early in 1910, and 400 at the end of
the year, over a quarter of them new branches; 449 at the end of 1911, supplemented by 106 affiliated unions; and 450 at the end of 1913, plus 100 affiliated unions.\textsuperscript{101} The figures for 1910 include many branches which were new, small, and ephemeral\textsuperscript{102} and are best taken as an indication of the upper limit to the number of branches determined at a time when the organization was at its peak for the successful election of that year. The figures for 1911 and 1913 are equally doubtful.

The number of candidates fielded in elections once single-member electorates were established throughout the state in 1893 is another rough indication of the number of branches (see table 3). After selection by the branch and endorsement by the central executive, Labor candidates normally stood only on the nomination of the branch or of the district assembly. A district assembly was created by grouping branches together for electoral purposes where there were several of them in the one electorate. The central executive only rarely exercised its right to nominate a candidate where no branch existed. Of course branches did not always put forward candidates and that, as well as the grouping of branches into district assemblies, means that this method of estimation is bound to give us too low a figure for the number of branches.

**Table 3. Numbers of Labor Candidates and Numbers of Seats in Elections, 1894–1920**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1894</th>
<th>1895</th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1904</th>
<th>1907</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1913</th>
<th>1917</th>
<th>1920</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of electorates</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Labor candidates</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31(35\textsuperscript{*})</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72(75\textsuperscript{*})</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* The numbers of candidates are those given in Hughes and Graham, *Handbook*, for the years in question. The figures they have given for candidates in 1898 and 1907 may be too low: In 1898 according to the *Worker*, 4 April 1899, there were 35 candidates and in 1907, according to the executive report, there were 75. Political Labor League of New South Wales, *Report of the Executive* for the year 1907, p.4.

The representation of branches at annual conferences is also bound to give us too low a figure for the number of branches because many branches frequently did not send delegates. In addition to that, the union organization must be considered. To some extent the unions made up for the weakness or absence of branches of the PLL, even before 1899 when unions became entitled to affiliate directly with the league and send their own delegates to conference. Their strength was particularly important in country areas and in 1900 the PLL reached an agreement with the AWU which recognized that for organizing purposes it was the effective structure in a large part of the state in the west, central, and southwestern areas.\textsuperscript{103} Furthermore, even after unions could be affiliated many did not
join the PLL as branches, but existed side by side with league branches in the same area.

Up to 1902 the number of branches represented at conference exceeded thirty only twice, in 1894 and 1897. After that the number increased slowly and sixty-two were represented at the 1908 conference. Twenty-six unions sent delegates in 1902 and that number also rose slowly until it reached forty-three in 1908. If we allow that representation at conference and numbers of candidates nominated both understate the number of branches, and that the official figures obtained overstate the number, it still seems clear that there was a slow growth and consolidation of the organization at the electoral level up to 1910; that the party probably did not have branches in every electorate until well after 1900; and even then it was not until 1910 that almost all branches were either able or willing to field candidates.\textsuperscript{104} It is also clear that this consolidation was achieved partly because the unions were incorporated into the party's branch structure.

Branches occasionally reported their financial membership for the year, and in the early 1900s these varied between 20 and 500, most of them being 100 or less. After 1901 the rules on representation at the annual conference were altered so that branches with up to 200 members had one delegate, those with from 200 to 500 financial members had two, those with 500 to 1,000 had three, and those with more than that had four. This gives us one means of estimating minimum membership roughly for years when representation at the annual conference was reported after 1901. The numbers of delegates from affiliated trade unions were determined by the same rule. Once women got the vote, each branch was allowed one woman as an extra representative, provided it had a minimum number of 25 financial women members. Assuming that branches and unions entitled to and sending one delegate averaged 50 members each; those entitled to two, 300 members each; those entitled to three, 700 members each; and those entitled to four, 1,200 members each, we may estimate the numbers given in table 4 from lists of conference delegations.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Estimate of Party Membership from Lists of Conference Delegates*}
\begin{tabular}{lcccc}
\hline
 & 1902 & 1903 & 1905 & 1906 \\
\hline
Branches & 2,500 & 1,700 & 4,600 & 4,300 \\
Unions & 12,300 & 13,400 & 15,400 & 16,700 \\
\hline
Total & 14,800 & 15,000 & 20,000 & 21,000 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

* See Political Labor League of New South Wales, \textit{Minutes of Proceedings of the Annual Conference}, 1902 (Sydney, 1902), and \textit{Worker}, 31 January 1903, 4 February 1905, 1 February 1906, for the details on which these figures are based.
The figures are admittedly rough and are an underestimate, since not all branches and unions were represented at conferences or sent their full entitlement of delegates. They may however be checked in two ways. If we assume that there might have been 70 or 80 branches of about 100 members each on the average at this time the number of members might have been about 8,000, exclusive of those counted as members by virtue of the affiliation of their trade unions. The trade unionists numbered 60,000 according to one report\(^5\) and that too appears to have been a generous estimate, because the 102 unions that were registered for arbitration purposes in the state in 1903 claimed only 66,000 members\(^6\) and not all of them, including at least one with 6,000-odd members, were affiliated with the PLL. There are in addition a few different estimates of the number of members in the branches. The numbers were said to be about 20,000 in 1903, 100,000 in 1905, and 40,000 in 1906\(^7\) and the last of these was probably the most reliable estimate. A few years later in 1911 it was reported that the number of members had grown to 21,000 in the branches and 72,000 in 100 affiliated unions. By 1914, the branch membership was reported as 30,000 and union membership at 250,000.\(^8\) These figures, like those for numbers of branches at these times, are no doubt inflated. And in addition the numbers reported are no more than those on which branches and affiliated unions paid dues to the central executive and claimed delegate representation at conferences, and most of them, especially those in the unions, would normally have taken little or no part in Labor party affairs at the branch level. However, this information makes it clear that around 1903 membership of the party was probably not less than about 20,000 and unlikely to have been greater than 60,000 and that the affiliated unions probably accounted for about three-quarters or more of the financial members of the party. The table also suggests that party membership grew steadily up to 1906, and it is more likely that it continued to grow than to decline after that date.

Of course, branch members were not the only element in the strength of the party at the electoral level, although because of the party’s chronic poverty they were particularly important resources for it. Money, propaganda, and organizational capacity were other elements of its strength and weakness.

The cost of election work was normally carried by the branches, which obtained their own money from both membership fees and fund-raising activities, often in pathetically small amounts. The membership fee, not to exceed four shillings (40 cents) per annum in the rules from 1896 to 1901, was set at that sum in 1902 and in 1903 reduced to two shillings (20 cents) per year for men and one shilling (10 cents) for women with half-rates for members of unions or, for block union membership, sixpence (5 cents) per member from 1904 onwards. It stayed at this level until the end
of the first decade. This suggests that the income of the branches of the party from membership fees in the early 1900s was at most £1,500 ($3,000) p.a. Details of the income of individual branches are as difficult to find as details of their membership, but Narrandera with sixty members in 1908 reported receipts of £131 ($262) and expenditure of £109 ($218) for the previous year, and Barrier District Assembly in 1904 reported half-yearly receipts of £129 ($258) and a credit balance of £17 ($34). Scone, with 115 members, had spent £22 ($44) in the election of 1907 and Corowa £40 ($80). There is no way of knowing whether that level of expenditure by branches on elections was general; if it was, then for ninety electorates the branches alone must have spent two to three thousand pounds (four to six thousand dollars) in each election — a sum well beyond what was raised by membership fees.

Small sums were remitted each year by the branches to the central executive but this was basically to pay the expenses of the executive and little was left in its hands for election purposes. The funds at the disposal of the executive for elections were evidently raised in an ad hoc fashion and were probably in very small amounts, at least before 1910. In 1902 it was reported that city unions had been asked to contribute to a fund for election purposes in the city and a little over £10 ($20) was donated, and that another £23 ($46) had been raised by a fund started by the Worker which paid for a large number of leaflets. At the conference of 1903 there was some discussion of the need for an organizer, and an optimistic forecast was made of the amount that could be raised if all members put in sixpence (5 cents) a year. The subject was again raised in 1905, a resolution was passed, a temporary finance committee was appointed to collect the levy, and the post of organizer was advertised. There were twenty-seven applicants for the job but none were thought suitable and only £78 ($156) was collected for the work so the plan was shelved for the time being. According to Holman, the central executive had gone through the last election — presumably the state election of 1904 — with an income of £500 ($1,000) of which £150 ($300) had been accumulated by the Tramway Union over a three-year period at the rate of sixpence (5 cents) per member. In 1906 a major effort was made to build up a fighting fund for the federal elections of that year and in six months branches and unions donated a total of £625 ($1,250) — “the best fund we ever had”. In 1907, another election year, £359 ($718) had been raised by donations to a fighting fund. The election of 1910 cost the party £2,000 ($4,000) according to Watson, of which £400 ($800) was provided by league branches and the rest by the unions. Doubt is, however, cast on Watson’s claim by Black’s assertion that one of the men appointed to the Legislative Council in 1912 provided the party with £500 ($1,000) for the election. After 1910 reports and balance sheets of the
central executive show that its income increased, £1394 ($2,788) being reported for 1911; £1,400 ($2,800) for 1912 (of which £200 ($400) came from the branches and £900 ($1,800) from the unions), £2,866 ($5,732) for 1915 and a little over £4,000 ($8,000) for 1916.

Funds supplied by the trade unions were one of the main sources of the money of the central executive and many branches. The two main branches of the AWU in New South Wales, Central branch and Bourke — later Western — branch, contributed the largest sums to the party. The Typographers' and the Trolley and Draymen's Unions contributed £25 ($50) and £10 ($20) to the fighting fund of 1910 when the Bourke branch put in £120 ($240) and most of the branches of the PLL donated £1 ($2) each. The annual reports of the two branches of the AWU show amounts annually allocated for political purposes and usually give a detailed account of how it was spent. The Bourke branch allocated £939 ($1,878) over eleven of the years between 1891 and 1904, including £3 ($6) in 1897 and £250 ($500) in 1894. The Wagga Wagga branch committed £246 ($492) to politics in 1894. Table 5 gives the allocations of the Bourke and Central branches from 1905 onwards.

Table 5. Money Allocated to Political Funds, Bourke and Central Branches AWU, 1905–20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bourke</th>
<th>Central</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>1232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Annual reports of the two branches in May annually for each branch in the years shown. Archives, R.S.S.S., A.N.U.

Donations to branches of the LEL or PLL were one of the three main ways in which the two branches spent their allocations for political purposes, usually giving each branch a sum between £10 ($20) and £30 ($60) p.a. From time to time the conferences of the branches decided to send out political organizers, and their salaries and expenses for tours of a few weeks accounted for sums ranging between £10 ($20) and £300 ($600) p.a. in each branch. The central executive of the PLL had donations and sustentation and capitation fees from the two branches from about 1905. The sums were small before 1910 — about £30 ($60) p.a. — but they then increased to about £100 ($200) and more, the largest being £528 ($1,056) paid by the Central branch in 1915. An amendment of the
industrial legislation in 1917–18 prevented unions making grants from their funds to the PLL and forced them to organize what the AWU called a “political fighting fund voluntary levy” of 2s.6d. (25 cents) per member for the year. Both branches made special donations to a handful of PLL branches for federal elections, and occasional grants to the campaigns of particular candidates or to the central executive for referendum campaigns.

The parliamentary party itself was another source of funds for election work. In 1894 when the party decided to oppose Cook in the election for Hartley each member of caucus subscribed £1 ($2) and later on in the year “it was decided to run a man for the Public Works Committee, half his fees to be returned to the party”. In 1901, the central executive complained that its funds were “wholly inadequate” and made it “dependent upon the charity of the Parliamentary Party” but the parliamentary representatives at the conference refused to give any details of their fund when questioned about it. From then on the caucus fund was not discussed publicly in conference until 1914 when Meagher, one of the more radical members of the parliamentary party at that time, explained that they put into the fund 20 per cent of all their earnings from their official posts as ministers, speaker, chairman of committees, and members of the public works committee, but nothing from their salaries as members of parliament, an arrangement which was possible only when the party was in power and which evidently dated back to March 1913 at least. Black claimed he had paid £524 ($1,048) into party funds during his term in office. The money in this fund was used to pay the whip a salary of £437 ($874) p.a., for organizing and other unspecified work, and for electoral purposes, £335 ($670) being spent on by-elections in Maitland and Liverpool Plains in 1911 and £100 ($200) in Blayney in 1912.

Since the funds used in a particular electorate could come from the branches and unions in it, the central executive, the parliamentary party, and occasionally from the candidate himself, it is practically impossible to determine how much might have been spent on a given by-election, to say nothing of a general election. In the Blayney by-election, for instance, the central executive put in £96 ($192) in addition to the £100 ($200) from caucus. In Cumberland in the general election of 1920 the bill for election expenses appears to have been £153 ($306), of which £33 ($66) was accounted for by three weeks’ lost wages, but there is no indication where the rest came from. But it seems likely that the amounts spent on the three by-elections, all fought when the party had a very narrow majority and was constantly in danger of losing it, were the exception rather than the rule.

Discussion of ways to raise money for elections was usually linked with discussion of the need for an organizer. In 1906 Hughes argued at the
annual conference that £30 ($60) should be spent on each seat for the House of Representatives, £60 ($120) for each Senate seat, and £10 ($20) for each of the ninety state seats, and in addition that £200 ($400) a year was needed for an organizer's salary.\textsuperscript{125} The temporary finance committee was made permanent at the conference and it proposed that the central executive of the party should have a regular income of £1,000 ($2,000) a year for election work over and above the sums spent by the branches. But the difficulty was that the PLL could not levy its members and that, although the unions could levy theirs, they needed all the money they could raise to fight cases before the arbitration court. As far back as 1894 the need for an organizer had been recognized: a commentator on the elections of that year, Frank Fox, editor of the \textit{Workman}, writing under the pseudonym "Frank Renar", who said he had been to a good many districts during the campaign, argued that the party needed an organizer like Schnadhorst, the Liberal organizer in Great Britain.\textsuperscript{126} He thought the branch workers lacked efficient control and direction and implied that candidates were left to organize the local branch members into work teams and to make all decisions, large and small, about these campaigns that the branch secretaries should have attended to, and that they consequently wasted time that would have been better spent speaking and canvassing. He also felt that branch members who spoke for the candidate often stole the limelight, as if trying out their own future candidacies, or bored their audiences to tears by long expositions of the platform.

The non-union help the party had for organizing in its early days was probably voluntary and almost certainly ill-equipped for the task. The diary of one "honorary organiser" in 1892 captures, even in summary form, the futility of much that he did.

28 Oct: credentials from central committee
29 Oct: meeting Mittagong
2 Nov: walked, arrived Picton, held meeting
3 Nov: walked to Camden
4 Nov: open-air meeting near station, reorganised this branch called on former secretary, editor of \textit{Camden Times} friendly, left Camden
5 Nov: arrived Liverpool, open-air meeting, passed hat around big crowd, got nothing, local paper friendly -- ex-member of League . . .
8 Nov: meeting at Sherwood, branch dead . . .
10 Nov: last money gone, went to Granville, meeting at Birks Hotel
11 Nov: Parramatta, bad camp, no meeting . . .
14 Nov: Drummoyne then Sydney; to House of Assembly then Public Library and back to Drummoyne; entered into contract with \textit{Workman} to canvass for paper

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15 Nov: Public Library, nothing to eat; handed in credentials; saw Holman...

... and so on. It is clear that although the propaganda committee of the central executive of the LEL tried to help branches in the 1894 election it was less with a view to winning votes than to securing the loyalty of branches and of candidates willing to sign the solidarity pledge. "Renar's" analysis was almost certainly correct but the party never managed to obtain the kind of organizer he had in mind. In later years the intervention of the central executive appears to have been almost wholly in order to settle disputes in branches and to ensure that the rules of the party were upheld, and it admitted by implication that it was unable to do more by saying that if it had half a dozen organizers the party would win many more seats. The general secretary of the PLL asked the AWU to organize country districts in 1900 and conference agreed, the plan being that it would undertake organizing work in all electorates except in Broken Hill and in the coastal regions, but in 1901 and 1902 there were remarks at AWU conferences which indicated that little organizing work had in fact been done. As late as 1908 and 1909 the central executive of the PLL was still unable to employ a permanent political organizer for the state and had to rely on branches of the AWU to help it with the work.

In the metropolitan area, the Women's Central Organizing Committee began to do much of the work after 1904 and even sent its own organizers into the country from time to time.

Want of money was one of the main reasons why no organizer was appointed in the early 1900s, and instead the party made do with a temporary organizing committee set up just before the elections in 1906 and 1907 and even then in the 1907 elections it confined itself to work on electorates not yet represented by Labor. In 1908, the president of the PLL once more appealed for funds for organizing work and the organizing committee, still temporary, decided to raise the level of branch activity by promoting speaking teams and choirs that would move from branch to branch. This was thought so successful it was decided to repeat it again in 1909, and in addition to hold a special class in economics to remedy the ignorance of the subject shown by the speakers in 1908. These activities were confined to the Sydney area of course; in the country districts the executive had long depended on state and federal Labor members of parliament to make speaking tours, and relied, as it had in the nineties, on the special organizing efforts of a few devoted or aspiring individuals who were free to travel, and on the help of the AWU organizers appointed to do political as well as union work. In 1907 the conference of the AWU — a meeting of delegates from branches all over Australia — recommended that branches appoint year-round political organizers, and the Central branch in New South Wales appointed Alf Gardiner the
following year. By 1910 the secretary of the AWU was able to tell conference that this kind of work had produced "splendid results". Gardiner and Arthur Rae were the two main political organizers at this time. Rae's report of that year describes the work: it consisted of speaking, with the help of Labor's federal prime minister Fisher, reviving defunct branches, and distributing pamphlets. In twelve months he addressed over 150 meetings, travelled about 12,000 miles without covering all of the state, and, although not a young man, he proposed to cycle from Cobar to Broken Hill through Wilcannia and White Cliffs. In 1909 the organizing committee of the PLL was able to arrange meetings in all electorates.\textsuperscript{132}

The trade unions, and above all the AWU, helped the party not only with funds and organizers but also by maintaining the Labor press in New South Wales at this time. Labor men had an unquestioning faith in the power of the press, especially of the capitalist press. In 1904, for example, ten years after the electoral system had been made relatively democratic, George Black argued that, if there were still wage-earners and producers who did not vote Labor after all that the party had achieved since 1891, it could only be because they had been fooled and diverted by prejudices and false issues: by the fiscal question, federation, sectarianism, or even personal ambition, all built up by the non-Labor press. He described these people as the "Judas Iscariots of the labor movement", "traitors" who had "sold into Slavery the power which should be Sovereign".\textsuperscript{133} The papers maintained by the trade unions as a counter to the biased capitalist-owned press were weeklies at first. The \textit{Australian Workman}, the organ of the TLC, was conducted throughout the nineties until it was taken over by and merged with the \textit{Worker}, the AWU paper, in 1897. The \textit{Worker} itself had begun life in 1891 as the \textit{Hummer}, then the organ of the Wagga Wagga branch of the Amalgamated Shearers' Union. After 1900, the \textit{Worker} was enlarged in size to provide reports of Labor and union, especially AWU, affairs in all states. By 1909 it was bi-weekly, and the question, long discussed by Labor men, whether the party or one of the unions could raise the money to launch a daily Labor paper was once more being discussed, this time with more hope of success.

These papers carried detailed accounts of all the major activities of Labor organizations, including many of the trade unions — reports of conferences and of meetings of the central executive and of branches; news of lectures, debates, demonstrations, and above all of elections and current political events. The message conveyed in cartoons and much of the editorial and other comment was simple and repeated with little variation, to the point of tedium. The workers were all honest, lean, upright Australians who would win eventually against their overfed upper-class enemies — provided they were solid and true to their own class — although they constantly suffered setbacks in the struggle for freedom and justice,
usually because the press and the courts were in the hands of their opponents, because non-Labor politicians were a corrupt lot, or because the “fat men” (capitalists; land, industrial, and commercial monopolists) had the wealth. For variation the cartoons occasionally reminded the workers of the yellow hordes to the north — both Japanese and Chinese — who were supposed to be anxious to bite large chunks off northern Australia. Besides the press, there was a large pamphlet and throwaway literature, especially around election time. The *Australian Workman* claimed to have run off and distributed a million items in the election of 1894, including copies of the *Workman*. Black’s history, *The New South Wales Labor Party, what it did and what it prevented*, first published in 1893, sold 90,000 copies and was regularly updated and reissued. Copies of the party’s platform and its election manifestos appear to have been produced regularly and in large numbers.

Many of the changes in the organization of the party were minor ones made necessary by the growth and elaboration of the branch structure, by the incorporation of the trade unions into it, and by its adaptation after 1900 to federal as well as to state electoral campaigns. But some changes resulted from the adjustment and readjustment of the constant tension between the parliamentary section of the movement, and the trade union and branch sections. The parliamentary members, particularly the more forceful men like Holman, often felt that the demands and doctrines of the extraparliamentary wing of the movement were an electoral liability and imposed an unacceptable constraint on their work in parliament. This feeling became much sharper from about 1904 when the party became the direct opposition, could no longer exact concessions from a government by threatening to withdraw its support, and realized that it had to win middle-class votes to gain office.

The extraparliamentary section, and especially the trade unions which provided so much of the money, the manpower, the propaganda, and the organizational support of the party, was constantly suspicious of the MPs in the party. From the time of the split in the early nineties it was axiomatic that Labor members were untrustworthy unless tied down by a pledge that made them, if not delegates of, at least collectively responsible to the organization outside parliament and above all to the annual conference of the party and the platforms it enunciated. The platform was not regarded simply as a statement of principles and policies for candidates in elections but as a prescription for the work of the parliamentarians as well. When members of parliament failed to do what was expected of them they could easily be attacked for having betrayed the movement or for having put personal considerations above those of the party. The usual argument, not so common before 1910 as it was to become afterwards, has been well summarized by Childe:
The parliamentary representative of the workers tends to set himself up as a leader and to claim the right to neglect the recommendations of Conference, and even the sacred platform itself in accordance with his interpretation of the interests of the Party which is frequently determined by consideration of personal safety and mere political expediency. This is plainly contrary to the Labor theory of self-government and has to be checked by the exercise of the authority of the governing organs of the party...the workers' representative is liable to get out of touch with the rank and file that put him in the legislature, and to think more of keeping his seat and scoring political points than of carrying out the ideals he was sent in to give effect to.135

The conflicts engendered by mutual suspicions were adjusted at annual conferences without being permanently resolved, and, as Childe notes, without producing a split in New South Wales between 1894 and 1916. But as the various sections jockeyed for positions of power at the conferences and on the central executive of the PLL, the rules, particularly those concerning the composition of the executive, were repeatedly altered.

But the powers of the executive, which were extensive, remained virtually unaltered throughout the period: it had sole charge of all matters relating to elections except those vested in branches and sole control of any by-election that followed when a Labor member “ratted” on the party and was expelled from it and resigned his seat. It had reserve powers to select candidates if branches failed to do so and power to declare branches bogus and replace them with new branches if they disobeyed the executive or were judged disloyal to the platform. Members of the executive also had the right to attend and speak, but not to vote, at any branch meeting. The central executive of the PLL, which in 1894 consisted of one delegate from each branch, one parliamentary delegate for each ten members of the parliamentary Labor party, and the president and six delegates from the TLC, was reduced to eleven members by 1896. It was then enlarged to twenty-two elected by conference, exclusive of members of parliament, two ALF delegates, and an unspecified number of delegates of the Sydney Labor Council in 1900, reduced to twenty-six (including two representatives of the parliamentary party) in 1903, and then again raised to thirty-four in 1908. It consisted in 1896 of the president, the secretary, two delegates of the ALF and seven members elected by the annual conference. From 1898 the parliamentary members of the party were once more directly represented; all were allowed to attend and speak at executive meetings but they were allowed only a limited number of votes — five at first and two from 1902 onwards. Parliamentarians could, of course, be elected to the executive by the annual conference, just as trade unionists were, and in 1903 for example seven members of parliament were put on the executive in this way. Despite the conflicts on this question, the
executive frequently complained of the poor attendance of the parlia-
mentary members at executive meetings. When the ALF was disbanded at
the end of the century, trade unions were given direct representation in
the conference and the Sydney Labor Council inherited the representation
of the Federation on the executive, five members in 1900, and two in
1902. In 1904, shortly after women had been enfranchised, a women's
central organizing committee was set up and given direct representation in
the annual conference and on the executive. When the executive was en-
larged to thirty-four members in 1908, each of the bodies lost its separate
representation on the executive, but Labor members of either house of
state and federal parliaments could attend and speak at executive
meetings.

The rules concerning the structure of the executive and its powers, and
the supremacy given in the party's ideology to the conference and the
platform made it difficult if not impossible for parliamentarians to regard
themselves as leaders of the party. McGowen, the first leader of the parlia-
mentary party, was no more than that and he made no attempt to chal-
lenge the extraparliamentary sections of the party. He was first selected by
caucus as its leader in 1894, evidently after caucus had decided that it
could no longer afford to rely on a committee for the purpose, and even in
that role he has been judged "pedestrian" and the party under his leader-
ship at the turn of the century was criticized for lacking boldness, initia-
tive, and decisiveness. Holman, elected deputy leader in 1905, became
leader by caucus election when McGowen resigned in 1913. Evatt's bio-
ography of him reveals a man who was immensely hard working, ambitious,
and idealistically devoted to the cause of Labor. That cause he interpreted
in socialist terms in the early nineties, but he soon modified his views until
by 1910 he was coming under criticism from the more radical elements of
the party. Labor politics were his career and he developed great skill not
only in oratory and campaigning but in organizing and in managing the
organization. His skill, experience, and intellectual capacity made him pre-
eminent in the party, even before he obtained formal office in it, but they
never enabled him to dominate it.

Holman came to the leadership only after the party had been in office
for two years, and although it may be said that he then had greater
opportunities to employ his abilities than McGowen had while not in
office, it must also be said that by the time he became leader much more
was being demanded of the parliamentary wing of the party than had been
expected of it when it was not in power — more than it could reasonably
accomplish — and Holman had to take much of the blame for what the
extraparliamentary sections of the party regarded as its failures and mis-
takes.

What was equally important was the structure of the party as a whole
which put internal power in the hands of committees and conferences. Individual leaders found it very difficult to rise to a position of long-term domination within it. The various sections of the organization — trade unions, especially the AWU; the Sydney Labor Council; the central executive of the PLL; the federal members from New South Wales; and even the organizations in Newcastle and Broken Hill — were all to some extent independent of one another, if not autonomous, and gave a base of support and power to their leading figures which could be used to check the pretensions of any parliamentary leader. As a result not one but several prominent men could usually be identified in the party at any given time, and the arrangements made to bring together a diversity of elements when the party was founded were carefully preserved for years afterwards in the rules, ensuring the representation of different sections of it in its highest organs — conference and the executive. By these arrangements power was dispersed throughout the organization.

Suspicion that leaders might betray the movement was usually reserved for the parliamentary members of the party. Betrayal was a highly emotive word for what was a prosaic possibility, namely that members of parliament might well enter into commitments with non-Labor leaders, ministries, or parties in order to gain office or some other temporary party or even personal advantage. Commitments that the parliamentary party entered into were necessarily a restriction on the control the extra-parliamentary organs of the party could exercise over it and might even be a restriction on the power and freedom of the branches if they concerned the selection of candidates for elections. Consequently the members of the parliamentary party were hedged in not only by the pledge which ensured that they acted both unitedly and within confines set by the platform and the conference, but by rules designed to ensure that they remained independent of other parliamentary groups. From the earliest years it had been specified, to quote the rules of 1894, that “members elected to parliament [shall] form a distinct party and shall not merge themselves into other parties”. After Cook had accepted the postmaster-generalship in Reid’s ministry in August 1894, a new rule was added that no member of the parliamentary party could join a ministry unless it was composed mainly of Labor party members. The question was debated briefly in 1900 when it was proposed at the conference that individual party members should be free to join non-Labor ministries, but the proposal was defeated. The party maintained its separate identity throughout the three-party period without making any written agreements with the other parties. But in 1904 and 1905 the question whether the party could formally ally itself with another party in parliament became important not so much because the New South Wales parliamentary party, now in opposition, had to decide on its own tactics but because the federal
parliamentary party, under Watson's leadership, had entered into a written agreement with the liberal wing of Deakin's Protectionist party in opposition in federal parliament in September 1904. The New South Wales party debated the question in its conference in 1905 and again in 1906. On the first occasion Riley argued that alliances would be made merely to get into office, that they created electoral "misunderstandings", and that they could undo the work of the past. Watson denied that Labor had sacrificed any of its planks, its identity, or its programme or had bound any of the constituent organizations, and he managed to have a somewhat more moderate motion passed by conference than the one proposed. But the next year, when the federal alliance had ceased to have any significance anyway and the Victorian branch had proved to be far more difficult, not to say obdurate, than the New South Wales party, a motion by Lamond was carried that neither federal nor state parliamentary parties should enter into an alliance extending beyond the life of the parliament it was made in, nor grant nor promise immunity from opposition in elections. The question of immunity at elections was usually raised in this connection and revealed clearly what was at stake, namely that the extraparliamentary organization would not accept any arrangement made by the parliamentary wing possibly in its favour, which could limit the freedom of action of the branches. As early as 1895 the party had refused to reciprocate when the Council of the Free Trade party offered immunity from competition with its candidates and it took the same stand again in 1901 in relation to the Progressives. The supposition that the parliamentary party might subvert the organization to its own advantage also lay behind the rule that the PLP might not grant financial aid to any candidate without first consulting the branch concerned to be assured of the "bona-fides of such candidate". But the party did not always refuse to grant immunity to its competitors. In 1898, when the party was still giving support in parliament to Reid's Free Traders, renamed the Liberal and Federal party, it had an electoral agreement with the Liberal and Federal party which, although its terms were not disclosed, granted immunity in some electorates and even made it possible for Labor men like Arthur Rae to stand with endorsement from both parties in Murrumbidgee, and others, such as Hector Lamond and C. J. Danahey, to have the endorsement and financial support of Reid's party.

The performance of the party in parliament was the final test of the efficacy of the rules governing its behaviour. Its legislative performance, only part of the whole, could be measured against the platform. In the earliest years, the pamphlets and press of the party had proudly listed the achievements of the parliamentary party not so much in assessment of it but in order to convince the Labor movement that its entry into politics was paying handsome dividends. The achievements were firm evidence to
support appeals for funds, votes, and continued organizational effort at the branch and trade union level.

The story of Labor's achievements, set out most fully in George Black's pamphlets, gave all credit to the party and none to its opponents in parliament. During the thirty-five years before 1891, Black said, parliament had passed many bills for "almost every conceivable purpose, save the improvement of the material and spiritual condition of the overworked, ill-fed and abominably-clothed workers. Many measures were passed...for the purpose of making property secure, adding to the privileges of the wealthy, improving the estates of the landowners at public expense and alienating Crown lands, but little or nothing was done to ameliorate the condition of the oppressed, to lighten the load of toil and to surround the workers with safe and sanitary conditions." He could find only eight bills which had benefits for the working class. But once Labor came into parliament much more was done. Before 1895 the Electoral Act of 1893 was the party's main achievement according to Black, but he also put other items to its credit: the Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1892; the Labor Settlements Act of 1893, which was intended to facilitate the communal settlement of the unemployed on Crown land in the depth of the depression; and a list of bills that passed the Assembly but were thrown out in the Legislative Council, all of them dealing with subjects in Labor's platform. After 1895 the party had a much easier task — the lower house and the ministry (Reid's) — were more democratic according to Black, and Reid had made the upper house more compliant by holding the election in 1895 on the question of reforming it. The legislation credited to Labor from then until 1904 was listed as twenty-six items, including the major acts introducing land and income taxes in 1895; a Workshops and Factories Act; a Coal Mines Regulation Act; various acts that further amended the Electoral Act of 1893; the "Exclusion of Inferior Races" Act; Amendment of the Navigation Act; and Old Age Pensions Act; an act prohibiting truck; a Miners' Accident Relief Act; the Women's Franchise Act; and major amendments of the industrial arbitration system in 1901 which made arbitration compulsory, encouraged trade unionism and collective bargaining, and made strikes and lockouts illegal, under penalties, except under specified conditions. In addition to the legislation, Black credited the party with a list of administrative reforms in this period: the establishment of a minimum wage and of day labour in place of contract labour on governmental works; extension of the eight-hour day; preference to unionists as far as possible; and various other reforms of interest to unionists.

All of this and much more was explained as the result not merely of Labor's support but of its initiative. The argument had two parts: the governments which passed the legislation held office only with the support
of Labor and their legislation could not have been passed without the support Labor gave to it. It was also accepted that this support was effective because it was solid. The other part of the argument was that Labor's initiative could be proved by reference to its platform. Since non-Labor governments needed Labor's votes in the house, they adopted measures from the platform to get them. But in addition there was a more indirect argument interwoven with that one, to the general effect that non-Labor governments were all governments of a ruling class of the wealthy, the owners of capital and land; that none of the legislation which Labor approved of or which was in Labor's interest was to the advantage of the wealthy and much of it was to their disadvantage. The non-Labor ministries were primarily interested in office, not in reforms; in serving the interests of their class by administering the status quo and occasionally adjusting it but not in serving the interests of the community as a whole. Consequently they could not, by definition, take a reforming initiative, let alone an initiative that was of benefit to the class that had interests opposed to their own.

As propaganda this was undoubtedly effective, but as a history of Labor's part in the legislation of the period it claims too much for the party. Martin, Gollan, Dickey, and Fitzpatrick have all critically examined the legislative record to test this argument. Martin's is a study of the early years of Reid's government and he concludes that under pressure from liberal middle and lower-class voters in town and country, who strengthened the radical wing of the Free Trade party and weakened its wealthy and conservative wing in the elections of 1894 and 1895, the party under Reid adopted policies, on grounds of both social justice and self-interest, designed to compel the rich to bear a larger part of the burden of maintaining the state, to use state action to protect "the smaller man on the land, and to ensure that working men engaged in hazardous enterprises like mining were given safeguards against the rapacity of their employers". Dickey has emphasized that there "were social reformers in both fiscal camps", Protectionist and Free Trade alike, at this time; that not all of Reid's radicalism can be explained as a response to pressure from the Labor party; that the "majorities in support of the Factories and Shops Bill and the rest were much larger than ever the Labor Party alone could muster", that even the upper house made "sane and moderate" qualifications, which Labor leaders accepted, to some of the legislation. He too concludes that "the Labor Party played a far less independent role in the accomplishment of... social improvement by legislation than they themselves claimed". Fitzpatrick accepts that Labor members "did much to bring about the introduction and enactment of a great deal of social legislation in the interests particularly of working people" at the turn of the century but insists that "a substantial amount of social legislation... was
enacted, especially in Victoria, without Labor parliamentary aid, though not without trade union advocacy in the parliamentary lobbies" and that the "industrial arbitration systems which were soon established in all parts of Australia did not derive from the Labor Party, though all, and especially the compulsory system established in New South Wales by Act of 1901 and in the Commonwealth by Act of 1904, took some of their character from Labor pressure on Governments which introduced them".146

Gollan has put the argument more generally. He agrees that the party played an important part in the passage of the reforming legislation, but he emphasizes that similar legislation was passed in other colonies where Labor pressure was negligible, that Labor both adopted policies from the liberals of democratic reforms and state intervention in the economy and put forward policies for social services and the regulation of industry which liberals found reciprocally acceptable, the difference being that Labor was often prepared to extend the legislation further than liberals. He concludes that by the turn of the century "the lines of policies which the Labor Party would continue to follow had already been drawn [and they] . . . owed more to liberal thought than to the socialist ideas and militant trade unionism that had been responsible for [the] formation" of the party.147

This explains why the radical critics of the party thought it had lost much of its early idealism and specifically its socialist tendencies in the period when its parliamentary power and extraparliamentary organization were consolidated. The contention that the party had once had a strong socialist inspiration is an exaggeration. But though the party as a whole was not socialist in inspiration and policies, socialists and socialist organizations did play a more prominent part in its affairs in its early years than they played in the later nineties and the first decade of the new century.148

The ASL, founded in 1887, had proposed in 1894 the formation of a parliamentary socialist party to extend the principle of state ownership by legislation abolishing all private ownership of land, industry, and capital.149 Shortly afterwards another body, the Social Democratic Federation, was launched by the Active Service Brigade, a more radical and ideologically an even less sophisticated body than the ASL which had concentrated its work on relieving distress in Sydney in the worst years of the depression and in militant agitation in the Domain.

This too, in 1895, joined the ASL in saying that a distinct socialist political party was desirable, explaining that the present Labor party had proved to be a failure. But for the time being nothing was done to form such a party. Many of their leading figures, and many of the more moderate Leigh House socialists — men like Hughes and Holman — were members of the extraparliamentary wing of the Labor party, and at the
1896 conference of the PLL the Leigh House group in particular "numbered eighteen out of thirty-three delegates" and were prominent in the executive and on the platform committee. The committee recommended a number of changes in the platform that had a collectivist if not a socialist character, the most important being to add a plank for the nationalization of all coal, silver, copper, and iron mines. A little later in May 1896, the ASL produced a revised platform and now advocated in it that a distinct socialist party should be formed. The platform, apart from calling for the transfer of all means of production, distribution, and exchange to state and municipal ownership, consisted of ten short planks all much more radical than socialist in character.

The next conference of the PLL marked the high point of socialist influence in the party. Representatives included a higher proportion of socialists than in the previous year; a new plank was added to the general platform, but not to the fighting platform as proposed, calling for the nationalization of land and the means of production, distribution, and exchange; the executive elected by conference consisted entirely of socialists of various shades and the ten men whom conference chose to stand as Labor's candidates in the elections to decide who would compose the state delegation to the federal convention included six members of the ASL and two or three others of socialist inclination, beside the leader of the parliamentary party, McGowen.

But from this point the socialist influence — or rather the influence of those who called themselves socialists — declined, chiefly under pressure from three sources: the trade unions, Roman Catholics, and the more moderate section, especially the parliamentary and so-called political wing, of the party. In April and May 1897 there were signs that the unions, and especially the country unions, notably of shearsers, were dissatisfied with events at the recent conference. The Australian Worker, itself no uncritical friend of the socialists at this time, noted that two factions were battling for control of the PLL, one union and one non-union based, and, in May, Macdonell, a spokesman for the shearsers and other country workers in the AWU, insisted that the PLL was established to help obtain practical reforms for the people and not to set in motion "machinery that would bring forth a millennium for some subsequent generation", and he went on to say that though socialists could capture a conference they could not capture the vote, and for that what was needed was "less policy and more organization". His comment came at a time when the AWU was beginning to recover from the demoralization and disorganization it had suffered during the worst years of the depression. The importance of the vote was driven home to the party shortly before this by the elections held on 4 March 1897 to choose delegates to the federal convention.

The convention, of ten delegates from each colony except Queensland,
was to draft a constitution for the federation of the colonies. The Labor party had long had reservations about federation and these were only partly expressed in the plank, first set out in 1890 and surviving in following platforms, that federation should be on a national, not an imperial basis. The party’s anxiety was that national interests might be sacrificed to British interests by federation of the colonies, particularly if the proposal were influenced in any way by Chamberlain’s imperial federalist ideas. At the 1896 conference, when the decision that the party would contest the convention elections was first taken, it was decided that Labor’s policy on federation, to be set out in the election, would be to advocate that both upper and lower houses of the federal legislature should be popularly elected, that there should be a power of initiation vested in the people, that the power of the upper house to veto legislation should be restricted, and that the upper house — intended as a states house — should be constituted in proportion to population to prevent it being a stronghold of conservative interests. At the 1897 conference, the party went further and proposed a unicameral popularly elected legislature, and insisted that it would approve federation only on these terms. Their fears were not only that the upper house might be as deaf to proposals favourable to Labor as the New South Wales upper house had recently been, but also that, once the power over customs and excise had been transferred to the federal parliament, it might undermine the recent legislation for land and income taxes in New South Wales that had been seen as democratic measures to raise less of the revenue from the working class and more from the wealthy and propertied.

As the campaign for the convention elections began, the party’s apprehensions about federation were increased when Bruce Smith, a conservative Free Trader, said he expected it to act as a barrier to the growth of Labor’s political power, and by the admission of Cardinal Moran, who decided to stand as an independent candidate, that he saw federation as a barrier to socialism. Moran’s attitude to the Labor party had at first been one of independent sympathy, but for two years or more before the convention elections he had been indicating to the party his opposition to the growing influence of those in it whom he regarded as socialists. In addition, the Catholic Freeman’s Journal, never as sympathetic to the party as the Cardinal, had begun to show “undisguised hostility” to the party in 1896. Protectionist in its opinions on the fiscal question, and cherishing a grudge of ancient origin against the party Parkes had once led, because of his association with the protestant sectarians, the Freeman’s Journal had little time for Labor while it supported free trade and Parkes’s successor, Reid.

Moran’s candidacy split the vote for the Labor ticket, but it was only one of the factors contributing to the defeat of all ten Labor candidates.
Another was the sectarianism introduced into the election by the formation of a United Protestant Conference and the intervention of the Loyal Orange Lodge, which either chose their own or endorsed existing candidates with a view to defeating Moran. Labor’s inexperience in conducting a state-wide election, the low turn-out, the election being on a working day, and perhaps the doubts that others who were non-Catholics had about socialist influence in the party were all factors contributing to the defeat. What ever the explanation for Labor’s defeat in the convention elections might be, members of the party, particularly those who were members of parliament and who had already begun to think that the socialist influence might be an electoral liability, had their doubts strengthened considerably by it. These men included some who had been prominent propagandists for socialism in earlier years.

Holman, soon to become a member of parliament, was one of them and at the 1897 conference in January he argued strongly against including the general nationalization plank in the platforms on the ground that it would be electorally ill-advised to do so. Hughes made it plain before this, when the ASL had talked of the need for a separate socialist party, that although he was a socialist his loyalty was to the Labor party. Both men had recently done much organizing work in country electorates, in many of which the AWU was the main source of votes, and so presumably were in touch with country opinion; both had stood as candidates in elections, Hughes successfully, and by the end of 1897 both were engaged in negotiations for organizational changes to increase the influence of country branches and members of parliament in the PLL — something radicals had always been opposed to. Black, another one-time socialist now a member of parliament, argued in May 1897 that conferences which took up abstract questions and added impossible planks to the platform — meaning nationalization — had a disintegrating effect on the party and that conferences should confine themselves to discussing plans of campaign and the organization of elections. The Sydney District Assembly of the PLL — the stronghold of Social Democratic Federation men — replied by attempting to pass a vote of censure on the members of parliament and a couple of months later censured the PLL executive for not submitting the revised platform to the branches and not publishing it. The executive ignored the censure and insisted it was responsible only to conference, which suggests that the socialists who predominated in it were more moderate and circumspect than their critics.

Towards the end of 1897 preparations were made for the next conference to be held in January 1898, and the main aim of the more moderate members of the party was to obtain a modification of the rules to admit all the parliamentary members of the party to the executive. The secretary, the AWU’s Lamond, “reorganized” the league branches — it had
been noticed in May 1897 that many were defunct — reducing the number of delegates considerably. The conference was also transferred from Sydney to Newcastle “mainly because of country protests against city domination.”

The preparations were effective — of the twenty delegates present, only a third were from city branches and all of the parliamentary members were admitted to the executive but only five were given votes in it. A left-wing proposal that the nationalization plank be removed from the body of the platform and set at its head as a principle was defeated and so too was a proposal that it be dropped altogether. It remained in the platform as the second last of twenty-five planks. The fighting platform, chosen with a view to the approaching elections, consisted of four planks: abolition of the upper house, coupled with the introduction of the initiative and referendum; establishment of a national bank; state pensions for the aged and infirm; and local government reforms. Others that were evidently regarded as tinged with socialist thought were removed from the fighting platform. One prominent socialist complained that the Labor party, meaning the parliamentary members, had deliberately packed the conference, had secured the proxies of absent delegates, or come as representatives of branches which were probably not genuine. Holman complained only of the change in rules that permitted a sitting member to remain as the candidate of a branch unless it saw reason for a ballot: he thought candidates should be balloted for every time because it kept the MPs on their toes and revived interest at the branch level. The ASL decided a few weeks later at its Easter conference to set up a separate political party and to insist upon its own rule, previously ignored but now prescribed for the new party, that members of the Socialist Labor party (SLP) could not join other parties. Most of those who had been prominent socialist propagandists in the past or in other ways associated with the Leigh House group of the ASL — men like Hughes, Holman, Spence, Sleath, Hepher, Flowers, and others — remained in the Labor party and did not join the SLP.

The nationalization plank itself remained in the platform in various places, usually towards the end, until it was removed by the PLL conference in 1905. In the meantime, the warnings that Moran had given the party before the election of 1897 had ceased and the Catholic press had changed its attitude. The cardinal and the press began to give the party public signs of guarded approval, particularly after 1901. With federation, the fiscal question had been moved out of state politics and the \textit{Freeman's Journal} could no longer regard that as a major question in its judgment of the state party. The party had, in any case, already transferred its support from Reid in 1899 to Lyne's, then to See’s government, although each soon appeared to be no better than Reid’s. A new paper, the \textit{Catholic
Press, had been formed late in 1895 to develop a more independent line than the Freeman's Journal and, although it occasionally reminded Labor of the dangers of toying with socialism, it too gave Labor sympathetic consideration. There was, perhaps, little else Catholic papers and spokesmen could do. Many Catholic workers had already attached themselves to the Labor party for class and economic reasons and the party appeared to be the only one which was independent of the growing influence of sectarian organizations of protestants, especially after 1900. There were growing numbers of Catholics among Labor party candidates and members of parliament; there was evidence that the party had good support from electorates in which Moran had polled well in 1897, and the party showed its sympathy with the Irish Home Rule Movement in 1902. Finally, at the time of the party conference in February 1905, Moran made it clear and the Freeman's Journal echoed him that he did not regard Labor as socialist in any sense condemned by papal encyclicals.  

At that conference, Cann, the delegate from the Amalgamated Miners' branch of the PLL at Broken Hill, moved that the state and federal fighting platforms should both have a permanent preamble defining the ultimate objective of the party and this he proposed should be “a co-operative commonwealth founded upon the socialisation of the production and distribution of wealth”. The phrase a “co-operative commonwealth” had been used before in the revised manifesto of the ASL in 1898 after it broke with Labor and reminded members of a popular contemporary text on socialism, Grönlund's Cooperative Commonwealth. The Mudgee branch had proposed that the old nationalization plank, now the seventeen in the platform, should be dropped altogether. These motions reopened the debate of the nineties. One after another, the delegates argued that Labor had succeeded since 1898 not by following “theories” but by doing “practical work”, that the people of New South Wales were “not yet educated up to that state of things”, that the party would reach its goal at some future day, but if they announced that they “wished to become socialists straightaway they would do the cause more harm than good”, that they should not “lose their chance of power in all the states by adopting this German fad”. Only one or two spoke out against this chorus and by eighty votes to fifty-five Cann’s proposal for an objective was referred to a committee to devise a preamble. The committee proposed that the party adopt as its objective:

the cultivation of an Australian national sentiment based upon the maintenance of racial purity, and the development in Australia of an enlightened and self-reliant community [and]  
the securing of the full results of their industry to all producers by the collective ownership of monopolies and the extension of the industrial and economic functions of the State and Municipality.
After an amendment to remove the word "national" from it—Morrish, one of Cann's supporters, argued that the trend of the times was internationalist—this was adopted as the party's objective and plank 17, for nationalization, was removed from the platform by the unanimous vote of conference.

Speaking a few months later, Watson, the federal leader of the party and one of the most prominent men in the New South Wales party, summarized the party's position on socialism. He said that "they looked forward to the ideal when collectivism took the place of competition in this world; [when] production would be for use, not profit. But they recognised that that condition of things could not be attained all at once . . . and in the meantime . . . they were going to devote their energies to relieving the community from the incubus of monopoly."166

And in federal parliament at the same time, touching a theme that was to bedevil the Labor party for another decade or more, he insisted that he was a state socialist and "not a social democrat in the sense in which some understand the term. I do not believe that those engaged in a particular industry should control it. I am a State Socialist; that is, I believe that the whole community should manage whatever industries they take over . . . I believe that Socialism will find its greatest development through the municipalities."167 At the Australian political Labor conference a few days later, constituted by six delegates from the parties in each of the six states, the objective devised by New South Wales earlier in the year was adopted as the objective for the federal platform, in preference to others more aggressively socialistic, by twenty-three votes to eleven, the six from Victoria and five from Queensland constituting the minority.168

What the party contented itself with had been becoming popular for some time: the nationalization of particular monopolies, the establishment of state-owned productive enterprises to supply materials bought by the state in large quantities or for defence purposes and the setting up of state-owned enterprises to compete with capitalist enterprises. The Commonwealth Trades Union Congress, for example, had carried motions three years earlier for the nationalization of the coal and iron industries on these grounds.169 A more subtle argument, but one still leading to the same state socialist conclusion, was presented to the public by Holman in 1906 in the Reid-Holman debate. Holman spoke officially on behalf of the Labor party in defence of its socialism, at a time when Reid was developing his famous "Socialist tiger" propaganda campaign. The main steps in Holman's argument were that monopoly was natural to capitalism in its evolution and that

where these monopolies have reached the stage of complete nationalisation of an industry, where all the articles of a certain kind . . . are made under a single contract, there we say we have arrived at a state
of things which is absolutely incompatible with the continued freedom, happiness or development of the individual citizens of that country . . . we deny that we have struggled away from the tyranny of the old regime, that we have fought our way out of the old military institutions of the colony, that we have overthrown the dictatorship of Downing-Street, and established self-governing and constitutional institutions here in order to subject ourselves again to the unrestricted and unfettered tyranny of an economic mastership such as monopolists would be able to impose upon us.\textsuperscript{170}

The message was distinctly ambiguous: it hinted at a proper Marxian analysis of the development of monopoly in capitalist economies but it also activated a nationalistic anti-British sentiment and a judicious liberal radical concern for individual freedom and self-government. It all depended on which adjectives the audience attended to. Its general tendency was familiar to those in the Australian Socialist party who held the Labor party in contempt for its want of socialist doctrines. Andy Thomson, speaking on the 1905 conference before the Reid-Holman debate, put the idealistic contrast between state socialism and democratic socialism sharply and in terms much more effective than those used by Reid, even though some of Reid's arguments were the same. The ASL agreed with Holman that capitalism had inevitable tendencies towards monopoly but disagreed with him about the way in which it might be conquered and democratized. For Holman, state ownership was sufficient and that was what Thomson, speaking for the ASL, denied. “The trust”, he said, “was efficiently organised capitalist industry, but it took no thought of human welfare throwing men and women on the human scrap-heap in its progress.”\textsuperscript{171} But nationalization by the state was not the answer for a variety of reasons: first, if the second part of Labor's objective meant what it said, it was incoherent, because if the producer got the profits none would be left for the state and vice versa; secondly, the workers would probably be in a worse position under the bureaucracy of a state enterprise than under the management of a private monopoly; thirdly, if they did gain it would be at the expense of other sections in society; fourthly, Labor governments in control of nationalized industries would have to conform to the prevailing conditions of a predominantly capitalist society or be hit in a “vital part” – the financial part; and, finally, no state-run and therefore bureaucratic enterprise could hope to compete successfully with private firms.

Thomson failed to explain whether he thought society should take everything over at once in the course of a revolutionary upheaval or whether it might all be democratized from within by some other process. The question was one which the Labor party had to face again in a few years' time in a more difficult context, but for the time being it seemed safe to ignore it. The proposal was once more put before conference in
1909 that the objective be changed to say that the party was committed to "the securing of the full results of their industry to all producers by the collective ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange". After some debate, in which the old arguments were heard once more, Holman stood and intemperately said — amid disorder when he repeated it — that "there seems to be an impression that this little idiotic idea from Broken Hill [is] true socialism". Against that he posed the present objective of steady progress in the development of state and municipal functions and the observation that European socialists had already begun abandoning the notion that the socialist state could be reached by the collective ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Hughes agreed, but with the less exasperating argument that they must talk to the people in the language they understood if the party was to win elections. The proposal to alter the objective was rejected.

The party was to win both state and federal elections in the next year, but by then it was becoming clear that the parliamentary party would scarcely enter office to accomplish major reforms in the fullness of its strength but would face a most difficult period from both its opponents and its own extraparliamentary organization. But this was not apparent to everyone in the party at the time; many expected it to make great strides once it gained office and its failure to do so led to a mood of frustration and discontent that was turned against the first Labor government.

The party took office for the first time on 21 October 1910, after the Wade government had been defeated in the elections of that year. The caucus selected the members of the ministry, and McGowen, the party leader, allocated the portfolios. Holman became attorney general, Nielsen secretary for lands, Griffith minister for public works, and Beeby minister for public instruction and labour and industry — to name only those who were later at the centre of most conflict within the party. The party won forty-six seats in the Assembly, which left it with a majority of one after the speakership had been filled from its ranks, but it did obtain some support from the seven independents. Party lines were now more firmly drawn than at the end of the 1890s and a ministry which had a narrow majority had more to fear from deaths, resignations, and internal splits than from individual defections and the manoeuvres of the opposition, although, as soon became apparent, the ministry could still suffer embarrassments of those kinds too.

After the election of 1891 the party had hailed its success with elation;
in 1910 the mood was more sober, although the hopes of its supporters were still considerable. Their expectations at the time were moderated by the knowledge that although a Labor government should be able to do a great deal more for the working class than non-Labor governments dependent on the party and under pressure from it, the new government could not bring about a massive reformation of society. Apart from the party's numerical weakness in the Assembly, the Legislative Council, in which it had only a minority of supporters, could easily block Labor legislation; there had already been signs that the federal party, now in power with a substantial majority in both houses for the first time, might not do as the party leaders in New South Wales wished; and, beyond that, no one familiar with the party's twenty-year history could suppose that the diverse elements of which it was composed would always work harmoniously together and in support of a Labor government towards objectives which it felt were within the realm of practical politics. What is more, although the depression was fifteen years back in history when the party came to power, it still had effects on the workforce which increased the pressure on the party from its industrial wing and especially from that section of it, the mass unions of the unskilled, which were the least likely to be tolerant of politicians.

Except for the effects of a major drought in 1901 and 1902, from which the state did not fully recover until 1905, the economy of the state expanded steadily up to the outbreak of war in 1914. Coal output available for consumption doubled between 1896 and 1914 and the amount available for domestic consumption trebled. Manufacturing employment, which reached a low in 1893, rose steadily from 51,000 in 1896 to 121,000 in 1913, then fell slightly in the first years of the war, and rose again from 1917 to 1920.

But the unskilled workforce in mining, agriculture, and the pastoral and construction industries suffered chronic unemployment from the depths of the depression onwards, relieved only temporarily and for particular sections by brief bursts of economic activity. The relocation of the unskilled workforce, from industries where it was highly productive to industries where it was not, kept wages down, and the failure of the government to resume its old levels of expenditure on capital works accentuated the problem. The average weekly wages of the whole workforce fell from 1891 to 1900 and then rose again slowly, but did not exceed the index figure for 1891 until 1911. Wages in manufacturing employment did not fall as far and by 1894–95 had returned to the level of 1891. But unskilled labour suffered a loss of wages of about 20 per cent in the depression which was not recovered until 1921. Even before the war, "because of the movement in retail prices and house rent, and the reappearance of high unemployment for considerable periods, wage
earners as a socio-economic group had made little material progress overall from 1891 to 1914, although for a short period, 1909–1913, higher effective wages were received.\textsuperscript{176} Good seasons from 1906 helped in that recovery, but it was by no means complete for the unskilled or the chronically unemployed when war broke out.\textsuperscript{177} Then the almost immediate drying up of loan money, and the pegging of wages in a period when food prices rapidly began to rise, brought increasing hardship to large numbers in the workforce.

Another effect of the depression, as we have noted, was the weakening of the trade union movement. But from the later nineties onwards, partly because of major organizing drives by the Labor Council and the AWU, the amendments of 1901 to the industrial legislation, the changed tactics of unions in relation to arbitration, and the slow return of relative prosperity, the numbers of both unions and of union members rose. In 1900 there were about 23,000 members in 42 unions; by 1910 there were 127,000 in 166 unions. Many of the unions were poor and small and all were "relatively weak for most of the 1900s", but this, far from subduing the unions, did little to decrease their solidarity when the Broken Hill lockout and the general coal miners’ strike occurred within a few months of one another in 1909.\textsuperscript{178}

The politics of the year 1911 brought to the surface almost all the questions which were to weaken the Labor party and hamper the ministry without resolving any of the disputes about them; industrial problems concerning wages, hours, strikes, and arbitration; relations between the federal and the state governments and incidentally between the state and federal wings of the party; and relations between the parliamentary and extraparliamentary wings and the industrial and country sections of the party organization in New South Wales.

The mixed feelings of the party in victory were reflected in the address of the president of the PLL, Minahan, when he opened the annual conference of the party early in 1911, three months after the party had taken office. "The vessel of Labor", he said, "had sailed out of the harbor of theoretical politics, and was now upon the broad ocean of politics. It was manned by a crew of loyal parliamentarians, but with the cargo aboard the vessel was now well down to the water line... Their Federal Labor Government had justified the confidence reposed in it by the people of Australia and the manner in which the State Government had conducted itself had not only brought credit upon itself, but had added prestige to their movement."\textsuperscript{179} All this hinted at more than he could say openly: namely that the government might be unable to follow a course as straight as the ideological purists would expect or move as fast in satisfying demands as its supporters hoped; that the parliamentarians would of necessity play a major part in determining the course Labor followed in
power; that, as the word “loyal” hinted, they should not be judged too rashly or too soon; and that the party had such a backlog of demands since it was in opposition in 1904 that the ministry might well be unable to satisfy all of them as soon as the party would like.

His forebodings and warnings were amply justified — there were now two Labor vessels, not just one, on the ocean, and the New South Wales party and its supporters had expectations of both and could judge each by comparison with the other. The two conferences of 1911 — the annual one which Minahan opened, and a special one called later in the year to discuss the course of the New South Wales party — provided the opportunities for making that judgment.

The ground for one of the conflicts in 1911 was laid at the interstate conference of delegates from the six state Labor parties held in Brisbane in 1908. That conference decided unanimously that the party in federal politics should advocate alterations to the federal constitution which would enable the Commonwealth government to make the policy of “new protection” effective, to provide for the nationalization of monopolies, and to put the powers of the federal conciliation and arbitration court beyond doubt and its decisions beyond challenge in the High Court.

The policy of new protection, given form in federal legislation passed by Deakin’s government in 1906 with Labor support, was designed to ensure that the workers got a cut, in the form of improved wages and conditions, from the benefits of the protection given to Australian industry by the federally designed tariff system and other legislation. This legislation had been declared invalid by the High Court in *Barger’s Case* and the *Union Label Case* in 1908, although improved wages were obtained through the federal conciliation and arbitration court, notably as a result of Higgins’s *Harvester* judgment. But the powers exercised by that court had been under review by the High Court too and in some important respects they had been whittled down, particularly by its judgment in the *Railway Servants Case* in 1906. The unions, always short of money, found their funds swallowed up winning arbitration court awards that were subsequently declared invalid in the High Court. And yet they believed that much more could be obtained for their members, especially those in interstate unions like the AWU, from federal industrial legislation and court actions than from state legislation and state courts and wages boards. Finally, the nationalization of monopolies, which for many in the party was precious because it was almost all that remained after years of argument of its early socialist inheritance, was a plank in both state and federal platforms, but the federal parliament did not have the power to enable a Labor government to give effect to it. In addition, the High Court had ruled in 1908 that the Commonwealth could not use its corporations power to break up intrastate trusts.  

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To carry out the decision of the 1908 conference to alter the constitution, the federal party had to pass the necessary bills in the Commonwealth parliament and submit them to a federal referendum. When the party took office briefly at the end of 1908 it did not have the power to do this, but its victory in 1910 gave it the majorities it needed in both houses. In the meantime, two different lines of thought about the proposals had been developed; Holman had emerged as the main protagonist of the states rights position, and Hughes, the attorney general in Fisher’s federal ministry, as the advocate of increased Commonwealth powers. This position was often labelled unificationist because there had always been a section of the party which regarded a federal system as inherently conservative and any move to enlarge Commonwealth powers as a step towards the abolition of state parliaments. The party was generally convinced that even the more modest objective of enlarging the industrial powers of the Commonwealth could be achieved only by changing the constitution by means of a referendum, and consequently the alternative procedure, of inducing all the states to refer the necessary powers to the Commonwealth, was given scarcely any consideration at first.

The conflict between Holman and Hughes over the extension of federal powers was particularly serious for the New South Wales party because Hughes too had his political base and powerful allies in it. The proposal for a referendum had been firmly supported by the AWU in 1909 and by the more doctrinaire unificationists in the party at its conference early in 1910 before the party had won power in either federal or state elections. The arguments for extending federal powers were both thrashed out again at that conference, and the unificationist motions were rejected by large majorities. The alternative motion that “the states shall hand over to the Federal Parliament the power to legislate in all industrial matters” was carried by 95 to 35 votes, and although two of the future ministers in New South Wales, Beeby and Nielsen, argued against it the vote was a compromise rather than a defeat for Holman. McGowen avoided the question altogether in his policy speech in May 1910 for the state elections. In October the federal government began debate on the two bills that were to be put to a referendum to extend Commonwealth powers, and on the eve of the conclusion of the debate McGowen, Holman, and Beeby set out for Melbourne by train in a fruitless effort to induce Hughes to make alterations in them.

Minahan therefore had every reason to expect that the conference in 1911 would be tense and quarrelsome. On its second day it resolved, with only a few dissenting votes, that it supported the proposed amendment of the constitution to be put forward in the referendum set down for April and urged electors to vote yes to the two bills. Holman told the conference that he and his state colleagues would not oppose the decision to support a
The report of what then happened given by the *Worker*, which was tersely opposed to Holman, captures some of the flavour of the proceedings:

On Saturday [State] Attorney-General Holman, noticing that the attendance of delegates had considerably lessened, and that Mr Watson and other advocates of United Australia were absent, recognised that this was a good opportunity to gain a snatch-vote for Little Australia. He, therefore, moved the suspension of the standing orders, so that conference might vote at once on the motions of which he had given notice for the following Monday. He appealed for unanimity — and he got a majority of 10 in a Conference of 240 delegates! . . . Delegates opposed to Holmania as a Federal policy were of course unprepared for the insidious move, but they put up a hard fight.

On Monday evening when the conference reassembled there was a big roll-up. The possibility of the Holman resolutions . . . threatening the existence of the labor movement had begun to be recognised, and the majority of delegates were determined to nip anything of that sort in the bud . . .

Holman's three resolutions, only the first two of which were carried before the conference rescinded them by 129 votes to 82, were designed to save his position by sidestepping the earlier decision of the conference. The resolutions were that the interstate conference of the party, composed of six delegates from the Labor party in each of the states, should be reconstituted on a population basis; that the present interstate conference should confine itself to effecting the reconstitution and that the “Labor movement [should] oppose all further extension of the power of the federal parliament until the [federal] constitution has been reorganised upon lines which secure parliamentary supremacy”.

These proposals were anathema to the AWU conference which was meeting at the same time in Sydney and it decided to send a strong letter to the PLL conference which expressed, among other things, its “indignant” resentment against the “traitorous attitude of Mr. W. A. Holman” and its desire that he should get out of the Labor movement and fight it from outside. In the debate which followed in the PLL conference, words like “treachery”, “Labor rats”, “solidarity”, “an enemy within”, “a small clique”, and so on were freely used and finally conference unanimously passed two more resolutions condemning Holman’s action as unconstitutional and expressing the opinion that he ought to be asked to resign from the party.

The anger the conference expressed against Holman was soon extended to the parliamentary party as a whole and especially to those in it who, though not opposing the yes campaign, had failed to support it, sometimes ostentatiously. When the referendum was held, it resulted in a defeat for
the advocates of the yes vote which was only a fraction of the Labor vote in the two preceding state elections, and the government’s critics were furious. Holman issued a statement that every member of the state cabinet was agreed that the federal government should have the powers specified at the Brisbane conference, and insisted that what Hughes asked for in the referendum went far beyond what had been agreed on. He added that the government intended to take steps “at once” to pave the way for a transfer of powers. But Hughes’s case was that what the Brisbane conference wanted done could not be done at all without additional supplementary powers. Evatt comments that “while Holman was right from the point of view of party discipline and constitution, Hughes’s general reasoning was not easily answerable by those who professed Labor principles”.

But to the *Worker*, the AWU, and many of the branches of the PLL these were subtleties. The *Worker* sought branch opinions under the headline “What shall we do with them?” meaning the state MPs, after the Labor Council had suggested that a special conference should be held. From May to July it had over forty replies urging either condemnation of them or a special conference, while only about seven replies favoured Holman and the government. The Bourke branch of the AWU was scathing in its secretary’s annual report in May, and the Central branch, disappointed that “nothing much, if anything, of value to the workers has as yet been placed on the Statute Book by the new Government”, contented itself with finding excuses for it. The Labor Council of New South Wales, on the other hand, referred in its half-yearly report in June to the “marked ability displayed by the State Labor Government in... their administration of existing laws, the introduction of new legislation... Handicapped as they are by their small majority, their task is a very hard one, and is likely to become harder and more difficult when the Bills now before the Assembly reach the Upper House”.

The special conference — formally two special conferences — of the party was set down for August 1911. The *Worker* reminded delegates on the eve of its meeting that “every no vote cast in the referendum... was a seed of evil sown in the life of the nation” and, after noticing increased industrial strife, concluded that Australia was confronted by a monopolistic conspiracy to plunge the country into industrial war and to make dividends out of the suffering of the people which the Commonwealth was utterly helpless to prevent. The second conference was held first and debate began on a censure moved by the Randwick branch and on the motion of the Bourke branch, AWU, for the expulsion of Holman, Page, and Beeby as traitors because they had either failed to advocate a yes vote or had openly advocated a no vote in the referendum.

But, quite fortuitously, the ministry was in the middle of a major
political crisis in parliament. Led by Holman, as acting premier while McGowen was abroad attending the coronation, the parliamentary party had completely outmanoeuvred the opposition in a situation where they seemed certain to be defeated. "Conference delegates cheered Holman to the echo, his welcome easily eclipsing that of Hughes", and it was soon clear that in this atmosphere no censure of Holman would be carried. The censure and expulsion motions were negatived, and Watson spoke, telling delegates that he too felt bitter about the result of the referendum but that he would not give the advice Holman himself gave twelve years before, when Sleath and Ferguson were expelled, to thrust traitors into the outer darkness. He then moved that "with a view to maintaining the solidarity of the Labor movement and preventing a recurrence of the unsatisfactory position in connection with the recent Federal Referendum this Special Conference hereby directs that in future an executive shall not endorse as a Labor candidate any person who, henceforth at a referendum, opposes or fails to support proposals submitted to the people by the Federal or State Labor parties, provided that such proposals have first been endorsed by an interstate or New South Wales Conference." Hughes and Holman both put their arguments; Foster (the member for New England) made a forlorn attempt to rally the radicals by speaking of the states rights curse and reminding Labor of the noble cry "Workers of the world unite! You have a world to gain and nothing to lose but your chains" (Cheers). Watson’s motion was then carried, the question whether Page who had failed to campaign for a yes vote should be re-endorsed as a Labor candidate was left to the Botany branch, and the delegates reconvened as the first special conference. That meeting decided to alter the basis of representation at conference to increase the influence of the unions at the expense of the smaller branches; it deprived the Labor Council of its separate representation at conference, and told Broken Hill delegates that their proposal to form a distinct Trade Union party was inadvisable. The conference broke up, Evatt concludes, "with Holman in full enjoyment of the confidence of the parliamentary party, of the Labor Leagues and of the majority of the unions". But though the conference was a vindication for Holman for the time being, powerful sections of the movement remained unreconciled or suspicious: the AWU, especially the Bourke branch; the Broken Hill miners; the Worker edited by Lamond; some of the city branches of the PLL and the PLL executive itself.

The parliamentary crisis which made acting-premier Holman the hero of the hour in August 1911 arose when two country Labor members, Horne (Liverpool Plains) and Dunn (Mudgee), resigned their seats in opposition to the government’s land policy during a debate on the policy initiated by an opposition censure motion. The state platform of the party after the
PLL conference of 1910 included land and financial reforms as the second of the planks in its fighting platform, and one of these was the “immediate cessation of Crown Land Sales”. The plank also included a proposal for the consolidation and amendment of existing land legislation to provide for compulsory resumption of privately owned land for closer settlement, water conservation, and irrigation, and a list of smaller reforms intended to facilitate settlement by small owners and to stop speculation. McGowen had emphasized in his policy speech in May 1910 that the financial and railway policies of the party were intimately linked with its land policy, both in order to facilitate settlement and to promote decentralization. Opening up Crown lands was to be the first task, before any privately owned land was resumed. And he went on to say that “he had been creditably [sic] informed that in the central districts there were two million acres of land fit for agricultural purposes that was leased”, that is Crown land.¹⁹⁶

Homestead selections in Crown land up to 1908 had been made only on terms of perpetual leasehold established by an act of 1895. In 1908 the Wade government had framed a conversion act that gave leaseholders the right to convert their tenures to freehold. The principle of no further sales of Crown land in the Labor platform required repeal of this conversion act, and in a statement made shortly after taking office McGowen had reiterated that remaining Crown lands would be leased, not sold.

The PLL conference in January 1911 had rejected motions to remove the nationalization of land from the general platform and to have a committee of country delegates revise the plank. A motion was carried “regretting” that Nielsen the secretary for lands had been prepared to depart “from the leasehold principle even in such a small degree” as to propose the sale of a small piece of urban Crown land at Maroubra.¹⁹⁷

Nielsen amplified the policy early in 1911 saying that bills were prepared to consolidate the twenty-four land acts and that they would be followed by amending bills which would include a bill to repeal the conversion act. Wade moved an amendment to the address-in-reply disapproving of the proposed repeal but it was defeated. In July 1911 he again moved a censure on the government’s land policy which this time brought on a parliamentary crisis and provoked internal conflict in the Labor party. Black convened a two-day meeting of twenty-four of its members from country areas which produced a set of motions that subsequently formed the basis of the decision reached in caucus.¹⁹⁸

Before the vote was taken, Horne and Dunn resigned their seats. They had arranged pairs for the division, which were honoured, and the censure was defeated but the government was left with only forty-three members against forty-four Liberals and independents. All but two of the seven independents were old Progressive party members representing country...
electorates and, although they had all declared their intention of supporting the government at the beginning of the parliament, in the amendment to the address-in-reply they abstained and some of them voted with the opposition in the second censure motion. Holman decided he could not carry on until the two by-elections had been held and sought supply and a special adjournment of six weeks, but then, when the house seemed certain to vote against the adjournment, he asked the lieutenant governor, Cullen, for a prorogation and, when that was refused, he submitted the ministry's resignation. Cullen saw Wade, who agreed to form a government if promised a dissolution should he not be able to control the house. Cullen refused to promise that and then asked Holman to carry on, now granting him the prorogation he had first asked for. Meanwhile, in order to free another Labor member to vote in divisions, Cann had resigned the speakership. But caucus then decided that the act repealing the conversion act should not interfere with existing land rights and at that point Nielsen, who was determined to follow decisions of the conference and the platform, resigned his portfolio, saying that although he would remain a loyal party member he could not take a post in a future Labor government. Dunn announced that the decision removed his objection to the land policy and he rejoined the party. But the two by-elections left matters where they stood: each party won one seat, leaving Labor with forty-five to forty-five Liberals and independents.

This meant that if the speakership were filled by a Labor party man the government would again be in a minority, but Holman extricated himself from the difficulty by getting a Liberal, Willis, to take the chair, on condition that there would be a short session in preparation for an election, and that only bills already passed by the Assembly, the budget and non-contentious measures would be dealt with. The anger of the Liberals was unrestrained and, after chaotic scenes in the Assembly, Willis was physically installed in the chair by Labor members. That gave Holman his majority of one, but soon there were two more by-elections, one of which Labor won, which gave it a majority of three. At this point a further change in the block of independents occurred which was also of benefit to the government. When parliament first met in 1910 the independents had agreed to act together and at the end of 1910 announced themselves as the Democratic party. But now late in 1911 they broke up and at least three of them were expected to give general support to the government.

In this situation, the government reintroduced legislation which was regarded as contentious, including an industrial arbitration bill and an income tax bill which provided for a graduated tax and distinguished between earned and unearned income. Willis protested, but Holman argued that the agreement with him not to bring such legislation forward was subject to reconsideration if the strength of the party changed. Willis did
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not resign. Wade again moved and lost a censure motion and the session, adjourned for Christmas 1911, was to continue into 1912, making it clear the government had no intention of holding an early election.

Success in dealing with the parliamentary crisis was only one of the things the government had to its credit by the end of the second session in March 1912. Soon after taking office it released Bowling, who had been sentenced to twelve months' gaol earlier in 1910 for his part in the major coal strike that began late in 1909 while Wade was still in power. This was an election promise and of considerable symbolic value to the unions, particularly since the leaders of the party had dissociated themselves at the time from the more extravagant of the doctrines inspired by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), concerning strikes and industrial warfare, that were then being actively advocated in a section of the union movement. What was of more importance to the unions was that the government should repeal both of Wade's acts for dealing with industrial relations. To accomplish this, the fighting platform of 1910 included the demand that the 1901 industrial arbitration act should be re-enacted.

The fighting platform included six other planks besides the two dealing with land reform and industrial relations. The first consisted of a long-standing demand that the upper house should be abolished and replaced by initiative and referendum, and proposals for electoral reform. Free technical, secondary, and university education, regulation of the hours of labor, a workmen's compensation act, nationalization of coalmines, and a zoned system of railway fares and freights comprised the remaining planks. McGowen stayed close to this platform in his policy speech. Soon after the elections the new Labor government announced plans for a state coal mine and a state brickworks and for adopting the Commonwealth adult male minimum wage for its own employees. Not much could be done in the short session held in 1910, but an irrigation bill and public works bills were put through parliament as well as the budget. By the end of 1911 a state brickworks and metal quarries had been set up and various schemes for public works, including railways and harbours, were under development for both Sydney and the country. The most important acts passed during the year were the Income Tax Act, an act, not finally passed until 1912, for absentee voting and to extend the hours of polling, and the Industrial Arbitration Act. Early in 1912 a Housing Act was passed authorizing the state to build houses to reduce the housing shortage and bring down rents. Daceyville, named after the minister, was built as a model working-class suburb under this act. Legislation was also passed to authorize the establishment of state coal mines.

The executive of the PLL was mollified. In its annual report for the year, it regretted that the government had still taken no steps to abolish the upper house, that the alienation of Crown lands was continuing, and
that the party had not had a chance to discuss the resignations of Horne and Dunn. But, conceding that internal party strife had delayed legislation, it found a good deal which it could praise: the provision of housing for workers, the state brickworks and timber yard, the amendment of the Electoral Act, the Income Tax Act, and the select committees the government had set up to study other questions in the platform. The annual conference of the party in January 1912 was free from contention and did no more than load a number of new and minor items on to the party platform, urge the government to establish a state iron industry, and insist that in future no one should resign, as Horne and Dunn had, without first obtaining the consent of caucus.

But the unions were dissatisfied with the failure of the government to carry out much of its industrial platform. Of the half-dozen industrial acts it promised at its outset, only one, the Industrial Arbitration Act, had been completed and that had been held up and drastically amended in the upper house. The Worker complained particularly that a compensation law, a minimum wage law, and the eight-hour day for miners had not been obtained. The Industrial Arbitration Act was attacked not only by Labor's opponents, but also by some of the unions, notably the government railway and tramway service association, for its failure to grant compulsory preference to unionists in employment. From 1912 onwards the dissatisfaction of the trade union section of the movement with the government increased.

Their industrial demands were based partly on the fact that the industrial arbitration act of 1901, put through by the Lyne government with Labor's support, had established a system in which arbitration was made compulsory for the first time in New South Wales. When the original act expired and had to be renewed in 1908, the Wade government was in power and Labor in opposition. The act of 1901 needed amendment "but not in the direction of discouraging the trade union as the selected unit for the system of conciliation". However, the bill "introduced by Wade was designed to discourage [the] growth of unionism which he correctly associated with Labor's increasing political power". At the time Holman and Beeby managed to obtain amendments to the bill which preserved the trade unions as the employees' negotiating bodies, but the increased penalties and the wage board system which the act introduced were a challenge to the unions. The parliamentary Labor party urged the unions to accept the new act, but the Sydney Labor Council called for a boycott of it.

The boycott was unsuccessful, but the act was challenged directly by a number of strikes, particularly that on the coalfields and by the lockout of miners in Broken Hill. These provoked Wade to increase the already heavy penalties of the 1908 act by the amending legislation of 1909 — the
“coercion act” — which was gagged through parliament late in the year, more in a spirit of revenge than with any rational plan in mind for settling the coal strike or regulating industrial relations.\textsuperscript{203} It was under this act that Peter Bowling, the leader of the Newcastle miners, was convicted and sent in leg-irons to Goulburn gaol early in 1910. The result was to create a martyr to the cause of direct action.

For a while, after about 1907, direct action doctrines, spread by militant socialists like Tom Mann and Peter Bowling and by IWW clubs, had some appeal to men in the mass unions of the unskilled, particularly miners in Broken Hill and Newcastle. The lockout in Broken Hill which lasted for over sixteen weeks early in 1909 ended in a qualified victory for the men: Higgins gave judgment in their favour, part of which the High Court reversed on appeal, and some mines had to remain closed until metal prices rose, once they were compelled not to reduce wages. The coalminers in Newcastle who failed to get the support of watersiders and transport workers suffered a severe defeat, in which five of their leaders were arrested and their demands for a minimum wage and “eight hours bank to bank” were rejected. They were, as Turner puts it, “domesticated” by force to the arbitration process\textsuperscript{204} but in circumstances which revitalized and strengthened an old tendency in the union movement to distrust politicians, parties, governments, and courts. It was this feeling that the Labor congress expressed in 1908 in its resolution that “whereas there is a grave possibility of the industrial movement being eclipsed by the political, and whereas those taking part in the political movement are not always in touch with industrial developments, therefore it be resolved that the industrial movement hold a Congress annually in order to give adequate expression to Labor’s aspirations and general direction to the political movement, aiming always at making the industrial the dominant factor in political affairs”.\textsuperscript{205}

This meant, of course, not that bodies like the Labor Council would accept radical and direct action doctrines — the Council made that plain in repudiating the IWW in 1910\textsuperscript{206} — but that they would expect a lot from the political movement and watch it closely. Even the Bourke branch of the AWU, the more radical of the two branches in New South Wales, insisted in 1910 that the “political arm is quite as essential as the industrial one — in fact they are inseparable”\textsuperscript{207}

As long as it was in opposition, the parliamentary Labor party suffered little from this distrust. But in office it had to show that it was capable of meeting the unions’ demands if it too was not to be held in contempt by them. The demands, however, were not all easily met, as a discussion of the arbitration plank at the PLL conference in 1910 showed. In the course of debate, Stuart-Robertson, one of the more radical members of the parliamentary party, urged that the plank be removed altogether from the
platform for two reasons that were linked. He agreed there could not be compulsory arbitration without penal clauses which a Labor government would have to enforce. But arbitration and wages boards had so far granted nothing more than a living wage and in most cases less than that and in such a situation the unionists had to be able to resort to strike action. If they did, he implied, a Labor government enforcing penalties would be in the same position as a non-Labor capitalist government.

Another delegate, who insisted he preferred constitutional methods to a strike, especially a general strike, argued that a Labor government would not necessarily be defeated if a union went on strike and it had to enforce penalties, but Stuart-Robertson thought that one or the other, arbitration or the strike, would have to be given up. Watson deprecated the sharp contrast, and asked conference to confine itself to general principles and leave the details of an act to the parliamentary party.

The government's Industrial Arbitration Act of 1912 went some way towards meeting union demands. It introduced conciliation committees, provided for grouping of industries so that the number of wages boards could be reduced, and altered the penal clauses but did not abolish them. The wages board system was still open to delays even though it was simplified; the upper house insisted on retaining some penalties which the government wanted to end, but the penalty of imprisonment was done away with. Unions which did not choose to register under the act were still free to strike. The granting of preference in employment to unionists was left to the Court but the measure was so designed that the Court would have to grant preference in most cases. But no act could regulate the consequences for a Labor government, especially one with a slender majority, if it intervened on the wrong side in a strike, and that was precisely what happened early in 1913.

By that time, the relative harmony that had prevailed at the party's annual conference early in 1912 had been destroyed by appointments the government had made to the upper house, by its deal with Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP) to help it set up a privately owned steel-works, and by the resignation of Beeby, minister for labour and industry. All of these provoked heated argument at the next conference in 1913 and resulted in resolutions hostile to the government.

In March and April 1912 eleven men were appointed to the upper house but only six of them were recognized members of the Labor movement. Neither the executive of the PLL nor caucus was consulted about the appointments. In August, a Labor Principles Defence Committee was formed under the leadership of Duncan, vice-president of the PLL and president of the Clerks’ Union, particularly to force Labor representatives to adhere to the policy of abolishing the upper house. It threatened to play a prominent part in selecting Labor candidates for the next election.
The upper house had passed the bill for the state to set up its own coal mines, but it had amended the Industrial Arbitration Act, and rejected or shelved a bill to give coal miners their eight-hour day underground, an early-closing bill, and bills to amalgamate two savings banks, to give shearsers better accommodation, and to give tenants a share in improvements they effected. The house also blocked the state ironworks bill, carried in the Assembly by large majorities. The government had shown no signs of moving to abolish it and some of its appointees had helped block or amend its own legislation. But still the 1913 conference, although it passed a motion that the appointment of unpledged men to the Council was contrary to the spirit and detrimental to the interests of the party, was not prepared to pass a motion that the PLL executive should give prior endorsement to all Labor appointees and contented itself with a motion that appointees should have been League or union members for four years.

The argument about the agreement with BHP for an iron and steel works was simple enough, although the political manoeuvring by which the agreement was reached was not. The arrangement made, which was to be ratified in parliament, was that the government would dredge the Hunter River beside the site chosen for the works and vest the necessary land in the BHP Company. The government also agreed to consider a preferential contract with the company for the supply of steel to the state. One of the advantages of the arrangement was that it would increase employment in Newcastle, but it was contrary to the recently reiterated demand that the government set up a state ironworks and it would lead to a monopoly by BHP and enable it to supply the state railways with the steel it required. Conference resolved, by 104 votes to 42, that the agreement was contrary to plank 6 of the platform and to the spirit of the movement as exemplified in other state enterprises set up by the government.

Beeby's resignation enabled conference to touch on the untrustworthiness of politicians. Beeby, minister for labour and industry, resigned his portfolio, his seat in parliament, and his party membership in December 1912 and announced he would contest Blayney again as an independent. He said he wanted to be free to oppose a yes vote in the forthcoming referendum when Hughes was to resubmit his proposals for increased Commonwealth powers to the country, but he also left little doubt then and later that he resented the attempts of the extra-parliamentary organization to exert a close influence on Labor parliamentarians. The unions, and especially the AWU, resented his administration of the arbitration act and his attitude to other legislation of interest to them. At the annual conference of the AWU it had even been argued that the union, one of the main sources of party funds, should stop
supporting the party financially "seeing the way some of the parlia-
mentarians had acted and the intriguing that went on". The conference
was particularly angry because the parliamentary party had ignored its
requests in relation to the Hut Accommodation Bill, and by May 1913 the
Bourke branch was sarcastically accusing the Labor government of much
kinder consideration of squatters and farmers and the members of being
concerned only with their own personal aggrandisement. Three can-
didates stood for Blayney: one Labor, one Liberal, and Beeby. The Labor
man was eliminated on the first ballot, leaving Beeby and the Liberal,
Withington, to go to the second. The *Worker* urged Labor electors to vote
for Withington as a punishment for Beeby, but the PLL executive and the
ministry advised them to vote for Beeby on the ground that Beeby had
promised the government his general support. In radical eyes the govern-
ment had done a deal with a Labor rat. Beeby won. At the 1913
conference, Lamond, the editor of the *Worker*, moved for a committee of
enquiry into the Blayney by-election, the fate and future of the Shearers'
Hut Accommodation Bill, and the resignation of Nielsen from his seat in
Yass, a question designed more to embarrass the government by reviving
old fights on land policy than to serve any useful purpose.

By the time of the 1913 conference, there was tension in caucus as
well. In July 1912 the parliamentary party decided that it had confidence
in Page, member for Botany, who had openly opposed a yes vote in the
federal referenda, and to publish its opinion. In September, it passed a
motion that the main principles of all bills were to be submitted to caucus
before the bills were introduced into the house; and by the end of the year
a number of members were in arrears in their agreed contributions to the
caucus funds. And finally, according to Black who was in the parlia-
mentary party at that time, Holman and Beeby were both canvassing the
question of the leadership of the party on the assumption that McGowen
did not have much longer in the position.

Then, in February and March 1913, the gasworkers in Sydney went on
strike and were out for over ten weeks. They had spent six months trying
to get improved conditions from the court and finally Judge Heydon
rejected their claims. The secretary of the Labor Council and the minister
for labour, now Carmichael, tried to arrange negotiations for a settlement,
but the men, deciding that Carmichael had broken a promise he had given
at a mass meeting because the ministry refused to stand by it, were
adamant and turned down flat all proposals for negotiations. The ministry
issued a proclamation calling for volunteers to man the gasworks and the
*Worker* reacted with the headline: "Labor Government calls for Amateur
Blacklegs, Extraordinary proceedings in New South Wales." The out-
come was that when the unionists went back to work it was to their
former jobs and without victimization, with a promise from the govern-
ment that it would call a special session of parliament to amend the arbitration act, and with a promise from the gas company that it would agree to a wages board hearing on their claims and concede retrospectivity to any increase in wages it granted. They were confirmed in their opinion that the strike as a weapon of last resort was an essential adjunct to the arbitration process. Several other strikes occurred during the early months of the year and a number of workers were prosecuted and fined for their part in them, and this further strained relations between unions and government. A. B. Piddington, K. C., was appointed as a commissioner to enquire into the working of the arbitration act and recommended that, although there was no substantial opinion in favor of ending arbitration, the wages board system should be replaced by a three-man court to make it more efficient. McGowen admitted he wanted to retire – he had realized, according to Evatt, that his leadership “had become a nullity ... the workers had ignored both his advice and his threats” – and a couple of months later he resigned and Holman was elected leader. Holman took over in July 1913 with a short session of parliament in front of him before the general election became necessary. The government had a clear majority and it survived three motions of censure. One of these motions, on a proposal by the minister of public works, Griffith, for a £3 million ($6 million) contract with the British firm of Norton-Griffiths to finance public works, showed caucus to be divided. Holman said it would be treated as a non-party matter and spoke against it, and the proposal was defeated. But the party was to hear more of that question in the future. Once more, although the government had a substantial list of measures to its credit, the upper house had even more to its: twenty-three either held up or rejected including, as usual, legislation on such subjects as workmen’s compensation, closer settlement, fair rents, public servants’ superannuation, and various industrial and railway construction bills.

The elections were to be held on 6 December 1913, and in October the PLL executive endorsed McGowen and Holman, but only after considerable opposition to Holman had been expressed because of his attitude to the powers referenda. The executive refused to re-endorse Page and although the caucus asked it to reconsider its decision it refused to change it. Page stood successfully as an independent Labor candidate and one branch seceded from the league. Less serious quarrels between the executive and the branches over selections occurred in two other electorates.

In his policy speech Holman stressed Labor’s achievements since 1910 and blamed the upper house for blocking many measures. His proposals included many measures already blocked in the Council but none to show how he thought the Council might be induced to pass them. During the campaign, the most dangerous threat came, not from the unions or the
Labor Leagues which appear to have thrown themselves loyally into the work despite their dissatisfactions, but from the Catholics. The Catholic Federation asked all Labor candidates by circular to undertake to redress a list of grievances connected with schools and hospitals and Holman countered by reminding candidates that party members could give no pledges to any other organization. O'Reilly, a priest prominent in the federation, attacked Holman publicly for this and Holman replied in kind, successfully averting the threat. The results were a triumph for the state party, the more impressive not only because the second federal powers referendum had again been defeated a few months before but also because in the Commonwealth elections in May, the federal Labor ministry had been defeated after a fall of approximately 4 per cent in its vote in New South Wales since 1910. The government went into 1914 with a comfortable majority of eight in the new parliament.

Internal tensions in the party were, however, increased rather than eased by electoral success and from the beginning of 1914 onwards tension mounted for three years until finally when Hughes raised the conscription issue the party split apart. Immediately after the election, caucus met and Holman, congratulating everyone on the splendid victory, "pointed out the great responsibility now resting on the Party and trusted that everyone present would stand shoulder to shoulder in a solid endeavour to justify the existance of the Party now that it had a real majority behind it. There could be no excuse in the future, and we must be prepared to do big things..." The Labor Council took the same view — in its annual report it said "there should now be no reason for delay in bringing forward a number of industrial measures previously delayed owing to the smallness of the Government's majority in the last Parliament, such as an Amended Arbitration Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, Early Closing Act and many other measures..."

Observations like these led inevitably to the question how Holman would tackle the upper house, because it was plain to all that the government had suffered more from it than from its narrow majority in the preceding parliament. The annual conference of the PLL in January formed firm ideas about how Holman should proceed. Early in the conference its temper was exposed when the executive's action in refusing to endorse Page was upheld by ninety votes to forty-nine, after Holman, speaking in effect for the old caucus, had argued against it. For the first time for three years someone proposed that the objective include the collective ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange and the new feature, political and economic equality of the sexes. The proposal was easily defeated. Resolutions to make members of parliament more amenable to their branches and conference were defeated, and then conference got down to a debate on the upper house
and Labor’s past appointments to it. A committee was appointed which proposed that

1. to get abolition the government must make its appointments early
2. the appointees should include:
   - 6 nominated by Conference
   - 2 nominated by the AWU
   - 2 nominated by the Women’s Central Organising Committee
   - 3 nominated by the Labor Council
   - 2 nominated by the ALF
   - 1 nominated by the Maritime Unions
3. of the twenty or more needed in all, the caucus of Assembly members should nominate the rest – say half a dozen
4. all candidates for nomination should sign a pledge to work for abolition and the substitution of the initiative and referendum, that is, the first plank of the party’s fighting platform.

Watson tried to make it a little easier for Holman to swallow: he argued that cabinet not caucus should make the nominations under the third heading. Clause 1 was carried; clauses 2 and 3 were replaced by an amendment that the government should submit the names of all appointees to the executive of the PLL for prior endorsement, and that was carried by 95 votes to 53. Clause 4 was then carried. In this atmosphere, the AWU Central branch’s motion that it should be allowed to withdraw its political funds from the control of the PLL executive was lost.

In caucus in December 1913, McGowen and Meagher were nominated for the speakership, Meagher by Stuart-Robertson. McGowen was Holman’s choice and Meagher was chosen by twenty-four votes to sixteen. Having had what the minutes describe as an “animated discussion”, caucus decided not to proceed with the election of ministers but adjourned for a month. When it met in January, as conference was beginning, it re-elected Holman unanimously and then when the motion for election of eight ministers came on, an amendment was moved, but defeated, to deprive Holman of the allocation of portfolios by electing them to particular posts. From this time onwards Holman was opposed in caucus by a “cave” of radical critics consisting, according to Molesworth, mostly of new members and a few old members including Dooley, Stuart-Robertson, and Cochran. Its objects were to “force the government to get along with the abolition of the Upper House and to introduce a straightout Labor policy”.

In this period Holman made what Evatt describes as a “disastrous” decision, that is, not to make twenty or thirty appointments to the upper house immediately after the election. It is far from clear why he failed to do this, or at least to put the necessary names before the governor. Evatt’s
EXPLANATION IS THAT FOR HIS TRIP ABROAD HOLMAN HAD BORROWED MONEY FROM HUGH McINTOSH, A WEALTHY ENTREPRENEUR IN THE ENTERTAINMENT WORLD AND LATER A MAJOR NEWSPAPER PROPRIETOR, AND HAD PROMISED HIM A SEAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. HOLMAN ADMITTED THE PROMISE AND, WITHOUT NAMING HIM, THAT THE MAN CONCERNED WAS NOT A LABOR MAN. BUT, SINCE THE EXECUTIVE OF THE PLL WAS DETERMINED THAT ONLY FIRM LABOR MEN SHOULD BE APPOINTED TO THE COUNCIL, HOLMAN'S HONOURING HIS PROMISE TO McINTOSH WOULD HAVE PROVOKED A CLASH WITH IT.228

AS IT WAS, THE MEMBERS OF CAUCUS, IF NOT A FORMAL CAUCUS, APPEAR TO HAVE MADE THE NEXT MOVE, WHICH WAS TO ASK, ON MEAGHER'S MOTION, THAT THE MINISTRY SUBMIT TO IT NAMES FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE COUNCIL. MEAGHER AND HOLMAN ENGAGED IN A PUBLIC BRAWL, REPORTED BY THE WORKER UNDER THE HEADLINE "MINISTRY VERSUS MOVEMENT, HOLMAN MINISTRY DEFIES CONFERENCE AND IGNORES CAUCUS",229 WHICH ENDED WITH HOLMAN INSISTING THAT NO APPOINTMENTS WOULD BE MADE TO THE COUNCIL AND IF THEY WERE THEY WOULD NOT BE SUBMITTED TO ANY BODY OUTSIDE THE MINISTRY.230 EITHER ALTERNATIVE WAS OUTRIGHT DEFiance OF THE CONFERENCE AND, ALTHOUGH THE CONFERENCE AND EXECUTIVE COULD DO LITTLE TO FORCE HIS HAND, CAUCUS COULD BECOME DIFFICULT.

IN JUNE LAMOND PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE IN THE LONE HAND WHICH PUT FORWARD A VIEW OF THE NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF CAUCUS WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN ANATHEMA TO HOLMAN. THE VITAL PASSAGES WERE THAT "IN SHORT THE CAUCUS SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO MAKE ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY KEEP THE PROMISES THEY MADE TO THE ELECTORS WHEN, AS LABOR CANDIDATES, THEY Sought THEIR VOTES", AND AGAIN THAT "THE CAUCUS SYSTEM EXTENDS THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO MAY EXERT INFLUENCE UPON THE GOVERNMENT. BUT THE CAUCUS EXISTS ONLY THAT THAT NUMBER MAY BE EXTENDED UNTIL IT INCLUDES EVERY SAN MAN AND WOMAN IN THE STATES [sic]."231 IT WAS CLEARLY A JUSTIFICATION OF THE RADICAL "CAVE" IN CAUCUS.

