Postal Unions and Politics

A History of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union of Australia

Frank Waters

edited by Denis Murphy

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Foreword

Part of the business of writing a Foreword to any book is to commend its content to readers. I readily accept that role in regard to Frank Waters' history of the union he served so capably for so many years, for three major reasons.

Firstly, the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union, now the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union, has such a long, dedicated, faithful and fruitful association both with the Australian Labor Party and with the Australian Council of Trade Unions. That association is not simply asserted or claimed as one union man's view. It is documented in the records of the union where Frank Waters is not relying on his memory of his direct experience but on the records, decisions and declarations of the union over time. The efforts of the APTU and its principal officers in maintaining Labor unity are demonstrable. The then APWU was one of the first of the major unions to affiliate with the ACTU, and despite occasional differences it has remained a loyal, if not always uncritical, adherent to the policies of the central trade union body.

Secondly, there is the quality of the material itself. Frank Waters has proved a meticulous historian in his examination of the union's early days and his recounting of events in which he played a direct and vital role. He has resisted what must have been a great temptation for a man of his great gifts as a raconteur to be merely anecdotal. He has accepted the more difficult discipline of setting out the facts of the union's foundation and development, facts which will supply valuable research material for writers on industrial and political matters which have a broader sweep than the history of an individual union.

Having said that, it can also be said that when Frank Waters comes to the involvement of the "Movement" in the industrial and
political affairs of our country, the history becomes more alive through the injection of the understandable partisanship of a man who was intensely involved in those struggles. This history makes a valuable contribution to the too sparse body of written work on the Labor movement in Australia. One is almost compelled to say that those union officials who carry an immense knowledge of union experience around in their heads should seriously consider setting it down somewhere before that rich history is lost to posterity.

Thirdly, there is my personal association with the author which goes back more years than I really care to say. Suffice it to say that I have been aware of Frank Waters ever since I became active in the Trade Union movement and that we quickly became close friends. Time spent in his company has always been time well spent, not only because he is an amusing and congenial companion, but because of the quality of his judgments on a range of matters. He is among the best read people I have ever met, inside or outside the union movement, possessing an extremely retentive memory and a shrewd, quizzical view of the world. George Slater, General Secretary of the Union and another close associate of mine, calls Frank "father", and I suppose that is as good a description as any for a man who has helped a lot of younger people along the way. And despite what I said earlier about Frank resisting the temptation to be merely anecdotal, I would welcome a book from him of his own wryly humorous recollections of his time in our great movement.

In conclusion, I commend the APTU for commissioning this history and in its choice of an author. Hopefully other unions and other authors will be inspired to produce similar and sorely needed material.

R. J. HAWKE
President, ACTU

March 1978
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My particular thanks go to Dr Denis Murphy, who over the past eight months has edited the manuscript, suggested extensive rewriting and looked after the book through to its publication.
Finally, my thanks go to all those unnamed workers in the Australian and overseas trade-union movements who, over the past hundred years, have remained faithful to their union principles and who are the basis of this book.

FRANK WATERS
Introduction

Few trade-union leaders have had as eventful a life in the Australian labour movement as has Frank Waters. In 1926, at the age of nineteen, he became an executive member of the newly formed Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union and represented that union on the Brisbane Trades and Labour Council. Two years later, he was a member of the Executive of the Trades and Labour Council and in 1932, at the age of twenty-four, was one of the two Queensland delegates on the Interstate Executive of the Austral­asian Council of Trade Unions. Like Ted Theodore, who had formed the Amalgamated Workers' Association in 1907 by the time he was twenty-two, Frank Waters had drive, ambition and a great capacity for organization.

In 1932, Frank left the industrial movement and won a seat in the Queensland Legislative Assembly as the Labor member for Kelvin Grove. At the Labor-in-Politics Convention in Brisbane, prior to the election, he had urged reforms in the Queensland Central Executive and in the Labor Party organization generally. He wanted to break the near-oligarchic power that the “Inner Executive” held, and was soon branded as a radical and a trouble­maker. The minutes of the A.L.P.’s “Inner Executive” between 1932 and 1941 are studded with complaints about Waters from those who held power in the Queensland A.L.P. and with summons for him to be called in to be reprimanded. He was, in a real sense, a natural rebel. On the other hand, he was also a very capable Labor politician and would certainly have become a cabinet minister and possibly even Premier had his parliamentary career not been cut short. (Ironically, his opponent in later years, Vince Gair, also entered the Legislative Assembly in 1932.)
Frank Waters was the only Labor politician to lose his seat at the 1938 state election to the Protestant Labour Party, a sectarian organization that fielded twenty-three candidates at that election. When he sought the Labor re-endorsement for Kelvin Grove in 1941, Premier William Forgan Smith and Clarrie Fallon, the state Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union and President of the A.L.P.'s Queensland Central Executive, saw to it that this was refused. A deputation from his own branch members to the party's "Inner Executive", seeking the reason for his non-endorsement, was given a cold refusal. When two other radical Labor members of the Legislative Assembly, George Marriott and George Taylor, supported the "Sheepskins for Russia" and "Medical Aid for Russia" campaigns and were publicly associated with the Australian Soviet Friendship League, at the time when the Russians alone of the Allies were physically engaged fighting the Nazis, they were expelled from the A.L.P. Frank Waters organized a public meeting in the Brisbane City Hall to press for their reinstatement in the party. As a consequence, he too lost his A.L.P. membership and did not regain it until 1957.

In 1942, Frank Waters joined the Australian Army; he was discharged in 1946 and in that year, was elected Queensland Branch Secretary of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union. Once he had consolidated himself in this position, his career branched out to involve him in all sections of the labour movement: as a member of the Executive of the Queensland Trades and Labour Council; the Congress of the Australian Council of Trade Unions; the Asian and World Conferences of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International; workers' delegate to the International Labour Organization Conference; delegate to the Queensland Central Executive, Labor-in-Politics Convention and the Federal Conference of the A.L.P.; Federal President of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union; and his union's representative on the Joint Council of the Commonwealth Public Service. He also was a member of the Federated Clerks' Union from 1932 to 1976.

In 1972, he retired as Queensland Branch Secretary of his union and completed twelve years as Federal President in 1973. In 1971, the Union's Federal Conference asked him to write this history. Three years later, Prime Minister Whitlam appointed him to the Committee of Inquiry into Museums and National Collections; this inquiry met in 1974 and 1975.