SHORTLY AFTERWARDS HOLMAN HAD TO ASK CAUCUS TO MAKE SURE THEY ALL GAVE A SOLID PARTY VOTE WHENEVER A MINISTER MOVED CLOSURE. ON THE SAME DAY BLACK BROUGHT FORWARD A MOTION TO CONSIDER THE MISMANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS IN THE LATE SESSION AND HOLMAN REPLIED TO IT AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH. AT THE NEXT MEETING, ON THE EVE OF THE OUTBREAK OF WAR, THE WHIP, GRAHAME, COMPLAINED THAT MEMBERS WERE ABSENTING THEMSELVES FROM THE HOUSE AND THAT HE HAD BARELY BEEN ABLE TO ENSURE A MAJORITY OF ONE.232 AT SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS IN SEPTEMBER, THE CAUCUS AGONIZED OVER INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION, EVENTUALLY DECIDING TO APPOINT A COMMITTEE FROM ITS OWN RANKS, RATHER THAN ASK THE PLL EXECUTIVE TO CALL A SPECIAL CONFERENCE, TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO.233 AND THEN AT THE NEXT CAUCUS MEETING IN DECEMBER, WHEN STOREY WAS CARPETED FOR THINGS HE HAD SAID IN PARLIAMENT ABOUT GRIFFITH, THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS, HOLMAN HAD TO "REMIND" MEMBERS OF THEIR DUTIES INTER SE AND OF THE DEGREE OF LOYALTY HE EXPECTED FROM THEM TOWARDS CABINET. THE HOMILY EVIDENTLY CUT LITTLE ICE, BECAUSE HOLMAN THEN
had to explain why the negotiations with the firm of Norton-Griffiths had been reopened, and Dooley moved that entry into the contract be postponed for six months. The motion was never voted on in caucus because it then adjourned for lunch and afterwards a quorum could not be obtained.\(^2\)\(^3\)\(^4\)

By the end of 1914 the war, which had begun in August, was starting to have an effect on the economy of the state. Early in August, shortly after parliament had reopened, Holman announced that the extensive legislative programme the government had prepared would be altered by dropping contentious items. By-elections would not be contested either but vacated seats would be filled by the nominee of the party of the retiring member. Unemployment rose steadily, partly because of a severe drought and partly because loan funds from Britain were cut off or much reduced by the war. Many government employees were put on half-time. In November, Judge Heydon ruled that industrial wages boards would accept no more claims for wage increases except in special circumstances. A necessary commodities control commission was set up to prevent food shortages and rises in prices, but from then onwards, despite its activity, food prices rose steadily. In January 1915 the wages boards were given leave to consider claims for increased wages and by the end of the year a small increase in the basic wage had been granted. But industrial unrest, much of it linked with the increase in food prices, grew throughout 1915, and in March Holman and the attorney general, now D. R. Hall, explained to the Labor Council what they proposed to do to keep prices down.\(^2\)\(^3\)\(^5\)

Early in 1915 the government announced its decision to go ahead with the Norton-Griffiths agreement to finance public works to the extent of £10 million ($20 million) over five years, the firm to take 5 per cent for supervision of the work done. The intention was to free the state from the effect of the rationing of loan money imposed by the Commonwealth and to permit the government not only to keep unemployment down but to go on with public works that were called for by the party’s platform and its own programme, particularly the development of the railway system of the state in rural areas. As in the past, legislation of interest to trade unions had either been blocked or amended in unacceptable ways in the upper house by the end of 1915 and some items had suffered a similar fate in the lower house under the party truce.

The unrest in the movement was evident at the conferences of the AWU in January and the PLL in April 1915. A proposal that the AWU withdraw its funds from the New South Wales Labor party was considered and rejected a second time, but only after the members of state parliament and the ministry had been sharply criticized for their failure to give effect to vital planks of the platform, for the agreements with BHP and Norton-Griffiths, and for their failure to do anything to abolish the upper house.
There was talk of reconstructing the branches of the league on a sound unionist basis, of a new industrial party, of unsatisfactory politicians who had sold the Labor movement and should be thrown out of it. The president of the Labor Council thought there were too many unions with too little power, especially in the PLL branches, a reflection which made clear the political aspect of the proposals for federation of unions which had been made, under AWU auspices, some months before.

At the PLL conference in April, Meagher, who had been elected president the year before, in his opening address uncompromisingly stressed that “this Conference was the sanctuary which holds the sacred book of democracy. He did not take orders from the Parliamentary party or from the Labor caucus... The executive officers were the governors of the Labor cause, and members of Parliament were merely their servants to carry the platform, which this Conference made, into effect.” He emphasized that the only way to deal with the upper house was to abolish it altogether but took a much more moderate view of the Norton-Griffiths contract. In his speech on retiring from the presidency of the PLL he also emphasized the need for one big union, to wipe out craft unions, unite the voice of labor, and make the government “hurry up”.

Holman explained that the government had consulted not only caucus but the PLL executive fully about the contract, refused to consider abolition of the upper house, and announced that the government’s policy was to transform it gradually by appointing “democrats”. Three appointments would shortly be made, two of sound Labor men and one of a man to whom he, Holman, was “absolutely bound”, that is, McIntosh. Holman defended the Norton-Griffiths contract, even though it was a departure from the platform, on the ground that “it was equally the duty of the Government to keep its people in employment as it was to keep to the platform”.

By this time, Labor was in power again in federal politics, with Fisher as prime minister and Hughes as attorney general after a solid victory in the elections of September 1914. Hughes attended the conference to get a resolution from it, which was passed, that it supported a third referendum to alter the constitution to increase the powers of the Commonwealth. He and Holman once more snapped at each other on that question, and Hughes took the opportunity to stress too that the Norton-Griffiths agreement undercut the Commonwealth’s loan policy. Conference then debated a motion censuring D. R. Hall for bringing a libel action, which had greatly annoyed the AWU delegates, against the Worker, and after that went on to consider the work of the government and in particular its failure to abolish the Council, to set up a state ironworks, to put forward a fair rents bill, and to extend the state housing scheme at Daceyville. It also came under fire for suspending wages boards, lowering
wages, and shortening hours. Holman revealed the extent of the tension in caucus by saying that if the government had to rely on Stuart-Robertson's vote to stay in office if would rather resign, and one by one the motions censuring the government were defeated.243

In caucus, Holman managed to defeat his critics. In February Dooley criticized Griffith's handling of the public works portfolio, by implication challenging Holman to reassert his opinion that caucus had no business discussing administrative acts of the government, but the motion was defeated. When Trefle, minister for agriculture, died, George Black, who was on Holman's side, defeated Stuart-Robertson in a ballot of caucus. Then a month later caucus dealt at length with a quarrel between Holman and Carmichael which ended in Carmichael's resignation and the election of Graham to the cabinet by a narrow majority. In April caucus discussed an appointment to the upper house to fill a vacancy caused by the death of its president, and J. D. Fitzgerald, the nominee of cabinet, was chosen by a narrow majority.244 In July and August caucus again discussed irregularity in the attendance of members, and Holman insisted the party must support the government in divisions; Dooley (who along with Stuart-Robertson was one of those who failed to support the government in divisions) challenged the government again on the Norton-Griffiths proposal and caucus decided that a party vote must be given on it in the house; and in October Stuart-Robertson refused to be bound by caucus decision in view of the decision of the annual conference in a vote on the hours of trade in hotels.245

In November Holman explained that, in order to improve the discipline of party members in the house, the executive of the PLL would be asked to advise the officers of caucus of its proposed selections before it finally endorsed any sitting member — a clear threat that those who challenged Holman in caucus would be denied re-endorsement by the PLL executive.246 A week later Holman criticized Gardiner in caucus for his remarks in the house in a no-confidence motion, and that led to two motions, one by Gardiner of no-confidence in the cabinet and the other by Stuart-Robertson that Holman should resign, both of which were defeated after the motion for a secret ballot had been lost.247 These incidents and their background in disagreements in the assembly forced Holman to realize that his government might be overthrown.248

By this time the party had become increasingly divided about conscription, and in federal politics Hughes had replaced Fisher as prime minister and leader of the federal parliamentary party. The federal government had not yet made a proposal for conscription, but it had announced a plan for compulsory registration of men in July, and in the same month the state government had begun an official recruiting scheme, based on a widespread system of committees throughout the state. The Universal Service
League, advocating conscription, had been formed in September and it included eight members of the government — Holman, Hall, Cann, Griffith, Ashford, Fitzgerald, Flowers, and Black — as well as other leading Labor men. A few days later an Anti-Conscription League was formed at the Trades Hall with support from a wide variety of unions and other organizations, notably the SLP, the Australasian Socialist Party, and the IWW. The militants of the Anti-Conscription League saw the war as a capitalist conflict from which the workers would emerge as the losers and they felt that the state and federal ministries, backed by the conscriptionists, were drifting rapidly away from democratic to authoritarian methods of government.249

But for the time being the agitation about conscription continued without being brought to a head, and early in 1916 Hughes left for a trip to Britain to study the war at first hand. A further quarrel over Commonwealth powers was avoided when the federal government agreed not to hold the referendum on condition the states handed over the necessary powers. These events left Holman and his government to deal with their critics primarily on their domestic record, and that was not a good one. Evatt comments that

by the end of the 1915—16 session, the Upper House had become fully aware of the gradual decline in the Government’s prestige . . . After the Council had compelled the Government to jettison its Railway Bill, its amending Arbitration Bill and its Trades Union Bill, the Sydney Morning Herald summed up the work of the long session by stating that the only piece of legislation of the slightest public importance passed by the Labour Government was the Liquor Referendum Bill [to determine whether hotels should close before 11 p.m.] and that had been wrung from it by an indignant people and had split the caucus.250

The strength of the opposition to Holman within the party was made clear at the 1916 conference of the PLL, but he evaded defeat for the time being by challenging conference to throw the government out. The opposition took the form of a separate group, calling itself the Industrial Section of the PLL, formed in November 1915 at a meeting of union representatives called by the AWU. This section claimed that its origins lay in the 1915 conference. There had been a very large minority at that conference convinced that the government was not conscientiously trying to carry out the platform but “prostituting its principles in order to retain office at any price”. Holman had promised then to proceed with the policy and “force conclusions” with the upper house if it blocked his course, but he had failed to carry out either promise.251 In addition, according to Molesworth, Holman packed the 1915 conference and survived, but he “had learned [sic] the industrialists that if they wanted a
say in Labor matters, they would have to organise".  

Whether Holman did pack that conference or not, the industrialists presumably knew about and feared the consequences of the caucus resolution of November — taken at about the same time as the section was formed — that the PLL executive would be asked to allow officers of caucus to confirm its endorsements of sitting members. Since an election would fall due in 1916, the conference early in that year was the industrialists’ only chance to ensure that Holman did not obtain a compliant PLL executive and so set the stage for obtaining a manageable caucus after the elections. The section therefore aimed to break the ministry’s control over caucus and influence in conference by increasing and organizing its own representation in both conference and the PLL executive and by encouraging the main unions to take a more active part in branch affairs. Beyond that it aimed to compel the Labor ministry to push legislation through both houses giving workers improved wages and conditions, and unionists absolute preference in employment. The group admitted later that it had adopted a misleading name in calling itself the Industrial Section — it insisted that it was neither a section nor exclusively industrial because representatives from PLL branches could join it. Evidently many did so, at least from late 1916, although all but two of the twenty-three branches listed in the report for the year ending 1917 were metropolitan. The contention that it was representative of all sides of the Labor movement was no less misleading than its name. One of the features of this “curious” organization was that the more important unions represented in it were neither urban nor industrial in the sense that they were located in large-scale metropolitan manufacturing activities; they were those, like the AWU, the Rockchoppers’, the Coal and Shale Employees’, and the Wharfies’, which were the main unions of the unskilled and semi-skilled as contrasted with the unions of the skilled, many of which still retained some of their earlier craft characteristics, were smaller and were more exclusively based in the metropolis. Another feature of the Industrial Section was that its members were self-selected, not chosen officially by the unions and PLL branches they were said to represent.

In this context the industrial part of the name the group adopted makes most sense if it is understood by reference to the doctrines which left-wing groups, especially the IWW, had been advocating for some years. There is little reason to dwell on the voluminous, dogmatic, and singularly repetitious pamphlet literature on the IWW, the Australian Socialist Party, and the SLP, or to follow through the tangled skein of their relations with one another and their factional splits. Theoretically considered the arguments in the pamphlets were of a crude Marxist character, developed in syndicalist and anarchistic directions; ideologically considered they had
some effect, primarily in providing a general rationale for the contempt politicians were held in and an explanation why they did not deliver all that the industrialists demanded of them. They provided an image, if not a definition, of the industrialist as the solidarity-minded unskilled worker in a mass union, a worker who had no stake in the capitalist system and, ideally, was prepared to use any means to overthrow it. This somewhat heroic doctrine provided a justification in practice for assorted acts of petty sabotage, from the go-slow upwards, and a means of identifying as the martyrs of the cause those few who took somewhat more drastic steps than usual to organize the unskilled, to secure organized expression of discontent, or to provoke reprisals by the state and capitalists.

Socialist doctrines were less anarchistic, at least as regards methods, but at this time most left-wing pamphlets promoted the notion, at least occasionally, that the only acceptable and incorruptible social order would be one in which the workers themselves controlled their own affairs and in particular the industries in which they worked. The Labor party and the old-fashioned trade unions that accepted arbitration were from this point view irredeemably implicated in the capitalist system. This meant that the party was bound to betray the workers, not because its leaders were politicians, that is self-seeking opportunists, but because that was the nature of political parties. But from a more practical and less utopian point of view the neglected interests of the union movement — for example the AWU, had still not obtained legislation compelling employers of rural labour to provide satisfactory accommodation for shearers and the like, and the miners had not yet secured an eight-hour day underground — were easily blended with ideology and for most unionists their interests were undoubtedly much more important than the doctrines of local socialists and IWW men.

The accommodation between interest and ideology is exhibited in a short pamphlet put out about this time over the signatures of P. Adler and W. J. McKell, two members of the Industrial Section. The pamphlet was produced when the amalgamation movement in the unions was gathering momentum. For some years past, the AWU had been absorbing other unions, and various schemes for federation or amalgamation of all unions into one large agglomeration had been discussed in the movement, chiefly under the influence of the IWW and the AWU. In 1916 the one-big-union proposal, designed to replace all craft and similar trade unions with one comprehensive union organized into industrial sections, was emerging as the most popular of the various schemes. The pamphlet was intended to prepare the ground for a conference held in September, to discuss the desirability of and to plan for one big union. Members of the Industrial Section were prominent in it and had probably been the main ones who, according to Adler and McKell, met informally to set up the conference.
Adler and McKell argued, after noting that the trade and craft unions might find it difficult to accept the scheme, that "a war none the less deadly, though bloodless, is being waged between Capitalism and Labour here in Australia, and unless we keep pace with the Commercial interests which are arrayed against us, and organise on similar lines, we must of necessity fail in the struggle to maintain our liberties...let this unscientific and obsolete system of today disappear, and let us coalesce and reform into One Big Union, which will be able to resist or deliver attacks..." They then went on to say that the most important problems facing the unions during and after the war were unemployment and the absorption of returned soldiers, the demand of employers to dilute skilled with unskilled labor, and "the specialising of machinery, and men", the employment of women in place of men, and the related question of equal pay for equal work. Their argument concluded with the familiar diagram of the IWW for industrial groupings of different workers. Finally, the practical concerns of the Industrial Section itself, once it had defeated Holman in the conference, indicated its diverse and predominantly non-ideological interests. After the conference, it set up a committee to act in conjunction with the executive of the PLL to select and draft proposed legislative measures. Fifteen bills emerged from this collaboration, dealing with such questions as wages, hours, arbitration, workers' compensation, industrial safety, workers' accommodation, local government, and the right to work.

The men in the Industrial Section, most of them relatively obscure in the union movement at the time, confronted Holman in the PLL conference late in April 1916. The ministry wrote a reply to criticisms of it listed in the conference agenda but it appears to have drafted the reply in ignorance of the plans of the Industrial Section. It made no attempt to explain why there had been no significant industrial legislation and that was the main concern of the section. What is more, in the fourth session of the parliament which had ended just before the conference began, the majority of the eighty-odd bills passed had been mauled in the upper house, and business on another forty-odd — much of it in the Council — had not been completed. The Industrial Section felt that Holman had committed himself at the 1915 conference to challenge the upper house if it blocked industrial legislation and he had made no sign of doing so.

The outcome was, on balance, a defeat for Holman. Admittedly he was not thrown out of the party, and although the ministry with the backing of caucus decided to resign during the conference and elected Storey as leader in Holman's place, the resignation was not submitted to the governor. With the threatened resignation of the ministry in front of them, the leaders of the Industrial Section in the conference negotiated with
Holman, he resumed the leadership and the ministry continued in office. But Holman had been forced to concede what he had always refused before: that a referendum should be held on abolition of the upper house at the time of the next state election. He did not get conference to rescind its earlier resolution censuring the ministry for its failure to deal with the upper house and he failed to win control, not only of conference, but of the central executive of the PLL. Twenty-nine of the thirty non-official positions on the executive were captured by the Industrial Section, whose members at conference voted to a prearranged ticket and ensured that they would follow the ticket by a new voting tactic, namely voting in threes, each man's vote being scrutinized by the other two. They had control of the executive and consequently could ensure that sitting or new members who were likely to be critical of Holman, would not be refused endorsement. In addition motions were carried that members of parliament should not sit on the executive of the PLL nor be members of conference but, since these were not carried by two-thirds majorities, they were of no effect. The rules regulating the selection of candidates were again amended to enlarge the influence of unionists in the process, and to reduce the number of ephemeral and bogus branches set up to make selections.

Another motion, far more important in later months in the year, was also carried that conference pledged itself to oppose conscription for military service abroad and to oppose, through its unions and branches, all Labor members who might vote for or otherwise support conscription. To make these pledges effective, conference instructed its executive to refuse to endorse any conscriptionist candidate and to require its delegates to the interstate conference to oppose conscription at all costs in that part of the organization. This too was a threat to Holman and other members of the party who had been active in the pro-conscriptionist Universal Service League.

Shortly after the fifth session of parliament opened in July, Hughes returned from his trip to Britain. From about the middle of 1916 the Universal Service League had renewed its activities, and the Liberal party and F and SA had carried motions favouring conscription at their annual conferences. The Anti-Conscription League, the Australian Freedom League, the Australian Peace Alliance, the IWW, the New South Wales Labor Council, the executive of the PLL and other organizations had also begun to agitate against conscription about the same time. The Worker of course joined in and published resolutions of meetings and branches against conscription under the heading, “The voice of Labor”. Then at the end of August, Hughes announced that there would be a referendum on the subject at the end of October. On 4 September he met the executive of the PLL and explained the need for conscription. A motion
supporting it was rejected by twenty-one to five by the executive.

The executive of the PLL acted swiftly. In September it expelled Hughes and E. S. Carr from the party and withdrew the endorsements of Holman, Griffith, Hall, and Bagnall, who had said they would support Hughes in the referendum campaign. It also began “considering” the position of other Labor members whose position on conscription was “indefinite”. Hollis and Chanter soon lost their endorsements too. Both sides formed councils to organize their referendum campaigns. The ministry was divided, but those opposed to conscription were persuaded by Holman not to campaign against it. Eighteen members of the parliamentary party actively opposed it. On 28 October the vote was taken and conscription defeated, New South Wales returning a majority of over 117,000 against it. The party hailed the vote as a “victory of democracy over militarism”.

Parliament, adjourned throughout October during the campaign, met again on 1 November. In the preceding week Holman, whose political position now “seemed hopeless”, at least in the Labor party, had held discussions with Wade, the leader of the Liberal party, with a view to forming a coalition government and to prolonging the life of parliament. Agreement had not been reached by the time parliament reassembled, but in the meantime E. Durack had been elected leader of the parliamentary Labor party and he at once moved a motion of no confidence in the ministry. A week later the motion was defeated and an amendment moved by Wade was carried to the effect that it was inappropriate to move a no-confidence motion while a new national government was being negotiated. Twenty-one Labor men voted against the amendment, the executive of the PLL expelled all conscriptionists and those who had not voted with Durack. On 15 November 1916 Holman announced the formation of a new ministry and the split was complete, leaving only twenty-four members in the parliamentary party, three of whom were on active service. The party was once more in opposition and faced with the task of getting back to the government benches. It took three years.

V

The split had removed from the Labor party many of its most experienced and able parliamentary leaders, but it was not at all clear at the end of 1916 whether it had been much weakened in other respects. The elections and the party conference of 1917 were soon to show that much of the party’s strength remained. But new blows were to fall on it within months. Its annual conference had only recently been concluded when a
major strike broke out, and following that, Hughes again held a referendum on conscription.

The Wade-Holman government put an act through the expiring parliament at the end of 1916 to extend its life by twelve months but early in the new year Holman announced that elections would be held in March. The party was ill-prepared for the campaign. Shortly before the election was announced, Durack, the new leader of the party, spoke on its future in uninspiring terms. He tried to convince the public that what the party had suffered was not a split but only the loss of some rats and that it still retained its high ideals — humanitarianism, justice, and socialism — and looked forward to times when production would be for use not profit and the producers would obtain the full results of their labour. But his policy followed the platform closely and that had not recently been materially altered; he stressed both the determination of the party to abolish the upper house and some official posts that were supposedly useless, and also its aim of development by means of extending the railway system and a new scheme of land valuation. Instead he attacked the PLL for being under the control of the IWW and this attack was made plausible by events at the last party conference and threatening by the recent activities of the IWW. The IWW men had been among the most dogged and prominent opponents of conscription; their paper Direct Action had regularly attacked the whole capitalist system and their pamphlets had discussed the overthrow of it by sabotage. Late in 1916 twelve IWW men were arrested, tried and found guilty of conspiracy, and sentenced to terms of five to fifteen years in court proceedings of doubtful validity. Their convictions were largely upheld in appeals that were tried during the campaign in February and March 1917. This put the Labor party on the defensive in much of its campaign. The sectarian cry was also raised against it by the Loyal Orange Lodge, Protestant and Nationalist groups, and the Sydney Morning Herald.

Shortly before the campaign began, Durack resigned the leadership and Storey was elected to replace him. The party was short of money and experienced speakers and its branches were poorly organized. A few were split, some were unable to find candidates, and distrust of sitting members, even loyal ones, was still strong in the party. Many of the endorsed candidates were trade union officials and members of the executive of the PLL and consequently of the Industrial Section.

In the circumstances, it was not surprising that the party was defeated in the elections, but the results suggested that the split in the parliamentary ranks had not greatly reduced the voting support for the
party. It won thirty-three seats, an increase of nine on its strength in
the old parliament after the split, and the Nationalists, as the combined
government forces were named, won fifty-two seats. Despite its dis­
organization, Labor put forward eighty-four candidates as compared with
eighty-five in 1913 and its share of the total valid vote fell by 3.7 per cent
to 42.9 per cent. Endorsed Labor candidates were returned for ten seats
that had been lost in the split and a Labor man defeated Page in Botany.
Meagher, McGowen, and Griffith, who stood as independent Labor men,
were defeated and only one independent Labor candidate was returned.
Seven of the new Labor members were founders of the Industrial Section
and members of the PLL executive.

Two months after the election the party held its annual conference.
The Worker, under the editorship of H. E. Boote since 1914, insisted that
the conference should redefine Labor’s objective as “industrial socialism”,
meaning that the workers should “control and direct the production of
wealth and its distribution and not a central government”. But, although the Industrial Section was still in existence and largely in charge
of proceedings at the conference, it ignored this call to move left. The
fighting platform remained unaltered. The old arguments against having
members of parliament at the conference or on the executive of the PLL
were again aired, but the only result was a resolution excluding federal
members from the state executive. An argument developed about the
activities of the Industrial Section when one member of conference moved
it should be disbanded, but the motions to this end were all defeated.
Rules governing representation at conference were altered to increase the
influence of affiliated unions; and resolutions were carried that expelled
conscriptionists should never be readmitted to the party, that Judge
Heydon should be removed from the arbitration court, that evidence
should be gathered to support a demand for a royal commission into the
trial of the IWW men, and that there should be no £5,000 ($10,000)
exemption in the federal land tax system. The main debate was on the
attitude of the party to the war and the terms on which it should be
ended. Four resolutions were passed, insisting that war would be avoided
only by production for use under democratic control, rejoicing in the
revolution against despotism and class privilege in Russia, urging immedi­
ate negotiations for an international conference, which should include
working-class representatives, to end the war, and listing the terms which
should guide the peace settlement.
The Industrial Section reported its satisfaction with the conference,
which had accepted “in every instance its proposals regarding alteration of
Rules and other matters which appeared on the Agenda Paper, and [had elected] practically in all cases members of the Section to the various
positions for which they were nominated”.

100
The first serious blow to the party in 1917 was the major strike which began on August 2 and ended in total defeat for the men as the unions returned to work in September and October. The details need not concern us; what matters is that the attitude and actions of the government greatly strengthened the moves that had so far been unsuccessful for the formation of one big union. The government evidently believed that the IWW had played a large part in fomenting and organizing the strike and that it posed a threat to the state. Accordingly, it determined to concede nothing to the strikers, employed volunteer non-union labour, formed loyalist unions, dismissed strikers, deregistered striking unions, rationed power and fuel, commandeered coal and transport, and arrested three of the leaders of the Strike Defence Committee. When the strike was eventually broken, many of the men could not get their jobs back, despite promises that there would be no victimization; several unions were not reregistered; and some of the loyalist unions were not disbanded. Another important point was that, contrary to the government's belief, the "origins of the strike were in mass working-class unrest rather than in the agitation of revolutionary minorities". It developed without much planning and organization and often in opposition to the advice and efforts of the union leaders to restrict it or to negotiate. In all respects, it formed a total contrast to the coal strike late in 1916. That had been carefully planned and limited to a particular industry; it had clearly defined objectives; and it was carried through with determination against a government unwilling to budge an inch, and it had been totally successful.

The contrast between the two strikes and the action of the government convinced union leaders, even those who did not accept what the IWW and other socialists said about class war, of the need for working-class unity and for direct action against both governments and employers, and that a much stronger organization of unions was necessary if they were to make their industrial demands effective. But for the time being nothing could be done: the unions were temporarily shattered by the strike.

When conscription was once more put to the electorate in a referendum later in the year, the Labor party, the unions, and left wing political organizations opposed it -- again successfully. Labor had suspected since the last referendum a year before that Hughes would try a second time to have conscription approved, and the campaign was particularly bitter, especially since the federal government used its police and censorship powers to hamper the anti-conscriptionists in presenting their case. The importance of the campaign was that it confirmed the distrust of government that unionists and Labor men felt and it taxed their already depleted resources to the limit. But this time the parliamentary party remained united and at one with the executive of the PLL and the trade unions.

With this background, the annual conference of the party in June 1918
was harmonious and uneventful, although there was still some talk of the necessity of disbanding the Industrial Section, which had been renamed the Industrial Vigilance Council (IVC). In the preceding months the executive had appointed Arthur Rae as full time organizer, with a supporting department, to rebuild the party at the branch level. The platform committee recommended that the platform should be abbreviated and simplified but made no proposals for radical changes in the kind of things put in it. But before the next conference of the party, the harmony was broken.

In August 1918 the state trade union congress adopted a plan to form one big union, under the title, Workers’ Industrial Union of Australia. The six-point preamble argued that the capitalist owners and the working producers were locked in a class struggle which would be ended only “by the workers uniting in one class-conscious economic organisation to take and hold the means of production by revolutionary industrial and political action.” The organization was designed generally on the lines long advocated by the IWW, and pamphlets issued by J.S. Garden, the secretary of the organizing and propaganda committee, under titles like “We can and we will own the workshops” spelled out the message of the preamble. But this plan did not succeed. Childe explains: “The opposition of the Australian Workers’ Union [which had long had its own pretensions to being the One Big Union] was the rock on which the One Big Union went to shipwreck.” The conflict that developed soon involved the Labor party and gave its leaders the opportunity to check the radicals and to rid itself of some of them.

One incident which brought the conflict to the surface was Garden’s statement in March 1919 that the One Big Union (OBU) committee set up by the August conference would try “white anting the unions beginning with the A.W.U.”, since the unions had so far proved extremely reluctant to take the steps agreed on and necessary to dissolve themselves into the OBU. But another incident, more immediately threatening to the Labor party, was the recommendation of a subcommittee of the IVC, made in December 1918, that the council should replace its old objective with that of the OBU. This indicated clearly that if the IVC changed its objective there would be a fight over the objective of the PLL at the conference of the party set down for Easter 1919. Molesworth, one of the lesser figures deeply involved in the affairs of the IVC, but on the side of disbanding it, has said that leading unionists and state and federal Labor members decided in February to fight the “revolutionaries” by opposing any change in the objective of the party or the election of “unknown” or “disloyal” people to its executive. At further meetings in March and April, the conference was adjourned to June, a preliminary estimate of the numbers on either side was made, tickets for the state executive and the
interstate conference were agreed on, and it was decided to support the proposals of the 1918 committee for condensation of the platform and to alter the rules to allow a limited number of members of parliament on the executive. Meanwhile Garden had made his white-anting statement and Storey, the party's leader, had attacked him and three other members, including Willis, the organizer of the 1916 coal strike, for remaining in the party while attacking parties and politics and planning to replace the Labor objective with that of the OBU. In May, Boote, the editor of the Worker, castigated the OBU executive for using methods which provoked fratricidal strife, but hedged by saying he favoured the OBU. Then Blakeley and Grayndler, president and secretary of the AWU, publicly examined OBU doctrines and tactics to show it was a wrecking organization.

By May, the moderates believed their likely support at conference had increased and they decided that an attempt should be made to disband the IVC. Shortly before the conference met, the IVC met and with an unusually large attendance which quickly resolved itself into two factions. The members favouring the OBU were in a minority; the majority carried a motion adjourning the meeting until after the Labor conference and the minority decided to hold a separate meeting to form a new industrial section. The success of that move clearly depended on the success of the faction at the Labor conference.

But in that too they were defeated. Conference met early in June and from the outset it was a tense meeting, marked by verbal brawling between the factions on minor questions. In votes taken in the early stages on motions to set up the committees of conference, the moderates outnumbered the extremists. Then, when Willis moved that the League executive should consist of thirty-one members to be chosen by ballot of the rank and file members of the branches and the unions, the motion was defeated by 113 to 109. That led to further uproar, to be followed by more when another motion, put by Willis, was lost 127 to 112, for a plank advocating the establishment of social democracy, meaning that the workers, industrially organized, should own the means of production. That session ended in disorder as the left wing sang the Red Flag and the right cheered. At the next session Willis and Storey clashed on the question of nationalization and then, when the moderates won all positions on the executive, the extremists walked out of the conference en bloc and the conference ended abruptly. The extremists were expelled from the party and met to form a new party of leagues and unions to be called the Industrial Socialist Party and the new executive of the PLL anathematized the IWW and all its works. The extremists met in August and decided to form a new party, to be called the Socialist Party of Australia, and to invite other socialist parties to join them, but even at its formation the
components of the new party fell into a fundamental quarrel in choosing a name for their party, some insisting that it be described as revolutionary, and others quarrelling to decide whether it should undertake industrial action only, or political action as well.296

What then remained for the Labor party was to discover whether the left wing had power to do it as much damage when it split off as the parliamentary leaders had in 1916, and the answer, at least the answer in electoral terms, was soon provided. In the elections in March 1920 Labor contested eighty-eight seats, nine more than in 1917, and, although its vote rose by only 0.17 per cent, it won ten more seats than at the previous election. The socialists contested sixteen seats, ten more than in 1917, and won 1.05 per cent of the vote and one seat in parliament — Sturt in the Broken Hill area where they had secured support for the sitting member, Brookfield, from Labor party branches. The Nationalist and Progressives together won forty-three seats too, and independents three. The socialist and one of the independents gave Labor a minute majority, enough to return to office.

BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX

[NOTE: (1) A biographical index follows each state section. It includes those trade unionists, politicians, and Labor party members who were most important in the state Labor party between 1880 and 1920. (2) The following abbreviations are used in the biographical indexes and are additional to those listed at the end of the preliminary pages, before the Introduction.

MLA Member of the Legislative Assembly (lower house)
MHA Member of the House of Assembly (lower house in South Australia and Tasmania)
MLC Member of the Legislative Council (upper house)
NSW New South Wales
Qld Queensland
Vic Victoria
SA South Australia
WA Western Australia
Tas Tasmania
NZ New Zealand]


DACEY, John Rowland. b. Cork (Ireland), 1856; d. Sydney, 1912. Coach-


DAVIS, Thomas Martin. b. Redditch (Worcestershire, England), 1856; d. Ashfield (Sydney), 1899. Seaman. Also inspector railway construction on military line, India. Seaman, 1876–79. Interpreter in mines in New Caledonia (returning to Sydney, 1886). Secretary, Seamen’s Union. Organizer of Maritime Council (member of Royal Commission on Strikes). MLA (West Sydney), 1891–94; (Sydney-Pymont), 1894–98. Whip, PLP, 1891 +.


ESTELL, John. b. Minwi (NSW), 1861; d. 1928. Engine driver in colliery. President, Northern Miners’ Federation. Miners’ Union delegate to
BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX


Alderman, Sydney City Council, for 5 years. Member, Labor party, 1904–19. Expelled, 1919, and in 1919–20 helped form Communist party of Australia. Left it in 1925 and returned to NSW Labor party in Lang's inner group.

GOUGH, John George. b. 1848; d. Craigie (NSW), 1907. Ironmonger. Builder and contractor at Young until c. 1888, when he established J. G. Gough and Co., ironmongers, Young. MLA (Young), 1889–94.


HORNE, Henry Edwin. b. 1873; d. 1955. Teacher. Member of Teachers' Federation. MLA (Liverpool Plains), 1907–11 (resigned).


KELLY, Andrew Joseph. b. Dublin (Ireland), 1855; d. Sydney, 1913. Wharf labourer. Three years United States Navy. Arrived Sydney, 1881. Carrier. Helped run Democrat (working-class newspaper). Licensed victualler. Helped to found, and sometime president, Wharf Labourers' Union and Trolley and Draymen's Union. President, TLC. Alderman of City Council, 13 years. MLA (West Sydney), 1891–94; (Sydney-Denison), 1901–4; (Lachlan), 1904–13 (deceased). Expelled from party, 1893, but had rejoined it by 1901 when he held Denison division of Sydney as Labor party member.

operative butchery, Gunnedah. Alderman and twice mayor, Gunnedah. MLA (Gunnedah), 1891–95. Selected as Liberal and federal (Free Trade) candidate for Gunnedah, 1898.


MACKINNON, James Archibald. b. Benalla (Vic), 1841; d. Grenfell, 1910. Stock and station agent. Bought stations, 1873–75, but lost heavily through "blackmauling". Owner of Mermegong, Young. For some years commission agent in Grenfell. MLA (Young), 1882–94. Refused to sign the pledge and left the party.


MINAHAN, Patrick Joseph b. Ireland, 1865; d. 1933. Boot and shoe manufacturer. Member of Musicians’ Union. MLA (Belmore), 1910–17. President, PLL, 1910–11.


PAGE, Frederick Joseph. b. Windsor, 1859; d. 1929. Master tanner. Member of Botany Council. MLA (Botany), 1907–17.

candidate for Murrumbidgee, 1898, but also shown as Labor candidate.


STUART-ROBERTSON, Robert James, b. NSW, 1874; d. 1933. Shop assistant. Member, Shop Assistants’ Union. MLA (Camperdown), 1907–22.


NOTES

13. Ibid., pp. 82, 84.
16. Ibid., p. 163.
19. E. A. Boehm, Prosperity and Depression in Australia, 1887–1897, pp. 43–45, 131–32.
27. Australian Workman, 8 November 1890. The argument was later used by G. Black in parliament (NSWPD, 1st series [16 July 1891] 52: 126–27). Black claimed to have coined the phrase "support in return for concessions" and used it about this time in the Bulletin, and the Workman may have borrowed it from him (G. Black, "Humanity in Politics", p. 4).
28. The plank read: "The recognition in our legislative enactments of the natural and inalienable rights of the whole community to the land... by the taxation of that value which accrues to the land by the presence and needs of the community irrespective of improvements erected by human exertion." See F. Picard, "Henry George and the Labour Split of 1891", pp. 52–53; Black, The Labor Party in New South Wales, p. 3; and, for socialists, P. Ford, Cardinal Moran and the A.L.P., chaps. 7–9; Ebbels, Australian Labor Movement, pp. 185–86; P. J. O'Farrell, "The Australian Socialist League and the Labour Movement, 1887–1891", p. 152.
30. The first was drawn up in 1890 (Nairn, "Trades and Labour Council", p. 175).
33. E. J. Brady, "Progress of Labor Politics in New South Wales, 1891–1904".
34. Black, Labor Party in New South Wales, p. 4.
36. Australian Workman, 20 June 1891.
37. C. A. Hughes and B. D. Graham, A Handbook of Australian Government and Politics 1890–1964, p. 429. These figures are based on the assumption that there were forty-eight candidates, that thirty-six of them (including Langwell) were successful, and that the unsuccessful included Grantham, Dyson, and Marshall, who appear to have been endorsed but not selected LEL candidates.
40. Black, NSWPD, 1st series, 52: 126-27. The speech is given in Dickey, Politics in New South Wales, p. 175, and C. M. H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History 1851–1900, 2: 579.
41. Besides the two divisions on Garvan's and Dibbs's amendments to the address-in-reply, the divisions were:

   on 1 September 1891, on Copeland's motion that both manufacturing and agriculture should be protected by customs duties, and on Barton's amendment that with federation pending customs duties should be used only to provide revenue,
on 10 December 1891 on Reid’s motion, in effect a censure on the new Dibbs government, to defer a decision on the fiscal question until a referendum on it had been held under the one-man one-vote principle; on 19 January 1892 on the second reading of Dibbs’s Customs Duties bill; and on 10 February 1892 on the third reading of the Customs Duties bill.

42. Roydhouse and Taperell, Labour Party in New South Wales, p. 65.
44. Australian Workman, 31 October 1891.
47. The ten who now left the party were Cann, Fitzgerald, Houghton, Hutchinson, Johnston, Newton, Nicholson, Sharp, Williams, and Murphy who was paired against Reid’s motion; Australian Workman, 12 December 1891. Those remaining in it were Bavister, Black, E. M. Clark, G. D. Clark, Cotton, Cook, Darnley, Davis, Fegan, Gardiner, Hindle, Hollis, Kirkpatrick, McGowen, Newman, and Rae. However, Langwell’s votes suggest he was not in caucus at this time, which Black in Australian Workman, 10 April 1897, confirms.
48. Australian Workman, 5 December 1891. See also similar comment in the Hummer, 30 January 1892, but evidently with the party’s protectionists in mind.
49. For example see Australian Workman, 19 December 1891; Hummer, 30 January 1892.
51. The revised platform is in Ebbels, Australian Labor Movement, pp. 215–16, and Australian Workman, 5 March 1892; Ford, Cardinal Moran and the A.L.P., p. 111, for the socialists and single-taxers.
52. Australian Workman, 6 January 1892.
57. Worker (Queensland), quoted in Overacker, Australian Party System, p. 56.
58. Australian Workman, 15 October 1892.
59. It was at the end of this session that G. Black wrote the first of his pieces on the party, Labor in Politics. It was reprinted from Australian Workman as a pamphlet, which ran to 90,000 copies. Black said that in updating his pamphlets he omitted details and corrected errors (Australian Workman, 3 April 1897). They are, however, not always accurate and they are sometimes confusing.
60. Black, in Labor Party in New South Wales, p. 9, names twenty-five men, and his later notes, in Australian Workman, 10 April 1897, make clear what event it refers to; see also V. Molesworth, “The Story of the New South Wales Labor Party from Its Inception in 1890 to 1917”.

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61. Quoted from Nairn, “J. C. Watson”, p. 96; see also Sydney Morning Herald, 27 January 1893.
64. Australian Workman, 14 November 1893; Sydney Morning Herald, 10 November 1893.
66. Australian Workman, 2 June 1894, an unsigned history of the split; and Black in Australian Workman, 10 April 1897.
68. This, the letter the editor of Worker did not print, survives as a poor copy in a letter book in the Catts collection in the Australian National Library. Holman to Worker, n.d. [November 1893 (?)]; also Holman to Bavister, 28 November [1893] and Holman to editor, Daily Telegraph, 2 December [1893] 3, all in letter book 1893–1906.
69. Fitzhardinge, William Morris Hughes, p. 48.
70. Ibid., p. 43.
71. Worker, 18 November 1893; Australian Workman, 30 December 1893.
72. Australian Workman, 10 April 1897.
73. Australian Workman, 17 March 1894. The pledge as conference defined it is given in Overacker, Australian Party System, p. 58, note 17.
74. Ford, Cardinal Moran and the A.L.P., notes that twenty-nine were from country branches and half of them were city proxies and ASL members.
75. Australian Workman, 28 April 1894.
76. Complementary parts of it are given in Evatt, Australian Labour Leader, p. 60 and in V. G. Childe, How Labour Governs, 2nd ed., p. 18; see also Black, A History of the New South Wales Political Labor Party, from Its Conception until 1917, bk. 2, pp. 41–44. Their proposed pledge is in Australian Workman, 26 May 1894.
77. Australian Workman, 26 May 1894; Daily Worker, 19 July 1894; see also Denison Division, LEL, minute book, entries for 2 February, 16 February, 11 June 1894 (Mitchell Library), for report of delegate to central committee on early attempts at reconciliation.
78. Australian Workman, 9 June 1894. Those which refused were Ashfield, Glebe, Hartley, and Darlington branches.
80. Australian Workman, 28 July 1894.
81. Ibid., 23 and 30 June 1894.
82. Ibid., 23 June 1894.
83. Ibid., 28 July 1894.
84. Ibid., 14 July, 21 July 1894. It seems likely that there were seventy, not sixty-eight, LEL candidates. Only thirty-four of the forty-seven “other Labor” men who stood were listed as ALF candidates. The ALF appears to have had little or no organization for the election and to have been a label some non-LEL candidates adopted to indicate their union connection. See A. W. Martin, “Free Trade and Protectionist Parties in New South Wales”, p. 320.
85. Australian Workman, 21 and 28 July 1894; Worker, 21 July 1894.
86. Australian Workman, 4 and 11 August 1894; Ford, Cardinal Moran and the A.L.P., p. 166.
87. Worker, 2 February 1895.

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90. Overacker, *Australian Party System*, p. 62 and, for the reconstruction of the executive, p. 64.

91. PLL, *The Platform* (Sydney, 1895).


97. See for example the regular exhortation on the back page of the platform, constitution, and rules pamphlets issued by the party in the early 1900s.


101. The sources for these are:


1894 *Australian Workman*, 9 June 1894.


1911 PLL of NSW, *Report for the Year Ending 1911*.


104. The same slow growth at the branch level seems indicated by the proportion of the valid vote won in seats contested by Labor candidates. A slightly higher proportion of seats was contested in the suburbs in the period specified, with a smaller proportion of the valid vote obtained. The implication is that branches in country electorates were more cautious and husbanded their resources more than city and suburban branches.


106. Ibid., 13 June 1903.


110. The scale of contributions from branches and unions was:

- up to 200 members 10 shillings ($1) per annum
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201–500 members £1 ($2) per annum
501–1000 members £1.10 ($3) per annum
1001 and over £2 ($4) per annum.

111. Worker, 17 January, 21 March 1903.
112. Ibid., 7 January, 4 and 11 February 1905, 25 January, 26 April 1906.
114. Worker, 18 October 1906.
115. Ibid., 1 August 1907.
116. Ibid., 7 September 1911; and Black, History of the New South Wales Political Labor Party, bk. 6, p. 92.
118. AWU, Central Branch, Annual Report and Balance Sheet, Year Ending 31 May 1918, p. 12.
119. “Old Timer”, “Labor Party Records” (Molesworth papers). The author, unidentified, claimed he wrote the MS from the early minute books of caucus.
120. Worker, 2 and 9 February 1901.
121. Ibid., 12 February 1914.
123. PLLP of NSW, minute book, entries for 15 November 1911, p. 2; 17 December 1912, p. 68; 2 April 1913, p. 72; 24 June 1913, p. 81; 10 June 1915, p. 147 (Molesworth papers).
124. Scrapbook (Molesworth papers).
125. Worker, 1 February 1906. A figure of £200–£300 ($400–$600) was mentioned the year before as the cost of contesting a federal seat (Worker, 11 February 1905). Catts’s expenses for Ashburnham, a state electorate, were £85 ($170). See Catts to Richards 4 October 1904, letter book 1893–1906 (Catts collection).
126. Australian Workman, 21 July 1894.
127. “Diary of a Labor League Honorary Organizer, 1892.”
128. PLLP of NSW, Minutes of Proceedings of the Annual Conference 1902.
130. Worker, 30 January 1908, 5 March 1908, 21 January 1909; PLLP of NSW, Report of the Executive, for the Year 1907, pp. 3–4.
131. Holman and Hughes were two travelling organizers in the late nineties; see Worker, 25 January 1906, for Miss Powell’s organizing work in the country; see Worker, 19 April 1906, 21 January 1909, for members of parliament on speaking tours; and for the help of union organizers, see PLLP, NSW, Platform and Rules, 1900, p. 8, and Worker, 21 January 1909.
134. Australian Workman, 21 July 1894, 3 April 1897.
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137. Rules of the Labor Electoral League of New South Wales, 1894, Rule 14i.
138. Worker, 3 February 1900.
139. Ibid., 11 February 1905.
140. Ibid., 8 February 1906.
142. PLL of NSW, Platform and Rules, May 1903, Rule 39; and for the 1898 election, Liberal and Federal party, minute book, 1898, 18 July 1898, p. 17 and passim (Mitchell Library).
144. Martin, Political Developments in New South Wales, p. 214.
154. Australian Workman, 24 April 1897.
158. Ford, Cardinal Moran and the A.L.P., chap. 27, for a more detailed discussion.
159. Ibid., pp. 179, 195, 220–25.
160. Ibid., p. 225.
161. PLL of NSW, Fighting Platform 1898 and the Platform; Ford, Cardinal Moran and the A.L.P., p. 227; Fitzhardinge, William Morris Hughes, p. 63, appears to be mistaken in supposing the plank was “conveniently lost” in 1898.
162. Worker, 2 February 1898.
166. Worker, 1 July 1905.
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271–73, for a brief account of the conference debate and the objective.


177. H. Nelson and R. N. Spann, “New South Wales Politics, 1910–1917”. I am deeply indebted to the authors for permission to consult this in advance of publication.


184. Ibid., 19 May 1910.


188. *Worker*, 4 May 1911; and Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader*, p. 266.


194. *Worker*, 24 and 31 August, 7 September 1911; and for the Labor Council’s reaction, its *Report and Balance Sheet, for the Half Year Ending 31 December 1911*, pp. 9–10.


197. Ibid., 3 February 1911.
217. Ibid., 13 March 1913.
220. PLP, minute book, entry for 13 August 1913, p. 95 (Molesworth papers).
223. The New South Wales party also had a lower proportion of the vote – just less than 2.5 per cent down on its vote in 1910 – but it won three more seats.
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232. PLP, minute book, entries for 29 July and 4 August 1914, pp. 128, 129 (Molesworth papers).
233. Ibid., entries for 9, 15, 22, 30 September 1914, pp. 131–34.
234. Ibid., entry for 8 December 1914, p. 139.
235. W. A. Holman and D. R. Hall, *Cost of Living, State Policy*.
238. Ibid., 8 April 1915.
239. Ibid., 29 April 1915.
240. Ibid., 15 April 1915.
241. The election was held after Cook, the Liberal prime minister from 1913, had secured a double dissolution. Labor’s vote in New South Wales increased to 52 per cent of the valid vote cast for the lower house.
244. PLP, minute book, entries for 4, 5, 13 February, 10 March, 19 April 1915, pp. 141–45 (Molesworth papers). Some reshuffling of portfolios occurred at the same time: Black had agriculture for only a month; and then Grahame, who was never given Carmichael’s portfolio, took over from him. See Hughes and Graham, *Handbook*, pp. 64–65.
246. Ibid., entry for 17 November 1915, p. 172.
247. Ibid., entries for 24 November and 1, 3, and 8 December 1915, pp. 174–77.
252. Molesworth, “The Industrial Section of the A.L.P.”
258. PLL of NSW, Industrial Section, *Official History*, 1917, p. 3.
260. PLL of NSW, Censure Motions to Be Moved in Connection with the State Labor Government and the Government’s Reply.
262. Nairn, “The 1916–17 Labor Party Crisis”, pp. 8–9, doubts whether there was anything particularly unusual about the Industrial Section and contends that, though there was “some organizing” of the conference, this was an essential and traditional way of making such gathering work. There is no question that conferences had been “organized” before, though evidence of precisely what
happened is usually incomplete; but it does seem as though the Industrial
Section was more thorough than previous managers of conferences, made little
attempt to conceal what it was doing, and did adopt a new tactic (voting in
threes) in 1916.

263. Worker, 27 April 1916, 4, 11, and 18 May 1916.
265. K. S. Inglis, “Conscription in Peace and War, 1911–1945”, in Conscription in
Australia, ed. R. Forward and B. Reece (St. Lucia, 1968), pp. 30–42.
266. Worker, 24 August 1916.
267. Ibid., 21 September, 12 October 1916.
268. Ibid., 12 October 1916.
269. Evatt, Australian Labour Leader, chaps. 55–57; PLL of NSW, Official History
of the Reconstruction, p. 6.
expelled by 14 November 1916.
272. Worker, 25 January 1917.
273. Childe, How Labour Governs, pp. 146–48; Turner, Industrial Labour and
275. Molesworth, “Industrial Section of the A.L.P.”, p. 11
276. Worker, 7 June 1917.
277. Ibid., 14 and 21 June 1917.
278. Ibid., 14 June 1917.
279. ALP, State of NSW (Industrial Section-Industrial Vigilance Council), Annual
160.
283. Worker, 20 June 1918.
284. Ibid., 6 and 27 June 1918.
285. One Big Union: Scheme Adopted at the Trade Union Congress, 6 August 1918.
287. Quoted from Childe, ibid., p. 170.
288. Molesworth, “The Labor Party Crisis of 1919” (typescript, Molesworth papers,
uncatalogued MS, set 243, item 1, Mitchell Library).
289. Worker, 27 March 1919.
290. Ibid., 1 May 1919.
291. Ibid., 15 and 29 May 1919.
293. Worker, 12 June 1919.
294. Ibid., 19 June 1919.
295. Ibid., 19 and 26 June 1919.
Mounted police breaking up picket lines in the Maritime Strike, Sydney

*Illustrated Australian News*, 1 October 1890 (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

Henry Boote (Courtesy National Library of Australia)
First Labour Ministry in New South Wales.

The new Ministry was formed and sworn in on 31st October. The composition of Ministry was made by the party in power. In its character it was a marked change from the previous Government, and was welcomed by the public. The Ministry included two members of the party, and two former Members of the House of Commons, who had been absent from the previous Government. The Ministry was composed of Mr. C. H. H. Elphinstone, Mr. W. H. T. H. Childers, Mr. W. A. V. C. J. B. A. Smith, and Mr. W. H. T. H. Childers, who had been absent from the House of Commons. The Ministry was regarded as a strong and able Ministry, and was looked upon as a promising beginning.

Sydney Mail, 26 October 1910 (Courtesy National Library of Australia)
A view of the New South Wales political system and the part Labor would play. Parkes (the cockatoo), Dibbs (the peacock), and Reid sitting on the Free Trade branch are obvious. This contains the favoured cartoon figure of the National Association.

*Australian Workman*, 14 July 1894 (Courtesy National Library of Australia)
It has been commonplace to relate the formation of the Labor party in Queensland to the maritime strike of 1890 and even more to the shearers' strike of 1891. This interpretation has depicted the journalist William Lane as the key figure, placing the stamp of socialism on the party and giving it a "socialist from the jump" character and an identity which was later to be lost by scheming politicians more intent on gaining votes than on upholding socialist principles. It is an interpretation which now demands a reassessment. The Labor party in Queensland evolved as a result of changes in trade unionism and in the fortunes of liberalism in that colony and in Australia. It inherited the radical strands of nineteenth-century liberalism and the idealism of the socialist writers of the time, emerging as a radical liberal and social democratic party which provided a political base for reformers of all kinds but which had close associations with a pragmatic urban and rural working class, linked with scattered union organizations. Though, until the mid-1920s, it could claim to be a moderately socialist party, it was far from being "socialist from the jump". Its essential feature was a pragmatic and practical approach to political issues, with little reliance on political theory, but with strong streaks of idealism and nationalism and a determination to use the power of the state to provide for a more equal distribution of wealth. Its other aims were to ensure that employees worked in safe and reasonable conditions, to provide state assistance for the aged, invalids, and children, to assist selectors, and to provide for government by the people on the basis of majority rule. State business enterprises were seen as the means of breaking the economic and, therefore, the political and social power of monopoly capitalism.

When the first Inter-Colonial Trade Union Congress (ITUC) met in Sydney in October 1879, no significant Labor or union organization existed in the colony of Queensland. An eight-hour movement, begun in Brisbane in 1857, had existed fitfully, staging a march in 1865 and dying during the recession of the late 1860s. A bill in 1876 to provide for a statutory eight-hour day had lapsed in the Legislative Assembly. In the 1870s various union and workingmen's associations sprang up, generally on the basis of a single issue, to die again after the issue was resolved.
Working men who were eligible to vote tended to follow Liberal politicians like Charles Lilley, a barrister and the driving force behind the development of free education in Queensland, and later Samuel Griffith, another barrister whose concern was the implementing of free education. It was not until the 1880s that a vibrant Labor movement emerged, which, by the end of the decade, had determined to enter politics in its own right and had begun to provide the organization necessary to send working men into parliament.

The 1880s saw Queensland prosper; capital was invested in the pastoral and mining industries, the sugar industry along the north coast provided large export earnings in agriculture (the only agricultural industry to do so), and large-scale immigration provided the labour for the towns and ports which developed. Queensland's population increased from 213,525 in 1881 to 322,853 in 1886, and 393,718 in 1891, but, because of the decentralization in the west and along the coast and because of successive governments' attempts to induce large-scale rural settlement, Brisbane did not develop as an industrial centre as did Sydney and Melbourne. As the labouring population was concentrated in the mining areas in the north and at Mount Morgan and Gympie, in the sugar and cattle areas in the north, and in the pastoral areas in the west, these rather than Brisbane were the places where the Labor movement was to dominate. As the export of wool and minerals increased, coastal ports became not only exporting centres but also centres for importing goods, servicing industries, manufacturing building materials, and processing food. They also became the termini of railways. The mining of gold and metals, the export of which at times exceeded that of wool, provided the impetus for a timber industry and the development of foundries and engineering firms. Because of the large area covered by the pastoral industry and the value of mineral exports, transport became a major concern and involved the government in heavy expenditure on building railways, ports, and roads, and in providing postal services. These in turn, provided work for large numbers of seamen, labourers, waterside workers, carriers, and railway employees.

While the Queensland economy in the 1880s provided for the development of pastoral, mining, sugar, and building industries, Queensland politics entered a liberal era in which social legislation became more important, more people were enrolled as voters, education was extended, and unions were able to grow. Throughout the decade a mild liberal and conservative party system existed in which the major differences arose out of such questions as the use of Kanaka labour, the granting of land for railway construction, and the method of opening up new land for agriculture. The liberals tended to be those associated with the Brisbane middle class, the enfranchised working men, and the Darling Downs farmers, who looked to Sir Samuel Griffith as their leader, while the conservatives
tended to comprise the pastoralists, the sugar planters, and larger moneyed interests, all of whom looked to Sir Thomas McIlwraith as their political leader. The differences however were not deep. Both accepted the economic theories on which private enterprise was based and each believed that the role of government was to provide the climate where men could succeed through hard work and the judicious use of their capital resources.

Though trade unions were not really legal until the passing of the Trade Union Act in 1886, they had begun to organize and operate openly before this. The impetus for the organization of a trade union movement in the colony had come from English migrants with previous trade union experience, and in 1882 an eight-hour day committee was re-established in Brisbane where a march and demonstration were held in March 1885. Only one further step was required to establish the Brisbane Trades and Labour Council (TLC) on 1 September 1885. Prior to this, craft unions were developed in the building and printing trades by 1884, and a branch of the Seamen's Union, already well established in the other colonies, was formed; unions of waterside workers and labourers, and working men's societies for protection against black and non-European labour, were brought into being in the principal coastal towns. At the same time, miners in the goldfields were also taking the first steps towards protecting themselves against non-white labour and rapacious overseas mine owners. The unions formed were not then oriented towards political action, but were primarily concerned with protecting the industrial interests of their own members. However, as with those in the southern colonies, it was impossible for Queensland unions to avoid being involved in politics and the first tentative steps were taken in 1886 when the Queensland Typographical Association (QTA), at its annual meeting, recommended to the TLC that at least two Labor candidates should be nominated for Brisbane electorates at the general elections in 1888. It proposed that its president, Albert Hinchcliffe, and vice-president, W. P. Colbourne, should stand. In that same year the president of the TLC, Alderman William Galloway, a seaman and chairman of the Eight Hour Day Committee, became the first to stand as a Labor candidate when he nominated for a by-election in Fortitude Valley, one of the few metropolitan electorates with a high proportion of working-class people; he was later endorsed by the TLC. He polled only 111 votes out of 1,401 to finish last.3

At the successive ITUCs it was obvious to the delegates that working men could gain entry to parliament only when three conditions were fulfilled: payment of members, enfranchisement of working men, and better organization of unions. In Queensland, Griffith's liberalism assisted the first two of these somewhat, by the passing of the Members Expenses Act in 1886 by which members of parliament drew £2.2s ($4.20) for each sitting they attended, with a maximum of £200 ($400) a year, and by the
amending of the Election Act in 1885 to prevent disqualification of a voter on the grounds of his change in residence. The third condition was the responsibility of the unions themselves who received some inspiration at each ITUC and through the writings of optimistic authors who told of a new world emerging in which organized Labor would play a new and dominant role.

Queensland was again not represented at the second congress in Melbourne in 1884, but sent seven delegates to the third congress in Sydney in October 1885, and four delegates to the fourth congress in Adelaide in September 1886. At each congress, payment of members and direct representation of Labor in parliament were debated and agreed upon by the delegates. With the establishment of at least fifteen new unions in Brisbane by 1886, together with a miners' union at Charters Towers, the premier mining town in north Queensland, and wharf labourers' and seamen's unions in the coastal ports, in 1887, Labor in Queensland was poised to take on a political as well as an industrial role.

Among those most influential in this movement were Albert Hinchcliffe, William Lane, and Charles Seymour. Hinchcliffe,\(^4\) born in Lancashire in 1860, had come to Queensland as a boy of six. After an intermittent education he served an apprenticeship as a printer with the *Darling Downs Gazette*, where he worked for eight years from 1874 to 1882. Following a twelve months' visit to England in 1882, he settled in Brisbane, working on the *Brisbane Courier* and then the *Telegraph* and assisting in the refounding of the QTA in 1884. He held the offices of president and secretary of that union and when Alf Walker, then secretary of the TLC, became business manager of the new radical paper, the *Boomerang*, late in 1887, Hinchcliffe became secretary of the TLC, while continuing to work for the *Telegraph*. From this beginning he developed into the most important single figure in the Queensland Labor movement before World War I. Though small in stature and quiet in demeanour, Hinchcliffe was an extremely competent organizer and planner, whose role in Queensland history has been largely neglected and, in some cases, completely ignored. Yet both the Labor party and the Labor movement were to exhibit his influence. Hinchcliffe, though a socialist in his long-term aspirations, was fundamentally a pragmatist and was not concerned with utopias. His aim was the immediate improvement of working and living conditions, while still keeping sight of his long-term goals. To achieve these, about which he and his friends were understandably vague, he saw two necessary requirements: the federation of all Labor unions and the gaining of political power by Labor.

William Lane\(^5\) was a quite different person from Hinchcliffe. Born in Bristol, England, in 1866 of a conservative working-class family, Lane was small, with rather large, sad eyes behind steel-rimmed spectacles, and he
had been slightly crippled since birth. He had emigrated to Canada and the United States where he worked as a printer and a reporter before coming to Brisbane in 1885. His "labour notes" in the *Evening Observer* during 1886 revealed his concern with social problems and with building useful contacts in the Labor movement and in liberal reform groups. Though he was not actively engaged in the Labor movement, his views on the common ground existing between capital and Labor coincided with those of most union leaders. He saw the role of the unions as the mitigation of the worst evils of capitalism, and the use of their organizational power to gain Labor representation in parliament. But where Hinchcliffe was the cool organizer, Lane was the crusader and propagandist, driven on to spread his gospel through the written word. With the establishment of a new liberal radical weekly the *Boomerang* at the end of 1887, Lane, as editor, was able to give expression to the dreams bubbling within him: state-aided co-operative village settlements, Australian nationalism, Labor in politics, the organization of Labor, and the exclusion of racially inferior non-whites who would engulf the white Australian nation. He wrote well, with feeling and with a turn of phrase that was to gain him hundreds of devoted admirers and followers, some of whom were to find Lane in person quite different from Lane in print.

Although Seymour initially rivalled Hinchcliffe and continued to be a force in the Labor movement until his death in 1924, he has been the least chronicled of the three. A native of Dublin, he became a seaman and in 1880 settled in Queensland, where he became a bookkeeper and in that occupation formed the Queensland branch of the Federated Seamen's Union of Australasia, being elected secretary in 1885. He became associated with the growing Labor organization in Brisbane and initiated proposals for an intercolonial federation of maritime unions, the structure of which was similar to that of the later Australian Labor Federation (ALF). Seymour's essential quality was loyalty rather than brilliance or administrative ability. It was because of this that he remained a background faithful figure, carrying out the policies of others, rather than being an initiator in his own right.

With Hinchcliffe as secretary of the TLC and Lane as editor of the *Boomerang*, a serious attempt was made in 1887 to form a working men's political organization — the Workers Political Reform Association — in Brisbane, Ipswich, and the surrounding areas. In other parts of the colony, similar ideas were being put into effect. In the northern mining areas of Charters Towers, Croydon, and Ravenswood a radical movement was emerging which included others as well as trade unionists and which went beyond mere trade union demands. In the pastoral areas in western Queensland, the Shearers' Union and the Labourers' Union were moving towards the formation of a political association to elect their own repre-
sentatives to parliament. These moves towards Labor’s taking a direct role in politics were reported not only in the *Boomerang* and similar papers in the mining areas, but also in the established press. This led liberals, such as Griffith, who were conscious of the changes occurring in the colony’s political structure, to attempt to capture political Labor before it established itself as an independent and separate force. In his election manifesto in March 1888 Griffith wrote: “The relations between labour and capital constitute one of the great difficulties of the day. I look to the recognition of the principle that a share of the profits of productive labour belong of right to the labourer as of the greatest importance in the future adjustment of those relations.” But as delegates to successive ITUCs had indicated, Labor wanted to be represented in parliament by Labor, not by liberals, conservatives, or by any other group.

A boost was given to Queensland unionism and political labor with the holding of the fifth ITUC in Brisbane in March 1888. At this congress, the South Australian delegates reported that, following the fourth congress in Adelaide in 1886, a political platform had been drawn up, nine candidates endorsed, and seven of these elected to the colony’s parliament at the following general elections. They claimed that through their efforts legislation for payment of members had been passed. With this evidence, there was no opposition to a motion calling on TLCs to make greater efforts to secure direct representation of Labor in parliament. The mood of the Queensland delegates had been well expressed by the president of the Queensland TLC in his presidential address to the congress when he concluded: “There is one more question I feel compelled to avert to, which seems to me to be absolutely necessary to give effect to all that has gone before [exclusion of Chinese, abolition of state-aided immigration, Factory and Workshop Act, encouragement of native industry], I refer to direct representation of labour in parliament (applause). If we workingmen are to get beneficial legislation, it is largely to ourselves we must trust.”

In his introduction to the published report of the congress, Hinchcliffe who had been the secretary also made his attitude clear on this question:

The unanimity of opinion which characterised the debate... is certainly matter for congratulation. Will it not be matter for even greater felicitation if when the next Congress meets at Hobart, Tasmania, delegates are able to report that a fair proportion of the resolutions arrived at have been carried into effect? The first step towards the accomplishment of this is to secure direct representation of labour in the Houses of Legislature in the various colonies. Wage earners have been too often gullied and hoodwinked at election times by the rash promises of so-called labour candidates which are mostly forgotten after they have secured their seats, and now the workers have determined that none but a man direct from the workshop —

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one from among themselves — shall be returned in the interests of labour.\textsuperscript{11}

Since the 1884 congress, plans had been discussed for an intercolonial federation of unions, but no concrete proposals had been put forward. At the 1888 Brisbane congress, a delegate from the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, whose union was already moving towards a federation of the building trades in Brisbane, moved for a committee of six to be formed to draft a constitution for the federation of Australian Labor. It was evident from the remarks of Hinchcliffe's QTA colleague, Colbourne, that their union also wanted a stronger combination of unions than was possible under the TLC arrangement.

During the two months following the congress, the first attempt was made by a body of Labor candidates to enter the Queensland parliament. In Brisbane the TLC endorsed four candidates: the two printers Hinchcliffe and Colbourne in Toombul and Fortitude Valley respectively, and two boilermakers J. Valentine and J. Johnstone in Toowong and Woolloongabba respectively. Outside Brisbane, Thomas Glassey was advertised as a Labor candidate for Bundamba, near Ipswich.\textsuperscript{12} Though the Boomerang campaigned well for the Labor team in the metropolitan area, its influence could not match that of the Courier or the Telegraph. The four metropolitan candidates polled only 1,261 votes between them compared with the 6,544 of their opponents. It was obvious that solid grass-roots organization combined with an efficient central administration would be the key to electoral success. Glassey, alone of the Labor candidates, was elected.\textsuperscript{13} Politically he was a good representative of the type of British migrant who was to become the backbone of the new Labor party as it developed. Born in Northern Ireland in 1844, he had worked as a miner in Scotland and northern England where he had organized unions of miners. He had taken an active part in local government elections and had assisted in returning Thomas Burt as the first working man to enter the House of Commons. Having been a member of the Liberal party in England, he attached himself to Griffith's liberals on his arrival in 1885 and became a friend of Lane and Hinchcliffe and of the leaders of the liberal organization. After organizing a Mutual Protection Association among the Ipswich coalminers, he had been asked by them to stand for parliament against the official liberal and the McIwraith candidates. In his first speech in Parliament, he declared himself a Labor representative, though he acknowledged that he was a supporter of Griffith.

Defeat at their first attempt to secure parliamentary representation did not deter the leaders of the Labor movement. In the boom of the 1880s, working men with a trade or in good jobs, who were seeking higher pay and better conditions through combining in unions, continued to enrol in unions and invite others to join them. Labor leaders like Hinchcliffe, Lane
and Seymour, with concern for sweated employees, pressed for Factory Acts to improve the working conditions of the thousands of exploited, non-union workers and for work for the unemployed. For, despite the remarkable increase in unionists registered under the Trade Union Act from 2,359 in 1887 to 21,379 in 1890, it was estimated that 120,000 to 140,000 employees still remained outside the unions in 1890. A characteristic of the unions now was a greater interest in Labor's directly entering politics. The growth and emerging politicization of unions, in turn, produced a desire for closer federation not only in Brisbane, but in the principal coastal towns, in the mining areas and in the shearing centres, where the bushworkers had appointed travelling agents to visit the stations to see that all eligible workers were on the roll as a preliminary to electing their own representative to parliament.

The scheme for an intercolonial federation of unions, which provided also for a union federation within each colony, was duly drawn up by Hinchcliffe, Seymour, and a recently arrived English migrant, Mat Reid. Reid was born in 1856 in London where he became a carpenter and a member of the Amalgamated Carpenters' Union. He had also been a member of Henry Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation which preached a form of Marxist socialism and sought to create a large working-class party. On his arrival in Brisbane in 1887, he was elected as a delegate from the Carpenters' Union to the TLC and soon emerged as the leading figure in the formation of a Labor League. There is no evidence to suggest that Lane's was the organizing brain behind the scheme, though as the leading Labor propagandist he probably took part in the discussions, particularly those concerning the federation's newspaper.

Through the *Boomerang*, Lane provided the mouthpiece for the increasing dissatisfaction with the TLC organization and for demands that it should be replaced by a body something like the Labor League which was then threatening to break away from the TLC. Like the Labor League, the Labor federation provided for a more tightly unified organization of unions, but planned to base this geographically on district councils which would try to settle disputes in the areas concerned, have the power to levy members and unions, organize new unions, and be responsible for providing a united front of unions in the event of industrial trouble. The district council, in turn, was to be affiliated with a general council which would exercise an overall supervision throughout the colony and which could, in an emergency, assume control of a dispute. The federation was to be financed by a levy of sixpence (five cents) per member per month, one penny of which was to go to the general council and the district council for administration; two pence to the district council for organization; one penny to the district council for a reserve fund, and one penny towards a monthly journal of the federation. In addition to running this labor news-
paper, the federation aimed at consolidating the eight-hour system, securing direct representation of Labor in parliament, obtaining fair and reasonable conditions of work, and preventing “Australians being degraded by competition to the level of Chinese and European labourers”.

It was in effect, a political and industrial One Big Union (OBU) where the skilled worker would be protected against the unskilled taking his job during a dispute and where the weakest union would have behind it the strength of a united Labor movement. It was such an organization, said Seymour presenting it to the ITUC in Hobart in 1889, as would provide the remedy for the bane of all labour, viz. strikes, and would make it “utterly impossible for any combination of capital to break through it”. It was however too advanced and too constricting for the southern unions, whose delegates were not even prepared to discuss the scheme, but, when in April and May 1899 a protracted strike of Brisbane printers against the employment of non-unionists was broken by the importation of “free” labour from the south, the deficiencies of the TLC were so starkly revealed that it was disbanded, and in June the federation proposals were adopted under the title of the Brisbane District Council of the ALF. Seymour was elected provisional secretary and a bootmaker from Victoria, David Bowman, president. Born in Bendigo in 1860, Bowman had come to Brisbane in 1889 for health reasons, and almost immediately organized a union among the men in his own trade. He soon found his place in Brisbane among Lane, Hinchcliffe, Seymour, Reid, Billy Mabbott, the idealist secretary of the Waterside Labourers’ Union, and Gilbert Casey, a former bushworker, seaman, and miner. Casey had a flair for oratory that made him the nearest thing to a professional agitator among the group.

Events were now moving quickly in the colony. Though Griffith’s party had been defeated at the 1888 election, his liberalism had not been quashed and in the Christmas Boomerang of 1888 he had contributed a remarkable article called “Wealth and Want” which was as radical in its call for a fairer distribution of wealth as anything spoken or written by Lane or the other Labor leaders. He subsequently had the article reprinted in pamphlet form and distributed throughout the colonies, where it was favourably received by the Labor movement. It was as close as Griffith was to come to leading the political Labor movement. Somewhat reserved, he, like other middle-class liberals, could not bring himself to associate directly with the working class or to be bound by the closely knit political organization then being planned. On its side, Labor had made it clear that it wanted its own men, not “brany democrats”, to lead and represent it.

In 1889 an act to provide for the payment of members was passed, under which members were to receive £300 ($600) a year with a mileage allowance for travelling expenses. The way was thereby opened for a larger number of Labor candidates without other means to nominate at the next
general election. In September 1890 a Constitution Act Amendment Act was passed reducing the length of Queensland parliaments from five years to three — and fulfilling a desire which Griffith had advanced since his entry into politics. Labor, it was anticipated, would have its next opportunity to put forward candidates at a general election in May 1891. The high point of public sympathy and support for a fairer deal for working men was reached during August 1889 when the London Dock Strike Fund Committee consisting of Labor and non-Labor sympathizers, with Hinchcliffe as secretary, contributed significantly to Australia's £30,000 ($60,000) donation. Nothing seemed to bar Labor's way to achieving what the multitude of writers was promising — a new society where the working man would take his rightful place in the government of the country and in the sharing of its economic wealth.

The need for the working man's case to be placed before the voting public was appreciated by the Labor leaders and six months after the adoption, in June 1889, of the ALF scheme by the Brisbane unions a meeting was held in the maritime hall in Brisbane to formulate plans for a monthly newspaper, to be owned by the unions and circulated among their members. More than 20,000 unionists were represented, giving the newspaper a potential circulation higher than that of any other in the colony. A board of trustees consisting of Hinchcliffe, Casey, Reid, and Seymour was elected, Mabbott being added later. Casey became chairman of the board, Seymour was secretary, and Hinchcliffe, treasurer; subsequently he became manager, a paid position, which gave him flexibility and greater power within the Labor movement. Lane was appointed editor on £3 ($6) a week, a substantial sacrifice on his part considering that he had been earning £12 ($24) on the Boomerang. The success of the venture depended on its acceptance by the shearsers', carriers', and labourers' unions, since these had the big numbers to provide the finance. There was little doubt of their acceptance. Lane's reputation and following were strongest in the west, but in any case Hinchcliffe made a tour of the coastal, mining, and shearing areas with Glassey and Casey in November 1889 to sell the idea of the federation and the newspaper to the unionists there. To be quite sure, he also had himself elected as a delegate to the meeting of the central Queensland labourers', shearsers', and carriers' conference called to discuss the formation of a central district council of the ALF. The tour was immensely successful and local newspapers, sometimes hostile to Labor, reported large audiences absorbing the explanation of the ALF by Hinchcliffe and Casey and the long addresses by Glassey on politics and parliament; in these he urged Labor to send more of its own men into the Legislative Assembly.

The new eight-page journal called the Worker — the earlier title of the Swagman having been discarded — made its first appearance at the eight-
hour day procession in March 1890. It promised to be a lively journal, mostly written by Lane under a number of noms-de-plume but with some contributions by Hinchcliffe and Seymour. It was to be above all a political as well as an industrial Labor journal, teaching as well as informing the workers. In his opening paragraph Lane wrote:

The political attention of the Worker will be limited to those questions which closely affect the welfare of the wage earning masses. It will advocate the measures and reforms agreed upon as desirable at the Labor Congresses of Australia and will comment radically upon any and every proposal tending in the same direction. Neither of the old political parties will have its praise or its blame excepting as they treat demands of the workers for justice and all efforts to secure direct representation for organized labour will have its loyal support.

In Queensland in 1890 where the results of expanded education had promised a waiting and eager audience, such sentiments were popularly received. Lane, driven on by an inward compulsion known only to the crusader, had a free hand to write what he chose and so was born the legend of the man who accomplished all things for Queensland Labor. Coincident with the publication of the Worker, came a growth in the ALF. To the Brisbane and central Queensland unions were added district councils in Wide Bay and Burnett (Gympie, Maryborough, and Bundaberg) in May, and in Townsville, Charters Towers, and Rockhampton in June. In May also the ALF scored its first industrial victory in the Jondaryan dispute when the Brisbane maritime unions made it clear that they would not handle wool shorn by non-union labour. A conference between the pastoralists and the unions led by Hinchcliffe and Spence, who had been invited to take part, resolved the dispute, with the pastoralists agreeing to shear with union labour. Labor had won, though it overestimated the significance of its victory. A “slate” of seven points to prevent disputes between employees and employers was drawn up by the ALF executive for presentation to the pastoralists before the next season. Unions were to be asked to subscribe 2s.6d. (25 cents) per member for increased organization to provide the strength necessary to prevent employers infringing the “slate” proposal. These proposals were constructive, but within the Labor movement the first rumblings against the assumption of power by the ALF executive were heard.

In capitalist circles, the new strength of the combined unions was recognized by the pastoralists and the non-Labor press, which pointed to the obvious corollary of a union of employers. The Brisbane Courier correctly noted: “A combination of capitalists if once seriously set about would from the very necessities of the case be of greater strength than any which all the Labour Federation put together could accomplish.
Moreover, in a war, the sinews of the labourers would soon be wasted from sheer want, since they would be producing nothing, and therefore would speedily exhaust supplies long before the capitalists could be sensibly touched." Moreover, serious economic changes were occurring which neither organized Labor nor optimistic liberalism could avert. Drought in 1889 and 1890 had caused heavy losses of sheep and cattle with a predictable effect on urban commercial life. The price of wool, which had been declining since 1882 despite an increase in the quantity exported, recovered somewhat in 1889 but declined once more in 1890. Pastoralists already heavily in debt to finance companies were fearful of rising labour costs as profits fell. In addition, as so many Queensland stations were owned by pastoral companies outside the state, the former personal relationship between employer and employee was lost. In the north, the boom in the sugar and mining industries ended, producing increased unemployment. The oncoming depression was felt by the government when the treasurer announced a deficit of £1.3 million ($2.6 million) and proposed a 5 per cent tax on all property — real and personal — to make up the deficit. The Assembly saw Griffith and McIlwraith voting together against the proposal, to bring down the government on 7 August. After some speculation, the "Griffilwraith", a coalition of Griffith and McIlwraith, was sworn in. It was to become known in the nineties as the "continuous ministry". The approaching depression, the absence of other capable leaders, and the problems raised by the new militancy of Labor brought to an end the non-Labor political divisions of the 1880s.

Though the changes in the colony's economic fortunes were recognized by pastoralists and businessmen, Labor leaders dismissed stories of treasury deficits as attempts to confuse the electors and continued on in their spirit of optimism. The first general council of the ALF met in Brisbane in August 1890. Its main business was to draw up the official constitution and rules, consider the "slate" proposals, provide for women's organizations, and lay down the basis for political action. In the heady atmosphere of success, the eight members — none of whom had any experience of parliament — drew up a political programme which, far from reflecting solely the influence of Lane as has been claimed, reflected rather the spirit of optimism of Queensland Labor at the time, as these leaders interpreted it. Intoxicated with the romance of the occasion and with past successes (they were mostly teetotallers), they resolved to by-pass all intermediate steps and at one blow bring about the reformation of society and the emancipation of the working class. The political aims of the ALF which they sent to the district councils for their endorsement were:

1. The Nationalization of all sources of wealth and all means of producing and exchanging wealth.

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2. The conducting by the State authority of all production and all exchange.
3. The pensioning by the State authority of all children, aged and invalid citizens.
4. The saving by the State authority of such proportion of the joint wealth production as may be requisite for instituting, maintaining and increasing national capital.
5. The maintenance by the State authority from the joint wealth production of all educational and sanitary institutions.
6. The just division among all the citizens of the State of all wealth production, less only that part retained for public and common requirements.
7. The Reorganization of Society upon the above lines to be commenced at once and pursued uninterruptedly until social justice is fully secured to each and every citizen.

These aims, said the general council, were “impossible of attainment so long as political power is withheld from the people... In one year a People’s Parliament will give Queensland workers more justice than can be wrung from capitalistic parliaments in a generation”. So the legend of Queensland political Labor being “socialist from the jump” was born. A further significant resolution sought the commitment of working men to an abstinence from alcohol, “which interferes so fatally with that intelligent persistence without which it is hopeless to organise for Social Justice”.

The council clearly recognized from the “people’s parliamentary platform”, included in their report, that the attainment of a people’s parliament was ultimately dependent upon all the people having the franchise and voting. This platform included the exercise of universal white adult suffrage for all parliamentary and local elections, the virtual abolition of the Legislative Council, the holding of all elections on one day, the establishment of equal electoral districts on adult population basis, and annual parliaments. It was clear also that in their optimism they thought that all the working people, who formed a majority in the colony, would support their programme and vote for it. Though the district councils, and therefore the unions which comprised them, had to consider the platform before it could be adopted, the Boomerang confidently reported: “If this is accepted a Labour Party will at once be formed of which the Federation will be the backbone and which will keep itself independent of other party affiliations.”

Now, however, the ALF found that its idea of unlimited progress was not universally shared among its allies, as liberals, fearful of the term “nationalization” and what it would do to their property, swung away from support for the aims of Labor and hid behind the skirts of the Griffilwraith. The Brisbane Courier waxed eloquent in its most outraged
terms as it saw Communism and revolution becoming the aims of Labor. As the ALF reeled from the blows of the colony’s conservatives, the bubble of all its hopes burst. In Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide one of the greatest industrial struggles in Australia’s history, the maritime strike, broke out and quickly spread to Queensland. Reports of police charges and instructions to soldiers to “fire low and lay them out” dispelled the belief in the harmony of capital and Labor. The ALF gave full support to the strike, but having paid out £15,000 ($30,000) in strike pay, Hinchcliffe was forced to wire Melbourne on 22 October that exhaustion of funds was forcing Queensland to call off the strike. The victory at Jondaryan had clearly been over-rated. Not all working men had absorbed or even read the gospels of the Worker; in fact the majority were still outside the unions, apathetic about their own emancipation and, in their need for jobs, prepared to act as strike breakers against the interests of their fellow workers.

Though the failure of the strike in Queensland was a costly and severe setback for unionism, it did not deter the leaders of the Labor movement from their path towards direct Labor representation in parliament. Union leaders, in fact, used the obviously repressive actions of the colonial governments as propaganda to try to urge the uncommitted workmen and non-unionists to realize the need for Labor to be in parliament where it could put an end to strikes and bitter industrial disputes. However, the depression, the strike, and the public reaction to the ALF platform were turning workers away from unions and politics. Their views can be roughly measured by the reaction of the district councils, which, with the exception of Charters Towers, all opposed the proposed political platform. It was apparent that there was large-scale opposition to the ALF platform from the ranks of the Labor movement and, if affiliated unionists were upset by the platform, it seems unlikely that those outside the unions who were sympathetic to Labor were any more impressed.

Charles McDonald, the ALF organizer in Charters Towers and state president of the ALF, with Hinchcliffe and Lane tried through the Worker’s columns to defend the platform, but it was obvious that the leaders had advanced too far and too fast for the rank and file. The latter had wanted Labor in parliament, but only to reform the existing society that they knew, not to pull it down. If socialism meant using the power of the state to introduce reforms beyond what liberals were prepared to concede was a legitimate role of the state, then the Labor movement collectively opted for socialism, but if socialism meant more than this, if it meant a rapid upturning and reorganization of society or the nationalization of all industries, then the Labor movement drew back and opted out. It is likely that the press reports at the time of the maritime strike had something to do with this rejection, but the important fact was that the
Labor movement in Queensland turned quickly from a theoretical to a pragmatic and practical approach to reform and to politics.

As opposition to the political platform continued to be voiced, the general executive of the ALF met in the central Queensland shearing town of Blackall in December to fulfil one of the instructions of the August general council, namely to draw up the plans for the organization of the political Labor party. It could not amend or alter the platform, a task which was the sole responsibility of the general council, not due to meet again until August 1891. It was at this meeting that the Labor party in Queensland was formally born.

It was to comprise members of unions affiliated with the ALF and members of unaffiliated unions or political associations which endorsed the political principles of the ALF, i.e. those who resolved to accept its platform and who were recognized as being sympathetic to the Labor cause by the district council of the ALF in the area in which they were located. The inclusion of local political associations reflect clearly the view that though the Labor party was seen as the political vanguard of the union movement, it was not to be an exclusively trade union party. Those who were sympathetic to the movement, but who were not members of affiliated unions, on accepting the platform were to be given equal rights with unionists. Thus selectors, storekeepers, small businessmen, white-collar workers, in fact, anyone who saw himself as being in sympathy with the aspirations of the Labor movement was accepted as a member of the political Labor party from its inception.

The task of selecting candidates and ensuring that Labor politicians obeyed the rules was left to the local associations. Because of the decentralization of Queensland industry and population, suspicion of Brisbane domination in all state politics, and idealistic notions about democratic control, these local organizations were given complete autonomy. Candidates were to be chosen either by a two-thirds majority of a meeting of Labor members or, if this was not physically possible, by a plebiscite. The only restrictions imposed by the executive were that official Labor candidates would be required to sign a pledge to support any political reforms demanded by the Labor party and to resign if a vote of no confidence was passed by a two-thirds majority of the Labor members in the district.

Almost simultaneously with the ALF executive’s decisions, the Workingmen’s Parliamentary Representative Association changed its name to the People’s Parliamentary Association (PPA) and began establishing new branches in other western shearing towns. In centres in the north and along the coast where miners’ unions, wharf labourers’ unions, carriers’ unions, and other unions were organized, local Labor political organizations were formed adopting different names: Democratic League, Workers’ Political Association, Political Reform Association, and Workers’
Political Organization (WPO). Such bodies were open to all unionists and non-unionists who accepted the ALF platform. Their responsibilities were the enrolling of electors, the making of house-to-house canvasses, and the educating of workers in the principles of the Labor movement; in addition they arranged for the choosing of political candidates. At the end of February 1891, under the auspices of the ALF, the first WPO was formed in Brisbane in the electorate of Fortitude Valley and by July 1891 each electorate in Brisbane had its WPO. To heighten the emphasis being given to politics, the *Worker* in January 1891 began a new column, “Labour in Politics”, compiled by Hinchcliffe. It was apparent at the beginning of 1891 that both capital and Labor were beginning to organize for the election which would possibly be held in May 1891. By now, Labor’s parliamentary representatives had increased to two with the election of John Hoolan, an eloquent and at times offensive newspaper editor, who had won the mining seat of Burke in a by-election in September 1890. With Glassey he began to organize for the expected election.

However, before any election could be held, a greater battle between Labor and capital commenced in Queensland. The defeat of the maritime strike had dimmed none of the unions’ ardour for closed shops nor its opposition to working with non-union labour, but the strike itself had drawn employers closer together not only in the pastoral and maritime industries but also in north Queensland. The depression had made the employers more intransigent, while rumours of the introduction of cheap coloured labour were the best incentives to workmen to combine against the increasingly impersonal face of capitalism. Mistaking the sentiments of Lane’s flamboyant journalism for the immediate goals of Labor, capitalists and conservatives assumed that, for the maintenance of their own privileged position, they would have to confront and defeat organized Labor. With the depression providing an increasing abundance of unemployed workmen willing to work anywhere for any price, capital was in a strong position, while the unions containing numbers of unemployed themselves and being £15,000 ($30,000) poorer as a result of the maritime strike, were in a less favourable position. As the depression increased in severity in 1891 it was from Labor’s point of view the worst possible time for an open clash with capital.

During a series of meetings in November and December 1890 among the pastoralists and pastoral companies, tactics were agreed upon for the shearing season to open in central Queensland in January 1891. Freedom of contract, an idyllic piece of liberalism defined by the secretary of the New South Wales Pastoralists’ Union as allowing “an employer to be free to employ whom he pleases and an employee to be free to engage or refuse to engage work as he pleases”, was to be insisted upon, with wage reductions of up to 33 per cent for labourers who constituted 60 per cent
of the employees on the station. There were to be no prior negotiations with the unions or with the ALF as reports seeped through of growing employer strength. On 13 January, Hinchcliffe wired to the Secretary of the ALF in Barcaldine: “Private information. Federated pastoralists levying three hundred thousand pounds throughout Australia to fight Queensland. Eight thousand in Queensland. Fight delayed till levy comes in. Employers plan to raise thousands blacklegs to take district after district in rotation. Keep this strictly secret. Act cautiously. Big trouble ahead.” He further arranged with McDonald for both of them to go to Barcaldine to try to reach a settlement with the pastoralists. Hinchcliffe was no revolutionary, nor were the unionists associated with him. In the Jondaryan dispute he had tried to establish some rapport with the squatters and though rebuffed had kept open the invitation to immediate settlement. He was prepared to exercise the same patience in 1891 and avoid open warfare. His attempts to seek an open conference with the pastoralists failed as it was clear that nothing short of agreement on their terms would be acceptable. It was soon apparent that the pastoralists had laid their plans well. On 23 February, as batches of infantry and artillery arrived in Rockhampton, the government issued a proclamation calling on shearers and labourers to break up their camps and disperse; this the ALF saw as provoking the unions at a time when they were trying to effect a settlement.

Since Griffith was in Sydney at the National Australasian Convention, it was to McLlwraith, the acting premier and a leading member of the pastoralists, that Hinchcliffe appealed on 1 March to try to arrange an unconditional conference between the unions and the employers to bring about a settlement. McLlwraith’s reply was evasive and virtually demanded that the unions admit to freedom of contract before he would take any initiatives. Undeterred, Hinchcliffe tried again, only to be rebuffed with a homily on obeying the law. On 3 March, a special general council of the ALF met at Rockhampton and issued a manifesto setting out their specific grievances against the pastoralists in particular and Australian capitalism in general, including also charges of allowing coloured labour to take its place beside white labour, of provoking the unions with armed police, and of the disfranchisement of bushmen. It concluded with a plea to the colony’s citizens for financial and moral support for the bushmen and with an appeal to “each man and woman to remember always that through the ballot box we can peaceably win our rights when we have votes.”

Anticipating an election in May, and sobered by the reaction inside and outside the movement to the early political platform, the general council drew up a completely new platform which dropped all references to nationalization and provided a pragmatic reform platform in line with the express desires of the miners, shearers, selectors, and others who made up
Throughout January and February, Hinchcliffe, Bowman, Reid, McDonald, Glassey, and Hoolan had carried out extensive organization of the political party and knew what the rank and file would accept. The new platform which was recommended to the district councils gave priority to electoral reform, namely, universal and equal adult white suffrage and the abolition of the Legislative Council. It also sought state control of waterconservation and irrigation, state-aided village settlements, and a state bank. It included free compulsory education, a statutory eight-hour day, pensions for all people over sixty and for orphaned children, shop and factory acts, a mines act, a wages act, and the amendment of the Trade Union Act to provide protection against conspiracy laws. The repeal of state-aided immigration was also sought. Broadly, it was a platform containing the demands that trade unionists had made at successive ITUCs. As it was to remain basically the platform for the 1893 election, its general acceptance by the Labor movement was apparent.

In March the real bitterness of the strike began to emerge. There was disagreement within the ALF and the strikers over whether or not a general strike should be called. Lane, Casey, and Mabbott were in the forefront of those who urged this course. One of Lane’s followers, W. Fothergill, secretary of the central district council, urged George Taylor, the organizer, to “remember the Commune and see if the thing is possible in Clermont”; to William Hamilton, an organizer in Clermont, he had previously written: “the men are of the opinion that constitutional means are very little good, and other methods must be tried.” In his autobiography, Dawn to Dusk, Ernie Lane later claimed that his brother planned to get into direct communication with the French communists in Paris with the intention of forming a militant international organization, but it is difficult often to separate fact from fancy in this book. On the other hand Hinchcliffe, Bowman, Reid, Seymour, and Glassey urged caution. Hinchcliffe used Seymour, whose seamen were solidly behind the bushmen, as his personal envoy to try to raise funds from other unions and to prevent the strikers from doing anything that would break the unions. Glassey and Reid concentrated their efforts on the less romantic but most important task of enrolling voters before 4 April when the next revising court was held. Glassey wrote to George Taylor:

Say to our friends to exercise forbearance and not to be tempted to break the peace. Use all the forces at your command to canvass the different Electorates to see that those who are off the capital Rolls and entitled to vote are put on. You have up to the first Tuesday in April to register names, so be busy.

. . . Leave no stone unturned to have every name placed on the Electorate Roll and be prepared for the coming struggle which cannot be very far off.
At the end of March, Reid applied to the colonial secretary's office for 5,000 electoral claim forms for use in enrolling electors at meetings of the WPOs but was given only 100. However those in the unions seeking a general strike won and a general call out of all pastoral workers was announced from 24 March. Though the general strike had all the romance of a revolution about it, its chances of success were slight in a country where the population was, at best, apathetic toward the strikers and, at worst, antagonistic. Moreover in an open war between unions on the one hand and capitalism, the government, the press, and community leaders on the other, the unions were virtually beaten before they started. When to this was added the effects of the depression, and the increasing unreality of Lane's thinking which contrasted with the clearer analysis of the situation by Hinchcliffe and Reid, the bitterness generated by the strike inside and outside of the Labor movement was understandable. It is perhaps significant of the widening breach between Lane and the ALF leaders in Brisbane that Lane, the chief Labor propagandist, should have been ushered off to Ballarat to the ITUC for a week at the end of April when the strikers were being arrested, tried, and sentenced to hard labour for intimidation, and when the Worker was expected to provide the Labor case. McDonald and Bowman represented the ALF at the congress, while Hinchcliffe and Seymour remained in Queensland.

It is significant that the report of the Queensland parliamentary committee to the ITUC, delivered by Bowman, made no mention of either strikes as being the reason for Labor's entry into politics. The fact was that the Labor movement in Queensland had obviously determined to enter politics and, if anything, might have been deterred rather than spurred on by the strikes. Bowman's remarks were quite clear: "To political action Queensland has paid particular attention, the idea being everywhere accepted that labour must strike systematically at the ballot box in order to secure for the workers ownership and control of the means of living now monopolized by the capitalist class... It is expected that at the coming elections the effect of long continued organization will be felt." Whereas Bowman and Hinchcliffe were clear in their plans for the emancipation of the working class, Lane was torn between his advocacy of the ballot box and his advocacy of revolution. In responding to the toast to the "trades and labour councils of Australasia", he said: "They must stand by their union, and even be prepared to die for it, for it was the only means of securing their rights... If the government refused to allow them the chance of securing the ballot, by which only they could redress their wrongs, they must get it and if that meant rebellion he only hoped he would have strength and courage to join in it." It was purple pieces such as this in the Worker that were becoming a source of concern to the unionists and union officials hoping or trying to effect a settlement with
the government and the pastoralists.

The government had produced its own method of settling the strike. T. J. Byrnes, the attorney general, wrote to Horace Tozer, the home secretary, on 14 March: "I think we could prosecute the leaders for conspiracy to prevent employees from following their calling by intimidation. Conspiracy is probably the most elastic offence known to the law." An 1825 English conspiracy law, since repealed in England but not in Queensland, was dug out. From Sydney, Griffith agreed to the charging of the strike leaders with conspiracy, but counselled against the use of the overt military force that the pastoralists and the police magistrate R. A. Rankin were requesting. He did not want the government to assume the position of being allies in a class war, though he agreed to Tozer's plan to stop telegrams between the ALF and the shearers. With the jailing of twelve strikers the government and pastoralists had clearly won. The strike was officially called off at the beginning of June. Hinchcliffe had agreed to the central district council's recommendations. He had always believed in keeping the union organization intact to fight another day rather than in destroying everything for a principle which could later be achieved by careful management and negotiation.

Griffith did not hold the anticipated elections in May. It is not possible to say whether it was because of the disorganization caused by the strike, or the warning of possible Labor party successes suggested by a by-election in Townsville in the middle of May, or the New South Wales Labor party's gaining thirty-six of the forty-eight contested seats in June of that year, or whether it was simply a decision to allow the parliament to run its full term. The Labor party was ready in Queensland and anxious to try itself out. A number of by-elections gave it a chance to test its organization in four electorates. In Townsville in May, Anthony Ogden, secretary of the meatworkers' union was defeated by only 806 votes to 655. Two months later E. Byrnes, secretary of the miners' union at Eidsvold, stood for Burnett, seeking the votes of farmers and other workers as well as miners. He polled 245 votes to the winner's 318 and the other candidate's 267. Labor was not winning, but it was obviously not being disgraced. Its first success came when the member for Barcoo died in February 1892 and the PPA nominated Tom Ryan, secretary of the central district council and one of the two strike leaders acquitted. In a short campaign Ryan defeated W. H. Campbell, the proprietor of the Western Champion, a Barcaldine paper supporting the pastoralists, by 518 votes to 322, to become the first endorsed Labor candidate to win a seat. G. J. Hall, a carpenter, repeated the performance in Bundaberg in June by campaigning on opposition to black labour and slipping through a field of four to win by 452 votes to his opponents' 353, 170, and 14. Griffith countered by amending the Electoral Act to provide for contingent voting, i.e. optional preferential
voting, and to require stricter residential clauses which caused thousands of names to be removed from the roll. However in Bulimba, a metropolitan electorate, a candidate could not be found, even though a WPO was established there.

It was apparent that those areas best organized industrially would be the first to send Labor members to parliament. A second factor to emerge was that even though the organization of the Labor party was centred on Brisbane, the Worker emanated from Brisbane, and the men exercising the power in the party lived and operated from Brisbane, the electoral and financial strength of the party was to be in the rural and mining areas and in the provincial towns which were the centres for these industries.

The two years between the shearsers' strike and the general elections provided the Labor party with a breathing space to consolidate the organizing that had been started at the end of 1889. In those two years WPOs, PPAs, and Democratic Leagues were organized; these included selectors, workers, and anyone who was sympathetic to Labor and who would sign the platform. Consequently at a time when liquor reform and land reform were two burning issues, the Labor party found representatives of each of these movements inside its ranks. Land reform to break up the large holdings for smaller selectors was at least as important as industrial reform. The Australian dream of a nation of yeoman farmers was held as strongly by the Labor movement in Queensland as by any other group in the continent. The main functions of the local organizations continued to be the enrolment of electors, the raising of finance, and the holding of public meetings where the Labor party and its platform were explained.

The party had not been born out of the strikes nor had it arisen because of them. Both the strike and the Labor party were the end results of a decade of working-class optimism in a society heavily influenced by British political philosophies. Had there been no shearsers' strike, the party would have evolved in much the same way and with much the same ideology. The influential leaders after the strike were the same as those before. What had changed was the ideal of capital and Labor living in harmony, and with the starkness of that change came a greater determination by the ALF leaders to organize Labor so that it could in time govern the colony. In this regard the role of the strikes was clearly their use as propaganda, to show to apathetic working men and doubtful craft unionists in the Brisbane area how far organized capitalism was prepared to go to crush the legitimate rights of Labor and to keep it from having its full share in the wealth of the colony. It was to be almost twenty years before this lesson was appreciated. Nevertheless "1891" became part of the legend of the shearsers, the noblest of the bushworkers, defeated by the squatters, the princes of Australian capitalism, but rising undaunted to become the
emerging political force in the colony. Legends in any society are important and, as the strike receded and memories dimmed, the legendary foundation of the Labor party emerged as having a basis of fact.

For the Labor movement in Queensland, the strikes were the occasion of the ending of its association with Lane. It was not in despair that he set about founding his new colony; it was the coming to fruition of dreams he had nursed for several years. The parting was welcomed on both sides. Lane with his messianic vision of founding an Aryan Utopia was anxious to leave Australia and begin his colony in South America partly because of his fear of Australia's engulfment by hordes of Asiatics and partly to prove that he could succeed in creating a communist utopia, where others had failed. His journalistic extravagences no longer suited the mood of Queensland Labor where Hinchcliffe and Reid had to organize and administer a non-utopian Labor movement in non-utopian surroundings, while Glassey and Hoolan strove to defend the strikers in a parliament that was not only anti-Labor but prepared to agree, ostensibly as an economy measure, to reduce parliamentary salaries from £300 to £150 ($600 to $300) a year to deter Labor men from coming into parliament. Moreover, despite what some unionists and propagandists had said and written of revolutions and communes during the strike, the fact was the Labor movement and the Labor party were not highly theoretical in their approach to politics but pragmatic, with a strong element of idealism, and a faith in what state action under a Labor government would achieve. Though their leaders were radicals with strongly held hopes and views on politics and parliaments, they too were governed by the realities of what they could achieve in the present. By 1892, Lane was out of touch with these realities. Nevertheless, his racist views and his jingoistic support for conscription in World War I should not detract from the significance of his earlier role as an inspiring and crusading propagandist for the working classes.

In 1892 Labor had four members in the colonial parliament, but no real identity in its own right except as a part of the ALF. Before the general election of 1893, the four members of the PLP sought a convention of Labor associations throughout the colony to draw up a platform for the election and to establish an executive to administer the party. During Exhibition week, in August 1892, twenty-four delegates representing the PLP, the ALF, and local Labor organizations (WPOs and PPAs), assembled in Brisbane for the first Queensland Labor-in-Politics Convention. No definite criteria were set for the basis of representation, other than that the delegates were to be elected by those Labor associations which had accepted the ALF platform. As the political organization of workers was stronger in mining and shearing areas than in the area in and about the capital city, country representatives outnumbered those from Brisbane,
nineteen to five. As long as the decentralization of Queensland industry and population persisted, this pattern could be expected to continue. Glassey, leader of the PLP, was elected without opposition as chairman of the convention.

After several hours of discussion an executive council of twelve was constituted, consisting of the four parliamentarians and eight others elected by the convention. The council was to hold office until 31 January 1894, unless re-elected in the meantime, suggesting that at this stage it was envisaged that conventions would be held on an annual basis as was the ALF provincial council meeting. The functions laid down for the executive council remained basically the same after it was replaced by the Central Political Executive (CPE) and later by the Queensland Central Executive (QCE). They included hearing appeals over the selection of parliamentary candidates, endorsing candidates as officially “Labor”, raising money, checking electoral rolls, and estimating the strength of other parties in various electorates. The platform agreed upon closely resembled that issued by the ALF in March 1891, with electoral reform — one man, one vote — again being the first plank.

New policies were inserted reflecting the widening basis of the party as a reform movement. It was a significant comment on the continuing dream of a colony of small landholders that land reform was included in the “labour rights” section and aimed at breaking up the large agglomerations of land by a progressive tax on land values, irrespective of improvements. The effects of the depression, namely, its spectre of unemployment and overtones of cheap labour being introduced by pastoralists, planters, and mine owners provided the stimulus for an all-embracing plank calling for the exclusion of coloured Asiatic, contract, or indentured labour. Opposition to foreign capitalists’ exploiting the building of railways for their own profit was reflected in the demand for state construction and ownership of all railways. However, on the more touchy questions of northern and central separation, where there was not the same unanimity, the platform left local organizations free to determine their own courses of action, while the equally sensitive question of free trade and protection were placed outside internal Labor politics. The political theorists were able to have the referendum included, while the liquor reformers were able to have a recommendation appended that only “sober men” should be chosen as Labor candidates. A party, a platform, and electoral organizations had evolved and taken recognizable form. Following the convention, Seymour drafted the first manifesto which, significantly, was concerned principally with land settlement. While it charged the government with being partly responsible for the depression through heavy overseas borrowing, it was more fearful of the possibility of its allowing railways to be built in return for land grants and of its accepting the introduction of
more coolie labour which would depress further the opportunities for small independent farmers. Labor in politics promised a new era. Seymour concluded:

From out of the "slough" of misfortune brought about by misgovernment and into which Q'land has been plunged it is the task of the future to rescue her from, so that her people may be contented and have happy homes. The Labour Party believes that to accomplish this it is necessary that all adult men and women should have an equal voice in making the laws which govern them . . . Farming must be encouraged at the expense of the land grabbers who never use the land . . . Farmers ought to be brought in touch more closely to the consumer . . . by dispensing with unnecessary middlemen who now fleece the farmer without decreasing the cost of his produce to the consumer.

When men can supply their necessities at all times and have the opportunity of engaging their labour productively then will our people be contented and labour troubles a thing of the past. Co-operation can gradually but eventually take the place of competition. Political equality and a solution for the unemployed difficulty is what the Labour party are after and both comprise all that is contained in their detailed political platform.44

Glassey signed the manifesto and all that remained now was for the party's ideals to be tested by the forty-six Labor candidates who were endorsed for the seventy-two seats at the general election in April and May 1893.

II

An analysis of the occupations of the candidates who advertised themselves as standing for the Labor party, together with the platform and the speeches of the parliamentary leader Glassey, provides some clues as to the nature of the new party. Twelve miners had nominated in addition to a further four men who were ex-miners; ten candidates were shopkeepers or small businessmen; there were nine skilled and eight unskilled workers; four were journalists; two were farmers; and there was one barrister. Seats were contested in all parts of the state except the suburban areas of Brisbane, the farming areas in the south-eastern portion of the state, and odd electorates along the coast and inland where no candidate could be found. This weakness of Labor in the suburban areas of Brisbane and in the more closely settled wheat and dairying districts in southeastern Queensland was to continue into the twentieth century. Each candidate seems to have campaigned on a combination of electoral reform — one man, one vote, and the abolition of the Legislative Council — his role as a
local representative, and the broad reform policies which the new party espoused. The platform had sufficient breadth to cover those whose main interest was the land, or industrial working conditions, or general liberal radicalism.

Despite the reform nature of the platform and the obvious intention of the candidates, whether unionists or otherwise, to improve the economic, industrial, and social position of those at the bottom end of the wage scale and, despite the earlier invitations to working men from liberals and conservatives to send their own representatives into parliament, there was a fear among conservatives that a new era of politics had arrived where the lower orders might eventually take control of the colony’s economic and political power. Consequently charges of lawlessness and the destruction of Queensland society, which had grown out of the strikes, were hurled at the Labor party and its candidates. Glassey, who was contesting Brisbane North with Lilley against McIlwraith, attempted to refute the charges in an address to Brisbane North electors on 21 April, a week before the first day of the elections:

The charge that the Labor Party wanted to get hold of other people’s property was absolutely false. What the Labor Party had aimed, and would aim to do, was to prevent as far as possible the people’s property, from being unjustly confiscated by those who had been hitherto, and now were, in power. The Labor Party wished to protect the girl behind the counter and in the shop-room from being sweated. They wished to protect the child who was unable to protect itself from being robbed of its education in consequence of the impoverishment of its parents. The Labor Party aimed at elevating and not injuring, and at establishing the right to oppose — as far as in them lay — wrong.

Where the Labor party’s reformism differed from that of the Griffith liberals was in the extent to which it was prepared to use the power of the state on behalf of employees and farmers, and in the absence of any inhibitions about establishing state business enterprises. At the same time it had other characteristics. Most of the leaders of its hard core in Brisbane — Hinchcliffe, Reid, Seymour, and Bowman — were teetotallers, seeing drink as being one of the evils keeping down the working class. Religiously the strongest elements were low-church Anglicans and Methodists, with a smattering of Catholics and agnostics. There was agreement that education should be divorced from church control, though the aims of such education did not extend much beyond the functional goal of learning to read and write in order to be able to find a job. Lilley, though Chief Justice, had supported the unions in the strike. If he had won Brisbane North in 1893, he might well have emerged as the Labor party’s leader and given that party higher goals so far as its education platform was concerned. In
common with liberals, radicals, and representatives of the working class, the Labor party in Queensland maintained a strong attachment to a White Australia. This was not in all cases as radically racist in essence as that of Lane, but most members seemed to place racial reasons at least on an equal plane with economic and social reasons in their desire to exclude non-Europeans. This was undoubtedly strongest in north Queensland, where Labor itself was strongest politically.

The election over, the Labor party found that it had won sixteen of the seventy-two seats, to become the second largest group in the Legislative Assembly. Admitting their lack of parliamentary experience, the new members elected to sit on the cross-benches rather than attempt to assume the formal role of the opposition party. There were good reasons for this. Of the four parliamentarians who had attended the first Labor-in-Politics Convention in August 1892, only Hoolan remained. Glassey had been beaten in Brisbane North and again when he tried to win his old seat of Bundamba; Hall had been defeated in Bundaberg, while Ryan had been refused endorsement in Barcoo by the executive council of the party for his drunkenness and indebtedness about Brisbane. Despite these losses, the sixteen members elected included some very able politicians including Anderson Dawson, Mat Reid, and Andrew Fisher.

In its first election then, the Labor party found itself a distinctly northern mining and western pastoral party, with the obvious necessity of obtaining support in the coastal farming and urban areas if its political programme was to become more than a list of pious resolutions. In the absence of Glassey, Hoolan was elected leader of the PLP and Reid secretary, a position then of executive importance and one which made him, in effect, the deputy leader. Hoolan subsequently resigned his seat of Burke to allow Glassey to re-enter parliament and become leader once more.

Even though it had sixteen members in parliament, the Labor party faced a rather gloomy future. The combination of the big strikes and the depression had almost crippled unionism in north Queensland; in the west, the pastoral unions, which provided the major part of the finance for the Worker and the ALF, did not reregister under the Trade Union Act as they struggled to hold their members. Membership of the Amalgamated Workers’ Union (Amal W U) formed from the Queensland Shearers’ Union and the Queensland Labourers’ Union, had dropped from 10,000 in January 1891 to 3,400 during 1894, while employees in the pastoral industry were forced to accept a general reduction in wages in July 1893 from thirty shillings ($3) a week to twenty-four shillings ($2.40). Other unions, in and out of Brisbane, fared worse and either went out of existence or were so concerned with their own survival that any consideration of political action was dropped. The ALF dreams of unions joining
to form district councils was shattered and the federation struggled on with the three Amal WU branches and Reid’s carpenters. From fifty-four unions with 21,379 members registered under the Trade Union Act in 1890, the official figures of unions had dropped to nine with 780 members in 1894 and seven unions with 240 members by 1895. In 1896, the registrar noted that the registered trades unions in Queensland continued to be few and that they appeared in several cases merely to be kept on the register as a matter of convenience, should any emergency arise which might make it necessary for them to revive into an active state. “The unions appear to be dormant at present”, he concluded. The great flood of optimism which had carried unionism and the Labor party into existence had not only ceased but was turning into a drought while the state slowly recovered from the depression; the building and printing industries, whose unions had been in the vanguard of the Brisbane Labor movement, were the last to recover. It is probably true to say that only the Worker and the PLP kept the Labor party together in Queensland and prevented its disintegrating into a number of localized political units. Hinchcliffe, Seymour, Bowman, Reid, and Fisher stand out in this period as the ones who had faith in the future of the party, and who were prepared to sacrifice a great deal personally to keep it going.

The effects of the strike and the depression on the Labor movement were reflected in the fate of the executive council, which had been elected at the 1892 convention, but which lapsed after not being reconstituted in January 1894. Hinchcliffe clung tenaciously to the organization of the ALF and its newspaper, and, despite the ideals of its founders, began selling advertising space in the Worker from April 1892. As long as the Worker survived, Labor in Queensland had a medium for its slogan “organise, educate, agitate”. In September 1893, William Guy Higgs, secretary of the New South Wales Typographical Association and editor of the Australian Workman in Sydney, was appointed editor of the Worker, thus maintaining the standard of journalism and the optimism for the Labor cause which Lane had established. The indefatigable Reid continued his role as the chief Labor organizer, piloting through the Legislative Assembly the Trades and Labour Hall Bill which enabled the trustees to mortgage their land to raise money to build the first Trades Hall. During the parliamentary recess, he spent his time rebuilding the political and industrial Labor organizations in those areas where the movement had waned and particularly where the principal fear of cheap coloured labour was most manifest. It was to one of these areas, the sugar town of Bundaberg, won by a “black labour” candidate in 1893 that Reid and Hinchcliffe directed a young Liverpool compositor Henry Boote in 1894 to become the editor of a new pro-Labor and pro-white-labour newspaper the Bundaberg Guardian.
In parliament the new Labor members applied themselves assiduously to the task of mastering the procedures of the house and using the library to make up for the deficiencies in their formal education. They all spoke too long and too often, but in the committee stages of bills dealing with mining, railways, land, and working conditions, proved their value to the institution of parliament by providing amendments based on experiences that were beyond the knowledge of liberals and conservatives. They won the respect of their supporters with their opposition to the Peace Preservation Bill (dubbed the “Coercion Bill”) which the government, in panic, introduced during the 1894 strike. Seven were suspended from the house in their attempt to delay the passing of the bill.

Despite these efforts, however, the position of the Labor party outside the parliament remained grim. As the 1896 election approached there had been no attempt to reconsider the platform nor was there any administrative body to organize the overall election campaign. Hinchcliffe therefore called a meeting of the executive of the ALF and the PLP to consider holding a convention, but it was evident that the sheer lack of finance prevented this. Instead a CPE was formed, consisting of the executives of the ALF and PLP together with two representatives of a metropolitan body called the Brisbane district council of the WPO. The two functions of this executive were the endorsing of candidates and the hearing of appeals. As the leader of the PLP, Glassey was elected chairman of the executive, though it was evident that he was no longer accepted as the most competent political leader available. It seems that Reid and Hinchcliffe were angling to have Glassey replaced by a more socialist-oriented leader, less concerned with Liberal-Labor (lib-lab) alliances. Reid himself and Fisher were the likely contenders.

Although fifty Labor candidates nominated in 1896, there was much less organizational and financial support for the party. Only £31 17s.6d. ($63.75) was raised through donations compared with the £206 ($412) in 1893. Each candidate therefore ran almost as an independent in his own area. The lack of campaign finance and strenuous campaigning by the opposition seem to have been the principal factors causing the defeat of the two most able parliamentarians Fisher and Reid. Their absence from the PLP in the following three years and the loose nature of the party organization was to affect the attitude of the Labor party to its own political role for the following ten years. Reid saw the role of the Labor party as being similar to that of the Parnell party in the House of Commons and to that of the New South Wales Labor party in its policy of support for concessions. Unfortunately, since the coalition of Griffith and McIlwraith there no longer existed two equal non-Labor parties, but rather one large coalition — the government, known as the “continuous ministry” — and a group of dissident Liberals who called themselves the...
Independent Opposition, consisting of only seven members in the 1893–96 parliament and five in the 1896–99 house. Despite this, Reid continued to maintain his ideal of an independent cross-bench party even to the extent of advocating the growth of a viable second non-Labor party at the 1896 and 1899 elections, so that his own party would be placed in an advantageous bargaining position. In line with this ideal, he shared with Fisher the belief that the Labor party should avoid any formal links with other political groups and should not be tempted into a lib-lab coalition. When Labor finally came to power, they both believed it would be in its own right. Consequently, an attempt by Charles Powers, a barrister and leader of the Independent Opposition, to form an alliance of Liberals, Democrats, Radicals, and Laborites in 1895 and again in 1896 to oppose the continuous government at the election was rejected by Reid and the ALF.

This view was not shared by those who became the more powerful figures in the PLP after 1896. Glassey, re-elected leader without opposition after the defeat of Reid and Fisher, supported some tacit alliance with the other non-government parties. In this he was supported by Dawson and W. H. Browne, who had been elected secretary of the PLP in place of Fisher, after the elections. Also supporting this ideal was a far more able and influential politician, William Kidston, who had been returned as one of the two members for Rockhampton. After serving an apprenticeship to an iron moulder in Falkirk, Scotland and obtaining a first-class certificate in chemistry through evening study, Kidston had migrated to Australia in 1882 and established a book-selling business in Rockhampton, the principal central Queensland port. As a major port, Rockhampton contained large numbers of waterside workers, seamen, carriers, labourers, and building workers, who formed the basis for the political Labor associations of which Kidston also became a significant member. His name and his political views became widely known during the shearers' strike in 1891 through the publication in the Worker of a poem, "The Ballot is the Thing", the concluding verse of which ran:

Then keep your heads, I say, my boys;  
your comrades in the town  
Will help you yet to win a vote  
and put your tyrants down.  
Throw your old guns aside, my boys;  
the ballot is the thing  
They did not have to reckon with  
When George the Fourth was king.  
The ballot is the thing my boys,  
the ballot is the thing  
Will show these men how long it is  
since George the Fourth was king.
This contrasted with the more romantic notions of revolution that Lane and some of his followers espoused and which Henry Lawson, a month later, in the *Worker*, had glorified in "Freedom on the Wallaby", where he concluded:

But Freedom's on the Wallaby,
She'll knock the tyrants silly.
She's going to light another fire
And boil another billy.
We'll make the tyrants feel the sting
Of those that they would throttle;
They needn't say the fault is ours
If blood should stain the wattle.

It seems to be a truism of internal Labor politics that once he has established himself as a true Labor activist, the non-manual working liberal or radical is soon accepted as a legitimate representative of the Labor movement. So it was with Kidston. In 1892, he represented the Clermont and Mount Morgan WPOs, as well as that of Rockhampton at the Labor-in-Politics Convention in Brisbane. Following his defeat as a Labor candidate for Rockhampton in 1893, he stood as a “Democrat” in 1896, at the same time acknowledging that he had signed the Labor platform but denying any official association with the ALF. Was he shuffling and trimming or merely being discerning? On his election, the caucus accepted him as a Labor member, as did the *Worker*.

After the 1896 election a disagreement over tactics began to emerge between the leaders of the PLP (Dawson, Browne, Kidston, and Glassey) and the leaders of the ALF (Reid, Hinchcliffe, and Seymour). The former group inside parliament saw the opportunity for effecting reforms by a judicious and discerning use of compromise, while the latter had greater faith in the ultimate triumph of Labor and the greater reforms that would come with this triumph. In retrospect, Reid and Hinchcliffe were proved right, but to the Labor movement at the time there seemed to be a great deal of practical, political sense in the attitudes of Kidston and Dawson.

Apart from the significant effect of the loss of Reid and Fisher by the PLP, and the acquisition of Kidston, the Labor party retained many of the same characteristics in 1896 as it had exhibited in 1893. Fifty candidates had been endorsed and twenty seats won. Twelve of these were still west of the range and seven of the twelve were mining and cattle electorates in the northwest. The Labor vote remained high in the provincial cities though no new seats were won there. In the metropolitan area, the loss of Toowong by Reid was offset by the election of T. Dibley, a butcher in the south Brisbane seat of Woolloongabba, and by the election of Frank McDonnell, the leader of the movement for the early closing of shops, for
Fortitude Valley. Obvious alike to Reid, Hinchcliffe, Kidston, and Dawson were the disadvantages Labor suffered through the Electoral Acts of 1885 and 1892 which, while providing in theory for manhood suffrage, excluded a third of the eligible voters and certainly many Labor voters by its six-months' residency clause, and which allowed obvious non-Labor electors to vote in each electorate where they held properties. But though this was of some importance, of greater significance was the looseness of the party itself which remained virtually an association of local organizations whose only links were the PLP, the Worker, and sections of the platform.

The need for a more cohesive party organization was becoming apparent from the actions of some parliamentarians, but it was also apparent from the very nature of the Labor party itself. There was a common acceptance among those who were clearest on Labor ideology that there were now two broad groups in Queensland politics representing moneyed interests and labouring interests. The former controlled the land, the most important political issue in the colony, and had the advantages of social prestige, favourable newspapers, control of the Legislative Assembly and Council, and economic wealth, while the latter had only their ability to organize and educate. Any lack of unity, any woolly respectable liberal concepts about owing allegiance to local electors or local bodies, could only serve to destroy the one power the representatives of Labor held. It was not a formalized Marxist class-struggle, but an obvious socio-economic division which the strikes had served to confirm.

It was the ALF leaders, in and out of parliament, who sought to produce the necessary cohesiveness in the political and industrial movement. Two events inside parliament soon after the 1896 election served to highlight the need for a more formal solidarity. The first of these concerned the crash of the Queensland National Bank in 1896, and the government's intention to provide assistance to that bank. Glassey supported the government, arguing that it was better to keep the bank operating than risk the possibility of a further depression. Against this, the ALF supporters in parliament argued that the bank was a corrupt institution and that no public money should be provided to support it. However while there was no formal or binding policy on the banking question, there was on the construction and ownership of railways, a point on which the Labor party was adamant that this was a matter for the state only, and on which it vigorously opposed the building of private lines. When a bill came before the Assembly for a private railway in the Mareeba-Chillagoe mining area it was opposed by the Labor members, with the exception of Hoolan and George Sim, a financier and member for Carpentaria through whose electorate the line was to run. Sim resigned from the party over the issue. To prevent similar defections, the need for a tighter pledge such as New
South Wales had adopted became more apparent to those inside and outside the PLP.

This was only one aspect of party organization which called for attention. The CPE formed to administer the 1896 election had ceased to operate after the election. However, early in 1898, Hinchcliffe once more took the initiative on behalf of the ALF and called a further meeting to organize a Labor-in-politics convention prior to the 1899 elections. In Labor party records this convention is counted as the first, despite that of 1892, and indeed there is good reason for this. The 1896 election had demonstrated that the Labor party's successes in 1893 had not been accidental and that the party would continue as a force in Queensland politics. The organization and policy laid down in 1898 therefore represent the concept which the Labor party had of itself and of its role in Queensland politics. To ensure that the delegates attending the convention represented genuine functioning Labor organizations, the CPE ruled, prior to the convention, that each delegate would have to be elected by at least twenty financial members of an industrial or political organization which had been registered with the executive for three months prior to the convention. Furthermore the delegates were to represent state electorates, not unions, whose role was still seen as being part of a local PPA or WPO.

When the forty-one delegates assembled in Brisbane on 3 June 1898, the bulk of the representation consisted of state parliamentarians and metropolitan ALF officials representing several of the more distant electorates. Glassey, Kidston, Browne, and McDonald were among the politicians who attended. Fisher, who hoped that the 1899 elections would return him to parliament, was also present. In all, twelve of the forty-one delegates were politicians. The most notable and unexplained absence was that of Reid. In what had become the accepted tradition, Glassey as leader of the PLP was elected chairman of the convention, with Hinchcliffe and Browne the joint secretaries. Glassey's speech at the opening of the conference reflected the awareness of the electoral weakness of the Labor party and also something of its concern for rural questions:

I am pleased to see such a large assemblage of delegates on the present occasion from the country districts, as it augured well for the progress of the Labor Party. It showed that those districts now fully recognise that it was not from those who are now in power that they were likely to gain much advantage to themselves or to the country generally . . . I hope that in framing the platform the Convention will adopt such means as would not only be acceptable to the towns but also to the farming districts.  

The convention had met to thrash out a permanent system of administration and to review the platform for the following elections. If
the ideal of a broadly based party controlled by the rank and file members through their convention delegates was to be maintained, the larger number of Labor politicians in 1898 meant that not all of those could be members of the CPE. Its new composition reflected this desire to have the executive responsible to the convention and dominated neither by the PLP nor by the ALF. However, the right of both of these bodies to be represented directly on the CPE was accepted by making the chairman and secretary of the PLP and the president and secretary of the ALF ex officio CPE members. These four were outnumbered by the eleven members to be elected by and from the convention in the hope of giving a broad representation to all groups and regions. This hope was to be frustrated as meetings of the CPE were held in Brisbane, and with the size of Queensland only those CPE members living close to the capital were able to attend its meetings. Consequently though it was not the intention of the convention, often the majority of those attending the CPE meetings were members of the PLP. There is, however, no evidence that this worked against the best interests of the Labor party. Despite what has been written about divisions in the party, the effect of these can be exaggerated. In 1898 there was no ALF or PLP “ticket” for the election of the eleven delegates to the CPE, only Glassey and Hoolan of the PLP were becoming unpopular with the ALF leaders, while the parliamentarians, the ALF leaders, and the ordinary party members still held an ideal vision of how Labour would govern when it came to power.

The platform that emerged continued to reflect clearly the goals of the Labor party in Queensland. Electoral reform remained the first and most important legislation sought, couched in the slogan “one man, one vote”, with the added provision that the state should assume the responsibility for enrolling voters and that adjustments should be made to the electoral laws to prevent disfranchisement of itinerant workers whose places of residence were constantly changing. With this electoral reform there remained coupled the abolition of the nominated Legislative Council. The first section of the platform dealing with industrial reform clearly was concerned with providing the means of overcoming the central problems of working men — unemployment, industrial strife, long hours, poor accommodation, compensation for injuries, and the guaranteeing of the payment of wages. These represented practical union demands which may have been found in a liberal policy, though there is no evidence that liberals in Queensland in 1898 were anxious to push on with these at a very fast rate. Despite Glassey’s statement regarding the farming districts, neither he nor the delegates present produced any practical policies which would appeal obviously and directly to large numbers of farmers. In the section headed “national work”, the party clearly showed its difference with the liberals in its intention to use the power of the state to compete
in business enterprises with those local or interstate monopolies which increased the cost of production to miners and farmers and reduced the profits made from their labour. This section wrote in demands for national markets and storehouses, a state bank, a state sugar refinery, a quartz crushing mill, flour mills, and chilling works; these and state manufacture of railway rolling stock, together with state ownership and construction of all railways, state fire and life insurance, and a state coastal marine service represented the Labor party's socialism and its departure from the goal of nationalizing the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

The equation of socialism with state enterprises was a natural corollary of the aspirations of unionized working men who were not yet educated for adventures in a more scientific form of socialism and who did not appreciate the potential power which they held industrially and politically. Unions in the colony represented only some, not all employees, and the Labor party in turn included only some, not all unions. It would be only when employees realized their potential power that the heights of socialism, about which a host of writers had preached, could be attained.

Further planks spelled out the continued Australian dreams of land settlement, a system of free education available to all in state schools, and the exclusion of non-white or cheap European labour. In the last third of the twentieth century, the racial basis of White Australia has come under popular fire; but, if the working man of the last third of the nineteenth century was a racist, he was doing no more than reflecting what he thought were his own observations and the attitudes of his educators in accepting, without doubt, the superiority of the white race and especially the superiority of the British section of that race of which he was a significant though distant part. There was no dissension on this point; all sections of the party accepted their White Australia policy without question. The same was not true of the pledge. Whereas in 1893 and 1896 a candidate before receiving Labor endorsement was required to sign a pledge to support any political reforms demanded by the party and to resign if a vote of no confidence was passed by a two-thirds majority of party members in his district, for the 1899 election a candidate for preselection was required to sign a pledge agreeing to advocate and support the principles contained in the platform, and, if he were defeated in the preselection ballot, not to oppose the selected candidate.

Glassey was not enthusiastic about the pledge but signed it. R. M. King, the member for Maranoa since 1893, J. M. Cross, the member for Clermont since 1893, and Hoolan refused to sign and were refused endorsement. There was little chance of defeating King, a popular local figure in Maranoa, but the electorates of Burke and Clermont were in the strong Labor area, and to allow Hoolan and Cross to succeed in their flouting of the convention decision would have been a major setback.
Reid, still the best organizer in the Labor movement, was sent to bring them to heel. Throughout Burke he visited every mining camp, spoke to the men, organized them, and was certain that a “straight Labor” man would be returned at the next election. In an address to the Croydon Miners’ Association and WPO he told his audience: “the Burke electorate is at present organized from one end to the other.” His organization must have been effective since a CPE supporter W. S. Maxwell, a miner, received the Labor nomination and the rebel Hoolan did not bother to contest the election.

Reid’s speech gave a good indication of the character and role of the Labor party as those who controlled the extraparliamentary organization conceived it. The Labor party above all should eschew any change towards moderation and compromise as, Reid said, some of the new “brainy democrats” who had recently come into the party were suggesting. The party was at a stage where it could go forward or backward. To go forward, he said, it must be composed of people of conviction, those prepared to maintain an aggressive attitude on all occasions where the rights of the workers of the colony were at stake. He defended the party against the charge of its being controlled by a “Trades Hall clique”, stating that opponents of the Labor party and those who were not really Labor men were the only ones to complain of a “Trades Hall clique”. Then, having “cut the political throat of John Plumper Hoolan”, Reid proceeded to Clermont “to cut the political throat of John Michael Cross”. Cross in turn was beaten by Reid, and Joe Lesina, also a journalist, became the candidate and subsequently the member for Clermont. Little further evidence was required to demonstrate the power Reid commanded within the party or the fear his presence engendered in Labor parliamentarians. Hoolan had his revenge, however, at the 1899 election and worked against Reid in Toowong, where the latter was defeated by a solicitor and former Ulster man, E. H. Macartney.

At the 1899 election the Labor party increased its number of candidates to fifty-four and though it won more seats it had presented anything but the united front it desired. Glassey more and more was revealing his unsuitability as a leader, though he had accepted the formal post of leader of the opposition in 1898. He lacked the tact of a good parliamentarian; he was less and less able to find common ground with the ALF leaders; and his essential liberalism prevented his recognizing the necessity for the tightness of the Labor organization. He had been the main reason moreover for a breakdown in serious discussions which the PLP had held, with the blessing of the 1898 Labor-in-Politics Convention, with the Independent Opposition. Regarding an electoral alliance, Glassey had insisted that he, not the Independent Opposition leader J. G. Drake, should be the leader of the alliance, but neither Drake nor his followers would accept
this.\textsuperscript{55} With his estrangement from the Labor party, Glassey made no effort to act as the leader at the 1899 election but concentrated on retaining his own seat of Bundaberg. The absence of a leader, the unfavourable reaction to the pledge, and the non-endorsement of Hoolan and Cross reacted against Labor which was fortunate to win twenty-one of the seventy-two seats. It remained a western and north western parliamentary party.

After ten years, the party had become a permanent part of the Queensland political scene but had not widened its basis of support in the metropolitan and southeastern Queensland areas sufficiently to appear likely to win office in the near future. The party’s rise to power was obviously to take longer and to be more difficult than it had seemed in the halcyon days at the close of the 1880s, but there remained unanimity in the belief that the party had to gain power if the reforms needed in Queensland society were to be effected. To Hinchcliffe, the solution lay in improved union organization and in bringing all unions into the Labor party, while to parliamentarians like Kidston and Dawson the answer lay in a prudent alliance with Liberal opposition members. Both in their own way were to be proved correct. Into this debate about the nature of the Labor party’s role intruded the swearing in of the first Labor government in the world and the debate on federation.

At the first caucus meeting after the 1899 election, Glassey announced that he would not stand again for the leadership if there was to be a ballot. The feeling against him in the party was too strong and Dawson was nominated. Glassey immediately left the meeting which elected Dawson leader. Fisher had been re-elected in 1899 but his absence from parliament for the previous three years robbed him of the caucus support to become leader. In any case, Dawson was a man of considerable experience, of high intellectual calibre, and with a capacity to speak well and to establish friendly relations with other politicians. He had become a close friend of the attorney general and premier, T. J. Byrnes, who had suggested that he should read for the Bar, but poor health, which plagued so many former miners, prevented his completing these studies. Nevertheless he was respected by the non-Labor members of the Assembly and was agreeable to a lib-lab alliance if this would help to enact Labor reforms, and more particularly electoral reform.

The opportunity to give effect to this came at the end of November 1899 when the continuous government, then headed by James Dickson who had been elected as an independent in 1896 and only recently joined the ministry on the death of Byrnes in September 1898, was brought down on a railway bill. Griffith, then the lieutenant governor, sent for Dawson as the leader of the opposition and asked him to try to form a government.\textsuperscript{56}
Dawson’s task was not easy. Those on the government side who had brought about Dickson’s downfall wanted him replaced by Robert Philp as premier, not by a Labor leader. Inside the Labor caucus there were objections to any lib-lab government, especially if Labor was to have a minority of seats in the cabinet. Outside, in the ALF, there was opposition to any attempt to assume office. However Dawson convinced the PLP that Labor should not allow the occasion to pass by to show that it was prepared to govern. He consulted with the leaders of the non-Labor factions and sought their support for at least a minority Labor government, especially one that would legislate for electoral reform. But when these indicated that they would not support him, Dawson, urged by Kidston, went ahead and chose a wholly Labor cabinet which was sworn in on 1 December. While the new ministers tried to master as much of their departments as possible, Philp replaced Dickson as leader of the former government party. When Dawson sought a further adjournment of the house on 7 December, this was defeated by thirty-six to twenty-six. The first Labor government in the world had fallen and been replaced by a ministry headed by the former treasurer and Townsville businessman Robert Philp. The Labor party’s only satisfaction was in the acquisition of evidence of corruption and bad administration by the continuous ministry and from Mat Reid’s winning the seat of Enoggera when one of Philp’s new ministers went to the Council. The defeat of the Dawson government confirmed the view of Hinchcliffe and Reid that Labor should not be too hasty in seeking power but, at the same time, confirmed the opinion of Kidston and others that Labor’s future lay in prudent alliances, not in hoping or trying to govern alone.

Owing to his continued bad health, Dawson resigned the leadership of the party in August 1900 and was replaced as leader and as president of the CPE by Browne. This did not affect the party’s internal debate on its role since Browne, like Dawson, was prepared to accept a lib-lab alliance if this would hasten the implementation of Labor’s reform programme. However, the defeat of the Dawson government was soon lost in the debates over federation and the Boer War. As with their attitudes on northern and central separation and the fiscal question, the Labor party in Queensland had no specific policy on federation. Northern mining members like Dawson and Browne along with Fisher, Glassey, and Seymour had been strong supporters of federation in and out of parliament while McDonald vehemently opposed it as a “middle class device for diverting attention from the needs of Labor”. This was a view held by many of the ALF leaders and the leaders of trade unions associated with the Brisbane Trades Hall, while other Labor members, notably Lesina and Reid, opposed federation on the grounds that it would favour the introduction of black labour. However, among the state parliamentarians present at the debate
of the Federation Enabling Bill in May 1899 there were many more in favour of federation than against. Kidston opposed federation on the grounds that it would destroy Queensland's manufacturing and commerce, but like other members of the party was anxious to use the referendum on the federation proposals to introduce full manhood suffrage into Queensland's elections. If "one man, one vote" could be introduced for the federation referendum, he argued, then obviously the same principles could be made to apply to state elections.\(^5^9\) Federation was carried in the referendum in Queensland principally through the heavy "Yes" vote in the north and northwestern areas — the strong Labor voting areas.\(^6^0\) With regard to the Boer War, the Labor party set forward no clear policy, though there was a ready sympathy for the Boers who seemed to be fighting for their independence against an imperial power. Glassey, however, supported the British and following a challenge from the Labor party resigned his seat of Bundaberg and recontested it against Hinchcliffe, whom he defeated easily in a by-election in July 1900. His break with the party was now complete.

In the federal elections that followed federation, Labor polled strongly to win four out of the nine House of Representatives seats plus three of the six Senate seats. In the process it lost some of its best state politicians in Fisher, McDonald, Higgs, and Dawson. With the departure of these and the uneasiness about Reid felt by state parliamentarians, Kidston though nominally Browne's deputy emerged as the real leader of the PLP and as one who would not be dictated to by those outside parliament.

The reported dominance of state Labor politicians by Trades Hall officials or by the ALF was more apparent than real and, despite the establishment of the CPE in 1898, the Labor party remained a collection of local Labor associations adhering to the same platform, but wholly responsible for their own organization and selection of candidates. The CPE met only at irregular intervals whenever the president or the secretary thought that there was sufficient business meriting discussion. It did not meet at all, for example, when the question of the Dawson government was raised. Moreover the *Worker* no longer enjoyed its dominance among Labor readers, as local Labor or "democrat" papers began to emerge in the provincial centres giving prominence to local political Labor figures and often defending these when they seemed to be coming under attack from Brisbane.

Finance was the major problem facing the party. The 1898 convention had not laid down any system of financing the party administration, and, as the principal contributing union to the ALF, the Amal W U, was affected by the drought in the pastoral areas, the CPE, which still depended largely on the resources of the ALF, was further restricted in the organizing of the party. Funds were so short that the Queensland delegates
to the January 1900 conference to establish a federal Labor party were forced to pay their own fares and expenses. If the Labor party was to increase its power, it needed organized finance. Hinchcliffe with three years’ experience as CPE secretary and ten as secretary of the ALF recognized that a regular income of sufficient size to provide for administration and for the conduct of federal and state elections was as essential as an efficient and well-organized industrial base. This income could be derived only from affiliated unions and from WPOs. As a tangible return for money contributed, the 1901 convention decided that the payment to the CPE of the minimum £1 ($2) registration fee per year would entitle members of WPOs and industrial unions to vote in the selection of local Labor candidates. It was hoped that this enticement would lead other unions to sign the party platform, pay the registration fee, and so become affiliates of the Labor party, as it was maintained that a candidate selected by local affiliated members would be responsible to them, and they would have some say in the calibre of their Labor politicians. Another ruling of the 1901 convention was that, in addition to the requirement of holding a convention each three years or whenever the CPE thought it was necessary, a new convention could be called at any time on a two-thirds vote of affiliated unions and organizations.

The party maintained its slow increase in electoral support at the 1902 election, nominating fifty-eight candidates of whom twenty-five were elected and obtaining over 40 per cent of the valid vote in the two-member constituencies and almost 40 per cent in the single-member electorates. More importantly, for the first time, more than half the seats were won on the eastern side of the range, although Brisbane continued to be the weakest Labor area. With Reid’s unexpected defeat in Enoggera, there remained only two Labor members in the thirteen metropolitan seats. Among the new members was Francis Kenna, from Bowen, who had edited the Worker after Higgs’s election to the state parliament in 1899. As Kenna’s election to parliament in turn rendered the editorship of the Worker vacant, the ALF executive appointed Henry Boote as editor. He turned out to be the finest editor the paper was to have and not only returned the Worker to the political significance it had enjoyed under Lane, but joined with Reid, who had established himself in a tailoring business in Brisbane, and Hinchcliffe in forming a powerful political triumvirate abetted by the faithful if prosaic Seymour and by Bowman, who having been defeated for Warrego in 1902 was now living in the strong Labor electorate of Fortitude Valley.
Despite its impressive performance at the 1902 election, where it had won forty of the seventy-two seats, the continuous government under the conservative Robert Philp was far from impressive in office and came under increasing criticism not only from dissidents in its own ranks but also from the state’s financial interests and their principal organ, the Brisbane Courier. Among the dissidents was a group known as “the Darling Downs bunch”, representing the wheat-growing seats, and having two members in the independent opposition in addition to its six government members. These were the political descendants of the Griffith liberals of the 1880s, and their unofficial leader was Arthur Morgan, whose family had been and were still prominent political figures in the southern Downs. Morgan had represented Warwick in the Legislative Assembly since 1883; he was now Speaker of the House, a personal friend of Kidston, and on several occasions he had expressed approval of the latter’s moderation. Aware of the internal dispute tearing the Philp government apart, Kidston announced his desire, in January 1903, for an alliance with other progressives to defeat the continuous ministry. The invitation was quickly taken up and in September, when Philp introduced the bill to extend stamp duties to cover a £500,000 ($1,000,000) deficit, he was left with a majority of only two and resigned. Browne, the leader of the opposition, was sent for but reported that he was unable to form a ministry, though with the example of the federal Labor party there was every indication that the PLP would provide some support for a new Liberal government.

Among the party leaders outside there was a suspicion of Labor’s being entangled in a lib-lab alliance, but there was little that these could do except warn. The politicians were virtually masters of their own destinies provided they kept to the party platform. Moreover it appeared that Labor could exact from the new government, in return for support, their most earnestly desired reform — one adult, one vote — with a special provision for itinerant workers to remain on the electoral roll. Morgan in turn was sent for and immediately entered into negotiations with Browne and Kidston. However he insisted that Labor must be part of the government, not merely a supporter, and must have two members in the cabinet. After a week’s debate, the caucus agreed to this, though Browne insisted that the party maintain its autonomy and have the right to break away from the coalition once the reforms sought had been achieved. The separate views of Kidston and the Hinchcliffe-Reid-Boote triumvirate having been at least partly satisfied, Labor entered into a formal coalition with the Liberals. Browne became minister for mines and public works, each well suited to his interests and experience, while Kidston, the most able man on finance in the parliament, became treasurer. Both resigned from the caucus which
elected as its new leader, Peter Airey, a teacher who had succeeded McDonald in Flinders in 1901 when the latter entered federal parliament. Airey therefore became one of the two PLP members on the CPE and was elected president in place of Browne. However, when Browne died in April 1904, Airey took his place in the cabinet and George Kerr, a former miner and blacksmith, who had been endorsed for Barcoo in 1893 in place of Ryan, was elected leader of the PLP with the consequent election also to the presidency of the CPE.

As 1903 closed, fortune seemed to be smiling on political Labor in Queensland. Apart from being in office, in a coalition that promised to bring some long-sought reforms into effect, the federal election on 16 December produced a stunning 56.7 per cent Labor vote in the House of Representatives, returning seven Labor members in the nine Queensland seats, and a 53.5 per cent Senate vote to elect all three Labor nominees. When a state election was forced in August 1904, Labor won thirty-four of the seventy-two seats, thanks largely to the prestige of Kidston and Morgan, the general popularity of the coalition, and the relief at the end of the continuous ministry. Kidston in Queensland and Watson in federal parliament had revealed that Labor was not composed of a bunch of wild-eyed revolutionaries, but of responsible politicians quite capable of administering the state. It was somewhat anomalous that, though Labor held thirty-four of the coalition's fifty-five seats, it filled only two of the eight cabinet positions. The truth was that while Labor had won additional seats in Brisbane and in the northern coastal areas, the political calibre of most of its members was not high.

Reid had lost Toowong once more and following that loss seems to have soured somewhat of politics and to have determined to play the role more completely of the guardian of the socialist goals of the party. Bowman however won Fortitude Valley, giving the "straight Labor" officials outside the parliament their representative inside the caucus to act as a watch-dog on any deviation from "fundamental Labor principles". Bowman had little of Reid's intellectual or organizing ability, but unlike Reid had a genial, friendly disposition and came to be respected and liked by the Labor parliamentarians, where Reid had been feared and held in some awe. Of greater long-term significance for Labor were the signs of the revival of unionism in the state. On the other hand the increasing importance of the Labor party had made more obvious the cracks in its administrative and organizational structure. Hinchcliffe, occupying the three key positions of secretary of the ALF, manager of the Worker, and secretary of the CPE, found that organizing the federal election campaign of 1903 was, even with the assistance of the secretary of the PLP, beyond his physical resources. His attempt to resign as CPE secretary served only to demonstrate more clearly that some of the fundamental questions of administra-
tion and finance had yet to be answered. It was evident that no union leader had either his knowledge and experience of both the political and industrial section of the Labor movement or such freedom of movement as his occupation allowed. Furthermore, though the £1 ($2) registration fee had provided some of the finance for administration, it had not proved sufficient to pay the wages or expenses of a full-time secretary. Consequently the problem of increased finance still needed to be solved before the party administration could be placed on a sound footing by the appointment of a full-time secretary. For the time being, Hinchcliffe at the request of the CPE withdrew his resignation.

According to the party’s rules, a convention was due to be held no later than July 1904. However, because of the shakiness of the coalition, both the CPE and PLP wished to avoid actions which might precipitate any ill-feeling between the two parties. Consequently the CPE decided that the convention should be deferred until later in 1904 when the fate of the Adult Suffrage Bill would be known. However the August 1904 election further delayed the convention, which was eventually held in Brisbane in May 1905. The 1905 convention was significant both in the history of party administration and in the relationship of the party to its politicians. For the first time a comprehensive set of rules was published and a stated political objective was written into the platform. Prior to the convention, Hinchcliffe had assembled all resolutions passed at previous conventions as well as the working rules under which the CPE operated. These were incorporated into a draft constitution which the convention ratified and ordered to be printed. The official title, “Queensland Labor Party”, was adopted; conventions were to be held in turn in the south, centre, and north of the state; and rules relating to the £1 ($2) branch registration fee and the requirement that convention delegates be elected by at least twenty financial members became part of the constitution. Candidates for state and federal elections were henceforth required to show that they had been members of an affiliated Labor organization for at least twelve months and to sign a new pledge binding them not only to advocate and support the principle of the Labor platform, to refrain from opposing endorsed Labor candidates, and go through the electoral contest if selected but also, and most important of all, to vote in parliament as the majority of the caucus decided.62

In all states the party was becoming more conscious of defining clearly the role of the Labor politician. Was he to be the political representative of the Labor movement or was it his role to lead the Labor movement in and out of coalitions and alliances, much as the political leaders of the nineteenth century had done? There was clearly a determination that the long-term goals of Labor in politics were not to be set aside to please the whims of even acknowledged competent leaders such as Watson or
Kidston. Consequently, when the Labor-in-Politics Convention met, the role of the politician in the administration of the party and his role on the CPE was discussed at length and after a long debate a motion to debar any politician from being elected to the CPE from among the convention delegates was defeated and a compromise resolution accepted prohibiting more than half the executive from being members of the PLP. One of the outcomes of the debates over the role of Labor in politics was the demand by the more radical section of the party to set down an objective towards which the party would aim while continuing to seek immediate reforms. It was partly a reminder to the political representatives that Labor in entering politics sought large changes in the economic organization of the society, not merely piecemeal reforms, and partly a reaction by the socialist element to what seemed the inherent slowness of constitutional methods. Prior to the convention, Boote in the Worker had been urging the necessity of returning to the fundamental principles of the movement now that the Adult Suffrage Act had been passed. In March he had written: "The movement must become consciously socialist... It must drop all pretensions to be statesmanlike and continue to be agitative. Discontent is still the divine gospel; we are all damned as soon as we congratulate ourselves." After twelve hours spent in debating a proposed objective to bring about the collective ownership of monopolies, Reid moved an amendment to replace "monopolies" by the phrase, "the means of production, distribution and exchange". This was carried by twenty-eight to ten and Queensland Labor was given a socialist objective. However, despite the arguments of Reid and Fisher, now deputy leader of the federal party, at the Inter-State Labor Conference in Brisbane two months later, the Queensland objective was rejected in favour of that of New South Wales which called simply for the collective ownership of monopolies.

To Kidston, present at the convention as an observer, the passing of such an objective revealed the unreality of those who were in control of the extraparliamentary party. To him politics was the art of the possible and he suspected those who continually spiced their political speeches with reference to sacred, though ill-defined, principles. When to the socialist objective was added an insistence on the stoppage of all sales of Crown land, through which he had been rectifying the accumulated deficit, the breach between him and the party administrators widened dangerously. Kidston had the support of a majority of members of the PLP, who authorized Kerr to issue a statement to all newspapers seeking the repeal of the socialist objective, describing the plank relating to the sale of Crown land as impracticable and calling on Labor supporters to seek a new convention. Its most significant paragraph read:
It must be evident to anyone who has studied Australian politics for the
last ten years that many gains of Labor in the Legislative Arena have
been won largely by a system of prudent alliances. These alliances
are only possible so long as the councils of the Parliamentary Labor
party are guided by moderation and sound sense. Not only is this the
case, but the existence of a purely Labor Government would depend
entirely on the practicability of its programmes. Hence any extreme
proposals that alienate from Labor the sympathy and support of
every other political party in Parliament and outside Parliament can
only have one result viz.; the bringing back to office of powerful
reactionary conservative government.64

In response to the request from the PLP to the CPE to call a new
convention, Hinchcliffe, though personally opposed to such a convention,
circularized affiliated Labor organizations. Of the replies received, in the
three weeks provided, only three were in the affirmative, while over
twenty were in the negative. The result further widened the breach
between the Kidstonite section of the PLP and the CPE, already danger­
ously opened by the refusal of Kerr as parliamentary leader to accept the
traditional position of president of the CPE. Reid became president of the
new CPE, being the only non-politician to be the president of that body
between 1892 and 1916.

If some of the blame for the split in the Labor party lies with the
intransigence of the four "straight Labor men", Reid, Hinchcliffe, Boote,
and Bowman, the remainder must lie squarely on the shoulders of Kidston,
who had become premier in January 1906 when Morgan retired to the
presidency of the Legislative Council. Always a man of independence,
Kidston was determined from the start of the coalition that having gained
power he would not let go easily, nor did he consider that he as political
leader should consult with the extraparliamentary leaders. More than this,
he seemed to be publicly insensitive to Labor ideals. In appointing five
new legislative councillors, he included only one Labor supporter, at the
same time appointing the leader of the Anti-Socialist League. It appeared
that he was assuring himself of a separate following in the event of a split
in the Labor ranks.

The disastrous drop in the Labor vote in Queensland at the 1906
federal election and the heavy anti-Socialist party vote, seemed to confirm
Kidston's opinion of the public response to the 1905 convention. Labor
won only four of the nine House of Representatives seats and none of the
Senate seats. In February 1907, Kidston, emboldened by his public
popularity, threw down his challenge to the Labor party in a speech at
Rockhampton, offering the social reforms that Labor had long sought, but
demanding personal allegiance of the parliamentarians to himself and not
to the party.65 He was demanding the impossible.
The Labor-in-Politics Convention in Rockhampton in March that year accepted the challenge. Reid, Hinchcliffe, and Bowman had organized well before the convention and had the additional support of Fisher, soon to be the federal Labor leader. Kidston's faithful lieutenant Kerr, still leader of the PLP, found himself solidly defeated on each proposal he made, but as a final gesture, on the last day of the convention, he moved that the Labor party should support the government's, i.e. Kidston's policy, at the coming election. Bowman, supported on the floor of the convention by Reid and Fisher, moved an amendment to have all Labor candidates pledged to the convention platform and unhampered by any compact with another party. The amendment was carried by thirty-six to six. Following Kerr's non-committal answer, a month later Bowman was elected the new leader at a special meeting of the PLP. However the convention had not been concerned only with the problems of Kidston and the coalition. The administration of the party still demanded attention, and with the resurgence of unionism in Queensland came a demand for direct representation of unions on the CPE, as the only union delegates were still the president and secretary of the ALF. After some debate, the CPE membership was expanded to include the secretaries of the three Queensland Australian Workers' Union (AWU) branches at Hughenden, Longreach, and Charleville. To overcome the multiplicity of local rules for selecting political candidates, Reid had drawn up a uniform set of plebiscite rules which the convention adopted and which have not been basically altered since.

The convention resulted in the first great split of the Labor party in Queensland. All but fourteen of the Labor politicians and an unknown number of supporters decided to follow Kidston. At the elections in May 1907, Labor was routed, receiving only 25 per cent of the vote and winning only eighteen seats. After fourteen years, it seemed that it had advanced half on its 1893 result; nine of the seats won were still in the west, six were from coastal cities, with only one, Fortitude Valley, in the metropolitan area. The split was to have a sobering influence on the party, while Reid became more disliked as the ogre responsible for the split and the one who stood between Labor and success. However, in addition to the advantages gained from the regrowth of unionism, the party was now attracting several competent liberals to its parliamentary ranks who would compensate for the loss of Kidston. Among the new members elected in 1907 were William Lennon, a banker and former manager for Burns Philp, who won the northern coastal sugar seat of Herbert, and John Hunter, a successful Roma merchant, who won the central western seat of Maranoa.

For the following two years, Queensland politics were to suffer the traumas of three parties in the field, as the Labor party, the Kidstonites,
and the remaining conservatives under Philp each held about a third of the seats. No one party could govern alone, though Labor continued to give Kidston support but refused any alliance or coalition. However, as Kidston pushed on with his reform programme, he necessarily came into conflict with the nominee Legislative Council, and, when the governor would not make the additional appointments he sought, he was forced to fight a further election in February 1908 on the basis of Kidston and Labor against Philp, the governor, and the Council. Only Labor made any gains in seats but, since it still refused any alliance, Kidston was forced to fuse with his old political enemy Philip in October 1908. This was too much for former Labor members such as Kerr and Airey, who left his party to form part of a new independent opposition, reducing Kidston’s majority on the floor of the Assembly to only one. A new election was called in October 1909 and Queensland politics, for the first time, became clearly Labor versus anti-Labor.

Yet the coalition had been fruitful for the Labor movement. In addition to the Adult Suffrage Act, Kidston’s attorney general, James Blair, drew up two bills to remove the permanent veto of the Council. The first of these to be passed, the Constitution Act Amendment Act of 1908, provided that amendments to the constitution needed only a simple majority, not the two-thirds majority laid down in 1867. This paved the way for the passing of the Parliamentary Bills Referendum Act which provided that a bill, rejected twice by the Council, could be submitted to a referendum of the people. If the referendum was successful, the bill required only the governor’s signature to become law. Kidston had also passed a Workers’ Compensation Act, a Shearers and Sugar Workers’ Accommodation Act, an Old Age Pension Act, and a Wages Board Act which recognized the right of a union to act for an employee.

It was not only Queensland politics that had taken on a new character by the end of 1909. A whole new Labor movement was re-emerging, not with the same rapidity as that of twenty years before but based on sounder experience. The re-establishment of a TLC in Brisbane in 1904 and the appointment of a roving organizer, J. A. Moir, in 1909 assisted with the building of new, and the rebuilding of several old, unions many of which were affiliating with the Labor party. However it was in the north that the exciting revival of unionism was occurring. When he had visited the mining areas of Gympie, Mount Morgan, and Charters Towers in 1905, the English socialist, Tom Mann, recalled that he could nowhere find a unionist. Had he returned three years later, he would have been amazed at the change. With the fall in the price of copper, and with other minerals no longer bringing the same prices, the consequent wage cuts and unemployment on the mining fields provided the environment for the building of a new union.
It was into this fruitful area that a young miner, Edward Granville Theodore, stepped, having spent the previous four and a half years at Broken Hill. Theodore was physically large, with a capacity for organizing and a zeal for reading socialist and economic tracts. Among the miners at Irvingbank, Herberton, and Stannary Hills on the Atherton Tableland, he formed a new union at the end of 1907 called the Amalgamated Workers’ Association (AWA), designed as a mass union in the north Queensland tradition, and concerned with fighting workers’ battles, not with being a friendly society like some of the Brisbane craft unions. With another big-boned miner, William McCormack, Theodore built the AWA into the most powerful union in the state, eventually covering all workers not in craft unions and, most importantly for the Labor party, he conditioned it to accept that Labor in politics was a necessary arm of unionism.

At the 1909 election, the twenty-four-year-old Theodore regained the seat of Woothakata for the Labor party from the Kidstonite, Mick Woods. At the same election, but in the western pastoral area, a second Labor seat regained was that of Barcoo, where Kerr was defeated by a thirty-three-year-old Rockhampton barrister, Thomas Joseph Ryan, who thus provided the State house with a second T. J. Ryan, in the same seat. Ryan had been born in Victoria of Irish immigrant farmers and had gained his degrees in Arts and Law from Melbourne University while teaching at Melbourne, Launceston, and Maryborough. From here he had gone to Rockhampton as a teacher at the Grammar School in 1901 and established a law practice there in mid-1903. At the federal election in that year, he stood unsuccessfully as a Deakinite and joined the Rockhampton WPO soon after in 1904. Though a friend and admirer of Kidston, he stood as a Labor candidate against the Kidstonite member for Rockhampton north in 1907 but was again defeated. However his many successful cases for unionists, involving workers’ compensation and the recovery of wages, brought him to the notice of the powerful Longreach branch of the AWU, which supported him in the Barcoo plebiscite. Having won this, he had little trouble defeating Kerr in a two-way contest.

It was a party of new members who met to elect Bowman leader after the 1909 election. Only Herbert Hardacre of the western seat of Leichhardt remained of the original sixteen members elected in 1893, though George Ryland, a Gympie miner and close friend of Fisher, William Hamilton, a shearer imprisoned in the 1891 strike, and William Ryott Maughan, a journalist from Ipswich, had been elected in 1899. Only a handful of the twenty-seven members of the new caucus could recall the strikes or depression of the nineties. To them the Labor party represented the future, not the past. Putting the platform into action was more important than being dogmatically concerned with guarding old and ill-defined principles. As if to confirm the change that was coming over the
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party, Mat Reid dramatically resigned his offices in the party when the CPE overruled his objection to the re-endorsement of Lesina in Clermont. For him, twenty years of service to the Labor movement and to the Labor party had produced little. He had been the hardest working and most effective organizer, bringing shufflers and trimmers to heel, codifying the rules and constitution, and maintaining the pristine purity of Labor principles, all at the expense of his own business; yet he remained one of the least popular men in the party. His resignation was accepted with barely a ripple of comment.

IV

The 1909 election confirmed the Labor party as a regionally based party, whose strength still lay in the mining and pastoral areas and whose weakest area of support was the more heavily populated southeastern farming and metropolitan districts. Of the thirty seats within a hundred miles of the centre of Brisbane, only five were won by Labor — two in the mining town of Gympie, one in the mining town of Ipswich, and two in the dual member electorate of Fortitude Valley — still the only solidly Labor electorate in Brisbane. Four of the pastoral seats and two mining seats won by Labor had contained fewer than 2,000 electors, while there were six Liberal seats in Brisbane averaging over 4,500 electors. Consequently when it was learnt that Kidston proposed to redistribute state electoral boundaries to provide seventy-two single-member electorates of equal voting size, the necessity for Labor to win support in the metropolitan and southeastern area was made more obvious. When the bill came before parliament in 1910, the Labor members argued strongly for lower electoral quotas in the distant and sparsely populated areas. Kidston’s insistence on equal electorates threw back on the Labor party the onus of widening its electoral support if it were to win government and thus to implement its reforms.

Yet, despite the prospect of losing seats through the electoral redistribution, the omens for Labor in Queensland in 1910 were unproving. From the elections of 1907, 1908, and 1909 had come competent new members, who were to raise the debating capabilities of the PLP. Of these, Ryan and Theodore were the outstanding examples. At the federal election of April 1910 it was further demonstrated that where the party was not divided, as it had been over Kidston, and where it presented a challenging programme, it could gain a high proportion of the vote. In contrast to the 39 per cent Labor vote in the 1909 state election, Fisher was able to achieve a 47 per cent House of Representatives and 50 per cent Senate vote to win all three Senate seats and six of the nine Queensland seats in the House of Repre-
sentatives. It was still worth noting however that the three Liberal seats were in the southeastern area.

In party administration, advances were also being made early in 1910. The three state elections and the federal election held between the 1907 and 1910 conventions had re-emphasized the financial and administrative problems of the party. Hinchcliffe continued to hold his three positions, though in August 1909 the CPE agreed to appoint Lewis McDonald, a compositor from Fortitude Valley, as assistant honorary secretary. When the Labor-in-Politics Convention met in Townsville in May, a ways and means committee was appointed to report on how finance could be provided for the appointment of a permanent secretary. The committee, chaired by Bowman, brought back a recommendation to provide that WPOs and industrial unions registered with the CPE should pay in addition to the registration fee a capitation fee of threepence (two cents) per member per year and that Labor members of parliament should pay threepence in the pound (1.25 per cent) of their salary each year. In addition industrial unions not registered with the CPE, but which had passed a specific resolution approving of the principles and platform of the party, could, on the payment of threepence (two cents) per member each year, take part in the selection of convention delegates and Labor candidates. These recommendations, if accepted, were expected to bring in an additional £320 ($640) per year.69 Federal and state parliamentarians agreed, a majority of unions and WPOs agreed, and the basis of a new party administration was laid. McDonald became the first full-time secretary, holding that position until 1936.

The 1910 convention (at which, by the way, red was officially adopted as the Labor party’s colour in Queensland) saw Labor party policies moving more definitely and more confidently towards the use of government power to intervene in the economic, industrial, and social life of the state, particularly through the establishment of state enterprises. The official policy since 1901 had been divided into a fighting platform of reforms to be implemented immediately Labor attained office, and a general platform setting out long-term goals. Of the twelve planks in the fighting platform in 1910, five were concerned with state enterprises, while the abolition of the Legislative Council and the institution of the initiative and referendum still retained priority over all else. This growing desire for direct government intervention in the economic life of the state reflected the movement towards socialist policies as they had been interpreted in the Australian context. It also provided the dividing line with the change of Australian politics to Labor and anti-Labor, between those liberals who would opt for the Conservative party and those who would support the Labor party. Above all, the increasing importance of state enterprises in the platform reflected the optimism that the Queensland
Labor party felt about what Labor in office would achieve. Just as it had been the optimism and improving economic conditions of the 1880s that had produced the first spectacular growth in unionism and the movement of Labor into politics, so it was a second flush of optimism and an upward surge in economic prosperity that produced the second spectacular growth of unionism after 1909, which was also directed towards politics. By 1911 the Queensland economy was recapturing some of its early vigour. It was still primarily a rural economy, with the larger population growth also in the rural areas, though manufacturing, retarded by federation, had also begun to expand by 1911. In the north, miners finding this field no longer profitable were able to move into the sugar industry, some as farmers, others as employees, or on to the Atherton Tableland, where dairying promised to be a fruitful enterprise. The continued heavy government investment in railways to serve these areas together with the necessity of expanding the timber, transport, and service industries associated with them provided additional areas of employment for ex-miners. It was among these men that Theodore and McCormack were able to expand the AWA and increase its political influence. In August 1910 the first Queensland Trade and Labour Union Congress had been held with representatives from the ALF, the Brisbane TLC, and thirty-seven unions. While agreeing on the need for a closer federation of unions, the delegates also agreed that all unions should belong to the Labor party where they had been offered the power to nominate and select candidates in return for the payment of capitation fees. In February 1911 Kidston, exhausted after fifteen years of intense political activity, retired to the Land Court and was succeeded as premier by Digby Denham, a produce merchant, who had followed Morgan out of the continuous government in 1903. At the same time, Kidston's treasurer, A. G. C. Hawthorn, who had defeated Mat Reid for Enoggera in 1902, retired to the Legislative Council. In the by-elections that followed, John Adamson, a Protestant clergyman who had held the seat of Maryborough in 1907 and 1908 and then retired disgusted with the intrigues of politics, won Kidston’s old seat of Rockhampton for the Labor party, while the Liberal majority in Enoggera was reduced from 988 to 139. The omens were still favourable, though the federal Labor party’s referenda in 1911 on legislative powers and monopolies were rejected in Queensland by 18,000 votes. This could not deter the growth of political unionism, which continued though not as rapidly as had been hoped in 1910. By the second Trade and Labour Union Congress in August 1911, there had been some moves towards greater unity among unions but little real progress. The Brisbane TLC had been replaced by the metropolitan district council of the ALF, of which the AWA, now spread to Brisbane, was a principal force. Theodore was becoming convinced that amalgamation of unions on
the AWA model was preferable to the loose ALF type of federation in making the Labor movement a strong industrial and political force. A dramatic example of this was provided while the congress met, when the AWA, having absorbed the Amalgamated Sugar Workers' Union in December 1910, tested the new union against the powerful monopoly, the CSR, and achieved a forty-eight-hour week and wages increases for sugar workers after a long and bitter strike. It was a convincing display of what good union organization could achieve and was not lost on the new Liberal premier Denham and his minister, who had shipped police and strike breakers from Sydney into the sugar areas. Nor were they slow to grasp the possibilities for the Labor party in having such a union as the spearhead of its organization.

The party now had a full-time administrator, it had a powerful weekly journal, the *Worker*, supplemented by an increasing number of provincial Labor weeklies, and it had a union basis growing stronger and more united. A socialist organization, called the Social Democratic Vanguard, existed but it was in no sense a significant body nor did it compete with the existing political Labor organization. Any increase in political activity of unions or other radical groups consequently assisted the Labor party. The party's principal weakness lay in its political leadership and its lack of support in the metropolitan and farming areas. Bowman was a stolid leader, not brilliant, but honest in his opinions and trusted throughout the party and the Labor movement. But now, as the party moved towards achieving its goal of parliamentary power, Bowman, racked with sickness which kept him away from parliament for much of the time, was not able to provide the leadership needed. Lennon, elected deputy leader in 1909, found himself the acting leader, after having only two years in parliament, and without a deputy to lean on. Though a competent member, he had no close links with the union movement and lacked the skill and intelligence needed by a Labor leader. Consequently there was considerable jockeying for the right of succession to Bowman among the front bench members, but when Ryan, with strong support outside parliament from the AWU and the AWA, topped the ballot for the PLP executive for the 1911 session, it was clear that he had become the outstanding figure in the caucus. As the 1912 election approached, Theodore sought unsuccessfully to overcome the leadership weakness by having both Ryan and Lennon appointed as deputy leaders.

Advances made by the Labor party after 1909 had clearly been through the efforts of its politicians. Those with strong union backgrounds had not dropped their union contacts or offices when elected to parliament but rather used their parliamentary passes to travel through the state assisting in union organization. That union membership in Queensland doubled between 1910 and 1912 was the result of the work of unionist-politicians.
It was not a matter of politician versus unionist, but of both working for common goals. A loss at this time was sustained when Boote, for personal and family reasons, left for Sydney and the Australian Worker in April 1911. Seymour became editor and, though not at home in the new AWA-dominated ALF, pushed on with championing state enterprises and reflected the mood of the parliamentary party.

As the parliamentary session drew to a close at the end of 1911, the Labor party was keen to face the Liberals in a general election. Denham had decided to hold the election in October 1912 though the government backbenchers sought an earlier date, closer to the beginning of 1912. They had good reasons for this. The Labor party had been far more penetrating during the recent session; in Ryan and Theodore it obviously had two of the most competent and incisive members of the Legislative Assembly, while the Labor organization outside parliament was not only better than that of the Liberals but was continually being improved. Furthermore the recent electoral victory of the Western Australian Labor party meant that now a Labor government was in power in three states as well as in the federal parliament. It was not an atmosphere or time in which it would have been expected that a government, anxious about its own political survival, would bring in a controversial liquor bill. Yet this is what Denham did in September, producing a confrontation with the Legislative Council and the threat by the premier to use the Parliamentary Bills Referendum Act to force the Council to accept the bill. The Labor party was delighted, and electoral victory seemed within its grasp. But the breaking of a storm which had been brewing in the English-owned Brisbane Tramway Company was to defer Labor's coming to power for a further three years.

The manager of the tramway company was an arrogant, union-hating American, J. S. ("Boss") Badger, who refused to allow any union to be formed among his employees. He was confident of the open support given to him in this regard by the state government. However, under the federal Arbitration Act, registration of a federal union could be achieved if fifty workmen signed a request for this. In November 1910 an organizer of the Australian Tramway Employees' Association had come to Brisbane and secretly obtained the fifty signatures. When this became known, the lines of battle between Badger and the union were drawn, with Badger threatening to dismiss any man who wore his union badge, which contained the Australian coat of arms, on his uniform. Not only was this an insult to the men's right to form a union, but there was strong nationalist opposition to such a decree coming from a foreigner. On Friday, 19 January 1912, at midday, a crowd gathered at the General Post Office to watch the union men pin on their badges. They were immediately dismissed and a strike was called.

Believing that a general attack on unionism was imminent, other unions
came to the support of the tramwaymen. The waterside workers were willing to come out on the understanding that a general strike would be called. Other unions expressed similar support. In the plumbers' union, for example, it was decided by thirty-five votes to fifteen that the union would join the strike, "if a general strike is declared". The Brisbane district council of the ALF called a special meeting where it was agreed that a general strike would be called unless a satisfactory settlement was arranged between Badger and the union. Though there was some consensus among unionists regarding a general strike, the decision to hold one was completely ad hoc. There had been no planning and there was no clear idea of just what was to be achieved by such a strike. It erupted from the fear that unionism was about to be attacked by employers and the government and from the enthusiasm for industrial action born out of the success of the sugar strike and the growing strength of Labor organizations throughout the state.

Though it had some of the ingredients of the spontaneous rise of the workers that leftist Ernie Lane had dreamed about, the general strike in reality was not to prove an effective weapon. As Labor propaganda at the 1911 federal referenda had pointed out, no one state government could effectively control monopolies in Australia; similarly no general strike in any one state could hope to bring about the social revolution. The people convinced by headlines in the Strike Bulletin of "Brisbane Toilers Class Conscious at Last" were those who desperately wanted to believe this. As often happens, conservatives and government supporters overreacted and chose to accept literally the strike leaders' propaganda that "today the toilers refuse to toil and all commerce, all industry is paralysed. Tomorrow, when the workers of the world unite, no Government can exist except by their mandate." They forgot the pragmatic nature of the Australian political and industrial Labor movement and the strong conservative element within the working class.

The strike revived Denham's political fortunes as he emerged and was praised as the custodian of law and order. A procession of strikers on Friday, 2 February, was brutally broken up by mounted and foot police, eagerly supported by special constables sworn in for the strike. "Black Friday" or "Baton Friday" as it was sometimes called, became an infamous day long remembered in union history. However, to those residing outside the metropolitan area who had not witnessed the procession and who could rely only on inflammatory newspaper reports, it was seen as an attempt at revolution condoned by the Labor party and prevented from producing complete anarchy only by the government's firmness.

All was not lost to the Labor movement through the strike. For years there had been the dream of a Labor daily newspaper. An attempt had
been made in 1907 to launch a Brisbane Labor daily but only one issue had appeared. However, during the strike the daily *Strike Bulletin*, issued each evening, had once more raised the hope and possibility of a daily Labor paper. A Labour Daily Newspaper Company was formed with a capital of £15,000 ($30,000) in £1 ($2) shares which were held substantially by Brisbane unions. The first issue of the newspaper, the *Daily Standard*, was to appear in December 1912. J. V. MacDonald was appointed editor. Of more immediate consequence was the election itself, which the Liberals fought on a slogan of “constitutional government versus mob rule”. To make clear Labor’s constitutional position, Boote, in Sydney, was asked to draft the Labor manifesto. He used a mixture of attack and conciliation, but in his concluding paragraphs revealed clearly the non-doctrinaire basis of the party’s ideology: “The Labour Party aims at no sudden revolution; no dramatic breaking down of existing institutions, but at such a gradual transformation of the evil features of our social system as will bring to pass a better state of things, more worthy of human nature and human genius.”

When the election results were published, Labor, for the first time, had won six metropolitan seats and came very close to winning a further three. By contrast, in the rural areas which had not been exposed to the strike, and where Badger’s reputation was unknown, it failed to gain ground and won, in all, only twenty-five of the seventy-two seats, with 46.7 per cent of the vote. It maintained its popularity in the traditional Labor areas, though Mullan lost Charters Towers; it won seats in the coastal sugar towns like Bundaberg and Cairns, but it still had not enticed the sugar farmers or other primary producers from the Liberals.

The strike had further demonstrated Bowman’s unsuitability as the political party’s leader. During the strike his recurrent illness had forced him to take only a minor part in the nightly rallies, whereas Ryan, being younger and fitter and holding a safe Labor seat which did not demand his presence prior to the election, became the principal political speaker at important rallies and acted as the tramway union’s legal adviser. He soon emerged as the dominant political figure in Brisbane, while his analysis of the origins and developments of the strike was used as Labor election propaganda in two special numbers of the *Strike Bulletin*.

When the new PLP assembled after the election, Bowman was re-elected leader and Ryan defeated Lennon for the deputy leadership. However soon after the parliament resumed, Bowman collapsed and Ryan was elected leader, with Theodore becoming his deputy. One of the most formidable pairs of political leaders in Australian history now set about winning political power. At the election, several of the more prominent members had lost their seats, but fortunately new members of equal political talent had joined the PLP. The election had also increased the
number of Catholics in the caucus, and with the strength of freemasonry obvious among the Liberals, and with the introduction of compulsory Bible reading into state schools, members of the Catholic Church began to look more favourably on the Labor party. Though Irish Catholics in Queensland were to be found largely among those from whom Labor hoped to receive support, the Labor party had never attempted to solicit support from Catholics, but had firmly maintained that religion should be divorced from politics. For the Catholic Church, the one political question was aid for its schools and though there was no indication that the Labor party would deviate from its platform of education as free, compulsory, and secular, the presence of Catholics like Ryan, Theodore, McCormack, John Fihely, and Lennon among its leaders caused the Catholic newspapers and clergy to drift to a position of quietly supporting Labor in the hope of receiving some school aid if it won a government.

How to gain a larger share of the farmers’ votes remained a problem. There were three principal groups of farmers in the state: those along the coastal belt engaged in growing sugar, wheat growers on the Darling Downs, and those whose living depended on mixed farming, dairying, and fruit growing. This last group spread from the south eastern corner, inland and along the coast to the Atherton Tableland. There was some support for Labor among all the farmers, especially those who had been associated with the shearing or mining unions. Gaining additional support was to be the function of the two leaders, Ryan and Theodore. The former having been born of farming parents and the latter having witnessed farmers’ problems while organizing for the AWA considered struggling farmers as rural workers and spoke openly of the natural alliance between farmers and workers, producers and consumers. It was neither compromising Labor principles nor simply vote chasing, but a broadening of the anti-monopolist and anti-middleman alliance. Additionally it was a practical realization that, if rural employees were to receive their just wages, then the producers had to be guaranteed a sufficient profit for their crops to enable them to make a good living and still pay fair wages. In November 1912 Ryan called a special meeting of the caucus to consider the PLP recommendations for the Labor-in-Politics Convention in February 1913. The PLP’s concurrence in his plans to gain a greater share of the farmers’ votes came with its decision to recommend a new section in the platform entitled “Encouragement to Agriculture”, which was to include a state export department and cold stores, a state line of streamers, and state distribution of seed at cost price.

The thesis that the Labor movement has turned from industrial to political action after the failure of major strikes is difficult to sustain at any time. To suggest that this occurred in Queensland after the 1912 general strike is simply incorrect. Industrial action continued. The
increased importance placed on political action was a reflection of the improved competency and capability of the PLP under Ryan and Theodore, together with the scent of victory which the election results and the suspected weakness of Denham provided.

At the same time a dramatic change was taking place in the union movement. The failure of the general strike had finally destroyed the ALF, which was absorbed into a newly created AWU. By-passing the pious resolutions about the federation of unions, Theodore had amalgamated the AWA with the old AWU and with a number of southern rural unions — carriers', rural workers', and rabbiters' — and in so doing imposed the tight, centralized AWA organization on the new union. It was a union which came closest to the Labor dream of an OBU. In the process, he acquired for the AWU the ALF's valuable commercial assets: the *Worker* newspaper, its printery and stationery business, and the new three-storied *Worker* Building in Elizabeth Street, which was another monument to Hinchcliffe's competence as an administrator.

With the acquisition of the *Worker* Building, the AWU removed its offices from the Trades Hall and so established two physical centres of power in the Labor movement, a move which was to have significant long-term effects in the industrial and political areas. The eclipse of the ALF left the Brisbane unions resident in the Trades Hall without any co-ordinating body. The AWU attempted to absorb several of them, notably the building and meat industry unions, into its own organization, but already there were fears of the possible development of an unresponsive bureaucracy in the AWU and the lack of much rank-and-file control through its highly centralized administration, which, when added to traditional unionists' demands for autonomy of their own body, provided some limitation to the AWU's growth. In place of the ALF organization, the Trades Hall unions in 1914 formed the Brisbane Industrial Council (BIC), a loose linkage of unions in which some displayed greater outward militancy than the AWU, although they could never match the latter's coherent and united strength.

When the Labor-in-Politics Convention assembled in February 1913, Ryan, president of the CPE as well as being leader of the PLP, was elected chairman and set out in his presidential address the two areas on which Labor would concentrate in the following two years. The high living costs to wage earners and the reduced returns to primary producers were due, he said, to the operations of trusts and combines, middlemen, and monopolists. To overcome these, Labor in Queensland would support the federal party's referenda and, if these failed, move for the establishment of competing government business enterprises when it gained power. The 1913 convention reflected the change that had come over the Labor party in the previous twelve months. No longer was it concerned so much with
rules and constitutions; now it devoted the first four days to debates on policies in which the new section on "Encouragement to Agriculture" was included. It was not until the last day that the constitution and rules came under debate. The passing of the ALF necessitated changes in the composition of the CPE; the two ALF and three AWU branch delegates were replaced by five delegates elected by the new AWU. That no delegates were allowed from other unions was a reflection of their lack of an organized central body, not of any attempt by the AWU to keep them out.

The convention over, the CPE ordered 5,000 copies of the party's platform to be printed for distribution in farming centres, while in and out of the parliament Labor politicians proclaimed themselves as the true representatives of the farmers. The divisions within the Liberal party over the importance of legislation to assist farmers enabled Ryan, revealing himself as a skilful parliamentary tactician, to play a game of divide and conquer as the newly emergent country Liberal group was torn between supporting his proposals which the farmers desired and thus bringing down the government or supporting the government and bringing down on their heads the criticisms of the farmers themselves. Furthermore, when Denham expressed his support for the establishment of the American Meat Trust on the Brisbane river, the Labor party was able to link him with the higher prices for meat in the metropolitan area. The increasing lack of confidence and the lack of competence of the Liberals contrasted with the image of the Labor party, whose political leaders scented electoral success.

The 1913 federal election further boosted Labor hopes in Queensland where Fisher won seven of the ten Queensland House of Representatives seats and all the Senate seats with a 54 per cent vote and, though the constitutional referenda were narrowly defeated nationally, in Queensland there was an affirmative majority of 20,000. As the Liberals, restive under Denham, sought to placate angry farmers, the Labor party evolved its best campaign organization ever. In mid-1914 a special campaign committee was formed and a paid organizer appointed, while Theodore and Foley produced a series of twenty-seven different pamphlets on defence, farmers, railways, food prices, and middlemen which were distributed according to the type of electorate. Three — *The Defence of Australia*, *Farmers and Men on the Land*, and *Farmers and Agricultural Machinery* — were the most widely sought in rural areas. With the CPE now installed also in the *Worker* Building, there developed that close co-operation between the AWU, the PLP, and the CPE that was to characterize Labor in politics in Queensland for the following forty years. Nor did the outbreak of war in August 1914 deter the Labor party from its path, though there was a broad agreement between the parties on the allied war aims and, strangely, on the need to regulate food prices and supplies. The federal election, following the double dissolution, resulted in a record 55.6 per cent Labor
vote in Queensland for the House of Representatives, where seven of the ten seats were again won, and a 57.4 per cent Labor vote in the Senate, where all six seats were won.

A confident Ryan delivered his election policy speech at Barcaldine, in his own Barcoo electorate, in March 1915. He charged the Liberals with allowing trusts and honourable understandings to raise prices in Queensland at a far greater rate than in other states. The Commonwealth statistician's figures for the last half of 1914 at least supported his argument on price increases if not on the cause of these. After dealing with government deficiencies in a number of fields from public servants to railways and industrial matters, he outlined Labor policy in each field and promised an extension of government business enterprises to protect the producer and consumer against middlemen and monopolies.

Labor won forty-five of the seventy-two seats with 52 per cent of the votes. For the first time it won a majority of metropolitan seats; it regained all but one of the Kidston Labor seats and six of the former Labor seats lost in 1912. Seven seats associated with the sugar industry were won, but the wheat and dairying areas remained non-Labor.

V.

It was with some pride that Hinchtcliffe, appointed to the Legislative Council by Kidston in 1904, moved the address in reply in the upper house following the 1915 election. The victory had vindicated his earlier opposition to coalitions or lib-lab alliances and his faith in Labor's ultimate success. It was now a question of whether Labor in office could "give Queensland workers more justice than can be wrung from capitalistic parliaments in a generation", as the ALF platform of August 1890 had boldly predicted. There was a general optimism about what Labor would achieve. For some it was the beginning of the co-operative commonwealth or the socialist society, for others, a better-all-round standard of living. Few, apart from Ryan, Theodore, Hunter, and the other parliamentary leaders appreciated that Labor was in office, not in power, while the Legislative Council unaffected by the election, continued to exist and while it contained only four Labor supporters among its thirty-nine members. There were some in the PLP who argued that the government should ignore the upper house, and even for those of a more realistic approach there was such distaste for acknowledging the constitutional power of the Council that Ryan was forced to hold two lengthy caucus meetings before he could satisfactorily convince his colleagues that a minister had to be appointed to the Council to supervise government business there.
The caucus elected eight ministers, Ryan, Theodore, Bowman, Lennon, Hunter, Adamson, Hardacre, and Hamilton, with the last of these being made minister for mines and appointed to the Council, a change in role for the shearer who had spent three years in jail for his part in the 1891 shearers’ strike. It was left to Ryan to allot the portfolios. He took those of premier, chief secretary, and attorney general; Theodore was given treasury and public works; Bowman became home secretary; Lennon took agriculture; Hunter, lands; and Adamson, railways. This left Hardacre with public instruction. Given Ryan’s early interest in education, this was unfortunate, as an intelligent and progressive minister for education could have done as much to lay the foundations of the new society as a treasurer or lands minister. However, the caucus had elected Hardacre, and education came after industrial legislation, land, primary production, and railways in Labor’s priorities. The Catholic press had hoped that Fihelly would have been allotted education. However, his obvious ability was not to be wasted. Two additional honorary ministers, Fihelly and John Huxham, were elected to assist Ryan in the justice department and to administer the home secretary’s department for the ailing Bowman. On Ryan’s casting vote, McCormack, who with Theodore and Fihelly had formed a powerful triumvirate in the caucus, had to be content with the Speaker’s chair, where he was to be confined during Ryan’s premiership.83

Soon after the new government had been sworn in, the hope was expressed by chambers of commerce, non-Labor newspapers, and the Liberal opposition, that there would be no “contentious legislation” introduced and that there would be a truce effected between Labor and capital during the war. There was little evidence to convince the government that such a truce was seriously sought, as food prices rose alarmingly and a perusal of the files on sugar and meat showed Ryan that the CSR and the meat companies were out to exploit the disruption caused by the war and to reap even greater profits.84 Consequently Ryan and his closest colleague, Hunter, took direct control of food prices, leaving Theodore to prepare his Labor legislation and Fihelly to seek the advice of the Western Australian and New South Wales Labor governments on establishing state enterprises. The legislative and administrative actions of the government in the first half of its term confirmed that it was determined, despite the Council, to be more than “ordinary liberal”. Through the Sugar Acquisition Act, under which the Queensland government still acquires the total sugar crop each year, and the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act, the sugar industry was stabilized and growers guaranteed a fair price which would enable them to pay reasonable wages. A new Election Act provided for one month’s residence in an electorate to be sufficient to establish residency and the right to claim a vote; it also laid down that all elections should be held on one day, Saturday, and that women were to be eligible

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for election to the Assembly. A series of acts dealing with labour provided for government labour exchanges, the removal of restrictions on trade unions, government inspection of machinery and scaffolding, new regulations governing sanitary conditions, ventilation, eating accommodation, and meal breaks in factories and shops, and the two long-sought pieces of legislation on arbitration and workers' compensation.

Among the dreams of those who had sought direct representation of Labor in parliament had been the provision of some means of settling and avoiding strikes which affected workers far worse than their employers. In the ideal and to those who had imbibed something of syndicalist writings, the solution lay in strong unions dealing directly with employers; in the loftiest dreams it meant the workers taking immediate control of the means of production themselves. However two factors stood out: unions were not as strong as governments or employers, and major confrontation between unionists and employers had usually caused great personal suffering to the former. What the Labor movement and sympathetic liberals had therefore sought was a scheme of neutral arbitrators and conciliators who would judge the rightness of each side's case and have the full backing of government in enforcing their decisions. By this means the strike weapon could be reserved by the unions as an ultimate tool in negotiations, but it was hoped that a fair and impartial conciliator and arbitrator, able to obtain all the facts, would obviate the need for any use of the strike.

Drawing heavily on his own reading and experience and on the ideas of the crown solicitor, T. W. McCawley, a friend and admirer of Henry Higgins, Theodore introduced his Industrial Arbitration Bill, which, though amended by the Council, remained a tribute to his knowledge of industrial legislation in Australia and overseas and to his patience and skill in steering through the parliament what was clearly unpalatable legislation to those who had ruled Queensland since separation. The act established a Court of Industrial Arbitration with the power and jurisdiction of a Supreme Court and with a president who was to be a judge of the Supreme Court by virtue of his office. McCawley was appointed as the first president and a judge of the Supreme Court. It was not, however, until the Privy Council ruled in favour of the government in the McCawley Case of 1920 that the legality of this was made certain.

The court was not concerned simply with settling disputes but could also investigate costs and standards of living, rule on wages, hours, and conditions of work, and act as a conciliator. Its decisions on any industrial question were final. Employers were not permitted to dismiss a worker because of his membership of a union and though the Council expressly removed any specific reference to preference to unionists from the act, the two members of the Court, McCawley and A. W. MacNaughton, accepted that they could grant preference to unionists in any industry if they
thought this proper. Tacit preference to unionists in Queensland existed after 1917. The second important piece of legislation, the Workers' Compensation Bill, under which a schedule of payments for injuries was laid down and workmen protected on their way to and from work, not only made workers' compensation insurance by employers compulsory for all employees, but made it a state monopoly, creating the State Government Insurance Office which was to become the most successful of the state enterprises. The Workers' Compensation Bill, with its corollary of reducing the profits of private insurance companies, was soundly defeated in its first appearance before the Council and was allowed through at the second attempt only through the bungling of excessively zealous insurance directors in that chamber.  

In other areas selectors were relieved of the burden of guaranteeing the financial success of railways built in their areas, public servants were allowed to plead their case before the Arbitration Court, and a Public Curator was established. None of the legislation was passed easily and several significant bills (to give the government power to take over and operate meatworks; to provide for adult suffrage in local government elections; to open up land on the perpetual lease system and limit the amount of land any one person could hold in a district; to pass certain powers over to the Commonwealth for the duration of the war in lieu of holding the 1915 prices referendum; and to pass the Industrial Arbitration Bill at the first attempt) were either declared "lost" or not returned from the Council. Within the caucus, the restriction imposed by the Council were a constant source of frustration and its future was earnestly debated. There was a division between those who wanted the Council abolished through swamping, i.e. appointing a majority of Labor members, and those who wanted to use the power contained in Kidston's Parliamentary Bills Referendum Act to have the Council abolished by a vote of the people. The governor, Sir Hamilton Goold Adams, was unwilling to make the necessary appointments to the Council to allow the former course to proceed, but, in any case, as there was a majority in the caucus in favour of the second method, in November 1915 a bill to amend the constitution by abolishing the Legislative Council was introduced into the Assembly.

Part of the success of the first Ryan government was due to four remarkable public servants inherited from the previous Liberal government, who found in Ryan, Hunter, and Theodore capable men who appreciated their abilities. As under-secretary, Ryan inherited Peter McDermott, a scholar, literary friend of Boote, and president of the Queensland Irish Association; in the justice department he acquired the most brilliant of the four, the crown solicitor Thomas McCawley, whose preparation of Ryan's constitutional briefs in the following three years enabled Ryan to become one of the nation's leading constitutional
barristers and whose study of labor legislation markedly assisted in the preparation of the Industrial Arbitration Bill and the Workers' Compensation Bill. The marketing and sale of meat was to be the most contentious item during the war, and here the Labor government inherited the services of a former meat export company manager, Charles Ross, who combined his duties of imperial meat officer with assisting Hunter to establish a very successful chain of state butcher shops. In London, the agent general, Sir Thomas Robinson, who had created the AUSN Company from the ASN and Queensland Steamship Companies, became Ryan's indefatigable ally in the struggles to prevent the pastoralists, meat companies, and later the Nationalists from raising the price of Queensland meat to the allied troops.

In its first six months, the government began a programme of state business activity which went beyond the "colonial socialism" of the Australian governments of the nineteenth century. The governor's speech at the opening of parliament made this intention quite clear: "The want of effective machinery to protect the community from persons who continue unduly to inflate prices and amass large profits out of necessary commodities, makes it incumbent on my advisors to seek your authority for measures to regulate trade and cope with trusts and combines and for a further extension of public ownership and the establishment of State enterprises." In August 1915, the Worker, now an internal propaganda journal rather than the prophetic and evangelistic mouthpiece of Lane, Higgs, and Boote, began a series of eight full-page weekly articles on state enterprises covering the method of establishing these, the financing of them, and the pitfalls to be avoided. The concluding paragraphs of the last article reflected something of the motives of those who most loudly advocated state business undertakings: "State ownership is the first move towards Socialism... Private enterprise or capitalism stands for profit before everything; State enterprise stands for the greatest possible service to the people at the lowest possible price." After the first flush of victory had passed, state enterprises came to have a more functional role than that of pulling down capitalism. Theodore outlined plans in his budget speech in October for state sawmills and coalmines to lower the cost of workers' dwellings and the running of the railways, for the provision of batteries to provide an alternative avenue for crushing for the miners in north Queensland, and for the setting up of a fishery to break the monopoly in Brisbane, give the fishermen a fair price, and provide cheaper fish for Brisbane and eventually for the state. Possibly the best known of all the undertakings, the butcher shops, were established not only to provide cheap meat but also to allow the government to ascertain the exact costs of buying and selling meat. They were established, along with the state stations, to meet an urgent problem in the meat industry, not simply for ideological reasons.
However quite early in the government’s term, the major problem of financing these enterprises loomed, as borrowing for war purposes took precedence over development. Nevertheless, the cabinet was determined to make a start. Cognisant of the difficulties faced by the Western Australian Labor government in introducing state enterprises to which the non-Labor Legislative Council was irrevocably opposed, the Queensland government attempted to provide the legal machinery for these by including clauses in both the Sugar Acquisition Bill and the Meatworks Bill giving the government power, by proclamation, to acquire any goods and operate any business. The rejection of the Meatworks Bill by the Council necessitated the use of backdoor administrative actions to establish all but the fishery and the insurance office. Although the one state hotel built, at Babinda in the north Queensland sugar area, proved a financial success, it was hardly the beginning of the nationalization, with a view to prohibition of the liquor trade, while the state stations, also a financial success during the war, did not supply one pound of meat to the state butchery but sold their meat to the British government. Only the butcher shops and the insurance office fulfilled, from the start, the hopes of their founders. In each case, competent business officials were placed in charge of the enterprise from the beginning and, though competing with lower meat prices and premiums, insured that correct business practices were followed.

By the beginning of 1916, visible links with the Labor party of the nineties were passing. Frank McDonnell, one of the early heroes and now a member of the Council, had let his party membership drop as his drapery business, McDonnell and East, expanded, though he continued to vote with the Labor members in the upper house. Seymour in 1915 had resigned from the editorship of the Worker and been replaced by John Hanlon, a journalist from the Perth Daily News. In February Dave Bowman died, while Hinchcliffe, no longer the key figure in the Queensland Labor movement, prepared to resign from his position as manager of the Worker and in June 1917 transferred to Sydney and the company of his friend Boote on the Australian Worker.

There were more significant changes produced at the Labor-in-Politics Convention in February 1916, when the composition of the convention and the CPE were changed and when the Labor party became more closely tied to the fortunes and capabilities of the union leaders than it had even been in the previous twenty-six years. As more unions had become affiliated with the party, their leaders had sought greater direct participation in the administration of the party through the CPE and in policy making through the convention. Leading this demand was McCormack, who, since his election to the CPE in 1913, had argued that, because of the much greater amounts paid to the party by the unions than by the WPOs, the unions were entitled to a greater role in the party machinery. A com-
mittee, headed by McCormack, was appointed at the convention to outline a series of recommendations for union representation; these, with minor amendments, were adopted. Delegates to future conventions were to be elected from affiliated unions according to their membership and from each state electorate. The composition of the CPE was a compromise between the old and the new. As before, eleven members were to be elected by the convention with one each instead of two from the state and federal PLPs, but with the real power in future CPEs being given to the unions, who were allowed one delegate for 2,000 members, increasing according to the total affiliated membership. Apart from that of W. H. (Billy) Demaine, proprietor of the Maryborough Alert, president of the Labor party from 1916 to 1938 and secretary of the ALF in Wide Bay in the 1890 strike, there was little opposition to the changes. Demaine, arguing that representation should be on the basis of electoral effort, not financial contributions, contended that some sections of the industrial movement were not contributing to fighting elections as they should, given that they were going to be allowed to nominate and select candidates, make policy, and administer the party.\(^{89}\) An attempt to prevent members of the PLP from being elected to the CPE was again defeated. The leading unionists recognized that their best method of achieving their goals lay in representing the movement in parliament while maintaining close links between the unions, the PLP, and the CPE.

Though the convention changed little in the platform, it passed a definite motion against conscription. In addition both the AWU and the BIC were adamant that conscription for overseas service was against Labor principles and against the interests of the working class. Hughes, shortly after he had been elected prime minister, received a taste of the BIC's opposition when his offer of 50,000 additional troops to the British brought a threat of refusal of support for the Labor candidate in Fisher's old seat of Wide Bay. To the BIC the new recruiting scheme "looked like conscription, smelt like conscription and was conscription in a most insidious form" and they would have none of it.\(^{90}\)

Ryan went to England in March to confer with the British government on meat for the troops and to appear for the state before the Privy Council. During his absence, the debate on conscription deepened, with the unions and the Labor party forming an anti-conscription committee which included Theodore, as chairman, Fihelly, and Lewis McDonald as secretary. Though there were some members of the PLP who favoured conscription, only Adamson openly declared himself a conscriptionist and joined the Universal Service League. The British reprisals in Ireland following the Easter rising forced Irish Catholics closer to the Labor party, though ultra-Protestant criticism of the Irish and the Catholics and the linking of the two with anti-conscription caused Archbishop Duhig, a con-
scriptionist, to adopt a neutral role in the debate that followed. Conscription in Queensland must be seen as strengthening the bitter political division that had built up through the Labor party’s insistence on pushing through its radical programme. During Ryan’s absence in England, the CSR, pastoralists, and insurance companies challenged significant pieces of Labor legislation in the courts, while a very favourable award to sugar workers by acting-Judge Dickson in the Arbitration Court, when added to the attempts to regulate profits on meat, sugar, and wheat, represented a direct and constitutional attack on the economic power of those who considered themselves the rightful rulers of the state. In the face of this “socialistic” legislation and the possibility of not having a favourable Legislative Council to protect their interests, pastoralists, sugar mill owners, and their commercial allies saw havoc and social ruin facing them, so that, when the conscription debate erupted at the end of 1916, well-defined lines of battle were already drawn.