Frank Waters would make a great character in a novel. Few men have had such a long and interesting career, filled with victories and defeats, hopes that were dashed, but replaced by others that bloomed. He was at home drinking beer with workers in the public
bar, and equally at ease with cabinet ministers and senior officers of the Commonwealth Public Service. Labor leaders like Bert Evatt, Arthur Calwell and Gough Whitlam have sought his advice and been his confidants. His home is filled with books and collections of art; and while he was certainly a Labor intellectual, he was also a tough architect of industrial action.

Frank Waters was undoubtedly one of the key trade-union leaders who were responsible for the downfall of “The Movement” and the Industrial Groups in the 1950s and 1960s. In his earlier political career, he had learnt about organizing numbers the hard way and was to apply in the 1950s and 1960s the lessons he had learned twenty years before. Yet, despite his unrelenting campaign against the Movement and the Industrial Groups, he retained a strong commitment to natural justice and equity. He did not regard a person who had made a mistake in the industrial or political labour movement as being for ever banned or condemned. In his later years in the union movement and the A.L.P., he became very much a father figure, and one held in high regard for his shrewdness and wisdom. Many an aspiring candidate for office in the A.L.P. or in the union movement was advised to “go and have a yarn with Frank Waters and see what he thinks”.

This is not an autobiography or a book of reflections. It is a history of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union (now the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union). This is a union that operated within one industry only: the Australian Post Office. Though there were other unions in that industry, they resisted invitations to amalgamate with the A.P.W.U. While some sections of the A.P.W.U. had a militant background, notably in New South Wales, it was not a union with a long record of involvement in strikes. Indeed, it was not to be until the 1960s that the A.P.W.U. demonstrated that it had the solidarity to engage in successful industrial action. It was a union that was in close touch with its members and responsive to their needs and wishes. In short, it was a democratically run organization. A notable characteristic of the A.P.W.U. has been its commitment to political as well as industrial action through its affiliation with the A.L.P. It has attached greater importance to its A.L.P. affiliation than many other unions affiliated to that party. Indeed, it is a good example of a union faithfully supporting the Labor Party and then sharing in the benefits unionists and workers generally have obtained from Labor governments. The A.P.W.U. has an unbroken affiliation with the A.C.T.U. and has tried to insist that its state branches affiliate with the various state Trades and Labour Councils.
There has not been a great number of union histories written in Australia. Of those published to date, about half are by former union officials, while the remainder are by academics. Both have their place in trade-union and labour history. Those written by trade-unionists often have a feeling of personal involvement and commitment that is not possible in the histories by professional scholars. This is particularly so in chapters on strikes and negotiations with employers. For the professional historian, the written works of practical officials like Frank Waters become an invaluable reference for assessing trade-union attitudes to and feelings regarding issues in the labour movement.

Possibly two of the chapters that will be read most closely in this book are those on the “Movement” and on Industrial Groups within the unions. Frank Waters was at the very heart of the battle with B.A. Santamaria for the soul of the trade-union movement. Working with Jack Egerton in Brisbane and a score of other close confidants throughout Australia, and particularly in his own union, he pieced together the operation of the Industrial Groups and the “Movement” as finely as any outside person could in the early 1950s. He then provided the organization to overthrow the Industrial Groups in his own union, which in any case was never threatened by any communist take-over, and lent a hand to other embattled unionists. He was thus an active participant in possibly the greatest internal battle in the Australian labour movement. The chapters dealing with the replacement of the Postmaster-General’s Department by the two corporations and the correlation between the Labor Party in and out of office with an affiliated union are also valuable studies of a union at work.

There was much good sense in the decision of the A.P.W.U. to commission Frank Waters to write this history. George Slater, the Federal Secretary, displayed a keen interest in the job and it was through his co-operation, and that of the federal office, that this book was produced. The Union has deposited its records with the Australian National University Archives for the use of other students and historians. These records will provide researchers with the material to follow up leads given to them in this book for further trade-union histories.

Unions in Australia are barely a hundred years old. In a real sense, many date only from the 1920s (and still have the same rules now as then). Frank Waters and those of his vintage grew with the unions. They knew their industries; they were close to their members; they were trained and educated “on the job”. In pressing for a properly established Trade Union Training Authority, union leaders like Frank Waters hoped to guarantee the success of the
unions they had built and the new officials who now administered them.

My role as editor of the manuscript was not to rewrite it, but to put it into shape for publication. The A.P.W.U. history here is that written by Frank Waters. Where I thought it was lacking, I asked him to write additional material or to clarify what he had written. In the six months that we spent preparing the final draft, Frank has given me access to his collection of papers, which will later be deposited in the Australian National Library. They will be a very valuable addition to Australian trade-union history.

DENIS MURPHY

University of Queensland
Trade unionism in the Australian postal and telegraph service had its genesis in the states prior to Federation. The history of some of the early organizations is clouded in mystery, for there is no connected record of their establishment in most instances, nor for that matter of their functioning and the manner and means of how this was done.

Most of the recorded history revolves around the formation of unions or associations of telegraph operators (telegraphists), which were first established in 1885. In New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia Gerald Caiden, in his *Career Service* and his *History of the Australian Commonwealth Post and Telegraph Associations,* discusses the emergence of these unions. Percy Gribble, in his History of the Queensland Telegraph Branch, points out that these were followed by the inauguration of a similar association of telegraph operators in Queensland in 1889.

Some interesting segments of Australian postal history were unearthed in the evidence tendered to the 1910 Royal Commission into the Australian Post Office. The evidence suggests that unions were registered by governmental authority in some states in the 1890s. There was a Letter Carriers’ Union registered in Queensland under the 1885 Trade Union Act. Also, in the evidence tendered to the Commission, it was disclosed that a New South Wales Letter Carriers’, Mail Boys’ and Mail Drivers’ Association was functioning

in 1900 and, according to later evidence, was actually established in 1889. The following letters, which were circulated to all members of the New South Wales parliament by the Association were obtained from the New South Wales Post office Historical officer Mr John Olsen. It should be noted that parliamentary legislation was required then, through the annual budget, to increase the wages and salaries of postal employees. Legally, the Association's members had no right to appear before an arbitration tribunal or to enter into direct bargaining or negotiations with their employer.

Confidential

LETTER CARRIERS, MAIL BOYS AND MAIL DRIVERS' ASSOCIATION

General Post Office
October 13th, 1900.

The Hon. ......................... M.P.