During Ryan’s absence, he was defeated in the ballot for the presidency of the CPE by Demaine. On the surface it seemed that the industrialists had ousted the politicians from control of the CPE, but as with many such simplifications of Labor ballots the reality was otherwise. Demaine had defeated Ryan by seven votes to six, with five of the seven absentee being Ryan supporters. The significance of the defeat was the beginning of a new tradition that an industrialist, not the leader of the PLP, should be the president of the party. There is no evidence that the PLP took the result as a rebuff or that Ryan was unduly concerned about the defeat. The reality of Queensland Labor in 1916 was that the CPE, BIC, AWU, WPOs, and the PLP saw themselves as belonging to the one movement, whose goals were clear and whose representatives in parliament were making a determined bid to oust the controllers of economic and political power.

It was this broad unanimity of purpose, fortified by a healthy remembrance of the losses of the Kidston split, that was one of the factors preventing any split in Queensland over conscription. The other factor was Ryan himself. Though having a background and education quite different from most other Labor leaders, Ryan understood the nuances of the Labor party as few other leaders had. He had witnessed the destruction of Kidston as a political reformer after his break with the Labor party; he was conscious of the role union officials saw themselves playing in the administration of the movement and accepted that there were times for a political Labor leader to take the initiative and other times for him to follow what the movement demanded. Moreover, he had early determined not to enter into any political fight without first having judicially weighed the strength of his own and his opponent’s case. He had also resolved to avoid any such fight where he felt he could not win or at least come out with a reasonable compromise. In England, he had seen the same evidence as convinced
Hughes that conscription was necessary, but, when he arrived back in Australia in August 1916, the Labor movement and the Labor party in Queensland were both decisively anti-conscription. In such a situation, Ryan's role was to hold the party together and convince those members of the PLP who favoured conscription that a unified party continuing to support the allied war aims was the best solution and would still allow Labor's social and economic goals to be achieved. He was thus able to carry conscriptionists like Hardacre and George Barber, secretary of the PLP, and also Hunter and J. Harry Coyne, shortly to be minister for railways, who were uncertain of the stand to take; he did this by his immense prestige, his obvious ability, and his unequivocal support for Australia's participation in the war. Only Adamson, concerned not only about conscription but about what he thought was the growing strength of Catholicism in the Labor party, finally left the party to find some solace in the company of Mat Reid and Peter Airey among the conscriptionists.

The spectacular transformation of Australian governments from seven Labor in 1915 to one at the end of 1916 gave conservatives in Queensland hope and confidence that they also would soon be rid of this infringement of their economic and political rights. They took heart at the stand of the Council in rejecting bills to abolish the death penalty, to provide adult franchise in local government elections, to begin the first steps towards a system of free, government-conducted hospitals, and to introduce the initiative and referendum into the constitutional procedures. Fortified by this feeling of righteousness, the Council, for a second time, and despite the non-Labor chairman's ruling against any interference with a money bill, rejected parts of Theodore's Income Tax Bill which was declared "lost". The rights of the men of property were being preserved. On the other hand, the rejection of conscription in Queensland by 158,051 votes to 144,200 and the inability of the non-Labor press to split the party on conscription, convinced the Labor party that it still had the support of the electorate. The federal election in May 1917 destroyed some of that confidence.

Concurrent with the federal election, the Labor government held its referendum to abolish the Legislative Council. This was to prove a bad tactical error. The physical and financial campaign resources of the party had to be divided in the fight against its two principal enemies, Hughes's new Nationalist party and the Council. The CPE opposed the cabinet and PLP decision to hold the referendum on the same day as the election, and, when the cabinet refused to reconsider its decision, the CPE declined to co-operate with the PLP in the abolition campaign. It had wanted Ryan to concentrate his ability on the immediate question of defeating Hughes, and was finally persuaded to co-operate in the abolition campaign only after argument by Ryan himself at a special CPE meeting.
Nothing seemed to go right in the abolition campaign. Ryan was involved for much of the time with the problems of the sugar industry and in March 1917 began one of the most important constitutional cases in his legal career, the Moorabberrie Case, which threatened to upset the legislation under which the Queensland government provided cheap meat for the allied troops, for Queensland residents, and for those of any other state which was prepared to guarantee that the meat would be sold at fixed retail prices. The case eventually was to be resolved at the Privy Council in Ryan's favour. In another constitutional area, a challenge to the validity of the referendum was issued by three members of the Council in the Supreme Court when they sought an injunction restraining the government from taking the poll. Having to concern himself with this second case effectively prevented Ryan from campaigning widely for either the federal election or the abolition of the Council, though he managed to squeeze in a weekend at Rockhampton for the Labor candidate Francis Forde, who was standing in the by-election for Adamson's seat on the Saturday after the federal election. Adamson had nominated as an independent Nationalist for the Senate.

When the Full Court ruled on 28 April, a week before the polling day, that the referendum should not be held, Ryan contested this in the High Court, convened in Sydney specially to hear the case, and on the Friday before the elections was given leave to proceed with the referendum with the points of law to be decided later. From Brisbane, Theodore desperately endeavoured to insert advertisements in all newspapers informing electors that the referendum would definitely be conducted. Many areas of the state received their news in only weekly papers and he was not completely successful. But the folly of holding the abolition referendum on the same day as the federal election and the uncertainty in the electors' minds about the constitutional validity of the poll was exacerbated by the wording on the ballot paper:

☐ I vote for “A Bill to amend the Constitution of Queensland by abolishing the Legislative Council”.

☐ I vote against “A Bill to amend the Constitution of Queensland by abolishing the Legislative Council”.

To the voter on polling day, confronted with three or, if he lived in southeastern Queensland, four ballot papers, it appeared, at first sight that to vote for the Council's abolition, he should place a cross in the bottom square. Such a vote, of course, was for the retention of the Council. On the same day, local option polls under the Liquor Act were held in areas within a hundred miles of Brisbane. For this ballot, many large and well-constructed advertisements were inserted in all newspapers urging a cross to be placed in the bottom square against any reduction in liquor licenses.
The local option ballot paper read:

- [ ] I vote for the reduction of existing licenses by twenty-five per cent.
- [ ] I vote against any reductions.

As many booth workers later reported to the CPE, it seemed that a number of voters placed a cross in the bottom square in each case assuming they were voting against the Council and against any reduction in drinking facilities.

The election and the referendum results were both disappointing. All three Senate seats were won by the Nationalists, who had included Mat Reid on their ticket, and only four of the ten House of Representatives seats returned Labor members. Queensland’s Labor vote fell to 47.0 per cent, though it was still the highest Labor vote in the Commonwealth. In the Council referendum, 179,105 voted for the retention of the Council and 116,196 against. Only thirteen of the seventy-two state electorates had majorities in favour of abolishing the Council and these were principally the long-held Labor seats in the north and west. It would be difficult to compare the results of the liquor and Council polls held, though there is possibly some significance in there being 43,640 votes against reducing the number of hotel licences and only 23,999 for. It was comforting for Labor supporters to blame the courts, the wording of the ballot paper, and the concurrent federal election, but the size of the majority was possibly an indication that there was a large degree of support for maintaining a second chamber.

Sectarian bitterness had been a feature of both the federal election and referendum campaigns. As the Labor party had come under attack from a number of Protestant clergymen, it was not surprising that the Daily Standard and other Labor newspapers reported more favourably the speeches of Catholic priests and thus lent weight to the ultra-Protestant and freemason contention that Catholics had undue influence in the Labor party. Following the results of 5 May, the Queensland Protestant League held a thanksgiving service at the Exhibition Ground, for the Nationalists. The president of the League, T. M. Hall, a member of the Legislative Council, was followed in his address by the oldest member of that chamber, F. T. (“holy Freddie”) Brentnall, a former Protestant clergyman and now proprietor of the Telegraph, who said: “For many years I have worked on behalf of the Protestantism which I verily believe is the cause of God . . . We have assembled to celebrate a victory and to give thanks for that triumph. I and others have been working to organise the vast amount of Protestant sentiment that we are sure existed in the community.” And so Catholicism came to be closely associated with the Labor party in Queensland.
The federal election and the Council referendum, combined with the defeat of the New South Wales Labor party, confirmed the isolation of Queensland Labor and began a defensive period when Labor became more conscious of states' rights. However, the results gave the whole Labor movement in Queensland a healthy jolt. The two years of Labor government, with its substantial gains in industrial, rural, and electoral legislation, had made some sections of the movement complacent about the party’s support among the people; others were still more concerned with keeping the party “straight” and pure with advocating total industrial control to prevent a Hughes or Holman emerging in Queensland; while a smaller group regarded themselves as the only true socialists and turned their backs on the Labor party, whose members they classed merely as reformers, not destroyers of capitalism. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) represented more clearly their concept of a political Labor organization.

It was apparent that, if Labor was to be returned in 1918, the political movement had to be rejuvenated, unity of purpose re-emphasized, and those flirting with the IWW rejected. In June 1917, Labor (along with the Nationalists) began preparing for the 1918 state elections where the future of Labor in politics in Australia seemed to be at stake. John Mullan, recently defeated at the Senate election, was appointed as an organizer; a 136-page booklet, *Socialism at Work*, was produced which set out the achievements of the state enterprises and was sent to all major organizations in the state; while Ryan set out on a tour of the western and coastal sugar electorates. From the Nationalists, accusations of IWW influence in the Labor party mounted; a personal attack was launched against Ryan, alleging that he was drawing huge fees for his court appearances as attorney general; the state enterprises came under close scrutiny and also under heavy fire for interfering with the rights of private enterprise, while insinuations of favouritism to Catholics in the public service appeared frequently in the press. While keeping the dogs of capitalism at bay, Ryan and Theodore had also to work constantly to maintain the unity of the Labor movement, which was basic to the party’s continuing successfully on its radical path. Despite the haranguing of people like Lane in the *Daily Standard*, the initiative in the party remained with a handful of radical politicians who seemed to have a clearer view than many of the union leaders as to what political Labor hoped to achieve.

As the government defended its position, north Queensland railwaymen began what threatened to be a long and costly strike over retrospective pay. In an atmosphere where revolution, socialism, and worker control were widely discussed among radical sections of the Labor movement and where the Queensland Railways Union (QRU) was possibly the most militant union in north Queensland — an area noted for its militancy — the
situation called for tact and strength, but also for a willingness by the government to compromise. While the government sparred for time, the strike of railwaymen, seamen, and waterside workers in the southern states overshadowed that in north Queensland and gave the government's unwillingness to use the mailed fist against its own striking employees a distinctive air of reasonableness. It further gave the government a respite to consolidate other unions behind its promise to refer the dispute to independent arbitration. Higgins of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court had tentatively agreed to act as arbiter and would have performed the service, but was refused permission by Hughes, whose disagreements with Ryan over sugar, meat, and the strikes were reaching their limit. Nevertheless the railway unionists returned to work, accepting that their case would be examined by an independent arbiter, at the same time contrasting the attitude of the Ryan government in Queensland with that of Fuller the Nationalist acting-premier in New South Wales and Hughes in the eastern states. But while they accepted that the strike had been handled with more reasonableness by the Labor government than by any previous government, they were annoyed by the lack of sympathy displayed by Fihelly and McCormack.

This was not the end of industrial strife in Queensland. Railwaymen in the southern division refused to handle goods loaded in the south by "voluntary" labour, while in north Queensland the ports became clogged through the stoppage of coastal shipping; the maritime unions refused to handle any goods loaded or shipped from the south by national service or "voluntary" labour, and the shipping companies refused to allow goods in the north to be handled by union labour. In attempting to settle the disputes and return commerce in the north to normal, Ryan gave effect to his long-held scheme for a state shipping line, manned by union labour, by using the powers of the Sugar Acquisition Act to acquire ships lying idle in Queensland ports. The union movement applauded this obvious determination of a Labor government to press home an attack on the shipping combine and the Nationalists; but to the national press, to Hughes, and to the shipping companies it demonstrated once more the confiscatory nature of Labor legislation and its socialist intent to usurp the holy role of private enterprise. The wily Hughes retaliated with a proclamation prohibiting the acquisition of any vessels trading interstate, which effectively curtailed Ryan's action.

This attempt to take over private ships, and a later bill to empower the government to requisition and man ships in Queensland waters, brought the whole of the conservative edifice down upon the government. Its legislation to reduce the economic power of the pastoralists and meat companies, insurance companies, and the CSR, when added to its determination to abolish the Legislative Council and its refusal to endorse the
Nationalists' proposals for "national service" labour to break the strikes in eastern Australia, made it the target for southern as well as local representatives of capitalism. The *Argus* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, no less than the *Brisbane Courier*, fulminated against it in constant editorials. The government remained unrepentant despite a well publicized inquiry by a Legislative Council committee into the state enterprises. Seventeen additional butcher shops were being established between September 1917 and March 1918, thirteen stations had been bought, exploratory drilling continued for future state coal mines, and a hotel was built; all this had been done by administrative action without express legislative authority.

Following the defeat of the Council referendum, Ryan persuaded the governor to appoint thirteen new Labor members to the upper house so that the government would at least be able to form a quorum at all times and have some strength in debate. Nominees were to be financial members of the party and had to fulfil all the conditions required for normal plebiscite selection, with the addition to the normal pledge of a clause promising to support the abolition of the Council. Ryan was flooded with willing applicants. Endorsements were to be first by the PLP and then by the CPE. In fact the PLP was ahead of the CPE, which met to discuss the nominations after the thirteen new members had been selected by the PLP and approved by the governor. There was little doubt where the initiative lay in the party. Those selected were well-proven Labor men with a range of backgrounds — union organizer, newspaper proprietor, farmer, and others. Demaine, Richard Sumner, a merchant and vice-president of the CPE, and McDonald were among the thirteen.

In October, Ryan introduced his most ambitious piece of legislation, a bill to establish a state iron and steel works. Next to his State Insurance Office, this was the project he hoped most to see brought to fruition. The public works commission established by the government in 1915 had been appointed as a Royal Commission in June 1917 to investigate the feasibility of an iron and steel works. Its progress report in August indicated that the raw materials were present in Queensland and that commercial pig iron could be produced in Queensland at a profit to the state.98 The investigation could hardly be considered adequate in modern terms, though it examined thoroughly the expert witnesses who appeared before it. Having received their verbal report, Ryan introduced his enabling bill in which he described the industry as the most important that could be established in a country which, because of the experiences of the war, needed to become self sufficient.99 There was a measure of support from opposition members, but in the Council a ceiling of £100,000 ($200,000) was placed on the project. This breach of the Assembly's power over finance provided the excuse for Ryan's declaring the bill "lost". In truth, it must be admitted that many members of the PLP were becoming less
than enthusiastic about government enterprises, preferring to see Labor's role in government in more conservative terms, while Theodore was having such a problem with finances — being forced against canons of Labor economic philosophy to suspend the loan sinking fund — that he was in no position to provide funds for a long-term project. It nevertheless remained a dream of Ryan and was left in the Labor platform for another leader to take it up in more prosperous times.

As the Labor and Nationalist members prepared for the coming election, the second conscription referendum was unexpectedly announced. Ryan, in Melbourne, immediately took it on himself to play a leading role in the anti-conscription campaign. Indeed it was to be about Ryan that the most remarkable events of the referendum were to revolve. There was no equivocation on this occasion about where Labor parliamentarians stood. Hardacre made it clear that the discrepancies in Hughes’s demands for troops had robbed the conscriptionists’ case of its credibility. However, the Labor movement in Queensland was ill-equipped financially to fight a second referendum after the industrial troubles which had put a large number of Queensland workmen out of work and had drawn heavy donations from those remaining at work. Of more moment was the possibility that the Daily Standard might have to cease publication because of rising paper costs and the boycotting by advertisers who objected to its politics. The unions supplied additional levies; staff members donated their wages back to the company, while individual supporters made substantial donations. The paper was saved temporarily, yet the directors were aware that the principal anti-conscription organ in southeastern Queensland could still be forced to close down at any stage.

Conscription in Queensland in 1917 represented merely a continuation of a battle now two and a half years old. The anti-Labor forces had the advantage in this instance of the full support of the federal government and its heavy-handed censorship of anti-conscription propaganda. So discriminatory was this, that when vital parts of Ryan’s first major anti-conscription speech were refused publication it became necessary to resort to using the state Hansard to have his full remarks published, together with the two anti-conscription pamphlets that Theodore and Fihelly had prepared. However the government had underestimated the vigilance of the censors; when the Hansard was being sent to all parts of the state through the postal services, the chief censor in Queensland stepped in, forbidding the publication and distribution of the Hansard. A raid by a squad of soldiers, accompanied by Hughes, on the government printing office, focussed the nation’s press once more on the single Labor government. Hughes’s reputed threat to “have” Ryan and Theodore in forty-eight hours for repeating outside parliament the censored parts of the speech and pamphlets was the culmination of his frustration at being
thwarted over meat, sugar, shipping, and strikes in the previous year. It was not merely based on conscription. Both Ryan and Theodore clearly had no sympathy with the IWW. But after a well-aimed egg dislodged Hughes’s hat at Warwick, where he was to make a short address, Nationalists in Queensland applauded the prime minister’s vitriolic association of the Queensland Labor party with the IWW, Sinn Fein, disloyalty, and pro-German sympathies. In a tense and testing debate, conscription in Queensland was again defeated by 168,875 votes to 132,771, a majority of 36,104 compared with 13,851 in 1916. The Hansard and Warwick egg incidents made Ryan a national Labor hero. Invitations poured in from the eastern states for him to address rallies. In Sydney for the final anti-conscription rally he was met by the biggest crowd in the campaign and carried through the streets like a conquering Roman general. The conscriptionist Sydney Morning Herald reported the crowd as having been greater than 100,000, while Ryan’s arch opponent, the Argus, quoted police as saying the number approached 200,000.

Within the Labor movement, not only in Queensland but throughout Australia, Ryan’s reputation soared as the one man capable of standing up to Hughes. Even those in the Labor movement who were unimpressed by the Labor government’s achievements recognized his leadership of the Labor cause. Consequently, when the Labor-in-Politics Convention met in January 1918, Demaine insisted that Ryan, and not he, should take the chair. It was a wise decision. There were indications that the 1918 convention would be quite hectic. The sizable minority of militant delegates wanted not only industrial control of the Labor party, but also a definite anti-war, as distinct from merely an anti-conscription, stand by the party. In addition there was a significant section of the convention who were concerned with liquor reform and were suspicious of the government’s not having introduced early closing of hotels during the war. Ryan’s prestige enabled him to make rulings from the chair which would otherwise have been contested and would have embittered the convention. It is notable that nowhere in Lane’s autobiography, Dawn to Dusk, does he castigate or even criticize Ryan as he does unmercifully Theodore, McCormack, Forgan Smith, and a host of other Labor politicians; while, in the tributes to Ryan after his death, Tim Moroney of QRU made special reference to Ryan’s handling of the 1918 convention, as well as his assistance to the unions, as his outstanding memories of the premier.102

The main feature of the convention was the desire by the moderate section to head off the militants who wanted to progress at a faster rate than the majority could cope with or accept. It was not simply a right-wing AWU versus a left-wing BIC, nor scheming politicians versus honest industrialists; the AWU was still counted among the leftist unions, though its size, the power of its leaders, and its desire to be the OBU in Queens-
D. J. MURPHY

land were making it feared among the less well-organized BIC unions. There were fewer politicians at the convention than at any time since 1910 and, though the unions were represented directly for the first time, there is no evidence of their delegates’ desiring or being capable of wrestling the initiative from the political leaders. In the election of CPE members and Federal Conference delegates, the even mixture of militants and moderates suggests that permanent lines of division were not laid down, while the militant-moderate cleavage broke down in the debate on the repeal of the compulsory military training clauses in the Defence Act, when the convention voted thirty-eight to twenty in favour of their repeal. McCormack, Gillies, Riordan, president of the AWU, Tom Jones, a long and close friend of Boote, and Cuthbert Butler, secretary of the anti-conscription literature committee, were among those opposed to the repeal, while Theodore and Fihelly voted with the majority.

With the convention successfully concluded, the Labor party began election campaigning in earnest. The central campaign committee had again prepared a number of policy pamphlets on the key issues of state enterprises, meat, assistance to farmers and returned soldiers, the profits being made from the war by graziers and the shipping combine, and the money being collected from pastoralists’ associations and insurance companies to defeat the government. New South Wales politicians came to Queensland to help organize the campaign; Senators Ferricks and Maughan were added to the paid organizing staff, together with two of the new Labor members of the Council. The AWU donated £300 ($600), the Waterside Workers’ Federation gave £100 ($200), and other private donations brought in £255 ($510). Ryan produced a further £770 ($1,540) in private donations. To maintain the Daily Standard, a Liberty Fair was held to raise finance additional to that being provided by the unions and private donors. On the other side, the Nationalists became better equipped for campaigning with the appointment of Captain G. M. Dash, formerly secretary of the state recruiting committee, as chief organizer, and the journalist M. H. Ellis as publicity secretary. The Nationalists’ main problem was the absence of any person capable of matching Ryan as a political leader.

After an intensive campaign among the farmers in two winnable seats in the southeastern corner, and some placatory though straight talking with the BIC unions, Ryan left for north Queensland and the sugar electorates, where he delivered his policy speech. Though this manifesto dwelt heavily on what the government had done in the previous three years, there was sufficient to indicate that the ideological fervour of 1915 had not died. With the stakes so high, it became a bitterly fought campaign, with Ellis spending much of his efforts in a personal campaign against Ryan, while posters on the roadside exhorted electors to “Keep the
Council, "Keep Your Homes, Keep Your Savings Banks Deposits". It was largely in vain. Labor increased its majority by winning forty-eight seats with 53.7 per cent of the vote, the highest ever gained by the Labor party in Queensland. However, it was the distribution of the forty-eight Labor seats that was significant. The sugar seats gained in 1915 were held; three near-Brisbane farming seats and two dairying and sugar seats on the near north coast were won; the last Kidstonite seat in the north was regained; but four metropolitan seats were lost. Clearly the policy of assisting rural areas was paying off and, not surprisingly, Labor continued after 1918 to place one of its more able ministers in the agriculture department and to advertise widely its links with the less prosperous selectors and sugar growers.

Ryan, hailed as the man responsible for the victory, was heralded as the coming national hero in the southern Labor and Catholic presses. Not all southern newspapers were pleased with the result. The Argus wrote: "It is a matter for concern to the other states that Queensland should confirm by a second election since the war, the reckless financial and legislative policy with which the Ryan ministry has been associated." However it was the perceptive Boote, the revolutionary through evolution, who recorded the dual significance of the Labor victory:

The sweeping victory of Premier Ryan in Queensland is a proof that fidelity to the principles of the Labor Movement, on the part of a Labor Ministry, is appreciated by the people... [but] I don't expect the result will be the advent of a millennium in Queensland... Much will be done of which Social Democrats can heartily approve, but changes of a fundamental nature there will not be. The people of Australia are not yet ready for drastic transformation. They want to get on but not too quickly.

Since the Nationalists and the Brisbane Courier, in particular, had made the retention of the Council an election issue, there was trepidation among the non-Labor members there as to what the government might attempt. The abolition referendum having been defeated, they feared that, with the Labor majority at the poll, pressure would now be applied to the governor for additional Labor appointments which could swamp the chamber. A deputation approached Goold Adams, petitioning him to protect the Council as an "impartial, deliberate and revisory chamber" against its being "swamped with partisan nominees". Goold Adams informed Ryan of the deputation but had also made it clear that he would wait and see how the Council reacted to specific legislation before considering any further appointments. The governor's attitude was conveyed to the PLP at its presessional meeting. There, other matters beside the Council had to be concluded. A new cabinet of Ryan, Theodore, Fihelly, Hardacre, Huxham,
Lennon, Coyne, and Hunter was elected. Gillies became the assistant minister to Ryan in the justice department. Fihelly, now a full minister, took railways (an unfortunate appointment), and Coyne, lands. McCormack was again confined to the speaker’s chair, where he fumed against Ryan and Hunter for their non-manual-labouring backgrounds and attempted to assume the role of caucus champion against the cabinet.

Although the government continued to introduce legislation sought in the Labor platform — extension of arbitration to police, teachers, and other branches of the public service, legislation to provide relief and assistance for unemployed workers — the war and the battle with the Council had reduced the opportunities for more radical legislation. In conjunction with the establishment of the Public Curator to provide legal assistance to anyone in the state, Ryan had hoped to reorganize the Crown law department to provide counsel for people appearing in the courts. Not only he, but also his ministers and McCawley, felt that the costs of litigation were too high and that the state had an obligation to regulate these as it would regulate living costs. Having to devote so much time to political questions, like conscription, that were outside the immediate jurisdiction of a state government legislation, Ryan was forced to let slide preparations for such legal assistance. The appointment of McCawley to the Arbitration Court, on which Theodore was insistent, also removed the person most able to implement this ideal.

While Ryan, Fihelly, and McCormack attended the interstate conference in Perth, where Labor attitudes to Australia’s future participation in the war and to compulsory military training, were to be determined, Theodore introduced new taxation proposals. These were designed to make up the deficit caused by the Council’s rejection of previous new taxation bills, the increased wages granted (voluntarily) to government employees, the repatriation of returned soldiers, the larger spending on welfare institutions, and the increased interest on overseas loans. He proposed to increase the tax on land (with exemptions) and on higher incomes. Again these were passed by the Assembly and rejected by the Council. On his return from Perth, Ryan conferred with the governor, who agreed that the Council was wrong but argued that he was unable to override its decision and would not appoint any new members.

The conflict with the Council was causing a distinct rise in the political temperature of the state, with many prepared to take the side of the Council. Several hundred women temperance advocates, frustrated at Queensland’s being the only state not to have introduced early closing of hotels during the war, marched on Parliament House. They claimed they were little concerned with the tactics of politics. They refused to accept the impossibility of Ryan’s giving in to Council and Nationalist demands for early closing when this meant rejecting his own Initiative and Referen-
dum Bill under which such legislation could be produced but which had already been defeated twice by the Council. When the upper house again refused to pass the Income Tax Bill without amendment and rejected once more a Land Tax Bill to allow the Land Court to increase the rentals of grazing properties, the gauntlet was thrown at the government's feet. The _Brisbane Courier_ piously reminded Ryan that the will of the people was that the Council should remain. But the cabinet was firmly determined that this "excruciation on the constitution" should go. A new bill was drawn up to amend the constitution by abolishing the Council, but on this occasion it was coated with the provision for an advisory committee of members of both sides of the house to scrutinize all bills before these were sent to the governor. The Initiative and Referendum Bill was to be passed at the same time and to become an integral part of the new constitution.

On this occasion the Labor party was not only to be more tactful in its approach, but was to find the CPE and PLP fully agreed on the basis of the campaign. Ryan was careful not to overplay his hand: it was emphasized that the King was to remain a part of the constitution; and, when a bill, introduced at the same time, to reduce the voting age to eighteen met with vociferous opposition, Ryan quietly shelved it, at the same time insisting that the vote be given to all absent soldiers who were eighteen. Ryan introduced the new bill into the Assembly in September, and in December the CPE established a special Legislative Council Abolition Committee with an abolition campaign fund. Thus at the end of 1918 the stage seemed set for a second popular challenge to the upper house.

The strength of the PLP in the previous six years had tended to reduce the significance of the CPE, known after November 1918 as the QCE. McDonald administered the party competently, but did not wield the influence of Hinchcliffe. On all political issues except those relating to war — recruiting, bugle blowing, and parades in state schools, which offended the anti-war group — the PLP was left free to determine its attitudes and methods of implementing policies, though it kept close contact with the QCE as a powerful administrative unit in the party, which could, if roused, exert considerable pressure on the party organs, the unions, and the PLP itself. QCE meetings, in 1918, were held fortnightly and often lasted a full day, as issues affecting the organization of the party, the policies of the government, and questions raised by the branches were debated at length. Demaine, re-elected president in 1918, set the tone of the QCE by assiduously devoting himself to Labor party work and by travelling from Maryborough each fortnight to chair the QCE meeting. Other members of the QCE, whether politicians, full-time union officials, or working men needing time-off to attend, showed a similar awareness of the importance of their role in the Labor movement as QCE delegates. By the end of
1918, the pressure of correspondence was such that an executive committee, later to be dubbed the "inner executive", was established to deal with much of the correspondence before it came to the full QCE.

So long as the PLP continued to press strongly to have party policy implemented, and so long as the QCE contained delegates of strong and independent views, the two would co-exist as equal partners. However, there were sections within the party which continued to be dissatisfied with the slowness of constitutional changes and, with stories of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia filtering in, these sought to turn the Labor movement from its national, pragmatic-cum-radical base to one espousing revolution. Their penchant for flying the red flag and preaching the coming workers' revolution caused more fear to conservatives than it should have, but by 1918 the Labor party itself was becoming concerned, particularly when Labor members of parliament and QCE delegates were among a group arrested for flying the red flag in contravention of a new regulation in the War Precautions Act.

In January 1919 Ryan left for England to fight the Mooraberrie Case before the Privy Council. During his absence there began to develop within the party the division between those variously labelled left and those labelled right or moderate. It was, in part, a conflict between the AWU and the BIC for control of the administration and ideology of the Labor movement; in part, it was a personal dispute between some union leaders at the Trades Hall and political leaders like Fihelly, closely associated with the AWU; yet, aside from the problems which the physical separation of the BIC and the AWU induced, in Ryan's absence there was no person among the industrial and political leaders with sufficient prestige and tact to bring the groups together. Theodore certainly had the power, the political experience, and the ability to attempt to do so, but he was tied too closely to one camp and lacked those elements of charm and trust that had placed Ryan beyond intraparty squabbles. The problem was exacerbated by the Daily Standard, financed largely by BIC unions, which was not averse to printing articles critical of the PLP and other articles which at times seemed to support IWW ideas. McCormack was particularly annoyed about these. Both he and Theodore had grown up in a tough school of politics, where opponents were defeated, not allowed a liberal rein. Consequently, at the QCE meeting in February, Theodore launched an attack on the IWW and those in the party who gave it tacit support. At his instigation, a committee including himself and Lane, the chief propagandist for the IWW, was appointed to prepare a manifesto to close the party's ranks. The thousand-word document, entitled Solidarity or Disruption, adopted by the QCE at the end of March, declared that any element which deflected the Labor movement from its true aim was to be combated. It went on to point out that it was not simply attacking radical or left-wing opinions:
“Without the driving force of the left or extreme wing of Labor an intel­ligent and advanced criticism, progress and virility are impossible.” The manifesto, with the names of all QCE members, militants and moderates, attached, was distributed to all unions and party branches.\textsuperscript{112}

Manifestos and May Day appeals for unity by Theodore could not convince those of an IWW bent that Labor’s constitutional programme was anything more than a palliative staving off the revolution. Only a continuance of the radical legislation of the first Labor government or a crushing of those who continued to propound more militant views in the party could head off the challenge that was now emerging. Ryan’s return was welcomed by militants and moderates in the party and in the unions as the means of settling the unrest in the party and the industrial unrest which the postwar period was bringing.\textsuperscript{113} However, the weakness of the federal Labor leadership was drawing Ryan into federal politics and away from Queensland, while a strike in Townsville, in which shots were exchanged between unionists and the police and in which railwaymen were suspended for refusing to take a train of policemen into Townsville, widened the gap between the QRU and the AWU with its close PLP links. Moreover, since Moroney and George Rymer, the QRU officials, were such powerful and respected figures among the unions at the Trades Hall, this exacerbated the division between the BIC and the AWU.

At the end of August, Theodore introduced an ambitious piece of social legislation, the Unemployed Workers Bill, which was, in his view, “the first practical attempt [in Australia] to deal with the problem of unemployment in any adequate manner”. The \textit{Brisbane Courier} called it the “Loafers’ Paradise Bill”, while a prominent Nationalist member was aggrieved that “legislation such as this is going to sap our moral fibre instead of making us a virile race”. The main provisions of the bill were to establish an unemployment council consisting of the minister for works, the director of labour, and a judge of the Arbitration Court, along with employers’ and employees’ representatives; to provide relief work through government and local authority agencies; and to require large private employers to provide additional employment or invest money in some state developmental work. Also written into the bill were the provision for the establishment of unemployment insurance and the right of every citizen to be able to work, with the proviso that it was the responsibility of the community and not that of the individual to see that each man received a job.\textsuperscript{114}

Theodore had been acting premier for eight months during Ryan’s absence in England and it was he, not Ryan, who reintroduced the bill to abolish the Legislative Council on 28 August, in accordance with the requirements of the Parliamentary Bills Referendum Act. However the desire for a second public confrontation with the Council with the
possibility of a further defeat introduced a cautionary note into discussions on how the Council should be dealt with. Though the abolition campaign had been opened by Theodore in May, the severity of the postwar influenza epidemic, and the early federal election in December 1919 caused the postponing of the second referendum. Gaining a Labor majority in the upper house, temporarily, became the goal.

Ryan's entry into federal politics ended the type of socialist-radical-liberal Labor government that had characterized his period as premier. Hunter, Lennon, and Hardacre also retired from the cabinet and a major reshuffle occurred. Theodore soundly defeated Fifelly for the leadership and McCormack, freed from the speakership, ousted Huxham from the politically important home secretary's portfolio and had him demoted to public instruction. It was now a solid AWU cabinet, where the virtues of the practical man were to rate most highly, where rural values were to dominate, and where the concept of democracy was to be based heavily on "having the numbers". No future Labor attorney general was to have any legal training and the importance of "practical politics" was to override much of the dreams and ideals of pre-1915.

VI

The Labor party that had emerged in Queensland consisted at its grass-roots level of working-class reformers, populist farmers, and a selection of small businessmen and lower-paid professionals like teachers and journalists. There had been only a handful of prominent women: two of them attended a convention; none was elected to the QCE; and none had stood for parliament by 1922. At its higher controlling level, there had been combinations of liberal radicals, socialists, and union administrators, with the liberal radicals and socialists forming a tacit leftist alliance. At this latter level, rules and policy were decided and submitted later to the "grass roots" group for ratification. However, despite claims of "grass roots" control, it was those who forced themselves from this group into the upper group who made most of the important decisions and laid down party attitudes. There was nothing sinister or unusual in this; the sheer size of the organization demanded some such mechanism. What was important was that there were opportunities for new men to come through the ranks on their own ability rather than through patronage.

The thirty years of the party's history had been characterized by attempts by various groups, seeing themselves as the custodians of the party's objectives, to take control of the party administration and policy making. Though Reid, Hinchcliffe, and Boote had partly succeeded in this during the Kidston split, the strength of localism in Queensland politics,
the absence of any permanent bureaucracy in the party before 1910, and the absence of any strong state-wide union organization had lessened the opportunities for this to become permanent. However, with the expansion of the AWU throughout the state, its highly centralized administration, the weakness of other central union organization at the Trades Hall, the dominance of rural over metropolitan and provincial city electorates, and the AWU's closer association with the PLP and the CPE, by 1920 the position had been reached in which one organization could exert a dominant influence in the Labor party. Moreover, since it was virtually the only political Labor organization in many rural electorates, it was almost impossible, in a majority of electorates, for any person to attend the Labor-in-Politics Convention or to nominate for parliament without AWU support.

In 1893, flushed with optimism and enthusiasm, the party had contested its first election. Through the faith of men like Reid, Hinchcliffe, Fisher, Seymour, and others it had survived the combined disaster of the strikes and the depression to struggle on through the nineties. By 1920, not only was it the governing party in the state, but its future was assured as a workers' political organization. The early figures on membership no longer survive, but the reports to the successive conventions after 1913 indicate the growth of the party. These are set out in table 1.

Table 1. Growth of the Labor Party in Queensland, 1913–23

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<td>69,529</td>
<td>69,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of unions in Queensland Union membership in Queensland (all unions)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union membership in Queensland (all unions)</td>
<td>44,768</td>
<td>58,310</td>
<td>75,393</td>
<td>97,378</td>
<td>100,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Lewis McDonald, in 1916, said that the enlistments in the AIF made it impossible to calculate membership.

** From 1920 onwards the actual size of the Labor party, in terms of number of branches, membership, and cost of election campaigns, was not reported to conventions.
The general fund, which accounted for the day to day running of the party, but not for state or federal election expenses, similarly reflected the increase in size and function of the party. The figures are set out in table 2.

Table 2. Cost of Administering the Central Party Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Cost (£)</th>
<th>Cost ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1901–Sept. 1904</td>
<td>£82 (164)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1904–Feb. 1907</td>
<td>£255 (510)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 1907–April 1910</td>
<td>£342 (684)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1910–Dec. 1912</td>
<td>£1,278 (2,556)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>£1,241 (2,482)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>£1,645 (3,290)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>£1,805 (3,610)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>£915 (1,830)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>£1,300 (2,600)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>£1,116 (2,232)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1919–May 1920</td>
<td>£3,654 (7,308)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1921–Dec. 1921</td>
<td>£3,125 (6,250)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Q.C.E. minutes and Labor in Politics Convention reports.

While Ryan had been the parliamentary leader, the radical liberal forces in the parliamentary party had been dominant, but with his retirement, together with that of Hunter, Lennon, and Hardacre from the cabinet, and the inability of the socialists to produce a viable political leader, there was no balance to the AWU strength. The lower level of secondary industry in Queensland had resulted in smaller craft unions; the Queensland TLC was not re-formed until 1922; the OBU movement was never strong among Queensland unions; attempts to build a one-big-railway-union foundered and, given the investment in and size of railways in Queensland, such a union alone could have provided the nucleus for a Trades Hall balance to the AWU. At the same time, with the resignation of Moroney, the most capable of the socialists, from the QCE in protest against its acceptance of a delegate from the Returned Soldiers and Sailors’ Labor League, the non-AWU unions on the QCE lost their strongest figure, while the continued strained relations between the Australasian Railways Union (ARU) and the QCE blunted the syndicalist and socialist pressures in the executive.

The Labor party and the Labor movement from its earliest times had placed great importance on unity and solidarity. The danger the party faced without strong radical liberal and strong positive socialist elements was that the demand and need for solidarity would come to be equated with conformity and that the non-conformity of the radical, the intellectual, or the socialist would be branded disloyalty. This is not to suggest that the Labor party in 1920 had ceased to be what it had always been, a
radical reforming party concerned with using the power of the state to assist wage earners and farmers and to provide government by popular will. However a change was occurring and became more evident with the expulsion of Rymer and Moroney in 1926, and the disaffiliation in that year of the ARU.

At the end of 1919, Goold Adams left Queensland on his six months' pre-retirement leave. The government had made no recommendations regarding a successor; indeed it had been made clear to Goold Adams that no more imported British governors would be sought. Amid cries of anguish and fury from Nationalists and the non-Labor press, Lennon was appointed lieutenant governor in January 1920. His elevation was to be partly the first step to introducing Australian-born governors and partly a guarantee that the vice-regal representative would appoint sufficient Labor nominees to give the government a majority in the upper house.

In February, the Council again rejected Theodore's income tax proposals and the amendment to the Land Act to provide for a reassessment by the Land Court of pastoral rent. This was to be their last defeat of the government. The PLP in January had agreed to appoint fourteen new members to the Council to provide for a Labor majority there. Sixty-three candidates were endorsed by the QCE for the selection, and in February Lennon appointed the fourteen elected by the PLP. There was little doubt that the fourteen were chosen with one purpose in mind, abolition. They were closely associated with the trade unions; they had demanding positions outside the Council and like the other councillors were to receive no salary. That the government did not immediately pass a bill through both houses abolishing the Council was due largely to a fit of human uncertainty that overtook the party now that the most significant and dramatic constitutional change was within its grasp. A state election was only twelve months away and in the previous three months Hunter's seat of Maranoa had been lost in the by-election, while Labor in Queensland had lost further votes in the 1919 federal election. There was uncertainty, therefore, regarding the electors' reaction to any use of its new majority by the government to abolish the Council. There was uncertainty over the attitude the British government would take, since the abolition bill, being an amendment to the constitution, would require royal assent and not merely that of Lennon. Finally, there was some uncertainty inside the Labor party — in parliament, the unions, and the branches — about the propriety of abolishing the Council before putting the question once more before the electors either at a referendum or at a general election. There were also some legislative councillors who were not sure that the upper house should in fact be abolished now that Labor had a majority. Frank Bulcock recalled that one Labor member of the Council, G. Page-Hanify, circulated a document opposing the abolition. Theodore attempted to
end the speculation, when speaking about the new appointees: "The additional members have been appointed to prevent the Government measures from being unceremoniously flung out of the Council. The Government will not take advantage of its new strength in the Council to abolish that Chamber. At any rate until it gets a fresh mandate from the people. That could be either by making the abolition the principal issue at an election or by way of another referendum."

Despite the premier’s remarks, a letter to the *Daily Standard* by Page-Hanify, complaining of the decision of the PLP not to proceed with the initiative and referendum, even though it now had the power to pass this bill, raised some uneasy feelings in the party about what the plush seats in the upper house might be doing to Labor resolution. The PLP and particularly the AWU members were having second thoughts about a number of electoral issues, and the decision not to proceed with the initiative and referendum after a majority had been obtained in the Council was accompanied by the dropping of a bill, rejected again by the Council in 1919, to allow eighteen-year-olds to vote. In other areas, there was not the same reserve. As soon as the Council majority had been obtained, a Profiteering Prevention Bill, also previously rejected by the Council, was passed, along with a Fair Rents Bill, the amendment to the Lands Act, and the new Income Tax Bill. Theodore further announced that the government would be proceeding with the establishment of the state iron and steel works at Bowen on the north Queensland coal field. In the meantime, a delegation of Sir Robert Philp, the former premier, Sir Alfred Cowley, a sugar planter and former Speaker, with a solicitor, J. A. Walsh, had been appointed from the state’s conservatives to go to England to interview the secretary of state for colonies over the constitutional changes effected by the Labor government’s swamping of the Council.

At the end of February, Theodore left for England to dissuade the Colonial Office from appointing another British governor and to obtain a further loan on the London market to continue the state’s public works and railway construction. In London, he found that Philp, Cowley, and Walsh were concerned not only with the Legislative Council but also with advising British investors against assisting the Queensland loan. At each meeting with the financiers, Theodore found that the amendment to the Land Act, which would increase rents principally on the British companies’ leased properties, was being hailed as repudiation and breach of contract. At the same time his government’s refusal to allow the British-owned Brisbane Tramway Company to increase its fares, and the government’s intention of purchasing the tramways at their market value rather than at the company’s value, were noted as further examples of the spleen of a Labor government against investors. Theodore was offered a loan only if his government recanted. He refused and returned to Australia.
through the United States, where a smaller loan, but at a higher rate of interest, was negotiated. All round it was not a particularly successful trip, since the British government had refused his request to appoint an Australian governor.

Another blot had been thrown on the ideal picture of Labor in politics and, if it was not already aware of it, the Labor party had now been shown the limitations that practical politics placed on a Labor government even when it commanded a majority in both houses. Those Labor politicians who were less capable and who could not really comprehend the magnitude of their party's task retreated to a position of being fixers and wire-pullers for their constituents and concerning themselves merely with holding their own seats, in the belief that the system could not be changed, while those of greater capability, and with a clearer vision of how Labor ideals could be made realities, stuck doggedly to their difficult task.

While Theodore was in England, the Labor-in-Politics Convention was held in Townsville. The QCE report, which McDonald delivered, noted the gains made in 1918 in rural areas and commended the PLP for its legislation which had favoured farmers. In delivering his presidential address, Demaine was more inclined to reflect the idealist Labor position, praising the workers in Russia and emphasizing the role that education would play in producing the socialist state. But while this view was still the party's ideal, McDonald's reflected more the party's reality. It would go no faster than it thought the people were capable of accepting and it was to be the PLP, not the convention, which decided that pace. The 1920 convention also indicated the limits of the power which it held over the PLP when the latter chose to ignore its decisions. A motion to delete from the platform voting rights for eighteen-year-olds was lost, though no bill to provide this was ever introduced by later Labor governments; a motion for the immediate institution of the initiative and referendum was passed, though never implemented, while a call for the PLP to support total prohibition of liquor, which was overwhelmingly supported by the convention, was quietly ignored in a referendum later in the year when the electors voted for a continuation of liquor sales. For the first time a lengthy debate was held on the place of education in attaining Labor's goals. A proposal to hold a royal commission into the state education system was opposed by the cabinet ministers present and lost. There were some in the party who appreciated that education could be the most powerful tool in the party's armoury, but these were outnumbered by those who saw Labor politics in narrower, less radical, and more mundane terms.

In the non-Labor press, the furore over the swamping of the Council, combined with Theodore's unsuccessful visit to London, seemed to be reacting against the government. Before that campaign could gain further momentum, and in order to take advantage of the attempt by overseas
capitalists to dictate to the government, the cabinet decided to call an immediate election. An election on such issues could be expected to bring back into the party those unionists who were openly advocating a separate trade union party. In his policy speech, Theodore promised an additional tax on wealth and the raising of two million pounds (four million dollars) in a local loan. Despite the financial difficulties, he promised that the iron and steel works would still be built and that child endowment would be introduced and related to the basic wage; that the Council would be abolished, the initiative and referendum introduced, and adult franchise provided in local government elections. As the campaign developed, the Labor party was forced further away from its anti-capitalist stance and compelled to argue not only that investment capital was not leaving the state because of the government's actions, but also that, in fact, Queensland was a good state in which to invest.

The election produced a sharp swing away from the government, with Labor being returned with a majority of only four seats. The three non-Labor parties — Country, Northern Country, and Nationalist — polled 51.4 per cent of the primary vote to the Labor party’s 47.7 per cent. The population movements of the previous ten years away from the Labor rural areas to Nationalist urban areas had produced large safe Nationalist seats in the metropolitan and near-metropolitan areas, while the new Country party was able to regain for the non-Labor parties four of the southeastern dairying, sugar, and mixed farming seats.

The 1920 election result was to have long-term effects on the attitudes of future Labor governments. That only seven Labor members were returned from the sixteen seats which could now be classed as metropolitan, reinforced suspicions about the potential of the metropolitan area and confirmed the belief that for Labor to succeed in Queensland it had to concentrate its efforts and propaganda in the rural areas and in the towns associated with rural industries. It made the party doubly suspicious of capital investment, of the industrial enterprises that accompanied this, and of the resulting larger cities which might vote against Labor. In turn this reinforced the belief that the practical man, holding the legendary virtues of the shearer, the miner, or the small farmer, was to be preferred to the city gent, the brainy democrat, or the political idealist who generally came from the city. The capital costs and losses in some areas of the state enterprises had again come under fire during the election, reducing further the enthusiasm of many members of the PLP for this version of socialism.

Political power was to be used in future to ameliorate the worst evils of capitalism, rather than to engage that system in the frontal attack that Ryan and Theodore had pursued from 1915. Labor policies in future would concentrate on opening land for closer settlement, guaranteeing
farmers a fair return for their produce, and providing their employees with fair wages, hours, and conditions. Labor governments would legislate to control the prices of food and other commodities, to perfect the arbitration and conciliation system to provide a more equal basis for industrial negotiations, and use the state machinery to guarantee employment for as many working men as possible. The idealism of the early movement had been tempered by the realities of politics and, while the grand schemes passed so easily at successive conventions had not all come to pass, enough had been achieved in the previous five years to repay the faith of those who had argued that Labor should enter politics in its own right and not simply tag along as part of a lib-lab coalition or as part of a Liberal party.

While the initiative and referendum was not introduced in the new parliament, adult franchise for local government elections was passed and, later, the only bill in Australia before the depression to provide for unemployment relief and unemployment insurance. It might well be argued that granting adult franchise in local government elections was as much an attempt to break the local power of anti-Labor landholders as a desire to implement a Labor ideal. The uncertainty about how to deal with the Council remained; however, when J. C. Peterson, the Labor member for Normanby, defected to the Country party in 1921 and there was the possibility of a second defection, Theodore quickly introduced a bill to provide for the abolition. There was a fear in the Labor party that a Nationalist government, with the new British governor, Sir Matthew Nathan, a London financier, could reswarm the Council with Nationalists, while there was no guarantee that the elective Council which the Country party sought would not be chosen on a restrictive franchise. The bill was quickly passed through both houses and, despite a deputation to the colonial secretary from the non-Labor members, the British government declined to refuse royal assent and so Queensland became the first state to be governed by a single elected chamber. Ryan’s proposed advisory committee was not included in Theodore’s bill, but instead the solicitor general was required to peruse each bill before the third reading to certify that it was in order.

The major constitutional planks in the platform had been effected. The way, theoretically, was now open for the development of a model Labor state. But if this was not achieved, and if Labor governments after 1922 were not as radical as the first Ryan government, it was because of the extreme difficulty of finding men with capabilities to match the aspirations of the party.


Hunter, John McEwan. b. Pittsworth (Qld), 1863; d. Brisbane, 1940. Merchant. MLA (Maranoa), 1907–19. Secretary for public lands,


RYAN, Thomas Joseph. b. at sea off Mauritius, 1852; d. (?). Shearer. MLA (Barcoo), 1892–93. Convention delegate, 1892. CPE member, 1892–94. Member of the Barcaldine Strike Committee, 1891; acquitted of conspiracy charge. Secretary, Qld Labourers' Union and Central District Council, ALF, 1891–92. Vice-chairman, New Australia Settlement Association; did not go to Paraguay.


SEYMOUR, Charles. b. Dublin (Ireland), 1856; d. Brisbane, 1924. Sea-
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man, bookkeeper, journalist. Convention delegate, 1892, 1898. CPE member, 1892, 1895–96, 1901–5. Secretary, Brisbane branch of the Federated Seamen's Union of Australasia, 1885; secretary, Qld branch, 1892. ITUC delegate, 1888, 1889. Member, Maritime Strike Committee, Sydney, 1890. Treasurer, ALF, 1889–99. Secretary, board of trustees, Worker, 1890; sub-editor, 1893–1900; editor, 1911–15.


NOTES

1. W. G. Spence, Australia's Awakening, p. 175.
2. A good account of the early attempts to form trade unions and political Labor movements in Brisbane is given in W. J. H. Harris, First Steps.
3. Brisbane Courier, 3 May 1886. Galloway's election dodgers said he was a Liberal candidate and a white labour candidate who stood for the development of native industries.
4. See also D. J. Murphy, “Two Administrators”, in D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce, and Colin A. Hughes, eds., Prelude to Power, chap. 17, and R. J. Sullivan, “Early Labour in Queensland with Special Reference to Albert Hinchcliffe”.
5. See also Gavin Souter, A Peculiar People, and G. Hannan, “The New Australia Movement”.

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6. The *Boomerang* was owned by Lane, Alf Walker, secretary of the Brisbane T.L.C., and J. G. Drake, a barrister and postmaster general in the first federal cabinet.


9. Ibid., pp. 10–11.


11. Ibid., p. X.

12. Other candidates advertised as being Labor were W. L. Davis in Charters Towers and T. Hunter in Carvarvon, while future Labor members included J. P. Hoolan, standing as a Radical in Burke, J. S. Collings, as a Griffithite in Bowen, and John Fogarty, as an Independent Protectionist in Toowoomba.


14. See Murphy et al., *Prelude to Power*, p. 315, for a table of unionists in Queensland, and J. Laverty “The Queensland Economy”, ibid., p. 36, for employees in Queensland.


16. This was a closely knit association within the building trades unions which went beyond the talking shop of the TLC and proposed through a solid front to protect members against blacklisting, to consolidate the eight-hour system, to organize new unions, and to provide the financial basis to carry out these aims.


18. Both Mabbott and Casey later went to Paraguay with Lane. See Souter, *A Peculiar People*.


20. Delegates attended from the miners at Charters Towers and Gympie, the Queensland railway employees, the Brisbane Early Closing Association, the Maritime Council, the Brisbane Building Trades Council, the bushworkers of central Queensland, boilermakers, butchers, and the Brisbane District Council of the ALF.


22. Press cuttings of the tour are included in the Glassey papers.


27. The council comprised M. Fanning (a shearer and ALF organizer from central Queensland), Charles McDonald (a watchmaker and ALF organizer from Charters Towers), James Stewart (a journalist and selector from Rockhampton), T. Foley (a carpenter from Townsville), R. Morrison (a miner from Wide Bay), together with Hinchcliffe (provisional president), representing the Brisbane district council, Casey attending as organizer, and Seymour as provisional secretary.
28. Worker, September 1890; ALI, Official Report of the First Annual Session of the General Council (Brisbane, 1890) (Seymour papers).

29. Boomerang, 9 August 1890.

30. H. Kenway, "The Pastoral Strikes of 1891 and 1894", in Murphy et al., Prelude to Power, p. 112.

31. Hinchcliffe to H. M. Graham, 13 January 1891, COL 415A, QSA. Copies of telegrams and letters seized by the government are in the QSA.

32. Brisbane Courier, 24 February 1891.

33. Ibid., 5 March 1891.

34. Worker, 7 March 1891.

35. Fothergill to Taylor, 12 March 1891, COL 415A, QSA.

36. Fothergill to Hamilton, 19 February 1891, COL 415A, QSA.

37. E. H. Lane, Dawn to Dusk, p. 48.

38. Glassey to Taylor, 8 March 1891, COL 415A, QSA.


40. Ibid., p. 67.

41. Byrnes to Tozer, 14 March 1891, COL 414 QSA.

42. See Hannan, "New Australia Movement", 49–56 for a good account of Lane’s hopes in New Australia.

43. For a report on the convention, see the Worker, 20 August 1892.

44. "Manifesto of the Queensland Labour Party", 9 September 1892 (Seymour papers).

45. Worker, 29 April 1893.

46. Executive Council Minutes, 22 December 1892. Ryan was thus the first notable victim of Mat Reid to be refused endorsement.


48. The QTA is a good example. See J. Hagan, Printers and Politics, and J. Hagan, "The Queensland Typographical Association", in Murphy et al., Prelude to Power, chap. 10.

49. See Sullivan, "The Australian Labor Federation".


51. S. Rayner, in "The Evolution of the Queensland Labour Party to 1907" (M.A. thesis, Queensland University, 1947), claims:

The talkativeness of the Labour Members in their first session is well illustrated by the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Member</th>
<th>No. in the Assembly</th>
<th>No. of Speeches</th>
<th>No. of speeches in Committee</th>
<th>Lines in Hansard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>35,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government supporters</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>50,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>56,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>20,060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52. This is discussed at length in T. A. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia 4 (Melbourne, 1969): 2234–2261.
56. Griffith's account of the formation and defeat of the Dawson government is given in Griffith to the Secretary of State for Colonies, 1, 7 December 1899, and 4 January 1900, GOV. 33, QSA. For Dawson's account see the *Worker*, 23 December 1899. See also Murphy, "The Dawson Government in Queensland".
58. J. Lesina, *Federation, Black Labour and Monopoly* (anti-federation pamphlet, Glassey papers).
63. Ibid., pp. 16ff.
64. *Worker*, 29 July 1905.
71. PLP minutes, 16 August 1911. Both Ryan and Hamilton obtained twenty votes out of a possible twenty-six.
72. Ibid., 12 March 1912.
73. For a contemporary politician's view, see T. O'Sullivan, "Reminiscences of the Queensland Parliament 1903–1915", p. 128.
74. Kidston had provided counsel for members of Badgers employees' association to fight the union in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. *Brisbane Courier*, 13 December 1910.
75. For an account of the strike, see A. A. Morrison, "The Brisbane General Strikes of 1912", and Glenda Strachan, "The Brisbane Strike of 1912".
77. *Worker*, 16 March 1912.
78. See Celia Hamilton, "Irish-Australian Catholics and the Labour Party", chap. 5.
79. PLP minutes, 21 November 1912.
82. PLP minutes, 31 May 1915.
83. Ibid.
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84. Denham had been quite upset in 1914 to find that the meat companies were more intent on profit than patriotism. Denham to agent general, 22 August 1914, PRE/55, QSA.
85. QPD 120 (2 September 1915): 568–75.
86. For an account of the manoeuvring over the Workers' Compensation Bill, see Murphy, "T. J. Ryan".
88. Worker, 23 September 1915
90. Worker, 9 December 1915.
91. CPE minutes, 26 June 1916.
92. When Fihelly had narrowly defeated Barber for the secretaryship of the PLP in 1914, Adamson had begun to be concerned with the number of Catholics in executive positions in the PLP. *Daily Standard*, 5 February 1917
94. CPE minutes, 15 March 1917
95. 1917 St R Q 208.
96. (1917) 23 CLR 457.
99. QPD 127 (23 October 1917): 2130ff
100. Ibid., (22 November 1917), pp. 3132–38, see Murphy, "T. J. Ryan", chap. 13, for a fuller account.
101. The historian Ernest Scott in his *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–18*, 11 (Sydney 1941): 415–16, accepted the report of this meeting as relayed by the *Argus* reporter accompanying Hughes. The files in the Queensland archives, containing the statements of Nationalists involved in the mêlée, show that this *Argus* report was far from accurate.
102. *Daily Standard*, 9 August 1921
106. Quoted in the *Worker*, Brisbane, 4 April 1918.
107. Memorial presented to His Excellency Major Sir Hamilton Goold Adams by Honourable members of the Legislative Council of the State of Queensland, 10 May 1918, item 18/7536, PRL 594, QSA.
111. At the CPE meeting on 20 November 1918 the party changed its name from the Queensland Labour party to the Queensland branch of the ALP. The CPE was thereafter called the QCE.
112. QCE minutes, 25 March 1919.
113. See the speeches from political and industrial leaders welcoming Ryan back to Brisbane, *Daily Standard*, 30 July 1919
115. Interview with Bulcock, Typescript in Oxley and Fryer libraries.
117. Additional information on the opposition in Queensland to Theodore’s visit is contained in Bernie Schedvin; “E. G. Theodore and the London Pastoral Lobby”, Politics 6, no. 1 (May 1971).


120. Ibid., September 1920.


122. Papers relating to the Council abolition are to be found in *QPP* 1 (1922): 21–66.
Mounted police and foot police wait, with mounted and foot special (volunteer) police, for the procession of workers on 'Black Friday' in the Brisbane general strike, 1912 (Courtesy Oxley Library)
The Queensland Worker of 3 June 1915 records the sixth government in Australia captured by Labor (Courtesy Mitchell Library)
The history of the United Labor party of South Australia up to 1920 falls naturally into six phases. First is the story of its origins in the trade union movement of Adelaide in the 1880s, and its entry into the political arena in the early 1890s. Then comes a period of trial and error, a search for appropriate roles in the political environment of the 1890s. In the years 1898–1903 a distinct recession of power and enthusiasm can be detected, matched by a resurgence of conservative forces in the state's politics. But out of adversity was to come strength, for the party entered a fourth phase, of revival through organization and extension, from 1904 to 1910. In this period the parliamentary Labor party (PLP) provided two members of a coalition government, including Tom Price, Australia’s first Labor premier (except for the short-lived Dawson ministry in Queensland in 1899). From revival to power was the fifth, and natural, progression, when in 1910 Labor formed its first government unrestrained by coalition arrangements. This period of power was broken in 1912 over the question of the powers of the Legislative Council: it was a period of unstable equilibrium in federal and New South Wales politics too, and in each case Labor ministries returned, even stronger than before. In South Australia, as elsewhere, the next phase was the collapse of the party’s political fortunes brought on by the conscription crisis, and the subsequent efforts to clarify the party’s purposes and organization. As the elections of 1921 approached, the South Australian branch of the Labor party was once again challenging the Liberal Union for political power.

I

The first men elected to an Australian parliament as members of a Labor party, pledged to its platform, committed to its organization, and promoted specifically as its representatives were David Charleston, Robert Guthrie, and Andrew Kirkpatrick. They were all members of the United Labor party of South Australia (ULP), and in May 1891 they were elected to the Legislative Council of South Australia. Charleston and Guthrie were returned first and second for Central District, which included Adelaide, gaining 2,942 and 2,155 votes respectively. There were seven other
candidates for the two vacancies, and 10,707 votes cast.

Charleston was born in Cornwall in 1848. He came to Australia in 1884 after working in the United States and China. He was an engineer by trade, a member of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, their representative on the Adelaide United Trades and Labour Council (UTLC), its president for twelve months in 1889–90, and president of the Women’s Trade Union. He was appointed to the magistracy in 1888. Even before migrating to Australia he had been active in land reform societies in London, while in the colony he was a speaker on behalf of the single tax.1 Guthrie was born in Scotland in 1857, and came to Australia in 1878. He was a seaman, and from 1888 secretary of the Port Adelaide branch of the Seamen’s Union. He too was a member of the UTLC, as well as being president of the Maritime Labour Council at Port Adelaide in 1890. He represented the Seamen’s Union at the Intercolonial Trade Union Congress (ITUC) in 1885 and again in 1887. He was on the executive of the Homestead Block League, and he had been chief ruler of the Independent Order of Rechabites, which means, almost certainly, that he was a Primitive Methodist. Like Charleston, he was a Justice of the Peace.2 Kirkpatrick was born in London in 1848. He was a compositor, and president of the local Typographical Society. He was president of the UTLC, and of the Eight Hours Union at the time of the elections. Kirkpatrick (2,325 votes) was elected for the Southern District, along with R. C. Baker (2,478 votes). There were three other candidates and 9,548 votes cast. Proportions of this sort were to remain typical of Labor’s vote for the next twenty years, until the political situation settled into the groove of a two-party competition.

Why this success, in 1891, in the Legislative Council elections, by the United Labor party of South Australia? First it is necessary to consider the social and political environment in the colony.

The population of the colony in 1890 was 320,000, of whom 42 per cent lived in Adelaide and its suburbs. The traditions on which the colony sustained its self-identity were those of freedom and individual achievement. This was the “paradise of dissent” which had become the respectable society, untainted by convictism, with a restricted range of economic and social differences, only a few very wealthy or destitute, and with most accepting the Victorian bourgeois liberal ethos of sober self-help and proper conformity, yielding a fairly open-meshed society with considerable, though contracting, opportunities for upward mobility.

The dominant economic activities of the colony were rural, and in particular the production of wheat, together with the declining copper mines of Moonta, Wallaroo, and Burra. Meanwhile the total value of the activities conducted in Adelaide and its suburbs was probably rising proportionately to all the others. Clearly the original Wakefieldian vision
of a colony of prosperous, independent yeoman farmers had been given substantial, though not by any means total, reality.

Nonetheless, in 1891 there were 870 factories in the colony, employing 12,600 males (about 13 per cent of all males aged 16—65) and over 2,000 females. While some of these workers (approximately 3,500) were employed in small concerns such as forges and mills in rural areas, there was a considerable degree of factory concentration in the city of Adelaide and in the suburbs reaching out to Port Adelaide. There were 20 factories in this area with more than 100 employees (a total of 3,800), another 30 with 20—29 workers (1,300), and 400 employing 3—19 people (4,000). The most notable of these were in the boot, iron, clothing, timber, tanning, and tobacco industries, the larger retail trade, and the transport and maritime industries.

Unions had emerged in most of these urban industries and trades in the 1870s and 1880s. Some of the unions were based on crafts, with small membership and with concern for the skills and income they enjoyed as craftsmen — for example the saddlemakers whom F. W. Coneybeer represented. But there were already unions of the unskilled — the Port Adelaide Workingmen’s Association (established in 1873), the Seamen’s Union (1874), the Shearers’ Union (1886), the Suburban and Port Road Drivers’ Association (1877), the Railway Service Mutual Association (1870).

The nature of politics in South Australia up to the mid-1890s reflected the dominant liberal bourgeois values, both rural and urban, which were current in the community. In the constitution inaugurated in 1856 all adult males received the vote for the House of Assembly, a radical step at that time, widely remarked on throughout the British empire. The Legislative Council, however, was elected on a far more restrictive franchise, and one which became increasingly so as the years went by: £50 ($100) freehold, £20 ($40) leasehold, or residence in a house of an annual value of £25 ($50). In effect, the propertied interests of the colony, in good whiggish style, were entrenched in the upper house.

Political behaviour in the Assembly was based on parliamentary factions clustering around men of talent and energy — for example, in the 1890s, C. C. Kingston, T. Playford, J. Downer. These factional groups had no formalized extraparliamentary support: contemporary thought frowned on such breaches of the doctrines of independence and the promotion of the common good. To some degree there was a division of political opinion in the colony, conservative versus liberal, but it had been long since institutionalized. Conservatives dominated the Legislative Council, while men of liberal outlook, mostly Adelaide residents, filled the House of Assembly. In the Assembly the groups had not, up to the entry of the Labor party, polarized in any significant way around such issues as
free trade or protection (as was beginning to occur in New South Wales). Rather they fluctuated unpredictably in membership, exhibiting a low degree of cohesion, with frequent examples of confused cross-voting, concerning themselves with the fate of the government and their own separate special concerns.

The UTLC was established on 31 January 1884, with aims of “uniting more closely the various trade societies, discussing unitedly any question affecting the welfare of any society, and...having more political influence in the colony”. It drew its support from the urban-based unions noted earlier. Within three years, nineteen societies were sending forty-three delegates, representing 3,000 workmen, to the meetings of the Council. Moreover, by 1887 the Port Adelaide Labor societies had also formed a representative body, the Maritime Labour Council.

The business of the UTLC during the 1880s suggests a fair degree of common purpose among all these unions. It concerned itself in the conduct of industrial disputes, and in such matters of public concern as the Chinese question, the tariff, payment of members of parliament, employer liability, land tax, the franchise, and education. Not all these issues yielded unanimous decisions, for there were tensions, for example, on the tariff in the meeting of 1 May 1885. But, as the aims of the UTLC show, there was a general conviction “that to be anything we must be political”, a remark made in that debate on the tariff question. It was not long, therefore, before a parliamentary committee was appointed, on 26 June 1885, in response to the advice given on the subject at the 1884 ITUC.

Broadly, the established organs of public opinion, for example the newspapers and politicians, quickly came to approve of the activities of the UTLC, even if they spoke of “that noble fusion of capital and labour under which each man will work for all and everyone will work for his fellow”. It was to be on the basis of this community acceptance of the concept and the activities of unionism that the successful development of a Labor party was to be built in South Australia. The craft unions were most obviously moderate in their approach to working conditions and community problems, and it was from these groups that most of the UTLC and early ULP spokesmen came. All these unions emphasized their roles as benevolent societies, and as conciliators in times of industrial trouble. As yet the unionization of the unskilled had not proceeded far and so the impact of an angrier, more forceful style of union behaviour was not yet – in the late 1880s – apparent in South Australia.

Several Adelaide politicians, while thoroughly middle-class in social and economic background, took positively pro—working-class – or at least radically Liberal – positions on a number of issues in these years. Men such as Dr. J. A. Cockburn and C. C. Kingston spoke and wrote
favourably of the UTLC and its social and political ambitions. To such men, and to the bourgeois-dominated community generally, the trade unions were acceptable entities worthy of a place in the system of power and prestige.

It was the parliamentary committee of the UTLC which took the initiative in identifying public issues for the attention of the Council, and in waiting in deputation on politicians, e.g. on the immigration question in June and July 1885, when on the committee’s advice the Council convened a public meeting which resulted in a series of resolutions being presented to the government. It was this committee, at the direction of the Council on 7 August 1885, which formulated a policy in order that “people in the country might know what the political views of the Council were”. The platform, adopted at the Council meeting of 21 January 1887, was payment of members; protection for protective, not revenue purposes; increase in the current land tax; extension of employers liability to merchant seamen; introduction of a factory and workshops act; a mining on private property act. These were the issues upon which Adelaide working men were united in demanding action by the politicians. Payment of members was crucial to getting working men into parliament, while the other points clearly related to the conditions of work of the Council’s member unions. These urban groups were seeking to mount sectional pressure in the political field in order to improve these conditions of working and living. This notion of sectional pressure on the political system had long been accepted. It had been integrated with the older, Burkean, notion of independent representatives of the whole community by the practice of the sectional groups endorsing but not controlling the parliamentarians through whom they sought to present their views. It was this practice with which the four-year-old UTLC began to experiment in the elections of 1887. It was not unique in proceeding along these lines. The ITUCs had been discussing the idea of direct Labor representation, notably at the 1886 congress in Adelaide. That ITUC was itself evidence of the growing sense of identity building up among working-class groups in many centres of Australia. Much in European and American example and propaganda assisted in this process, and in broad terms its effects must be presumed to have filtered through to Adelaide. David Charleston was certainly one obvious transmitter of such ideas; many other UTLC leaders had experienced or were aware of these overseas examples too. There is no need to rehearse these contexts again.

On the local scene there had been abortive efforts in the 1870s to give working men direct political influence, in the United Tradesmen’s Society, the National Liberal Reform League, and the Labour League. They had all foundered from poor support, itself a sign that working men in Adelaide in the 1870s were not able or willing to see themselves as needing
a specific political voice. Instead, organization developed along trade union lines, and gradually out of this grew, first the UTLC, and then the effort to achieve positive parliamentary representation.

On 3 November 1886 the UTLC (on the motion of its secretary, W. Robinson) referred to member unions of the Council a scheme prepared by the parliamentary committee to raise the necessary funds to support direct working-class representation in parliament. The proposal was also given an airing at the Adelaide ITUC in September 1886. But, until such time as the unions would adopt the idea of a per capita levy, the Council had to rely on middle-class politicians who seemed worthy of support, and of course, to press for payment of members.

Consequently, prior to the 1887 Assembly elections the UTLC discussed supporting several candidates for city electorates in return for their adherence to the Council’s platform. As a result, nine politicians, including C. C. Kingston, J. G. Jenkins, and T. Scherk were adopted. Only A. A. Kirkpatrick, a candidate in the Port Adelaide electorate, had close UTLC affiliations. He and one other of these nine were defeated. Indeed, the Council seems mostly to have supported liberals who were certain to be elected with or without UTLC endorsement.

In the 1888 Legislative Council elections, the UTLC invited G. W. Cotton, a retired carpenter and land agent, to stand for the Central District. He had been first elected to the Legislative Council in 1882, and had gained UTLC approval for his energetic championing of working-class causes, especially small landholdings (or “blocks”). Cotton was returned, and continued his passionate espousal of Labor interests. At times he gave the impression that he regarded himself as a direct Labor representative, for example in the 1891 Conciliation Bill debate. He died in 1892.

Similarly, a range of nineteen safe bourgeois liberals (plus Kirkpatrick again) were selected for the 1890 Assembly election, on the basis of an expanded platform, adopted on 28 February 1890, which called for “protection for the purpose of encouraging local industries and for the further development of the resources of the colony”; a lien bill; a workshop and factory act on the lines of the New Zealand bill; payment of members; progressive tax on land value, without exemption; tax on foreign bottoms; inspection of land boilers; free education, with maintenance of present standard; an absent seamen’s voting bill; reform of the Legislative Council in the direction of manhood suffrage and shorter terms; workingmen’s blocks and loans to blockers; provision of a Trades Hall site, or a sum on the estimates for that purpose; the removal of duties from tea, coffee, cocoa, kerosene; a reciprocity treaty with Queensland; the amendment of the Railway Commissioners Act; the establishment of a department of labour; and a redistribution of seats bill. Fourteen of these twenty adopted candidates were elected, but none of them acknowledged the UTLC as
their political guide or patron after the elections were over.

Two events transformed this restricted, fundamentally passive approach to the political scene, in which neither Labor candidates nor self-consciously Labor voters seemed to exist in large numbers. The first was the passage in 1890 of the bill making permanent the payment of members of both houses which had been passed for the life of one parliament in 1887. It had been promoted for nearly twenty years by radical liberals mainly on the argument that payment was necessary to free representatives from improper sectional influences. In the minds of some supporters, however, including the UTLC, the measure would permit the proper representation of hitherto excluded groups. The implications were obvious. No longer would working men be excluded from parliament for want of funds. Moreover, societies could join together more readily in sponsoring candidates now that the matter of finance was removed from their concern. Again, reliance on middle-class candidates of independent means and outlook, never a satisfactory or certain practice, would no longer be necessary. Payment of members had thus opened up the possibility of a decisive change in the colony's parliamentary structure.

The other crucial event of 1890 was the maritime strike. It affected South Australia in a number of ways. The conflict originated in the eastern colonies, and was taken up in South Australia out of a sense of Labor solidarity. It was exacerbated by the belligerence of the members of the Employers' Union in Adelaide who were engaged in interstate shipping and who were linked with their competitors in Sydney and Melbourne. There was little difference in the degree of support accorded to the maritime Labor bodies in Adelaide by the societies of skilled and unskilled workers: if anything, the skilled societies were more enthusiastic in their support than were the unskilled. Between them they contributed £10,000 ($20,000) to the local strike fund.

The unionists were defeated in Adelaide, as in the rest of Australia, with a few exceptions: the Port Pirie wharf labourers secured a reduction in the working day; the marine engineers made a satisfactory agreement for three years; the marine officers retained the recognition of their association and the wage increases gained earlier. The main product of the strike in Adelaide, as in Sydney, was a bitter feeling towards the employers, and a heightened willingness to explore other avenues by which influence could be exerted, and in particular by which industrial issues could be settled without recourse to strikes. It is clear that this did not mean working men in Adelaide turned for the first time to seek parliamentary representation. But it did mean a tremendous fillip to the organizational efforts already being mounted. It reinforced the sense of class-identity that was being expressed in those efforts, and summoned forth sufficient effort to induce workers to organize and to vote for direct
Labor candidates simply because they were members of their own social and economic class.\(^1\)\(^3\)

The critical organizational step aimed at capitalizing on this feeling was the recommendation of the UTLC Parliamentary Committee on 12 December 1890 that a public meeting be held, to which all constituent societies of the Council should be invited, to discuss the return of “bona fide labor candidates at the forthcoming [Legislative Council] elections”. This election marked the full reconstruction of the Legislative Council under an act of 1881, which provided for the division of the province into four Council electorates, each of which was to return six members, to be elected at three-yearly intervals with eight members retiring each time. In 1891 the last three members of the Legislative Council returned by the whole province, plus two members for the Central District and one from each of the other three electorates, retired. Thus there were in all eight vacancies to be filled.

This special meeting was held at the Selborne Hotel, Pirie Street, Adelaide, on 7 January 1891. It was agreed that direct Labor candidates should be selected to contest the forthcoming Council elections for the Central and Southern Districts. A list of potential candidates was to be drawn up and a plebiscite taken of all members of workingmen’s clubs and trade unions in the area. An election fund was to be established with a levy of 6d. (5 cents) per member. A committee was named; it comprised the parliamentary committee of the UTLC, the secretaries of the Maritime, Building, and Iron Trades Councils, of the South Australian Democratic Club, the German Workingmen’s Association, and the North Adelaide Workingmen’s Social and Patriotic Association.

This committee is referred to in the UTLC minutes as the “Legislative Council Elections Committee”; but it soon became the Council of the United Labor Party of South Australia. For the immediate future – i.e. January to May 1891 – it is the ad hoc nature of the decision which must be emphasized. Organization had been going on, experience gained, momentum had been built up, and now, with these vacancies in the Legislative Council to be contested, an opportunity to act presented itself. No doubt, if another Assembly election had been held instead, it would have provided an opportunity for testing the plans. However, in the immediately preceding months the UTLC had expressed its dissatisfaction with the Legislative Council’s decisions on the Chinese question, on land valuation, and on the education bill.\(^1\)\(^4\) They were not unaware that the constitution gave the Legislative Council virtually equal powers to those possessed by the Assembly. Nor did any final provision exist for settling deadlock between the houses. Under legislation of 1881, disagreement expressed by the rejection in the Council in successive parliaments of Assembly legislation (the second rejection by an absolute majority) could
lead to a dissolution of both houses or the election of an additional representative for each Council district. The legislation made no further provision: if disagreement continued, only private negotiation and concession could alter the situation. Nor was this situation unusual, because the distribution of Council districts and the restrictions on the franchise for its electors meant that it was always dominated by wealthy rural property holders. Clearly any reduction in this dominance was attractive to the UTLC.

The four months succeeding the public meeting in the Selborne Hotel were marked by busy activity on the part of the election committee and other members of the various societies. One important and very early decision concerned who was eligible to be adopted as a candidate. It was agreed to accept those persons as candidates who were “eligible to become a member of a trade or labour society, which trade or labour society is eligible to become affiliated with the UTLC”. This underlined the working-class character of the group — even if some of the supporters of the Democratic Club might have been middle-class radicals and possibly single-taxers (although as yet the necessary research has not been done on this point). The committee also decided that, before acceptance as candidates, applicants would be required to pledge themselves to work as a separate party in parliament, and to refuse office in a non-Labor ministry. Candidates were also to agree to resign from parliament if a plebiscite was conducted resulting in a vote unfavourable to the member concerned. Here was firmly stated the clear intention to achieve a separate identity for the Labor party and for the organization to have control over its representatives — neither of which traits were characteristic of the existing factional political situation. The organizational independence implied was in due course to transform the politics of South Australia, as it did elsewhere in Australia. Unity and accountability, hallmarks of the trade union movement, were now to be transported to the political arena.

The next task was to arrange the selection of the candidates. In the established pattern of the 1880s, a number of already declared candidates wrote to the UTLC seeking its endorsement. However, the plan to select candidates by and from the Labor movement was adhered to: none of these applicants was listened to. Instead, a list of twelve names was submitted in February 1891 to a vote by members of the selection committee’s constituent societies, and out of these Charleston, Guthrie, and Kirkpatrick were chosen, as the UTLC learnt on 6 March 1891.

An intense campaign was then mounted. At Port Adelaide a “Parliamentary and Vigilance Committee” was established. Charleston and Guthrie spoke almost nightly, while Kirkpatrick had a heavy programme in the Southern District. Prominent advertisements were placed in the newspapers. Circulars, how-to-vote tickets, and the agreed platform were
widely distributed. This platform varied from that of 1890 in the following ways. “Progressive Tax on Land Values” was qualified by “or failing this, an increase in the present tax, with exemptions for small holdings” (not really the single tax, but a bow in the direction of that radical reform). “Workshops and Factories Act” was spelt out: “for the purpose of securing adequate breathing space, to regulate and limit the hours of labour, limit the age at which young persons may be employed, and provide proper sanitary arrangements in all buildings used as workrooms and factories” (a typical trade union demand about practical working conditions). “Tax on Goods and Passengers carried intercolonially in foreign vessels” expanded item 6. “Manhood suffrage” was dropped from the Legislative Council plank; while “Redistribution of Seats Bill” grew with “on the basis of population, and the adoption of Adult Suffrage”. Items added to the platform were “Supporting the principle of Taxing Land Values, as embodied in Part XIX of the Municipal Corporations Act of last session”, “Establishment of a State Bank”, “An Act to secure to Tenant Farmers just compensation for their improvements”, “An Eight Hours Bill”, and “Opposed to Free and Assisted Immigration”, while items 4 and 9 were dropped. The emphasis was on social justice, with a qualified acceptance of land taxation, and some recognition of the need to secure votes in the country. The platform and the vigorous campaigning meant the ULP was away to a flying start.

Campaigning in the rural areas to the south and east of Adelaide was difficult and expensive for Andrew Kirkpatrick, for it cost £300 ($600). But he was helped, as were Charleston and Guthrie, by the comprehensive appeal of their platform, with its urban and rural proposals, and by his own personal qualities. All three were leaders of the Labor movement. All devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the campaign. These were to become permanent characteristics of Labor candidates in subsequent campaigns. The advantage in 1891 lay in their exploitation of these techniques when few if any of the other candidates adopted such practices.

Some other, more fortuitous, events may be briefly noted: but noted they must be, for the resounding success of 1891 gave a critical initial impetus to the existence of the Labor party in South Australia. Without that success, it could have been twenty years before a similar opportunity presented itself, an opportunity, that is, matched by a strong corporate sense of identity and a desire to express it in political terms.

These events were conferences in Adelaide of the Amalgamated Shearers’ Union (ASU), and the General Labourers’ Union (GLU), a campaign to win support for the striking Queensland shearsers, and the visit of Sir George Grey. The fifth conference of the ASU and the first conference of the GLU were held in February 1891. W. G. Spence was active in both gatherings, where frequent references were made to the
importance of united action and to parliamentary representation. A party of delegates from the two conferences made the same points to a meeting of the UTLC on 13 February 1891. Soon after, the shearers' strike in Queensland again emphasized the point of common identity of workers: a local defence committee was set up, and Spence, a Queensland delegate to the ASU conference, and D. M. Charleston campaigned in several centres on behalf of the shearsers. Sir George Grey, the veteran radical, and of course one-time governor of the province of South Australia, toured Australia after the Federal Convention meetings in Sydney. He continually urged the adoption of the system of one man, one vote. In Adelaide his meetings were triumphs, as he spoke of democracy and the single tax. He was greeted with vociferous cheering and rapt attention. It could not help but be valuable propaganda for the Labor movement a month before the elections. In all, these events helped to excite and sustain a sense of identity and involvement which finally came to have its expression on the election days in May, when three seats were won.

Naturally, there were moments of rejoicing when the election results were announced. David Charleston picked up some of the strands at a celebration at the Selborne Hotel on election day: "He hoped that now the labor party was represented there would be no more recourse to the barbarous system of strikes, but that their difficulties would be adjusted by intelligent and honorable means. He hoped a new era was dawning — not an era of selfishness and individualism, but of co-operation . . ." In Charleston's remarks the main emphasis was on rational co-operation based on mutual recognition of interest. The Labor representatives would be the spokesmen of the working-class section of the community in the forum where community problems were discussed and resolved. One of the three new councillors came from an unskilled and highly vulnerable occupation, the other two from crafts that had won their place among the aristocracy of Labor. As yet they were all townsmen, which was to remain true of the ULP for the next fifteen years. But it was the beginning of direct Labor representation in the parliament of South Australia.

II

The formal constitution of the ULP of South Australia soon followed. Unfortunately, the evidence is not as certain as we would wish. Since the minute books of the council of the ULP survive only from 1900, we must largely rely on the reports recorded in the minutes and letter books of the UTLC for these early years. From there and other sources it can be said that the secretary of the Legislative Council Elections Committee was J. A. McPherson (who was also the UTLC secretary), and that he wrote on
11 July 1891 convening a meeting to construct a list of candidates for the expected Assembly elections.\(^2\) In this circular he referred to “the well-being of the United Labor Party”. He also indicated that the Legislative Council Elections Committee had been constituted as “a permanent Parliamentary and Vigilance committee, whose duty it will be to consider and report from time to time on all matters affecting the interests of the party”. The constituent members were now: the parliamentary committee of the UTLC; the secretaries of the Building and Iron Trades Council, the South Australian Allg. Deutsches Verein, the Democratic Club, the North Adelaide Working Men’s Society, the Port Adelaide Parliamentary and Vigilance Committee; and the president of the Port Adelaide Working Men’s Association. Once again a fighting fund based on a levy of 1s. (10 cents) per member was proposed; in other respects the rules already agreed on for the selection and behaviour of the candidates were to stand. By December 1891 reference to the United Labor party had become habitual in the UTLC minutes. Thus, it would seem that in retrospect the meeting in the Selborne Hotel in January 1891 must be regarded as the constitutive meeting which established what was to be called the Council of the United Labor Party of South Australia.

There was no general election during 1892, but a by-election for East Adelaide was held in February, at which J. A. McPherson was successful. He had been born in Aberdeen in 1860 and had emigrated to Australia in 1882. He was a compositor and frequently held office in the local Typographical Association, he was secretary of the UTLC from 1890 to 1896 and of the ULP from 1891 to 1896, and he was elected first leader of the parliamentary Labor party (PLP) in 1893. From all these onerous tasks he was released by death in December 1897. Nor, as we shall see, was he the last such loss. Meanwhile the original plebiscite arrangements for the general election were carried through. Sixty-two members of the ULP nominated, covering a wide range of skilled and unskilled employment. There were seven bootmakers and four compositors among them. The fifteen successful candidates, chosen in a first-past-the-post ballot, gained from 2,603 to 1,019 votes. They were Buttery (cabinet maker), McPherson (compositor), Robinson (coach trimmer), McGillivray (stevedore), Gould (bootmaker), Rogers (printer), Hourigan (tanner), Olivier (trade union official), Coneybeer (collarmaker), Archibald (labourer), Stokes (labourer), Wheeler (draper’s assistant), Adams (patternmaker), Wood (blacksmith), and Batchelor (engine fitter). They were then allocated by the ULP council to contest the various multi-member constituencies in Adelaide, and also the Legislative Council vacancy, in consultation with such district committees of the party as had been formed.\(^2\)

As well as this preselection activity, funds were accumulated — about £500 ($1,000) in 1891\(^2\) — and the platform revised. Not unexpectedly
the platform had grown and become more specific. Cessation of land sales was now at the top of the list; early closing had been added; electoral law was now to be amended to permit greater facilities for the transfer of electors from one district to another, to control election expenses, to redistribute Assembly seats on the basis of population, and to give the Council vote on the basis of a £10 ($20) rental. Immigration policy had also become more explicit: "Prohibiting the influx of Asiatic and servile races, and restricting the introduction of immigrants bound to service before arrival in South Australia." Introduction of the referendum was called for, and also the creation of a state export department. As always with the ULP, it was a series of political and economic demands reflecting the sectional interests of the working classes.25

The preparation of rules in January 1893 governing the operation of district committees in each constituency was a further step in the growth of the organization of the ULP.26 Membership was open to any elector who would sign a declaration of support for the objects and platform of the party. Control of the district committees lay finally with the executive committees of the ULP. Local committees were provided for, in the hope that these would be established in every subdivision. Their tasks were essentially those of getting electors qualified, and to the polls. The district committees were to have one representative on the executive of the party.

Thus two sorts of organizations now constituted the ULP — functional and territorial, unions and district committees. This dual arrangement provided the potential for conflict, but nothing of this sort is recorded in the early years, a fact which emphasizes the unity of purpose and identity which had been achieved in launching the party. An important organizational and educational step taken by the party was the publication of a newspaper, the Weekly Herald, in 1894. The company was controlled by directors appointed by the ULP and UTLC. Its editorial and news coverage, though by no means revolutionary, provided an important outlet for alternative political commentary to the existing organs (Register, conservative; Advertiser, liberal).

The Weekly Herald carried frequent reports of the activities of the district committees. Based on the electoral boundaries, they were the key points at election time in cleansing the rolls and mobilizing the voters. They also provided for political education, and strengthened the numbers and hence the finances of the party, holding discussions of general and specific issues, and commenting on the performance of their parliamentary representatives. The best example of the working of such a committee is contained in three retrospective articles on the East Adelaide committee published in the Daily Herald in March 1919. Written from the minute books of the first ten years, the story begins on 20 March 1894 (though a committee to aid J. A. McPherson had operated in 1892). McPherson was
the first secretary of the committee. Meetings were held in the club rooms of the Democratic Club, Flinders Street, Adelaide, and later the Trades Hall. Canvassing was conducted in the Hindmarsh and Young Wards of the city. Election figures were analyzed to identify weaknesses in Labor voting patterns. Socials were held in the Selborne Hotel. The rolls were checked, party plebiscites conducted, opinions expressed on proposed legislation, and by 1899 two candidates, not one, were being run for the two member seat — a sign of the growing Labor dissatisfaction with the Kingstonite liberals.

The terms of eligibility for Labor candidates also became controversial when in July 1893 the exclusion of non-unionist members of the ULP was removed. This decision drew some criticism from union delegates, who feared for the independent existence of the party and their influence on it, and the matter was referred to a plebiscite. The result, dated by Wallis as 13 December 1894, gave 1,291 votes for the more exclusive and 99 for the more open version of the rule. Craig claims that this reversion to the original position raised a “storm of criticism”. The only evidence found of this reaction is in a series of articles in the *Weekly Herald* in 1894 entitled “On the Track Towards Freedom”. On 30 November 1894 the author, “Bluey”, made his hostility plain: “The United Labor Party surely ought not to feel so strong that it can dispense with any section, or that it can in the end gain anything by limiting its own field of choice.”

The more general attitude was a pragmatic recognition that both groups needed one another. Thus in practice, if the biographical data published in the *Herald* is to be relied on, there were occasional relaxations of the rule.

As yet there were no district committees outside the metropolitan area. While constituencies were contested outside this area, especially for the Legislative Council, the ULP found it difficult to establish permanent bases in the rural hinterland of the colony. It was a problem to which the *Herald* turned its attention from time to time: by reporting the mass forays to such country centres as Mount Gambier of a party of speakers from Adelaide, by urging the organization of the country districts, and by editorial discussions of the true interests of the farmers. In effect, therefore, the ULP was an Adelaide-based party, with perhaps the ambition of doing something more.

It was not geographical distribution, however, but the acquisition and exercise of political power which gave purpose and coherence to the ULP. Therefore the onrush of elections built up high peaks of party activity, to be followed by the endeavours of the men elected to parliament as the party’s representatives.

The ULP had a number of advantages in campaigning for the 1893 elections beyond the organizational developments just reviewed. The depression was at its worst in the winter of 1892 and for months follow-
ing, with bank closures, a smaller harvest, and the strike in Broken Hill all intensifying the depressed economic conditions in the colony. In parliament discontent saw the successive defeat of the Playford and Holder ministries in 1892. Downer, the third premier of that year, faced the electors in April 1893 advocating nothing more than “a period of rest and quiet”.30 In this first election for the Assembly which the ULP contested, the party was able to exploit the momentum built up by its Legislative Council successes. Ten Assembly seats, and a fourth in the Council, were captured. Eight were Adelaide seats contested by ULP candidates, while Hooper (Wallaroo) and Poynton (Flinders) identified themselves with the PLP when parliament assembled, even though they had signed no pledges. The much weakened Downer ministry was decisively defeated in the subsequent no-confidence debate, and C. C. Kingston took office, with the enthusiastic, if independent, support of the Labor party. (See Appendix 1, p. 280 for election results, 1893–1921.)

That the Labor members should have been so willing to support Kingston was not surprising. He was well known as a radical liberal. He had often written approving letters to the UTLC.31 The Advertiser was the mouthpiece of liberal opinion in Adelaide in the 1890s. Its reaction to the ULP manifesto of 1893 shows that as yet it was not necessary to draw out the differences between Kingston’s liberalism and the ambitions of the ULP: “There is much in the rest of the comprehensive platform with which a moderate Liberal can warmly sympathise . . . we fail to detect any trace of undue radicalism in the proposals for workshop and factory legislation, liens for the better protection of workmen’s wages, the extension of the system of workmen’s blocks and the further restriction of the importation of contract and servile labour.”32 No doubt the editorial says as much in its silence on taxation and land policy as it does by its outright approval of legislation of factory conditions. Nevertheless, Kingston’s six years as premier saw the enactment of many radical pieces of legislation well suited to the demands of the ULP: women’s franchise, industrial arbitration, a state bank, village settlements, the export department, workmen’s lien, factories regulation. His active public works programme helped to mitigate the effects of the depression. His public pronouncements and the policies he pursued make it plain that he actively supported wider government intervention in the affairs of the community with a view to greater political and social justice.

Kingston’s position as a faction leader in these years was based on his obvious ability and his commitment to a range of radical-liberal propositions about the proper structuring of society. He was a lawyer from a respectable family, and a flamboyant character always anxious to dominate the political limelight. In the Assembly he was certain of about a dozen votes, and confronted by Downer’s faction of about seventeen.
Another group (about fourteen) sometimes called the “Country party” – a phrase more relevant to their electoral origins than any organizations – generally preferred Kingston’s brand of progressive-liberal government to the stolid unimaginative efforts on behalf of the wealthy and successful promoted by Downer. The PLP group of twelve now entered as a fourth main group in the House of Assembly. Obviously their support was important for Kingston’s survival. But equally clear was the fact that for the ULP no alternative faction leader had anything like the same attractions as Kingston. Thus the modern notion of the “balance of power” which presumes an otherwise stable two-party system was irrelevant to the situation confronting the PLP in 1893. Instead, they had to deploy their strength as best they could in search of possible sectional advantages. It can be shown that their numbers, in both Assembly and Council, critically contributed to the passage, and sometimes also to the shape, of some, but only some, of Kingston’s legislation. A few of the early enthusiasts for the ULP made much of these successes, claiming them all for the Labor party. But allowance must be made for the propaganda intent of these pamphlets. On the other hand there is little point in becoming too serious in revising these claims. Clearly the party publicists, in speaking and voting from their convictions about working-class demands, were supporting measures widely acclaimed in the community, so that Kingston could congratulate them at one point — unctuously? — for their “loyalty and devotion to the cause of liberalism”. Similarly Tom Price, a PLP member, spoke of the process as getting “a little, and then a little more of what one wanted”. However, only one act originated by Labor members was enacted with at least some of the original provisions in the period 1893–1900. This was the Marine Board Bill of 1894. In a few other cases the votes of ULP members in divisions were critical to the passage of a bill — the Adult Suffrage Bill of 1894, the Conciliation Bill of 1894, the Factories Bill of 1894, Chinese Immigration Restriction Bill of 1891, and the Education Act Amendment Bill of 1891. Here then were the limits of the parliamentary power of the ULP as they confronted the electors and parliament through the first decade of their existence in South Australia. They were a sectional group among the general body of liberals, another faction in the Assembly.

III

The elections of 1896 at which twelve seats were won, and 1899, eleven seats won, saw little increase in the share of seats held by the ULP in the Assembly, while in the Council the high-water mark of 1894 — six seats — was steadily eroded. Economic conditions had improved; the incidents
which had encouraged working-class solidarity were less frequent; the bona-fides of Kingston's liberalism were coming to be questioned. Moreover, other politicians were coming to imitate Labor's organization, in an attempt to minimize vote-wasting competition; for example, the National Defence League was formed in May 1891 by conservative politicians such as R. C. Baker, with the ULP as much as any other group in mind. Again, federation attracted much attention. It proved to be a proposition about which the ULP entertained grave doubts. Finally, election figures make it clear that the ULP was not continuing to mobilize its supporters with the same effect as in 1893, while the more conservative politicians had become more adept at extracting electoral advantage from their followers. Indeed, the National Defence League, aimed at achieving some extraparliamentary support and legitimization for conservatism, was the sign of response, a recognition of the need to organize that yielded significant conservative victories by the end of the decade. Therefore, the late 1890s was a period of conservative reaction and loss of nerve among the liberal forces in South Australia.

There were other, more particular, clues to the loss of momentum by the Labor party in these years. In the early 1890s the churches and the Labor party had scarcely intersected: a sign of the social, theoretical, and practical distance of the two groups. But at the 1896 and 1899 elections the issue of state aid for church schools was much discussed. It brought the ULP into disfavor with the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. The Southern Cross, the newspaper of Adelaide Roman Catholics though not directly subject to diocesan control, had spoken sympathetically of the Labor party under the editorship of J. V. O'Loghlin. But in 1897–99, under pressure from the new archbishop (O'Reily) and with a new editor, the paper was much harsher on the ULP. For the next few years the ULP was given little prominence, and often handled in a far from friendly manner. The ULP platform was described as "hardly within the limits of practical politics". Ironically, the successor to O'Loghlin under whom this policy was carried out was W. J. Denny, who had worked as a telegraphist, then trained as a lawyer. He succeeded Kingston as the member for West Adelaide as an independent Liberal in 1902, and a little later joined the ULP. He was elected for the seat of Adelaide in elections from 1905 till 1933. He served as attorney general in the Labor governments of 1910–12, 1924–27, and 1930–33.

The platform of 1896 was little different from that of 1893. "Mortgagors liability limitation bill", "encouragement and development of the mining industry", and "federation on a democratic basis" had been added. The platform to which exception was taken in 1899 by the Southern Cross explicitly called for household suffrage for the Legislative Council; the department of labour was to be "extended" (it having been
created by the Factories Act); tramways were now to be state-owned; "State insurance", "old age pensions", and "in favour of any equitable and reasonable claims of women for the amendment of the laws" had been added; and the plank on the Commonwealth referred now to "union" "on a democratic basis".40

Despite the fact that state aid was an open question in the ULP, during the 1899 election campaign Archbishop O'Reilly alleged that "the tyranny of the Labor leaders was the worst tyranny from which Catholics suffered in South Australia".41 This was followed by an exchange of invective between the Southern Cross and the Weekly Herald during May 1899. Whether Roman Catholic working-class voters were thereby constrained from supporting ULP candidates remains unproven. Denny's success in the heart of working-class Adelaide as a Liberal in 1902 suggests that perhaps this was the case.42

The role of the other churches in aiding or resisting the ULP was minimal. With the exception of J. V. O'Loghlin in the Southern Cross, "the churches showed only a moderate inclination to speak out on behalf of the working man in the conflict between capital and labour or to advocate the policies of the Labor party".43 There was some clerical intervention on behalf of the workers during the maritime strike.44 There are few other clues, as church spokesmen, whether from disinterest or convictions, remained virtually silent on the Labor movement, or spoke incautiously, only to be criticized roundly by the Herald.

Another incident dramatized and contributed to the weakening position of the ULP. It was the fracas surrounding the exit of D. M. Charleston from the party in 1897.45 Charleston had become unacceptable to many members of the party because of his repeated failure to support caucus decisions about party voting in the Legislative Council. First E. A. Roberts, the member for Gladstone, and then Tom Price, the member for Sturt, publicly accused him of disloyalty to the party. Charges and explanations flew back and forth. Charleston withdrew from the party, resigned his Legislative Council seat, and in a hotly contested election, which included the publication of telegrams from Kingston condemning Charleston, he defeated the ULP candidate by 762 votes in a 50 per cent poll. It was distressing, and it showed the need for continuing cohesion and loyalty in the party.

Meanwhile the parliamentary situation at last began to change. At the commencement of the 1898 session, the first no-confidence motion which Kingston had faced as premier was tabled. The Weekly Herald greeted the motion with an editorial distinctly cool to Kingston, criticizing him for mere talk, for legislation actively supported by the opposition, and for an attitude of supercilious confidence.46 W. O. Archibald, E. L. Batchelor, and Tom Price, the PLP spokesmen in the House of Assembly, echoed the
Herald's remarks, making it clear that the Labor party could conceive of limits to their support of Kingston. Archibald argued that "the time had arrived when he and there were others with him felt something more than an ordinary remonstrance should be made". Batchelor, who was born in Adelaide, and who had succeeded McPherson as PLP leader, listed his dissatisfaction with the Closer Settlement Act, the Factories, Employer's Liability, and Workmen's Lien Acts, and demanded action on direct taxation and early closing. He refused to have all the unpopular acts of the government heaped on the ULP, and stated the intention of his party "to take a more independent position". A succession of amendments to the motion found the Labor party in a minority against Kingston, who was therefore being supported by Downer's opposition group, but when Downer's original challenge at last came to the vote the Labor party voted against it and in support of Kingston. In the end they realized Kingston was preferable to the known hostility of Downer, Baker, and the National Defence League.

Possibly as a response to this check, Kingston became active once more on the issue of Legislative Council reform. During the 1898 and 1899 sessions he introduced bills providing for the drastic widening of its franchise. Both were passed by the Assembly and one defeated in the Council, after much angry debate. In November 1899 Kingston applied to the governor for a double dissolution based on the Council's actions, past and anticipated, but was refused. Following this, two Labor members, A. Poynton and Roberts, both representing country electorates, transformed the political situation when they crossed the floor to defeat the Kingston ministry. V. Solomon, another of Kingston's opponents, formed an administration but on its first appearance in the House of Assembly a few days later it too was brought down. Roberts had switched again, though Poynton remained firm in his opposition to Kingston.

In the recriminations which followed it emerged that Roberts and Poynton felt no commitment to the ULP organization: after all they had not signed its pledge, and were confident of their standing with their electorates, independent of the city-based ULP. But they had acted with the ULP men in the PLP caucus up to this point. Probably they reflected Labor party anger with Kingston, who had brought matters to a stalemate, and who was threatening parliament with an unwanted election. The alternatives for the PLP were either to support Kingston in his intransigence or to see Solomon drop Council reform altogether. Poynton and Roberts, by first defeating Kingston, contrary to the final caucus decision, and then Solomon (in Roberts's case), opened the way for another solution. By accepting appointment to the delegation proceeding to London to negotiate on the Commonwealth of Australia Bill, Kingston withdrew from the scene. Holder, long his lieutenant, formed the new ministry on
the basis of a modified plan to reform the Council and talk of an election was dropped. This the Labor party decided to accept, as well as the appointment of their leader, E. L. Batchelor, as minister of education. Why the PLP tolerated Batchelor’s elevation is not clear. The party had no particular commitment to that portfolio, although there is evidence that Batchelor himself had already developed a substantial interest in this subject. Perhaps too Batchelor was anxious for his own prospects; more probably, the PLP calculated they would have a greater influence over the government through Batchelor. But the unpleasantness aroused by these incidents did the parliamentary Labor party little good. Poynton was no longer a member; Roberts was suspect; Batchelor’s motives in accepting office could be called into question, and his services as leader were lost. It was not a happy moment for the party.

Tom Price, who was elected by caucus to succeed Batchelor, was a conscientious man who evoked great loyalty and feeling in the party, both during his life and as a legend since his death in 1909. He was born in Wales in 1852 and grew up in the slums of Liverpool. As a boy he attended a Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School, and remained an ardent Methodist all his life. In this he was representative of a significant proportion of the ULP in South Australia. He was also a vigorous and lifelong temperance advocate. Price followed his father’s trade of stonemasonry and was an employer of ten to twenty men at one stage. In Liverpool he had joined the Liberal Reform Association. In 1883 he migrated with high hopes to Australia on medical advice, but arrived just as South Australia was drifting into twenty-five years of economic stagnation. His capital resources were swallowed up in land whose value promptly plummeted, and soon he was searching for employment as a stonecutter again. By 1890 he was representing the Bricklayers and Masons’ Society in the UTLC. The scanty evidence available suggests that he continued to take a conciliatory and co-operative attitude towards employers, as a man of practical common sense and perhaps as the classic petit-bourgeois seeking upward mobility.

He entered the House of Assembly in 1893 with the first wave of Labor men, there claiming that “he was not ashamed to be a delegate of . . . labour . . .”52 Like most of his ULP colleagues, he was at pains to dissociate himself from European socialism, which to him was revolutionary and anarchic. This did not prevent him, again in a manner typical of the ULP, from advocating control over such public services as the post office, or sewers, such functions as would assist producers in time of need — e.g. the state bank and the produce department.53

Again in tune with his colleagues, Price expressed his growing disenchantment with the Kingston ministry during the 1898 no-confidence debate, claiming that the bureaucrats were being allowed by ministers to ignore the proper claims of the working classes.54 He repeated his
criticisms in the Crown Lands Amendment Bill debate of October 1898 and during the Loan Bill debate in December 1898, accusing the "great apostle of public works in times of depression [i.e. Kingston] [of] backing down." He entered into his task as leader, therefore, very much the spokesman and representative of the ULP of the 1890s.

An issue on which the ULP experienced difficulty in the 1890s was federation. The UTLC had been cautious about the 1891 draft constitution. By 1896 the party platform called for federation on a democratic basis. Four ULP parliamentarians (McPherson, Batchelor, McGregor, and Charleston) were run in the liberal (or Advertiser) federal convention ticket, but none was elected: instead four Liberals and six candidates supported by the National Defence League were successful. In April 1898 the ULP convened a meeting in opposition to the proposed constitution, calling for a unitary state, the abolition of the Senate, and firm guarantees of interstate free trade. In the referendum, though the total South Australian vote was in favour of federation, there were large concentrations of negative votes, and some of these were in centres of Labor strength in Adelaide, where economic interests clearly seemed threatened by federation. The basically urban Labor party's suspicions had been overborne in the vote by middle-class and rural enthusiasm. It was dispiriting for the ULP, and what is more the Charleston affair was to emerge out of the debacle of the convention elections.

The politics of the first years of the new century brought out into the open the relative accession of political strength by the Conservatives. G. C. Kingston's Legislative Council seat (which he had gained in a contrived by-election aimed at putting him back into parliament after his return from England), vacated in his move to federal politics, was won by a Conservative; nor was the seat Charleston held, likewise vacated, regained for the ULP. In the first federal elections Batchelor was successful, but Price was not. Batchelor was not replaced in the state cabinet by another Labor man. As the state by-election results came in, it was clear the ULP had lost one seat in each house. The Herald emphasized the financial strength of opposing candidates, poor organization, and community reaction to the effects of the Early Closing Act. In addition, there was an obvious lack of excitement in these elections, reinforced by their frequency and the accumulating effects of defeat on Labor supporters. But worse was to come. One widely canvassed proposal in 1901 was a reduction in the number of state politicians now that federation had been achieved. The 1902 general elections were held after legislation to this effect, and the accompanying electoral boundary adjustments had been made. Labor's strength dropped from ten seats in a house of fifty-four to five seats out of forty-two.

Labor supporters did not hesitate, meanwhile, to express their in-
creasing dislike for Kingston's heirs. Even Holder had become suspect before he left for federal politics. He was accused of "spineless inconsistency" in yielding important clauses of a Workmen's Compensation Bill under pressure from the opposition, despite the support given by the ULP to keep him in office, and of postponing all controversial measures. Batchelor, (at this point still in state politics) voting with cabinet colleagues, was called on to resign.

Jenkins, Holder's successor as premier, proved even less satisfactory. His reduction in the number of legislators was viewed critically, as was his opposition to adult franchise in the Council. What is more, it was now clear that the opposition and some unattached Liberals were keeping Jenkins in office. "The Government play at liberalism without a shadow of its reality in their hearts." Tom Price joined the *Herald* during the election campaign in April 1902 in castigating Jenkins for selling out to the Conservatives. The 1902 and 1903 parliamentary sessions were little better. The *Herald*'s strong language expressed the stark political realities confronting the small band of Labor men in parliament, and the frustration it meant to the ULP:

This session of Parliament will be chiefly memorable for the infamous conduct of Jenkins and the members of his Ministry who have been false to their political faith, despicable traitors to their country, and cringing subservient tools of the National Defence League and of John Darling, its parliamentary chief. The one great gain in bringing the session to an early close is not that thereby there will be any saving of expense to the country worth considering . . . the real gain will be that opportunity will be shut off for doing any further political mischief in carrying out the reactionary policy of that notoriously vile firm of political humbugs — Jenkins, Darling & Co. . . .

Price took the initiative at the beginning of the 1903 session in expressing this angry frustration at Jenkins's administration. He spoke "through Hansard as a Liberal to the country", for he knew his party must rebuild a wide electoral appeal. He called on the opposition to accept the responsibility of governing now that they were the largest party in the House. The task lay before them: their opposition was clearly defined. The challenge was to revitalize the ULP.

IV

During 1903–4 such a resurgence was achieved as the party struck out in search of an independent identity. At the organizational level early signs and causes of this revival were the ULP Council decisions that candidates
would be bound by referendums held by the party, and by majority votes of council and caucus.\textsuperscript{65} There was discussion in 1900 about a proposal moved by Frank Lundie (of whom more later) to forbid members of the PLP joining a ministry unless it contained a majority of Labor members, but no firm decisions were made.\textsuperscript{66} The 1902 elections drew the usual invitations by the \textit{Herald} and the ULP Council to subscribe funds, select candidates, offer amendments to the platform, stimulate local effort, and mobilize voters on election day.\textsuperscript{67} The party’s manifesto for the 1902 election, after reviewing past achievements, placed Legislative Council reform, i.e. adult franchise and a provision to deal with deadlocks between the houses, at the head of the list. It is notable that two other planks which were to become persistently contentious issues over the next twenty years had been added to the platform – clearly a sign that the party was updating its demands. These were for “conciliation and compulsory arbitration” and a “minimum wage of 7s. [70 cents] per day for all adult males employed by the State or on State Contracts”. Other changes in the platform from 1899 were: the tariff, labour department, immigration, rent distrait, and federation clauses dropped; state ownership now to extend to the wharves; the Early Closing, Workmen’s Liens, Wages Boards and Workmen’s Compensation Acts were all to be amended.\textsuperscript{68}

In the wake of the 1902 election a committee was appointed by the council of the ULP to advise it on the best means of reviving interest in the party. Its report was received in August that year, but no further action was taken. The secretary (F. W. Coneybeer, member for East Torrens, later minister of education in the 1910 Labor government, and then Speaker) had to lament in September 1904 that a Legislative Council seat had been lost. He was “sorry so many of the working people did not take the trouble to turn out and record their vote . . .”\textsuperscript{69}

But signs of resurgence at last began to appear. At the federal elections in December 1903 Labor won all three South Australian Senate vacancies with 51 per cent of the vote. The reasons for this success probably relate to federal politics. However, it could be evidence of the true balance of votes overall in the state, when unaffected by franchise and boundary constraints. A significant decision was taken on 14 January 1904, to establish a committee charged with organizing country branches. This decision was followed in subsequent months by reports of visits, speeches, and new branches. Even more momentous was the decision taken in March 1904, on the recommendation of that organizing committee, to convene an annual conference whose main purpose would be “to definitely fix the Labor Platform” (for up to this point the council adopted the platform, which was usually written by ad hoc sub-committees dominated by parliamentarians). To permit the attendance of country delegates, the conference would be held during Show week, normally early in September. Here
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was the sign of Labor's organizational advance outside Adelaide, and a real attempt to broaden the party's base of support beyond its urban industrial core.

With the approach of the 1904 session, evidence began to accumulate that the political situation was about to change. There was a meeting at Gawler of "unattached liberals" (mostly parliamentarians representing rural electorates), the tone of which was critical of the government. The Weekly Herald looked with mild approval at this expression of discontent with Jenkins, though it urged a clear-cut two-party arrangement. These "Liberals", as they called themselves, nailed their colours to the mast very soon after parliament met by moving a sudden-death adjournment motion on 13 July 1904. The PLP were unwilling to yield the initiative, and, preferring to have a full-dress no-confidence debate, voted to support the Jenkins government. Price argued that discussion was necessary in order that Darling's Conservatives could be made to take responsibility for supporting Jenkins. A little later in the address-in-reply debate, both A. H. Peake, leader of these country Liberals, and Price moved no-confidence motions which were dealt with on 28 July. The breakaway Liberal group's motion was lost seventeen to twenty and the Labor party's was defeated eighteen to nineteen, both groups supporting the two challenges to the government.

The ULP's first annual conference convened on 8 September 1904. It carried out the annual executive elections, hitherto conducted at a council meeting. It also considered the platform, and a virtually new set of rules constituting the structure of the party. The sixty-two delegates attending the conference illustrated the organizational development of the party. The list published in the Herald included thirty-three delegates representing twenty-seven unions, the parliamentarians, and nineteen district branches. There were fourteen delegates representing organizations outside Adelaide. (Details of attendance at ULP conferences 1904–20 are shown in Appendix 2, p. 282.)

The evidence that this conference was dominated by the desire to work out an organizational and ideological compromise with the country voters is very strong. Not only, as we have seen, was its convening stated to be for this purpose, but also both platform and rules were altered to give significant expression to the country point of view. Moreover, in view of the later criticisms of the United Labourers' Union (ULU) and the Australian Workers' Union (AWU), the country voters who were being wooed in 1904 were clearly the small farmers.

The platform was specifically divided into a fighting and a general section. Changes were considerable: there were now twenty-six planks instead of sixteen. The emphasis of the 1890s on a single-tax approach to land and finance, which had even survived the demands of trade unionists
for protection against foreign goods, was decisively reversed. The land tax clause was altered from one calling for an overall increase in the land tax to one proposing a progressive land tax. Provision for the repurchase of large estates and a demand for a more equitable system in the allotment of Crown lands were both inserted. In all of this the desire to win over the small farmer can be seen, set against the familiar Henry George doctrines so hostile to land alienation, so confident of the land as the source of all revenue.

Other developments in the platform to be noted were the introduction of a clause in the fighting platform calling for the “public ownership and control of all railways, tramways and wharves”, another for the “abolition of the Legislative Council, failing that, adult suffrage for both houses”. This latter clause was a significant step forward, an expression of the growing anger of the ULP with the Legislative Council. Then followed the significantly altered plank calling for a “compulsory conciliation and arbitration bill”. Borrowing for public purposes was to cease, in line with the depression experience of crushing government debt burdens.

The additional planks in the general platform included another country flavour — “conservation of Murray River water for irrigation and navigation”, together with such new matter as “abolition of plural voting in municipal elections”, “maintenance and extension of present system of education”, “amendments of Food and Drugs Act with a view to better safeguarding the public health”, and “Amendment of Landlord and Tenant Act, to place all creditors on an equal basis”.

It was a much stronger set of demands. It was much broader in its reference. In particular, three of the seven planks of the fighting platform were about country problems. Moreover, it was a platform committing the party to a much greater degree of imperative government action, and one in which the ameliorative quality of the party’s outlook, its eclectic search for social justice, can be seen.

The controls exercised by the party over its parliamentary representatives were not changed: but the internal organization was. The summoning of an annual conference was provided for. The executive committee of the party was abolished — though not the executive offices. A scale of representation for conference was laid down in which country local branches were specifically provided for on the same scale as affiliated organizations. In addition electorate committees (of which three were city, and nine were country) were given one delegate each to conference. The newly arrived country delegates were treated generously. The council was now to be made up of delegates from affiliates, again including country local branches, together with four delegates per electorate committee. Also given membership of the council were the executive officers and members of parliament, and each local committee; on the other hand, two original
constitutive organizations, the parliamentary committees of the UTLC and the Port Adelaide District Trades and Labor Council (TLC) lost their representation. The conference was to settle the platform and the party’s constitution, the council acting in its name for the rest of the year. Country branches were given a large degree of autonomy, including the right to decide on their own candidates, and were only required to pay threepence (two cents) per member annually to the central fund, which was one quarter of the normal affiliation fee per member. This last provision was carried only narrowly, pointing to the limits some of the existing members of the party were sensing in the search for country support.

In this way the ULP spread the roots of its support much more broadly. The danger of the effect of a junta ruling the party — especially the executive committee — was removed. The essential supremacy of a broadly democratic annual conference was affirmed. The leading strings of the UTLC were broken, a substantial increase in the representation of non-union affiliates was provided for, and a real attempt had been made to reach the country areas, without which the party could never hope to gain a majority in its own right.

Thus strengthened through mutual encouragement, the party faced the prospects of an election in 1905 with confidence. They watched as Peake pressed his position as leader of the opposition in the face of a specific coalition by Jenkins and the Conservatives led by Darling which led to a reconstruction of the ministry on 4 July 1904. They joined Peake willingly on 9 November 1904 to vote twenty-one to seventeen in favour of a bill for the reform of the Legislative Council against the wishes of the government. It failed for want of an absolute majority of the whole house.73 During December and January four lengthy articles entitled “The Labor Movement” appeared in the Weekly Herald, exuding the sense of confidence and the sense of national responsibility, rather than mere Adelaide trade society sectionalism, which now pervaded the party. The auguries continued to be good. Jenkins resigned as premier and went off to London as agent general. Richard Butler, once a Kingstonite, took over as premier, leading a ministry which was, like Butler, becoming more conservative.74

Tom Price, therefore, had much to attack in his election speech of 26 April 1905, which the Herald ran under the banner, “The Fight for Justice”. He castigated the rush for jobs among government supporters (referring to the two cabinet members, Jenkins as agent general, and Homburg as judge in the Supreme Court), and attacked Darling’s Conservatives for their hidden support for Jenkins. He proudly proclaimed the public and democratic way in which the Labor party made its decisions. He scorned Butler’s election policy as one of “drift, bluff and deception”. His main proposal was for Legislative Council reform. For the rest his speech was built on the party platform. The report of his peroration ran:
"The policy of the Labor Party was one of development and progress, and they would not be frightened by the nonsense that had been talked about Socialism. The Labor Party stood for expansion of business as far as South Australia was concerned, and they meant to bring about prosperity and honest government... The bluff and misstatements of their opponents would not impede the triumph of the Labor Party." Here was the leader of the only really organized political party in South Australia appealing for support from the whole community.

The Jenkins and Butler administrations had been facing a difficult economic situation and, as in the early 1890s (and again in 1914—15), the ULP was to gain electorally from the effects of the situation. The 1903—4 fiscal year yielded a government shortfall of £32,000 ($64,000) in £2,543,000 ($5,086,000) expended. Savage drought had struck the northern areas in 1901—2, and the wheat harvests of 1901—2 and 1902—3 were poor. Metal prices also fell by 15 per cent. To these difficulties the government responded with an economy drive which won them few friends among retrenched public servants, overworked school teachers, and unemployed day-labourers.

The Jenkins government had also exposed itself to ridicule and condemnation over proposals to hand the city's tramways over to a private business, and for another to build a light railway to Darwin in return for 90 million acres of freehold land. With imprudent and quixotic proposals of this sort, together with the accusation of subservience to Darling's Conservatives hung about them, Butler's followers could make little headway in the election campaign. Some effort to raise the bogey of socialism was made, but it had little effect.

The disarray of the non-Labor groups was evident in the fragmented way the elections were contested. The results saw Labor's strength rise from five to fifteen, eighteen Conservatives gathered around Butler, while Peake called himself the leader of eight Liberals. Price and Peake promptly entered into negotiations for a coalition government. The Labor party had failed in this election to gain enough seats to fulfil its aim of governing in its own right, but increased strength meant that the day of pressure-group manoeuvring for support in return for concessions was over. After he was defeated on the floor of the house, not by one but two sudden-death motions in which fifteen Labor men and nine Liberals voted against seventeen Conservatives, Butler resigned.75 Tom Price introduced himself as premier on 27 July 1905. The terms of the coalition between the PLP and Peake's Liberals were important. Price made it clear he and Kirkpatrick (chief secretary) were not binding the Labor party by entering the government. They had been given a free hand by the PLP, but, following the precedent adopted by Batchelor, they ceased to attend the party caucus. The Weekly Herald explained that, while the PLP approved of
Price's actions, it was not in coalition with any other party: "... The Labor Party accepts no responsibility for ministerial actions ... there is no more official connection between Party and Ministry than there was between the Party and the Kingston team, or that led by Mr. Holder which included Labor member Batchelor ..." To this extent the party continued its practice of acting as a pressure group rather than as the government. The opportunity was being taken to exploit the situation for what it was worth. It was probably Price himself who was most enthusiastic for the arrangement, and it was probably loyalty to Price which led the PLP to trust him.

From Peake's point of view it was a good bargain. Two of the four cabinet posts were his. He emphasized the common sympathy of the two groups, and that the differences were those of speed, not principle. The two groups agreed to put forward the Liberal proposal on Legislative Council reform of a £15 ($30) franchise and the dual vote. This suggests the anxiety of the PLP to secure immediate reform of the Council. The two groups agreed to push it to a double dissolution if need be. Beyond that main proposal was a range of improving plans drawn from the common stock of aspirations in the two parties, including an extra minister of the Crown, closer settlement, expansion of the government produce department, arranging the Commonwealth's takeover of the Northern Territory, establishing irrigation colonies, extended credit for farmers, extended land tax, a cautious public works programme, amendments to the Workmen's Compensation and Factories Acts, legal appeal on the River Murray arrangements, compulsory school attendance, a food and drugs bill, and an increase in the number of judges.

It was reform of the Legislative Council which had provided the common ground in the elections and for the coalition. It dominated parliament's proceedings for the life of the ministry. During the 1905 session a number of minor acts were passed, but the Council would only amend, not accept, the reform bill. Moreover it threw out bills on compulsory repurchases, factories, judges' appointment, land value assessment, taxation, and municipal tramways, and caused the shelving of bills on the state savings bank and an increase in the number of ministers. It was not surprising therefore that the 1906 session was convened early, to deal with the reform bill once more. On its further defeat by the Council, a double dissolution was granted to Price and the 1906 election was fought on the issue of Council reform.

To the ULP conference in September 1905 the Price-Peake government presented something of a challenge. Before it were resolutions from the interstate conference urging that no alliances be undertaken beyond an existing parliament, that no promises of electoral immunity be made, and that cabinets be elected by the caucus. The proposal on alliances was
accepted, but that on cabinet construction was not. For the rest, this conference was a quiet gathering; it agreed not to alter the platform, while much consideration was given to the prospects of a daily paper.

Twelve months later the party conference heard Price hammer the importance of Council reform again. It was a good rallying cry. The 107 delegates were also informed that twenty-seven new branches and committees and four more trade unions had affiliated, all signs of continuing expansion of the party organization in response to the work of Price and his colleagues.

The elections held on 3 November 1906 were brought on specifically to test the issue of reform in the Council. The ULP increased its strength from fifteen to nineteen, and the Liberals theirs from nine to ten, but in the Council conservative strength remained unaffected. This obviously meant that the movement for parliamentary reform was blocked by the existing Council franchise, for the constitution provided no further solution but mutual agreement, despite the victory of the reformers in the lower house.

This indeed was the line taken by Price in the 1907 parliamentary session after yet another rebuff from the Council. A conference of the two houses produced agreement that a referendum of Legislative Council voters would be held, and the vote would be binding. The Labor party’s leader, Archibald, had already made the PLP position clear, that all other business should be laid aside and a double dissolution pressed for if the Council resisted. Price was disappointing the party, frustrated as he was by the balance of votes, but the PLP alone was powerless to impose Legislative Council reform.

Despite the stalemate on Council reform, the achievements of the Price-Peake government were still considerable. The administration was helped by good rain and good harvests after 1906. The community responded to the improving economic conditions with a higher marriage and birth rate, and a halt to the surplus of emigration over immigration. The treasurer therefore could report government revenues in surplus in 1906. But this did not lead Price and Peake into a generous public works programme. They preferred to redeem some of the state’s outstanding debts, and to live on revenue alone — an attitude best understood in the light of the extensive and possibly ill-judged borrowing of the 1880s and 1890s, which meant heavy interest burdens and repayments. Price was proud (if inconsistent) that a debt redemption loan of £1.5m ($3m) was successfully floated in Australia on South Australian securities during 1908.

A field that saw hesitation and compromise was taxation. The ULP was committed to the policy of progressive land taxation and compulsory repurchase of large estates, both aimed at breaking up large estates and thus helping the small farmers. The Council rejected such moves, in 1905
and 1908, while L. O'Loughlin, the Liberal commissioner of Crown lands made clear his party's opposition even to ceasing sale of Crown lands.

But the Liberals did accept the government's decisive reversal of the Butler plan to turn the transport system of Adelaide over to private enterprise. The Metropolitan Tramways Trust was the result. It was a piece of practical government action. Equally positive and practical was the development of the Outer Harbour to provide facilities for much larger vessels than could use the Port River. So was the decision to commence weir-construction on the Murray, rather than wait for the finalization of the agreement with New South Wales, Victoria, and the Commonwealth. At the urging of the trade unions, the Factories Act in 1906 included the creation of wages boards. This decision reflected Price's belief in the possibility of amicable relations between employers and employees in each industry without the interference of the government: "...every trade must be alive to its own interests, it must keep employers up to scratch, and not use the Government as a whip to do it."^82

Again in a practical vein were the decisions on the Northern Territory and education. Price reached agreement with Deakin in February 1907, by which the Commonwealth agreed to take over the Northern Territory, assume responsibility for its debt, and take over the Port Augusta to Oodnadatta railway and link it with a line from Darwin. He then pushed the agreement through parliament in October against the criticisms of Butler that it was a loose, "grossly unfair" settlement. The important point was that it was a settlement of a burden long borne by South Australia.83

Price as minister of education took one important though controversial step. He appointed Alfred Williams, headmaster of Norwood school, as director of education, ignoring the claims of several more senior officers. Williams's tenure was to be brief, for he died in 1913, exhausted by his efforts. But under him a considerable reform of the attitudes and standards in the South Australian education service was achieved. It was Price's contribution, having selected Williams, to support him to the full.84

During much of 1908 the ULP, like the government, were fairly quiet. Price was overseas, largely in an attempt to recover his health. In April, the ULP discussed in regretful terms, the departure of Kirkpatrick to London as agent general, while in July it was ruled that unionists were entitled to automatic membership of the party electoral committee of their district. It was a hint of tension between two forces within the party. At the annual conference something similar seemed to be in the air: selection of candidates was to be put in the hands of the electorate committees while the Council would retain a right of veto (if the constituent branches approved the proposals). There was also a hint of dissatisfaction with the PLP in the resolution requiring the PLP to report back to conference on all matters
Both these proposals seem to be evidence that the trade unionists, and especially the representatives of the general unions, were becoming suspicious of the politicians and of the influence of the local or non-union membership of the party. The coalition of the 1890s had included middle-class radicals. Now they were being challenged: the crescendo was yet to come.

Politics received a sharp jolt with the untimely but not unexpected death of Tom Price on 31 May 1909. A generous, though liberal, tribute was paid by the Advertiser, on 1 June 1909:

One of South Australia's ablest and most useful public men... One of the remarkable feats that Mr. Price accomplished was that of securing general confidence without sacrificing avowed principles. He was too clear-headed to be led away by fantastic schemes for revolutionizing society, but he allied himself with progressive movements... [his] sympathetic interest in his fellow-workers was developed as a necessary consequence but he never lowered himself to the level of a demagogue. He knew what to do and what to leave undone, how far to go, and when it was good policy to accept a compromise.

The ULP had lost an able, intensely practical, and very attractive parliamentary leader. Caucus elected John Verran to succeed Price. Verran was born in Cornwall in 1856 and was brought to South Australia at the tender age of seven months. He grew up to be a copper miner at Moonta. He held various posts in the Amalgamated Miners' Association (AMA), and like many Cornish miners was a Primitive Methodist, a lay preacher, and a Rechabite. The PLP would only continue the coalition government arrangement with Peake if a Labor member were premier, since theirs was the larger party. But Peake, already acting premier, refused. Caucus also wanted the ministry to commit itself to inserting in the constitution a deadlock clause similar to section 57 of the Commonwealth constitution. This, too, Peake would not accept. He negotiated adroitly, forming a new ministry from among his own nine followers ("the nimble nine") alone, and when parliament convened was able to indicate than an arrangement had been reached with Richard Butler. The Conservatives had promised general support for the session, at the end of which a coalition government would be formed.

This loss of power, this unceremonious dumping, was frustrating and disappointing for the ULP. The ULP Council approved the action of the PLP, believing that Peake had broken the arrangement reached in 1905. The Weekly Herald pointed out that Peake had exploited the advantage of his position as acting premier while Price was overseas. Peake had meanwhile been actively promoting the affairs of the Liberal and Democratic Union, and according to the Herald, presenting its policy as
that of the government. This the *Herald* angrily rejected. So was Peake's argument that the ULP had destroyed the coalition.

The break was probably inevitable. Price had been the uniting force in the coalition, and now he was gone. Peake's liberalism must have found the limits of its radicalism: the attraction of continued office as premier proved to be too great. The Conservatives under Butler knew they once again could exercise the balance of power. So now the Labor party was the official opposition, in the words of the *Herald*, "watchful, strong, and united... We trust that Labor will henceforth attend exclusively to its own affairs straining every nerve to make the Party's Policy something more than a printed leaflet." The evolution of the party as an independent political force, the alternative government, was now complete. It remained for it to win power at the polls. That as yet has never fully eventuated in South Australia, for the Legislative Council continues to be controlled by Labor's opponents. But a majority in the House of Assembly, and the treasury benches were to prove within their grasp.

The remaining months of 1909 were much taken up with manoeuvres by Peake to achieve a similarly united party organization to confront the ULP. His own Liberal and Democratic Union had to negotiate with the Australasian National League (R. C. Baker's National Defence League under a new name), and the Farmers and Producers' Political Union, formed in 1904 because the producers "thought it was quite time they took a hand in the management of the affairs of the state". The *Weekly Herald* watched sardonically as details of the negotiations leaked out, noting on 1 January 1910 "the hollowness of [Peake's] pose as a democrat... [he] stands convicted as a political adventurer of the worst type." In the short run, because they and their organizations were still not agreed, the three non-Labor groups were routed at the polls in 1910. This was the main factor which finally pushed them into fusion in 1911. When they did agree, it was clear that the Liberal and Democratic Union salvaged least of its ideals in the new organization. But they did at least have Peake as the new Liberal Union's parliamentary leader.

Meanwhile, at the ULP conference in September 1909 the party's platform was revised after a good deal of discussion. The main changes included putting adult suffrage for the Legislative Council, with the object of its ultimate abolition, at the top of the fighting platform. The education plank was made explicit: "to extend free education to all citizens of the State, up to and inclusive of Universities, and that school books and other requirements for school children be provided free." The functions of the state bank as "deposit, issue, exchange and reserve" were spelt out — being drawn from the federal platform. A plank was added on housing to provide advances to workers to build homes.

On the other hand an attempt to ameliorate the implications of the
progressive land tax plank was lost, as was one to finance all public works from income. The parliamentarians present opposed it vigorously. The housing clause emerged after a great deal of angry discussion about high rents and poor housing. Motions in favour of compulsory voting, a statutory eight-hour day, state ownership of all flour mills, the tobacco industry, and the liquor industry were all lost, as was one calling for annual parliaments and a proposal for redistributing electoral boundaries.

It is clear that these arguments were reflecting a more complex grouping in the party. There were new delegates from a much expanded AWU — very much a country union — and from the growing ULU, the voice of fruit pickers, salt scrapers, railway navvies, public works labourers, and the like. These men were militants, as their remarks at this conference on several issues revealed. They let their suspicion of the country branch delegates be known, as they pressed for increased government ownership, and the extension of the land tax. The land tax was of course still the centre of attention for the remaining single-taxers. Meanwhile the moderate city trade union and parliamentary group sought to hold the peace, with some degree of success. Clearly there was grass-roots impatience at the pragmatism of the parliamentary leadership, and in particular there was real pressure to repudiate the deal with the farmer-voters which had been achieved in 1904. Should this occur, obviously the party’s chances of success in country electorates might be endangered, unless the AWU claim to replace farmer votes with country workers’ votes could be substantiated in considerable volume. Nevertheless, compared with the difficulties of their opponents the ULP was well prepared and strong in unity.

V

The next state election campaign began in February 1910. Verran, as Labor leader, emphasized the independence of the ULP, and its commitment to “moderate measures of much needed reform.” That much longed for publication, the *Daily Herald*, was launched on 5 March 1910 as part of the ULP election effort. The party sought to exploit the sense of outrage at the way Peake clung to power, and the obvious weakness in the non-Labor forces.

The ULP won all twelve city seats, and another ten in the hinterland, sufficient to form a government in its own right. One happy supporter greeted the victory thus: “Glory Hallelujah, but are we not doing splendidious, oh its spiffing... let every town and country district join in having a united Labor Jubilization thanksgiving, every band and tin whistle
out, and with banners (Red) ah march, march the streets, to our own parks, or showgrounds, say next Sunday afternoon 24/4/10 and rightly celebrate the triumph of progress and freedom and right and truth for the cause and aims of Labor stand for all these . . .”^3

Because it was a Labor government there was no need for Verran and his cabinet to withdraw from caucus. There is no doubt that the men Verran had chosen as his ministerial colleagues were tried and true Labor workers — Verran, Coneybeer, F. S. Wallis, and J. P. Wilson all had trade union backgrounds. Whether this meant a resurgence of Adelaide craft union power over the pressure of non-unionist local branch members, or the growing influence of the AWU, is another matter. For ideals, the Daily Herald (on 3 June) and Verran (on 11 June, in an address to the UTLC) emphasized the aim of steady humanitarian reform, though both were well aware of the difficulties posed by the Legislative Council. Verran in particular was at pains to remind the UTLC that the government must be permitted to get on with the task of administering the whole state, not simply focussing on industrial questions, an attitude which strengthens the case for arguing that this ministry was one dominated by Adelaide artisans, men of respectability and good sense, or so they might have thought of themselves.

In his policy speech in the House of Assembly on 5 July 1910 Verran promised Legislative Council reform as his first priority, then legislation for locks on the River Murray, a progressive land tax, the completion of the transfer of the Northern Territory, compulsory acquisition of land for closer settlement, more wages boards, advances to settlers, and a string of other administrative matters. It was a large programme, and, since the Council stood to bar his way, an optimistic one. But broadly it was a reformist programme, concerned with social justice and with redistribution of wealth. It might have been called socialistic by the opponents of the ULP, but that was as much their label for opposing any change in the existing system of class, status, and power. It is undeniable, nonetheless, that the Verran government, and the Vaughan government of 1915, and behind them the ULP, wanted a large increase in the powers of the state for the purpose of enforcing variations in the existing economic, social, and political systems.

Meanwhile the party convened once more in annual conference. Selection of candidates for elections was again discussed, and again it was decided that this be done by electoral committees, for the 1909 decision had failed on remission to affiliates for ratification. The appointment of a full-time, paid party secretary was canvassed at length once more, this time favourably, though the matter was referred to the delegates for final decision. A wide range of other issues was aired — most focussed on the possibility of the government intervening to alter the existing economic
relationships. Verran's address was a fine example of Labor rhetoric:

... [the party] advocated a policy designed for the welfare of the whole of the people. It was a policy that would better the conditions of every man who worked; it would enter into the homes of all men and help the wives, daughters, and young children. It was a policy which was in itself intelligent, and appealed to every man who gave a thought to his fellows' wellbeing. The Labor Party would never have succeeded as it did had it not been that, attracted by the policy, there had been men and women who had given their lives to its cause. There had been a sacrifice of time, money, and ambition, and the party had been built up by this and the amount of intellectuality that had been devoted to its service.

It appears to have been an amicable gathering, which concluded with the singing of "The more we are together".

The government were confronted with a great deal of industrial unrest in 1910. There is no doubt that economic pressures were making living conditions difficult. Prices were rising, and the real buying power of wages was being eroded. The expansion of economic activity in 1910–11 probably provided that contraction in the numbers of unemployed and part-employed which guided some unions to seek improved conditions. Ten or twelve industrial incidents aroused concern in Adelaide. The most publicized of these were the tarpavers strike in Rundle Street and the drivers' strike. In the first the government was referred to at the UTLC meeting as "the so called Labour Government" by Frank Lundie of the AWU and the United Labourers' Union. The government had to face angry trade union delegations and calls for the enforcement of law and order. The attorney general, Denny, did succeed in gaining a settlement — but the publicity for the union movement and the government was poor.

The drivers' strike, in December 1910, was even more controversial. Direct action in support of their claims for eight shillings a day and an eight-hour day included stopping virtually all commercial traffic in the city. Rumours of famine were rife; there was violence, police action, a series of pained statements from the government, and cries that the workers "had miles of proof that when the Labor man got into power, they forgot about the class that put them in there". Once more, however, the workers gained most of their demands and once more the government lost much prestige. In April–May 1911 there was a bitterly argued strike at Renmark, where Lundie's United Labourers' Union was again involved. The Daily Herald saw the Labor party as unjustly blamed for all this industrial trouble: certainly the range of possible government action was greatly restricted. For example its legislative response — an arbitration bill, which expanded the wages board system, linked it with an Industrial Court, provided union preference, and made strikes illegal — was dras-
tically transformed in the Legislative Council and so the plan was shelved. This revelation of the party’s legislative impotence was galling.

Evidence of a conservative political resurgence began accumulating during 1911. The federal Labor government’s referendum proposals (April 1911) were defeated in South Australia, as they were in general: the “No” vote was about 62 per cent of the votes cast. A Legislative Council by-election for the Central District in August saw the Liberal candidate win by 1,300 votes in nearly 20,000. There were reports of the Liberals organizing preselection ballots, requiring pledges, and expounding platforms. This activity evolved from the plain desire of the various non-Labor groups to defeat the ULP, and their sense that the opportunity might be at hand. The Liberal Union, which had emerged by the end of 1910 as the political vehicle of this eager anticipation, received a further boost in the success of the Liberal candidate for the vacancy in the federal seat of Boothby consequent upon the death of E. L. Batchelor (Labor), on 14 December 1911. By the time of the elections in 1912 Senator Vardon, a leading figure in the Liberal Union, could write: “It is NOT the people versus the Legislative Council (merely pretext). The real issue is the LABOR SOCIALIST POLICY versus the true interests of the whole community. We stand for the PEOPLE against SOCIALISM. Remember the Drivers’ Strike.”

Already the Legislative Council had rejected the government’s upper house reform bill in September 1911. The succeeding months were enlivened by Verran’s announcement of a succession of appeals to the British government for direct legislative intervention to impose Legislative Council reform, all of which appeals were rebuffed. At last a crisis was manufactured: the Council rejected tacked appropriations for a state brick works and timber yard in December 1911.

It was ground well chosen: an apparently illegal attempt to introduce that dreaded socialistic regime which was anathema to good bourgeois liberals. It hid the rejection by the Council of a large number of similar efforts at social reconstruction — taxation, land values, railway commissioners, household suffrage, industrial arbitration, among others. Elections for both Council and Assembly were held in February 1912 after Verran gained a double dissolution from the governor. In them the Liberal Union gained twenty-four seats, the ULP sixteen. It was a victory for law and order, for established security, for the existing power structure, for wealth both city and country, “for greed and ingratitude”. It was the climax of the most comprehensive attempt to reform the Legislative Council and it failed. In the years that followed, although there were some ULP governments, the party did not come so close to success on this vital issue of Council reform until 1973.

The sense of exhaustion, the loss of momentum, evidenced by the
election defeat had to some extent been apparent in the 1911 annual conference. A few variations to the platform were agreed to. The terms of appointment of a full-time secretary (salary £250 [S$500] p.a.) were ratified. Verran issued a warning about their “tendency to move in sections”. He went on to say that “he was of opinion that there was a slight eruption going on in their midst, but he urged upon them to forget any little differences and to always consider the principles which they had in front of them... The Labor Party had a big responsibility on it and they could not afford to allow any friction to exist amongst them...”

Evidence of this tension was to recur over the next few years until it was given focus and expression in the conscription split of 1916–17. In the meantime the party concerned itself with castigating the new Liberal government and husbanding support with a view to winning power once more. The years 1912–14 were years of economic distress and confusion. Unemployment caused agitation, deputations, and pressure for extensive government action. These were large sticks with which to beat Peake and Butler, the Liberal premier and treasurer. Worse for the community was the severe drought of 1913–14, when rainfall was half the average, and when wheat yields were as low as 1.41 bushels per acre for the state. This generated severe hardship in country areas. The government refused to construct a complete grain purchasing scheme, as urged by rural opinion. The administration, moreover, appeared to bungle the city dwellers’ need in times of drought for adequate drinking water. Government revenue fell, and Butler, preferring not to seek more credit on a difficult London market, moved to increase taxes and contract public activity, which included making retrenchments in the public service. It gave political humorists scope to point out that drought, recession, and Richard Butler once more coincided, as they had done in 1903–4.

The Peake government’s legislative proposals succeeded in arousing further Labor ire. The PLP fought every step of the Industrial Arbitration Bill which imposed severe restraints on strikes. They opposed the Liberals’ version of a constitution amendment bill for the Council which, while it meant a minor advance in Council franchise, was mere tinkering from the ULP standpoint: especially when it implied the co-equal control by the Council over money bills. They battled angrily against the redistribution of electoral boundaries brought forward in 1913. The ULP claimed that it was designed by Peake to make even more complete the numerical disparity between rural and city voters in Assembly elections, thus ensuring a strong and permanent Liberal bloc in parliament. The bill increased the number of seats from forty to forty-six, and consequently meant the rewriting of divisional boundaries. It appeared that, for example, instead of Labor holding the four old Adelaide seats, it would only win the three new ones, with the two new North Adelaide seats going...
to the Liberals. Peake in reply claimed that the new electorates were more securely based on community of interest than before. This was true, but it did not stop angry criticisms from proponents of one man, one vote.\textsuperscript{108}

Efforts to strengthen the basic support for the party were slow to develop in 1912. The appointment of a paid organizer for the metropolitan area was opposed by the affiliates because of the expense involved.\textsuperscript{109} The conference of 1912 was characterized by “great enthusiasm” — or so the \textit{Daily Herald} thought. Certainly thirty-five new branches were affiliated, while thirty-six unions paid increased fees.\textsuperscript{110} The conference joined in vigorous condemnation of the government’s constitutional proposals, and supported compulsory military service for Australian boys by fifty-two votes to forty-two. By December 1912 there were two paid organizers checking on supporters and their eligibility to vote. This presumes that the objections to the cost had been overcome. What is more, this report in the ULP minutes is the first typewritten document there: signs of increasing efficiency at the centre!

But there was difficulty on another flank. These same months of anger at the government found the \textit{Daily Herald} warning against “The Syndicalist and His Folly”: “... The propaganda of the Australian Labor Party in no degree embraces syndicalism — that foolish and hysterical idea ... Syndicalism stands for the total destruction of the existing industrial organisations and the transfer of all means of production from their present possessors, the wage payers, to the wage earners. Such an ambition vaults higher than the dream of the wildest Socialist, and is destined to overreach itself.”\textsuperscript{111} This outburst was against the extremists of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), who had made their formal appearance in Adelaide on 6 May 1911.\textsuperscript{112} They were seen by the ULP as revolutionaries attempting to reconstruct the economy and society on a wholly new set of premises. Their influence in South Australia has been very difficult to gauge. Naturally the party’s propaganda organs gave them only unfavourable notice if any at all. There were, however, a growing number of working men engaged in large-scale industrial activity, notably at Port Pirie. To these men the increasing pressures of inflation and the apparent immobility of the ULP were goads that pushed them from time to time into militant industrial action. Their spokesman was often Frank Lundie, as we have already seen in the case of the strikes of 1910. But there does not seem to be any evidence that the attempt at a new, radical, political solution along IWW lines ever got much support among the working classes of South Australia.

The parliamentary organization saw change at the commencement of the 1913 session. John Verran stood down from leadership of the PLP, deeply distressed at the illness of his wife and conscious of the electoral defeat of 1912. Crawford Vaughan was elected to succeed him. He was
eighteen years younger than Verran, and had been educated at Prince Alfred College. He worked as a clerk and a journalist before election to parliament in 1905. He had been treasurer in Verran’s cabinet, when he emerged as the PLP's most able debater. After he broke with the ULP in 1917 he toured the United States in connection with the war effort. Subsequently he went on further lecture tours of the United States, and then became interested in cotton growing in Australia. He was an unsuccessful candidate for New South Wales and federal seats — appearing in 1931 for Adelaide as an unofficial "Lyons-Latham" candidate. In his later years he lived quietly in Sydney writing novels and plays on Australian historical themes, and died in 1947.

The ULP sought to maintain political pressure on Peake during 1913. Long sittings in the house were matched by angry *Herald* editorials, especially on the "gerrymander" proposals, and followed up by meetings of public protest. The *Herald* commented: "the whole policy of the Conservatives is manifestly one of fearing the people, and of taking every possible precaution, no matter how fraudulent it may be, to prevent the people governing themselves."^113^ The 1913 party conference yielded reports of improving party funds, extending branch strength, and amendments to the platform. The most important of these amendments focussed on rural problems. The Land Board was to allot land with a much stricter regard for equality; revenue from land sales was to go to debt redemption; tax on personally earned income from land was to be abolished, while that on absentee landholders and on probate was to be sharply increased; a Land Court of Appeal was to be established; another board was to be established, to regulate the wheat industry, with grower, government, and buyer representation. All of these proposals were clearly in response to the existing adverse rural conditions and the opportunities these provided for the party to attack the government and to offer a more attractive alternative to the community. In addition, the platform called for proportional representation, Commonwealth takeover of state debts, and control of state borrowing, the school leaving age to be raised from thirteen to fourteen years, state or local government home building, state-provided pure milk, and earlier closing of hotels. Generally, it was a more detailed programme, and as a result more realistic.^114^ By the end of the year fruits of the renewed interest in the party could be found in increased Labor success at municipal elections, and a landslide victory at the by-election for (federal) Adelaide.^115^ Vaughan was on the stump in the southeast in April, assaulting the government and appealing to the farmers. In July, at the opening of the 1914 parliamentary session, he launched a no-confidence motion, charging the government with subservience to the Legislative Council, with inactivity, deliberate electoral gerrymandering, a coercive Industrial Arbitration Act, an ungenerous Land
Act, and with equivocation over demands for government-backed bulk wheat handling.\textsuperscript{116}

Meanwhile, an interesting point was reached in the life of the \textit{Daily Herald}, the party’s newspaper. A. C. Pratt was succeeded by E. H. Coombe as editor on 2 May 1914. E. H. Coombe had been the most radical critic of the Jenkins regime, the most radical of Peake’s followers, and the maverick when the Liberal Union was formed. He stood as a Labor candidate in 1912, but was unsuccessful. His first editorial statement in the \textit{Herald}, on 4 May 1914, was an unequivocal commitment to radical gradualism rather than revolution, to the drive for social justice for the working classes. He argued that the party had staked its chances on the political machine – a slow but sure means of success. “The aim of the Labor Party is to secure political equality and economic improvement.” The message was perhaps more general than that which Guthrie or McPherson might have spoken, but the terms of reference and the objectives were unchanged.

When news of the war in Europe reached Adelaide the parliamentary efforts to embody these ambitions for social justice were dampened. Debate on Crawford Vaughan’s no-confidence motion was halted by the PLP. Peake, however, insisted the motion be put to the house, but then the Labor party abstained from voting. The same day parliament was prorogued after the fervent singing of the national anthem, and cheers for “the King, God bless him!”\textsuperscript{117}

The 1914 party conference heard the secretary report that twenty-one further trade societies and eleven local branches had affiliated with the party, and that paid-up membership totalled 25,168. An attempt to disaffiliate the democratic associations was made, but it failed. Following this, the method of conference representation was canvassed, and it was not for the first time. The existing arrangement of largely proportional and institutional representation was preferred to the card vote.\textsuperscript{118}

The war brought little joy to the economy of South Australia. Broken Hill’s German markets were closed\textsuperscript{119} which meant a rapid fall in the South Australian railway receipts and in the income the community of South Australia derived from the many services provided to Broken Hill; for example, the Port Pirie smelters were affected drastically. Meanwhile farmers suffered as drought continued unabated. Deputations seeking assistance beat their way to the doors of Peake and Butler, but the government could do little to revitalize the economy, for it was difficult to raise loan finance at home or abroad as the demands of the war gathered pace. There were claims that the shortage of seed grain was being exploited, and that the government was not encouraging fodder conservation. When parliament reconvened, its time was much occupied with discussion of drought relief, starving stock, seed wheat, unemployment, and falling water supplies. All this was grist to the opposition’s mill.\textsuperscript{120}
The election campaign began in February 1915. Vaughan, in his policy speech, gathered up these accumulating economic and political grievances and hurled them at the government. The party received its reward and its commission: it won twenty-six seats, an increase of ten, and took office for the second time. While comparison with the 1912 election is difficult because of the redistribution, and with the 1918 election because of the conscription split, it is clear that the ULP broke into country electorates, as well as winning all fifteen city seats. Coombe took one seat in Barossa, while all the Victoria, Newcastle, Port Pirie, and Wallaroo seats, plus two in the Murray, were won. Even Peake was defeated, only scrambling back in at a by-election contrived by the resignation of another Liberal. Using the 1912 voting patterns, the ULP could only have expected to win fourteen of the forty-six or nineteen of the old forty seats. It is clear, therefore, that a severe shift away from the Liberals had occurred.

The cabinet, elected by caucus, later drew critical comment from trade unionists. J. H. Vaughan, in the Legislative Council and attorney general, was the premier’s brother and a lawyer. C. Goode, commissioner of Crown lands, was the premier’s brother-in-law and a farmer. A. W. Styles, also in the Legislative Council, was chief secretary and an accountant. He had been a union official. R. P. Blundell, minister of industry, had long been a union official and working man, while Harry Jackson, commissioner of public works, was a smelting worker and wharf labourer from Port Pirie. Norman Makin claimed in 1918 that this cabinet “from its inception could not claim the confidence of many supporters of Labor”, that the “black-coated brigade” were too influential, and that “rumblings of discord could be continually discerned”. However, there is difficulty in assessing the ULP’s attitude to this ministry because the problem has been overshadowed by the split on conscription, with the consequent desire to trace everything back as far as possible. One point to notice is that popular resentment at the economic troubles of the state – drought and war being the main causes – continued to be heaped upon the government, which happened now to be Labor. Another point to make is that Verran, a trade unionist’s trade unionist, had felt this sort of tension and criticism while premier. Therefore it is not adequate to begin a discussion of the explosion in 1916 by arguing that it simply revealed the long-hidden “hypocrisy of many who claimed allegiance to the cause of Labor”.

The programme which the Vaughan Labor government launched was ambitious, but oriented to the demands of the party’s platform. The bills included advances to settlers (intended to provide easier credit facilities), Murray waters (ratifying the long drawn out negotiations on works for the development of the river), education (the fruit of substantial enquiry, which proposed a school leaving age of fourteen, a structure of secondary education and a reorganization of the department), industrial arbitration...
(removing the power to imprison, applying the act to government employees, repealing power to compel individual unionists to pay penalties, giving the court power to deregister), public service (to create a board with power to classify, and then a commissioner to control the service). Some of these, and others, suffered at the hands of the Legislative Council — for example an adult suffrage bill, a taxation bill, and a health bill were to be negatived or lapse there. But the session saw the passage of fifty-three acts, including those on education, arbitration, Murray waters, soldier settlement, and the wheat pool. It was the most voluminous legislative output to date. The breadth was considerable, some of the legislation far reaching. The war had proved no barrier, nor the Council a drastic hurdle, to a government and party full of energy and zeal.

Similarly, the 1915 party conference was a busy gathering. Amendments to the platform were postponed to the next conference, but forty-four resolutions were passed. These were, as always, a mixed bag: they were concerned with family allowances, maternity provisions, liquor, arbitration, factories, day labour, roads, bread, libraries, venereal disease, and opticians. Much time was taken in dealing with the behaviour of a legislative councillor, J.P. Wilson, minister of industry in the Verran government, who had accepted election to a parliamentary committee contrary to caucus direction. Though expelled, Wilson defied the conference. The issue of voting strength was again aired: Frank Lundie successfully opposed a proposal to permit individual voting by all members of the ULP in pre-selection plebiscites, because the trade unions “would lose their hold of the political movement. The bulk of the finance came from the unions and it would be greater if the card system were adopted.” The premier emphasized the difficulties in providing employment which the war imposed. The party secretary spoke the rhetoric of loyalty and sacrifice. The conference made explicit its belief “that any members of the ULP opposing the platform of the ULP be expelled from the ULP”, but put to one side a proposal to urge a referendum before the introduction of conscription. There were, however, several expressions of frustration at the PLP and the government: Labor members of the Legislative Council were to sign the current platform, in addition to the one on which they were elected; the government was urged to exercise “more authority over the officers of their various Departments”; the PLP was told not to enforce a penal dissolution of parliament without party authorization; activation of the 1913 Arbitration Act was condemned.125

But it was the issue of conscription which dominated the affairs of the party for the next eighteen months.126 Continuing economic difficulties in the state, expanding administrative constraints, and the Legislative Council’s rejection of much government legislation, together with the continual stream of casualty lists and war reports, all provided the context
for the arguments within the party on the subject of compulsory overseas military service.

VI

In December 1915 the ULP Council directed its delegates to the interstate conference to support conscription only in conjunction with compulsory service of wealth. It was a directive specifically reaffirmed in March–April 1916. At the same time, sections of the party were already taking up more precise positions on conscription. Vaughan in January announced his willingness to countenance conscription if necessary.\textsuperscript{127} The UTLC decided during February, March, and April to call for conscription of wealth first, and conscription of men only as a last resort, and then only after a referendum. By June 1916 the UTLC had resolved to “oppose conscription by all lawful means... and to oppose all Labor members of parliament who supported conscription”. The UTLC then issued a circular to Labor members making it clear that they would oppose “any member of parliament on the next plebiscite, who dares to support the pernicious policy of Conscription”.\textsuperscript{128}

Manoeuvring became more intense as the annual conference approached. A gathering of trade unionists who were delegates to the conference was held in the AWU rooms under Lundie’s leadership, despite the angry criticisms of Crawford Vaughan that this was improper.\textsuperscript{129} This group considered not just the conscription issue, but the whole range of resolutions to be considered at the conference. This strengthens the argument that there was a radical trade-unionist versus reformist-pragmatist tension — but it should be noticed that some unions were for this very reason dissociating themselves from the UTLC, which they believed to be too radical.\textsuperscript{130} Thus the simple division between industrialist and politician is not enough to categorize the movement in these months of crisis; to it should be added the notion that the unions of the unskilled (AWU, United Labourers’ Union — both dominated by Lundie), with non-Adelaide bases, were challenging the metropolitan craft union pragmatists.

The party conference in September 1916 was given drama and confusion by the attendance of W. M. Hughes. Study of events at the conference is confused by the absence of written minutes, the custom of the previous few years. In their place the occasionally laconic \textit{Daily Herald} account must be used, which the next conference adopted as the official version, despite the fact that it had suffered at the hands of the censor, at least to the extent of having no account of Hughes’s speech nor of the response to it. Discussion on conscription came after the usual range of resolutions. The decisions taken on this contentious issue seem to have
been, first, to resolve to support Hughes in his conduct as prime minister, but secondly, and separately, to support the proposal that a referendum on conscription be held. This motion carried a second phrase "but is against conscription of human life". Three more explicit resolutions, two hostile to conscription under any circumstances, the third simply calling for a referendum (moved by Vaughan) were all defeated in what was clearly a long and exhausting discussion. The motion which was accepted passed by only 119 votes to 90, narrowly enough for a fairly general resolution which was meant to be the moderate compromise.

Unfortunately, the motion was open to varying interpretations. Vaughan and his parliamentary colleagues took the rejection of the stronger motions, and the absence of any threats in the motion passed, to mean that all had the right to express their opinions freely. But opponents of conscription had an entirely different view. The ULP Council resolved on 21 October 1916 "that this Council emphatically and definitely declares that the resolution approved at the Conference absolutely binds every member to oppose conscription, and that we declare that any member favouring conscription is disloyal".

The national conscription referendum ensued: it was an angry and heated time in South Australia as in the other states. Vaughan made his support for the now expelled Hughes public and explicit. Perhaps with distaste, pro-conscription Labor men found themselves campaigning with erstwhile political enemies. But in the eyes of their opponents they were thereby disloyal to the party, despite the fact that the platform had been made a binding test of loyalty in this way only at the 1915 conference.

The referendum vote in South Australia was 119,236 against and 87,924 in favour of conscription. It was the action taken to follow up this vote which irrevocably split the party. No doubt Vaughan had been confident — and with him the other nineteen Labor members of the Assembly (of twenty-six) and five members of the Council (of seven) who had supported conscription — that a majority "yes" vote would be achieved. No doubt, too, they believed their platform rhetoric that it was "treacherous", "disloyal", "anti-British", "pro-German" to oppose conscription. But they could not have anticipated the promptitude and rigour of their treatment on the morrow of the referendum.

Once again a caucus was held in the AWU rooms, and then at the ULP Council meeting specially convened on 2 November to discuss the subject, it was decided (by 198 votes to 100) to bring forward all parliamentary plebiscites, both federal and state. The meeting heard Vaughan complain this was a plot by the industrialists. The next evening the meeting continued, carrying a motion critical of those members of the ULP executive who had supported conscription, then one naming as disloyal the thirty-one state and federal parliamentarians who had supported con-
scription, and thirdly one recognizing L. L. Hill, J. Gunn, E. H. Coombe, J. Carr, J. Jelley, T. Butterfield, and J. Price as the South Australian PLP.

Naturally enough Vaughan and Lundie exchanged arguments — the one claiming injustice, improper caucussing, and gagged discussion, the other critical of the Labor government and concerned for the opinions of the rank and file trade unionists. But the anti-conscriptionists had the numbers to confirm their interpretation of the situation at Council meetings in November and December, if only narrowly. Plebiscites for all state and federal candidacies were held in January 1917, after a last-minute attempt in the ULP council to postpone them. About 24,000 ballot papers were distributed for the statewide Senate plebiscite, but only about 30 per cent were returned, a figure which was said to be lower than average. None of the pro-conscriptionists were successful, which was clear evidence of grass-roots anger at their behaviour.

A special conference was then called in February as a last resort. Again the anti-conscriptionist industrial group caucussed, planning to confirm the party’s opposition to conscription and to expel those parliamentarians who had supported it. Even more obviously than in September 1916, this group had the numbers. There were twenty-eight delegates representing the AWU (in which Lundie had just succeeded W. G. Spence as national president). Some of these delegates came from branches heard of neither before nor since (for example, Mount Gambier).

The peacemakers, led by the 1916 chairman, Hugh Gilmore, called for unity in the interests of the movement built up with such agony over its twenty-five years. He argued in his remarks at the opening of the February conference that the party was facing political doom. Urging that all involved were acting from conscientious conviction, he asked if such behaviour should be labelled disloyalty. But his plea went unheeded.

Immediately following these remarks the valid admission of the parliamentarians was challenged, but they were admitted. They were then confronted by a demand of the conference that they give written assurance they would abide by decisions of the conference. All the pro-conscriptionist parliamentarians who were delegates refused, and withdrew in a huff. There is no other word for it. The conference proceeded to declare all executive posts vacant and elect new office-holders, Frank Lundie not unexpectedly being elected to the chairmanship of the party. It then confirmed the branding of the parliamentarians as disloyal, and made resolutions of conference binding on parliamentarians. The victory of the anti-conscriptionists was complete. The gulf seemed — indeed was — unbridgeable. Perhaps a little tolerance on the part of the industrialists might have opened the way for a reconciliation. There is no doubt that the pro-conscriptionists were pursued ruthlessly. But their opponents were bitterly resentful of the campaign of vilification they had been made to
endure, and of the walk-out of Hughes and many others from the federal caucus. Feelings had hardened until opinions in craft unions, industrial unions, electoral and local committees, in city and country centres, all flowed in the one direction.\textsuperscript{138}

The censured parliamentarians met promptly and formed themselves into a new political party, the National Labor party (NLP), whose manifesto appeared on 3 March 1917. The tiny PLP met to count heads: it numbered five.\textsuperscript{139} A few unions supported the NLP but most continued their existing allegiance; for example the Port Adelaide Working Men's Association voted 504–309 for the ULP.\textsuperscript{140} Some competition ensued in the district branches, but again the weight of support lay with the ULP.\textsuperscript{141} After a certain amount of jockeying, control of the \textit{Daily Herald} was retained by the ULP.\textsuperscript{142} But at the 1917 federal polls and in several state by-elections the community at large refused to support the ULP. Boothby and Hindmarsh, two federal seats, were lost, as were East Torrens and Barossa in the state Assembly.\textsuperscript{143} The NLP lost all seats contested. So Peake soon became premier, ejecting Vaughan with little ceremony and ignoring his pleas for a national government under Vaughan's leadership.\textsuperscript{144} The ULP members took no part in this voting\textsuperscript{145} and like the \textit{Daily Herald} concentrated on denigrating the "Vaughanites".

In the months which followed the \textit{Daily Herald} reported with acid superiority the twists and turns to which the Nationalists resorted in an effort to retain power. Vaughan refused to serve under Peake. The Liberal Union finally accepted some Nationalists as worthy of electoral immunity, and two were admitted to the cabinet.\textsuperscript{146} By establishing its position as the sole working-class party, the ULP hoped to recuperate its electoral strength.

However it is clear that through 1917–18 the pro-conscriptionists and the new ULP leaders alike misjudged electoral opinion. The former had expected a "yes" vote to be followed by efforts to heal the divisions in the party. The latter, observing the "no" vote, pursued their erstwhile colleagues, confident that Labor would win at the elections. Just as a wide range of social factors produced the "no" vote, so the suspicion of the electorate at the disarray and inexperience of the ULP led to repeated electoral defeats. It left the party in opposition for years to come.

The party's regular organizational structure was maintained. There were 220 delegates to the 1917 conference, all of whom were required to pledge loyalty to the party objects and platform. This conference reflected rising pressure on wages in its demands that the state Arbitration Court fix wages in real terms. There were resolutions on the welfare of soldiers, on the wheat pool, on peace, and on card voting (which was lost). The Vaughanites were expunged from the sight of the party. The party's title was altered, in conformity with interstate decisions, to "The Australian
Labor Party [ALP], South Australian Branch”. The objective of the party was spelt out, also in line with interstate discussion, and consonant with the more radical character of the party: “To secure the adequate representation in Parliament, and other public bodies of organised workers and producers for the purpose of securing to each person the full result of his or her labor, by the collective ownership and democratic control of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and to ensure to each person full religious, political and social freedom.”

The second conscription referendum absorbed the energies of the party in November and December 1917, as it acted wholeheartedly to oppose conscription. Perhaps it refurbished the party’s organization, but it could not have been cheap.

As we have seen, the preselection plebiscites for the 1918 elections were completed in January 1917. A study of the candidates for this election reveals some differences with the established pattern, and it is therefore a convenient point at which to consider this matter generally. Information about all Labor candidates from 1893 is incomplete: the Daily Herald was not quite total in its provision of biographical sketches. From these, however, some facts emerge. The average age of candidates was 41–42 years till 1910, when it rose to 47–48, at which figure it remained till 1918, when the average dropped to 40–41. The place of birth of candidates was dominated by the British Isles until 1905, when six of the twenty-eight had been born in South Australia. This proportion grew steadily till there was a majority of Australian-born in 1915. By 1918, of the forty-six, thirty-one were Australian-born while data for another ten were not available. The religion of the candidates was overwhelmingly Protestant — for a long while Denny was the lone Roman Catholic. By 1912 four of the thirty candidates were Roman Catholic. This figure grew to eight in 1918 (but no data were available for fourteen). There were very few, if any, cases where existing members did not become candidates for the next election. Nearly all candidates had working-class experience in their careers, and many were honorary or paid trade union officials. For the whole period a small sprinkling had secondary or tertiary education. Therefore it would not be true to argue that the character of the party’s candidates changed dramatically in 1918, though they were younger, and more of them were Roman Catholics.

As part of the 1918 election campaign Norman Makin’s A Progressive Democracy was published. This pamphlet caught and recorded the newly built party’s mythology about the experiences of the previous two years. He claimed that the Vaughan ministry never had the confidence of the party, and even that “from 1912 the Labor movement lived within the precincts of a veritable volcano”.

It was a comforting, simplistic assertion which did not take the complexities of the situation into account.
account. However, it was not the past, but the future, which really con­
cerned Makin and Hill (the latter was state president and contributor of a
foreword to the pamphlet). Makin’s preface spoke of their belief in the
ALP as “the foremost movement of reform, and the leaders of an enlight­
ened Democracy”. They sought to create “conditions that will produce a
higher standard of human beings” through the provisions of the objective
and the planks of the party. This was the traditional — and authentic —
voice of the Labor movement.

In the immediate context of the elections the ALP pushed the theme of
“cleaning up” politics.149 Shortage of funds limited their efforts, especially
in the matter of the Legislative Council and, naturally, interstate
speakers were greatly appreciated. The party was conscious that the newly
organized farmers’ party probably took votes from the ALP.150 But still,
to recover from three to seventeen in the Assembly was encouraging, as
was the virtual disappearance of the Nationalists. Nevertheless, the Liberals
with twenty-eight seats were comfortably ensconced in power. The Labor
party had seen its support shrink from the great days of 1915 to the hard
core of industrial centres in Adelaide, Port Pirie, and the mining areas.
While it was to gain office in the 1920s, it is doubtful whether the party
regained the breadth of community support it had in 1915 until, perhaps,
1962.

For the immediate future, the task was to build the party to regain
power, and to evolve the policies appropriate to the onset of peace. The
Daily Herald carried frequent editorials in 1918 exuding a sense of con­
structive appraisal of the tasks ahead: there were references to greater
worker control, and to increasing his share of the returns of industry. The
Nationalists were watched as they sank from political view, rejected by the
ALP and discarded by the Liberal Union. At the 1918 conference many
unions and district branches reaffiliated.151 The bonds of control over
candidates were strengthened, and the big unions at last gained their
objective of the card vote (although the experiment was shortlived, being
abandoned at the 1921 conference). Perhaps because they were satisfied
with the rotundities of the 1917 objective, the interstate Labor conference
objective was not adopted (thirty-five votes to thirty-three). Again
cautiously, support for the idea of One Big Union (OBU), so much the
current fashion in trade union circles, was expressed only in an innocuous
motion referring largely to the AWU.

Despite these deliberate efforts at strengthening the party, the parlia­
mentary session of 1918 had to be written off as “barren and useless”. The
government had refused a statutory living wage to employees under state
awards, had done little else, and was simply holding onto office.152 The
ALP claimed that the issues of postwar administration were becoming
urgent: the cost of living, the lack of employment, and the adjustments to
peacetime required vigorous government attention. These were the issues gathered up in the Daily Herald's assessment at the commencement of the 1919 conference. It opened with the reworded objective of the federal party: "the emancipation of human labor from all forms of exploitation and the obtaining for all workers the full reward for their industry by the collective ownership and democratic control of the collectively used agencies of production, distribution and exchange."\(^{153}\) It spoke of the need for international and Australia-wide federation of labour. It emphasized the ALP's acceptance of the role and powers of the Commonwealth — indeed argued for their extension. It acknowledged that in South Australia the party had never held power without hindrance. Until the absurd and unfair distinction in franchise for the Council was removed, it would be hopeless to look for thoroughly democratic legislation or administration. The parliamentary representatives of the party were worthy of all encouragement in the immediate and difficult situation. The ALP conference represented the people, not the profiteer: it was for such gatherings to show that they had sound and practical policies for dealing with those questions which the anti-Labor parties had so miserably failed to handle in the best interests of the people. All this, plus the endeavour to stand apart from the "extremist element within", and to prefer the "orderly, constitutional manner", epitomized the ALP in South Australia as it entered the 1920s. In the words of the outgoing president, Norman Makin: [the ULP] sought to exalt life, to demand justice and opportunity for all who furnished creative service to the world. It protected the weak and oppressed and destroyed the power of the arrogant.\(^{154}\)

The party had grown out of a sense of injustice among trade unionists in Adelaide. It had been informed by liberal, reformist ideals. It had provided sectional support to a liberal coalition in the 1890s, then to a Liberal-Labor coalition, and had then become in parliament the fully developed and accepted opposition, the alternative government. Even when in power, however, the ULP was persistently and successfully resisted by the Legislative Council. Sometimes, too, it had been restrained by pressure mounted by angry, frustrated industrial workers.

Its character was reformist and radical, but never revolutionary. It was a popularly based political organization, with considerable sectional support, seeking to gain political power within the existing structure, committed to the struggle for distributive justice and sustained by doctrines of potentially far-reaching effect. At the core of its support was an homogenous working class, based on Adelaide and its suburbs, conscious of its own interests and anxious to promote them. Sometimes even that base proved to possess internal dynamics, as employees of new, large-scale industry and suburban craftsmen took up different positions. Beyond the urban work-
ing classes, the party looked to attract suburban middle-class voters, and also rural voters discontented with the existing situation. It was a process whose success tended to fluctuate with the state of the economy and the validity of the party's pose as an alternative government, together with the competition of the principles of self-interest and social justice in the minds of these fringe supporters.

APPENDIX 1

South Australian House of Assembly: ULP Performance at Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Valid Vote</th>
<th>ULP %</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
<th>ULP Seats Contested</th>
<th>ULP Seats Won</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<th>ULP %</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
<th>ULP Seats Contested</th>
<th>ULP Seats Won</th>
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<td><strong>30</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>3 member: 200,480</td>
<td>43.93</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 member: 124,167</td>
<td>45.92</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>3 member: 252,252</td>
<td>40.41</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 member: 149,593</td>
<td>51.71</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


**COMMENTS:**
(1) Voting voluntary, plumping permitted.
(2) ULP figures 1893–1902 include country candidates not pledged to ULP, but described as “Labor” in contemporary accounts, and counted as such by Hughes and Graham.
APPENDIX 2

Attendance at ULP Annual Conference 1904–20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Representing Unions</th>
<th>Representing Local Branches and Societies</th>
<th>Parliamentarians</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>127</td>
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<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>135</td>
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<td>1912</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>153</td>
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<td>1913</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>c. 240</td>
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<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917 (Feb.)</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>237</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>230</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: *Weekly Herald* and *Daily Herald*.

BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX


Association. Secretary, Drivers’ Union. Member, Richmond Demo-
cratic Club. Senator, 1906. MHA (Adelaide), 1907–17, non-Labor
1917–18. MHR (Adelaide), 1919. Minister of mines, and minister of
marine, 1915–17. Minister of agriculture, minister of repatriation,
1917–18.

CHARLESTON, David Morley. b. Cornwall (England), 1848; d. SA, 1934.
Engineer and marine engineer. Member of Amalgamated Society of
Engineers from 1870. Delegate to TLC; president of TLC. MLC
(Central District), 1891–96, non-Labor 1897–1901. Senator,
1901–10.

Arrived Australia, 1865; Adelaide, 1881. Collar maker and union
official. Druid, lodge, and friendly society member. General
secretary, Saddlers’ Trades Society. President and vice-president,
TLC, 1888 and 1892. Member of parliamentary and managing com-
mittee of TLC. MHA (East Torrens), 1893–1902; (Torrens),
Minister of education, 1908–9, 1910–12. Speaker of House,
1915–21.

COOMBE, Ephraim Henry. b. SA, 1858; d. SA, 1917. Journalist and news-
paper editor. Commissioner of Crown lands and immigration, and
minister of agriculture, 1909.

councillor, 1898. Editor, Southern Cross. MHA (West Adelaide),
1900–1902; (Adelaide), 1902–33. Attorney general, minister of
irrigation, minister of repatriation, and minister of housing,
1925–27. Attorney general, minister of railways, 1930–33. Minister
of local government, 1930.

Goode, Clarence. b. SA, 1875. Farmer and grazier. Councillor, Gladstone
Town Corporation. MHA (Stanley), 1905–15; (Victoria), 1915–17,
non-Labor 1917–18. Commissioner of Crown lands and immigra-

Gunn, John. b. Victoria, 1885. Lorry driver and union official. President
and secretary, Drivers’ Union. MHA (Adelaide), 1915–17. MHR
Premier and Treasurer, 1924–26. Minister of irrigation, and minister

Guthrie, Robert Storrie. b. Scotland, 1857; d. Victoria, 1921. Arrived
Australia, 1878. Seaman and union official. Secretary, Seamen’s
Union. President, Maritime Labour Council, Port Adelaide, 1890.
ITUC delegate, 1885, 1887. Executive of Homestead Block League.
MLC Central District, 1897. Senator, 1903–21, Labor 1904–16,
non-Labor 1916–21.


POYNTON, Alexander. b. Victoria, 1853; d. SA, 1935. Came to SA, 1888. Miner, land agent, and union official. Member, AMA. Secretary, treasurer, Port Augusta branch, Shearers' Union. MHA (Flinders), 1893–1901. MHR (Grey), 1901, 1910–19.


NOTES

4. Ibid., lists, Appendix 2; L. E. Kiek, “A History of the South Australian Trade Union Movement”, Appendix 1, names twenty-nine societies in existence in the colony on 1 January 1890.
5. UTLC minutes, 31 January 1884.
14. UTLC minutes, 30 November 1890.
NOTES TO PAGES 239–50

Party 1882–1900”, p. 15. Wallis wrote this account while secretary to the ULP in the early 1900s. The minutes of the “Legislative Council Elections Committee”, from which in this and a number of other matters he is clearly quoting, do not seem to have survived. His evidence seems to be substantially reliable and useful.

16. UTLC minutes, 20 February 1891.
17. E.g., Advertiser, 25 April 1891.
18. Coneybeer papers, 26/1/171.
20. Ibid., pp. 71–76.
22. Copy of circular letter in Coneybeer papers, 26/1/17.
25. Ibid., 26/1/57a.
26. Ibid., 26/1/47.
31. UTLC minutes, 15 May, 3 July 1891.
32. Advertiser, 17 February 1893.
35. Advertiser, 28 April 1896; SAPD 1893 (7 September 1893), Col 1423.
37. O'Loghlin resigned from the Southern Cross to become Kingston's chief secretary. Much later he was elected for Flinders as a member of the Labor party.
38. Southern Cross, 14 October 1898.
40. Copy in Coneybeer papers, 26/3/1.
41. Southern Cross, 21 April 1899.
42. This paragraph is based on M. French, “Churches and Society in South Australia 1890–1900”, pp. 401–7. I am grateful to the author for permission to quote from the thesis.
43. Ibid., p. 395.
44. Walker, “Maritime Strikes in S.A.”
46. Weekly Herald, 2 July 1898.
47. SAPD 1898–99 (6 July 1898), p. 66.
48. Ibid., p. 72.
49. SAPD (House of Assembly) 1899 (28 November 1899), p. 918.
50. Ibid., p. 943.
51. In the debate on 12 December 1899 and following days on Holder’s policy statement [SAPD (House of Assembly) 1899, p. 944 ff.], Poynton (1017), Roberts (1022), and Carpenter (1026, 1096) all made speeches revealing PLP dissensions.
52. SAPD (House of Assembly) 1893 (28 March 1893), p. 7
55. Ibid. (1 December 1898), p. 789.
57. See the cool editorial on federation in *Weekly Herald*, 15 January 1897.
61. Ibid., 24 November 1900, 20 July, 17 August 1901.
62. Ibid., 5, 12 April 1902.
63. Ibid., 2 November 1902.
64. *SAPD* (House of Assembly) 1903 (8 July 1903), p. 29 ff.
65. ULP minutes, 12 July, 9 August 1900.
66. Ibid., 14 June 1901.
67. Circular letter from Secretary ULP to branches, 17 June 1901, invited proposals for amendments to the platform, and action to cleanse the rolls. (Inserted in ULP minutes, June 1901.) Plebiscite: 1860 valid votes (ULP minutes 23 January 1902). See also ibid., 13 February 1902 – allocate candidates; Port Pirie branch to be written to for prompt decision about election plans, ibid., 20 February 1902.
69. ULP minutes, 24 September 1903.
73. *SAPD* 1903 (9 November 1904), p. 914.
78. Annual conference minutes, 13, 15 September 1905, in ULP Council minute book at that date.
80. *SAPD* (House of Assembly) 1907 (10 October 1907), p. 598.
81. Ibid. (3 July 1907), p. 28.
82. Ibid. (27 November 1907), p. 957.
86. *SAPD* (House of Assembly) 1909 (22 July 1909), p. 3.
87. ULP Council minutes, 10 June 1909; *Weekly Herald*, 12 June 1909.
94. See *Daily Herald*, 15–17 September 1910, for the report.
105. Quartly, "Liberal Union in Power", p. 43.
109. ULP minutes, 13 June, 11 July 1913.
118. ULP minutes, 1914–19, pp. 12 ff.
120. *Daily Herald*, 24 September, 3, 4, 26 October 1914.
122. These calculations were kindly provided by Mr. D. Hopgood, who is engaged on a study of Labor's electoral fortunes in South Australia 1913–33.
125. ULP minutes, 1914–19, pp. 54 ff.
128. UTLC minutes, 30 June 1916.
NOTES TO PAGES 274–79

134. Ibid., 6, 7, 8, 11, 13 November 1916.
137. Ibid., 12 February 1917.
138. Gibson is critical of the "Lundieites". See her thesis, p. 18 Makin, on the other hand, in a letter to the author, 6 August 1970, emphasized the breadth and depth of the bitterness felt in the ULP towards the Vaughanites.
139. PLP minutes, 1 March 1917.
141. Ibid., 2, 10, 11 April 1917.
142. Ibid., 16 May 1917; ULP minutes, 8 March 1917.
145. PLP minutes, 12 July 1917.
146. *Daily Herald*, 19, 27 August, 22 October 1917, 11 January 1918. See also the scathing remarks of Kirkpatrick (PLP leader) in *SAPD* 1917 (29 August 1917), pp. 70 ff.
147. ULP minutes, 13 September 1917, p. 214.
150. Ibid., 9 April 1918.
153. Ibid., 15 September 1919.
The Verran ministry, the first wholly Labor ministry in South Australia (1910–12) (Courtesy South Australian State Archives)
Victoria

Humphrey McQueen
A “Labor party”* in Victoria contested its first general election in 1892. Sixty years were to elapse before any of its successors could claim an absolute majority in the Legislative Assembly although a minority Labor government limped through oblivion from 9 to 22 December 1913. There were four further minority ministries in 1924, 1928, 1929–32, and 1943–45. By the time Victorian Labor won its first majority in 1952, Labor in the other states had already been in office for periods ranging from ten to thirty-four years. Yet in the years after the gold rush the Victorian Labor movement had occupied a position privileged in the Australian colonies and indeed in the world. In 1856 the eight-hour day was secured by stonemasons, one of whose number entered parliament in 1859. The Trades Hall Council (THC) was a respected part of society and its leaders occupied themselves with affairs of state, particularly protection. So in 1889 when the past-president of the council, William Arthur Trenwith, was elected to the Legislative Assembly and found four sympathetic but unmarshalled supporters, the stage seemed set for the appearance of a dominating Labor party. Failure to fulfil this promise must be accounted for initially in light of the preceding development of Victoria’s society.

Even if Victoria was not the richest country in the world in the forty years after 1850, its citizens certainly believed that it was and that it would continue to be so. This wealth was by no means shared evenly and there were the submerged poor within nineteenth-century affluence just as there are today. Although things had been bad in the 1860s, by the 1880s even the unemployed had ritualized their grievances. Eric Fry distinguished six features of Melbourne’s unemployed at this time: they were small in number; their condition was temporary and seasonal; they were unskilled; they would not leave the city to work in the country; they

*Although there was a “Labor party” in the Victorian Legislative Assembly from at least 1892, there was no official Labor party in Victoria for another ten years. In this chapter I have used “Labor party” to refer to a parliamentary faction and have reserved Labor party for the Political Labor Council (PLC) after 1902, since it alone sustained a parliamentary caucus pledged to an outside mass organization.
demanded work from the government as a right and immediately turned to publicity and political agitation. "This in turn reflected a background of economic confidence, large scale public works and political democracy."¹

Trade unionism in Victoria had proved viable and its growth was as extensive as in New South Wales, as can be seen from the lists of trade societies appended to the Inter-Colonial Trade Union Congress (ITUC) reports. The 1884 report lists Melbourne’s THC with fifty societies comprising 10,000 as against New South Wales TLC’s twenty-four societies and 8,000 members. More important was their relative composition. In July 1890 the New South Wales TLC had twenty-one craft and twenty-three unskilled unions as against Melbourne’s thirty craft and thirteen unskilled.² The THC was a gathering of the trades, of responsible and respected citizens. It would be wrong to see the Victorian unions as passive or docile. They were in fact quite active on purely economic questions and while they were always most anxious to conciliate they were equally insistent in negotiation that they should receive their share of the benefits from the boom. This applied particularly to the newer unions which accompanied the upsurge of light secondary industry after 1880 and which were endeavouring to establish their position.

Factory discipline proved the seed-bed of solidarity needed for united action and there were important strikes by tailoresses in 1882–83 and by bootmakers in 1884–85. Fry listed another thirteen trades organized between June 1882 and June 1883. Their primary aim was the eight-hour day which by 1890 was enjoyed by half of Melbourne’s wage-earners; this had the additional advantage of producing extra pay for hours worked in excess of the eight hours. Wider aims, such as amendments to the Factory Act, were not subjects for strike action but for legislative and social pressure. Union tactics were thus restricted though their aims were less so. When the unions did engage in wider issues, which was most of the time, they did not see themselves participating in a battle of classes having no common interests, because their experience made it impossible to see Victoria in these terms. This was made inevitable by protection which in its idealized form was a partnership of labour and capital under the benign guidance of the government, to provide jobs for the workers, profits for the manufacturers, the benefits of a high wage economy and economic growth for the colony. Protection remained to bedevil the Labor party until well after the adoption of “new protection” by the Commonwealth.³

There was an intangible but very real import to Victoria’s polity in the years after the gold rushes. It was congruent with material prosperity but had sources and a life of its own which in turn influenced the way in which that prosperity was encountered by wage-earners. Victorian Liberalism,⁴ so difficult to betray since it was impossible to define with precision, was nonetheless part of the achieved inheritance of Victoria’s
labouring classes. For them its most obvious expression was the eight-hour day but this had been won — and continued to be debated — in terms of intellectual and moral improvement.

For similar reasons plural voting was totally unacceptable to the labouring classes. It is impossible to appreciate the intensity of feeling that this issue generated if its abolition is seen merely as a means to the end of political power which would in turn result in improved economic conditions. Plural voting was a moral affront to the labouring man since it classed him as less valuable than someone else's property. Perhaps if he had perceived himself as property he would not have felt so outraged. Because he was so far from being a wage-slave in his self-perceptions, he was indignant at what he considered to be a political castration of his manhood.5

In its material prosperity and confidence, in its notions of colonial and racial superiority, in its political radicalism and social reformism, in its imperialist schemes and protectionist policies, Victoria in the 1880s was a vast companion piece to Joseph Chamberlain's Birmingham. Different in detail as geographic considerations demanded, Victoria and Birmingham were the products of a similar conjuncture of British imperialism. Victoria's entire work-force can be seen as an aristocracy of labour, within which the Melbourne THC operated as a House of Lords.

The import of this brief sketch of the totality of Victoria's society in the years before the appearance of a "Labor party" is essential if its failure vis-à-vis the other colonies is to be understood. True, the party's practices compounded its initial difficulties. But the inheritance of Victorian Liberalism, ideological and organizational, meant that there was no Labor party in Victoria till after 1900 and that when it did emerge it would be confounded in the struggle to exorcise Liberalism's spectre. In this struggle for an identity, Victorian Labor often isolated itself from those groups whose support could have given it greater parliamentary power. Yet these groups, particularly the small farmers, had received their share of the inheritance as well, and were not as susceptible as their counterparts in other colonies.

II

Victoria's unionists were by no means apolitical before the maritime strike of August 1890. The mining unions were well advanced in this respect if only because mining communities offered a viable electoral base and a group of radicals was consistently returned from the mining electorates. Those who survived into the 1890s maintained a decidedly ambiguous relationship with the THC-dominated "Labor parties". Some of
the Amalgamated Miners’ Association’s [AMA’s] unwillingness to be tied to the “Labor parties” sprang from the miners’ attachments to their existing representatives. Nor did the Melbourne-based unions ignore politics. The eight-hour pioneer, Ben Douglas, unsuccessfully contested Collingwood in 1871. More continuous were the activities of the THC’s parliamentary committee which had the responsibility of presenting the unions’ point of view to politicians. The parliamentary committee appointed by the ITUC in 1884 was instructed “to obtain for labour direct representation in Parliament”. In its report to the 1885 congress the committee concentrated on the question of direct representation, and was once again given widespread approval.

When it is remembered that the committee consisted entirely of leading Victorian unionists, it is at first surprising to learn of the opposition within the THC to a resolution to bring forward candidates to contest the 1896 election. After a series of special meetings of the council the motion was withdrawn. This apparent defeat for “direct representation” must be understood in the context of the developing struggle between the old and new unionists: the old guard was headed by Ben Douglas, who was chairman of the Trades Hall trustees, while the new men of power were led by William Trenwith, who became THC president in March 1886. Trenwith’s forces finally gained control but only after years of negotiations and a sensational court case. Failure to obtain THC endorsement did not prevent F. H. Bromley, W. A. Trenwith, and W. E. Murphy from contesting seats at the 1886 election: what is significant about these three is that they had been president, treasurer, and secretary of the parliamentary committee appointed in 1884. Their belief in direct representation had thus found an opportunity to develop an organizational cohesiveness. While none was successful, none polled disgracefully. Certainly there was reason to hope that the Labor vote could be improved into a winning position.

As the 1889 election approached, the THC adopted a fourteen-point platform and urged all workmen to vote only for those candidates who supported its demands. No specific candidates were endorsed. Murphy and Trenwith again contested seats, with the latter being successful in Richmond. This victory brought an immediate change in the THC’s position as it passed a resolution appreciating “the service of all members who worked for Labor candidates”. The council’s response to Trenwith’s success leaves no doubt that it would have endorsed him (and others) at the next election. His long battle had been won without the intervention of the 1890 strike.

Thus the THC’s decision in March 1891 to form local district committees in the electorates was not a “turning point” so much as the fulfilment of a long process; a change of emphasis, not of direction. Almost immediately a vacancy occurred for one of the two Collingwood
seats and the parliamentary committee recommended endorsing a candidate: John Hancock, secretary of the Typographical Society and chairman of the Maritime Strike Committee, was selected and eventually headed a poll of four. This local success reminded the THC of the tremendous victory which their New Zealand confrères had achieved in the previous January. In addition, the Shearers' Union announced its intention "to organise the Labor vote in the country" and the ITUC in Ballarat came out strongly in favour of "direct representation".

The THC organized a political Labor convention for the last week-end in May 1891. Thirteen representatives attended, two from each of the Trades Councils in Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong; two each from the Amalgamated Shearers' Union (ASU) and the AMA, and one from the Social Democratic Federation. They agreed to form the Progressive Political League (PPL) of Victoria. The choice of name with its intention of appealing to a wider constituency than labour, shows that the consensual underpinnings of Victorian Liberalism had survived intact. The political platform which they announced called for the abolition of plural voting; the repeal of Conspiracy Acts; a legally enforced eight-hour day; and the "Federation of the Colonies on a Democratic basis"; as well as sixteen other items which showed no appeal to rural interests. Seventeen rules were adopted including an objective:

- to secure for all classes such legislation as will advance their interests by
  - the enrolment of all persons desirous of promoting progressive legislation.
  - the return of Candidates to Parliament pledged to support the Platform of the League.

This moderation was reinforced in the preamble which asked for nothing more than that all the great interests receive a "fair proportion" of the parliamentary places so that the legislature could function satisfactorily. Rule 15 gave "Each Branch . . . absolute freedom in selecting Candidates . . ." This lack of central control cut across the concept of a pledge and was to create grave tension when attempts were made to alter it.

The PPL's platform provoked immediate adverse comment from the rigidly Protestant executive council of the AMA, which demanded the addition of a plank calling for the "Maintenance of the Education Act" before it would affiliate. At the AMA No. 1 Colonial District conference at Bendigo fresh approaches were made by Trenwith, who attended specifically for this purpose. The most the AMA would agree to was to support individual PPL branches which accepted the AMA's secular education policy. Spence moved for complete support but was overwhelmingly
defeated. The rift between the miners and political Labor in Victoria persisted for another seventeen years and was one of the important factors inhibiting Labor’s electoral success and organizational growth outside the metropolitan area.

Absence of finance was part of the overall economic collapse in the colony. Some indication of the extent of the depression can be gauged from incidents such as the decision in 1892 to make Melbourne’s trams run at 12 mph instead of 9 mph so that fewer cars could make the same number of trips; by 1894 the Melbourne Metropolitan Gas Company had repossessed 6,233 gas stoves — about half of those on loan in 1890. Many unions had spent heavily on strike funds in the preceding eighteen months: the Melbourne Typographical Society had given £1,400 in the six months to May 1891. With rising unemployment there was a fall in income with an increased demand for benefit payments: “In one year from October 1892, the Australian branches of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers paid out the massive sum of £7,137 in donation benefit . . .” Poor union response to PPL requests cannot be seen as lack of political interest; it was more generally the lack of money to give.

The third meeting of the PPL central council on 30 January 1892 sought an alliance with the unemployed, an understanding with the farmers, and unity with the AMA. Failure to achieve any of these in its first half-year of existence accurately foreshadowed the league’s overall future.

Choosing candidates for the 1892 elections presented some real difficulties, particularly in Fitzroy where the “anarchists” S. A. Rosa and W. F. Fleming sought endorsement. Rosa headed the pre-selection poll but was replaced at the insistence of Trenwith. A similar situation occurred in Carlton South where W. D. Flinn, a foundation member of the PPL as the representative of the Social Democratic Federation, was replaced as the endorsed candidate. The free-thinking Josh Symes was given even shorter shrift in Collingwood. Far more typical was F. H. Bromley who told his cheering audience that “he had no prejudices against any class”. So the party’s nature was determined as much by its candidates as by its stated policies.

As the obvious, though unelected, leader of the PPL, Trenwith deserves further attention. His dilemma was how to live up to and live down the revolutionary reputation that he had had thrust upon him by the Argus for his role in the maritime strike. He chose simply to explain that he had never “counselling strikes . . . [but had] . . . hundreds of times prevented them . . . [always urging] . . . that strikes are barbarous and cruel methods of attempting to settle labour disputes”. Reporting to his constituents at the Richmond Town Hall on 25 February 1892, Trenwith showed his support of protection to be as much a “roads-and-bridges” issue as a
matter of national policy as he listed the nail factories and leather shops he had helped, thereby increasing local employment. He had other claims to fame since the Mallee lands had been opened up at his initiative: the importance of rural escape routes for Richmond’s factory workers was a question of continuing concern to their astute representative. Here is that persistent but often overlooked combination of land hunger and state action which constituted so much of what passed as socialism in late nineteenth-century Australia.

As if poor organization, lack of funds, and a diminishing electoral base were insufficient problems for the fragile PPL, it was faced with some of the argument over free trade and protection which was concurrently racking the New South Wales Labor party. Moreover, neither of the issues most in the public mind in April 1892 could be turned to the league’s specific advantage. Allegations against the railway commissioners were the preserve of the Age and any benefit to be gained went to its immediate political coterie. But by far the most exciting thing in the papers during the election campaign was the Deeming murder sensation.

Undeterred, the PPL’s paper Commonweal (16 April) issued a pre-election “Manifesto of Progressive Democrats” indicating that the old Liberalism was out in force. The manifesto declared against class rule and for “peaceful and constitutional” reforms to “elevate the general conditions of all classes”. An editorial appealed to “farmers, shopkeepers, artisans, labourers, producers and distributors of all kinds” to vote for the league and against “the encroachments of the idle few”.

Victorian Liberalism was not only ideologically well-prepared to absorb a Labor challenge, it also had state-wide organizational linkages which could be turned to purely political ends. Contacts established through the Australian Natives’ Association and the Protectionist Associations could be employed for the Liberals, while young imperial federationists established the Victorian Patriotic League in March 1892 to support the Conservatives.

Considerable relief was expressed in the Argus the day after the election since the PPL had increased its membership merely from six to thirteen in a house of ninety-five. Hancock had lost his seat and three of the PPL members had won by majorities of only 107, 97, and 25. The Age (22 April) was content to affirm its consensual principles by pointing to the impossibility of a “purely sectional institution” gaining political strength.

Of the thirteen PPL members who were elected, one immediately defected; another joined the ministerialists within a year; and two of the remainder expired before their terms and their seats were lost in the subsequent by-elections. A Victorian Labor party had been still-born. A month after the elections Commonweal expressed a strategy which fully recognized the extent of Labor’s failure:
HUMPHREY McQUEEN

It is clearly understood that our Party is to avoid the serious mistakes made by the Labour Party in New South Wales, notably that primary error which placed the party in a position of hostility to all other sections of the Parliament. The Victorian Labour Party constitutes itself a wing of the Liberal Party, and is prepared to support a Liberal Government so long as that Government promotes genuine democratic legislation in the interests of all classes, workers included. New Zealand should furnish us a model. 19

Financial trouble hit Commonweal and in September 1892 it launched an appeal fund. By the end of May 1893 it had been reduced from eight to four pages and it ceased publication entirely on 1 July that year. In the preceding February the THC had replaced its permanent secretariat paying £4 a week with an honorary one at £1 a week. If the incidence of Commonweal reports is any criterion, there was a sharp decline in PPL branch activity after the elections. The central council continued to meet monthly but reported little organizational work. The fate of the Ballarat West branch was perhaps representative. After much discussion as to whether it could afford to support a candidate it nominated one, only to find after the election that its liabilities exceeded its assets by more than £57. The July meeting lapsed for want of a quorum and the minute book contains no further entry. In the enthusiastic expectation provoked by New Zealand and New South Wales successes the PPL had overreached itself with fatal results. 20

Seven years of Conservative-Liberal coalition government in Victoria had ended in November 1890. Budget deficits brought down three governments in the next four years since failure to balance the budget was taken as proof that a government had failed to cure the depression. These depression deficits raised other problems: how to make up the difference? Should expenditures be cut? Or revenues increased? And if so, how? All this questioning eventually produced doubts concerning protection. Legislative form was given to these doubts by the Conservative ministry of James Patterson in his 1894 budget. For the first time in over twenty years, Victoria’s protectionist policy was faced with real opposition from a government. 21 Confronted with this direct conservative thrust, the THC was fortified in its resolve to broaden the base of its political organization.