Dear Sir,

I am directed by my Association to bring under your notice (now that the Estimates are before Parliament) the question of salaries paid to letter carriers and others in the Postal Department. You will observe my Association placed the matter before the Post Master General on July 10th, 1900, who admitted a strong case had been out and promised to do what he could with the Public Service Board in bringing about a better state of affairs as regards salary. A reply has since been received from the Deputy Post Master General, to the effect that the matters submitted to the Post Master General would receive consideration when the re-grading of the Department was being made.

We, therefore appeal to you when the Post Master General's estimates come on for consideration to use your influence by advocating a reasonable increase in salary to a large body of Public Servants—who are so scandalously underpaid.

By falling in with our wishes you will oblige,

[Signed] D. Evans,
Hon. Sec

NEW SOUTH WALES LETTER CARRIERS, MAIL BOYS, AND MAIL DRIVERS ASSOCIATION

Mail Branch, G.P.O.,
June 15th, 1900.

To the Post Master General,

Sir,

I am directed by the New South Wales Letter Carriers, Mail Boys, and Mail Drivers Association to respectfully ask you as head of the Department to which we have the honour to belong to intercede on behalf of the Letter Carriers and Mail Boys of New South Wales with the Public Service Board, and endeavour to obtain for them an increase in their Salaries and for the Letter Carriers to receive increments of
£10, instead of £5, as at present, that the minimum salary be increased from £26, per annum to £91, per annum. And the maximum salary be increased from £144, per annum to £160, per annum. And that all vacancies on the Letter Carriers staff be filled by Mail Boys at an increased salary.

In support of the application for increase in Salary it may be stated that the majority of Letter Carriers have not received an increase for a considerable number of years, while officials holding less responsible positions in other branches of the Service have received increases annually.

A large number of the 220 Letter Carriers, receiving less than £100, per annum have been in the Service upwards of 10 years. Some have wives and families to support, and others have aged parents depending upon them for maintenance, and on the small salary they receive they are unable to live with any degree of comfort.

If the past rate of advancement is any guide, then those on the lower grades can never hope to receive the maximum salary. My Association in respectfully asking for the Letter Carriers to receive £10, increments, instead of £5, as at present, and that the maximum and minimum salary be increased, we claim that in consequence of their being so many grades and the progress from grade to grade being so slow, the best years of a Junior Letter Carrier's life would be spent in the Service with no brighter prospect before him. That the duties of Letter Carriers are more arduous and equal in responsibility to the Sorters, whose minimum salary is £100, and maximum £160, per annum, to be raised shortly to £170, per annum. While in performing our duties as Letter Carriers in the Head Office, we have to be in attendance at 6 a.m. all the year round, and on special occasions even at an earlier hour. We have also to be out in all weathers, while on the other hand the Sorters perform the whole of their duties indoors, and therefore are not subject to the same climatic conditions as a Letter Carrier. A Sorter has one duty to perform, i.e.: Sorting. A Letter Carrier has several duties to perform: Letter Carriers do duty in the Receiving Room for 5 hours, sometimes more during the day, during that time they do the whole of the Sorting (Letters and Newspapers) and the fact of the Inter-Colonial and Country Mails arriving at this time, and the short time at our disposal in getting this large amount of Mail matter dealt with, while the work of getting our beats prepared for delivery must be considered of great importance.

In further support it may be stated here that the Letter Carriers had to come back and work for 2½ hours on May 23rd. (a Public Holiday) —to sort not to deliver the letters and Newspapers that arrived by the English Mail on that date. Letter Carriers have also to do stamping and open some hundreds of Mail Bags that arrive during the day. In appealing for the Mail Boys to fill what vacancies occur on the Letter Carriers Staff, at an increased Salary, it may be stated that the Mail Boys, after being for years in the Service, are asked to accept the position of Letter Carrier, on the Salary they were receiving as a Mail
Linemen's camp on the bank at the Burdekin River, Queensland's Post and Telegraphs Department, before Federation
Boy, and in many instances Mail Boys are called upon to do Receivers' duties without receiving any extra remuneration for such work, while when a vacancy occurs on the much less responsible staffs of Cleaner or Mail Cart Driver, and the position is given to a Mail Boy, he receives an increase of £13 per annum.

My Association in submitting these matters for your consideration, have but one desire, that being the welfare of these officials who have served the Department faithfully and well for a number of years, and by granting such it would be the means of giving encouragement to a large body of Public Servants.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

[signed] D. Evans,
Sec.

The Mail Branch Association of New South Wales, which enrolled sorters, had a parallel existence with the Letter Carriers', Mail Boys' and Mail Drivers' Association. The New South Wales Construction Branch Union of Telephone and Telegraph Branches was also functioning, according to the Commission evidence, before 1901, and from evidence presented to the Commission in Victoria, organizations of letter carriers and postal sorters also operated in that state prior to Federation. It seems reasonable to assume that the counterpart of the New South Wales organization of the Construction Branch Union of Telephone and Telegraph Branches also was in existence before 1901 in some states.

In 1902, Duncan MacLachlan, formerly Under-Secretary for Mines and Agriculture in New South Wales, was appointed Public Service Commissioner by the first federal government, and made no secret of his dislike for trade unions. Nevertheless, he received representations on union matters from the various state organizations and replies to representations were initially forwarded through the Deputy Postmaster-General in the respective states.

When the Commonwealth government established the Royal Commission into the Post Office in 1910, the unions took the opportunity to present evidence and representatives gave evidence in all states. The Royal Commission was used as a vehicle to draw attention to the bad working conditions that were in operation within the postal service at that time, and some very revealing facts were presented by the various worker organizations.

The 1910 Royal Commission was an important step in the history of the Australian Post Office. There were a large proportion of administrative officers in the Public Service who had been employed by their respective state governments prior to the Commonwealth, who were now assuming responsibility for sections within the Postal
and Telegraph Service. A number of these officers had had experience in both the state and the federal administration. To some extent, the Royal Commission was a battleground, in that it brought out into the open some of the in-fighting that had been proceeding between the Central Office of the Department and the various state administrations. It also unearthed many injustices that were being suffered by the rank-and-file of the postal and telecommunication service. For example, the State Electrical Engineer in Queensland, J.R. Bradford, thought it most unfair that linemen absent from their station every night should be allowed travelling expenses of only two shillings per night, and that in his judgement, most of them would be out of pocket as a result. Bradford, also at that early stage, cast doubts on the efficacy of examinations for line staff; in fact, he had some criticism to offer of the standards being exacted of engineers in their examinations. He thought that subjects such as algebra and trigonometry were not really necessary, and he also had reservations in respect to the standards of English compositions being set in the papers for engineers' exams.

The Royal Commission also brought to light the resentment of officialdom against the infant trade-union movement in the Service. Various descriptions were applied to the different employee organizations, such as "disloyal" and "insubordinate". In the forefront of these critics was H.B. Templeton, Deputy Postmaster-General for Queensland and former Chief Clerk of the Central Office, and R.O. Bourne, Public Service Inspector for Queensland. Templeton's remarks concerning associations of employees (i.e. trade unions) could be said to reflect the thinking of the bureaucrats of the day:

In my opinion, some of the recent troubles of the Department have arisen not because of undue political pressure, but owing to the disloyal and irregular actions of leading members of certain Departmental associations.

I am a believer in the organization of officials for social and even protective purposes, but unfortunately, whilst a large number of the associations have given no cause for complaint, the aims and actions of some associations of clerical officers (clerks and telegraphists) have of late years become so unreasonable, and the attitude adopted by them towards the Department has become so very aggressive, that, if allowed to go further unchecked, the existence of the particular associations under notice will become a distinct menace to the good and efficient working of the Department.

It has been a common occurrence for certain of these associations, and especially through their official publications and in the public newspapers, to offensively attack both the Department and its officers, and so strong has their conduct become that they press upon the Department the most preposterous demands, and at times show a
decided inclination to actively interfere with the administration of the Department.

Already by combination, officials of the Department have secured many great advantages which I feel satisfied they could not have hoped to obtain had the Department remained under State control; but, instead of being contented, some of them exhibit a greedy desire to secure the unreasonable, and I hope, the unattainable.

The time seems to have gone by when the whole of the officers of the Department could be expected or compelled to give loyal service to the Department, otherwise we would not have had the far too frequent occurrence of officials supplying newspapers with false statements concerning the Department.

It appears to me that no Department could possibly be managed efficiently and satisfactorily if any organization of officials be permitted to go beyond proper and reasonable bounds, and immediate action appears to be necessary to compel those officials who, acting on behalf of their associations, have gone beyond the bounds of propriety, to refrain from a recurrence of such improper actions and conduct, and to confine themselves strictly within their proper spheres.

Bourne's evidence to the Commission is very revealing:

**Question 37771** "Are you aware that the officers have been represented before this Commission by Associations?"

Bourne: "I do not feel quite satisfied that the organizations are what they represent themselves to be."

**Question 37772** "Do you consider the work of such organizations is harmful to the service?"

Bourne: "If by an Association it be understood that a few malcontents should arrange, utterly regardless of the impropriety of misrepresentation, to ventilate individual grievances which, if impartially inquired into, would be shown to have very little, if any, foundation in fact, rather than place their cases before the Commissioner as the Regulations provide, then I am of opinion that it would be right that such action should be discredited and discouraged, and that it is a positive wrong to give to such a sympathetic hearing as being subversive of discipline, and particularly so when officials express opinions upon matters of which they are without knowledge or experience. But if by an Association it be understood that a number combine in order to secure what is reasonable as to pay and conditions of service, having some regard to the interests of the public, there can be no objection if they keep within reasonable bounds."

Some members of the higher echelons of the Department had almost a pathological hatred of unions, which indicated that they would not lend much assistance to the unions' development on one hand or continuance on the other, but nevertheless, unions embracing various classifications of postal employees continued to expand and develop.
The question of whether the Post Office should be brought under the control of a Board of Commissioners was also canvassed at the Royal Commission. In fact, some Central Office officials gave backing to this proposal, but it was consistently resisted by a number of state administrators.

The question of fines being imposed upon employees was also examined in some detail, and it was disclosed that a few employees in the Brisbane Mail Branch were fined sums of up to £3 for misdemeanours involving alleged carelessness on their part. This was a particularly savage penalty. The ruling weekly rate of wages existing at that time for a sorter was £2.18s.0d. A fine of £1 also was quite common. There were also other types of penalties inflicted, such as suspension from duty without pay, which again inflicted great hardship upon the worker and his family. A number of these cases were highlighted in the evidence given to the inquiry by Arthur Brownlow Corbett, who was the General Secretary of the Commonwealth Public Service Association for Queensland and also editor of the journal *Federal Service*. Corbett later qualified as an engineer and designed the first mechanical mail-handling plant in the world, which was located in the Sydney Mail Exchange, where he was appointed Superintendent of Mails. Subsequently, he was appointed Deputy-Director of Posts and Telegraphs in Queensland, and finally the Director-General of Civil Aviation. It could be fairly said that, as an engineer, Corbett was a man of great ability, but he did not have the happy knack of endearing himself to his staff. Nevertheless, throughout the hearings of the Commission, he clearly played a significant role.

A number of other unions and staff associations, through their representatives, gave evidence to the Commission, using it as a sounding-board to bring to the attention of the Australian people a number of the ills within the Post Office that needed adjusting.* Constance Berridge, who was a representative of the Victorian Women’s Post and Telegraph Association, also gave evidence before the Commission, indicating that at that early stage, women were taking their place in the infant postal trade-union movement.

In the early 1900s, difficulties were encountered by unions in submitting to the Public Service Commissioner claims for wage increases, because of the different views held by organizations in the various states. However, interstate conferences of the Letter Carriers’ Association were held prior to 1910, and there were similar moves to interstate co-operation by other unions in the Post Office.

* The most prominent of these are listed in Appendix 2, p. 282.
Meanwhile, the struggle for trade-union recognition proceeded apace, and much to the discomfiture of Public Service Commissioner MacLachlan, the Fisher Labor government in 1911 introduced the necessary legislation to give legal recognition to unions in the Commonwealth Public Service. This enabled the unions to place their case before the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, then a revolutionary step for government employees. Gerald Caiden's observations of this breakthrough by postal workers are worth repeating:

For a number of quite different reasons, the majority of staff associations opposed access to arbitration, which they considered to be for industrial and manual workers subject to fluctuations in employment. They feared that arbitration would lower their standing in society, reduce their advantages to the level of industrial and manual workers, and encourage disloyalty and disservice to the Crown. These views were held mainly in the Administrative, Professional and Clerical Divisions, and because they dissociated themselves so much from arbitration, their Staff Associations were to disappear as formal entities by World War I.*

The Fisher government's legislation provided for an expansion of unionism in the Public Service, particularly among the lower-paid employees. The Australian Telegraph, Telephone Construction and Maintenance Union was registered in 1912 and was later retitled the Postal Linemen's Union. The Australian Letter Carriers' Association was registered in the same year, while the Postal Sorters' Union obtained registration in 1913. Despite the early difficulties of organization, registration of postal unions now made new demands on the embryo unions, and national organizations, of necessity, had to be established to meet the changing needs. There is evidence that the unions quickly organized interstate conferences and set up the required machinery necessary to enable their federal bodies to operate.