Invitations to a conference “to devise some method of political action” were extended to all societies affiliated with the THC and with the TLCs in Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, and Horsham; to the AMA, the ASU, the Eight-Hours Movement; and to the Democratic Club, the Women’s Suffrage Society, the Protectionist, Liberal and Federation League, and to all extant PPL branches. The conference met late in June and drew up a platform for a United Labour and Liberal party (ULLP) which was slightly more radical than the PPL’s had been; 22 the budget crisis which occurred
in August meant that the new party would be even less radical in practice than its predecessor. Even the “socialist” G. M. Prendergast declared himself to be a Liberal.²³

Patterson’s government was defeated on 29 August 1894 and an election was called for 20 September. Because of the clear-cut nature of the issue — Protection or Free Trade — the campaign was vigorously contested. Sectional groups such as Temperance and Scripture leagues were absent, thereby helping to sharpen the basic conflict. Candidates did have to compete with the football grand finals for the voters’ interest. Since it is uncertain how many ULLP candidates were endorsed it is impossible to decide how many were elected but it was somewhere between sixteen and eighteen.²⁴ What is beyond doubt is that Patterson was soundly defeated and that George Turner’s Liberal supporters won over two-thirds of the seats. Equally apparent was Labor’s enthusiasm for the new premier, despite some annoyance at being excluded from the ministry.²⁵

Liberalism had re-established its hegemony via protection. The difference between Liberals and Conservatives after 1894 was sufficiently great on this issue, so vital to the THC, that there was no opportunity for Labor to trade support for concessions. The PPL’s earlier failure to break through was compounded, and until 1902 the Trades Hall party could do no more than act out the role prescribed for it by the Age — that of advance guard for Liberalism. In this environment it is little wonder that the Ballance and Seddon Governments in New Zealand were taken as ideal models for Liberalism in Victoria to follow. Every new reform across the Tasman provided another opportunity to remind Turner that, as a Liberal, he should do likewise. As the 1890’s progressed, and Turner did not, New Zealand’s “lib-lab-socialist” governments became a yardstick against which to measure the failings of Victorian Liberalism. Criticisms derived from these comparisons eventually assisted in creating organizational autonomy for political Labor in Victoria. Yet this was achieved under a debt to Liberalism, albeit a Liberalism twelve hundred miles away.

In 1896 Liberalism scored two victories which reinforced its hold over the allegiance of the Victorian electorate. One of these was of general appeal: a balanced budget. The other was aimed directly at the working classes: wages boards²⁶ which were subsequently extended to many categories of workmen. The boards established minimum wages and thus attempted to spread the benefits of protection to the employees: the unity of class interests being given a further practical demonstration.

The attempt at a ULLP had never really passed beyond the wishes of the Labor side, so yet another organization was launched in May 1896 when the THC adopted the constitution of the United Labor party (ULP) of Victoria. The policy of the “new” party was barely distinguishable from that of the ULLP. Organizationally the changes appeared more substantial
since a pledge was to be obtained from all aspiring candidates to support the platform. This was still a long way from the "caucus pledge" since the Victorian pledge was to be given through the nominating organization which could be any "trades and labor union [or] democratic bodies" affiliated with the ULP. The THC maintained a proprietary interest in the new party.

Internal dissension was the most important fact facing the ULP as it contested the 1897 election. Some discontent with Trenwith's passive support for the Turner ministry, and with Liberalism in general, had been present for some time but it was not until 1897 that it came to the fore. The radicals were centred round Tocsin, a paper they launched on 2 October 1897 with a platform of seventy-four points which showed that there was little specifically socialist about even the radicals. Or as the first editorial put it: "The functions of a Labour Paper in a new community like Australia are necessarily greater, and less sectional and factional, than they are in older countries. There such an organ voices the claims and the despair of the hunted and cornered, and the aspirations of those of them who have been left long enough unmolested to have time to aspire; here it voices, or should, and must voice, the claims and realisable hopes of the whole community." The area in dispute was that of organizational autonomy from Turner and David Syme's Age.

Before the election of 14 October 1897 there was little open criticism of Trenwith by his fellow ULP members, who concentrated their fire on Turner and the Age. This led to Turner attacking the ULP in his policy speech for not giving him all the support it could have in the previous parliament, a suggestion denounced at the THC and denied by Trenwith, who was nonetheless critical of some of his colleagues. It was the Age which presented the matter most succinctly: the difficulty arose because "some members of this party . . . are no longer content to consider themselves as owning any allegiance to Liberal homogeneity. They declare for a policy of separation and segregation". Accepting this challenge the Age went all out to defeat its perpetrators, who had been encouraged by the presence of the British dock strike leader, Ben Tillett.

Once more it is difficult to be certain how many ULP candidates were returned, but the most likely figure is thirteen, which meant that Labor's numerical strength was unchanged but the confidence of its radical wing had taken a beating, especially with the defeat of Prendergast. The Age summed it up thus: "The net result of this part of the contest has been exactly what the Government asked for. The Labor party has suffered a check, but not sufficient to discourage it altogether. The effect should be to make it Liberal without going into impractical extremes . . . there is no standing room in Victoria for the people who look to Mr. Tillett as the long-expected Messiah of a Socialist Millennium".
The radicals' attempt to establish the ULP as the official opposition had failed, and by the time the next elections occurred in 1900 the homogeneity of Liberalism had been re-established. The intervening years were marked by the disintegration of the ULP; the proliferation of other "Labor" organizations; and the regrowth of the trade unions. Each of these will now be examined briefly.

The collapse of the ULP proceeded both inside and outside the Parliament. Shortly after the 1897 election *Tocsin* hit upon one of the complaints against Trenwith when it asked if "the duties of the leader begin and end with his Parliamentary work, or whether he should also exert a guiding and active influence in the work of outside organisation". Failure to break out of Melbourne certainly was the heart of the difficulty, but Trenwith's reluctance to take part in organizing country seats was part of the general attitude of the movement and was by no means a mere personal fault, although his failing sight must have affected his attitude. Discontent came to a head in June 1898 when Hancock unsuccessfully challenged Trenwith for the leadership.

Four months later Trenwith gave a very revealing interview to *Tocsin* in which he listed the three important measures which the "Labor party" had secured: firstly, the ending of the alienation of land in the Mallee; secondly, the limiting of the area of land to be held by an individual; and thirdly, the securing of the minimum wage and eight-hour principle. Significantly "land" occupied the leading positions. The rest of the interview should explain by itself the state of the ULP:

**Q.** Do you think it is advisable to admit membership of the Labour Party who never speak at Labour meetings, or who never identify themselves directly with the Labour Party unless at election times?

**A.** I do, certainly; why should a man continually parade his politics or the politics of his party any more than his religion.

**Q.** I hear it is the intention to exact a written pledge from all Labour candidates in future, and . . .

**A.** Ah, well that is one way to get rid of me . . .

It was this set of conditions which led *Tocsin* into its bitterest attack. In an editorial for 10 November 1898 it denounced "The policy of dilly-dally, drift and disaster" which marked the ULP: "Plan of campaign it has none, democratic work it does none. It never meets as a party to decide on measures to be introduced . . . It is leaderless, functionless, out-classed: its existence is as a constitutional abortion, with neither the cohesion of a Party, nor the daring and initiative of a guerilla band or a company of free lances . . ."

If the ULP was to continue, increased THC intervention was inevitable and early in 1899 it decided to re-write — yet again — the rules and
platform. The new proposals were finally adopted on 20 October. Commenting on the new programme the *Age* pointed out that “there is not one of its fourteen items which has not received the sanction of many staid and sober thinkers and writers”. After examining each plank the editorial concluded that “so far from the aspirations of this political organisation being violent or mischievous, they are but a few short forward steps in advance of the main body of Liberalism”. With the defeat of the Turner government two months later Liberalism’s ideological dominance was to be given organizational linkages far stronger than had previously existed.

Late in 1899 it appeared that the re-organization of the ULP might have come too late. Defeats and divisions associated with three by-elections certainly lent weight to this view. *Tocsin*’s fury at these defeats knew no bounds and in an editorial, “Labour’s Bunglers and Log-Rollers”, it attacked Trenwith’s treachery and bewailed the lack of organization. Editorially the *Age* expressed its genuine concern at the “acrimonious denunciations” and “aimless vituperation” which were put forward in place of penetrating evaluation of ULP’s parlous position. It was desirable that the party should recover so that it could spur Liberalism “into renewed activity by the admonitions of men who can speak for the sections of the community where the impulse towards democratic reform must always find its source”. Unfortunately the ULP did not have the confidence of the labouring classes and if it was to come into its own politically it would need to accept this truth. This gloomy but accurate picture augured inauspiciously for the future of the refurbished ULP as it faced a new century.

In the absence of a vigorous Labor party it was hardly surprising that the partial vacuum would be filled by grouplets and even by organizations attempting to supplant the ULP. Such groupings had long existed and it would be unwise to ignore the implicit warning of Bernard O’Dowd’s verse:

> And all who wear clothes good or neat,  
> Their life’s blood we will scatter;  
> We’ll make red rain drip on the street,  
> With Anarchistic patter.  
> Yes, ye shall hear our warning drum  
> Ere many more Decembers,  
> And Shriek, “The Melbourne Anarch’s come  
> With half-a-dozen members!”

*Tocsin*, which O’Dowd edited, never developed into the centre of organized opposition that its editorials suggested and its press provided for. Rather it saw itself as a clearing-house for ideas and as an organizing journal for all groups.
The Workers' Political League (WPL) was the likeliest contender for the ULP's right to represent Victoria's labouring classes. Its platform contained little to distinguish it from the ULP but its organization appeared to have resolved the dilemma which had impeded the growth of political Labor in Victoria for almost a decade. The League's headquarters were in Creswick and its officers included two members of the Legislative Assembly, two past presidents of the THC, the secretary of the Ballarat TLC, the secretary of the AWU, and the ex-president of the AMA. Whatever prospects it had were cut short by the THC's reorganization of the ULP during 1899. Also active, from 1898 onwards, was the Rochdale-style co-operative Victorian Labour Federation (VLF), of which Frank Anstey was president. As well as selling tea to raise funds, the VLF organized a bookshop, a quadrille club, and relief for the unemployed. By the end of 1900 it was in severe financial difficulties and Anstey stood down as president. A Victorian Socialists' League was formed in 1898 and existed till 1902 when it emerged into the Social Democratic party, but its own influence was slight. The Knights of Labour held picnics, sang the "Marseillaise", and marched behind a red flag; and Hegemony Club contemplated a war for position on the ideological front but went cycling; and the Marxian Club held social evenings, where very pleasant times were had by all. None of the above groups seriously challenged the THC's control of the political movement and if they had it is unlikely that they would have been any more successful in overcoming the besetting problems. The effort that went into them meant that the ULP was deprived of this energy and enthusiasm, a loss it could ill-afford, but a consequence that was inevitable in light of its own failing prospects.

After the collapse of unionism in Victoria in the face of the depression there was a period of quietism with few if any unions reforming. An attempt to reorganize the trade societies was undertaken at the THC early in 1900 with excellent results, and, by the end of July, eight unions had been formed in Melbourne and four in Geelong. Within a year, over twenty-five new unions had been formed, half-a-dozen amalgamations arranged, and eight unions resuscitated. This revival of unionism did not automatically mean a revival of the ULP since the organizing work was directed towards industrial rather than political ends. Nor did all the unions affiliate with the ULP. But the success held out hope for the ULP. Ultimately the increase in membership of the THC, and of the union business it needed to conduct, forced it to sever its controlling interest in the ULP. This could have proved disastrous had it not freed the party at a time when it could benefit from other forces at work — the Commonwealth, the arrival of Tom Mann, and the break-up of the old Liberalism. Before they were reached the ULP suffered from two more upheavals: the Boer War and federation.
In the early stages of the Boer War the Victorian Labor movement split down the middle. Trenwith supported the war, for which Tocsin described him as “a compromiser, a lickspittle to Liberalism and a recreant”. When the THC president reported that he had attended a banquet to mark the departure of the Victorian troops to the Transvaal he encountered strong opposition but his action was endorsed by a narrow majority. Tocsin remained hostile to the war throughout and lent its support to the Peace and Humanity Society, of which Dr. Maloney, a state member of parliament, was treasurer. Tocsin’s primary objection was that the war was engineered by Jew capitalists to replace white labourers with blacks and Chinese. It was forced on 21 June 1900 to admit that the “... Victorian Labor Party, with one or two notable exceptions, are intensely Jingoistic, because the majority of the people favour the war”. Although the Labor movement as a whole supported the war, the opposition of a minority not only deepened divisions within the ULP but made the whole ULP suspect by association.

The ULP was no less at odds with itself and the electorate over federation. Demands for a democratic federation had been part of Labor’s political programme from the start but this created little interest until the preparations for the 1897 convention were underway. By 1898 Tocsin was completely opposed to the draft constitution which it scarificed as “Fat Oration”. The vote against adoption of the constitution in Victoria was less than half that which any of the “Labor parties” had achieved at any election since 1892.

The split in the Liberal party, by which Allan McLean had become premier late in 1899, gave fresh life to the unity of ULP and Liberal interests. Addressing an election meeting the ULP candidate for Carlton South and THC secretary, J. G. Barrett, announced that “as a member of the Labor Party, the advance wing of the Liberal Party, he would, if returned, sit in opposition, if Sir George Turner was in opposition... He, for one, had every confidence in Sir George Turner, who, he considered, would be the only person who could reunite the Liberal Party”. Trenwith was on the platform when Turner gave his policy speech and the Liberal caucus around Turner endorsed all the metropolitan ULP candidates. At least sixteen ULP candidates stood, of whom possibly twelve were successful, which meant no numerical change. One important change was that ULP members held the balance of power in the Assembly. There was no attempt to bargain for concessions and all ULP members attended a caucus called by Turner a week after the elections. Trenwith was appointed commissioner of public works and minister of railways on 17 November and resigned his leadership of the ULP six days later; there was no suggestion that he did not have the approval of his colleagues. Bromley was elected the new leader on 3 December.
There were signs of increased activity by the ULP after the 1900 elections: parliamentarians agreed to donate towards an organizing fund; a few new branches were launched. Important alterations were made to the ULP, renamed the Political Labour Council (PLC), at a meeting on 23 February 1901. A federal platform was adopted calling for “one adult, one vote”; constitutional amendments to provide for initiative and referendum; a White Australia; old age pensions; and protection. The state platform remained unaffected. Partly as a consequence of this reorganization, the preparations for the federal elections due at the end of March were painfully slow. Only four of the twenty-four federal seats were contested by the PLC of which two were won, as was one Senate place.

A conference was called by the PLC for Thursday 26 June 1902 “to devise the best method of organising the Labour vote in Victoria”. Tocsin’s excitedly jubilant headlines were quite justified as this was the first truly representative political Labor conference held in Victoria. As an indication of the PLC’s electoral weakness only eight branches were represented compared with forty-seven unions. The most important decision was “that a contribution of 6d. per annum per member be paid by the unions and branches towards the organising fund of the PLC”. The AWU was empowered to organize the country electorates and the PLC agreed to endorse its candidates. Although this — the fourth political “Labor party” launched in Victoria in little over a decade — managed to survive and grow, it was not free from serious initial problems, not the least of which was the refusal of some unions to affiliate. As the PLC began to exert its influence, it ran into the accumulated difficulties of the preceding decade, particularly the unregulated existence of suburban branches. Having persisted for so long without central direction, many branches and some members of parliament were reluctant to be brought into line.

Ted Findley’s victory in the Melbourne seat was the only surprise in the ULP’s 1900 state election results and the conservatives were most put out that their financial centre was represented by a Labor man. Largely in response to a hue-and-cry initiated by the Argus, Findley was expelled from the Assembly on 25 June 1901 on the charge that he was responsible for an issue of Tocsin which had reprinted “libellous” extracts from an attack on Edward VII in the Irish People. In fact Findley was a mere figure-head; he apologized for the article and dissociated himself from it. Spence claimed that Findley’s expulsion was crucial in altering the PLC’s attitude towards the city Liberals, but this is unlikely as evidenced by the statement of the parliamentary leader, Bromley, in the Argus of 21 November: “...I do not think that would turn one vote from our members against the Government. Mr Irvine was more bitter on that question than Mr Peacock.” The Findley episode did point towards the shape of things to come.
A. J. Peacock’s Liberal ministry was defeated on the floor of the house on 3 June 1902 on the grounds that it had not pushed ahead vigorously enough with retrenchments and economies. The new government was led by William Irvine, who made his attitude clear with his claim that “the regeneration of politics in Victoria may be taken to date from the time when I brought forward my want-of-confidence motion”, because up to that time the government had been controlled by the “Labor party”. This exaggerated view of Labor’s importance was the basis of Irvine’s intention to put Labor back in its place, which was out of politics altogether.

Two major legislative measures were before the parliament in August 1902: reduction in public service salaries and the re-enactment of the Factories and Shops Act. As part of its general economy drive, the Reform ministry introduced the Members’ and Public Service Retrenchment Bill which was designed to cut all salaries over £125 p.a. When the government was defeated on an amendment, it chose to go to the people. This had two important consequences: it forged an alliance between the PLC and the public service; and it meant that the wages boards and their rulings no longer had legal force. Wages boards had been introduced in 1896 for a trial period of three years; in 1899 they were renewed for two years, after which they were to remain in force until the end of the next session of parliament, which was unexpectedly cut short while the re-enactment legislation was before the Council. Some thirty-six trades were covered by its provisions and its future was of vital concern to all unions. Its abeyance during the 1902 election was a considerable spur to union support for the PLC. Labor made the wages boards and public service salaries the centre-pieces of its campaign. It was this second aspect which was novel since it brought into direct union with the PLC, workers who had hitherto been hostile or at best apathetic. Internally the PLC was in almost as great a state of disorder as ever. At attempt to enforce a fairly loose pledge succeeded, much to everyone’s surprise. There was a sizeable improvement in the vote cast for Labor, even allowing for the increase in the number of candidates. Tocsin claimed eleven “pledged” members, all from metropolitan seats. However the overwhelming return of Irvine supporters was the dominant feature of the results. This presaged a new era in Victorian politics.

III

The advent of the Commonwealth had four consequences for the PLC. Firstly, because Melbourne was the seat of the national government till 1927, there were a fair number of interstate Labor politicians who could
be used as speakers to carry Labor's message into new areas. Secondly, because the Senate was a state-wide poll, it became necessary to extend Labor's electoral machinery into hitherto unexplored rural districts. Thirdly, the electoral success of the federal Labor party within the first decade of the twentieth century provided a source of confidence to the Victorian branch which it could never have obtained by itself. Voters who swung to Labor at the federal level often stayed to vote Labor in state elections. But the most important result of federation seemed to offer anything but promise to the future of the PLC. The consensus of Victorian Liberalism broke under the impact of a largely one-sided class struggle in the early years of this century. This is not to say that most of the causes had not been present for some time. Rather it is to direct attention to the single most important change in Victorian politics, namely, the removal of the protection issue from the state arena by the creation of the Commonwealth. Protection had been the basis of the virtual one-party rule in Victoria from 1883 onwards. Moreover, it had allowed the Deakin-style liberals to set the stage. When federation removed most of the leading Liberals and their *raison d'être* from the state sphere, it became possible for the conservatives to fulfil their long-felt desire for a "cheap government" campaign. Since the conservative Free Traders could no longer endanger protection, it simultaneously became possible for the electorate to support such a campaign to the extent that Victoria had its most conservative government since self-government.

Initially the conservative upsurge centred on the Kyabram movement,* which expressed rural demands for reform, that is, cheaper and more efficient government. The mood of austerity was heightened by the drought which reached its climax in 1902 when the wheat yield was 1.3 bushels per acre, about a quarter of an average harvest. In these circumstances rural discontent could be easily mobilized against the rapacious city.

As a result of the 1902 state elections the *Age* suggested separate representation for public servants so as to break their alliance with the PLC. The Constitution Act of 1902 provided for this, the object being to teach the Labor movement a lesson — perhaps to the point of its destruction. Thus the rail strike of May 1903 must be seen as a link in a long causal chain extending back to Kyabram. Wage-cuts and retrenchments had created grave discontent in the service. In April 1903 Irvine precipitated a confrontation by issuing a decree that all railway unions must withdraw their affiliation from the THC or have their executive officers dismissed. Most of the unions refused and the threat was carried out. The engine-drivers struck immediately. Irvine hurriedly introduced a Coercion Act under which all strikers were dismissed, losing all pension and retirement rights. The commissioners had power to re-employ on such terms as they
felt warranted. Three days before the act was passed by the Assembly, the strikers agreed to return unconditionally. The act proceeded and its provisions were carried out in full. It was this strike rather than the 1890 maritime dispute which established the organizational autonomy of Labor in Victoria. It was “Iceberg” Irvine, rather than “Firelow” Price, who loosened the bonds which had limited Labor’s independence to an inchoate Liberalism.

Commonwealth political concerns became central in the twelve months after the rail strike. Tocsin decided that “the Federal Parliament is the Victorian workers’ political hope” because adult franchise would operate as from the 1903 federal elections. In June 1903 the federal platform and pledge which had been drawn up at the Commonwealth Labor conference in the preceding December were adopted “with provision for ensuring the Victorian members being pledged to the New Protection policy”. In 1903 four PLC candidates stood for the four Senate vacancies and Ted Findley was returned. Three of the eleven House of Representatives seats contested by the PLC were (eventually) won for Labor. Overall Labor had almost doubled its strength, so that the House of Representatives was divided evenly into thirds. Late in April 1904 Deakin resigned after his Conciliation and Arbitration Bill had been amended, and Watson formed a minority ministry from 27 April to 17 August when it too was defeated on a proposal to extend arbitration to public servants. It was highly significant for the fate of the proposed Labor-Liberal alliance that Deakin’s supporters should defeat Watson on an issue so intimately related to the rail strike of recent memory. Watson’s government stayed in power with the tacit support of a section of the Liberals for whom the federal Labor party requested electoral immunity. This presented special difficulties in Victoria, and not simply because most of the radical Liberals came from there. Partly because the PLC was anxious to retain its newly acquired independence, and partly because it was still smarting from the hammer blows of reaction which in the main had been supported by the Liberals, there was strenuous opposition to granting the requested immunity.

If the lib-lab alliance was dead at the state level there was still life in it at the federal, and elements on both sides set about reinvigorating it. Within Victoria most of this initiative came from the Liberal side, since the 1905 PLC conference had unanimously supported an addition to the state pledge which bound politicians not to join any alliance or coalition, or other combination, without the sanction of the organization to be determined “by a general or special conference”. The year 1906 saw renewed pressure from the federal Labor caucus for electoral immunity for the radical Liberals such as Isaacs, Higgins, Mauger, Hume Cook, and Crouch. With great reluctance the PLC executive left the final decision to individual branches. The alliance lingered on until the elevation of Higgins
and Isaacs to the bench in October 1906.

Throughout this dispute the PLC never denied that it had considered itself part of the old Liberalism but it blamed the so-called radical Liberals for its break-up. In reply to an attack by the Age, Tocsin declared on 26 October 1905 that “with a Seddon at the head of a progressive Government, it is unlikely that the Labour Party as we now know it, would have come into existence, for the simple reason that it would not have been required.” Indeed the preface to the 1906 PLC constitution insists that “the Political Labour Council came into being about 1902, as a result of the disappearance of genuine Liberalism from Victorian politics”.

In the middle of these disputes a state election was held in Victoria. Labor fielded its largest team so far — thirty-nine for the Assembly, which had recently been reduced from ninety-five to sixty-eight members. When the new parliament met, Labor held seventeen seats, which was absolutely and proportionately the best result yet. It had not only survived the “Reform” onslaught but had emerged strengthened and secure with a recently tightened pledge. Yet it was still only half-way to gaining a majority within an electoral system which was weighted heavily towards rural interests, which did not provide for adult franchise, but which still retained a form of the property vote. And if all these could be overcome there remained the powerful Legislative Council, to which Labor returned its first two members in 1904. Nor was there any prospect of “giving support for concessions”; alliances were now out of the question. The realization of Labor’s impossible situation in state politics provided the field in which two otherwise unconnected but important developments occurred — the rise of John Wren, and the relative success of Tom Mann and the Victorian Socialist party. (VSP).

Happy indeed would be the historian who could define precisely the range of John Wren’s influence in Australian politics. Opinion ranges from those who see him as a dominant figure in three states to those who dismiss him as being unable to control even the Collingwood branch of the party. For Victoria before 1920 there are inconclusive clues which should not be ignored. One Labor member, Robert Solly, told the Assembly that he knew “Mr Wren to be a man with force of character, and people admire a man with force of character, although when that force is used in a certain direction it cannot be admired. Napoleon was a man with force of character — a man who was determined as far as he could with his great intellect and ability to have his way in controlling the world . . . I think the same thing applies to John Wren.” Perhaps the most intriguing item is the £100 which Wren sent in 1916 to the PLC to establish a fund for the widow of his “boyhood friend” and PLC president, Laurie Cohen, who had, although a reputed teetotaller, fallen to his death from a hotel window in Adelaide only six months after the fatal robbery at the Trades
Humphrey McQueen

Hall, of which Cohen was assistant secretary. And why is there such voluble but empty resistance to a call to nationalize the totalisator at the 1915 PLC conference? No answers have been found to these questions: only more questions. They are reproduced so that readers will not neglect the possibility that — if the PLC was controlled from Tattersalls Club rather than from the Trades Hall — this account will be entirely irrelevant. No further detailed reference will be made to Wren, but this silence should not be interpreted as acquittal. Indeed, one might reflect on his influence in any discussion of control of the liquor traffic.

Temperance and prohibition persisted as minor themes throughout the history of the Labor party in Victoria well into the 1930s. If there was general agreement that alcohol was not the cause of poverty, there was nonetheless widespread support for the view, expressed by Dr. Maloney in the 1899 report of the board on habitual drunkards, that “when a working man becomes a drunkard he very often, on that account, loses his employment, and as a drunkard does not save money, he will either at once, or very soon become destitute”. This led to an acceptance of temperance as an ideal although total abstinence found supporters in the THC as a 1905 debate revealed. At the political level this was expressed as a policy of nationalization of the drink traffic by which means the commercial drive to create drunkards would be removed, and a motion to this effect was carried at the 1905 PLC conference.

In the following year legislation was introduced to the state parliament to reduce the number of hotels and to impose a time-limit on compensation payable to hotelkeepers. F. W. Eggleston commented that “the Labor party, although a great number of them were total abstainers, were far more enthusiastic for compensation to hotelkeepers than for compensation for compulsory purchase under the Closer Settlement Act; indeed with one or two exceptions, such as Mr Lemmon, the Labour Party voted with the trade”. This opposition undoubtedly arose from the fact that most of the hotels to be closed were in working-class areas and since they were little more than family affairs the loss of compensation would be a real hardship both to the families and to the election funds they supported. A motion at the 1915 PLC conference calling for prohibition was amended to “the Socialisation of the liquor traffic with a view to prohibition”. From correspondence to Labor papers and from union and branch resolutions it is clear that liquor reform was of genuine concern to the labouring classes. To their parliamentary representatives it presented an embarrassment but one which could occasionally be turned to tactical or debating advantage when prohibition without compensation could be attacked as less moral than socialism.

Two days before the 1902 election, Tom Mann, the famous British union leader, arrived in Melbourne. Before the end of the year he had been
appointed organizer for the THC-PLC with a fund of £600, half of which was to be his salary. Throughout 1903 Mann formed branches in country areas where Labor’s case had never been heard before. His style was superbly captured by a Labor politician, George Elmslie:

He seems to say to the audience, “You’ve got hearts and brains; I’m going to reach them”. And reach them he does. What a time we have... No mincing or smooching; no toning down; straight out; the real thing, clear, pointed, and explicit. What!... Surely this is not socialism?... Authorities are supplied, cheers for the Labor Party and Tom Mann are heartily given, and those who are favourable to the formation of a branch are asked to stay behind.

Tom does not sit down — before you know where you are he is in the middle of the room explaining the rules of the PLC, and taking names down... they don’t want you to enrol them. They want to give their names to Tom. Brother ______, sing a Labor song; right; anything; stand on your head or try to fly, it’s all the same. Let it go — “The March of the Workers”, “Coming of the Light”. This is another success; another branch formed, secretary appointed, and night of meeting fixed.

The long-term effectiveness of his organizing is open to doubt. Elmslie hinted at this in the conclusion of his report by pointing out that “if more system be not displayed, the splendid effort of Tom Mann will end in a fiasco”.

This is a criticism of the PLC’s inability to follow up Mann’s breakthroughs, rather than a criticism of Mann’s style. While the PLC’s organization was extended significantly under Mann’s guidance, several factors undermined even greater success. Firstly, there was the lack of follow-up from head office and the refusal of some politicians to join in the work. Secondly, there was Mann’s own ambivalent attitude to the task: for about half the time he was under the shadow of his own resignation. In addition there were his interstate speaking tours and from 1904 he spent more and more time with the Social Democratic party. But Mann’s principal contribution was to that vital but immeasurable dimension of ideology.

Various socialist political sects existed in Australia before 1920 but none was as important numerically or ideologically as the VSP. In 1905 Mann organized a social questions committee (SQC) to investigate unemployment in Melbourne and by October it was so successful that the metropolitan district council of the PLC expressed its fear that the SQC might undermine the esprit de corps necessary for electoral success. At its first half-yearly meeting in March 1906, the SQC had 758 members and it agreed to change its name to the VSP and to publish the Socialist with Mann as editor. The VSP was not conceived as an electoral opposition to the PLC but as a ginger-group for socialism.
In June 1907 at its peak membership of 1,500 the VSP participated in moves for the federation of the disparate socialist groups throughout Australia. The VSP wanted the new organization to continue working within the Labor parties but this move was defeated. As this controversy raged within the VSP its membership declined. Two VSP candidates were endorsed for the 1908 state elections, polling 167 votes between them. By 1909 membership had fallen to 430 and acquiescence to the hard line against the PLC was losing support even amongst the remaining membership. Because most of its membership remained active in the wider stream of the Labor movement it was able to exert an ideological influence on the Labor party.53

Mann preached a two-pronged message — socialism and internationalism — and for each his achievement is ambiguous, although socialism found a readier audience. At the 1905 federal Labor conference the Victorian delegation urged a thoroughgoing socialist objective, and one delegate, Harry Scott Bennett, a state Labor member and associate of Mann's, opposed the racial purity clause on strictly internationalist grounds. Mann concentrated his internationalist propaganda to breaking down xenophobia towards other Europeans. On altering attitudes towards non-Europeans there was little success, and the PLC's attitude was perfectly expressed in a Tocsin editorial, 4 October 1906: "We do not object to a man because his complexion or the cast of his eyes differs from our own, but because his complexion and the cast of his eyes are inseparably connected in our experience with certain qualities of mind to which we do most emphatically object." An article, "The Slant-Eyed Idolator", in Labor Call, 21 July 1910, argued that "if the Chinaman is going to be suppressed and repressed in the Commonwealth, he must be registered and numbered, even if he has to carry a brass plate or collar. To walk in some streets of Melbourne now would make one fancy he was in Canton so plentiful is the Chinaman, and the rising mongrel between him and the white woman." Racism was to reveal its significance more fully in the conscription debates of the First World War.

Once established the PLC settled down to a decade of uninterrupted dullness which achieved its finest moment in 1913 with the formation of a pre-Christmas Labor ministry. Thus the organizational aspects became dominant, as they will in this account. Comment will be made on the central organization, the branches, relations with unions, Labor papers, and women's organizations. While none of these are totally new developments in themselves, their combination around a pledged parliamentary party meant that they were very often qualitatively different from their antecedents.

A full-time secretary was not appointed until the middle of 1907, when P. J. Heagney received £156 p.a., which was far from satisfactory; Heagney
subsidized his income by contributing anonymous Labor news to the Argus. When this was discovered in August 1909, the executive passed what amounted to a motion of censure and in December Chas. Gray took over as acting-secretary, while Heagney tendered his resignation on grounds of "illness". By implication a report to the 1910 conference was extremely critical of Heagney’s entire stewardship, for it considered "it absolutely necessary that in future, copies of all outward correspondence should be kept; all correspondence received should be properly filed for the information of the Central Executive and future reference". These failings were partly the result of Heagney having to do all the office work himself until the second half of 1909 when he gained some part-time assistance. Having been re-elected at the 1910 conference, Heagney shortly afterwards again resigned and was finally replaced by Arch Stewart from the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) in Ballarat.

The ordinary conference in 1910 had instructed the executive to revise the party's constitution before its next publication by omitting redundant matters and by a more convenient arrangement of the items. At the same time it was agreed that the executive should "draw up a scheme to give all leagues and unions affiliated, fair representation at Conferences, such scheme to be submitted to all unions and leagues for consideration before next Conference". Despite and because of the variety of suggestions and interests involved a similar motion was carried at the 1912 conference, which did manage to adopt a new plan for organization. It was not until 1915 that the upper limit on four delegates from any one organization was lifted, so that henceforth every thousand members in excess of the first thousand entitled a branch or union to an additional representative. The AWU was the prime beneficiary under this scheme, its conference delegation in 1916 increasing to ten.

After the resignation of Tom Mann as organizer late in 1904, the PLC's country work suffered a severe decline which the continuous rearrangement of party structures did nothing to reverse. Financially matters were also precarious and "labour Tea" was sold for 1d. a pound royalty. Sporadic meetings were held in country centres, but by May 1905 the PLC executive was forced to admit that its organizing attempts were neither widespread nor effective. Some of this was due to intimidation by rural employers and the Property Owners' Association. One stalwart advised the executive that he had "received the parcel of Labor leaflets on Thursday. I was discharged on Friday, and, therefore have plenty of time to distribute them." In its report to the 1907 conference the PLC executive noted that "generally speaking, the Labor forces during the past year have been and still are, in a state of disorganization". In the final quarter of the year the organization sub-committee reported a desperate situation with no money to employ an organizer and little or no interest in election
meetings anywhere. This malaise was partly due to the growing independ­
ence of Mann’s Socialist party.

From this languishing state the AWU, whose Victorian segment had
only recently been restored to life, delivered them when it affiliated in
1905. The way forward was cleared in 1907 when facsimile voting slips in
the Worker were accepted by the PLC for state and federal preselection
ballots. Having thus secured its influence over future candidates, the AWU
extended its interests to the branches and in April 1908 generously
appointed J. H. Scullin as its political organizer to work with the PLC.
Scullin’s efforts were concentrated in the country electorates such as
Corangamite which he successfully contested in 1910. Within a year of his
appointment twelve country branches had been revived and thirty-nine
new ones formed, compared with four in the metropolitan area. The PLC
directory published in Labor Call registered an increase from ninety-eight
branches on 23 April 1908 to 186 on 9 June 1910. In less than three years
the AWU had secured control of the two full-time positions of organizer
and secretary, had been instrumental in forming almost half of the PLC
branches, and could influence the selection of candidates for public office
and party conferences through the facsimile voting procedure.

Relations with other unions were not always so close. In June 1907 the
PLC executive reported that of twenty-five unions recently approached for
affiliation only two had agreed. But in 1908 and 1909 there was an
absolute increase of almost 4,000 affiliated unionists each year. Despite
general improvement there were still thirty-seven unions unaffiliated
at the end of 1910. Disputes arose between competing unions, and the
THC persisted with its demand that only unions affiliated with it be
granted affiliation with the PLC. By the 1911 conference at least one
long-standing gap was overcome with the affiliation of a significant section
of the miners. The public service and railway unions, although sympa­
thetic, were prevented by law from affiliating.

Increased union affiliation was certainly helpful to the growth of the
PLC, but of even greater importance was the nature of unionism after
1905. Instead of being dependent on a small coterie of Melbourne-based
trades, it now had access to and derived benefit from the organization of
unskilled and non-metropolitan workers. Unionization also assisted in
creating the climate of opinion in which rural workers were prepared to
vote Labor.

Labor papers in Victoria in the 1890s came and went with even greater
ease than did Labor parties. Commonweal was the official PPL weekly
from 1891 to 1893, while the Shearers and General Labourers’ Record and
later the Worker were Shearers’ Union papers which gave some support. In
addition there were Henry Hyde Champion’s Champion from 1895 to
1897, and Boomerang for a few weeks in 1894.
It was not until the appearance of *Tocsin* on 2 October 1897 that Victoria saw the beginnings of a continuous Labor paper. *Tocsin* did not commence as an official publication but as the brainchild of three public servants, especially the poet Bernard O’Dowd; the technical side was handled by the political aspirants, George Prendergast and Ted Findley. From the start there were some very doubtful financial dealings and the paper was never very successful, requiring constant subsidies from J. P. Jones, a sympathetic tailor. In a letter dated 12 May 1899 the lawyer, Marshall Lyle, advised Jones to sever all connections with the *Tocsin* company, which he alleged was “open to grave charges of mismanagement” and “sweating”. Jones however maintained his support and *Tocsin* lived from crisis to crisis until it was adopted as the official organ of the PLC on 4 July 1904. On 9 June 1905 the THC dismissed a series of allegations concerning the paper’s management, but this was a mere prelude to the stormy scenes at the two annual general meetings in the following October when the attendance of the police was requested.

If these internal ructions were insufficient to undermine the paper’s strength, it was being challenged by other contenders. As well as the VSP’s *Socialist*, there were three schemes under way to launch a Labor daily, which meant very little if any new capital was available for *Tocsin*. *Tocsin* itself had initiated the demand for a Labor daily in an editorial (11 June 1903) immediately after the rail strike. This general proposition gained support and by October there were plans for a *Daily People*, a *National Independent* supported by Trenwith, and *Progress* as the proposed organ of the THC-PLC. An amalgamation was arranged into *National Progress*, whose directors included Senator Trenwith as chairman, Robert Solly, a state member, and representatives from the PLC and the THC. Despite this backing, it proved almost impossible to sell shares in the company. More than 2,000 people attended a rally in support of the new paper but only eighty shares were sold; by the end of June 1905 a mere £650 worth of shares had been sold and Trenwith had resigned from the board. Worse still it was costing as much to run the board as was being collected in shares, and so on 3 July a new policy of “rigid economy” and “increased activity” was adopted. By February 1906 the board was left with almost £800 and decided to negotiate for the purchase of *Tocsin*, which was eventually achieved, so that *Labor Call* commenced on 2 November 1906. Although the new paper was more soundly conducted, the PLC was as far from publishing a daily as it had been three years earlier, despite a tremendous expenditure of effort and enthusiasm.

This failure did not end hopes of starting a Labor daily. Once again it was the AWU whose resources offered a solution to a long-standing organizational problem. After hearing an address from W. G. Spence, the 1910 PLC conference pledged its support for a paper to which the AWU
promised £70,000 if the rest of the Victorian Labor movement could raise £30,000. By April 1911 the THC had agreed to contribute £25,000. Spence reported progress to the 1912 PLC conference: an eight-storey building was under construction in Sydney and it was expected to have the New South Wales edition out before the 1913 federal elections; once this was well established it would expand into other states. War interrupted these plans, but the demand for a Labor daily naturally intensified during the conscription campaigns. After a THC sub-committee investigated the question for almost a year, it was decided that nothing could be done while war-time shortages and costs persisted.

To some extent the plans for a metropolitan daily were justified in Ballarat, where a weekly Labor Vanguard had appeared in conjunction with the 1910 federal elections. In 1912 AWU officials were engaged in a “hurry-up scheme” to obtain an extra 10,000 subscriptions in three months for the Evening Echo, which came under their control and then under the editorship of Scullin in 1913. The Echo played an important role in the conscription campaign when special editions were brought to Melbourne where they sold very well. By May 1918, however, Scullin was appealing to the THC for financial assistance. Labor Call may not have been the best paper in Australia but it did appear every week for almost half a century, which gave it certain advantages over the illusory Victorian Labor daily.

The growing radicalism of the twentieth century spawned a range of sectional journals including Ross’ Monthly, Industrial Solidarity, Labour Light, Proletarian, OBU, and the One Big Union Herald. While they inevitably added to the store of socialist ideas, none appears to have had an identifiably individual influence on the Labor movement at large.

From 1903 women were permitted to vote in federal elections, but they were not enfranchised for Victorian elections until 1909. The first Labor platform in 1891 called merely for “manhood suffrage”, but from 1894 all subsequent Labor parties advocated “adult suffrage”, and Tocsin, under O’Dowd’s influence, was particularly sympathetic to the cause while Dr. Maloney persisted with the fight in the Assembly. However in 1903 the PLC came into conflict with the major movement for women’s rights – the Women’s (Federal) Political Association led by Vida Goldstein, who unsuccessfully contested the 1903 Senate elections as a feminist independent. Goldstein was a social reformer and agreed with the Labor party on all issues but refused to sign its pledge, which she pointed out was honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Non-Labor women organized the Australian Women’s National League, which quickly constituted the backbone of the conservative political machine in the Melbourne area. A women’s committee of the PLC was formed in August 1903 to organize the vote for the forthcoming federal elections, after
which the committee declined severely. Attempts were made to reform it every year thereafter, but it had a fitful and largely social life until June 1909 when a Labor women's political convention met with thirty-three delegates from electorates and thirteen from unions. Up till this convention the PLC women's committee had consisted of a majority of men who organized women into fund-raising activities at which they were very successful: nearly £350 was raised at a fair in March 1909, thereby doubling the PLC's income for the year.

After the resignation of Tom Mann as organizer, Miss Lillian Locke was employed on a temporary basis in 1905, and in the following year Miss Powell was taken on as a recruiting agent. Demands for a full-time "lady organiser" were fulfilled in April 1909 when the THC agreed to employ one at £156 a year; this was half the salary that had been paid to Mann six years earlier and £50 less than the amount originally proposed by the PLC. Lower wages seemed to have been at the heart of the PLC's desire for "lady organisers". It was in this frame of mind that the 1906 PLC conference unsuccessfully invited the Countess of Warwick to campaign in the 1906 Federal elections in order to attract the women's vote on the grounds that a titled "lady organiser" would make a great impression.

While women could join their local PLC and there exercise the same formal rights as men, they were also able to form separate women's committees which were used to convene a PLC front, known as the women's convention, every two years. The local electorate committees were very much organizational bodies, while the conventions were sounding boards for Labor policies and discontents and lacked any genuine power to alter the party ideologically. Moves to remedy this were made at the 1912 women's convention and came before the next PLC conference in 1914 in the form of a motion to "provide for the creation of a permanent Council of Women, consisting of delegates to be elected annually by the electorate women's organising committee . . ." Speakers in support concentrated on the electoral advantages to be gained while those in opposition stressed the unity of Labor's struggle and deprecated any division on sex lines. After a debate extending over two days the proposal was defeated by sixty-eight votes to sixty-seven; at the 1915 conference the vote against was eighty-eight to forty-nine. By the 1917 conference this had changed into a ninety-six to fifty-three majority in favour of a "Central Council of Women, composed of PLC members and affiliated unionists . . . whose function shall be to propagate the principles of the Labor party's platform and organisation, and to assist in the better education of women, socially, industrially and politically". At least one woman spoke against on the grounds that it was implicit discrimination.

This change in attitude was due in part to the decidedly political role undertaken by women in the anti-war and anti-conscription campaigns. As
early as September 1915 the women's convention entered "an emphatic protest against the present methods of enforced recruiting — namely by starvation. Further, that all the delegates pledge themselves to work, speak and write against conscription in any form, and desire a definite statement from the Prime Minister as to his attitude on the matter." Women such as Adela Pankhurst, Mrs. Baines, and Miss Suter were arrested, and the first of these gaoled, in the anti-conscription battles which followed and there was a widespread belief in the Labor movement that conscription had been defeated by women to whom propaganda such as the "Blood Vote" verses had made direct appeal. Certainly the conscription fights presented Labor women as political beings and not mere brewers of tea and carters of cakes, since "the history of working-class women only begins in revolutionary periods. For it is only in times of great social upheaval that the proletarian woman, the lowest of the low, is buoyed up on the radical upsurge to become visible to the historian." Unfortunately this liberation was not fulfilled or complete, and women were never entirely freed from their fund-raising "social" activities: in 1918—19 the women's central organizing committee raised over £1,000 which it dutifully handed over to the central executive.

As a parliamentary party the PLC's entire efforts at organization and its policy arguments were all intended to improve its electoral achievements. Comment upon these will now be made at the federal, municipal and state level. Partly because the federal parliament was in Melbourne, but largely because of the impossible electoral and constitutional system in Victoria, the PLC's attention was directed towards federal elections. While its share of the Senate vote climbed steadily from 13 per cent in 1901 to 33 per cent in 1906, its seats in the House of Representatives rose from two to four. This was not due to lack of preparation as some electorates had organized their campaign committees as much as eighteen months before the polls on 12 December 1906. Nor was foresight lacking at the centre, since Senate preselection results were announced at the end of March 1906. Some electorates were either less prepared or the selection process produced severe disruptions as in Batman and in Melbourne Ports, where the sitting member, Rev. J. B. Ronald, was defeated five to one in a preselection ballot. The nomination of two farmers and a stock agent for the Wannon preselection indicated in Tocsin's words "that the men on the land are taking an active and leading part in the Labour Movement". There was, if anything, an embarrassment of contenders; "some of them decline[d] to join the organisation or sign the pledge" and were thus rejected outright. A decade earlier they would have been welcomed with open arms. Money was still scarce, and the PLC conducted a self-denial fund of 5s. squares at 3d. a section. However it was necessary for the redoubtable J. P. Jones to advance £75 for the deposits of three candi-
The improved condition of the PLC’s organization was evident in the 1910 federal campaign, when a majority of the candidates were selected at least ten months before polling day, 13 April, and the PLC showed itself to be a vote-getting machine of hitherto undreamed-of proportions. Three PLC senators were elected, and the Senate vote, which is the best indicator of the party’s overall standing, increased by a half to reach 48 per cent; it improved slightly in 1913, but reached an all-time peak in 1914, when it rose to 53 per cent. In the House of Representatives PLC candidates won eleven of the twenty-two seats in 1910; nine of twenty-one seats in 1913; and twelve out of twenty-one in 1914. These performances show that Victorians are not congenitally anti-Labor.  

Long before 1890 labouring men stood for municipal elections with occasional success but they were independents in every sense; it was not until the 1890s that Labor candidates stood as teams, and it was not until 1901 that the first Victorian labor mayor was elected. If caucus alignments were insecure in the Legislative Assembly, they were often non-existent in council meetings, and there was some difficulty enforcing the pledge after 1902. PLC interest in municipal affairs intensified because control of a council meant an opportunity to enforce minimum wages and other ameliorative portions of the party’s platform which were important because the immediate condition of the labouring classes was determined by the administration of local affairs as much as by the decisions of parliament. Control of a council also meant the prospect of relief works for the unemployed, and, less wholesomely, it led to jobs for the boys. Municipal politics attracted what a Labor parliamentarian later described as “the diversified type of Labourer adventurers . . . the conduct and the motives of whom are to say the least very questionable”.  

Having survived so well the Tory onslaught of 1904, the state parliamentary Labor party remained a compact and stolid faction of the Assembly for the next twenty years. Something of its tone can be gauged from George Elmslie’s advice to the Glenelg electors in 1906 to vote for the PLC candidate “if they could, but in any case to be sure and record a vote”. When Prendergast led the party to the polls in April 1907 there was a net loss of two seats under what the executive’s report to the next conference described as “unusually adverse” circumstances: “Thousands of Labor voters were disfranchised by the sudden act of the Government in rushing the elections. Candidates had not sufficient time to place their views before the electors, or to organise their supporters.” The editorial of the Australian Typographical Journal for January 1907 had a different explanation of the PLC’s malaise and listed sectarianism, Wren, brewers, and cliques as the root causes. Certainly the new gaming and liquor laws had inflamed sectarian passions once more, but three non-metropolitan
seats were lost because the government and opposition parties had arranged electoral immunity for each other so that Labor could not benefit from three-way contests.

After a ministerial crisis had brought down the Bent government, elections were held on 29 December 1908 under what were indeed "unusual" circumstances. Labor's vote remained steady at 35 per cent, but to their great amazement their share of the seats increased by a third, to twenty-one. Some of these wins resulted from the reappearance of three-way contests. A. R. Outtrim, who had been a member of the Assembly since 1884, adhered to Labor for the first time; Scullin's organizing was also beginning to show results and the western district seat of Port Fairy was won; deposits for improvident candidates were provided as usual by J. P. Jones. Labor's unexpected success at such short notice, combined with the far better results in the federal elections in 1910, to make the loss of one seat at the 1911 state poll a bitter blow.

Within two years, however, the party was to have office somewhat casually dropped upon it. During a debate on a bill to redistribute electorates the government of W. A. Watt was defeated by the defection of a conservative faction of its supporters. Watt resigned, and on 7 December 1913 George Alexander Elmslie was commissioned to form a ministry, which he did after a ballot of his supporters. It was then that what could have been a melodrama was turned into a low farce. Newly elevated salaried ministers were still obliged to resign their seats in Victoria and face the will of their electorates. Thus six of the Legislative Assembly members of the Labor cabinet were not on the floor of the Assembly when parliament reassembled on 9 December; their government, however, faced a want-of-confidence motion. With a third of his supporters and all the best debaters temporarily relegated to the gallery, the unfortunate Elmslie saw his government defeated on 16 December without as much as being able to say a word in its defence. The lieutenant governor refused Elmslie a dissolution, and Watt was recommissioned on 22 December 1913. Elmslie had been nominal premier for less than two weeks. This period in office left an indelible stamp on the minds of all members of caucus, as their parliamentary tactics throughout the next sixteen years were designed to recreate the events of 3–4 December 1913. They never realized who had done what, with which, and to whom.

When compared with the near chaos that marked Victorian labor politics in the 1890s, the key achievements of the PLC were stability and order, so that by 1914 no one doubted that a Labor party was a viable and independent part of the state's political make-up. Organizationally the PLC was free from total dependence on the unions for survival, although its expansion was contingent on AWU patronage. In state politics it offered little and received less; in the federal sphere it had been initially

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the recipient but repaid the federal party’s investment with compound interest. While there were areas of dispute around John Wren, sectarianism, and the Socialist party, the future appeared to hold nothing but further success.

IV

As the 1914 state elections approached, the question of religious education was placed increasingly before the PLC, which had added “secular” to its education plank in 1908. The Catholic challenge took organizational form in the Australian Catholic Federation which first approached the government and then the Labor party without success; next it decided to run candidates of its own, but with even less result. The PLC moved decisively and declared the federation to be a proscribed organization under rule 38 (g). In the face of its failure to succeed independently the federation set about capturing control of the PLC from within. However, this policy had no time to succeed by the 1915 PLC conference, where rule 38 (g) was strengthened by a vote of 98 to 48. A proposal to define “secular” as meaning “secular instruction given in state or registered schools” was crushed by 137 votes to 18.

Bishops Carr and Mannix warned that they would organize a Catholic Labor party, but on 1 September a Catholic Workers’ Association was inaugurated by Catholic members of the PLC and industrial unions. Its declared policy was to secure state aid for Catholic education and to work “through the PLC to improve the social and industrial conditions of the workers”. This meant that it was outside the provision of rule 38 (g) although group action by PLC members was quickly but ineffectively proscribed by the central executive. In the early months of 1916 Labor Call was full of arguments and news items about secular education and Catholic penetration of PLC branches. When the conference met on 21 April 1916, rule 38 (g) was rendered inoperative by a vote of 124 to 30, and the extension of all benefits enjoyed by state school children to children attending registered schools was supported. As Victoria’s Catholics exerted their influence at the PLC conference, the Easter rebellion raged in Dublin. The significance of the Catholic penetration can be fully appreciated only by asking “what would have been the fate of conscription in the Labor movement if Mannix had carried out his threat to establish a separate Catholic labor party?”

Opposition to the growth of militarism in the Australian Labor movement in the pre-war years was most pronounced in Victoria, largely as a result of the influence of Tom Mann’s VSP, but there remained general support for a citizen volunteer army. The adoption of compulsory military
training by the 1908 interstate Labor conference unleashed such great opposition that it was decided to hold a special conference to disavow this policy. Shortly afterwards the THC voted against conscription while the AWU expressed its support. Less than a fortnight before the special conference was due to meet, Andrew Fisher formed his first government and there was a reluctance to rock the boat. When the conference assembled, the president's ruling that it had power to alter the federal platform was disagreed with by forty-three votes to thirty. Anti-militarist attacks persisted and were often directed against the Fisher government, especially at Senator George Pearce, who was described by Labor Call as “A Military Czar of Tom Thumb dimensions”. Well before 1914 the Victorian Labor movement possessed a significant and vocal anti-militarist minority which was to become the core of the anti-conscriptionist movement in Australia.

The division of Labor opinion was apparent in August 1914. Two days after war was declared, Labor Call warned that it was all a capitalist plot to defeat Labor at the elections, and the Sandringham PLC passed a “general strike” resolution to end the war. Late in August the THC affiliated with the Victorian Peace Alliance. However these moves were marginal to the true temper of the time, which can be judged from the cancellation of many union meetings because members were engaged in “patriotic outbursts”, and from the jingoistic programmes of the “People’s Concerts” conducted at the Temperance Hall in conjunction with the THC. Pro-war attitudes amongst Victorian Laborites persisted well into 1916, including enthusiasm for the “heroic deeds” performed at the Dardanelles.

In the second half of 1915 there were indications that sections of the Victorian Labor movement were less happy with the continuance of the war: the THC passed a resolution calling for a statement of the terms for a negotiated settlement, while the PLC suggested an international conference of workers to settle disputes by arbitration. Opposition to a conservative call for conscription was far more precise.

Growing disenchantment with the war did not proceed in isolation but was tied to opposition to the Labor government’s general policy. Senator Pearce, defence minister, was the first to be attacked for his failure, and later for his apparent refusal, to enforce preference for unionists in Defence Department work. No less severe were the attacks on Hughes, who later in 1915 was described as a “bosses” representative when pre-conscription criticism of the Labor government reached its peak with the dropping of the powers referendum in November 1915; this was taken as final proof that Hughes had no intention of curbing prices and profits, or of ending unemployment. It was a particularly bitter blow to the Railway Union and to its secretary, Frank Hyett, who had been banking on the extension of Commonwealth powers to escape from the continuing consequences of the 1903 strike. Right from the very start of the war the
Victorian Labor movement was deeply involved in the fight against censorship; when in June 1915 Frank Anstey resigned from the federal parliamentary Labor party over the War Precautions Act, his stand was supported by the THC. A Labor split had begun.

Hughes certainly did nothing to bind up the wounds. Early in 1916 he referred to his Labor opponents as "devils in swine" which led at least one PLC branch to declare unanimously that he was no longer a Labor man. Shortly afterwards the PLC executive called on the cabinet to resign and for caucus to elect a new ministry. A motion to support this resolution was defeated at the THC by fifty-one votes to thirty. However attitudes hardened after the military raided the THC on 29 July and seized anti-conscription pamphlets. Even without conscription it was highly unlikely that the Labor party could have remained formally united for very much longer. Certainly the dissatisfaction up to August 1916 would not by itself have caused the split — nor would it have caused Hughes to be the loser. But the continuance of the war would have inexorably exacerbated the causes of discontent to the point of open division. To this extent conscription was contingent to a Labor split.

If Melbourne was the ideological heart of the anti-conscription movement, so too was it the organizational centre simply because the federal parliament was located there: the Australian Political Labor Executive at its first meeting in June 1915 appointed as its secretary Arch Stewart, who was also secretary of the PLC; in 1916 the secretary of the all-Australian trade union conference (E. J. Holloway) and of its anti-conscription committee (John Curtin) were also Melbourne-based.

Concern at the possible introduction of conscription started in earnest around the middle of 1915: an Anti-Militarist and Anti-Conscription League was formed in Melbourne in July, while the No Conscription Fellowship held its first meeting on 4 October. Many THC delegates were reluctant to act as long as conscription remained no more than a possibility. However as discontent with the government over economic matters intensified and as Hughes prepared to go overseas, the anti-conscriptionists in Victoria became more active. Robert Ross organized a United Peace and Free Speech Committee in January 1916 and the Militant Propagandists began work in PLC branches shortly afterwards.

Progress was made at the THC meeting on 2 March when Frank Hyett, Railways Union secretary, initiated moves for a congress of all affiliated unions in Australia to discuss conscription for overseas service. A further breakthrough came four weeks later when Hyett moved for the appointment of "a propaganda committee to bring the matter of conscription and the forthcoming congress before the Australian Trades Unions". The congress which met in Melbourne on 11 and 12 May 1916 recorded "its uncompromising hostility to conscription of life and labor" by a card vote
of 258,018 to 753; on 6 July the THC agreed to its secretary, Holloway, taking on the job of secretary of the no-conscription campaign but pressure of work demanded his almost immediate replacement by John Curtin. Rank-and-file opposition to the war as such remained ambivalent to say the least; when a meeting of Melbourne’s printers voted narrowly against conscription in April 1916, “the defeated group began singing the National Anthem which was then taken up as heartily by the other side”. In October a ballot of printers voted 570 to 439 in favour of donating £50 to the PLC for its anti-conscription campaign; almost a third of those eligible failed to express an opinion. When Hughes announced his support for conscription at the end of August, the THC stepped up its activities and resolved that unions should make as many of their officials as possible free for the campaign. The national executive of the trades union conference called a 24-hour stop-work for 4 October against Hughes’s proclamation calling up single men for service within Australia. In November THC approval was given to establish machinery which could proceed to a general strike if the proclamation was not withdrawn.

Voting in Victoria favoured conscription by a margin of 25,000 but it was defeated overall. The executive of the trade union anti-conscription congress handed its responsibility to a committee of six, to be appointed from the THC and the PLC, with a reminder from Hyett that conscription was still possible and that to disband completely would be disastrous, if not disastrous. Much of the drive and most of the finance for the “anti” campaign in Victoria had come from the THC, with Hyett playing a conspicuous part. Hyett had been assistant-secretary of Mann’s VSP and had something of Mann’s charisma amongst other unionists: he was young, effective, personable, and a Sheffield Shield cricketer. No doubt the THC would have opposed conscription if he had not been there; but whether its opposition would have been as much, as soon, or as effective is less certain. Hyett’s influence on the anti-conscription campaign was but part of the residue of the internationalism which Mann had sponsored in the Victorian Labor movement.

Defeat for conscription should not be seen as the triumph of a popular internationalism. Indeed xenophobic responses to Asia were at the centre of most anti-conscription arguments; the largest banner at the women’s anti-conscription rally in Melbourne on 21 October 1916 read “Vote NO and Keep Australia WHITE and FREE”. The Japanese assumed the position of dominant threat after the war against Russia, when *Tocsin* on 18 February 1904 claimed that “no white Australian can legitimately back up a semi-nigger against a European race”. Once the Great War began in 1914, fear of Japan intensified: “Japan has joined in the general slaughter... Before many years this same power will dominate the Pacific, and then good-by to White Australia”, or, as Frank Anstey would have
it; "Between the Jap and the Jew — shoddy and shentage — Australia and the Australian worker in particular is going to have a hot hell of a time." With an immediate threat of conscription Japan loomed even larger. Anstey published an open letter to John Earle (ex-premier of Tasmania) in reply to Hughes's denial that he (Hughes) had negotiated with the Japanese ambassador in London. Anstey threatened to make public the content of Hughes's report to caucus — a report which, according to a New South Wales Labor member, would make every man and woman in Australia vote no. Throughout 1916-17 Labor Call regularly ran articles with titles such as "The Mighty Japanese", "The Rising Sun", and "The Japanese Empire Bids for a New Continent", which coloured a grotesque charade on 21 June 1917 when representatives of the THC, the PLC, the Australian Catholic Federation, and the Rubber Workers' Union urged the Victorian premier to prohibit the manufacture and sale of contraceptives on the grounds that Australia had to populate or perish.

Neither the state parliamentary leader, Elmslie, nor Victoria's leading federal Labor politician, Tudor, was a militant anti-conscriptionist. In September 1916 Elmslie resigned as leader because of a "nervous breakdown" but was granted "leave of absence" instead. Tudor had grown firmer in his opposition by the time the referendum was announced and he played an active part whenever he could get away from the recruiting platform. Senator E. J. Russell was the only one of Victoria's seventeen federal Labor members to go with Hughes. Of the twenty-two state Labor members only three were expelled — the first on 26 September, that is, over a month before the referendum. PLC eagerness to deal with the conscriptionists is well expressed in Labor Call's comment early in October that only "a split can save the Labor Party". While the THC fought Hughes on the hustings, the PLC worked against him within the party machinery, and on 4 November 1916 its central executive called for a special interstate Labor conference to expel the conscriptionists. At this special conference in Melbourne on 4 December the expulsion resolution was moved by two Victorians, Scullin and Stewart.

Preparations against conscription persisted throughout the first half of 1917, so that on 7 June the THC set aside its meeting night for a discussion with representatives of the Trades Councils of Ballarat, Bendigo, and Geelong, the Railways Union, and the Mining Employees' Association, from which a call was made for an interstate conference of state Trades and Labour Councils (TLCs) with power to act in the manner deemed most effective against the introduction of industrial conscription: a general strike was never far from the minds of Victoria's industrial militants at this time.

The effect of the split on the organization of the PLC can be seen from table 1: The decline between October 1914 and October 1915 can be
attributed to the inevitable dropping away after the major election drives of 1913 and 1914; the increase between December 1916 and April 1917 is to be explained by the renewed activity in preparation for the federal election of 5 May 1917.

### Table 1. Number of Branches Listed in *Labor Call*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Electorate</th>
<th>8 October 1914</th>
<th>7 October 1915</th>
<th>14 December 1916</th>
<th>26 April 1917</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corangamite</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corio</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flinders</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indi</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maribyrnong</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimmera</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>194</strong></td>
<td><strong>137</strong></td>
<td><strong>84</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1917 federal and state elections were far from disastrous for the PLC. It lost five of its twelve House of Representatives seats but this still enabled it to constitute one-third of the federal caucus. At the state level the three seats of expelled conscriptionists were lost but the party managed to win eighteen others. PLC supporters were even more cheered late in December 1917 when Victoria swung against conscription at the second referendum. For a party unaccustomed to success this was no mere consolation prize.

Total war ruptured Australian society and resulted in the expansion and deepening of its proletarian segment. This was not simply a matter of imported ideas or statements by leaders but can be discerned at the branch level: Yarraville PLC early in 1916 agreed to co-operate with the Footscray Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) club; at its December 1918 meeting the Brighton Australian Labor party (ALP) unanimously protested at the prohibition of the red flag and at the imprisonment of those who had flown it; in 1919 the North Fitzroy branch carried resolutions supporting the flying of the red flag at the THC, the One Big Union (OBU), and calling for the release of political prisoners. W. A. Holman exaggerated somewhat when in late 1916 he described the Victorian Labor party as being “in a most unfortunate position, having apparently, succumbed almost unanimously to the pressure brought to bear by the workers”, but he had rightly sensed the nature of the future developments. Examination of the scheme to fly a red flag over the THC building; of attitudes towards the war; of the response to the Russian revolution; of the adoption of a socialist objective; of the establishment of the Labor
College and of the attack upon racism will demonstrate the contours of this leftward trend.

Flying the red flag over the Melbourne Trades Hall was no quixotic gesture but a political act in the finest traditions of propaganda by deed. The debate commenced in May 1916 when it was moved that “as the Labor Movement is (and must be) international, some non-national emblem ought to be recognised and exhibited as a symbol of that spirit”. The debate intensified, as did the wrath of the bourgeoisie, until a special THC meeting on 12 September 1918 decided that “the red flag be declared to be the flag and the color the color of the Labor Movement, and that the flag be flown upon days to honor any Labor event, and every other day determined upon by the Executive of the THC”. Throughout these months a continuous debate ensued in the Labor press, at union and at branch meetings where the issue was argued out in terms of socialism, the war and internationalism including support for Soviet Russia. The demand for their own flag indicated a growing awareness by a section of the workers that they were a class and that the Australian flag was the symbol of their oppressors.

Opposition to the war remained the central political issue as opinion hardened after the conscription split. On 18 January 1917 the THC resolved to “begin a peace campaign by holding public meetings, at which the people might be shown how their interests will be better served and their aspirations more thoroughly attained by a settlement of this war through negotiation . . . and that the Executive of the PLC be invited to co-operate”. On 26 July the THC called upon the PLC executive to request all Labor politicians “to refuse to assist in recruiting” and both wings of the Victorian Labor movement recommended a “yes” vote in the federal ALP ballot to determine whether the party should discontinue supporting voluntary recruiting. Nor was the parliamentary section silent, and on 6 August 1918 Prendergast, who had regained the leadership on Elmslie’s death three months previously, moved an amendment, calling for “immediate negotiations” to arrange “equitable terms of peace”, to the premier’s resolution which demanded “inflexible determination to continue” the war “to a victorious end”. Prendergast ended a forceful speech by declaring that “this is not a time to have any braggadocio in connection with the war, but a time to try to get conditions of peace for the future, so that Democracies may grow up irrespective of juntas and jingoes on one side, and profiteers and price-raisers on the other.” The war made it impossible to speak of an industrial wing in the old sense, as political strikes and actions had become regular parts of the THC’s programme; in line with this trend was the THC’s decision on 21 June 1918 to appoint a committee to present “an agenda of post-war problems” which would be discussed at subsequent council meetings. One of the problems encounter-
ed was the demand by some returned soldiers for employment preference over eligibles who had not enlisted. Despite the establishment of labor-oriented returned men's organizations and the holding of special conferences at the THC, at least one section of the soldiers declared their intention to organize industrial unions to fight "Official Labor".

Victorian Labor sympathy for a revolution in Russia dated back to the 1905 uprising and persisted throughout 1917 to 1920, largely irrespective of the changing composition of the revolutionary government. Lenin was quoted favourably in Labor Call as early as 18 October 1917 and the following issue reprinted H. N. Brailsford's defence of the Bolshevik leader. Favourable reports of the Soviet government appeared regularly in Labor Call throughout 1918 and on 18 July that year there was a front-page article by Peter Simonoff, the Soviet "consul" in Melbourne. The 1919 Victorian Labor conference protested at allied intervention in Russia; expressed sympathy for Simonoff, who had been gaol by the Australian authorities; and hoped for the success of Bolshevism because it sought "the common ownership and workers' management of the means of production". Labor Call occasionally carried materials critical of the Bolsheviks from Russian resident in Australia, but its editor, Maurice Blackburn, expressed the more usual position in an article celebrating the third anniversary of the Bolshevik coup: "With the Russian Revolution go the hearts and the hopes of men and women in the Labor movement all over the world; we are rebuffed in its reverses. We succeed in its successes after three years of the mightiest struggles with the foe without and the foe within, with the problems of economic reconstruction and of military defence, there endures and flourishes amid the rejoicing of its friends and the confusion of its enemies, the world's first Socialist Commonwealth." Bolshevik methods, however, were not to be imitated in Australia no matter how necessary they might have been in Russia.

Although the Russian revolution was seen as necessary for Russia, the prescriptive demands of Marxism did not penetrate very deeply into the Victorian Labor movement. In April 1919 the Victorian Labor party conference rejected the OBU revolutionary objective in favour of Maurice Blackburn's amendment which called for "the peaceful overthrow of the capitalist system" and the institution of "democratic control of industry". This previsaged the situation that emerged at the 1921 federal conference when a newly adopted socialization objective was once more given a Blackburn interpretation. Blackburn had published a number of articles in Labor Call in 1919–20 outlining a scheme of national guilds along the lines proposed by G. D. H. Cole in Britain. In addition he objected to the abandonment of political struggle, which he saw as the consequence of OBU-ism; ironically he was even then further to the left than many of those who were supporting Bolshevik methods.
Another instance of this leftward movement occurred with the establishment of the Labor College in July 1917. Only two years earlier the THC had participated in the launching of a Workers’ Education Association in Victoria, but this was now repudiated by the left because “its teachers are University professors” whose “teachings are an intellectual justification” of the middle classes. In contradistinction, “the Victorian Labor College offers the workers a revolutionary culture. It pins its faith to trade unionism as the hope of the economic world . . . Its teachings will be conditioned by the exigencies of the class struggle, the fundamental fact of our economic life.” The college taught an amalgam of guild socialism, as personified in Reverend F. Sinclair and Maurice Blackburn, and Marxism from Guido Barrachi. Frank Hyett and the Victorian Railways Union were equally active, and the college had its headquarters in the union’s Unity Hall.

Indicative of the strength of the leftward shift was the appearance of anti-racist material in Labor Call, which early in February 1917 quoted Debs on the colorless nature of the class struggle. Reports of strikes and other union activity in Japan were given favourable treatment, although the tone was often that expressed by the regular contributor, W. Wallis: “We believe in a White Australia, but we welcome the native of his own hearth, who strikes a blow against the devouring capitalist.” Sympathetic reports of coloured workers increased once Maurice Blackburn became editor in 1918 since he believed that the Australian Labor movement had “no hope of success except as part of the international movement”. Most of the attacks on racism came in the publications which were more directly inspired by the Russian revolution, the One Big Union Herald demonstrating its proletarian internationalism with headlines such as “Wake-up White Australians; Turn Red and follow the Example of Your Despised Yellow Brothers”. The long haul against racism had begun.

While the most exciting political events in the Victorian Labor movement from 1916–21 were definitely occurring outside the parliamentary arena, the PLC was above all a parliamentary party and no matter how thrilled or disgusted, encouraged or frightened, individual parliamentarians might have been by the mass stirrings in society, electoral demands had to be met. After weathering the federal election in May 1917, the PLC had to prepare for a November state election which saw the entry into politics of the Victorian Farmers’ Union candidates, who won four seats. It had been in an attempt to ward off such a challenge that the state parliamentary Labor party had split over a want-of-confidence motion in Sir Alexander Peacock’s government in July 1917. John Bowser, soon to be premier, moved an amendment to the address-in-reply censuring the government for not making “necessary savings in State expenditure” and for imposing “increased fares and freights on railway transport without the consent of
All five non-Melbourne Labor members voted for the amendment, leaving their colleagues to provide the premier with a bare majority of two in a vote of sixty. If country members were forced to vote for freight concessions, metropolitan members could hardly support retrenchment which would have brought increased unemployment; nor had Irvine’s 1902—4 economy drive been forgotten.

The Labor party’s country network was reactivated after July 1918 by the appointment as organizer of yet another AWU man, ex-Senator McKissock. State elections in October 1920 resulted in the defeat of one Labor member by the Farmers’ Union, which increased its membership to thirteen, gaining the balance of power. A referendum on prohibition, conducted in conjunction with this election, revived the debate on “Nationalisation with a view to prohibition” within Labor’s ranks. In Collingwood the sitting member, Martin Hannah, was defeated at a preselection ballot because of his support for liquor reform; he eventually won the seat as an independent Labor candidate; Hannah’s opponent was backed by the bookmaker, Robert Roberts, a close associate of John Wren. The old patterns would force their way through more clearly as the leftward shift lost impetus after 1921.

Three phases of political Labor in Victoria have been discerned: 1891—1902 was a period of confusion, dependence, and defeat; 1902–14 were years of organizational coherence and of limited success; 1915–21 saw the end of steady growth and the emergence of a significant leftward shift. This periodization cannot conceal the uneven development and lags which occurred, and by 1921 many of the organizational problems of the 1890s had returned — Labor Call, for instance, was in severe financial difficulties. The leftward shift affected all sections of the post-1916 party, but to such varying degrees that it created divisions no less important than those which had split the party at the time of conscription. The early postwar years witnessed the passing of many of those who had been part of the Victorian Labor party almost since its inception. These deaths were the occasion for summing up the achievements of the Labor party at a time when the need for its existence was being questioned by left-wing critics who were merely articulating the deep-felt doubts which the war, Ireland, and the Russian revolution had implanted in the minds of men as sober and as patient as James Scullin.

In its report to the 1919 conference the central executive presented a sombre but proud account of how the ALP had “saved the liberties of Australia” by waging principled and united struggles. By continuing in this
manner it hoped to turn "temporary defeat into a lasting victory". Robert Ross was less sanguine, and in the September 1920 issue of Ross's Monthly he traced three causes of Victorian Labor's long-standing electoral malaise. He pointed to the combination of unequal electoral districts and the highly concentrated nature of Victorian industry which prevented a wider geographic distribution of workers and thus kept the party's support centred on Melbourne and the country centres of Geelong, Bendigo, and Ballarat; in addition, Melbourne had fewer dailies, so that none felt the need to chase Labor supporters in order to boost its circulation. Whether one agrees with the adequacy of Ross's diagnosis or not, he is certainly correct to look for reasons other than the conscription split when accounting for Labor's chronic weakness in Victorian politics. But he should have mentioned the political inheritance of Victoria's Liberalism as an equally important consideration inhibiting the emergence and then constricting the growth of the party especially in state politics.

Whether the Labor party in Victoria was a success or a failure depends upon what one considered its aim to be: for the minority who always expected the socialist commonwealth there was nothing but disappointment; for those who wanted a state Labor government there was the mere farce of December 1913; for those who sought through Parliamentary place to assist their fellows at a personal level there were ample rewards. It is appropriate that the last word on the Victorian Labor party before 1921 should concern that typical labor man, Frank Tudor, whose death drew the following obituary from the OBU Herald:

His electorate (Yarra) comprised Protestants and Catholics, Sinn Feiners and Orangemen, Loyalists and Pacifists, Socialists and Conservatives. How to represent this jumble of interests would present a difficult problem to the ordinary man, but Mr Tudor tactfully solved it by doing nothing — that is, unless his accepting and retaining the Presidency of the Richmond Football Club can be regarded as a definite political achievement... and no matter how loudly Labor in Conference might declare for the social revolution it did not affect Mr Tudor inside the "House" or out of it. The only time the Capitalist parties feared him was when he spoke on the tariff.87

APPENDIX

The figures for the Victorian "Labor parties" in the first edition of Hughes and Graham's Handbook of Australian Government and Politics are not so much wrong as disputable. Because the pre-1902 "Labor parties" in Victoria were often little more than factions of the Liberal party, it would be exceedingly difficult to apply any universally acceptable criteria to determine their parliamentary membership. Table 2 provides
variant readings and is followed by some explanatory comments where the conventions followed are those employed in the *Handbook*.

**Table 2. Number of “Labor” M.L.A.s by Source**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Election</th>
<th>Hughes and Graham*</th>
<th>Spence**</th>
<th>Labor Papers***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10\textsuperscript{a}.</td>
<td>13\textsuperscript{b}.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>18\textsuperscript{c}.</td>
<td>16\textsuperscript{d}.</td>
<td>18\textsuperscript{e}.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13\textsuperscript{f}.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13\textsuperscript{g}.</td>
<td>12\textsuperscript{h}.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11\textsuperscript{i}.</td>
<td>11\textsuperscript{i}.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Commonweal, 23 April 1892; Worker (Melbourne) 22 September 1894; Tocsin, 8 November 1900 and 16 October 1902. The absence of an official Labor paper in Victoria for much of the 1890’s adds to the confusion.

a. Omits Emerald Hill; Port Melbourne; and Richmond (Bennett). Includes Stawell; and Warrnambool.
b. Includes Albert Park; and Borung which was won by J. H. Dyer who renounced his “Labor” endorsement the day after the polling.
c. This is almost certainly wrong, since it omits Dr. Maloney.
d. Omits Dandenong and Berwick; Essendon and Flemington; Fitzroy (2); Grenville (Kerr); Prahran; and Richmond (Bennett). Includes Collingwood (2); East Bourke Boroughs; Warrnambool; Emerald Hill; Stawell; and Melbourne West.
e. Largely agrees with Hughes and Graham but is very difficult to follow as it attempts to distinguish between “Labor” members, of whom it lists ten, and “good-as-Labor” members, of whom it lists another eight. It makes no mention of Maloney.
f. Includes Collingwood (Wilkins); Stawell; Warrnambool; Emerald Hill; and Williamstown.
g. Includes Collingwood (2); Emerald Hill; and Stawell.
h. Includes Collingwood (2); and Emerald Hill.
i. Both omit Sandhurst.

In an interview in *Tocsin*, 28 October 1898, the “Labor party” leader, W. A. Trenwith, claimed to be the leader of a party of at least sixty. But the researcher’s best advice comes from John Murray, MLA for Warrnambool, in reply to a questioner at an election meeting: “I leave it to his superior intelligence to form his own conclusion as to whether or not I belong to the Labor party.” (*Warrnambool Standard*, 2 October 1897)
BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX


NOTES

3. See minutes of Special 1911 Conference to deal with Martin Hannah MLA for joining a Protectionist League, pp. 8–29 (MS 131, vol. 1, Australian National Library).
4. S. M. Ingham, “Some Aspects of Victorian Liberalism 1880–1900”. The first prize in the Eight-Hour Art Union in the 1890s was often a 1,000-oz. piece of gold in the shape of a figure 8.
6. Aspects of Victoria's society can be obtained from G. Bartleti, “Political
7. THC minutes, 16 October–8 December 1885.
8. Ibid., 29 March–31 May 1889.
9. Ibid., 26 March, 3, 17 April 1891, Age 8, 17, 18 April 1891.
11. Shearers’ and General Labourers’ Record, 15 August 1891.
12. Age, 24, 25 February 1892. Spence was less than popular with the AMA because of his involvement with the ASU. On this and on all points connected with Ballarat, I am indebted to conversations with Weston Bate.
15. Argus 8, 9, 12, 14, and 25 March and 2, 8, and 21 April 1892.
16. Ibid., 2 April 1892.
17. VPD 65 (17 December 1890): 2685.
18. Age 26 March 1892; Humphrey McQueen, A New Britannia, chap. 13. The land “myth” persisted well into the twentieth century, as can be seen from this interview with Andrew Fisher:
Q. “Then, if the Labor party should return to power will graduated land taxation take precedence of everything?”
A. “I wish it to take precedence of everything except formal measures, and legislation already current.”
Q. “That isn’t socialism, you know – the creation of a large number of small-landed proprietors?”
A. “It’s my kind of socialism."
(Labor Vanguard (Ballarat), 22 April 1910.)
19. Commonweal, 14 May 1892.
20. Australian National University Archives, E 97/41.
22. Worker (Melbourne), 30 June and 14 July 1894.
23. Age, 11 September 1894. Not everyone was content, and Warren Lep snarled that “the new political party is a sign of the time. It demonstrates beyond a doubt how rapidly we are moving backwards . . . The most reactionary population of the whites who people this globe, is this same Victoria.” Worker (Melbourne), 28 July 1894.
24. Colin A. Hughes and B. D. Graham, A Handbook of Australian Government and Politics, has been used extensively, but for the pre-1902 period it is at variance with W. G. Spence, Australia’s Awakening, pp. 202–3. Both often disagree with the contemporary Labor press, especially over who is a “Labor” member. See Appendix 1.
25. Age, 21 September 1894; THC minutes, 23 November 1894.
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28. Age, 7 October 1897.
29. Ibid., 15 October 1897.
30. Tocsin, 11 November 1897.
32. Tocsin, 20 October 1898.
33. Age, 10 October 1899.
34. Tocsin, editorial, 29 September 1898.
35. P. G. Macarthy, "Victorian Trade Union Statistics, 1889–1914".
36. Tocsin, 18 May, 19 and 26 October 1899.
37. Ibid., 2 November 1899; 18 January and 8 February 1900; 12 March 1903; 23 November 1905.
38. Ibid., 26 October 1899; 8 February, 30 May, 19 December 1901; 2 January 1902.
39. H. L. Hall, Victoria’s Part in the Australian Federation Movement. Hall makes extravagant and absurd claims for the importance of Trenwith’s support as the single most important factor in carrying the “Yes” vote in Victoria.
40. Age, 18 October 1900.
41. Tocsin, 28 February 1901.
42. Ibid., 3 July 1902.
43. Argus, 7 July 1902, cited in C. P. Kiernan, “Political Parties in the Victorian Legislative Assembly 1901–1904”.
44. H. L. Nielsen, Voice of the people (Melbourne, 1902), provides a first-hand detailed account. The direction of the Kyabram movement was quickly taken over by paid conservative agitators who derived their strength from the donations of Melbourne’s free-trading importers. See G. D. Meudell, The Pleasant Career of a Spendthrift.
45. Tocsin, 18 June 1903.
46. VPD 114 (27 September 1906): 1751.
47. Labor Call, 24 February 1916; Daily Herald (Adelaide) 14 February 1916; letters from Sgt. Mullens and Constable McCabe to City Coroner, 12 February 1916. I am indebted to John Lonie who undertook the research in Adelaide.
48. Further suggestions concerning Wren’s influence can be found in C. Crowe, The Inquiry Agent, and Frank Hardy, Power without Glory (Leipzig, 1956).
51. Tocsin, 23 October and 20 November 1902. I am greatly indebted to Graeme Osborne for his special knowledge of Mann and for his assistance generally in the preparation of this chapter. See also D. Torr, “Tom Mann in Australasia, 1902–9”.
52. Tocsin, 13 August 1903.
55. Ibid., 16 June 1910.
56. Tocsin, 6 September 1906.
57. Labor Call, 4 April 1907.
59. From copy in possession of Graeme Osborne.
60. Norman Mackenzie, “Vida Goldstein, the Australian Suffragette".
62. Ibid., 30 September 1915.
67. *Labor Call*, 4 April 1907.
69. Celia Hamilton, "Catholic interests and the Labor Party".
70. *Labor Call*, 26 November 1908.
71. Ibid., 11 November 1915.
73. *Labor Call*, 27 August 1914.
74. Ibid., 23 September 1915.
75. At the 1912 PLC conference the Bedstead Makers' Union had unsuccessfully proposed "that graduated teaching in Sex Physiology form part of the curriculum in Primary and Secondary Schools".
76. MS 936, Mitchell Library.
79. See report of debate in *Socialist* throughout May 1920.
80. Ian Bedford, "The One Big Union, 1918–1923"; Constance Larmour, "The 'Y Club' and the One Big Union", pp. 37–54; I. A. H. Turner, *Industrial Labour and Politics*. The OBU's plan for the restructuring of society looked like a cross between Saint-Simon's "Council of Newton" and a Fourierist Phalanstery; it is a testimony to the depth of the leftward trend that such a complicated geometric construct could be taken seriously for so long by so many people.
84. B. D. Graham, *The Formation of the Australian Country Parties* (Canberra, 1966). After the 1921 election Prendergast announced that in "half-a-dozen constituencies we deliberately drove Labor electors over to vote for Farmers' Union candidates" (p. 163). For the next thirty years governments were often formed following negotiations between the Labor and Country parties.
85. *Age*, 16 October 1920.
87. *OBU Herald*, 1 February 1922.
J. P. Jones, H. H. Champion, Tom Mann, Keir Hardie, and Ben Tillett in Melbourne in 1908 (J. P. Jones papers, private collection)

Frank Anstey and Charles McGrath on cycles organizing for the Victorian Labor party, Gippsland, 1912 (Courtesy National Library of Australia)
William Trenwith (Courtesy National Library of Australia, Edward Searle Collection)
Western Australia

H.J. Gibbney
After fifty years of struggle, Western Australia seemed by 1880 to be at last under way. It had an almost viable economy based on primitive farming, sheep raising, timber cutting, and pearl fisheries. It had been granted representative government under a crown colony constitution, though real power still resided in a governor appointed from London. Despite this apparent maturity, however, the imperial convict establishment, which had only stopped importing unwilling immigrants in 1868, still cast a long shadow. Of a population estimated at 26,000 in 1874, 5,000 to 6,000 were time-expired men. Harassed continually by an overmanned and overzealous police force, these men preferred, when they could, to seek freer and greener pastures in the east. Because of the lingering stains of felony, and an oppressive Master and Servant Act, free immigrants, too, preferred the east and there was, therefore, a perpetual labour shortage which the Legislative Council obstinately but unsuccessfully sought to solve by importing coolies. The only political activity was a gentlemanly round game in which local dignitaries formed temporary combinations, to thwart the governor or to secure public works for their own district. West Australian politicians believed firmly with Edmund Burke that the member should be responsible only to his own conscience — a theory which left room for political parties.

In 1879, the discovery of fine pastoral land in the far north stimulated a minor land boom. Making bold use of loan funds, governors Sir William Robinson and Sir F. Napier Broome embarked on a vigorous programme of railway and telegraph construction which attracted workers from the east. Among them were the first trade unionists. Hitherto, working-class activity in Perth had been located either in the Mechanics' Institute, a cultural organization confined rigidly to the free, and the Working Men's Association, a social club which tended to cater more for the old lag. On 29 May 1883 the city press gave a scandalized account of a disorderly meeting at the rooms of the Working Men's Association chaired by T. Donnelly, “An importation from the other side” — a meeting devoted to the formation of a Labor League. Despite its name, Donnelly's Labor League played no part in politics, but in February 1884 the first stable
union, a branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, was successfully formed at Fremantle.

The Kimberley goldrush brought more immigrants, who began to work a fundamental change in the political scene. The movement for responsible government which had existed rather hopelessly for many years under the leadership of the native-born lawyer, Stephen Henry Parker, was suddenly rejuvenated by a group of immigrant business and professional men. They formed a Liberal League, which in 1886 began organizing an Eight Hours Association, mainly for the benefit of the League’s candidate for the Perth seat in the Legislative Council, a middle-aged, rabble-rousing Irish lawyer from New South Wales called John Horgan. Horgan failed at his first attempt but in 1888 won a by-election, allegedly because of strong working-class support. His parliamentary performance was disappointing, however, and he was defeated at the next election.

Encouraging gold discoveries at Pilbara and Yilgarn in 1889, followed by the establishment of a responsible government in 1890 under the dynamic leadership of John Forrest, began to attract unionists discouraged by eastern strike disasters. The first wave included Hugh De Largie, George F. Pearce, and James M. Fowler, all of whom became prominent later on. Early in 1891, Philip P. Rowe, who had worked on a Labor paper in Rockhampton, established a small weekly paper called the People with the backing of the Liberal League. Rowe’s advanced ideas soon frightened the Liberal League, and having meanwhile become associated with a Fremantle Lumpers’ Union he sought the support of a Trades and Labor Council (TLC) formed in August 1891 to float the People as a union-owned company. Receiving little or no support because of jealousies between Perth and Fremantle, he abandoned the People to work for a country paper, and died in Coolgardie in 1896.

In October 1891 John Marshall, who had just contested Granville unsuccessfully for the New South Wales Labor party, arrived in Perth and began advocating the formation of Labor Electoral Leagues (LEL). Like Rowe, he was unduly optimistic. The seven or eight existing unions saw nothing beyond their own trade, and the limited unity achieved by the TLC was already evaporating in inter-village feuds between Perth and Fremantle. Soon afterwards Marshall left the city, and after spending some time in the southwest became a highly respected citizen of Kalgoorlie, where he rapidly drifted away from the Labor movement.

The population of Western Australia actually decreased by 351 in 1888, but from then on the tide of increase continued to flow for nearly twenty years. Between 1890 and 1891, the annual increase leaped from 2,592 to 6,995 and remained close to this figure for the next three years. With a more liberal franchise and an expanding population, the conditions for Labor political organization were rapidly improving and on 20 October
1893 the TLC decided to organize a Progressive Political League (PPL). The moving spirits in the scheme were George Chitty Baker, a 32-year-old English printer with experience in the United States and Europe, and George Foster Pearce, a young South Australian carpenter. Pearce, a tall, quiet, reserved man with a heavy moustache, was the archetype of the steady, reliable, self-educated tradesman. His absolute honesty and enormous capacity for detail subsequently took him from a leading position in the coastal Labor movement to high office in the national government, but at twenty-four he had not yet completely matured and the programme of the league was a routine collection of the usual radical ideas of the time including the referendum, adult suffrage, payment of members, taxation of unimproved land values, etc. It was obvious, of course, that because of the weakness of the Labor movement in the colony there was nothing to be gained by a too radical programme and the only real dispute arose over education. Although Baker was a Protestant, he felt constrained as foreman printer for the Catholic diocesan paper, the *West Australian Record*, to oppose advocacy of free secular education on the ground that it would cause dissension and, with the help of the Catholic Rowe, succeeded in deferring the subject at the initial meeting. When accused by the *West Australian* of being under sectarian influence, Baker replied vigorously that he sought only to avoid the sectarian dissension which the *West Australian* obviously wished to provoke. At the next meeting, however, Baker was overruled by more advanced members and free secular education was duly adopted.

The phenomenal gold discoveries at Coolgardie in September 1892 and at Kalgoorlie in June 1893 brought a sudden influx of immigrants to Western Australia. In 1893, 8,298 people arrived, but in 1894 there were 25,858, most of whom went to the goldfields. The PPL saw its opportunity and formed a Coolgardie branch in February 1894, which nominated the liberal Dr. Davies for Yilgarn in the next general election. The North Fremantle branch nominated George Chitty Baker for North Fremantle. The campaign was a disaster. Davies withdrew before the election, while Baker, opposed by a popular liberal and accused of being a nominee of the Catholic Church, was soundly defeated.

As the gold frenzy increased, it became more and more difficult to keep organizations together on the coast, and by the beginning of 1895 both the PPL and the TLC had virtually collapsed. Baker made one further attempt to enter parliament in April 1895, but the sectarian label ruined his hopes again and he finally disappeared from the Labor movement.

Between 1894 and 1896 the gold fever reached its peak and immigrants poured in: 25,858 in 1894; 29,523 in 1895, and 55,215 in 1896. Then the rush began to subside and the upward trend was not resumed till 1901. Because of the predominance of migrants on the goldfields and because of
environmental differences, the coastal and goldfields wings of the Labor movement now began to move along divergent paths. The population of the goldfields was cosmopolitan. Most of it came from other colonies but there were some Europeans and Americans and many Asians. Of the Australians, the majority were from Victoria, with South Australia in second place, and smaller contingents from New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania. It was an almost exclusively masculine society in which the young, the restless, the discontented, and the enterprising formed the social elite. In such a society the rebels were soon prominent.

Coastal society on the other hand rested on a firm foundation of native Western Australians, whose parochial distaste for the outsider extended even into the working class. This foundation was overlaid by a large immigrant deposit, consisting not of the restless and enterprising, but of the safe and steady who saw that the real profit in the goldrush would be secured by the man who sold the work of his hands to the fortune-seekers.

After the initial disruption caused by the goldrush, unionism began to pick up rapidly on the coast. The TLC was active again by late 1895 and by 1896 there were probably about twenty coastal unions. Physical proximity to the colonial parliament dictated a faith in political action rather than strikes, a faith which was strengthened by the sober, respectable, nonconformist tradesmen who constituted the leadership. With the aid of liberal friends in parliament, such as Walter H. James, who frequently attended meetings of the TLC’s parliamentary committee, some useful social legislation was secured. Much of this progress was due to the intelligently pragmatic government of John Forrest who was always prepared to concede moderate demands which had some show of political backing.

By 1896 small unions, some of which were probably branches of the Victorian Amalgamated Miners’ Association (AMA), existed in at least fourteen goldfields towns. They were, however, fundamentally different to the craft unions of the coast. Most workers on the goldfields were prospectors at heart who only took paid employment to finance participation in the next rush. The mining laws of the colony were an extraordinary muddle designed primarily to encourage rapid capital investment, and the main objectives of goldfields unionism were the protection of the rights of alluvial diggers. Ordinary industrial objectives only became important later. Because of the absence of other unions and the influence of a few radical leaders, a number of these organizations decided to take in not only miners, but anybody who believed in the union ideal.

The leaders included such men as George Taylor, a romantic follower of William Lane, who had suggested setting up a commune at Barcaldine during the Queensland shearers’ strike of 1891 and had subsequently served a prison term; Hugh De Largie, a Scot who had been a leading unionist on the New South Wales coalfields; Jabez Dodd, who had been
particularly active in the Broken Hill strikes of the 1890s; and J. B. Holman from the Broken Hill Defence Committee of 1892. Someone, probably Taylor, was in touch with the Australian Labor Federation (ALF) in Queensland,\textsuperscript{19} and late in 1896 a proposal emerged for amalgamating all mining unions. On 7 January 1897 a conference at Coolgardie of six unions established the Amalgamated Workers' Association (AWA),\textsuperscript{20} a federation with a hierarchical organization of branches, district councils, and a central executive like the ALF, and a partly political platform based on that of the coastal TLC. For nearly ten years this organization dominated the Labor movement in Western Australia.

By 1896, there were two sympathetic liberals, W. H. James and A. J. Diamond, in the colonial parliament and the coastal leaders began once again to think of a Labor party. In September, a meeting in Perth established the Political Labor party,\textsuperscript{21} which sought electoral reform, payment of members, abolition of the stock tax and import duties on necessities, taxation of unimproved land values, and free, secular, and compulsory education. Branches were free to nominate candidates who could however be rejected by the executive, and for the first time candidates were asked to accept a solidarity pledge.\textsuperscript{22}

Since members were still unpaid it was difficult to find candidates. Charles Oldham, a builder who had once been president of the TLC, was nominated for North Perth and sympathetic liberals were endorsed in six other electorates. The Kalgoorlie branch nominated R. F. Norman, a miner from the new Kalgoorlie and Boulder TLC, for East Coolgardie, but other electorates were more difficult. In North East Coolgardie, Frank Vosper, a popular radical journalist who had been imprisoned in Queensland as a republican, sought endorsement but was rejected when he refused to sign the pledge. George Waite, a radical unionist who was eventually selected, was found ineligible and had to withdraw. In North Coolgardie there was an acrimonious dispute in which Hugh Mahon, proprietor of a Menzies newspaper, was accused of manipulating the local union to secure his own endorsement over William Kerr, a prospector.

Oldham was successful, but only two of the endorsed liberals were elected, including James, who had held the seat previously. In North East Coolgardie, Vosper, who had been rejected by the party, was elected in triumph. The debacle was due partly to disputes\textsuperscript{23} and partly to cumbersome electoral procedures which disfranchised many potential Labor voters. The \textit{West Australian} saw other reasons: "...avowed protectionists declare themselves on the free trade side... men are seen urging forward a policy of pure free trade, all the while proclaiming themselves protectionists... So long as these inconsistencies exist it is impossible that Labor politics... can unite its forces or command the attention of the working man."\textsuperscript{24}
During the election campaign two small suburban papers, the Subiaco Pioneer and the Suburban Standard, were a great help in Oldham's campaign, but this was no substitute for a permanent propaganda organ. There was little overt press hostility to Labor and much of the goldfields' press, led by the influential Hocking papers in Kalgoorlie, devoted a good deal of space, some editorial, to Labor affairs. The coastal leaders, however, sought a permanent vehicle for educational work and late in 1898 Fred Davis, a bricklayer who had been elected secretary of the coastal TLC, secured for the council permanent rights over the last page of a new paper, the Sunday Chronicle. The space was devoted to the reporting of Labor occasions and to reprinting selected items from the international Labor press. While the arrangement lasted it undoubtedly did some good, but unfortunately the Sunday Chronicle collapsed before the end of 1898.

The venture was, however, one sign of increasing maturity. In April 1898 the secretary, Fred Davis, became the first full-time, paid official in Western Australia, and in March F. J. Rawlings was appointed to attend the Intercolonial Trade Union Congress (ITUC) in Melbourne as delegate for Western Australia. The AWA leaders decided that the time had come for a united Labor movement and called a general conference to coincide with a big exhibition at Coolgardie early in 1899. The delegates met at Pearce's athletic hall on 11 April. Hugh De Largie, alleged by his enemies to be a rabble-rouser, who had been general president of the AWA since its establishment, was elected to the chair, with Fred Gilbert, secretary of the AWA, as secretary. William Somerville, a blacksmith from the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in Fremantle, was elected a vice-president. He had arrived from New South Wales in 1895 and had rapidly become prominent in the coastal movement. His main interest was always in industrial welfare and his lively intelligence and broad general knowledge served effectively to counterbalance the often woolly radicalism of the AWA men. Nine of the twenty delegates represented AWA branches, while Richard Blamire, also of the AWA, represented the Kalgoorlie and Boulder TLC, and Tom Bath of the AWA represented the John Ballance Assembly of the Knights of Labor, the first of a long series of ginger groups working within the goldfields unions which had been imported from New Zealand with Frank Kelsall, a printer. Only six of the twenty delegates represented coastal organizations because the goldfields contingent also included delegations from the Alluvial Rights and Democratic Association and the Australian Natives' Association.