The head offices of the Australian Letter Carriers' Association and the Postal Sorters' Union were established in Melbourne, which was then the seat of government. The federal organization of the Australian Telegraph, Telephone Construction and Maintenance Union was originally situated in Sydney, the first General Secretary being E.H. Burgess. In 1914 the head office was moved to Melbourne, where George Brown became the new occupant of that position. Brown was subsequently Mayor of the Melbourne suburb of Coburg, and later was appointed General Secretary of the Municipal Officers' Association.

*Caiden, Career Service, p.104
With the granting of registration to postal unions by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court in 1912, it soon became apparent to the early leaders of the newly formed organizations that there was much wasted effort in unions functioning as small units. They would be more effective if they united into larger bodies. The need for stronger and more virile trade unionism in the Commonwealth Public Service, particularly in the postal sector, was recognized.

The main drive in this direction came from the New South Wales branches of the Australian Letter Carriers’ Association, the Postal Sorters’ Union and the Australian Telegraph, Telephone Construction and Maintenance Union (later, from 1919, retitled the Postal Linemen’s Union).

A new era began with the publication of the *Postal Advocate* in 1917, a joint venture by the New South Wales branches of the Australian Letter Carriers’ Association and Postal Sorters’ Union. The new journal opened its columns to advocates of amalgamation and the battle was joined with the opposing forces. So far as the Sorters’ Union and the Letter Carriers’ Association were concerned, the main opposition was encountered in Victoria, where the head offices of both organizations were located. A virile committee was established in New South Wales, on which the Postal Sorters’ Union, the Australian Letter Carriers’ Association and the Postal Linemen’s Union were in the forefront; the Federated Assistants’ Association was also represented on this body. Other unions, including the Trades and Customs Union, also showed interest. A pamphlet issued by the New South Wales branch of the Postal Sorters’ Union in June 1919 had as its motto, “Less Unions and
More Unionism”. A well-documented case was made by the authors of the pamphlet for amalgamation between the Letter Carriers’ Association and the Sorters’ Union.

The Postal Advocate of 14 March 1919 records that a mass meeting of public servants, representing every organization within the Commonwealth Service, was held in Townsville in February of that year, at which a resolution was carried unanimously that: “the members at this meeting pledge themselves to work for the amalgamation of all the various organizations within the Commonwealth Public Service, this being considered the most effective means of obtaining redress for the many long-standing grievances under which we labour.” A committee was appointed to give effect to the resolution, consisting of representatives of the Postal Sorters’, Federated Assistants’, Postmen’s, Telegraphists’, Mechanics’, Trades and Customs and other unions.

Almost every issue of the Postal Advocate contained articles in favour of amalgamation, and that of 13 February 1920 reported that a joint conference of federal Public Service (General Division) unions had met in Melbourne at the Unity Hall during 14–19 January. Those representatives who attended included:

- **Trades and Customs Union**
  - J.P. Hickey (Executive Council)
  - G. McCarthy (N.S.W.); W. O'Reilly (Vic.);
  - A. Comas (S.A.);
  - J.H. Harkness (Qld.); W. O'Reilly (W.A.);
  - G. McCarthy (Tas.)

- **Postal Linemen’s Union**
  - G. McCarthy (N.S.W.); A. Comas (S.A.);
  - J.H. Harkness (Qld.); W. O'Reilly (W.A.);
  - G. McCarthy (Tas.)

- **Postal Sorters’ Union**
  - J.V. Dwyer (N.S.W.); J. Jones (W.A.); A.E. Gray (S.A.)

- **Australian Letter Carriers’ Association**
  - N.W. Burke (N.S.W.); T. O'Connell (Vic.);
  - W.M. Taylor (W.A.);
  - N.W. Burke (Qld.)

- **Federated Assistants’ Association**
  - J. Hore (N.S.W.); F. McCart (Vic.);
  - G. Gaunt (W.A.);
  - F. McCart (S.A.)

- **Postal Electricians’ Union**
  - W. Settle (N.S.W.); E.F. Meier (Executive Council)

- **Telephone Officers’ Association**
  - Miss S. Slatter (N.S.W.)

In some instances, Branches of the Postal Linemen’s and Postal Sorters’ Unions and the Letter Carriers’ Association were represented by proxy delegates. However, the branches appear to have favoured amalgamation.

A.E. Gray, General President of the Postal Sorters’ Union of Australia, in opening the conference, welcomed the delegates present and briefly outlined the reasons that had actuated the
Sorters' Union to convene the conference. The minutes of that meeting, a document of importance in Australian trade-union history, are reproduced below:

**Chairman**  J.V. Dwyer was elected Chairman.
**Minute Secretary**  G. Gaunt was elected Secretary
**Credentials**  Resolved, "That the credentials of delegates as read be accepted."
**Press Committee**  Gaunt, Dwyer, Comas, McCarthy and Settle were elected as a committee for the purpose of supplying information to the press.

**Submission of Scheme to Unions for Ratification:**

1. Resolved that the various organizations represented upon the joint conference be requested to submit the question of amalgamation on the basis adopted to a plebiscite of their members throughout the Commonwealth, in the following manner: A statement of the proposed basis of amalgamation (adopted by the joint conference), together with a ballot paper containing the undermentioned question, to be supplied to each member:

   **Question:**
   "Are you in favour of the amalgamation of this organization with one or more of the following Public Service organizations: Postal Sorters' Union, Telephone Officers' Association, Postal Linemen's Union, Postal Electricians' Union, Letter Carriers' Association, Trade and Customs Officers' Union, Federated Assistants' Association, upon the basis drawn up by the organizations mentioned, and herewith submitted for your consideration?"

   **Yes**

   **No**

2. Resolved that the various Unions represented upon this joint conference be requested to provide for the plebiscite of their members on the question of amalgamation (as proposed) being finalized by 30 June 1920.

3. Resolved that in the event of the central controlling body (Executive Council) of any organization represented hereon refusing to submit in the manner proposed the question of amalgamation to a plebiscite of their members throughout the Commonwealth, it shall be incumbent upon the Branch Secretaries of the organizations concerned to immediately communicate such information to the Central Committee of Amalgamation, who shall forthwith supply copies of the proposed scheme, together with the required number of ballot papers. Branch Secretaries of those concerned shall thereupon arrange for the taking of a plebiscite locally.