From 11 April to 15 April the congress worked its way through a heavy agenda and set out clear lines of policy on most of the important issues of the day. Socialism was accepted in principle as a desirable end, and a firm declaration of support for Australian federation was made. As regards future organization of the Labor movement, plans were made to establish
a division of the ALF, to seek direct representation in both state and federal parliaments, and to establish a permanent Labor newspaper. Under the proposed scheme of political organization, each constituency was left free either to run a direct candidate or to support other democratic candidates who subscribed to the following fighting platform:

- Payment of members;
- Redistribution of seats according to population;
- A compulsory arbitration act on New Zealand lines.29

To implement this programme, Congress directed the appointment of a joint parliamentary committee with sections both on the coast and on the goldfields, to manage elections until the formation of district councils under the Labor Federation scheme.

By this time, federation was the biggest of all political topics and both wings of the Labor movement became deeply involved. The Forrest government was already extremely unpopular on the goldfields, and, when it began to seem in June 1899 that government conservatism might keep the colony out of the Commonwealth, a movement developed in Kalgoorlie seeking creation of a new goldfields colony which could federate independently.30 Two of the twelve executive members of the Separation for Federation League were Hugh De Largie and John Reside of the Certificated Engine Drivers' Association, while two others, Hugh Mahon and Dr. H. A. Ellis, became Labor members of parliament within the next four years. Unlike the goldfields Labor movement, the coastal Labor movement was not unanimously in favour of federation, but the executive of the Western Australian Federal League nevertheless included five Labor representatives, Davis, Diver, Doheny, Pearce, and Somerville, while Davis and Diver were invited to put the Labor point of view to a Joint Select Committee of Parliament on the Federation Bill.31

When the colony was finally committed to federation, Labor leaders were free to devote their attention to the establishment of a viable political organization. The first objective was to secure payment of state members. Although Forrest and some of his ministers disliked the idea, there was already a strong movement in the Legislative Assembly in favour of payment. Pearce and his Labor colleagues sought to force Forrest's hand by threatening to oppose B. C. Wood, commissioner for railways, in a ministerial election. Forrest, who had probably decided already to pass the bill, gave way gracefully,32 and the most serious obstacle to the establishment of a PLP was thus easily overcome.

The second Trades Union and Labor Congress met in Perth from 13 to 16 August 1900 with Pearce and J. W. Croft of the TLC as president and secretary respectively. The main work of the congress was discussion of a programme for political activity in both federal and state spheres. The state programme proposed that 22 electorates should be contested at the
next general election and that in eleven others the decision whether or not to nominate candidates should be made by the local party members. Party branches were to be created, governed on the goldfields by an executive consisting of the president of the TLC and all union presidents. The equivalent coastal organization was to consist of two delegates from each party branch and three delegates from the TLC. Voting in selection ballots was confined to union members on the goldfields and to party members on the coast.

This curious arrangement demonstrated clearly the way in which the two wings of the Labor movement had diverged. On the goldfields, the all embracing policy of the AWA had led to the admission of all sorts of people, some of whom had little real sympathy with Labor ideals; this policy had already generated a puritan reaction emphasizing the importance of the union. On the coast, the effectiveness of political action had been so clearly demonstrated that the establishment of a political party presented no real problems, but on the goldfields the path was beset with pitfalls. By 1900, the AWA was no longer the popular force that it had been. Craft unionists objected to the one big union ideas of its leaders; there were allegations of administrative incompetence or worse, and a strong nonconformist group of miners led by Jabez Dodd believed that it was dominated by a Catholic cabal associated with De Largie. The opposition was centred in the goldfields TLC. In October 1900 the AWA began organizing political branches in accordance with the congress programme, but at a political conference on 13 October determined but unsuccessful efforts were made to exclude the only political branch represented on the ground that it was not a trade union. A goldfields Political Central Committee was created, but at the second of two further conferences on 28 October the opponents of political branches tried unsuccessfully to rescind the minutes of the previous meeting because they had been rejected by a majority of unions. The protagonists of political branches argued that with only 3,000 unionists in 20,000 to 25,000 workers it was absurd to restrict selection to unionists only. Their opponents argued that political branches provided an easy entry into politics for “little fellows with an axe to grind,” and that any sincere believer in Labor ideals could join a union.

Early in November, J. W. Croft, secretary of the coastal TLC, secured a short-lived agreement restricting the federal ballot to unionists but permitting league members to vote in the state ballots. Hostility between the factions, exacerbated by some sectarian feeling, was too strong however, and the AWA finally seceded from the TLC. In January 1901 the confusion became more profound when a conservative group, led by Jabez Dodd and William D. Johnson, seceded from the AWA to form the AMA as a craft union for miners pledged to avoid politics except when its
own members could be directly benefited. The AWA was able to survive the split because it had already commenced a massive organizing campaign among timber cutters and unskilled workers on the coast.

The senate selection ballots provided the first test for the new political arrangements — a test which, because of political inexperience, almost led to a fiasco. Although the coastal ballot could not be completed in the allotted time, the withdrawal of W. H. Diver left Pearce to be selected unopposed. On the goldfields, however, only one of the three candidates withdrew, while there was obviously no time for a ballot. The selection of Hugh De Largie was finally made by a committee of three coastal leaders — a quite unconstitutional expedient which was widely criticized and was used to justify the AMA breakaway. The malcontents had begun to establish Union Political parties but the apostles of reason seemed to have won the day when all the warring factions, including the Political Labor Leagues (PLL) and the Union Political parties, attended a meeting of the goldfields’ Political Central Committee. In spite of this apparent agreement, however, there was further trouble. Shaw of the TLC had agreed to support John Kirwan, editor of the Kalgoorlie Miner for the federal seat of Kalgoorlie. When the AWA faction invited William Ferguson, the Broken Hill strike leader, to stand, Shaw withdrew the TLC from the federal campaign, and Ferguson, deterred by tales of dissension in Kalgoorlie, withdrew at the last moment, leaving the party without a candidate. Coolgardie and Fremantle seats were convincingly won, however, by Hugh Mahon and James M. Fowler respectively.

The bitterness generated by this squabble was then transferred to the state election campaign and the selection procedures in both Kalgoorlie and Hannans were challenged by the Political Central Committee. When the committee threatened to interfere, however, its authority was questioned on the ground that it had been appointed only for the federal elections.

In spite of these disputes, the candidates selected in thirteen goldfields and nine coastal electorates went to the polls on 24 April advocating:

- Electoral reform, including redistribution on a population basis and payment of members;
- One adult, one vote, with every facility supplied for registration;
- Compulsory industrial arbitration, with necessary amendments in the present act;
- A Factory Act;
- Tax on unimproved land values;
- Amendment of the mining laws to protect alluvial miners.
Of the twenty-two candidates, six were elected. They were Henry Daglish, Fergie Reid, George Taylor, William D. Johnson, Robert Hastie, and John Reside. In Kanowna, Hastie polled particularly well with a lead of 800 votes over his nearest opponent, while Reside in Hannans led by over 1,000 votes. The result was particularly encouraging in view of an outrageously gerrymandered electoral system in which electorates ranged in population from 108 to 5,805, with a heavy bias in favour of rural communities. The 9,658 votes required to win the six seats compared more than favourably with the 7,549 votes required by the ministerial party to win 19 seats.

Although the Labor party had thus been successfully launched, its political platform demonstrates clearly that it still had neither a unique nor a very coherent body of political ideas. Many of the leaders were prepared to talk socialism in a general way but the Social Democratic Federation, established in 1900 by the veteran radical, Monty Miller, attracted few influential members and was virtually moribund after 1902. There had been some vague flirting from time to time with the single tax and co-operative movements also, but most members saw the policy of the Labor movement as a pragmatic response to practical problems. Because major strikes in the metropolitan area in 1897 and 1899 had seriously damaged the unions involved, the movement sought a compulsory arbitration system and got it by political lobbying. Being convinced that political action would pay more dividends than strikes, they sought to facilitate Labor political action by every possible means, and being primarily a miners' party they sought to protect the rights of miners. All these ideas were part of the common currency of nineteenth-century democracy and were not peculiar to Labor.

The same was true of other leading ideas not included in the platform. There were few Chinese in Western Australia, but the racist ideas generated in the east found a target in Indian and Afghan camel drivers and Japanese laundrymen. Ever since the introduction of camels in 1893, the Labor movement had taken a prominent part in a virulent anti-Asiatic campaign, initiated and led by the journalist Frank Vosper. When Commonwealth legislation removed the Asiatic target, attention was directed to the influx of Italian and Slav peasants seeking work on the mines. Within a few years there was a commonly held belief that these men were being imported by a mysterious organization which guaranteed their employment over the heads of native workers. Although several official investigations, launched in response to union demands, failed to find any trace of such an organization, the idea has remained part of the folklore of the goldfields ever since, and the ever present hostility has generated riots on several occasions.

Among the leaders there were a few who read widely, thought deeply,
and saw it as part of their function to educate their members to accept a somewhat wider range of political ideas. Sponsored by this group, the *Westralian Worker* commenced publication in Kalgoorlie on 7 September 1900 with Thomas H. Bath, a 25-year-old miner from New South Wales, as editor, and William D. Johnson, a New Zealand-born carpenter, as manager. In his first editorial, Bath defined his objective "We recognise that the salvation of the workers depends on measures and a party pledged to carry such measures into effect, and it is the province of the Labor paper to so mould public opinion that the irresistible impulse will be to sweep away all obstacles to proved and desirable reforms. This is the why and wherefore of our existence." Though plagued by financial troubles in its first few years, Bath's facile pen and his willingness to hit out at almost anything got the venture off to a sound start, and with the importation of Wallace Nelson, a trained journalist from Queensland, as editor in August 1901 the paper began to fulfil the educational role dreamed of by its founders.

II

The newly elected Labor members, only one of whom represented a coastal constituency, took their seats early in May 1901 and were immediately faced by an utterly confused political situation. With the departure of John Forrest to the federal parliament, the ministerial party which had been held together by allegiance to him, disintegrated, lost its majority, and resigned. F. C. Illingworth was then called for as leader of the opposition, but, when George Leake, who had led the coastal federation campaign, refused to join him, Illingworth stepped down, leaving Leake as premier with twenty supporters in a House of fifty. Since there were five independents and an opposition of nineteen, the support of the Labor six was a prize worth concessions and caucus argued with some justice that the ministry would only be prepared to grant concessions in return for guaranteed support. Radicals in the party who believed that it could only preserve its soul by preserving its independence saw this as the first betrayal. Hastie of Kanowna was elected leader of the Labor party with Daglish of Subiaco as whip, and the party seemed to be well launched; but trouble was not far ahead. Shortly after taking office the new government received a demand for wage increases in the railways. The claim was generally conceded to be just, but the presentation of an ultimatum to a new minister, followed by an immediate strike, was generally condemned. The PLP, anxious to present a responsible image, joined the chorus of condemnation, and when the strike collapsed on 10 July was irretrievably compromised in the eyes of union enthusiasts. At the third state congress
which met at Kalgoorlie in August, it was alleged that Johnson and Reside had advised the Kalgoorlie men not to join the strike, that the Labor party had supported the Leake government against the union, and that George Taylor had written a letter used as propaganda for the government. The action of the party was finally endorsed by fifty-five votes to eleven, but the tone of debate suggests that some hard talking in hotel bars may have been required to secure this result.

Although the parliamentary party had thus survived its first serious storm, new squalls were already on the horizon. The conflict between the two mining unions on the goldfields had become very bitter. The AMA accused the AWA leaders of maladministration. The AWA leaders accused the AMA of sectarian bias, and the AMA retaliated by securing recognition from the registrar of the Arbitration Court as the sole mining union entitled to registration under the Act. Since W. D. Johnson was general secretary of the AMA while George Taylor and other members belonged to the AWA, friction in caucus was always latent and in 1902 it became dramatically obvious.

The Leake government was defeated in November 1901, but a month later the succeeding conservative government of A. E. Morgans was defeated in its turn, and Leake, though still leading a minority party, took office again. George Taylor believed that Labor should not tie itself to any other party and, defying a caucus decision to support Leake, sat firmly on the opposition cross-benches. He was mildly and apologetically censured both by caucus and his own district council. Leake died on 24 June 1902, and when he was succeeded by Walter H. James, who had been a firm friend of the infant Labor movement in the '80s and '90s, the question arose again. Taylor still refused to conform and there was a bitter exchange of personalities between him and his colleagues in the House. Taylor's enemies ascribed his obstinacy to a personal feud with the minister for railways, while his supporters saw heresy in alliance with any other party. The 1902 Congress conducted a general investigation of the behaviour of members but, faced by a general refusal of the politicians led by Daglish to concede the right of congress to judge them, finally exonerated everyone including Taylor. Congress ruled in fact that caucus solidarity should only apply to platform questions, but Taylor was nevertheless temporarily expelled from caucus. In the meantime, the party had improved both in quantity and quality when J. B. Holman won a by-election in December 1901 and Bath replaced the deceased Reside in October 1902. The gains were counterbalanced, however, by the defeat of one of the few Labor legislative councillors, J. M. Speed.

The 1902 congress represented fifty-six organizations of some 7,000 members, but political organization was still quite haphazard, with political branches forming hastily just before elections and vanishing just
as hastily soon afterwards. In principle, there was little opposition to the idea of a co-ordinated organization but in practice it always broke down because the small unions distrusted the big ones, the coast distrusted the goldfields, unions distrusted leagues, and nobody was prepared to delegate an atom of real power to a central body. The third congress of 1901 had actually created a formal structure for a political Labor party, in which all unions were ipso facto party branches while independent branches could also be formed. The organization was to be governed by a district council in each of four districts to adjudicate disputes but otherwise merely offer advice. With no immediate prospect of an election, nothing was done to implement the scheme and the lack of any real desire for unity was emphasized when the 1902 congress decided that future congresses would be held triennially instead of annually, and that congress decisions were not binding on the constituent organization.

Proposals for a political party were also confused by parallel proposals at both the 1899 and 1901 conferences for Labor federation. The schemes of Labor federation propounded in the east had envisaged the establishment of a co-ordinated organization for all Labor bodies in the state which would eventually join a national organization. Consequently, Labor federation seems to have been viewed in Western Australia, initially at least, as something quite different from the state organization. The committee formed at the 1901 conference to consider the Labor federation scheme did not report to the 1902 Congress as was intended and the whole scheme seemed to have collapsed.

Early in 1903, the approach of a federal election stimulated action again. Political Labor party branches were hastily re-formed, and Senator Pearce arrived from the east advocating the adoption of a Labor federation scheme proposed by the Commonwealth Trade Union Congress of 1902. The scheme was launched on 3 April by a meeting representing existing executive bodies such as the general executive of the AWA, the TLC, and the executives of a number of large unions. During the federal election campaign, enthusiasm for the scheme remained high and there was some talk of allowing the federation to function as a permanent executive, but vested interests in the Political Labor party were too strong and after the federal election, although the organization remained in existence, it was virtually moribund.

The collapse of the ALF scheme was only one symptom of a fundamental disunity within the party, much of which was due to the still festering dispute between the AWA and the AMA — originally a question of principle, but now a highly personal faction fight in which most members of the parliamentary party were more or less involved. Widespread disenchantment with the policy of support for the James government was reflected in bitter personal feuds between protagonists of the
two sides. Julian Stuart, another prisoner in the Queensland shearing strikes, who had edited the *Westralian Worker* since January 1903 and was a strong AWA man, saw Johnson as “a capitalistic tout . . . neither more nor less than a jackal for the James government”, with “an insane hatred of the A.W.A.”, and spoke of the “Anti labor antics” of Bath. George Taylor believed that Hastie had been bought by the government with a promise of employment. Under this sort of pressure the policy of support for the James government began to break down and was abandoned in August 1903.57

Although the parliamentary party seemed by now to have lost touch with its grass-roots organization, there were some reasons for expecting to gain support in the general elections to be held in 1904. The 1901 elections had been conducted by a still tiny organization with no political experience but, partly because of the need to register under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, union members had increased from 8,974 in 1901 to 15,015 in 1903.58 A stronger machine was thus available which, because of the diversification of AWA activities, was already expanding in areas hitherto sacred to conservative candidates. Some political branches had also been established.

As the remnants of the old Forrest party slowly began to seek a united front against Labor aggression, the James party began to seem more conservative and some liberals might be expected to drift in the opposite direction.59 Finally, the Electoral Act and the Redistribution of Seats Act of 1904 had removed some of the more glaring anomalies in the parliamentary machinery of the state. Early in February, a conference of unions and leagues in Perth resolved on a nine-point fighting platform which contained most of the usual Labor aims, including nationalization of monopolies and the creation of a state bank.60 The campaign thus commenced seemed to inhibit dissensions. Taylor, having issued one tremendous blast against the party leaders, then fell silent, while the AWA and the AMA at last began a serious attempt to settle their differences.61

The result of the poll of 28 June astounded everyone. Five of the sitting Labor members were unopposed, and of the twenty-eight other seats contested seventeen were won with 42.57 per cent of the total vote. Labor was thus the biggest single party in the House, but with nineteen ministerialists and six opposition members it was still unable to form a safe government. At the first caucus meeting of the new session, Hastie, unwilling to renominate as leader, was replaced by Henry Daglish of Subiaco. Daglish, a civil service clerk, had entered the parliamentary party through George Pearce’s Subiaco Labor League. He was not without ability but had been known in Melbourne as a diligent espouser of radical causes including theosophy, spiritualism, and temperance. He had been a Primitive Methodist lay preacher and had unsuccessfully contested a Victorian seat.
in 1894. He presided over a motley crew of whom twelve represented goldfields seats, six the metropolitan area, and one the Collie coal miners, while three others were lucky and obviously temporary holders of agricultural constituencies. Most were unionists, but the party included also Daglish himself, C. C. Keyser of Albany, a clerk who had come through a league, A. J. H. Watts of Northam, a land agent, Wallace Nelson, a journalist, and Dr. H. A. Ellis of Coolgardie, who had dabbled in a wide variety of progressive activities all over Australia.

At a victory social in Leederville on 25 July Daglish made his first mistake by delivering a keynote speech without consulting his party. He was careful to damp down any suggestion of radicalism and stressed the need to assist struggling manufacturers. He condemned the land policy of the James government and advocated a land tax, but specifically denied any thought of confiscation. To party enthusiasts who saw the millennium within reach, the speech was almost an insult and all the old doubts, temporarily forgotten in the frenzy of campaigning, revived.

When the House met, James decided to force the issue at once, and included in the governor’s address an expression of confidence in the government. There was some apprehension in the party about taking office, but the ambitious Daglish, supported probably by Johnson, was able to sway a generally inexperienced caucus. With only twenty-two votes in a House of fifty, however, extra support had to be found. By 1904, the once powerful Forrest party had been reduced to four members known as the Independents, who usually followed a common line. Having secured a promise of support from this group, the address in reply was amended, the government resigned, and Daglish was called for on 10 August 1904.

Although still able to select his own ministry, Daglish faced one difficult problem. The Constitution required a minister in the Legislative Council but, since the defeat of B. C. O’Brien and J. M. Speed in 1902 and the subsequent defection of J. A. Thomson, Labor was not represented in the Council. The only possible candidate was John Michael Drew, a West Australian Catholic journalist from Geraldton, who had been editorially sympathetic to the cause, and on 10 August Daglish announced the appointment of Hastie to the Department of Justice and Mines, Holman to Labor and Railways, Drew to Lands, Taylor as colonial secretary, Angwin as minister without portfolio, and himself as premier, treasurer, and minister for education. Only Angwin and Taylor were over forty, while both Johnson and Holman were only thirty-two.

The ministerial elections following the change of government were the next disaster. In his policy speech delivered at Subiaco on 23 August, an obviously unhappy Daglish declared that, because of the condition of state finances, the government must retrench and “mark time” — an unfortun-
ate figure of speech which obscured promises of reform in the constitution, the electoral laws, and elsewhere. The disillusionment of his followers was completed when on 20 August, in his policy speech at Geraldton, Drew announced that he had refused to sign the pledge, would not support abolition of the Legislative Council or redistribution on a population basis and disapproved strongly of any proposals to stop alienation of Crown land. The statement may have been a tactical move to placate an intensely conservative electorate but it naturally deepened the existing atmosphere of suspicion.

Somerville of the coastal TLC expressed the endemic suspicion of the government by forming what he called a joint parliamentary committee, based on the Fremantle Trades Hall, which was intended to provide a forum for discussion between members of parliament and union leaders. The scheme collapsed when members saw it as impertinence and the goldfields TLC saw it as attempted metropolitan domination of the party. Honorable members were thus left to their own devices and the dissidents saw little to be proud of in their performance. Reform of the Legislative Council was proposed, but the ministry saw no better way of tackling the problem than a bill for a referendum which first had to pass the Council. A scheme for a land tax was saddled with inordinately high exemptions. In open defiance of party policy, the construction of a railway in the far north was entrusted to private enterprise and, worst cut of all, Mr. Justice Parker, who was considered a hostile judge, was reappointed to the Arbitration Bench.

The first serious crack in the party appeared when A. J. Wilson, member for Forrest, responded to the premier's policy speech by publicly assailing the government in the columns of the West Australian, but the crack was papered over with the support of the goldfields' organization. When James was appointed agent-general in October, however, J. J. Curran, secretary of the coastal TLC, failed to win his predominantly working-class seat in East Perth.

The government managed to get safely into recess on 24 December, but ministers were now subjected to attack over their departmental administration. George Taylor, tactless as ever, had antagonized the party's main power base in the mining unions by refusing to provide an emergency hospital near the mines, and had also incurred the bitter enmity of the influential West Australian Truth. Johnson, equally tactless, greeted a delegation seeking preference to unionists by refusing to accept dictation, even from his own supporters. When he announced that this was his last word, an angry unionist replied, "Then you'll be damned". Holman's performance was even worse. He flatly refused to receive a delegation of union secretaries.

Writing in the recently established coastal Labor paper, The Democrat,
in March, Wallace Nelson, member for Hannans, thought it time the Labor government did something, and on 18 March Nelson and two colleagues, F. F. Wilson and A. A. Wilson, publicly announced in Kalgoorlie that they were prepared to upset the government if the line of policy developed in the recess did not improve matters.  

Daglish returned late in March from two months in the east at a premiers’ conference and found the party almost entirely alienated from its supporting organization. Hoping to save the situation, he reshuffled his cabinet, replacing Holman and Taylor by Thomas Bath and Patrick J. Lynch, an eloquent Irish engine driver from Leonora. The changes might well have improved a cabinet in a secure position, but at such a time they were disastrous. The government, which was already in difficulties, had merely made two more enemies, one of whom had an enormous personal following as a Labor hero, while the independent supporters of the government saw clearly that there were to be no plums for them.

The opposition was quick to see the possibilities in the situation, and, as soon as the House reassembled on 6 July, moved a no-confidence amendment to the address-in-reply. Moran, leader of the independents, was prepared to make hay while the sun shone. The opposition offered him two portfolios for a vote against the government, but Moran had greater ambitions and proposed to Daglish that there should be a coalition between Labor and the independents, with himself as premier. Although some Labor members would have been delighted to get rid of Daglish, Moran’s reputation on the goldfields made him a political liability, and the offer was rejected. The desperate Daglish then seriously investigated coalition with the opposition but, finding no common ground, abandoned that idea also. Moran, however, now saw that the chance of profit was gone, and when it came to the point, the independents voted with the government.

The respite was temporary. On 17 August, Daglish innocently sought the opinion of the House on a cabinet scheme to purchase all the assets of the privately owned Midland Railway Company for £1,500,000 ($3,000,000). Most of the Labor back bench joined the opposition in a concerted roar of protest at the size of the offer, and Daglish suffered a humiliating defeat on the voices without a division. The government resigned on 22 August, and three days later, while waiting to hand over the premier’s office to C. H. Rason who had succeeded James, Daglish wrote on the blotting pad — “In the midst of (ministerial) life we are in death.” His successor, whose position was just as precarious, hastily pushed the sheet into a drawer.

Somerville’s condemnation of the Daglish government in a letter to Walter James would undoubtedly have been endorsed by most Labor men: “Why should these men be so anxious to smooth out and obliterate any
distinctively labor features in their proposals? I ask why, as if I did not know the present ministry are hanging on to place and pay by the grace of Moran, Connor, Butcher and Co. . . . Daglish of course I never could have imagined as a militant labor man.” Somerville’s bitter conclusion was oddly endorsed from the other side of the political fence. In a letter of 22 March 1905 to ex-premier Walter H. James in London, John Winthrop Hackett of the conservative *West Australian* said: “. . . the bulk of the government are not merely incompetent, they do not believe in themselves. They could be put out immediately parliament meets only it is hard to see where we could improve on Johnstone [sic] and Daglish.”

With only eighteen supporters facing twenty-two Labor members, Rason, the new premier, had troubles of his own. He secured five weeks’ adjournment for ministerial elections and, when the House met again on 3 October, moved immediately to discharge from the notice paper the bill for a referendum on the Legislative Council. The strategy succeeded, and, when the motion was duly defeated by a concerted Labor vote, he had an indisputable argument for a dissolution. The ensuing general election was aptly described by Somerville as “Our Waterloo”. Labor won only fourteen of the twenty-six seats contested and secured only 35 per cent of the total vote, while Johnson lost his seat. The few new members elected, however, included the flamboyant Thomas Walker, sometime member of the New South Wales parliament and spiritualist lecturer, and Philip Collier, a newly arrived Victorian socialist who became, in time, an outstanding premier.

III

The collapse of the Daglish government coincided with the onset of an economic recession which complicated the task of party reconstruction between 1905 and 1909. For the first time since 1888 there was a net loss in population and the value of manufacturing output fell from £4,116,000 ($8,232,000) in 1905/6 to £3,925,000 ($7,850,000) in 1907/8. The decline was reflected in union membership figures which fell from 16,330 in 1904 to 14,544 in 1907. The slow reconstruction dictated by these economic hazards was probably a factor in the final success of the parliamentary party.

As goldfields leaders, elected to parliament, settled on the coast, goldfields suspicion of the coast began to disappear, and the idea of a united party became more acceptable. The 1905 congress which met in July, in the gloomy last days of the Labor government, was therefore ready for the first time, to give some serious attention to party organization. Congress at last agreed to make its own decisions binding. The vexed question of
voting in congresses was settled by a compromise in which delegates voted by heads on political questions, and by the membership they represented on industrial matters. Finally, the congress adopted a new constitution which expanded some of the crude ideas adopted earlier into a sophisticated and comprehensive scheme. The party was to consist of unions and political branches organized into six districts, each governed by a district council. For the first time, the district councils were given a real role in organizing and assisting branches, arranging for joint action, and selecting, endorsing, and financing candidates.

The congress also agreed to the revival of the 1901 scheme for a Labor federation, and the exponents of reform saw their opportunity to secure something larger than the existing party organization. At a meeting in Perth on 17 February 1906 the ALF was formally reconstituted with F. J. Ware, member for Hannans, as president and John Scaddan, member for Ivanhoe, as secretary. The organization thus established, at first to manage federal elections only, was able to secure from the 1907 conference the pre-eminent position in a new constitution which served the West Australian Labor party with minor variations until 1963. The Western Australian division of the ALF was governed by a general council, meeting every three years. Between council meetings, the business of the federation was conducted by a permanent executive of president, two vice-presidents, secretary, treasurer, three trustees, two auditors, and one delegate from each affiliated district council. The scheme was financed by a levy of 1½d. (1.25 cents) per month per member, on affiliated organizations, one-third of which went to the executive, and the remainder to the seven district councils, which carried out the functions granted in the 1905 constitution.

In the meantime, the PLP, numerically weaker but improved in quality by the loss of some fellow travellers, had been reconstructed. Daglish withdrew from the Labor party entirely after 1905, fought the next election as an independent, and by 1910 was minister for works in a conservative government. His successor, Bath, elected after the failure of efforts to induce Pearce to return from federal politics, had an impeccable union background and was widely respected both in the party and outside, while his personal investment in a farm at Tammin was a valuable asset in dealing with the farming community. There was a small flurry when in 1906 A. J. Wilson of Forrest was expelled from the party for undertaking a paid commission from the hated timber combine, but otherwise the parliamentary party now seemed to be over the worst of its troubles.

There was a further obstacle yet to be faced, however. In 1905 the registrar of the Arbitration Court had been impressed by arguments used in the debates on the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act against the use of union funds for political purposes. Throughout 1906 he
had been fighting a running battle with a number of unions, particularly the newly formed Federated Miners' Union, to delay or prevent registration of those whose rules included political objects, while pressing the government for legislation on the subject. A major strike in the timber industry early in 1907 induced some of the more conservative members of the government to act and on 24 July 1907 an amended Conciliation and Arbitration Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council. It penalized those advocating strikes or helping strikers; made special arrangements by which non-unionists could enter the Arbitration Court; altered the constitution of the court to give the president greater power; prohibited the appearance of members of parliament before the court as advocates, and prohibited the use of union funds for political purposes. Many unionists saw some justice in the registrar's attitude, and Jabez Dodd of the Federated Miners' Union was prepared to fight for insertion of a conscience clause in the rules, but the introduction of the bill brought a united protest from all union leaders. Some unions spoke of abandoning the court entirely in favour of direct action, and when the critical chorus was joined both by some members of the Legislative Council and by the main metropolitan dailies the bill was quietly shelved.

The moral victory achieved by Labor in this struggle represented a big step along the road to recovery, a road which was made somewhat smoother by a change in the economic pattern of the state. The mining industry had reached a peak in 1904 and had then begun to decline. Anxious not to lose population, Newton Moore, who had succeeded Rason as Liberal leader and premier in 1906, met the challenge by a vigorous programme of agricultural expansion. As a result the new wheatgrowing districts east of Northam were settled by men who had spent their politically formative years in the orthodox Labor citadel of the goldfields. The fusion of the National and Liberal Leagues in May 1907, together with the ludicrously ineffective attempt at a secessionist movement in federal politics, no doubt also swung some support to Labor and in the general election of September 1908, nineteen of the twenty-nine seats contested were won, with 37.8 per cent of the total vote. The new members included a chastened W. D. Johnson, now member for Guildford. The triumph was marred when Richard Buzacott, who had narrowly defeated the unpopular Harry Gregory at Menzies, was unseated by an electoral petition, but there were nevertheless some reasons for satisfaction.

The new party constitution accepted at the 1907 congress came into operation on 1 January 1908, with John Scaddan as general secretary of the executive. The coastal TLC formally became the Metropolitan District Council of the ALF on 9 March 1909, and for the next few years the two bodies shared a common office and the part-time services of a
common secretary. Ever since its foundation, the TLC had led a wandering life in various rented rooms, and the first objective of the new executive was to seek a permanent home. Land had actually been granted for a Trades Hall in 1897 but the site was unsatisfactory and after complicated negotiations the present site in Beaufort Street was secured in 1903. E. L. Lobstein, a goldfields unionist who had been appointed first workers' representative on the Arbitration Court, had quarrelled with coastal leaders, but was nevertheless asked to manage the legal side of the transaction and, without the knowledge of the trustees, had the grant made to the Eight Hour Demonstration Committee, on which he and his fiancée constituted a majority. His relations with the Labor movement broke down completely when he successfully sued J. W. Croft, secretary of the TLC, soon after. The legal tangle over the grant was finally settled in 1905 but the financial strain of paying Croft's damages left the TLC unable to finish the building. However, Scaddan took up the matter again, debentures were issued, and the first executive meeting was held in the new building on 4 January 1910.

The Labor party now possessed what seemed to be a potentially efficient party machine, but the propaganda medium available still left a good deal to be desired. Two attempts to capture a wider audience with the *Sunday Figaro* on the goldfields, and the *Democrat* in the city, had collapsed rapidly, leaving the *Westralian Worker* to represent the Labor viewpoint supported only by occasional Labor columns granted by the commercial press. The *Worker* was controlled until 1905 by the AWA, when it was taken over by an executive board dominated by Jabez Dodd. It was always heavily goldfields-oriented and, under the editorship of Julian Stuart, was deeply involved in the faction warfare of the period. In March 1906, Stuart was succeeded by Will. Jones, an English socialist who had worked for some time in Queensland. Jones helped to revive a Social Democratic Association in Kalgoorlie and sought to make the *Worker* a vehicle for socialist propaganda; but, after fourteen months of struggling with what he saw as the apathy of the working class, he found a more congenial milieu and departed for Broken Hill, leaving the *Worker* under the joint control of Bath and Stuart, both busy members of parliament. Nobody was happy with this arrangement. In October 1910 a new English editor, E. S. Emerson, took over the paper but he too only lasted a few months, being replaced by W. L. Bodley in May 1911.

The first general council of the reformed party at Bunbury in June 1910 was presented with a scheme to follow the lead given in the east by establishing a Labor daily. Jabez Dodd on behalf of the *Worker* board thereupon announced the board's intention of converting the *Worker* to an evening daily in about six weeks. The inception of such a scheme in a declining goldfields town was obviously risky and the Congress persevered

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with an independent organization, the People's Publishing Co., to raise funds for the Labor daily proposal. At the same time, however, the state executive began pressing the Worker board to move the paper to Perth. Since the main supporters of the paper were the Eastern Goldfields District Council with 600 shares, and the Federated Miners' Union with 650, the board refused to consider the proposal until at least 1,800 shares were held on the coast. Following a high-pressure selling campaign by the state executive, the condition was duly met and the first metropolitan issue of the Worker appeared on 3 May 1912. On legal advice, a scheme for amalgamating the People's Printing and Publishing Co. with the Worker board was abandoned and the two organizations carried on independently.

Bath's efforts to run both the party and the Westralian Worker had worn him out, and in 1909 he spoke of resignation because he had lost confidence in himself. He was persuaded to defer a decision but decided finally to resign as party leader in July 1910. Holman, Scaddan, Walker, Johnson, and M. F. Troy, member for Mount Magnet, nominated in the ballot on 3 August. Walker and Troy withdrew, but Scaddan secured an overwhelming majority over the other two candidates.

The new leader was a 34-year-old mine engine driver from South Australia who had been educated in Bendigo. He was a vigorous optimist, generally known as "Happy Jack", but was nevertheless earnestly determined on his own intellectual improvement under the guidance of the widely read Bath. He was universally popular, and in his own constituency could do no wrong. With fresh leadership, a new party organization and a swing to Labor apparent, both in the Commonwealth and New South Wales, the party was now in a strong position. Late in 1910, the government sought to halt the drift by a gerrymandering redistribution bill which reduced the number of goldfields seats by two and the number of metropolitan seats by one, but the scheme backfired. A superbly organized Labor campaign based on a campaign newspaper conducted by Holman and Hugh Mahon, federal member for Coolgardie, carried the day. At the general election in October 1911, Labor won twenty-four of the thirty-nine seats contested with 52.54 per cent of the total vote and was unopposed in ten seats. The new departure was not confined to the Legislative Assembly, however. In May 1910, Jabez Dodd became the first direct Labor representative in the Legislative Council since 1902, being joined in November 1911 by J. A. Doland and Fred Davis.

IV

In accordance with a decision of the 1910 congress, the new ministry was elected for the first time by caucus. Scaddan was unanimously
elected leader, while the other posts went to Bath, W. C. Angwin, Johnson, Collier, Walker, Jabez Dodd, and Drew. Since Drew had still not formally joined the party, his admission to caucus brought some criticism. The state executive, having sought and received assurances of Drew’s loyalty from his district council, decided not to press the objections, but made it clear to the parliamentary party that six months’ membership should henceforth be a prerequisite for admission.\(^9\)\(^8\)

With only Angwin and Drew representing coastal districts, the new ministry apparently fulfilled dismal pre-election forecasts by the Liberals of goldfields domination, but it was nevertheless widely recognized as the best team available from the Labor party. The good-natured Scaddan made friends easily; Bath was, by now, virtually a farmer; Drew, Dodd, and Angwin were known as men of principle, while Walker already had a wide reputation as an intellectual and as a character. Only four of the eight lacked previous experience, and all of these had other advantages. On the whole, the auspices seemed most favourable.

After a short post-election session, in which legislative approval was given for a workers’ homes scheme and a land tax, the new government began immediately to make good use of its opportunity. In seven months it established a state shipping service and a government dairy, began the construction of a state sawmills, initiated negotiations for the purchase of the metropolitan tramways and drew up plans for a state agricultural implement works and a comprehensive state-owned meat industry designed to defeat the operations of an existing meat ring. In the process, over £100,000 ($200,000) was spent without parliamentary sanction, but the government argued with some justice that it had used only money allotted for unforeseen contingencies, a course justified by the existence of a hostile Legislative Council.

The point was emphasized when the Legislative Council killed twenty of the seventy-nine government bills in the session of July to December 1912, leaving the government with only improvements to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and the Workers’ Compensation Act to show for its sessional programme.\(^9\)\(^9\)

The aggressive implementation of government policy by executive action was continued in subsequent sessions by the construction of a city electricity plant, acquisition of a river ferry service, and establishment of a co-ordinated fishing industry to match the meat industry.

Shortly before his election as party leader, Scaddan had resigned as general secretary of the ALF.\(^10\)\(^0\) His successor, Alexander McCallum, a 33-year-old bookbinder from South Australia, had been associated with the coastal TLC since 1900 and had proved himself a dedicated and militant battler for the cause. He held office for nearly ten years and soon became the most influential man in the party. Backed by a small elite
group of activists, many of whom were associated with a revived Metropolitan Socialist League dominated by Montaigne O'Dowd, son of the Victorian socialist poet, and by Don Cameron, later senator, McCallum kept the executive firmly and enthusiastically behind the government. There were, therefore, few of the open attempts at industrial dictation which embittered the politics of Labor in New South Wales, although both Johnson and Collier fell foul of the unions in respect of their departments.

The term socialism was freely used by the opposition but none of the government's ventures were in fact motivated by any consistent scheme of state planning. The idea of state enterprise was nothing new in Western Australia. Long before 1910, the government already owned rock-crushing batteries in many mining towns, a state sawmill, and state hotels. All of these ventures were provided in response to a public need, which was not being provided or was being provided inadequately by private enterprise. The activities of the Scaddan government simply carried this process to its logical conclusion and its correct assessment of the public need was clearly demonstrated by the number of state enterprises which survived under subsequent hostile governments.

Partly because of Scaddan's free spending, which eventually earned him the sobriquet of "Gone a million Jack", both the 1911/12 and 1912/13 budgets showed deficits and, during the recess early in 1913, he spent four months in England seeking loan money, a step which was severely criticized as a negation of party principles. Blessed by a record wheat harvest, however, the government could still afford to ignore this sort of criticism. Soon after Scaddan's return, the third session of parliament opened with a head-on collision between the government and the Legislative Council in which seven government bills, some controversial, introduced on the one day, were all defeated. Although the Council's attitude was widely criticized even in the metropolitan dailies, it was merely one symptom of a general marshalling of the opposing forces which was reflected in the events outside the House.

Before 1911, the farmers had usually voted solidly for the Liberal party. The swing of some rural electorates to Labor in 1911 was an aberration produced by effective Labor organization and the normal swing of the pendulum, and the establishment in 1912 of a Farmers' and Settlers' Association (F and SA) signalized the end of the brief courtship. The rift was seen to be permanent when a conference of the association in May 1913 decided to establish a political wing, copying some of the organizational features of Labor.

Besides this looming political threat, the government now began to run into economic difficulties. The wheat crop of 1914 was a disastrous failure, and the consequent contraction of business activity soon brought
mounting unemployment. By August, the accumulated deficit had risen to £644,093 ($1,288,186). On top of these problems came the outbreak of the First World War. An Income Tax (War Emergency) Bill was introduced to relieve the financial strain, accompanied by an Industrial Arbitration Bill, designed to cope with unemployment, but both were rejected by the Legislative Council.

Steady losses due to maladministration in some of the state enterprises, deficit financing, and an attempt to introduce income tax, constituted a dangerous record with which to face an impending general election, and the government approached the campaign apprehensively. Its fears were justified. At the poll on 21 October 1914, Labor won only half of the twenty-eight seats contested while the Liberals won fifteen and the new Country party won seven. With its twelve uncontested seats, the government still had a majority of one after appointing a Speaker, but its fate hung in the balance for over a month while the results came in from the far northern seats. The result was clearly due in part to the advent of the Country party, but the ministry, embittered by what it saw as ingratitude, became progressively cooler about the expansion of state enterprise. Pressed by party enthusiasts to expand the field, they argued that the first requirement was to make existing enterprises more efficient.104

On 23 November 1914, Bath retired, devoted himself to farming, and at length drifted away from Labor into a co-operative marketing organization. He was replaced at Lands and Agriculture by Johnson, while Angwin took over Public Works, and R. H. Underwood, member for Pilbara, entered the ministry without portfolio.105 There was no cessation of the economic difficulties, however. Prices were rising rapidly; by February 1915 there were over 3,000 unemployed and by the end of January the accumulated deficit had reached one million pounds (two million dollars). Fortunately, the Country party, led by the moderate James Gardiner, voted with the government on most divisions, but the government backbench proved less compliant.

E. B. Johnston, a Western Australian-born land agent, who held the rural seat of Williams-Narrogin, had, during the election campaign, induced Scaddan to promise a reduction in the price of Crown lands to 15s. ($1.50) per acre. When the necessary legislation was introduced in 1915, Johnston, shocked to find a proposed price of 25s. ($2.50), accused Scaddan of a breach of faith and, with the support of A. A. Wilson of Collie, voted against the government.106

In the meantime, another backbencher had made an even more drastic protest. J. P. Gardiner, from the northern pastoral and mining seat of Roebourne, spoke rarely but was usually critical of the government. On 27 January 1915, he spoke for four minutes attacking the grant of a whaling licence to a Norwegian company and thenceforth virtually ceased to
attend parliament. On 30 September he was declared to have vacated his seat as an unauthorized absentee, and the ensuing by-election was won by the Liberals.

While Gardiner’s intentions were still in doubt, difficulties arose in the state enterprises. Staff friction in the agricultural implement works, generated allegations of serious maladministration, which were confirmed by a royal commission. Late in 1915 an even more serious scandal was revealed. The construction of a meatworks at Wyndham was the keystone of the meat supply enterprise and, in April 1915, Johnson and Scaddan, without consulting cabinet, let the contract to a financier, S. V. Nevanas, overruling public service advice. They then entered into shipping agreements which made performance of the contract difficult and, realizing at last the complexities they had created, granted Nevanas an extraordinarily generous inducement to abandon the contract.

When Parliament met in July, the story had leaked. E. E. Heitmann, member for Cue, at once resigned as government whip. Taylor gave notice of a no-confidence motion which he subsequently withdrew, and the opposition succeeded in securing a select committee which included Taylor. In the debate on the report early in November, Heitmann, Taylor, and E. B. Johnston all attacked the government but refused to vote with the opposition.

At a special caucus meeting on 9 December, W. H. Carpenter, member for Fremantle, moved that the proposed resignation of the ministry was undesirable, but found no seconder. Scaddan then spoke of his desire for relief because of ill health and refused to continue without support. George Foley, member for Mount Leonora, moved that the resignations be accepted, but A. A. Wilson and Heitmann both deplored talk of corruption and pointed out that the government had been unlucky through drought and war. W. L. Thomas, of Bunbury, agreed that there was no evidence of dishonesty but would leave politics rather than continue to support Johnson, whose blunders had brought defeat in 1905 and the present difficulties. Troy admired Johnson, but couldn’t take his word, because he was always ready to get out of a tight corner by a half-truth. S. W. Munsie, member for Hannans, felt that defeat would certainly follow a cabinet reshuffle. E. B. Johnston felt that failure of caucus to accept the resignations would amount to a double-cross. The government was saved by ten votes to eight but, two days later, Johnston resigned his seat, leaving the government in a minority of one.

When Johnston announced his intention of contesting Williams-Narrogin as an independent, he challenged Scaddan to stand against him and the premier rashly accepted. On the advice of the local Labor organization, however, he decided not to nominate and on the day of the election he was on holiday with his family in the southwest. As
had been expected, Johnston won handsomely. At a hostile caucus meeting on 3 February 1916 Scaddan agreed that the seat should have been contested, but said he was tired of the impossible demands made by his supporters and expressed his eagerness to resign if required. The offer was not accepted, but his days as premier were numbered in any case.

When James Gardiner resigned as Country party leader early in 1916, it was decided to withdraw support from the Labor party. As soon as parliament met in July, Frank Wilson, who had succeeded Moore as Liberal leader in 1910, took advantage of the Country party decision and moved an adjournment which was carried by twenty-four votes to twenty on 25 July. As a last hope it was decided that Scaddan should contest Canning against R. T. Robinson, Wilson’s Attorney general, in the ensuing ministerial elections. Don Cameron, endorsed candidate for the seat, obligingly gave way but, after a long bitter campaign, Scaddan was crushingly defeated on 19 August and the last hope was gone.

While the government was thus slowly expiring, the curtain was beginning to rise on the great conscription drama. In October 1915 there had been a debate on conscription in the Legislative Assembly, and in November the state executive had deferred consideration of a manifesto from an anti-conscription league in Sydney until the party congress at Kalgoorlie, on 31 May 1916, had given a ruling. In the meantime, a constant flow of literature and correspondence from the east stimulated controversy, and, when the congress met, the factions were already beginning to emerge. The opponents of conscription were led by Don Cameron, while E. W. Walsh of the Barmaids’ and Barmen’s Union advocated support for conscription provided that wealth was also conscripted. After two days of surprisingly calm debate, it was resolved by forty-one votes to twenty-six that Western Australia would trust the Hughes government and support conscription if the government thought it necessary.

Prime Minister Hughes passed through Perth on 31 July, on his way back from Europe, and spoke to party members, but his intentions were not finally clarified until he announced on 30 August that a referendum on conscription would be held on 28 October. The cleavage in Western Australia then became more pronounced. An anti-conscription league was initiated by an eastern delegate in August and led by Don Cameron, who was kept in touch with eastern developments by correspondence with McCallum, on sick leave in Sydney. When the referendum was announced, the district councils began to declare themselves. The important Midland and Eastern Goldfields’ councils and the less important Albany Council opposed conscription while the Metropolitan, Fremantle, and North Coolgardie councils declared in favour.

In spite of numerous attempts to capture the state executive, however, it clung rigidly to the ruling given by the Kalgoorlie congress, but a series
of abortive efforts during September to secure satisfactory assurances from
the federal government about conscription of wealth began to turn the
scale. On 16 October a motion advising a "no" vote was only defeated by
14 votes to 12 but, at the same meeting, a second motion to support the
federal members opposing conscription was carried by 14 votes to 13.
James Cornell, Labor member of the Legislative Council and a convinced
conscriptionist, who was acting as general secretary in the absence of
McCallum on sick leave in the east, immediately resigned, and in an earnest
typeat to avoid bitterness the meeting at once resolved that all officials
should be given a free hand on the question. Although many Labor leaders
in Western Australia were prepared to behave very positively on one side
or the other in the conscription controversy, the consensus was that the
subject did not warrant the risk of a split and, partly because of this
apparent uncertainty in the party which was the centre of opposition in
the east, Western Australia voted in favour of conscription by 94,069 votes
to 40,884.

Scaddan's defeat in Canning had left the PLP without a leader, but in
spite of everything faith in Scaddan seemed undiminished. J. T. Lutey,
who had won Scaddan's old seat of Brownhill-Ivanhoe, obligingly agreed
to resign, thereby virtually assuring Scaddan of re-election. When Collier
depicted election as leader at a caucus meeting on 19 September, Walker
suggested that a decision should be deferred until Scaddan's return. Heit­
mann then pointed out that this would infer a lack of talent, and Johnson
was elected, but Scaddan, who was present, sought permission of caucus to
attend a conference of premiers and opposition leaders. His confidence
was not misplaced. In spite of some opposition, he duly won the by-
election for Brownhill-Ivanhoe and once again became leader of the party.

Collier's announcement in the caucus meeting of 19 September that he
intended to speak against conscription was the first sign of the inevitable
split in the PLP — rendered inevitable by events in the east. The dramatic
withdrawal of the Hughes group from the federal caucus on 14 November
precipitated a general heresy hunt which McCallum, still in the east on sick
leave, heartily supported. Though well aware of the feeling in the east, the
state executive still relied on the freedom of opinion granted by the Kal­
goorlie conference and dispatched to an interstate conference in Mel­
bourne, on 4 December, a delegation consisting of three conscriptionists,
Cornell, Lynch, and R. J. Burchell, federal member for Fremantle, and
three anti-conscriptionists, McCallum, Lutey, and H. C. Gibson of the
Certificated Engine Drivers' Association. All attempts to make the east see
the Western Australian point of view were in vain, however, and in spite of
protests from the state executive, Cornell, Lynch, and Burchell were
refused admission to the conference.

The increasing hysteria of the campaign at last defeated the advocates
of reason. On 20 November the preselection of the five senate candidates, who included three conscriptionists, was cancelled; anti-conscription unions and branches began to withdraw from the ALF; the North Coolgardie Council substituted George Taylor for its anti-conscriptionist delegate, and the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) expelled Thomas Walker for supporting conscription. The same meeting, however, refused to expel Taylor. At the same time, Heitmann and Underwood took an active part in establishing the new National Labor party (NLP).

John Hilton, who had edited the *Westralian Worker* since Bodley's death in 1913, had opened the paper impartially to both parties in spite of his personal support for conscription, but on 1 January 1917 he was given a month's notice, and in the first issue for 1917 the position of editor was advertised. On 19 January the embittered Hilton joined J. Slocombe in establishing a "Labor Solidarity Committee" which eventually formed the metropolitan nucleus of the NLP. Soon afterwards, an opposition group was established called the "Industrial Vigilance Committee" which not only opposed conscription but represented a general industrial, anti-political position.

The last hope of the moderates on the state executive was an appeal to the wandering sheep to return to the fold, but, when this failed, all hope of reconciliation was abandoned. At a special congress on 20 March 1917, the six federal renegades who had followed Hughes were declared to have put themselves outside the pale and the executive was empowered to discipline anybody defying congress decisions. The Labor Solidarity Committee was declared bogus, and power was taken to discipline organizations defying congress. Heitmann had already been expelled by his own Geraldton Council for joining the NLP and had compounded his sin by resigning his seat to oppose Hugh Mahon in Kalgoorlie. He did not attend the congress but Underwood did and resolutely refused to recant.

Hitherto Scaddan had successfully sat on the fence, thereby earning some scorn. He assured the congress that he intended to remain in the working-class movement but, on 5 April, suddenly announced that he could no longer support the official Labor party. Soon afterwards he was joined by Cornell, Dodd, and Ardagh from the Council, and Thomas, Taylor, Carpenter, Foley, Mullaney, Hudson, Bolton, and Price from the Assembly. Drew, Walker, Angwin, and Troy alone of the conscriptionist group made their peace with the party.

As Robertson points out, however, the Western Australian Labor movement never formally prohibited support for conscription, and one conscriptionist, A. A. Wilson, successfully claimed his right to freedom of opinion, continued to support conscription, fought with the A.I.F., and retired as a Labor member in 1947. The final breach in Western Australia was not over conscription at all but over the support of rival senate teams.
In the middle of October 1916 the conscription campaign was enlivened by a dramatic side-issue. The propaganda of the Industrial Workers of the World had begun to appear in Western Australia by about 1913, and in 1914, IWW locals were organized in Fremantle, on the goldfields, and on the trans-Australian railway. In September 1916 indiscreet letters from Western Australian members were seized in a raid on the Sydney headquarters, and twelve men were charged in Perth with seditious conspiracy. They included Mick Sawtell, ex-state-Executive member, Monty Miller, a famous left-wing carpenter, Jack O'Neill, a journalist, and four Europeans of various nationalities. Two were discharged after the preliminary hearing, and the remainder were committed for trial. Miller and Sawtell, at least, were prepared to volunteer for martyrdom but they were disappointed. Though all the accused were found guilty, Judge Burnside very intelligently recognized their sincere, though perhaps misguided, idealism and released all the prisoners on recognizances.

Although conscription seemed to be a dead issue, tension remained high throughout 1917, flaring occasionally into violence, as when Don Cameron, speaking on the Esplanade, was forced to take refuge from an angry mob in the conservative Weld Club. Scaddan joined the Lefroy ministry and his ministerial election in Brownhill-Ivanhoe was of course a vicious personal clash between him and his old colleague, John Lutey, in which Lutey won. With the aid of Hugh Mahon, the Worker trustees secured a new editor to replace Hilton. John Curtin, who had been active in the Victorian anti-conscriptionist movement, took the chair early in 1917 and trumpeted a new sort of defiance at the enemy, but in the prevailing atmosphere of war hysteria the opponents of conscription had a hard fight. The extent of their difficulties was manifested at the general election on 29 September. With five parties in the field and eight independents, Labor won only fifteen of the twenty-five seats contested with only 24.8 per cent of the total vote, while W. D. Johnson once again lost his seat at Guildford. Even the death on active service of B. J. Stubbs a few months later failed to change public hostility, and his seat in Subiaco was also lost to a Nationalist. The one bright spot was the defeat of Scaddan at Albany, though not by a Labor candidate.

Rumours that conscription was not dead began to appear about the middle of the year and on 7 November a second referendum was announced for 20 December. The state executive still declined to make a firm policy decision binding members, but issued a quite unequivocal recommendation for opposition to the government’s proposals. All ordinary executive business was suspended, and in the next three months only two ordinary meetings were held, even the election of officers being deferred.

The ruthless determination of the government to carry the referendum
was emphasized when Philip Collier, the new party leader, John Curtin of the *Westralian Worker*, and other Labor leaders were successfully prosecuted under the War Precautions Act for utterances likely to cause disaffection. By an amazing and suspiciously convenient coincidence, a second IWW plot was uncovered a few weeks before the referendum and nine men were arrested. However, the plot, if plot it was, misfired. The trial was deferred because of the illness of the jury foreman and when the hearing was resumed in January only one of the nine was convicted.\textsuperscript{131}

Western Australia once again voted for conscription, but there was a sharp decline of nearly 10,000 in the supporting vote and a corresponding rise in the "no" vote from 40,884 to 46,522. The change may have been due in part to simple war weariness, but the fact that the Labor movement was able on this occasion to give a clear lead undoubtedly affected the issue.

VI

By the beginning of 1918 the smoke of battle had cleared, and the official Labor party was able to survey the damage. With only fifteen seats in a House of fifty, the PLP clearly faced a long period of opposition, and recovery obviously depended on an active programme of extra-parliamentary canvassing which could only be organized by the general secretary. Since 1915 the office had been operating as a full-time job, but the strain was still considerable and because of McCallum’s indifferent health he already had an assistant in Andrew Clementson,\textsuperscript{132} who had carried much of the weight during the conscription crisis. Johnson’s eviction from parliament made another expert assistant available and on 21 January 1918 he was given a short-term appointment as a paid organizer.\textsuperscript{133}

The effects of the split were evident all over the state. In Bunbury, W. L. Thomas, the local member, had supported conscription and had carried with him the Bunbury Lumpers and the Tally Clerks. In Fremantle, a Nationalist Lumpers’ Union existed side by side with the official union. In the metropolitan area, a number of small craft unions and the Railway Employees’ Union had left the ALF, while the defection of George Taylor’s followers had virtually destroyed the North Coolgardie District Council.\textsuperscript{134} On the eastern goldfields, nine dissident craft unions, including the powerful Engine Drivers and Firemen, had re-established a TLC,\textsuperscript{135} and moves were afoot for a National Labor Miners’ Union. With the exception of Fremantle, most of the coastal dissidents returned to the fold rapidly, disillusioned by incompetence in the NLP, but the position on the goldfields remained confused for years.
The loss of so many moderate leaders and the influence of eastern delegates to the first interstate conference held in Perth late in 1918 had, of course, put the left wing firmly in the saddle and from late 1917 the ideas of the OBU movement, which had previously been rejected, now received serious consideration. On 7 January 1918, the state executive appointed a five-man committee to draft a proposal. The next five months were spent collecting information about developments in the east, and a conference on 21 April 1918 decided to launch the scheme by grouping existing organizations into industry federations. In August, however, the New South Wales Labor Council published a much more radical proposal to form a completely new organization enrolling members into industrial departments. For a while this scheme held the centre of the stage.

In the meantime, the AWU, which had organized rural and unskilled labour in Western Australia since 1907, had arranged to absorb the Federated Miners’ Union, thus becoming by far the largest industrial organization in the state. The eastern leaders of the AWU were already urging its claims to be a ready-made nucleus for the OBU, and Western Australia was faced with a choice between the two ideas. E. H. Barker of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Edward Corboy, member for Swan, Senator Needham, and H. C. Gibson represented the state at the Melbourne OBU conference in January 1919 and Barker’s letters began to dampen Western Australian ardour for the New South Wales scheme. He was openly critical of the preamble which he said could be interpreted in various ways, and was particularly worried about the elimination of state representation. The complex arrangements for election of officers would, he thought, absorb most of the organization’s energies while he found the authoritarian ideas of the new leaders disturbing.

After the conference, Barker spent some time in Sydney. He described J. S. Garden as the brains of the movement, but such a wowsers that he would not allow his wife and children to see a picture show. “Judd, the next prominent man gets on everybody’s nerves as he will persist in talking whether he has anything to add to the discussion or not. The Victorian men... are very second class...”

Since the AWU held a commanding position in Western Australia, McCallum saw that it was politic to back the AWU claim and, encouraged by Barker’s reports, brought his considerable influence to bear against the Sydney scheme. In May 1919, he told a correspondent that the only way to create an OBU was to link existing organizations and added: “...those who advocate the formation of an O.B.U. by enrolling individual members, are the enemies of the Trade Union movement... in my opinion the A.W.U. has a basis on which we can build... People who are out after this new fangled idea are... doing something which is not in the interest of trade unionism...” Opposed by the AWU and McCallum, the OBU
never really got off the ground in Western Australia, but it did provide a badly battered Labor movement with a concrete and apparently attainable objective which may well have facilitated reconstruction.

As the war ground slowly to a close, Labor leaders began to see the enormous problem in reabsorbing the servicemen and the political advantage to be gained by capturing the returned-soldier vote. In July 1917, a deputation from the state executive objected to government plans for massive post-war immigration because repatriation must have priority. In January 1918, the executive appointed a standing committee on returned soldiers, while McCallum spent more and more time as party representative on various repatriation committees.

Politically there was a determined attempt to capture the disenchanted veteran. The most important prize was Captain Hugo Throssell, V.C., son of an ex-Liberal premier, who horrified rural Northam by a public declaration of socialist faith, and with his wife, Katherine Susannah Prichard, became an active member of the revived Socialist League. In the Returned Soldiers’ Association, a heresy committee appeared objecting to ex-officers on the executive. A meeting of the committee on 5 January 1919 was chaired by ex-sergeant Alex Panton of the state executive.

On the goldfields, similar efforts made to capture the Returned Soldiers’ Association proved less successful. The Kalgoorlie and Boulder Association fell rapidly under anti-Labor control, and became an extra complication in what was already a highly confused political situation. The AWU had organized the Italian and Slav firewood cutters at Kurrawang and Lakeside, and staged a series of strikes to improve their conditions. These men had never been popular among Australian miners and a six weeks’ firewood strike in June 1919, which tied up the whole mining industry and caused considerable hardship in Kalgoorlie and Boulder, brought tension to a head. The death of a returned soldier in a fight with an Italian set off several days of serious rioting. Left-wing elements in the unions seized the opportunity to talk revolution and the Returned Soldiers’ Association interfered frequently in defence of law and order.

Meanwhile the NLP had succeeded in having its own mining union registered by the registrar of the Arbitration Court. The Federated Miners’ Union appealed successfully to the president of the court, whereupon the NLP revived the defunct Coolgardie Union which was still registered. In November 1919, the leaders of what was now the AWU (Mining Division) realized what was going on, and declared the Coolgardie branch black. When some Nationalists were roughly handled, the state government enrolled and armed 680 special constables, including most of the Returned Soldiers’ Association, and arrested eleven strikers. The arrogant behaviour of some special constables finally ruined any chance of rapprochement between the Labor movement and the official Returned
Soldiers' Association on the goldfields.\(^1\)\(^4\)\(^6\)

The amalgamation of the Federated Miners with the AWU was a disaster for the extremist element among the miners who supported the Sydney OBU scheme. Early in 1920, when they were expelled in a power struggle, they induced the firewood cutters to withdraw from the AWU and formed what purported to be a branch of the Workers' Industrial Union of Australia. The few Australian cutters stayed with the AWU\(^1\)\(^4\)\(^7\) but in December 1920 the new union once again went out on strike, thereby tying up the industry again. The Returned Soldiers' Association once again began breathing chauvinistic threats and the Italian consul induced the men to return to work,\(^1\)\(^4\)\(^8\) but the woodUnes continued to be a source of trouble for some time.

The fourth general council held in Perth early in June 1919 demonstrated many of the preoccupations of the Labor movement at the time. The three main themes were pacifism, the cost of living, and the OBU, and the greatest of these was the OBU. For several days the protagonists of the AWU fought the protagonists of the Sydney scheme, demonstrating thereby to impartial observers the futility of adopting any scheme depending on immediate unity. Minor sidelines of the congress were the adoption of the title Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the abortive attempt by the gentle W. C. Angwin, who had been in the Daglish government and had reluctantly bowed to majority rule in 1917, to start a movement for healing the conscription breach.\(^1\)\(^4\)\(^9\)

In his annual report for 1919, the commissioner of police spoke of prevalent social unrest "due largely to the present high cost of living, to the lack of employment and also to the condition of affairs brought about as a result of the war". Regardless of Labor protests, the state government set out to absorb both returned soldiers and a flood of British immigrants by land settlement in the southwest. Inept administration of the schemes, strained an already creaking post-war economy. The retail price index, which had been falling steadily throughout the war, took a sudden 15 per cent dive in 1919 and continued to sag drastically through 1920 and 1921. Unemployment figures, on the other hand, began to rise dramatically at the beginning of 1921 reaching a peak of 11.4 per cent in the second quarter of 1922. Although Labor had obvious reason for confidence in the general election of March 1921, the result was disappointing. The aggregate vote rose by 12 per cent, but the party strength increased by only three members, while Kalgoorlie and Fremantle, both working-class areas, were lost. The result was probably due in part to a 38 per cent fall in goldfields population and a corresponding increase of 32 per cent in the three Fremantle electorates.\(^1\)\(^5\)\(^0\) John Curtin and others, however, blamed union apathy.

With general depression growing worse and the pendulum swinging
steadily against the government, the setback was obviously temporary, however. In the words of John Curtin: “For all that comes to the community in these days ahead, upon Nationalism and those who voted for Nationalism will the justification devolve.”\textsuperscript{151} The failure of Nationalism to justify itself was the main reason for the triumphant return of Labor to power in 1924.

\section*{VII}

By 1921, the alien movement of 1884 had thus become a recognized part of Western Australian society, but in the process of absorption had itself suffered a sea-change. The early union leaders had seen themselves as missionaries, carrying the word from their enlightened homeland in the east to the barbarous “Swan River Colony”. They were usually young, frequently idealists, and the struggle against what must have seemed insuperable odds assumed, at times, an almost spiritual quality.

The ageing of leaders, the relaxed tempo of Western Australian life, and the absence of profound class distinctions at length cooled much of the old ardour and by 1921 the movement consisted of a tightly knit group of hard-headed, practical politicians controlling an efficient political machine capable of keeping a Labor government in power for twenty of the twenty-three years between 1924 and 1947.

Operating in a small community separated from its neighbours by a thousand miles of desert, the Western Australian Labor movement was necessarily a follower rather than a leader but, because of local peculiarities, it nevertheless developed its own peculiar local flavour. Unlike some of the eastern movements, its main power base lay, not in a metropolitan proletariat but in the immigrant mining communities of the goldfields, the widely scattered and highly mobile railway unionists, and the rurally oriented workers of the timber camps. Of these three elements, the miners were by far the more important. Between 1904 and 1911 Labor never held less than eleven of the thirteen goldfields seats, and in 1911 and 1914 won all thirteen, while even in the black year of 1917 seven survived. In all parliaments except that of 1911, therefore, more than half of the Labor party was drawn from the goldfields — a fact which helps to explain some of the special attitudes of Labor in Western Australia.

The constant friction between industrial and political leaders, which was so characteristic a feature of eastern movements, was almost entirely absent in Western Australia because the mining communities saw their members almost as ambassadors to the alien metropolis who must be supported at all costs. Class-consciousness could make little headway because of the strong influence in the mining communities of respectable
Cornish nonconformists and because most miners were well aware that successful Sunday prospecting could easily turn the poorest man into a capitalist overnight. The most important aspect of goldfields influence on the Labor movement is, however, the most difficult to define precisely. The general easy-going tolerance of other peoples' sins, which is such a characteristic feature of goldfields life even today, undoubtedly helped to mould the western attitude towards conscription, an attitude which demonstrated western individualism more obviously than any other incident in the period under discussion.

Given this sort of climate, it is not hard to understand why theoretical socialism made little real impression in Western Australia. A Monty Miller, a Will Jones, or a Monty O'Dowd could always find some following for a socialist league but once the driving force was removed such movements invariably failed rapidly. In spite of a good deal of lip service to socialism by party leaders, there were few who had any real conception of what the word meant, and the policies of the party reflected these confusions. Even in the first enthusiastic flush of the Scaddan government, the allegedly socialistic policies of the government represented nothing more than a radical extension of the theory — widely accepted in Western Australia since the inception of responsible government — that the state had a duty to protect the public interest even if it involved ventures in state capitalism. The application of these ideas by the Labor movement was undoubtedly coloured by the generally humanitarian and reformist ideas of contemporary Labor thought in Australia, but was in no sense a departure from what had gone before.

The Western Australian Labor movement before 1921 was thus a mildly reformist body, with no profound feeling of class-consciousness, which was only lightly touched by the more radical currents generated in the east. It nevertheless produced some very effective leaders, and as the one real channel for the importation of progressive ideas was an important dynamic element in the growth of the state.

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CROFT, John William. b. NSW, 1870; d. c 1930. Secretary, coastal TLC. Secretary, PLP, 1899—1903. Senator, 1904—10.


CURRAN, John J. b. Sydney, 1876. Vice-president, Bootmakers' Union, Vic. Arrived WA, 1900. Secretary, coastal Bootmakers' Union, 1901. Secretary, Eight Hours Committee, 1900—3. President, ALF, 1903. Secretary, coastal TLC, 1904—(?).


HASTIE, Robert. b. Scotland, 1861. Went to NZ. Arrived Vic, 1890; WA, 1895. Member, Kalgoorlie and Boulder AWA. MLA, and leader, PLP, 1901—5.


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TROY, Michael Francis. b. NSW, 1880; d. 1953. Arrived WA, 1897. Secretary, Murchison district council, AWU; Miners’ representative, Arbitration Court. MLA, 1904–39.


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Tasmania

R.P. Davis
Geographically and climatically Tasmania is an anomaly amongst Australian states. Her temperate oceanic climate, comparatively abundant rainfall, and mountainous profile have much in common with New Zealand. Moreover, of all Australian states, Tasmania has been most dominated by her early history as a convict settlement. From the 1820s, at the peak of the convict period, much of the best land in the island, that lying along the central axis between Hobart and Launceston, was alienated in large blocks. Subsequent attempts, after the 1860s, to open up the more marginal areas for close settlement, were not entirely successful in creating profitable, small-scale farming. There was, however, something of a land boom in the prosperous years after 1900. The development of a refrigerated export trade in the 1880s, by encouraging dairy farming in the northwest and orcharding in the southeast, reduced dependence on the old unreliable staples of wool and wheat. The mineral discoveries on the west coast, beginning with the finding of tin at Mount Biscoff and culminating in the success in the late 1890s of the Mount Lyell copper mine at Queenstown, created an important new industry and brought fresh blood to the community. Since the 1850s Tasmania had lost large sections of her working population to other colonies, and this process, in spite of a high birthrate, has lasted to the present day. Industry in the nineteenth century, though not negligible, was on too small a scale and too decentralized to develop a strong, class-conscious urban proletariat. Even today Hobart, in competition with Launceston and growing northern towns like Burnie and Devonport, is less economically dominant than the capitals of other Australian states. It took, moreover, the exploitation of the state’s hydroelectric potential after the first world war to bring heavier industry to Tasmania. Why was Tasmania, which has now experienced more Labor government than any other Australian state, so slow to establish an effective Labor party?

The lethargy and inertia of Tasmania in the nineteenth century is usually attributed to her convict legacy. This tradition manifested itself in two ways. In the first place, the Tasmanian upper classes represented the free settlers, who, having obtained estates worked by convict labour, demanded the cessation of transportation in the 1850s, and established
themselves as a patriarchal society with full control over the political and economic institutions of the community. There was no pushful emancipist class like that of New South Wales. Manhood suffrage was delayed in Tasmania till after the establishment of the Commonwealth. The working classes tended to lack spirit and resolution. This phenomenon may have been due partly to an inherited convict servility, and partly to the more rapid development of other colonies: gold-rush Victoria in the 1850s, New Zealand later in the century, and finally Western Australia, which drew off the more energetic Tasmanians. Massive emigration from Tasmania in the fifty years before 1919 was believed to have kept wages low. The rural working classes thus represented a timid and conservative force, virtually impervious to union organization till the early years of the present century. In the cities the almost total absence of a developed factory system also helped to inhibit the development of Labor till after the turn of the century.

There were, however, other factors retarding the development of Tasmanian Labor. Unlike mainland Australian states, the island lacked a single dominant urban nucleus. Launceston has traditionally shown a reluctance to yield the supremacy to Hobart, while the west coast, after the mineral discoveries of the 1870s an obvious area for the growth of organized Labor, was almost entirely cut off from the Tasmanian capital. No railway has ever connected Hobart and Queenstown and a road was opened only in 1932. West coast sea communications were as easy with Melbourne as with Hobart. Not unnaturally there was for a time a demand that the Tasmanian west coast should form part of Victoria or the Australian Capital Territory. Sectional differences of this sort proved an exceptionally serious obstacle in the path of a pledge-bound unified Labor party.

It would, however, be exaggerating to claim that there was no significant unionism in Tasmania before 1900. Unions were established in the 1870s and did something to raise the standards of railway workers, mechanics, and other artisans. In 1883 Hobart formed a Trades and Labor Council (TLC), evincing some interest in politics but for the most part content to reply on the influence it could exert on the relatively sympathetic premier, Sir Philip Fysh. The Council's secretary, Hugh Kirk, an energetic man with a small goatee beard and hair perpetually on end, became the first worker to try for a seat in the Assembly when he unsuccessfully contested West Hobart in 1886.

Though unrepresented at the Intercolonial Trade Union congresses (ITUCs) of 1879 and 1884, two relatively silent Tasmanian delegates appeared at Sydney in 1885. By 1886, however, Hugh Kirk, the sole Tasmanian representative at the Adelaide congress was able not only to report some progress but to make an unsuccessful bid for a Hobart meet-
Kirk claimed that the Hobart TLC had helped to achieve an extension of the franchise and a reduction of the working hours of bakers. A campaign had also been mounted in favour of the taxation of land values and against state-aided immigration. Unions, all in Hobart, representing 700 members, were affiliated to the Hobart TLC. Though still a lone Tasmanian representative at the Brisbane conference in 1888, Kirk was successful in having Hobart declared the venue for the 1889 congress. He reported attempts by Labor sympathizers in the Tasmanian Assembly to restrict subsidized immigration, and to tax both Chinese residents and land values.

The 1889 Hobart congress though it undoubtedly gave a fillip to the movement, also demonstrated Labor weakness in the island by focussing on Tasmanian problems. Richard Burt, president of the Hobart TLC, as chairman of the conference, outlined an ambitious political programme, including protection, White Australia, compulsory arbitration, land nationalization, and free, secular, and compulsory education. But the antiquated conspiracy laws made a premier's dispensation necessary before the congress could assemble. A somewhat grudging legalization of trade unionism in Tasmania was a result of the conference. Tasmanian delegates at the congress showed concern at the lack of local progress. Hugh Kirk apologized for the barrenness of his report, and W. P. McMahon from Launceston, the sole representative of northern Tasmania, complained of being “surrounded here by trades which had become a wreck through want of organization. The jealousy that existed between the north and south of Tasmania was greater than that between Victoria and New South Wales.” Though Kirk had frequently come north to organize a TLC, he had failed on account of the “diffidence about anything down south”. North Tasmanian unions tended too often to be dominated by Melbourne and had little contact with their local counterparts. Even in the south there were complaints that union members were reluctant to pay their dues. It was pointed out that only seven Tasmanian trades sent representatives to the Hobart conference, though twice as many were affiliated to the TLC. Burt’s bland statement that relations between labour and capital were good in Tasmania seems a recognition of impotence.

In such circumstances Tasmanian response to the strikes of 1890 was ineffectual. “Free” labour was abundant and Tasmanian unions surrendered after a few weeks. At the 1891 Ballarat congress, H. Chappie of the Hobart TLC admitted that “federation was the only thing that would help the cause of unionism in Tasmania”. His attempts to argue that the great strike had shown the thorough organization of Tasmanian unions was less convincing. Hopes for the formation of large new unions were soon dashed.

Exaggerated claims were indicative of the uneven development of Tas-
manian Labor in the 1890s. On the one hand attempts were made, as promised by Chappie at Ballarat, to run, in both Hobart and Launceston, pro-Labor political candidates, eventually supported by weekly radical newspapers. On the other hand, depression added to existing weaknesses reduced Hobart and Launceston unionism to a mere facade. By 1897 the Hobart TLC had simply petered out, and in the following year its Launceston counterpart, which W. P. McMahon had established in 1890, albeit with only three affiliated unions, followed it into oblivion.\(^14\) When Premier Richard Seddon, the New Zealand Liberal leader, visited Tasmania in 1897, he lectured his local admirers on the need for Tasmanian unions. W. A. Woods, an experienced and travelled political journalist from Victoria, who had played an ambiguous part in the formation of the Australian Workers’ Union (AWU) and the New Australia scheme, insisted in 1895 that “in no colony of the Australias has the combination of the workers sunk so low as in Tasmania”.\(^15\) Woods believed that in view of the small number of operatives in each Tasmanian trade the only remedy was a takeover by the AWU. In the next thirty years Woods was to have an important though controversial role in the organization of Tasmanian Labor.

Several reasons have already been advanced for the backwardness of Tasmanian unionism at this time. Unionists tended to be conservative as Tasmanian industries were too small to demonstrate clear lines of division between workers and bosses. Labor, moreover, lacked adequate leaders. Hugh Kirk’s dismissal by his employers for unionist activism in 1889, and his subsequent three-year gaol sentence for forgery in 1892, not only removed one of the most vigorous Hobart Laborites but must have done much to demoralize the whole movement. Financial weakness, the small craft unions’ lack of concern for unskilled labour, the deep ideological divisions amongst urban workers, and the tardy development of class consciousness amongst miners before 1900 were additional reasons for Tasmanian apathy in the 1890s.

On the west coast, later to provide the nucleus for a real Labor party, the Amalgamated Miners’ Association (AMA) was far from militant in its early years, acting mainly as a friendly society and failing to enrol more than a large minority of workers. The vicissitudes of the mining companies which attempted to exploit the rich Lyell copper ores created a constant fear of unemployment amongst the miners and inhibited an aggressive attitude towards the employers. Union leaders encouraged hard work and the purchase of mining shares.\(^16\) Though the managers of the Mount Lyell company, which after absorbing its competitors caught the eye of speculators throughout the world and overshadowed the Tasmanian government, may not have been so benevolently despotic as Blainey appears to suggest, the company did in fact adopt the role of universal provider to its em-
ployees. The sternly patriarchal aspect of the mine manager's mansion as it lowers down from its eminence upon Queenstown symbolizes this fact. Zeehan, the silver mining centre, not Queenstown, was to take the lead in Labor organization.

The relative backwardness of the mining community in the years before 1900 should not, however, be allowed to obscure the fact, demonstrated by Coghlan, that the whole face of Tasmanian political life was ultimately changed by miners migrating from other states to the Tasmanian west coast in the great days of copper, zinc, and tin. Many of the future leaders and rank-and-file members of Tasmanian Labor learnt their politics elsewhere. To the employers such men were insidious agitators, determined to disturb the blissful serenity of the island colony, while to Labor advocates they appeared as crusaders bringing to the apathetic Tasmanian masses something of that cohesion and class consciousness so necessary for the uplifting of deplorably low living standards.

In spite of the extreme weakness of Tasmanian unionism in the 1890s, Tasmania, like the mainland colonies, attempted to achieve social reform by political action. A number of short-lived political leagues were established in Hobart and Launceston. Though Hobart had set the pace in the 1880s, it was Launceston which achieved greater political success in the next decade. The imprisonment of Kirk created a leadership vacuum in Hobart which was not filled by the exuberance of an Anglican minister, the Reverend Archibald Turnbull, whose efforts to organize the unemployed and pressurize the legislature resulted in a breach not only with his bishop but eventually with other radicals. Launceston was more fortunate in its possession of an able group of radicals led by McMahon, who after forming a Launceston TLC in 1890, helped in the following year to launch the Tasmanian Democrat, the island's first Labor weekly. The Democrat was particularly inspired by the example of the New Zealand Liberal-Labor (lib-lab) government which in 1891 took office under John Ballance and reached the peak of its international reputation for legislative experimentation under Ballance's successor, Richard Seddon (premier, 1893–1906). R. W. Smith, who edited the Democrat for a time, was a New Zealander who claimed the acquaintance of Seddon himself. As a result, Tasmanian radical programmes tended to have a distinct Maoriland flavour. Moreover, Tasmanians began to assume that the tactics adopted by the New Zealand Labor representatives who threw their support behind the Ballance and Seddon administrations were necessarily correct. Thus, when Joseph Cook in New South Wales "ratted" by joining the non-Labor government, his action was applauded by the Tasmanian Democrat. This, however, turned out to be a blind alley for Australian Labor as a whole. Similarly, the apparently radical Tasmanian political successes of the nineties lacked the vital concept of the pledge which was to prove so
important in the future.

In 1893 the election of Allan Macdonald for North Launceston was heralded as a "brilliant" democratic victory. Macdonald has always been regarded as Tasmania's first Labor member. But Macdonald, as Coghlan pointed out, was neither a working man nor a new political candidate. The chief plank of the Progressive Liberal Association which the radical member, Colonel Windle St. Hill, introduced to Launceston, apart from franchise reform and the adequate payment of members of parliament, was the New Zealand system of land taxation aimed at breaking up the great estates. One promising feature of Macdonald's success was the support received from the Catholic Morning Star, in spite of the former's antagonism to the principle of separate schools. The continuing education debate, which resulted in free education in 1908, made Catholic authorities less willing to compromise on this issue.

Macdonald was soon forced by ill-health to retire from politics. The next radical success demonstrated the ideological fluidity of the movement. The victory of the butcher, Jonathan Best, over the landowner, Norman Cameron, in the Deloraine election of 1894 was again applauded as a landmark in Tasmanian democracy. Nevertheless Best in parliament showed scant sympathy for most working-class demands. The promising Tasmanian Democratic League which functioned in both north and south Tasmania was no more consistent. R. W. Smith, its president, won a brief term in the Assembly, but Edward Mulcahy, the Irish owner of a tailoring business and other interests, who became the first secretary of the Democratic League, emerged, soon after election to the House of Assembly, as a tough and authoritarian minister of lands in a conservative government. Such men tended to justify the subsequent complaint from the west coast, whose own record was not exceptionally pure in the 1890s, that the city leagues never "had a good backbone" and that the men they helped to elect soon "kicked away the ladder by which they mounted the pinnacle". The election, to the first Commonwealth parliament, of the flamboyant King O'Malley, apparently a Scotch-Irish-American, but perhaps a mere Hobartian, who was regarded by friends as a "jagged thorn in the buttocks of fossilism" and by enemies as a "blatant mountebank", represents an analogus if reversed process. Before winning the election to the South Australian parliament in 1896, O'Malley had been interested in standing for Deloraine as a supporter of the not very liberal Tasmanian opposition of 1892. Though O'Malley's election in 1901 as a Tasmanian representative was also trumpeted as a great radical victory, it demonstrates the weakness of Tasmanian Labor even on the west coast. It was O'Malley's colourful if nebulous rhetoric, his organizing pertinacity, and his ability to spend, perhaps, £700 ($1,400), that won him sufficient votes on the west coast to ensure his election. O'Malley arrived in
Melbourne pledged to no one and, as he explained later, would have joined Labor's opponents had they been prepared to support his idea for a Commonwealth bank. The victory did contribute to the development of the Tasmanian Labor party. Apart from O'Malley's subsequent influence as a member of the state movement, it showed the miners on the west coast that with a little organization they might secure several seats in the Tasmanian House of Assembly. While only 23 per cent of Tasmanian voters before 1900 had been working class, 67 per cent of west coast electors came from this section of the community. O'Malley, who suffered from no false modesty, subsequently described himself as "not only the father of the Commonwealth Bank but the father of the Labor party in Tasmania". This claim was not acceptable to Tasmanian Labor.

An effective Labor movement required at least one newspaper as a vehicle for its propaganda. In the 1890s the Launceston Democrat (1891–97), controlled by McMahon and Smith, sometimes assisted by the experienced Woods, advocated mildly left-wing opinions. More important, however, was the Hobart Clipper, which after its inception in 1893 espoused a similarly moderate Christian Socialist or Henry Georgean policy. The ruin by a libel action in 1902 of the previous editor enabled W. A. Woods to replace him at a timely moment. Woods was thus able to turn the Clipper into an effective instrument in the hands of a pledged Labor party.

Sometimes associated with the Labor cause was the Catholic press. Though the Irish Nationalist and Labor leader, Michael Davitt, who was touring Australia in 1895, considered Tasmanian Catholics very backward in Labor organization, the Launceston Catholic Monitor, edited by Dr. John O'Mahony was established in 1894. Assisted by the appointment of Dr. Patrick Delany as co-adjutor bishop, it helped to inaugurate a new policy. Delany and O'Mahony campaigned strongly for the break up of the great Tasmanian estates and the settlement of small farmers. They responded favourably to the ideas of Henry George and fully endorsed the state socialism of the contemporary New Zealand Liberal government. Education, nevertheless, proved a distracting influence. Tasmanian radicals, believing that local conservatism based its authority on the low educational standards of the Tasmanian people, placed free education high in its list of priorities. The Catholic authorities, however, opposed free education unaccompanied by a grant to denominational schools. As a result, though support was usually given to Labor policies, the Catholic periodical refused to back Labor candidates at certain critical elections. The passage of the Free Education Act of 1908 did not remove the issue from politics. The 1914–16 Labor government was embarrassed by the educational demands of the Catholic Federation. During subsequent con-
trovercy Catholics claimed that their church had provided vital support for Labor in its early years of weakness. By 1901 it was obvious that Tasmania would be compelled, if only by the pressure of outside forces, to join other Australian states in the formation of an effective pledge-bound Labor party. Tasmanian radicals were encouraged to campaign for Commonwealth unification rather than federation. According to Ben Tillet, the English trade unionist, the resultant federal constitution with its senate incorporated some of the worst features of the backward Tasmanian regime where the Legislative Council with its limited franchise proved exceptionally vicious in its rejection of progressive legislation. In spite of its limitations, however, the coming of Australian federation meant greater pressure from mainland Labor on Tasmanian workers. It was feared that certain mainland employers were planning to transfer their industries to Tasmania where wages were low and the workers virtually impotent. Furthermore, the federal Labor party was looking for representation in Tasmania.

The stimulus of the recent federal election was obvious in September 1901 when G. M. Burns, secretary of the Queenstown AMA, succeeded in convening a Labor conference at Zeehan. The conference, consisting of officers of AMA branches with two representatives of the Engine Drivers’ Association, was chaired by the future Labor premier, John Earle, ex-president of the Zeehan AMA and such an ardent opponent of the Boer War that he is reputed to have said: “I hope the first volley will lay the Australian soldiers low.” The conference revealed that there were a number of west coast towns entirely devoid of unions and large numbers of workers who refused to take advantage of union facilities when offered. It was hoped, however, that visiting federal Labor members would improve the situation.

After discussion, the usual detailed but extremely moderate platform was drawn up and an executive elected. The Hobart Clipper was scornful of the platform’s length — “more varied than a Japanese bric-à-brac” — and lack of socialist underpinning. A scheme of propaganda and organization would, it believed, have been more useful, “while the workers are disorganized units — and the disgrace of it, hundreds of them mere traffickers in bribes and cheap beer”. One of the planks had sought the closing of public houses on election day. Other items included adult suffrage, adequate payment of members, a factory and workshops act, an eight-hour day, a progressive land tax, and state control of the liquor trade. Free education was adopted, but the conference, fearful of the churches, failed by one vote to insist on secularity. In view of his subsequent difficulties as premier it is significant that Earle supported the decision to require only an extension of the Legislative Council franchise and not its abolition. Some years later, however, Earle was demanding
"total abolition or nothing".41

In spite of the misgivings of the Hobart Clipper, the movement on the west coast made undoubted progress. The announcement of the Political Labor League's (PLL's) seventh demonstration at Gormanston forced the Clipper to admit that "the Western miners have done well". King O'Malley's rhetoric had been distinctly useful at a Queenstown meeting. The Catholic Monitor supported the general programme, minus free education. On the union side, however, the situation was less promising. The Queenstown AMA, "little better than benefit society", reduced Burns from organizing secretary to secretary at a nominal payment, and was accused, when contrasted with the liberality of the AWU, of political negativism. "Sulphur town", "a one horse show" was, because of its dependence on the Mount Lyell Company, difficult to organize. On the west coast generally, the existence of four large electorates posed serious problems for the infant Labor organization.

In early 1902 radicalism began to stir itself in the cities as well as on the west coast. Sir Neil Elliott Lewis's conservative government was losing popularity through its attempt to deal with economic difficulties by resorting to income tax with a low rate of exemption. Though parties were still nebulous, the opposition in the House of Assembly, led by W. B. Propsting, took advantage of the situation, and offered an attractive radical platform which included repeal of the income tax act, rigid economy in the public service, abolition of the Legislative Council, old age pensions, land value taxation, and compulsory acquisition of the great agrarian estates.42 The Clipper, complaining that the programme was too limited in scope, had to admit that it was the most far-reaching policy ever submitted to the Tasmanian electors. Propsting, had he succeeded, might have delayed for a considerable period the development of a strong pledged Labor party.

Hobart Labor, however, received a fillip in early 1903 from the visit of the militant English socialist, Tom Mann. Mann's lecture resulted in the formation of a Hobart Workers' Political League.43 Though Woods, who had recently taken over the Clipper, played a prominent part in this development, the platform was not only long but as far removed from socialism as the Zeehan platform of 1901. The most radical suggestion was the abolition of the state government in toto. The Hobart League, however, won the contempt of the west coast when it withdrew its chosen candidate for the 1903 state elections on hearing that the expected federal Labor members would not reach Hobart in time to canvass.44 This contretemps illustrates not only the dependence of early Tasmanian Labor on outside support but also the fact that, apart from the pledge, Labor offered little more than the Liberals.

This conclusion is reinforced by the nature of activity on the west
Pre-elections were held for the four constituencies and Labor candidates nominated. But in such a working-class area all candidates, save one, professed radicalism and opposition to the government. Moreover, the west coasters had the support of King O’Malley, one of the best platform orators in Australia. The pledge was therefore the line of demarcation between Labor and non-Labor. Borrowed from New South Wales, this pledge bound each candidate to “do my utmost” in carrying out the platform and to vote with the caucus majority “on all questions affecting the fate of the government.”

The state election in April 1903 resulted in victory for the Propsting Liberals and humiliation for the government. Lewis and his chief minister, Mulcahy, both lost their seats. The Clipper greeted the advent of Propsting with enthusiasm and had relatively little to say on Tasmania’s first parliamentary Labor party. On the west coast three of the four Labor candidates had been successful. The future leader, John Earle, lost by only four votes and his opponent at Waratah, Crosby Gilmore, who supported the Labor platform minus the pledge, offered to join the Labor party. Nothing came of this suggestion. The disparities within this infant party, consisting of J. J. Long (Lyell), G. M. Burns (Queenstown), and W. Lamerton (Zeehan), were demonstrated by the fact that while Lamerton was a mine manager, Long, as a result of his political activities, was summarily dismissed by the Mount Lyell manager from his pre-session job as an underground worker. According to the Mercury, the nature of Lamerton’s support was highly equivocal. The Zeehan AMA, which had previously backed the radical lawyer, D. C. Urquhart, remained neutral. Lamerton beat Urquhart in a three-cornered fight. Though Earle had also been blacklisted by the west coast employers, after his defeat in 1903 he managed to secure a job as a South Lyell engine driver. According to one who had taken part in the 1903 Waratah campaign, workers were dismissed for supporting Earle, who was smeared as a disloyalist. “It was a capital crime to mention union.” In view of this tough attitude on the part of employers it is not surprising that Lamerton soon dissolved his connection with the Labor party and became a noted reactionary. In other west coast centres besides Waratah, many miners fearful of the discriminatory tactics of the employers, were afraid to identify publicly with Labor. The Monitor denounced “the autocratic manner in which the Mount Lyell M and R Company is now treating its helpless employees. Conscious of their power and the weakness of the men, the heads of that company have dictated terms to its employees that no self-respecting men could accept.” In 1904 Labor complained in the House of Assembly that Mount Lyell miners were being sacked for being union members.

The newly elected Labor members found it difficult to obtain sustenance allowances from the AMA. As Long had promised to make do with
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the £100 ($200) payment to members which had been granted following agitation by the Hobart TLC in 1890, certain Gormanston miners objected to a ballot for a three-shilling (thirty cents) levy to cover his additional expenses. The *Clipper* pointed out that Long would need at least £200 ($400) to function efficiently.54 This shortage of money appears to have stimulated the next development in Tasmanian Labor organization. In April 1903 the Zeehan Labor League wrote to the Hobart League asking for an all-Tasmanian conference which would co-ordinate preparations for the December federal election and arrange for the establishment of a parliamentary fund based on a penny (one cent) a week levy on all workers.55 After correspondence with Zeehan and the newly formed Launceston League, a conference in Hobart was arranged for June 1903. The experienced Woods represented the Hobart League.

II

Of the seventeen delegates at the Hobart conference, ten were trade unionists and six of these were members of the west coast AMA. Not for many years were union delegates to have such strong representation at a Tasmanian Labor conference. The federal party was represented by its leader, J. C. Watson, who provided a good example of mainland Labor’s attitude to Tasmania. Before O’Malley “flashed comet-like across the island’s destiny” and D. J. O’Keefe was elected to the senate, other states, said Watson, had little hope for Tasmanian Labor. The recent election, however, “did her proud”, and mainlanders were ready to help. But Watson also indicated that this help would not be entirely altruistic when he declared that Tasmania “should not become the sweating ground of the Commonwealth”. Tasmanian Laborites owed it to their mainland brethren to deal with the “greedy sweaters” who “had let it be known that they intended to come to Tasmania to take advantage of the unorganized helplessness of Tasmanian Labor”.

Watson, preaching to the converted, advised Tasmanian Labor to proceed cautiously with piecemeal reform and to remember that the majority of the people were politically ignorant. He insisted that Tasmanian Labor must avoid antagonizing the farming community and offer it New Zealand reforms such as land value taxation, advances to settlers, and repurchase for close settlement which “had worked wonders” in Maoriland. Watson, who had spent most of his early life in New Zealand, also believed that its industrial conciliation and arbitration system was ideal for preventing strikes. Labor he declared, does not “seek privileges for one section of the community at the expense of another”. These views were not lost on John Earle, now elected president of the first Tasmanian
Labor executive. Tasmania had already heard much of New Zealand experimental legislation, approval or disapproval of which was often the main dividing line between the state’s conservatives and radicals.

In settling the organization and platform of the Tasmanian Labor party, the delegates demonstrated the truth of Watson’s view that Tasmania would be able to build on the twelve years’ experience of mainland parties. Only in relatively minor matters involving local conditions did Tasmania exhibit differences. The platform placed the usual emphasis on the abolition of the Legislative Council, the break up of great estates, and compulsory industrial arbitration. The rules of the organization were borrowed from mainland parties. Each league member was required to pay an annual sum of four shillings (forty cents), while union members paid two shillings (twenty cents). According to Woods, “the object of the rule is to permit large bodies of men to join at small expense to their union — sort of wholesale price for a quantity”. This provision caused much future debate. Three-quarters of the finances were to be held by the executive, for organizational and electioneering expenses. The remainder was returned to the branches. The pledge was adopted and the executive was given the right to exclude unsatisfactory candidates. J. A. Jensen, an orchardist recently elected for George Town, attended the conference, and after taking the pledge began the Labor career which was to bring him eventually to the federal cabinet. On the vexed tariff question the state party allowed its federal candidates freedom of action.

After the conference the new Anglican bishop, J. E. Mercer, delivered a well-attended special address at St. David’s Cathedral. Mercer, a product of the influential English Christian Social Union, was determined to support the just rights of Labor, and, though he never joined the party, gave Tasmanian Labor strong support before his retirement in 1914. Less impeded by a divergent education policy, Mercer demonstrated that, in spite of the bitter hostility of some members of his denomination, Anglican churchmen could rival the Catholics as advocates of social reform. Though the Catholic Monitor had previously criticized the social policies of the Lewis-Mulcahy government, Mulcahy’s support of denominational education as opposed to the Propsting-Labor policy of free education, won Lewis Catholic support in 1903. The Monitor, however, normally supported Labor at this time.

Behind the promising facade of the new party, serious fissures were already apparent. In Tasmania the perennial conflict between Labor parliamentarian and grass-roots supporter was reinforced by geography. In a querulous article in June 1903, the Zeehan and Dundas Herald complained that, while fourteen of the twenty conference members came from the west coast, Launceston and not Zeehan had been chosen as the location for the next conference. “The home of Democracy is on the West Coast”;

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Hobart as a Labor centre inspired no confidence; “until Hobart proves herself to be more energetic and persevering than she has been in the past, we have to confess we have little faith in any movement which has its headquarters there.” Thus physical barriers, even in the smallest state, were added to the psychological barriers separating Labor leaders and their followers. The radicalism of the west coast should not, however, be exaggerated. The new Tasmanian Labor movement was compelled to manoeuvre in an environment which contained two rival cities, a depressed and ignorant rural class, and a mining area looking more to Melbourne than Hobart. Wood’s view that “each section of the Island’s workers now felt that they could trust each other” was, as his correspondence reveals, mere wishful thinking. In the circumstances great militancy was hardly to be expected. When the Sydney Bulletin suggested that Tasmania was mistaken in founding a Labor party instead of a Democratic party, the Clipper mildly replied that a Democratic party was only feasible when there was already in politics a leader of the calibre of New Zealand’s Liberal premier, John Ballance.

The weakness of the new party in late 1903 is clearly demonstrated in the efforts of Woods, the general secretary. The immediate need to fight a federal election placed a great strain on the infant organization. Woods was forced to send a “cry from Macedonia” to Frank Tudor, secretary of the federal party:

In the chief centres of population — Hobart, Launceston and the West Coast — we consider our chances particularly good. But to prevent the dead weight of the way-back vote completely swamping the more advanced city and mining vote it will be necessary for us to get our candidates out among the villages.