4. Resolved that Branches of the various Unions represented at this joint conference be requested to immediately communicate with their Federal Executive Councils requesting that they submit the question of amalgamation in the manner proposed to a plebiscite. In the event
of no reply or a negative reply being received by 14 March, the Branches shall proceed to act in the manner laid down by the conference.

5. Future Action in Event of Two or More Unions Endorsing the Proposals:

In the event of two or more Unions deciding in favour of amalgamation upon the basis submitted from this joint conference, the following procedure shall be adopted:

Each organization (in favour) shall convene a special conference in accordance with the rules governing the Union concerned. Such conferences shall be held simultaneously with the intention of transacting business separately and collectively incidental to registration as an amalgamated body.

However, there was opposition to the amalgamation proposals. An indication of this opposition on the part of the federal body of the Letter Carriers' Association was noted in the same issue of the Postal Advocate, where it was reported:

We have been informed on fairly reliable authority that the Central Executive of the A.L.C.A. intend to stump the country in opposition to the amalgamation proposals recently formulated by the Melbourne Conference.

We have frequently commented upon the unconstitutional attitude taken up by our central body, so it is nothing new to find them taking a course which is the very reverse of straightforward and constitutional.

The struggle for amalgamation continued, and in the Postal Advocate of 11 January 1923, there was a report of the battles within the Letter Carriers' Association and the Postal Sorters' Union at the federal level. A stimulating note was struck by the publication of information from the Postal Linemen's Union:

**POSTAL LINEMEN'S UNION NOTES**

The General Secretary and Executive Council of this Union have very definitely intimated that they are prepared to effect an amalgamation as early as desired. The attitude of the headquarters officials of this Union provide quite a refreshing contrast with the opposition tactics adopted by certain officials on the headquarters of the Postal Sorters' Union and Australian Letter Carriers' Association. At the present time, the Postal Linemen's Union is considering the question of enlarging their membership so as to embrace those employees now covered by the Postal Sorters' Union and Australian Letter Carriers' Association, and to subsequently convene a joint conference of Branch representatives from all three organizations for the purpose of re-drafting the rules of the Postal Linemen's Union to conform with the desires of those concerned in the control and management of the amalgamation which would thus be achieved.
In an earlier issue of the Postal Advocate there was a report of a plebiscite on amalgamation by the New South Wales branch of the Postal Sorters' Union that had taken place in September 1921.

THE AMALGAMATION "HOLD-UP"
UNION HEADQUARTERS TO BLAME
REPORT BY NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH

For several months past the Committee of this Branch has been endeavouring to prevail upon the Federal Council of the Union to make a sincere effort to carry into effect the plebiscite-recorded direction of the members for an amalgamation with other Postal Unions.

Instead of pressing the proposal to a successful conclusion, as requested by this Branch, the Federal Council has resorted to the transparent subterfuge of adopting a resolution to "defer" the matter indefinitely. This decision was finally adopted by 6 votes to 4 votes at the December meeting of the Council, and constitutes a violation of the plebiscite direction of the members, and an evasion of the resolution of last Conference declaring it mandatory upon the incoming Council to give effect to the plebiscite decision within a period of three months.

Conference is the supreme governing body of the Union, and is held biennially. The last Conference was held in Melbourne during September 1921, when the following resolutions on the matter of amalgamation were declared carried:

1. "That a plebiscite of the Union be taken in accordance with Rule 9 (i) on the question: Are you in favour of amalgamation with the Postal Linemen's Union and the Letter Carriers' Association, and such other general divisions Unions that are in favour of amalgamating?"

2. "That the foregoing plebiscite be taken within a period of three months, and in the event of an affirmative decision, that it be mandatory on the Federal Council to give effect to same within a further period of three months."

The plebiscite on amalgamation was declared carried by the Returning Officer of the Union by 425 votes to 233 votes. This declaration was submitted to a meeting of the Federal Council in February last (February 1922), and although ten months have since elapsed very little real effort has been made to give effect to it.

The present hold-up of amalgamation is due to the improper actions of the Federal Council at the instigation of the General President (A.E. Gray), in declining to proceed in the matter except by way of a conference with the "headquarters officials" of the Unions concerned. The Federal Council is charged by Conference to give effect to amalgamation within a period of three months, and for the former body to quibble over the method of carrying out this direction is evasion of the most paltry and dishonest nature.

At the recent Conference of the Letter Carriers' Association all efforts
to elect their headquarters officials ended in a deadlock, and at the present moment this organization is functioning only by means of the several Branch committees. Since the conclusion of Conference overtures on the matter of amalgamation have been submitted by a number of the Branches of the Letter Carriers’ Association. These overtures have, however, been rejected by the Federal Council, a section of which are obviously endeavouring to exploit the situation in the Letter Carriers’ Association to their own personal ends.

It would appear as if the Federal Council is at present comprised of a majority of individuals owning to no higher conception of their duty to the members than the predominance of their own will, and whose personal views on the matter of amalgamation are in direct conflict with the views expressed by a majority of the Union. The attitude adopted by the Federal Council constitutes a very serious challenge to the fundamental principles of government of the Union by the members in accordance with majority rule, and substitutes the impossible position of government of the Union by a handful of officials.

We believe that the position stated is neither desired nor accepted by the majority of the Union. Under the circumstances it is considered essential that the necessary action be taken immediately to protect the rights of the members, and to uphold the majority decision recorded by the Union in favour of amalgamation. With this object in view, we have submitted a request to the Federal Council, under the provisions of Rule 9 (i) of the Union, for the taking of a plebiscite on the following question:

“Are you in favour of the removal of the registered head office of the Union from Melbourne to Sydney, and the replacement of the present Federal Council with a Council appointed from members of the New South Wales Branch, until such time as the proposed amalgamation with other service unions is achieved?”

This request is due to come before a meeting of the Federal Council on 11 January. Action has also been taken to notify various Branches of the Union of the intention to submit the request for the taking of a plebiscite on the question indicated, and the reasons actuating us is so acting.

The situation will be further reported upon in next month’s issue when the decision of the Council on the taking of the plebiscite, and the views of the Branches on such proposal should be known.