But we haven’t got the money. As you know, we have only just fought a general election: we are bound to supplement in our state Labor members inadequate £100 [$200] a year; the formation of new branches and other educational work necessarily costs something. Our West Coast unions have suffered a wage-reduction and dread a strike; our city unions are — well, the only one with money, the wharf laborers cannot be got into the organized political movement. Perhaps if Hughes or O’Keefe urged these Hobart Wharf Laborers on they would wake up a bit, but our local league officials have tried until disgusted.

In 1903 Woods was struggling with every section of the Tasmanian movement. The northerners were slow in organizing C. Metz’s candidature for the senate. As Woods told Symonds, the secretary of the Launceston Workers’ Political League (WPL): “I am afraid your northern chaps are not putting their best work into the organization. They should wake up a bit. What about your contributions to the Executive?” Woods had earlier sent a circular to all branches complaining that “many branches have not
paid their dues therefore it should be clearly understood that the Executive is not in a position at present to guarantee any financial assistance to candidates." 64

Woods's letters at this time also suggest that, contrary to the impression given in his letter to Tudor, it may not have been only financial reluctance which kept the unions away. Replying to J. E. Ogden then an organizer at Zeehan, Woods said he was sorry to hear that interest had sagged so much of late; but suggested that perhaps it could be restored by a few more visits of the Labor members to Zeehan and other storm centres. Though the Gormanston AMA had paid its dues, the Queenstown and Zeehan AMAs remained unaffiliated in late October 1903. 65 Even in Gormanston, Woods feared that J. J. Long's delay of the AMA affiliation might "have a rotten effect on branches". 66 In July Woods had argued that "just now the most important thing is to get all the Leagues and Unions into the W.P.L." 67 His appeal to the secretary of the Zeehan AMA appears to have evoked no response:

I think it is rather a pity that your Branch did not formally resolve to stand in with us — even if it was not deemed advisable to enrol members at the reduced rates. I am afraid that the AMA standing out will have the effect of keeping other unions from casting in with us for political purposes. Some of them are always glad of an excuse. Could your branch not — just for the sake of appearances — pass a resolution accepting the constitution and rules, allowing the financial inducements to remain in abeyance? You might have this proposal considered as we all look to Zeehan to encourage the others. 68

The Labor movement was politically unconvincing at this time. In Queenstown the league, inspired by Zeehan's prior action, attempted a boycott, not of employers, but of Chinese laundrymen, 69 justifying Blainey's view that "the main bias of the miners was against the Chinese rather than the companies". 70 Though Tasmanian Labor was backward in many respects it yielded to none in the fervour of its hatred for the Oriental. On this subject west coast miners and city leaguers were absolutely at one. 71 Racism did not, however, help in the federal election of December 1903. King O'Malley, whom Woods suspected of not signing the pledge, 72 won the west coast electorate of Darwin but Andy Kirk, a Hobart Labor stalwart, was unsuccessful in Denison, the Hobart electorate, and the three Senate candidates were beaten. Woods thought that the west coast should protest against its inclusion in the Darwin electorate alongside dairy farmers of the northwest coast. He feared that the Toryism of the Table Cape "teat-pullers" might unseat O'Malley. 73 Furious at the election of Mulcahy to the Senate, the Clipper attributed his victory to Catholic sectarianism. 74 The Monitor, however, pointed out that it had
supported the Labor candidates, not Mulcahy, and that the Labor organization needed improvement. Education was not then a federal issue. Before the previous state election the *Monitor* had commented on the reluctance of the newly enfranchised workers to register.

In state politics the tiny Labor party of four, which had some difficulty in reaching majority decisions according to the pledge, was at first overshadowed by the Liberal Propsting government’s attempt to carry through a New Zealand-style legislative programme containing items like industrial conciliation and arbitration, compulsory purchase of great estates, and the much vaunted idea of self-assessment for land tax with government right of purchase at the owner’s valuation. In its early stages there was some confusion as to the membership and functions of the Labor party. Not only did men like Crosby Gilmore, soon to become attorney general in Evans’s government, and H. J. M. Payne, a successful candidate of the conservative Reform League, talk of joining Labor, but the Labor members apparently demanded seats in the Propsting cabinet. Like most progressive premiers of the period, Propsting was totally thwarted by the Tasmanian Legislative Council. His difficulties evoked new memories of New Zealand premier, John Ballance, who had inaugurated the period of Liberal legislation by establishing his right, in the face of an hostile governor, to flood a recalcitrant upper house with government supporters. Tasmania had an elective Council but, as Holman was later to demonstrate in New South Wales, it was almost as difficult to discipline a nominated upper house. Propsting not only failed to emulate John Ballance in breaking upper-house resistance but allowed himself to be outmanoeuvred by the opposition which formed a new government in 1904. Subsequently in a spectacular piece of non-Labor “ratting”, Propsting not only acquired a Legislative Council seat, but two years later took office in the very government that had supplanted him. As a final irony, in 1914–16, Propsting, as a pillar of the Legislative Council, played an important part in neutralizing the efforts of Earle’s Labor ministry.

The blatant failure of the Tasmanian Liberals to carry through their legislation simplified the situation for Tasmanian Labor. Though fusion of the Liberal and conservative groups in an anti-Labor alliance was delayed till 1909, the possibility of an effective non-Labor radical party was considerably reduced by Propsting’s debacle. Before the 1909 state elections left Labor the only effective alternative government, a number of “Liberals” shared the opposition. There was co-operation between Labor and the Liberal remnant which was strongly opposed to the new ministry, but Labor, as a result of the government’s overall majority, was spared the necessity of working out the terms of an alliance with one party or of devising the best means to exploit the balance of power. After the 1906 Tasmanian election, the mildly conservative government of John
Evans held a majority of two over Labor and Liberals combined.

The pragmatic Evans government made some gestures in the direction of progressive legislation. School fees were abolished in 1908. Evans visited New Zealand in 1907 but returned with the opinion that the New Zealand radical legislation was not the main reason for the Dominion's prosperity. Nor did he believe it entirely suitable for Tasmania. The Tasmanian taxation commissioner was, however, sent to New Zealand to investigate the possibility of amending Tasmanian agrarian laws on New Zealand lines. His report argued that New Zealand and Tasmania were fundamentally different but conceded the need for expanding closer settlement in Tasmania. After Labor had become the official opposition, a system of wages boards was established in 1910 but not fully implemented till 1915. Thanks to the Legislative Council, the Tasmanian reforming legislation in this period was extremely limited in its scope and by no means acceptable to Labor.

In the years between the 1903 and 1906 Tasmanian elections, the growth of the political Labor movement was far from spectacular. The Launceston conference of April 1904 was attended by only ten delegates, who included neither the president, Earle, nor a single representative, apart from the parliamentarians, from the west coast. The 1905 Beaconsfield conference, attended by eleven delegates, was little better. The fears of the Zeehan and Dundas Herald in 1903 had thus been partly justified. Most of the vigour and continuity of the movement was provided by Woods, who not only edited the Clipper but acted as general secretary between 1903 and 1907. Woods tried manfully to provide union backing for the movement even when it required the manufacture of new unions. In 1905, following a resolution of the last conference, he attempted, under the auspices of the Hobart WPL, to form a Tasmanian Workers' Union open to all workers with trade sections to control particular industries. Woods also wished to raise the subscriptions and was disinclined to allow the unions further financial concessions. The membership dues were in 1904 equated with those of the leagues, and subsequent conferences tried to make membership of the political movement more attractive for the unions. Not unnaturally, in view of poor representation at the early conferences, there was a demand for an allocation of more resources to the branches as opposed to the executive. In 1904 a fifty-fifty division was established, but a proposal in 1905 for the retention of 80 per cent of subscriptions by the branches was voted down. Of much greater ultimate significance was the development of AWU interest in Tasmania. On hearing of the advent of AWU organizers from the mainland, the Mercury lamented that shearsers who had previously worked harmoniously with their employers would now be run by leaders from Sydney who "are absolutely without any proper conception of right and wrong".

The poverty of the movement made it almost impossible to hire paid
organizers for any significant period. There was indeed a school of thought represented by John Earle which believed that members enthused only by the oratory of an organizer were hardly worth having and that every member should be his own organizer.\(^4\) The movement, however, became over-dependent on the visits of federal parliamentarians and on sympathetic churchmen like Bishop Mercer, whose eloquence was in much demand from early Tasmanian Labor. John Palamountain, when dismissed on account of his Labor activities from his lay ministry in the Presbyterian church, was employed in 1905 for a few months as a Labor organizer. His west coast and northwest Tasmania lectures on industrial arbitration, the churches, and Labor and White Australia indicated the priorities of the Tasmanian movement. He succeeded in forming several branches, but, as he himself pointed out, branch strength was little indication of voting potential in Tasmania. Palamountain correctly anticipated that seven seats would be won at the next election. In 1905 Labor supporters were estimated at 2,000, but unionists at only 1,500. Three hundred of these were west coast AMA members.\(^5\) It was still felt that many Tasmanian workers were afraid to identify openly with political Labor though willing to vote for its candidates at an election. In spite of the efforts of Woods and the AWU, only in 1912 did the Labor conference resolve in favour of a permanent organizer, whose appointment, however, was left in the hands of the executive.\(^6\)

The 1906 election saw a more determined effort by Tasmanian Labor to elect a real parliamentary party. It was stiffened by an imposing battery of mainland supporters, including J. C. Watson, W. G. Spence, Frank Anstey, and the inevitable King O'Malley. "What motive", asked the *Mercury*, "prompts those perambulating philanthropists?"\(^7\) Once again, Labor placed great emphasis on the success of New Zealand radical legislation and the need for free education in Tasmania. Woods, standing for North Hobart, cited his New Zealand experience as a qualification. Other Labor candidates adopted a similar approach. The ministerialists and Liberals having few coherent policies appeared to differ little in their attitudes. Propsting's acceptance of a portfolio after the election was, as the *Monitor* pointed out, a blameworthy action but one which might help to liberalize the ministry.\(^8\) The Labor party of seven was thus almost the official opposition. C. Metz, previously a Labor candidate for the Senate, was returned as an independent Labor member. Metz, a fervent Catholic, appears to have balked at Labor's free education policy. After free education had been passed over Metz's dissentient vote in 1908 and he had lost his seat in the subsequent election, he rejoined the Labor party but stood again as a Liberal before returning to the Labor fold after conscription. The *Monitor*'s claim that Metz "is Labor all through from his toe tip to the crown of his head"\(^9\) was belied by Metz's voting record in the Assembly.
As a soap and candle manufacturer, Metz was not often found on the Labor side in divisions relating to factory acts and workers’ conditions. Generally, however, the Monitor, playing down the importance of free education, supported the Labor party in 1906. In this election Labor had to give serious consideration to the liquor question. The enfranchisement of women and the growth of a temperance movement had compelled the party in 1905 to adopt a new plank demanding state ownership and local option. In the election, however, Woods tried to evade the issue by emphasizing the priority of the “tucker question” over the drink question. At this time liquor interests tended to support the government, backed by the National Association, organized in 1905 as a reply to Labor, while the Liberals attracted the temperance party.

The return of a pledged Labor party of seven in a house of thirty-five marked the beginning of Labor as a serious force in state politics. As the hostile Mercury, complaining of the danger to the well-being of the state, lamented, Tasmania had joined the majority of Australian states whose Labor parties were squeezing concessions out of their governments. “This is the beginning, where the end will be, no one can say.” The Mercury also began to stress the menace of Labor’s formidable organizational machine. Though it was frankly admitted at the next conference that the assistance of campaigners from other states and the recent success of the English Liberals and their Labor allies had played a large part in the final result, the Tasmanian Labor bandwagon was observed to move almost immediately after the election. New branches were formed and many Tasmanians became aware that Labor was a potential government. The fact that most of the unofficial Labor candidates, including Lamerton, had been defeated demonstrated the effectiveness of the pledge. Propsting’s apostasy was used by the Clipper to prove the uselessness of voting for independent radicals. On a minute scale Tasmania was repeating the experience of New South Wales Labor. Lamerton, who had insisted on a restricted interpretation of the pledge, became a Tasmanian Joseph Cook. Nevertheless the pledge question was one of the chief points at issue in the early conferences.

Though the Mathinna conference of April 1906, where it was possible to accommodate all the delegates “around the parlour table in a small room”, followed too closely after the election to be representative, the year marked the end of the series of mini-conferences which gave the impression that Tasmanian Labor was a mere junta of officers without an army. The absurd predicament when a conference of nine members was unable to elect a president because three members tied for the position was remedied by a slightly more representative special conference at Hobart in July. At the next two conferences before the 1909 election, twenty-six and twenty-seven voting members attended — by Tasmanian
standards, very respectable numbers. The additional seats won at the 1909 election resulted in a large increase in delegates to the Longford conference which, apart from the executive, numbered thirty-six. Numbers declined with the outbreak of war, in spite of the fact that Labor was then in office.

After the first conference there were no trade union delegates till 1912. The unsuccessful attempts to affiliate trade unions provided much of the discussion at successive conferences. To a considerable extent, therefore, Tasmania’s Labor development, as has often been demonstrated, reversed the process in other states. It began with a parliamentary party requiring an ad hoc organization which in turn encouraged the growth of unions. Though many of the early leaders were west coast AMA members, these men were in fact reacting against the non-political tendency of their union. Tasmania’s very backwardness ensured the success of a Labor party as soon as the working classes became aware of their poor conditions, learnt the value of political action, and gained sufficient confidence to resist the propaganda and threats of their employers. Mainland campaigners and expatriates like Bishop Mercer from England and Archbishop Delany from Ireland might play a significant part in the first and second of those developments – Earle was able to cite both prelates as proof that his movement was not opposed to Christianity – but the value of political action could only be demonstrated by the effectiveness of the local party. However, the very existence of a sizeable group of Labor parliamentarians made a cavalier attitude to working-class organizations less easy for employers to maintain.

After the 1906 elections the new Labor party could no longer shelve the leadership question. For many reasons Woods appeared the obvious choice. His experience was considerable and he had done more than anyone else to build the Tasmanian party. Intellectually he was the outstanding representative of Tasmanian Labor. His contributions in both prose and verse to the Sydney Bulletin were well known, he possessed a quick wit and the gift of repartee, and the Monitor believed that his election was assured. He was “a very able fellow, whole-souled in his work, and has abundant tact, courtesy and determination, and should therefore, make an admirable leader”. The consequent elevation of John Earle, who had at last narrowly won Waratah, came as a great surprise. If a west coaster were preferred, “what heinous sins have Messrs. J. J. Long and G. M. Burns been guilty of?” On a sectional basis, Woods’s defeat was inevitable. In caucus there were four representatives of the west coast, one from Launceston and one from George Town. Woods alone represented Hobart. Earle was a Tasmanian by birth, an ex-president of the Zeehan AMA, and a nominal Catholic. Woods, however, had been born in Melbourne and lived a cosmopolitan life. Moreover, he had a reputation as a
left-winger and was probably an agnostic in religion. In spite of the Monitor’s eulogy he made many enemies and had been largely responsible for the withdrawal of Lamerton from the party. Apathetic trade unionists disliked Woods’s attempt to instill vigour and political determination into the unions and to organize them on a large scale. Woods’s control of the Clipper also earned him abuse, and there were several attempts at censure motions at conference. The fact that Woods had changed his name in Tasmania from Walter William Head made him appear a man of mystery, and there were attempts to prove him guilty of embezzling the funds of the “New Australia” settlement in Paraguay. Nevertheless, Woods throughout this period was behind most exhibitions of energy on the part of the Tasmanian Labor party. His position was strengthened by the election of Ben Watkins, “his faithful squire” and subsequent brother-in-law, to succeed Burns at Queenstown in late 1906. It is possible that Earle, fundamentally very moderate, was a more suitable leader than Woods for the Tasmanian Labor party. However, after Earle’s secession over conscription Woods was able to give vent to the misgivings he had always felt about Earle’s leadership. Earle, for his part, had always distrusted Woods.

Woods and his allies were not members of an informal discussion group which appears to have emerged in the early years of the century and which was centred round L. F. Giblin, an orchardist and Cambridge-trained economist, whose father had been premier of Tasmania, and Newham Waterworth, an optician. Both were comparative late-comers to the Labor party, standing unsuccessfully as Liberal Democrats in 1909. Their group, however, was patronized by men like John Earle, who eventually opened a socialist and Labor bookshop in Elizabeth Street, Hobart; Andrew Needham, father-in-law of John Curtin, who also attended when in Tasmania representing the Timber Workers’ Union; Gilbert Rowntree, an English socialist who was a bitter opponent of Woods; Henry Reynolds, a railway employee; J. R. Palamountain; J. A. Lyons, then a schoolteacher; and a number of other regulars. Apart from social activities such as sports meetings and picnics, the group organized lectures on current affairs and socialist theory. It was particularly influenced by the ideas of Robert Blatchford’s Clarion, to which many members subscribed. Though not necessarily more radical than Woods, this group provided an alternative source of ideas and helped to secure Earle’s leadership.

In the 1906–09 parliament, the Labor party fought more vigorously for their platform and attempted to drive the government towards New Zealand-style agrarian legislation and free education. Labor moved unsuccessfully for industrial conciliation and arbitration. When the Legislative Council rejected the mildly reformist bills of the government, Woods proposed its abolition. The effectiveness of Labor’s parliamentary pro-
paganda was neutralized by the *Mercury*'s reluctance, in the absence of a *Hansard*, to publish Labor speeches in full. Woods's proposal for a state *Hansard* was voted down.\(^{101}\)

The pledge held fairly well and Labor was the only group in parliament apart from the inner core of government men, to exhibit a voting pattern of any consistency. Education, that traditional battle-ground between Protestant and Catholic sectarianism, caused some division. When Earle voted for opening all state scholarships to private-school pupils, he earned the plaudits of the *Mercury* and the condemnation of a *Clipper* columnist, who accused him of “breaking the spirit of the Labor platform”. The embarrassing position of the Labor party when compelled by the platform to support a pro forma vote of no confidence proposed by an opponent, was used to justify the reintroduction of a suggestion, defeated at the previous conference. This had demanded the removal of the section in the parliamentary pledge requiring that, “on all such questions touching on platform principles and affecting the fate of a Government”, members must vote as a caucus majority decides. It was shown that Queensland had dropped this provision. Jensen demonstrated his lukewarm approach when he urged that, as there were some good unpledged democrats in the assembly, the words should be deleted. After Woods had argued the un-wisdom of making election promises outside the platform, the matter was referred to the 1909 conference.

This 1909 conference exhibited a startling diversity of opinion on the important issue of the pledge, which, according to Dr. P. M. Weller, was more significant as a cohesive agent in Tasmania than in New South Wales. The parliamentary party was divided six all on the question of excision. Jensen now favoured retention of the pledge, while Long and Ogden moved over to the idea of flexibility. On the one hand an unsuccessful parliamentary candidate and general maverick, J. H. Smythe, insisted that a Labor member “ought to be an automaton in a sense”, while on the other, W. E. Shoobridge, an erudite landowner and future parliamentarian, believed that members should be trusted in small things. James Guy, a member of the lower house, who demanded rights of conscience in matters like drink and gambling, forgot the explicit platform provisions for these questions, King O'Malley, believing that the federal party should have a stricter pledge, put the issue in characteristic fashion: “The road to political Gehenna was strewn with the bones of unpledged 'good as Labor' men. These were men like Dawson, Glassey, Kerr, Cook, Kidston, etc., etc.” The proposal was negatived, thirty votes to eighteen,\(^{102}\) but the issue was to re-emerge in other forms.

Even at the relatively small conferences of 1907 and 1908 significant differences of opinion on policy began to manifest themselves. In the early days of Tasmanian Labor, Hugh Kirk and other delegates to interstate
conferences had supported protection with considerable vehemence. Now Launceston still demanded that Tasmania should take a strong line on tariffs and pledge her federal representatives to the “new protection”. At the 1907 Burnie conference a resolution in favour of protection was passed, fifteen to eleven, but as this did not constitute a two-thirds majority the proposal was referred to the next conference at Devonport where it was lost on the voices. Woods and Earle took diametrically opposed positions on the issue. Earle, moreover, accused the Clipper of garbling his arguments in the conference report. Supporters of protection insisted that it would encourage Tasmanian industry — the case of the Burnie mine closed as a result of imports of foreign iron was cited — prevent dumping and be popular with the Tasmanian electors. Opponents either denounced the principle or, like Senator Russell of Victoria, who spoke at Burnie, insisted that a definite pledge would be disloyal to the federal Labor party, which contained a number of brilliant free traders such as Hughes, Pearce, and Spence. The party required such men to fight free-trade seats. This argument appears to have proved conclusive at Devonport. It was supported by King O’Malley, who had originally stood as a protectionist. Woods, Watkins, and some others were, however, prepared to denounce the whole idea of protection in spite of its electoral value. Woods argued that the growth of huge trusts had transformed the situation. In the absence of competition, tariff walls could not benefit the worker and would certainly antagonize the farmer. To Watkins, collective ownership was the only remedy.

Another general issue which exhibited considerable diversity of opinion in the movement was Australian unification, discussed at conferences in 1908 and 1909. Before federation the Clipper had strongly advocated the abolition of state governments in the new Commonwealth as the best antidote to the reactionary Tasmanian regime. Tasmania, its editor shrewdly pointed out, was a natural unit which would retain its identity under any alternative system of local government. Removal of the Legislative Council was still the major attraction of unification in 1908 and 1909. Earle, with the scent of victory in his nostrils, somewhat ironically as it eventually transpired, demanded that a state Labor government should be given an opportunity to deal with the local Council. On the motion of Woods, who professed himself a believer in unification, the matter was referred in 1909 to the federal conference. At the 1912 federal Labor conference in Hobart the Tasmanian representatives Watkins and Dwyer Gray moved for unification but were voted down. Earle and Woods campaigned dutifully for Fisher’s federal powers referenda which the former claimed would prove beneficial in issues like White Australia, new protection, land legislation, control of monopolies, and industrial arbitration. The Mercury, however, insisted that Tasmanian Labor, in the face of
the farmers’ reluctance to become dependent on a socialist federal government, was divided on the question. The eloquent O’Malley, it believed, had been brought over to encourage the doubtfuls.

A more pressing local issue concerned sectarianism. As has already been demonstrated the Catholic church’s education policy sometimes clashed with the Labor party. The Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society was not only committed to Catholic education but as a benefit society might compete with the early AMA. Metz, for example, was a prominent Hibernian. On the other side, the Tasmanian Orange Order was renowned for its hostility to Labor as well as to Catholicism. The visit of the New South Wales anti-Catholic leader, Dill Macky, to Tasmania in 1906 was part of a vigorous anti-Labor campaign and resulted in the formation of local branches of the Protestant Defence Association. The Clipper denounced the growth of Orangeism on the west coast and the Monitor complained that the anti-Catholics were using dissident Labor member Lamerton, who had unsuccessfully attempted to make secular education a plank of the Labor party, against the endorsed candidate. The Labor conference accordingly passed a resolution against the compilation of sectarian lists at election time and the question of debarring from the movement applicants oath-bound to an organization with aims incompatible with those of Labor was discussed. This proposal was aimed mainly at Orange groups but the question was reopened by the establishment of the Catholic Federation in 1914. As late as 1920 there was an unsuccessful attempt to debar freemasons. In 1907–8, as later, no action was taken. The executive already had the power to remove undesirables from the movement.

Associated with sectarianism were the drink and gambling questions. Labor had a definite policy of state control for the liquor trade, but experience in other states demonstrates that the brewers were often surreptitious Laborites. In 1908 an attempt was made to advance in the direction of temperance by prohibiting the sale of alcohol to youths under twenty and abolishing the tied-house system. O’Malley, however, considered the existing platform sufficient. Another delegate decried attempts to make “this a Sunday School body”. One of the complaints against Woods in 1909 was the fact that the Clipper had carried brewers’ advertisements. According to Woods’s friend, W. G. Spence, the Cascade Brewery was one of the main interests which governed Tasmania. The 1909 conference, in spite of the expostulation of King O’Malley that “Tattersall is dead but his ghost runs in Tasmania”, also dealt tenderly with another of the vested interests condemned by Spence. The issue of Tattersall’s lottery, legal only in Tasmania, was deemed inessential, though in effect an instance of “blacklegging” on the Commonwealth.

Labor’s disposition to treat vested interests gently was partly due to the
growing vision of the treasury benches. Though Labor senator O'Keefe lost his seat at the December 1906 election, Labor’s total Senate vote of 30 per cent was 4 per cent better than the state election result of the same year. In his presidential address at the 1907 conference, James Guy, one of the unsuccessful Labor Senate candidates, claimed that if Labor strength continued to increase at this rate the state would have a Labor government within five years. The Senate campaign had, moreover, convinced Guy of the need for “sweet reasonableness” and a “step by step” policy. The same caution was also in evidence at the next conference, which established a system of divisional councils in each of the five six-member electorates organized under the new Hare-Clark proportional representation system. Ironically, the Hare-Clark system had originally been devised by conservatives with the intention of inhibiting, by the encouragement of individualism, the organization of a pledge-bound party. Though the Clipper had once been strident in denunciation, it was realized by 1908 that the system would give Labor a splendid and completely fortuitous opportunity to gain power.

Meanwhile the government was on the verge of disintegration. Captain Evans, never a dynamic leader, discovered, as his critics delighted in pointing out, that it was as difficult to steer the barque of state safely between political shoals and quicksands as it had earlier been to keep afloat the two ships which had sunk under his command. The Legislative Council, the Monitor argued, could lay a fair claim to being the real ruler of the state. The education issue had reached crisis proportions. While Evans was uncomfortably balanced on a rail between teachers demanding better salaries and land speculators demanding tax reductions, a side issue emerged in the form of the controversy over W. L. Neale, the new education director. Neale, a South Australian, in his attempts to introduce the “new education” to Tasmania, infuriated the local teachers — including the future Labor premier and anti-Labor Commonwealth prime minister, J. A. Lyons, who was first elected to the House of Assembly in 1909 — by his autocratic methods and introduction of more efficient South Australian pedagogues. The teachers were represented by N. K. Ewing, a brilliant lawyer, once a senator for West Australia and now hoping to become a power in Tasmanian politics. Various commissions failed to reach agreement and Neale was eventually eased out with compensation. Though the Labor party was divided on the propriety of paying compensation to Neale, the issue was a greater embarrassment to Evans.

The 1909 election, by increasing Labor’s strength from seven in a house of thirty-five to twelve out of thirty, was ostensibly a resounding victory. The Mercury, considering Labor’s success “the outstanding feature” of the election, professed itself satisfied that, as an official opposition, Labor would no longer be in a position to dictate from the cross-benches. The
Monitor believed that the next election would return a Labor government because Labor was in close touch with "the greater mass of the community", its "organization is complete", and the fidelity of members to the platform assured. Beneath the surface, however, all was not well. It was argued that the increase in parliamentary strength was due almost completely to the Hare-Clark system and that the Labor poll was 3,000 less than in the 1906 senate elections, while the anti-Labor vote had increased by 4,000. Many were the explanations. "Labor's boasted 'organization' was virtually non-existent." The movement denied the Mercury's contention that in a 61.5 per cent poll Labor had brought all its supporters to vote and would have been reduced to one seat if its opponents had been as efficient. In Denison there was "no systematic canvass and no methodical arrangement for bringing voters to the poll". The opposition had cars and organizers galore. Moreover, the Denison electorate was the scene of a dispute between Woods and the Wharf Labourers' Union which backed a dissident Labor candidate, Gilbert Rowntree. The Clipper was accused of paying non-union wages, Woods's attempts to organize trade unions were repudiated as harmful rather than beneficial, and it was claimed that the unions were denied a real voice in the Labor party. This dispute was not only an electoral liability, but pinpoints some of the difficulties facing Tasmanian Labor. As Woods demonstrated, for the last four years unions had been encouraged to affiliate at the rate of fifty shillings ($5) for fifty members. Woods was saved from possible defeat by the strong endorsement of Spence who led the usual battery of mainland campaigners. "The man", said Spence, who 'shied off' the pledge was a 'rotter', "and a traitor to trade unionism." In the end Woods headed the Labor poll and his opponents were annihilated. The miners of northeast Tasmania, however, were accused of having a predilection for unpledged Labor men.

Throughout Tasmania many workers still failed to enrol. The closure of the poll at 6 o'clock may have kept others away. There was considerable criticism of the working of the divisional councils. In May, Duncan Murphy summed up the general position in the Clipper: "The analysis shows a splendid advance in Franklin, a slight decrease in Darwin, an enormous decrease in Bass, a heavy decline in Denison, Wilmot remaining practically stationary." Labor's total vote had, however, risen from 10,583 (26.59 per cent) in 1906 to 19,067 (28.94 per cent) in 1909.

Though the first result had helped Labor, it was obvious that the Hare-Clark system posed problems for a pledge-bound radical party. Tasmania was now divided into five large, six-member electorates. As the Mercury argued, Labor candidates in multi-member constituencies were forced to bid against each other; "strange doctrines" were thus sometimes heard from Labor platforms. In Denison, where only two of the four Labor
candidates had a reasonable chance, "all four are no doubt loyal enough to their party, but it is a case of cut-throat". Two of the Labor candidates in Denison, Woods and Smythe, were strongly opposed to each other. Certainly, when powerful pressure groups demanded alterations in liquor or education laws a considerable strain was placed on all Labor candidates.

The Hare-Clark system tended also to create a political balance. Denison and Bass, containing Hobart and Launceston, were potentially strong Labor areas, but under proportional representation (PR) it was difficult for the party to do more than share the representation with its opponents. Darwin likewise saw the mining areas of the west coast balanced by "teat-pullers" in the northwest. The growth, however, of towns like Burnie did something to help Labor. The large rural electorates of Wilmot and Franklin appeared to pose difficulties for Labor organizers, though in the latter some surprisingly good results were obtained amongst small farmers and orchardists. In 1909 Labor won two out of six seats in every electorate save Darwin, where they won four. The subsequent decline in west coast mining, however, made it necessary to look for additional support elsewhere.

As a result of the ambitions of N. K. Ewing who had just been elected to the House of Assembly, the Lewis government which, after a "fusion" of anti-Labor forces, backed by a new Liberal League, had replaced the Evans ministry, was beaten in October 1909 on a vote of no-confidence. Consequently John Earle, the blacksmith and engine driver once blacklisted by employers as a dangerous agitator, was invited to form the first Labor ministry in Tasmania's history. He had, however, barely time to distribute the portfolios to the ministers elected by caucus — J. A. Jensen, J. E. Ogden, and J. J. Long — before his opponents composed their differences and Labor was deposed after a week of nominal office, the governor refusing to grant Earle a dissolution. Earle was to wait four and a half years before another opportunity in equally difficult circumstances, arose.

III

In spite of increasing internal conflict the Labor organization made fairly rapid outward progress. It was realized that the proximity of the party to the government benches would attract ambitious men in search of seats, and conference sought expedients for deterring such men. L. F. Giblin, the economist who had shared a study at Cambridge with J. M. Keynes, was, however, accepted with alacrity though not with unanimity, after his defeat in the 1909 election. Giblin's explanation that though a socialist virtually from birth he had felt that his best chance in
1909 lay in candidature as an independent Democrat was neither flattering to the Labor organization nor a convincing demonstration of Giblin’s sincerity. His socialism, though never his intelligence, was always open to question. Metz, also defeated in the 1909 election was readmitted to the party. At the 1910 conference Giblin annoyed the Woods group by helping to defeat a proposed probation period of two years for Labor candidates. Giblin attended only as a proxy representative chosen by the executive. Those who considered Metz’s return premature were justified when he fought the next election as a Liberal. Metz’s comparative wealth was, however, vitally important when Labor launched its daily newspaper, and his wife — alongside other Labor women like Mrs. Ben Watkins, Mrs. Holt, the tireless canvasser, and Mrs. O’Shea Peterson, an energetic Irishwoman — was a party stalwart.

The conferences between 1909 and 1913 exhibited a considerable increase in branch representation though it was constantly complained that many league secretaries omitted to send returns to the executive. The period 1909–10, which saw the formation of forty branches, was rightly regarded as a boom year. In 1912 and 1913 a handful of unions like the brickmakers, bootmakers, carters and drivers, and Launceston waterside workers sent representatives, usually parliamentarians. Nearly all these unions came under the limited scope of the new Wages Board Act. Generally, however, unions proved reluctant to affiliate. For the 1910, 1911, and 1912 conferences, in answer to an opponent’s sneer that the Labor party was run by “self-appointed and irresponsible carpenters, bricklayers, and other tradesmen”, Earle compiled a list of the occupations of conference delegates. Farmers and orchardists were always the largest single group and increased from one-sixth of the total in 1910 (nine) to over a quarter (seventeen) in 1913. Many of the other delegates were decidedly middle class, while the genuine workers tended to be skilled rather than unskilled. The compilation of such statistics may well have helped to encourage Earle and others in the belief that the party was a national rather than a class party.

To summarize the details, the 1912 annual report announced the affiliation of the Launceston waterside workers and the following Hobart unions: brickmakers, carpenters and joiners, general labourers, jam makers, carters and drivers, bricklayers, clothing trades, coachmakers and wheelwrights, bootmakers, gas workers, bakers and pastry cooks. The conferences were as follows: Campbell Town, 25, 26, and 28 March 1910 (fifty-two delegates); New Norfolk, 14, 15, and 17 April 1911 (forty-eight delegates); Launceston, 28, 29, and 30 June 1912 (fifty-five delegates); Latrobe, 17, 18, 19, and 20 June 1913 (forty-eight delegates); Wynyard, 16–18 June 1914 (thirty-four delegates). In 1912 two unions were represented; in 1913, three; in 1914, none; in 1915, four; and in 1916, seven.
Another factor making for greater moderation was the replacement of Woods’s *Clipper*, “the little red-wing”, by the *Daily Post* in early 1910. Money as usual was in short supply. King O’Malley, believed to be the richest man in the Tasmanian Labor movement, rejected, on the ground that he had not even 500 pence ($4.20) to spare, a demand that he provide £500 ($1,000) to underwrite the new paper. O’Malley contemptuously dismissed Belton’s threat that the divisional council might as a result decide to dispense with the King’s services.\textsuperscript{113} In response to an urgent appeal in 1907, O’Malley had offered £2 ($4) if absolutely necessary.\textsuperscript{114} It was not till 1912 that, after a vigorous campaign to beat an advertisers’ boycott, Labor gained a controlling interest in the *Post* and was able to install its own editor, E. Dwyer Gray,\textsuperscript{115} who had once controlled the Irish Nationalist Dublin *Freeman’s Journal*. There had been a determined attack on Woods and the *Clipper* at the 1909 Longford conference. Though most was stimulated by a disappointed Hobart parliamentary candidate, J. J. Long’s opinion, that if the *Clipper* was made more representative all the AMA miners would subscribe, appears to indicate that sectionalism was involved. Woods, who claimed to have held an AWU card since the union’s inception, was supported by Hector Lamond of the AWU’s Sydney *Worker*, but he must have been glad to relinquish his direct responsibility in 1910. The *Daily Post*, attempting to appeal to a wider public, lacked the argumentative punch of the *Clipper*. It appears to have been financially backed by Henry Jones, the jam manufacturer, and Charles Metz. When it failed in 1918 it was replaced by the *World*, directly owned by the AWU.

The influence of the AWU, after the 1909 establishment of its headquarters at Campbelltown in central Tasmania, was a vital factor in the development of Tasmanian Labor. M. D. McRae has shown how hard Tasmanian leaders worked for the extension of mainland unions to the island state – another demonstration\textsuperscript{116} of Tasmania’s dependence. Unlike the non-political AMA, the AWU appointed D. J. O’Keefe, after his defeat in the Senate election, organizer for Tasmania. At the 1909 conference Earle thanked the union for placing him at the top of the Franklin poll.\textsuperscript{117} Earle’s old west coast seat of Waratah had been merged in Darwin, and Labor approached farming areas with some trepidation. During the 1909 election the secretary of the Tasmanian AWU wrote to Woods that: “C. Towners are going like Hell. Making every post a winner.”\textsuperscript{118} The AWU was able to make some inroads on the conservatism of the Tasmanian rural worker and give him some feeling for political action. The 1910 Campbelltown Labor conference report expressed its gratitude to the AWU for the “immense assistance in organizing the Labor cause”, and it certainly appears that many of the forty new branches, especially those in central Tasmania, were formed through AWU influence.
The 1911 and 1912 conferences also praised the AWU. The AWU was not, however, directly represented at conference, though its agents, like D. E. Dicker, D. J. O'Keefe, and its general secretary, James Mooney, often appeared as delegates for league branches and some also sat in the House of Assembly.

The difficulty of bringing in other unions was a perennial problem for Tasmanian Labor. In the early years, it had been argued that the union movement, apart from the AMA, was virtually non-existent. However, Labor parliamentary pressure in the 1910 had helped to secure the passage of a Wages Board Act. Though warmly denounced for its limitations,\(^{119}\) it helped not only to encourage trade unionism but to raise wages, thus preventing observers like the Frenchman Albert Métin from using Tasmania as an example of the harmful effects of the absence of an industrial conciliation system.\(^{120}\) Labor men who, like W. E. Shoobridge, argued that the political Labor movement had largely preceded the trade union movement, and Woods, who claimed that Labor's "sway and power" had ended a situation where workers subjected to employers' boycotts were forced to lie low, emphasized trade union dependence. Woods subsequently described the situation more bluntly. In other states the Labor party was an offshoot of unionism which controlled the movement, "but in Tasmania that was not the case, the unions had not formed as a prelude to the political movement but had grown as a result of the Labor movement, and the Trades and Labor Council had not come into existence until 1909. It was not until they were able to get 12 Labor members into Parliament that unionism took any sort of boost at all, and it was not until they had wages boards that more than a dozen or so unions could be formed at all. That the two sections were not combined in Tasmanian was merely an accident of birth."\(^{121}\)

Tension reached a climax in 1913 when the long-awaited fruits of office were again denied to Labor by the electors. The union problem might be solved either by allowing unions to affiliate at very low fees or adopting the revolutionary expedient of other states which had unified political and industrial Labor in one organization. The conference, however, rejected both these possibilities. Earle and Woods again represented opposing viewpoints. Earle believed that there was already sufficient inducement for unions to join political Labor. Was it wise to encourage the adhesion of lukewarm or conservative unionists? Though he approved of industrial unionism, he disliked the idea of fee discrimination against other members of the movement. The amalgamation proposal Earle considered too revolutionary for immediate action. The strong support for Earle's opinion illustrated the sectional cleavages in the movement. In a similar debate at the 1911 conference Giblin had declared that the party did not need men who were concerned only with wages. Woods now supported lower fees as
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a first step towards union, arguing that the Labor executives and the Hobart and Launceston TLCs re-established by 1910, should combine. "Unless these two movements could unite, Labor would, in the near future, receive a nasty bump just when it should be marching along triumphantly." The current Australian tendency of industrial unions to dissociate themselves from the political organization was "suicidal". Opposing Earle, who had attacked conservative unionists, Woods asserted that "there were members in the leagues who were not in favor of preference to unionists. This indicated that there was not that close sympathy between the organizations that should exist. The only way to overcome this was to rub shoulders."

Unionists at the conference argued that their members were too poor to pay double fees. They promised a great influx of AMA members if concessions were made. A league delegate in 1911, however, had claimed that in the Avoca area his members were on starvation wages of twelve to fifteen shillings ($1.20 to $1.50) a week. It was demonstrated that a union, with 199 members, had only the voting power of the smallest league. The problem was accentuated by the fact that in 1913 it was estimated that there were 9,000 unionists in Tasmania as opposed to 1,500 in 1905.

These issues surfaced again when the Earle Labor government took office. Committees for greater unity met little response from unionists till the conscription issue forced both sections to work together in the short-lived Tasmanian Labor Federation of 1917 and 1918. The federation broke up when the unions proved reluctant to subsidize, in addition to their own expenses, an apparently hopeless political party.

The same forces that had voted down concessions to unionists also gave short shrift to Gibb's proposal for a step-by-step approach to land nationalization which the sanguine economist admitted would be unpopular at first. As experience in other states has demonstrated, the AWU in organizing rural workers did not always distinguish too clearly between employers and employees. Thus AWU influence was not incompatible with rural conservatism. Such conservatism in the Tasmanian Labor movement also neutralized the attempts to adopt a "socialization" objective in the years after 1910. The question was raised regularly after the 1910 conference when only five voted for the socialization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Earle was opposed to any change in the old nebulous objective, borrowed from New South Wales, which restricted collective ownership to monopolies. Some conference delegates, arguing that most members were socialists, believed in a forthright statement. They were decisively voted down by others who claimed that it would have a bad effect on the electors. Woods adopted a middle or "Blackburn interpretation" position, asking for socialization

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where exploitation existed. Though not far from the original formulation, this was also rejected. At the Hobart federal Labor conference in 1912, Shoobridge and Giblin had spoken against the establishment of a more socialistic objective.

In Tasmania the "iron law of oligarchy" in the Labor movement is not hard to discover. Though originally the leadership had lacked a movement, it was not long before critics of the executive appeared at conferences. There were the usual attempts to restrict the influence of parliamentarians in the conference itself, and, on the executive, to prevent double voting and membership of more than one branch. Little success was achieved in the reduction of politicians' influence.126

In 1910 Woods's supporters complained bitterly that the executive was giving proxy votes to supporters who had been defeated in their own branches: "Eddington and that waster J. A. Smythe who were beaten by Teddy O'Brion [E. J. O'Brion] in their own branch [Queenborough] were there and had as much to say as the rest of them, and the same thing happened with C. Thorn who after being beaten by Palamountain went out to New Town and offered his services there, but which were refused." Thus Giblin [Glenora], E. B. Waterworth [Zeehan], Nettleford [Franklin], Eddington [Pelham], Smythe [Stowport], and Thorn [Crotty], by application to the executive were able to make use of proxies given by other branches.127 Moreover, two other delegates represented only eighteen members between them: Smythe, a bitter opponent of Woods, "toddled off to Campbelltown on the off chance and got the executive to hand him out a credential".128 Such conditions made it easy for the Mercury, shortly before the 1910 Campbelltown conference to claim that "the Labor party is undemocratic, is an oligarchy, a government of cliques and committees" and "more concerned about getting seats for its promoters — than work and wages for the people in whose name it acts".129 Even Woods's friends were not blameless. Ben Watkins provides a good example of the sort of influence a politician could exert. Though party secretary and whip, he was elected to the executive only twice in this period and required appointment as a branch representative to attend conference. Watkins appeared as delegates for not only Hobart branches but New Norfolk (1908), Strahan (1909), Burnie (1911), Ellendale (1912), Ulverstone (1914 and 1915), Brickmakers Union (1916), Wynyard (1918), and Smithton (1919). In this period Watkins sat in the assembly for Queenstown, Darwin (west coast), and Franklin. He was fundamentally a Hobartian and a "Clipper" man, subsequently managing director of the Daily Post. It is true that many of the leagues represented by Watkins were in his large Darwin electorate, but Watkins polled few first preference votes outside Queenstown. His "screeching to the heathen outback"130 was obviously not appreciated. The repeated but unsuccessful demands for
the abolition of the system of pre-selection of Labor candidates by divisional councils indicate the desire of potential candidates to escape the control of an oligarchy. Under the Hare-Clark system it would have been possible for an indefinite number of candidates to be endorsed by the party without splitting the vote, but such a procedure would have resulted in intense rivalry and competitive bidding between Labor candidates.

In the midst of their difficulties Tasmanian Laborites argued that though the workers might not always join the organization they could be trusted to vote Labor. The Commonwealth election of 1910, as part of a general swing to Labor, resulting in the election of Labor representatives for three (Darwin, Bass, and Denison) out of the five Tasmanian electorates and three Tasmanian senators greatly increased Labor confidence. Nearly 54 per cent of the House of Representatives' voters were Labor and 55 per cent of Senate voters. A Tasmanian Labor government appeared an inevitable outcome of the 1912 state election.

But the Hare-Clark system, like most forms of PR, militated against decisive results. In Tasmanian history it has created numerous situations where a volte face by even one member can bring down a government. Moreover, in late 1911 a 56-day strike at Mount Lyell costing £1,000 ($2,000) a week resulted in some gains for the men but left the unions without resources for political action. The strike itself was a godsend to the Tasmanian conservatives who tenaciously resisted their prospective deposition from power. The \textit{Daily Post} complained of an advertisers' boycott against it and denounced opponents' use of the socialist bogey. Election meetings were disorderly. An enraged landowner attempted to horsewhip J. A. Lyons on an election platform; Ben Watkins offered to satisfy his critics by personal combat; another Labor candidate was accused of knocking down an old man; and Earle met what the \textit{Post} believed to be organized opposition at some of his meetings. At Sandfly he talked far into the night to avoid a hostile motion. The \textit{Mercury} claimed that Labor supporters had denied their opponents free speech in the Hobart Town Hall. Labor was not entirely successful in insisting that Liberals who refused an adequate system of conciliation and arbitration were responsible for strikes, that the anti-Labor "fusion" had no policy, and that it was borrowing excessively. The \textit{Mercury} was wrong in its belief that the publication of the AWU's rural workers' log, which laid down minimum wages for farm labourers, would alienate the small farmers in Franklin, but King O'Malley agreed that the log may have cost a seat in Darwin. Additional seats were won in Denison, Bass, and Franklin, but the vital fourth seat was lost in Darwin. Labor was left with only fourteen out of thirty Assembly members. In all electorates save rural Wilmot there was an equal division of seats between Labor and Liberal. Though Labor had now polled 45 per cent of the vote, as the \textit{Mercury} said, it had been held
King O'Malley's optimism was inaccurate: "I have been to Tasmania taking part in the State Elections and considering the odds we have had a great victory. We gained four seats and lost one through the departure of so many workers from the Mining centre of Tasmania owing to that unfortunate strike which occurred last year. Otherwise we would have had a Labour ministry in Tasmania. I had great meetings and the Christians rolled up from every corner to shake the foundations of fosseldom [sic]." The annual conference report was bitter: "almost every conceivable kind of falsehood was stated about the party. Money was spent like water. Paid agitators scoured the country spreading misrepresentation and falsehood, and almost the solid press of the state was in the hands of our opponents, and poured out every morning a daily budget of calumny." The Mercury was convinced that "the Labor organization was this time more perfect than before" and could only explain Earle's very large vote in Franklin (3,662 or 22.55 per cent on first preference) by assuming some secret promise to the small farmers.

The closeness of the result encouraged Earle to attempt to win by negotiation what the polls denied. In December Earle reached an agreement with the same Donald Cameron whose defeat in 1894 had been advertised a great victory for democracy. The Speaker, however, resigned; Labor was denied its majority and Cameron renounced the agreement. He wished, it appears, to exact a pledge committing Labor against all legislation till the next election. Though the ministry, now led by A. E. Solomon, was saved, it obtained a snap election on 23 January 1913. Labor was furious. Not only was there little time to campaign, but, as it was the holiday season, many workers were engaged in seasonal employment outside their constituencies. The governor in granting the dissolution, was accused of partisanship. After the election, however, the Mercury claimed that the falling off of the Liberal vote was due to the small farmer's inability to leave his harvesting.

The Daily Post correctly forecast that "the new House will be a replica of the old", minus Cameron. Labor increased its proportion of the poll to 48 per cent but polled 2,000 fewer than in 1912. In spite of the precipitation of the election, the Post laid the blame on "the inefficiency of Labor organization". Two, possibly three, electorates were weak. Labor should have been able to profit from Catholic fury at the government's recent appointment of an Orangeman as governor, but Edward Mulcahy, minister of lands and special target of the Catholic Monitor, increased his majority by 260 votes. Labor was again assisted by its "gladiators from across the Straits", including on this occasion the future prime minister, John Curtin.
Cameron left a worthy successor in the person of J. T. H. Whitsitt, an eccentric Irishman whose facility for repartee and whimsical eloquence enlivened the proceedings of the Tasmanian Assembly. Towards the end of 1913 Whitsitt, “who at no time made any secret of his utter abhorrence for the Labor platform and methods”, grew disgusted with the Solomon government, especially in its failure to persuade other states, fearing the Irish blight, to accept Tasmanian potatoes. Furthermore, in January 1914 a by-election occurred in Denison. It was won by Labor in spite of a small Liberal majority at the previous election. Earle’s policy speech, emphasizing closer settlement and drawing a distinction between landed and other property, showed that Henry George still lived in Tasmania. Earle was criticized by Labor militants for approving of industrial arbitration rather than union power. As Earle’s policy was roughly similar to that of the 1890 Ballance Liberals in New Zealand, it was appropriate that William Sheridan, the new Denison member, had previously campaigned on the basis of his thirteen years in that Dominion. When subsequently recommending the adoption of the New Zealand system of afforestation, Sheridan declared that “all Tasmania had to do was to copy New Zealand methods, as the climates of the two countries were similar”.

Secure in Whitsitt’s determination on “bumping the present traitors out”, Earle lost no time in putting pressure on the government. The controversial Woods was elected Speaker, and Labor won its no-confidence motion. The governor, however, attempted to impose conditions on the aspirant premier. Earle was required to call for a dissolution immediately after forming his ministry. He applied to the Assembly which voted to refer the issue to the colonial office. The appeal eventually resulted in a ruling against the governor. Though Earle was later to boast of having written a page in the history of constitutional law, it was an inauspicious beginning for the first effective Tasmanian Labor government. The opposition naturally attacked Earle’s breach of agreement with the governor, though Labor counter-attacked by suggesting improper collusion between the governor and Solomon. Some of Earle’s own followers, including the highly intelligent Giblin, had serious reservations about the wisdom of Earle’s acceptance of office in the circumstances. On the other hand, Ogden subsequently claimed that it was only the pressure of Lyons and himself that had prevented Earle from accepting the governor’s terms. In any case the Labor position was extremely weak. In the House of Assembly, as Woods said later, Labor depended “on the elevation of Whitsitt as a ‘candle-stick’ on the see-saw”. Whitsitt was opposed not only to all Labor policies but even to the principle of party government. In the Legislative Council Labor had never had a single representative. The
equivocal nature of Earle's accession to power gave distinct colour to the Legislative Council's claim when discarding the Labor government's legislation to be acting as a cautious house of review. Except as a preparatory exercise in administration — and here serious differences with the Labor movement were likely — the Earle Labor government appeared to have little future.

Like Labor leaders in other states Earle was also faced, especially in the by-elections which virtually decided the fate of the government, by the knotty problems of Catholic education and temperance. In an ominous coincidence, the foundation of the Tasmanian Catholic Federation was almost simultaneous with Labor's accession to office. The Liberals took full advantage of Labor's attempt to uphold the anti-denominational principle and at the same time to make concessions to Catholics in the form of bursaries for secondary pupils tenable at state and private schools. Catholic Labor leaders like Earle, Lyons, Dwyer Gray, and even the nominal Catholic, Ben Watkins, who appeared a strong secularist, found themselves ground between the millstones of growing Protestant anti-Catholicism and the menacing statements of Catholic clergy demanding state aid. The tension between the Labor party and Catholicism in Tasmania never, however, became as serious as in Victoria.¹⁴⁰

On the liquor question, though the Liberals attempted to take advantage of the rigidities of the Labor platform, they were themselves divided. N. K. Ewing, who succeeded Solomon as opposition leader in late 1914, was no temperance fanatic, and was for a time opposed by members of his own party who believed that Labor's promise of a referendum on closing hours would be placed in jeopardy by the Liberal leadership. The referendum held with the 1916 election resulted in a victory for 6 o'clock closing. The Tasmanian liquor interests, unlike their counterparts in other states, may have backed the Liberals in 1915. W. H. Lee, who succeeded Ewing as leader late that year, being a Methodist lay preacher appeared a more determined temperance advocate. Some Labor men like Dwyer Gray and the future premier, Robert Cosgrove, campaigned hard for 6 o'clock closing. In general, while Labor may have lost by its education policy the votes of some Catholic supporters, it probably gained slightly through the temperance issue in 1916. The growth of sectarian feeling subsequent to 1915 was to reserve this alignment.

After the conscription split it was easy for Laborites to blame the failures of the Labor government on the defecting Earle. The problems he faced and his efforts to deal with them are, however, too similar to those of contemporary mainland premiers, and indeed Labor leaders in general, to support an explanation based on character defects or the Tasmanian version of "the aristocratic embrace".¹⁴¹ The small Labor ministry was in fact reasonably strong. Though Earle was regarded by the Mercury as a
nominal leader who had recently faced a strong challenge to his authority, he was an effective speaker with a fine platform presence, and, except in times of particular stress, a conciliatory and tactful manner. Without legal training, he proved a useful attorney general. Nor was he a cultural boor, but a man who read deeply and sought relaxation from his political duties with a violin. The treasurer and minister for education, Lyons, the future Commonwealth prime minister whom the *Mercury* considered the real head of the ministry, was given an early opportunity to prove his pragmatic ability, and was backed in the house by Giblin, one of Australia’s outstanding economists and future adviser to many Commonwealth governments. Ogden, chief secretary and minister for mines, was the first ex-miner to hold the latter position and dealt not unsuccessfully with a serious crisis. Ogden was subsequently a strong supporter of political, as opposed to direct, industrial action. James Belton, a Victorian who after mining and farming experience elsewhere had bought a bacon factory in Northern Tasmania, appeared impressive as minister of lands at a time when the Labor party was emphasizing its agrarian policy.

Though the Labor government was immediately faced by a serious economic crisis, threatening to force the closure of many mines and create widespread unemployment, in its first hundred days it took prompt, if not ultimately effective, action. Zeehan, the cradle of the Tasmanian Labor party, at the end of 1913 was “sinking fast” as ore became virtually unprocurable. The still valuable smelters were taken over by the Labor government, which also presented an ultimatum, demanding the development of the adjacent Argent Flat, to the British Zeehan company. It was hoped that a deep shaft might save the Zeehan mines. The outbreak of war in August 1914, cutting off the vital German market for Australian copper and zinc, meant ultimate ruin for Zeehan. The Labor government did, however, succeed in keeping open for six months the Beaconsfield gold mine and hoped to assist the coal miners of the northeast coast. Ogden obtained most of the credit for the government’s mining policy. The *Mercury*, however, considered his approach quixotic. Support for Zeehan was helping “an extremely lame dog faced with an excessively high stile.” Meanwhile Lyons transferred the state government’s account from the Commercial to the Commonwealth Bank, for whose foundation King O’Malley had been able to obtain some credit. According to the *Post*, Lyons had “done more in one day for Tasmania and Australia” than the previous treasurer would have done in a hundred years.

The most loudly acclaimed achievement of the Labor government in its early period was the prompt purchase of the assets of the company constructing a hydro-electric scheme at the Great Lake. Labor had been interested in the possibilities of this scheme for some time. The plans for the purchase and a report on the feasibility of the enterprise by the
inevitable New Zealand expert had been the work of the previous government which supported the purchase in the House of Assembly. Indeed, the only real criticism was that Labor was paying excessive compensation to a virtually bankrupt company. When the Legislative Council duly reduced the sum, Ogden remarked philosophically, “a good job we didn’t do it”.

An attempt by the government to achieve a spectacular purchase for closer settlement of the great Malahide estate of Fingal in northeast Tasmania just failed to come off. The closer settlement’s board established by a previous government returned an evasive report which Belton was at first reluctant to accept. The owners, unlike the proprietors of the New Zealand Cheviot estate whose purchase created the legend — often quoted in Tasmania — of New Zealand Liberal infallibility, refused to sell. A myth-making opportunity was lost which might have given the Labor government a new standing in the eyes of the poorer farmer and aspirant smallholders.

Nevertheless, by July Earle was able to claim with some justification that the government “had accomplished a great deal”. A month earlier the Tasmanian correspondent of a mainland paper declared that “the Labor Government is showing rare activity for Tasmania”. The government was now to face even more serious dangers. When war was declared on 4 August there was an immediate metals crisis resulting from the loss of German markets. Not only Zeehan, but Roseberry, Renison Bell, and even Mount Lyell appeared likely to close down for good. Earle, promising to do his best, implored Tasmanians not to allow patriotic fervour to obscure the need to keep industry alive. The government’s attempt to keep the mines open by paying 50 per cent of the tin price was applauded by Labor. When Earle announced to parliament the necessity for taking action against war profiteers, Ewing, as opposition leader, promised that there would be “no unreasonable or unfair criticism” of the government’s measures. The Legislative Council was not so amenable and promptly rejected seven bills which had received general support in the House of Assembly. The most important were measures permitting the fixing of maximum prices on foodstuffs, aiding farmers in planting crops, and seeking information on food supplies, all of which had been urged by other state premiers. The public works vote was reduced from £214,000 ($428,000) to £78,000 ($156,000). The Legislative Council, the representatives of the comfortable, well-to-do classes, said in effect, according to the Post, “No, you must not spend so freely; there may be unemployed, but railway construction will have to be delayed; mines may be closing, but your conditions for the purchase of ore must be restricted; a drought may be facing Australia, and the Motherland calling out for supplies, yet the farmers are not to be encouraged to cultivate idle acres
though the result would be to give needful employment.”

The *Mercury* and the conservatives, seemingly oblivious of the war crisis, attacked Labor for the spendthrift policy of rewarding its friends at the expense of the state. But to workers experiencing “semi-starvation” in Launceston the Earle government’s relief works had justified its existence. At the Commonwealth election on 5 September Tasmanian Labor had, with a slight lead in the total poll won three of the five Representatives’ seats and four of the six Senate seats. At this stage, however, the Tasmanian Labor government found itself in a virtual stalemate. At two by-elections (Bass and Wilmot) in late 1915 it failed to win a seat from the Liberals though Federal Labor had just captured Bass. War apathy, the farmers’ fear that wheat prices would be pegged, and the Catholic school issue, all played a part in these disappointing results which gave a virtual mandate for Legislative Council intransigence.

By the end of the parliamentary session in early 1915 the government was in full retreat. The Legislative Council mauled Lyons’s intelligent budget which, inspired by Lloyd George, attempted to introduce some redistributive taxation. Ewing was able to sneer that the ministers, who with “the most terrible record any government ever had”, were content to cling to office as the slaves of the Legislative Council. Not unnaturally discontent began to show itself in the Labor movement. There was talk of the uselessness of political action. Clifford Hall, of the Hobart United Labourers’ Union, later killed on the front as an anti-war stretcher-bearer, believed that Labor had done “nothing” towards “easing the burdens of those who elected them to place, pay and position”. The Legislative Council was no excuse. Hall had a lively exchange with Earle when the latter refused a union deputation seeking preference to unionists. To Earle in 1915 this basic Labor principle was “spoils for victors”. He advocated a stronger system of industrial conciliation and arbitration instead of wages boards. Hall asserted a belief in the Marxian class struggle and “spoils for victors”. He did, however, attempt to dissuade more militant union colleagues who wanted to run a new workers’ party. Earle, on the other hand, was congratulated by a Liberal in parliament’s next session for abandoning preference to unionists, the first plank on the Labor platform. It was suggested by another member of the opposition that Earle had chosen to please Whitsitt rather than the electors. Though Earle bore much of the brunt of union antagonism, according to the not very reliable Ogden after the latter’s own expulsion from the Labor party, Earle’s cabinet had been united in opposition to the granting of preference to unionists.

At a meeting of the East Hobart WPL in September 1915 Woods and Dwyer Gray attacked Earle for flouting the 1914 conference decision on preference to unionists and accused the government of taking the Council’s rejection of the food bill “as if they really rather liked it. There
was no protest whatever." In the *Daily Post*, Gray accused Earle of defying the resolution of the 1915 conference demanding that the Tasmanian government approach the federal attorney general to obtain a referendum on the abolition of Legislative Councils. Such criticisms may have encouraged Earle to think in terms of a coalition with his opponents. As Marilyn Lake has argued, by the end of 1915 Labor was becoming divided on the priority of the German war over the class war. In early 1915 the government had retained a seat in a by-election at Bass but, in spite of a vigorous campaign, had achieved no success in a contest for a Legislative Council seat. In early August Earle apparently refused a feeler from Ewing for a war coalition. However, in October, after the ministry had appointed Ewing to the bench where he became an eminent judge, Earle brought in, as part of a political truce, a bill for the prolongation of parliament. While he claimed that 80 per cent of Tasmanians favoured the idea of wartime unity, three Labor members, Barker, Giblin, and Sheridan, voted against the bill which, though passed by a large majority in the Assembly, was duly rejected by the Legislative Council — as the *World* said later, "smashed to smithereens amidst the plaudits of the whole state". The Council's action was based on the belief that supporters of both parties were opposed to the bill.

After this rebuff parliament was reduced to temporary deadlock. The opposition dropped all idea of a truce, and Labor introduced some bills to appease its supporters. The controversial Commonwealth Powers Bill, as Earle said, never had a chance in Tasmania. It was attacked by a strong group in the Assembly before ever reaching the Council. Without a clear Labor majority the bill, which was not pressed, could not have passed in the Assembly. An attempt, however, was made to institute a system of initiative and referendum which might be used against the Legislative Council. A Wages Boards Amendment Act promised some measure of preference to unionists. The resultant Assembly debate was interesting for several reasons. The Liberals in their condemnation of unionist preference and backhanded compliments to Earle suggested a danger to existing awards after a change of government. Moreover, two Labor unionist and later AWU members, J. McDonald and D. E. Dicker, showed the growth of militancy by questioning the value of preference to unionists. They desired a union movement sufficiently strong to enforce its own preferences.

In the 1916 election campaign Liberals stressed Labor's allegedly spendthrift policy. Lee argued that the government's massive wheat purchase, which Labor sources claimed had saved the state from famine, was little more than a wasteful subsidy to millers and bakers who had refused to drop their prices. Eventually Labor accepted this criticism and used it against Earle, who, according to Ogden, was, on this occasion solely
responsible.\textsuperscript{159} Lee also attempted to steal his opponents’ clothes by promising a wages board to the railway workers who had been refused by the Labor government. Lyons’s later justification for this lapse, that the government did not want to see the measure defeated by the Legislative Council, was not altogether convincing. The New South Wales premier, Holman, campaigning for Tasmanian Labor, pointed out that his government had also been accused of excessive expenditure. Labor’s general reply to Liberal critics was to claim that good work had been done in saving the state from depression. Workers were warned of the probable consequences of Liberal government. It was argued with some justification that Labor’s humiliation in the Assembly and the Council was due to apathetic workers who refused to supply the necessary mandate.

The result of the election was very close; Labor polled its highest total vote to date (36,118 or 48.47 per cent) but was still beaten by the Liberals and independents who returned with sixteen seats to Labor’s fourteen — the same position as in 1912 and 1913. The efforts to halt west coast decline did not recover the vital fourth Darwin seat which included the conservative northwest. Earle’s gamble that Labor by administrative efficiency could extract a real majority from the Tasmanian people had not succeeded.

Administratively Labor had done reasonably well. Even the bitterly hostile \textit{Mercury} was constrained to admit “that Labor in office was less disastrous, both to the country and to itself, than many people had expected. Considering their lack of experience in affairs, Ministers rose very firmly to their responsibilities and acquitted themselves with a degree of capacity and dignity which certainly did not disgrace the state.”\textsuperscript{160} Ogden had done his best to prevent large-scale unemployment in the mining areas; Belton had worked hard on behalf of agriculture and established Tasmania’s national park; Lyons, “cautious yet not unimaginative, partly reorganized government finances, gave increased assistance to farmers, levied taxes more equitably, and aimed to limit government spending and to balance the budget. He relied considerably on federal assistance.”\textsuperscript{161} In retrospect it appears that the 1914—16 Tasmanian Labor government, though it did little to implement its platform or satisfy its party, probably handled the problems of drought and war depression with considerably more sensitivity than would have been shown by the opposition. The bitter declaration of the \textit{World} in 1919, that, apart from the hydro agreement and administration, “the least-said about the record of the Earle government the better”, is too severe.

Labor’s fall increased the criticism of parliamentarianism in the workers’ movement.\textsuperscript{162} Men like Woods, Robert Cosgrove of the United Grocers’ Union, and Matt O’Brien worked hard for union between the two wings of the movement, but by May 1916 only four unions had accepted
the idea of a fusion of the two existing bodies into a federation. Meanwhile the position of the workers grew worse. There was a steady erosion of living standards which the new government was less inclined to maintain. Hobart unions were "at present really 'a disorganized rabble'."\textsuperscript{163} Master builders attempted to lock out builders' labourers demanding award wages. The railway workers went on strike and there was trouble at Mount Lyell. The Labor conference in July 1916 showed some tension between the party and the parliamentary leadership. Preference to unionists became a definite plank, and the Labor executive was ordered to approach the federal prime minister about the Legislative Council referendum. The late Tasmanian government barely avoided censure. A remit proposing support for conscription was heavily voted down in spite of Earle's adhesion. A subsequent critic linked Earle's support for conscription and opposition to preference for unionists.\textsuperscript{164}

When Hughes announced the conscription referendum, one other state Labor member followed Earle into the "yes" camp, and only two Labor branches supported Earle. Of the federal party, Jensen and Laird Smith became conscriptionists, while O'Malley tried to sit on the fence.\textsuperscript{165} In general, the Tasmanian Labor campaign against conscription followed the pattern of other states. The Catholic clergy, however, were on the whole supporters of conscription and the Irish issue was usually invoked only by opponents.\textsuperscript{166} Though many Tasmanian Labor leaders like Lyons and Dwyer Gray had Irish connections, the latter as an old Nationalist was strongly opposed to the 1916 Irish rising. Gray was also an ardent campaigner for voluntary enlistment. Lyons, moreover, was probably correct in his assertion that there was no Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) influence on Tasmanian Labor.\textsuperscript{167} The anti-conscription campaign not only showed the value of union and parliamentary Labor co-operation but demonstrated the power of political action which, it was argued, had nearly succeeded in enslaving the workers.\textsuperscript{168} However, the fact that Tasmania in both referenda was a "yes" state indicates Labor weakness. In some areas the results were distinctly disappointing. In 1916 Darwin had an overall "yes" majority, and some of the chief mining administrative districts such as Queenstown, Waratah, Zeehan, and Strahan, took the same side. The poorer areas of Hobart and Launceston generally voted "no".\textsuperscript{169} In the second referendum in December 1917, the "no" cause did considerably better, nearly winning the Bass (including Launceston) and actually winning the Franklin division and the four lost strongholds on the west coast. In Denison, Queensborough and New Town voted "yes" both times.\textsuperscript{170}

Earle, claiming that conscription was not part of the Labor platform, was deposed by the parliamentary Labor party immediately after the first referendum. He refused to attend the 1917 special conference on the
ground that its decisions were a foregone conclusion. In a highly overwrought letter, Earle denounced the selfish and disloyal unionists who, worse than the Hun, were attempting to enslave the Labor movement. Privately he blamed Lyons for driving him from the party. He need not have worried. Far from establishing a tyranny, the unions, integrated into the new Tasmanian Labor Federation by fear of conscription, could in many cases hardly wait till the 1918 annual conference gave them the opportunity to return to pure union activities. The scheme had merged the TLCs in divisional councils containing both unionists and political Laborites, but friction soon developed between the movement's two wings.

V

At the beginning of the War, Woods was one of the few Labor leaders to indicate some initial opposition. Labor supporters were by no means totally immune to the war-fever which swept the state; the local WPL demanded to have the name of Bismarck changed to Collinsdale and Premier Earle was easily convinced of the necessity. The conscription crisis encouraged a more critical attitude. At the 1917 special conference, delegates were almost evenly divided between those opposed to all conscription and those prepared to tolerate it for home defence. A compromise amendment was passed demanding conscription of incomes in excess of £300 ($600) p.a. before conscription of life. This conference also saw a demand for a negotiated peace. The 1918 conference showed further signs of developing Labor pacifism. Such attitudes led to accusations of defeatism and placed the parliamentary party in difficulty.

Though Labor lost only two members of the parliamentary party in the conscription split, the blow was as serious as if half the party had departed. Earle's influence as an ex-premier was probably greater than that of his immediate colleagues. The new leader, Lyons, had considerable leeway to make up. When Earle's irregular appointment to the Senate to succeed the apparently anti-conscriptionist Senator Ready resulted in a Commonwealth election, not only was the ex-premier returned at the head of the Senate poll but Labor was defeated in every seat. King O'Malley, who had been very slow in declaring his anti-conscriptionist feelings, lost in Darwin, and, though he stood for Denison in 1919, had in fact finished his colourful parliamentary career. Very unwisely, two state Labor members, Watkins and Woods, stood for Commonwealth seats and ended by losing their state seats also. Reduced to ten, the state party was pitifully weak and subject to smears of Romanist aggression, Sinn Feinism, Bolshevism, and pro-Germanism. As even states with "no" majorities had
returned Nationalist ministries, there was little hope that Tasmanian Labor would improve its situation. When Dicker, a militant unionist and Labor member, was fined for an alleged declaration that he would as soon live under German as British rule, the Liberal party, in spite of Dicker’s repeated assertion that he had been unjustly penalized, took full advantage of the situation and boycotted the public works committee on which Dicker served. Nor was Labor able to achieve success by running J. A. Hurst, a disabled soldier and ex-parliamentarian against W. G. Spence in King O’Malley’s old seat of Darwin. After this 1917 federal election the *Daily Post*, complaining of absenteeism and the loss of Labor voters in the army, admitted that “Labor is not strong enough just now to outvote the conservative vote plus the rebel Labor vote”, especially when the party had never won a majority in a state election. Two years later, in elections noted for the virulent sectarianism of the anti-Labor and anti-Catholic Loyalty Leagues and their fellow travellers, Tasmanian Labor received two more serious reverses. As King O’Malley put it, “already politics in Australia are beginning to produce an odor stronger than the fumes from a Texas trail buzzard on a Mexican sewer waggon”.

In the federal battle, Labor lost all the seats contested. At the state election where Labor’s poll fell from 48 per cent in 1919, only the Hare-Clarke system prevented annihilation. Though Catholics had supported Labor in this election, the temperance party was now definitely opposed. With thirteen seats the party was only one member below its 1916 strength. In 1922, when Labor’s vote again dropped almost 5 per cent, only one more seat was lost. By a huge irony, the disintegration of the anti-Labor forces and the conciliatory disposition of J. A. Lyons enabled Labor to take office in 1923. Since that time Labor has used PR to retain a dominant position in Tasmanian politics.

Though time and Hare-Clark were with Tasmanian Labor, the condition of the party in the years after the conscription split was parlous. The weakness of the parliamentary party naturally gave rise to much criticism of the leadership and encouraged Tasmanians to give ear to mainland debates on industrial action, the One Big Union (OBU), and socialization objectives. Moreover, the issue of Catholic education still had to be faced. Concessions short of straight aid were offered and seized on by anti-Catholic and anti-Labor opponents. Divisions of opinion also occurred on the legitimacy of giving written answers to Catholic pre-election questionnaires and on the old issue of membership of incompatible organizations. Tasmanian Labor, perhaps wisely, never laid down hard and fast rules on the latter question and several Laborites had a foot in both Catholic Federation and socialist camps. Nevertheless, expulsions and re-admissions were common in this period of Labor weakness.

Now that parliamentary Labor was paying few dividends, attention
naturally centred on trade unionism. The union of political and industrial Labor in 1917–18, intended to improve the relations between the two wings of the movement, probably had the reverse effect.\textsuperscript{175} It was argued that the Tasmanian cost of living was the highest in Australia, while wages were the lowest. The craft unions belonging to the Hobart TLC, which had amalgamated for a time with the political party, were incapable of energetic action, but, the AWU colossus after its absorption of the Federated Mining Employees’ Association (FMEA) (the old AMA) in 1917 looked more promising. James McDonald, first Tasmanian Labor legislative councillor and president of the FMEA, was instrumental in bringing about the amalgamation. Especially after the death of James Mooney in 1918, McDonald was a dominating figure in the union. With the stormy Dicker, McDonald attempted to organize workers throughout Tasmania,\textsuperscript{176} always seeking opportunities for swallowing up smaller unions. In July 1918 the AWU’s World, still edited by Dwyer Gray, replaced the Daily Post. Gray, once a strong supporter of political action, soon found himself at loggerheads with parliamentarians such as Ogden and Lyons. Though the AWU in its organizing campaigns was studiously moderate, approving arbitration, evolutionary methods, and parliamentarianism, disputes grew bitter on the interpretation of the 1918 conference’s decision against conscription, pre-election pledges to Catholics, and above all the party’s attitude,\textsuperscript{177} discussed at the 1919 conference, to the OBU idea.

At both the 1919 and 1920 conferences, Ogden delivered a presidential address denouncing the idea of direct action as a betrayal of Labor. Such vehemence hardly appears to have been warranted in a community like Tasmania. Many delegates were obviously alienated by Ogden’s remarks. Ben Watkins attacked the 1919 executive report for not telling “conference that there was practically no organization at the present time, or that the organization was in a rotten state”.\textsuperscript{178} Later the conference was called on by Kaye and McDonald to endorse the OBU principle which was provoking so much controversy on the mainland.\textsuperscript{179} The conference, realizing the existence of the division on the mainland between J. S. Garden’s OBU scheme and the views of E. Grayndler of the AWU,\textsuperscript{180} did not want to take sides, to adopt the revolutionary preamble of the OBU, or to antagonize Tasmanian electors. As Lyons said, it was absurd to ask conference on the eve of an election to say that present methods were futile: “if any of them thought that way, then for God’s sake let them get out of the contest and go home (applause).”\textsuperscript{181} This, in spite of his subsequent socialistic utterances, appears to have been Lyons’s basic attitude. The conference agreed with Lyons, and the vendetta between Dwyer Gray, backed by Grayndler of the AWU, and the parliamentarians gathered strength in 1919. The World was accused of disloyalty to the Labor party and excluded, like the capitalist press, from the 1920 conference, which
rejected yet another attempt to put "socialization" on the platform.

In 1921, a surprising swing to the left established the socialization objective, and even Lyons, after the defeat of his 1919 attempt to enter the federal parliament, began to talk of socialism and the OBU, without really understanding their implications. Tasmanian delegates, including Cosgrove and McDonald, were recorded as voting for the Brisbane "socialization" resolution but later claimed that they had not been present when the vote was taken. Lyons was careful not to allow socialism to come before the Tasmanian electors in 1922. Once he had achieved power in 1923 the issue was forgotten, and the socialization plank at the 1926 and 1927 congresses was nearly replaced by the old objective. Many Tasmanian Laborites would probably have agreed with King O'Malley's 1922 view that the party had "committed political suicide through marching from a Russian lunatic asylum through a Soviet slaughter house to an open cemetery". The Examiner's claim that Tasmanian Laborites were "not free agents", but were "expected to follow the lead set by their bosses on the mainland" was slightly hysterical but may have contained an element of truth.

It is difficult to believe that the conflict in Tasmania relating to unions and direct action versus leagues and parliamentarianism was more than a pallid reflection of the mainland dispute, important only because it gave Laborites an opportunity to find scapegoats amongst their colleagues for the party's weakness. In the top-heavy Tasmanian Labor party, dividing lines were indistinct. As was pointed out in conference debates on politician influence in the party, it would be foolish to make restrictions when the critics of today might be the parliamentarians of tomorrow. The AWU influence, moreover, had always been exercised through the leagues. On the other hand some of the smaller Hobart trade unions had been built under the influence of obvious politicians like Woods. As Woods himself had said, all Labor politicians were unionists and "some of them could show more union tickets than those who had attacked them". On the question of socialism it is noteworthy that Cosgrove and Ogilvie, both Catholics and associated with Catholic societies, appeared strong advocates of the advanced objective.

The fate of some of the chief players in the early drama of Tasmanian Labor is instructive. Lyons took office in 1923 in circumstances very similar to those of the Earle government. Though he likewise refused preference to unionists, Lyons did succeed in winning Labor's first election victory in 1925, but his proportion of the total vote, 48.4 per cent, was exactly the same as Earle's in 1916. Like Earle again, Lyons ended his career in a non-Labor federal cabinet. Ogden, who also went into federal politics, was expelled from the party in 1928. His rival, Dwyer Gray, was expelled but readmitted to become, eventually, treasurer and
for a time Labor premier of Tasmania. Woods and Watkins sat in parliament in the 1920s and, though the former achieved a second term as Speaker, neither obtained cabinet rank. Watkins, like so many others, eventually left the party. James McDonald, the focus of Tasmanian union direct action, ultimately held the post of attorney general for six years, an interesting outcome for a man who had once insisted on the uselessness of politics. Personal rivalries, ambitions, and divergent views on practical problems, rather than distinct ideological differences, appear to explain the careers of these men.

Gordon Childe's bitter conclusion in 1923 that "the Labor Party, starting with a band of inspired Socialists, degenerated into a vast machine for capturing political power, but did not know how to use that power when attained except for the profit of individuals", if true in any state, is hardly applicable to Tasmanian Labor. It is extremely dubious, for example, whether many original Laborites, in spite of the Giblin-Waterworth discussion group, were socialists or seriously influenced by the idea.

Yet the Mercury was not unfair when it declared that "there has been a great deal of shuffling in this matter" of socialism. Henry George and vague forms of Christian socialism appear to have been the chief intellectual staples. Even the erudite Woods advocated only Blackburn interpretation socialism. In the second place the Tasmanian organization never appeared formidable. In spite of the poverty of the state, Labor did not poll a majority till 1937. The very backwardness which Labor was committed to removing made organization extremely difficult. From its inception the Tasmanian Labor party was heavily dependent on support from the mainland, both for union organizers and political campaigners. In 1917 the special conference establishing a Tasmanian Labor Federation required a £50 ($100) subsidy from Victoria. Tasmanian Labor was certainly regarded by opponents as an offshoot of the "vast machine" in New South Wales and Victoria. The Mercury in its constant denunciations of "imported agitators" talked of "this great conspiracy which is using a Naysmith hammer to kill a snail". Finally, in the consistency of their adherence to the party, Tasmanian Laborites were neither better nor worse than their brethren elsewhere. The reactions of Earle and Lyons appear to have been similar to those of Hughes or Holman. However, though no pledge can contain a ruthless and determined leader, the Tasmanian lack of interest in clear distinctions appears, as frequent conference discussions on the subject indicate, to have provided a particularly happy hunting ground for several ambitious small-time politicians. In the 1903–20 period the weakness of the party ensured that such men were usually disappointed in their ambitions. Subsequently, however, Tasmanian Labor was to hold office longer than any other state party. The Tasmanian party's late start,
as was suggested in 1903, undoubtedly helped it to build on the experience and support of its mainland allies. Ogden’s presidential prophesy of 1912 was substantially correct: “He was quite confident that Tasmania would eventually be the first state in the Commonwealth to hold the reins of Government continually when once it got control of them, (Applause). He believed this because Tasmania had moved along slowly, and members of the party had been content to wait.” If this slow development was the result of weak trade unions and a lack of militancy, it may, by establishing an ideal of co-operation rather than class interest, have eased the evolution of Labor from a suspect extremist group to the normal government of the state.

BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX


BURNS, George Mason. b. 1878; d. 1932. Miner. MHA (Queenstown), 1903—6. MHR (Illawarra, NSW), 1913—17. Trade union organizer, Tas.


GILMORE, George Crosby. b. 1859; d. 1937. Lawyer. MHA (George Town), 1893–1900; (Waratah), 1903–6. Attorney general, 1904–6.


KIRK, Hugh. Born c. 1844. Builder and carpenter. Came to Tasmania about 1883, perhaps from New Zealand. Was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment for forgery in May 1892. No further details. Probably left Tasmania.


McMAHON, W. P. Left Tasmania, and in May 1909 was manager and proprietor, the Tribune, Melbourne. No further details.


O’MALLEY, King. b. 1854; d. 1953. Insurance salesman. MHA (SA), 1896–89. MHR (Darwin), 1901–17. Minister for home affairs,


WATKINS, Benjamin. b. 1884; d. 1963. Baker, journalist, printer. MHA (Queenstown), 1906–9; (Darwin), 1909–17; (Franklin), 1919–22; 1925–34.


NOTES

1. For an excellent survey of Tasmanian geography and economics, see J. L. Davies, ed., *Atlas of Tasmania*. The contributions by Professor P. Scott and Dr. R. J. Solomon are particularly useful.


3. For a full discussion of this topic, see Henry Reynolds, “That Hated Stain”.


5. According to J. E. Ogden's presidential address to the 1919 Tasmanian Labor conference, low Tasmanian wages were due to the “long continued excess of departures over arrivals”. He calculated that Tasmania had lost 30,000 in the last fifty years. In 1903 able-bodied men were receiving only 22s. 6d, ($2.25). World (2 May 1919).


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of Australia (Ballarat, 1891), pp. 64–65.
15. Tasmanian Democrat (Launceston), 1 March 1895.
23. A copy of the League’s manifesto is found in the Catholic Morning Star, Launceston, 18 November 1893 (Tasmanian State Archives).
25. Clipper (Hobart), 30 March 1901. For O’Malley’s alleged background, see Dorothy Catts, King O’Malley. Mrs. Catts uncritically swallowed the entire O’Malley legend.
27. Morning Star, 13 August 1892.
28. Catts, King O’Malley, p. 142. O’Malley, however, later claimed that he had never been able to spend more than £250 ($500) in a campaign. See King O’Malley papers. (MS 460/5121, National Library of Australia).
32. See Devonport conference, Clipper, 2 May 1908, where a delegate said to O’Malley: “We ran Labor candidates in both Hobart and Launceston before you left South Australia.”
33. For a useful account Woods’s career, see M. L. Lake, “W. A. Woods and the Clipper, 1903–1909”.
34. Clipper, 6 July 1895.
36. Clipper, 3 September 1899. “The funny part about the bosses of this Tasmania is that their wretched ideas are forced into the new Commonwealth Bill.”
39. Clipper, 5 October 1901.
42. Ibid., 19 February and 7 March 1903.
43. *Monitor*, 23 and 30 January 1903. Mann also gave addresses on Irish Home Rule.
44. *Clipper*, 28 March 1903.
45. Ibid., 28 February 1903.
46. Ibid., 11 April 1903. Gulmore apparently attended the first Labor caucus.
49. J. F. Hogan in *Daily Post*, 8 September 1917. By 1917 Earle had left the party.
51. *Monitor*, 28 August 1903. According to Blainey, "*The Peaks of Lyell*", p. 202, the North Lyell mine had been a paradise for unionists where political meetings were frequently held in working hours and the miners "did less work for more pay than probably any other miners in the land". Amalgamation with the Mount Lyell mine ended this idyllic existence.
52. *Clipper*, 16 April 1904; *Mercury*, 9 April 1904.
55. Ibid., 25 April 1903.
56. On 24 January 1903, the *Clipper* had published a comprehensive comparison to demonstrate New Zealand's progress and Tasmania's backwardness in social legislation. "It sets one thinking. Maoriland is only about 1000 miles east of Tasmania, the general conditions of both countries are not very dissimilar."
57. Ibid., 6 and 13 June 1903. "The annual contribution to the T.W.P.L. [Tasmanian Workers' Political League] is fixed at 1s. [10 cents] per quarter for males and 6d. [5 cents] for females. Members of Unions are to be entitled to full membership in the League on payment through their union of ½ ordinary contributions. Three-fourths of the amount of contributions collected to be remitted to the Executive, ¼ to be retained by the Branches." Woods made the "wholesale price" statement in an attempt to persuade the secretary of the Launceston Amalgamated Society of Engineers to join as a union after seeking a ruling from the Australian Council of the society on political work. Gormanston and Queenstown AMAs had already joined as units, while smaller unions were encouraging their members to join as individuals. (Woods to James Dunken, 21 August 1903, W. A. Woods papers, NP/1 39/8/4.)
60. *Clipper*, 20 June 1903.
61. Ibid. The *Monitor*, though it had previously demanded the establishment of a Labor party (16 January 1903), now agreed with the *Bulletin* (29 May 1903).
62. Woods to Tudor, 24 October 1903 (Woods papers, NP/139/8/4).
63. Woods to A. Symonds, 9 October 1903 (ibid., 41).
64. Circular, 11 September 1903 (ibid., 38).
65. Woods to Ogden, 22 October 1903 (ibid., 47).
66. Woods's Horse Racing Book, p. 25 (ibid.).
67. Woods to R. Horsham, 24 July 1903 (ibid., 27).
68. Woods to S. Ford, 30 July 1903 (ibid., 30).
69. *Clipper*, 4 July 1903.
71. The *Clipper* habitually wrote of the Chinese in the most offensive terms and suggested, for example, that the abominable Hobart drainage was due to the fact that a "dirty Chinaman" might have seven votes for the City Council while a white artisan remained disfranchised (7 February 1903).
72. "Now about O'Malley for Reps. Has he signed the pledge? If not, of a certainty he must do so," Woods to Ogden, 15 October 1903 (Woods papers, N/139/8/4, 43).
73. Woods's Horse Racing Book, p. 25.
74. *Clipper*, 19 December 1903: "The Catholic voter who votes for a man like Mulcahy, merely because Mulcahy happens to be a Catholic, deserves to be disfranchised."
75. *Monitor*, 18 December 1903. In its previous issue, 11 December 1903, it had recommended workers to vote for the Labor candidates: M. MacMaster, J. J. Mahoney, and C. Metz for the senate, and O'Malley and Andy Kirk for the House of Representatives.
76. *Clipper*, 16 September 1904, complained that a fifty-fifty division neutralized the pledge and members were not enthusiastic about solidarity.
77. *Mercury*, 7 April 1903.
81. Ibid., 29 April 1905.
82. Ibid., 18 March 1905. According to Woods, "several attempts had been made to start unions for different individual trades in urban Tasmania, but the population was so small and the number of employees in each branch so limited that nearly all such attempts had come to nothing". The Tasmanian Workers' Association was far from militant. Its object (ibid., 1 April 1905) was "to improve the relations between employers and workmen". The Launceston conference (ibid., 9 April 1904) had set up a committee to discuss this question.
84. Ibid., 2 May 1908.
86. *Daily Post*, 1 July 1912.
89. Ibid., 25 March 1906.
90. Ibid., 28 March 1906: "A compact little Labour Party in the House of Assembly would decidedly even things up a bit there."
91. *Mercury*, 30 March, 12 April, and 31 May 1906.
93. *Clipper*, 21 April 1906. Each received three votes.
94. In 1908 an AMA vote rejected by a large majority the proposal that the union should affiliate with the PLLs. See Lake, "W. A. Woods and the *Clipper*", p. 55.
97. Ibid., 1 June 1906.
98. Lake, "W. A. Woods and the *Clipper*", 49–50.
100. *Clipper*, 28 November 1908.
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103. The Orangemen were opposing all federal members who had voted for the recent Irish Home Rule resolution in the Commonwealth parliament. These included O'Malley and O'Keefe.


105. *Clipper*, 6 April 1907.

106. Ibid., 15 August 1896. As late as 1915, N. K. Ewing, leader of the anti-Labor opposition, was claiming that the Hare-Clark system prevented Labor from obtaining a satisfactory majority (see *Daily Post*, 10 April 1915).


110. Ibid., 1 May 1909.

111. This mode had been laid down with Earle's support at the Hobart special conference of 1906. See *Clipper*, 4 August 1906. At Campbell Town in 1910 (*Daily Post*, 28 March 1910) it was proposed to replace the system of an exhaustive caucus ballot for ministers by individual nominations. Both Earle and Woods opposed this change. For N. E. Lewis's position, see A. B. Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, 2nd ed. (Oxford), 1: 265. See also p. 167 for discussion of governor's refusal to grant Earle a dissolution.

112. *Daily Post*, 22 April 1912. Metz, however, was a delegate for the Denison League at the 1919 conference.


114. James Belton to O'Malley, 16 September 1909, and O'Malley to Belton, 18 September 1909 (*O'Malley papers, 460/4960–1*). Belton could not "understand how it is that those who get the least from our movement are ready to sacrifice the most".

115. See M. Kozak, "E. Dwyer Gray, Labour Journalist".


117. *Clipper*, 19 July 1909. Both Woods and King O'Malley strongly supported the AWU.


119. *Daily Post*, 13 March 1911. It was argued that the Legislative Council had only allowed the bill through in order that this inferior system might distract worker attention from the more comprehensive federal arbitration system. The main Labor criticisms were: the absence of compulsory arbitration, the relatively small number of trades covered, the non-recognition of industrial unions, the excessive penalties for striking, and the lack of protection for worker representatives against victimization. The system was attacked at the 1913 conference (ibid., 21 June 1913).


122. Ibid., 20 June 1913.

123. Ibid., 28 June 1913.

124. "Eventually it would have to be faced, explained, and expounded to the small cultivators of the land whose salvation it would be" (*Daily Post*, 20 June 1913). Land nationalization was again overwhelmingly defeated in 1914 (ibid., 19 June 1914) and 1915 (ibid., 6 May 1915).


126. In 1920 six of the eight executive members were members of parliament. In 1919 three of the eight-man executive were not members, but less than a month after the conference two of these were elected to the Assembly.
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127. “Claud” to Woods, 30 March 1910 (Woods papers NP 139/8/1).
128. “Peter D.” to [Woods], 30 March (1910) (ibid., NP 139/8/2).
131. See *Daily Post*, 28 June 1912, 20 June 1913 (Earle in favour), 28 July 1916, 12 April 1917, and 2 May 1919 (just failed to obtain two-thirds majority). In 1917, though the politically oriented J. E. Ogden supported the abolition, James McDonald of the FMEA and later the AWU insisted that it would “knock the end out of the organization”.
132. M. Cunningham, Secretary of Lyell A.M.E.A. to Woods, 6 November 1911 (Woods papers, NP 139/8/1).
133. O’Malley to Dr. Taafe, 10 May 1912 (O’Malley papers, 460/4321). The decline in the industry was responsible for the exodus which in 1913 meant 1,300 absentee voters in the Zeehan roll. See Blainey, *The Peaks of Lyell*, p. 148.
137. See letter in *Daily Post*, 5 December 1917: “My name will be found in the text books on constitutional law throughout the Empire when the name of E. Dwyer Gray will have been long forgotten, even in the dim and distant past.” Earle was certainly cited by A. B. Keith, *Responsible Government and the Dominions*, I: 171: “Mr. Earle’s conduct in accepting office and then breaking his undertaking was politically beneath contempt.” Keith also considered that the governor had behaved unconstitutionally.
138. *Daily Post*, 28 April 1915, “Some members of the party had rather hesitated about the advisability of taking office, because they had realized that they could not get a fair show.”
139. *World*, 8 December 1919. However, according to John Reynolds, “John Earle (1865–1932)”, p. 36, Earle acted on the advice of the future judge, Andrew Inglis Clark, Jr.
141. According to G. Bigwood at the 1917 special conference (*Daily Post*, 11 January 1917): “Mr. Earle had proved that he had allowed the environment of the class which was opposed to the Labor party to overpower him.”
142. Lyons had come under Giblin’s influence in 1907 when he was attending the teachers’ training college in Hobart. See P. R. Hart “J. A. Lyons, Tasmanian Labor Leader”, pp. 33–42. See also F. C. Green, *Servant of the House*, pp. 10 and 11.
143. *Daily Post*, 5 June 1914 (correspondent for mainland paper); 1 July 1914 (Earle’s justification in the Assembly). See *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 25 November 1914, (closure of Beaconsfield mine). The *Herald* believed that the ultimate failure was not the fault of the government. For an excellent and detailed description of Tasmanian Labor during the war, see M. L. Lake, “Tasmania and the First World War”.
144. *Mercury*, 22 May 1914.
145. E. Parry, electrical engineer to the New Zealand government. The scheme was later compared with the New Zealand Lake Coleridge development (*Daily Post*, 9 May 1916). The otherwise disappointing papers of W. E. Shoobridge in the University of Tasmania archives contain many papers relating to irrigation, hydro-electric power, and related matters. See especially W. E. Shoobridge to H. G. Raschbacher, consulting engineer, University of Mississippi, 6 March 1913, in which Shoobridge discusses possibilities of state hydro-power in Tasmania.
NOTES TO PAGES 425–29


147. Ibid., 12 September 1914.

148. Ibid., 22 October 1914.

149. Ibid., 21 January 1915.

150. Ibid., 7 April 1915.

151. Ibid., 8 April 1915; and McRae, "The Tasmanian Labour Party and the Trade Unions", p. 8.

152. See Hart, "J. A. Lyons, Tasmanian Labor Leader", and *CPD* (14 May 1930), p. 1709. Ogden's contention in 1930 that "I have always been opposed to the principle" was not borne out in 1915 when he introduced preference to unionists (*Daily Post*, 26 November 1915), and in 1917 when he criticized a Liberal Wages Boards' amendment bill on the ground that it did not give preference to unionists (*Daily Post*, 17 January 1917).

153. Ibid., 11 September 1915. This was also the opinion of the Launceston Examiner, 19 December 1914.


155. Outside Tasmania, Ewing is chiefly known for his 1920 report which resulted in the release of ten of the twelve IWW prisoners.


158. Ibid., 20 January 1916.


162. See discussion in Hobart TLC, in *Daily Post*, 8 May 1916, and views of Adam Martin, president of railway workers' union, ibid., 10 and 28 June 1916. According to Martin: "You may assert, sir, that the Labor party are better advocates in the interests of the workers than the Liberal Party, but you will find little evidence in support of this contention in their recent attitude towards railway workers. Indeed, the Parliamentary Labor Party seems to me to be very timid advocates, especially where the interests of the manual workers are concerned." Wages boards "are very safe propositions indeed for the employers".


165. D. Catts's belief (King O'Malley, p. 236) that "O'Malley was wholeheartedly against conscription" is belied by P. Kelly, FMEA president: "The people of Darwin were no longer prepared to support Mr. King O'Malley, who had done nothing during the campaign, and when it was over told them all to be brothers. (Laughter)" (*Daily Post*, 13 November 1916).


168. Ibid., 13 November 1916 (Matt. O'Brien), and 27 November 1910 (State union conference on amalgamation with political movements): "They must preserve the organization which had defeated conscription."

169. See *Mercury* and *Daily Post*, 31 October 1916, *Tasmanian Mail*, 2 November 1916. The "noes" won Hobart Central, East, and West, and Launceston North and West. North Hobart, a poorish area, had a "yes" majority in 1916 but not in 1917. South Hobart was "yes" in both referenda.

170. See *Mercury* and *Daily Post*, 24 December 1917. The "noes" won North
Hobart in 1917. In Darwin the Gormanston and Circular Head administrative districts, voted “no” in both referenda. The consistency of the latter helps to justify Turner's contention, that small farmers were the decisive element in the “no” cause. Franklin's 1917 “no” vote might appear to point in the same direction.

171. Daily Post, 4 January 1917. According to Woods, Earle “must have been hypnotized” (ibid., 11 January 1917).


174. See R. P. Davis, State Aid and Tasmanian Politics, pp. 95–96. The careers of J. J. Kenneally and C. Metz are instructive in this respect. The minute book of the ALP executive (Tasmania), March 1917 – December 1930, chronicles in laconic fashion many of these vendettas.

175. For further details see McRae, “The Tasmanian Labor Party and Trade Unions”, pp. 9 and 10.

176. McDonald brought the AWU to Hobart in 1918 and had some success enrolling labourers at the zinc works; Phil Kelly made an extensive tour of the East and North East Coast; Dicker organized workers at the Great Lake in 1919 and enrolled 700 apple and hop pickers in the Derwent Valley in 1920.

177. For disputes, see World, 30 July, 17 and 12 August 1918, 8 April and 15 July 1919.

178. Ibid., 2 May 1919.

179. Kaye and S. Champ had attended the Melbourne OBU conference (World, 1 March and 24 June 1919).


181. World, 6 May 1919.


183. O'Malley to V. Shaw, 25 September 1922 (O'Malley Papers, 460/5118).

184. Examiner, 12 March 1919.


187. Socialist noises were made from time to time, but, like Ogden's declaration in 1912 (Daily Post, 28 June 1912) that “he hoped they would never be ashamed of the name (Renewed applause.)”, these were not based on any clear consideration of the issues involved.

188. Daily Post, 11 April 1917.

189. Ibid., 28 June 1912.
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