Conferences of the Postal Sorters’ Union, the Letter Carriers’ Association and the Postal Linemen’s Union also were held in Melbourne in September 1921. Ballots on amalgamation had already been taken within these unions, the results of which gave the following rank-and-file opinion on amalgamation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>For amalgamation</th>
<th>Against amalgamation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postal Linemen’s Union</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Sorters’ Union</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Carriers’ Association</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3113</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(The Victorian branch of the Letter Carriers' Association did not take part in this ballot.)

The pressure for amalgamation was kept up by the Postal Advocate and by a combination of union officials and rank-and-file members. A further plebiscite within the Postal Sorters' Union resulted in an increased majority in favour of amalgamation. The resistance to amalgamation came principally from Victoria, whereas the major advocates were to be found in the New South Wales section of the union.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>In favour of amalgamation</th>
<th>Against amalgamation</th>
<th>Informal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Australia</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further plebiscite on amalgamation was taken by the Letter Carriers' Association, with the Victorian branch this time participating. The results of branch voting showed overwhelming support for amalgamation, as the following table indicates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>In favour of amalgamation</th>
<th>Against amalgamation</th>
<th>Informal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Australia</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1093</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the Letter Carriers' Association favoured amalgamation, it did not favour any increase in contributions and rejected this proposal by 1125 votes to 225. It also voted against the election of a full-time General Secretary by 992 votes to 365. Despite a heavy pro-amalgamation vote, the anti-amalgamation forces on the Executive Council of this union prevented any headway being made.

One of the agenda items submitted by the New South Wales branch to the Annual Conference of the Letter Carriers' Association, held in October 1923 sought to transfer the head office of the association from Melbourne to Sydney. It read: "That the head or registered office of the Association, to which all communications or notices may be addressed, shall be at the registered office of the General Secretary, which shall be situated in Sydney."
The motion was put to the vote and carried, with the Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australian branches in favour, and Victoria and Tasmania against. In addition, it was resolved that a new clause be added to Rule 3 (Objects): "To secure an amalgamation of the Association with other Commonwealth Public Service organizations." On being put to a vote, the motion was declared carried, only the Victorian branch delegates voting in opposition.

At the Postal Sorters' Union Conference, which took place in Melbourne on 17 September 1923, it was agreed that a further plebiscite be held on the proposal to move the head office of the union from Melbourne to Sydney, and that the matter be finalized not later than 20 December 1923. This unusual situation was brought about because the retiring Federal Council officials claimed that they could not give effect to the previous affirmative decision of September 1921 to transfer the federal office to Sydney, since they had no legal power, for they had in essence retired from office. This was only a subterfuge to delay the move, but in order to reinforce the previous plebiscite decision, a second plebiscite was held.

The second plebiscite on the transfer of the Postal Sorters' Union headquarters from Melbourne to Sydney was carried by 502 votes to 209. The total votes polled was equal to almost 83 per cent of the aggregate membership of the union. On the occasion of the previous plebiscite on the same question, the voting had resulted in 430 in favour and 260 against.

By January 1924, the Postal Sorters' headquarters had been transferred to Sydney. With the last impediments out of the way, the negotiations for amalgamation took on a firmer note.

E.F. Murnane, A.L. Haswell and J.V. Dwyer of the Postal Sorters' Union, P.W. Murphy, E.C. Cross and N.W. Burke of the Letter Carriers' Association, and C. Parker, T. Kelly and W. Mossong of the Postal Linemen's Union were appointed to act on behalf of the unions in the conduct of the negotiations for amalgamation. When the recommendations had been presented to the headquarters of each union, they had to await their acceptance for the proposed amalgamation to be translated into reality.

An application was originally made to the Industrial Registrar in 1924 by the secretary of the Letter Carriers' Association for the registration of the amalgamated union. However, due to a technical defect in that certain rules of the Letter Carriers' Association had not been followed in their entirety, the Registrar disallowed the change in the name and constitution of the new union. This was soon remedied by a special conference of the Letter
Carriers' Association, which opened in Sydney on 15 September 1924. The necessary order to comply with the Registrar's decision was taken, and a further application was then made to the Industrial Registrar for the change of name of the new organization and the constitution under which it should operate. It was then expected that when the application was successfully disposed of, that the way would be clear for the final steps of amalgamation to be entered upon. The procedure, in fact, was for the Postal Linemen's Union and the Postal Sorters' Union to be deregistered, and only the Letter Carriers' Association to function as the amalgamated union until the Registrar granted the amalgamation.

However, there were still obstacles to be overcome. Among the list of objectors to the new amalgamated union were the Public Service Board, the Federated Assistants' Association and the Victorian branch of the Letter Carriers' Association. The Public Service Board waged a last-ditch stand to prevent stronger unionism in the Service. The attitude of the Federated Assistants' Association was somewhat farcical, since part of its objections was centred around the new union being able to enrol assistants, whereas, in fact, the Letter Carriers' Association already had coverage for these employees.

Despite the fact that the Melbourne Trades Hall Council had endeavoured to get the Victorian branch of the Letter Carriers' Association to accept the will of the majority, the officials of this branch steadfastly refused. However, the Deputy Industrial Registrar allowed the amalgamation, disallowing all the objections to the change of constitution.

An appeal against the Deputy Industrial Registrar's decision by the Public Service Board, the Victorian Branch of the Letter Carriers' Association and the Federated Assistant's Association was made to the Deputy President of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, N.A. Webb. In his judgment on the 12 March 1925, the Deputy President upheld the decision of the Deputy Industrial Registrar, except as to the minor question of the change of name. The Deputy President held that the new name applied for by the amalgamating unions was inappropriate and he varied the Deputy Registrar's decision accordingly, without prejudice to the right of the unions concerned, to make application at any future time for a more appropriate name.

The title finally proposed, and agreed to by the Court, was the "Amalgamated Postal Linemen's, Sorters' and Letter Carriers' Union of Australia", and the amalgamated union commenced to function as from 1 July 1925. As the Letter Carriers' Association was the continuing body, the federal officers of that union remained
as caretaker officials. Thus P.W. Murphy and N.W. Burke re­
mained general president and general secretary until the Annual
Conference was convened in Sydney on 23 November 1925.

Prior to amalgamation, there were continuous conferences be­
tween the constituent bodies, in order to iron out minor points, and
arrangements were made for the first Annual Conference of the
Union to open in Sydney on the 23 November 1925.

A later application by the Union's Executive Council for a further
change of name to the "Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union of
Australia" (A.P.W.U.) was granted as from 26 February 1926 by
the Deputy Commonwealth Industrial Registrar, Sydney.

In retrospect, it is clear that were it not for the enthusiasm and
dedication of the New South Wales branches of the Postal
Linemen's Union, Postal Sorters' Union and the Australian Letter
Carriers' Association, amalgamation of the postal workers' unions
would not have been effected as early as 1925. Full credit for the
success of the amalgamation campaign perhaps should be given to
George McCarthy, who, until 1923, was the full-time Secretary of
the Postal Linemen's Union and of necessity, because of the
facilities open to him, was able to apply himself to the job more
adequately than those who were working in an honorary capacity.
However, mention also must be made of Jack Dwyer (who rendered
outstanding service), E.F. Murnane and A.L. Haswell of the Postal
Sorters' Union; E.C. (Barney) Cross, N.W. (Bill) Burke and Billy
Murphy of the Letter Carriers' Association; and Don Parker and
W. Mossong of the Postal Linemen's Union. The position of the
Linemen's Union was never in doubt; its members were strong for
amalgamation at all times and were rock solid in their determina­
tion to try and achieve the objective of one union for the postal
service.
The First Annual Conference

After the tumult and shouting had died down in respect to the battle for amalgamation, consolidation of the new organization was the order of the day, and so the founding fathers of the Amalgamated Postal Linemen's, Sorters' and Letter Carriers' Union of Australia assembled in Sydney for the first Annual Conference of the Union, which took place in Room 56, Commonwealth Bank Chambers, 114A Pitt Street, Sydney, and opened at 9.30 a.m. on Monday, 23 November 1925. The following delegates to the Conference were credentialed by their respective state branches:

- **New South Wales**: J.V. Dwyer, E.F. Murnane, C.E. Parker, A.J. MacPherson
- **Victoria**: J.J. Peterken, W.G. Bryson, M.J. Hassed
- **Queensland**: A.D. Aitken, B.L.C. Smith
- **South Australia**: O.H. Rosser, A.T. Comas
- **Western Australia**: E.E. Turnbull, G. Fraser
- **Tasmania**: H. Weeding, E.T. Petterd

The Union's first General President, P.W. Murphy, and the General Secretary, N.W. Burke, were also present in their capacity as caretaker officials. In opening the Conference Murphy said:
It gives me very much pleasure in declaring this, the initial Conference of the Amalgamated Union open, and to extend a hearty welcome to delegates.

No need exists for me to traverse the ground covered prior to the consummation of amalgamation, as you are fully conversant with the whole of the facts up to that time, but since July, from knowledge gained as General President, I believe that every effort has been given by all concerned to give effect to the wishes of members.

The duty of this Conference is to complete the work of which the foundation has been laid.

The policy outlined and instruction issued by you to the incoming Executive Council will have a far-reaching effect on the success of the Union.

We know beyond doubt that the decision of this Conference and the work of the Union is being watched very closely by the Service Unions and Departments, and as we are by far the strongest Union in the Service, we should be prepared at all times to give a lead to the smaller bodies on questions affecting the conditions of the Service.

The retiring Executive Council in convening the Joint Conference of Public Service Organizations gave the Union a splendid start, and we were congratulated from all sides on the initiative displayed in calling Conference, and upon the businesslike manner in which the agenda was prepared in that it caters for almost every grievance.

Conference got down quickly to the consideration of the major issues confronting the Union, and the necessary amendments to the rules were made to provide that the position of General Secretary—Treasurer be a full-time office.

One of the first issues to be considered was that of the Union's affiliation with the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (P.T.T.I.), an international union of organizations of postal workers.* The autonomy of national organizations affiliated to the International were safeguarded, and its aims were:

1. To furnish advice and information on all matters touching the interests of affiliated unions.
2. To publish a bulletin which shall appear in the French, German, English and Italian languages disseminating knowledge of the conditions, hours, etc. affecting postal workers in all countries.
3. To set up a library and to collect journals of affiliated unions, and to publish statistics and other works of importance.
4. To encourage international solidarity between postal unions, and to maintain friendly relations with similar bodies who are internationally organized.
5. To help to organize all postal workers.

The General Secretary, in submitting a report to Conference

* See Appendix 4, pp. 291 to 297
The First Annual Conference  /  23

concerning the Union's affiliation with the Postal International, stated that the question had, in the first instance, been under consideration by the Postal Sorters' Union. Following amalgamation, the matter had been referred to the Union for consideration, and the Executive had decided to bring the question before the Conference.

Subscriptions to the P.T.T.I. were fixed by the International World Congress for a period of two years. At the then rate of currency, the cost of affiliation to the Union would be approximately £30 (Australian) per annum, but the President of the International said he thought the Executive Council would give consideration to the fact of the Union being a new organization.

After some debate, it was decided by 13 votes to 3 that the incoming Executive Council would prepare a concise report on the Postal International for submission to the branches. In turn, the state branches were instructed to define their attitude on the question of affiliation, and the decision of majority of branches would be carried out by the Executive Council.

The three delegates voting against the proposal were not against affiliation with the International, but considered that the Union's Conference, not the Executive, should assume the responsibility to affiliate with the P.T.T.I. All the state branches agreed on affiliation with the International, and this was completed by the time of the 1926 Conference.

A number of matters of union policy were discussed and policies laid down. The Conference determined that the Union aim at obtaining 40 hours per week for day work for its members, and 36 hours for night work. It also was resolved that the policy of the Union was affiliation with the Australian Labor Party, and branches were instructed to immediately effect such affiliation in the various states. Yearly contributions were fixed at the rate of eighteen shillings for adults and nine shilling for juniors.* It was also decided to obtain a suitable union badge for members.

* Union membership totalled 10 245: 9700 members aged eighteen years and over and 455 members under eighteen years.

An important issue was the need to retain close links between the Union's executives and the rank-and-file members. It was decided that a journal would be printed by the Executive Council, and that the name Postal Advocate be used.

Throughout Australia in the 1920s, there were concerted moves within each industry for "One Big Union" of employees. This same desire was evident in the Post Office, and the Conference decided that the Executive Council should make overtures to other Post Office unions respecting amalgamation.
Amalgamated Postal Linemen, Sorters and Letter Carriers' Union of Australia, First Annual Conference, Sydney, 1925


Sitting: E.E. Turnbull, A.D. Atien, B.L. L. Smith, P.W. Murphy (General President), N.W. Burke (General Secretary)

M.J. Hassard, G. Fraser, Prov. Trustee, A.T. Comas, W.C. Bryson
A union's first responsibility is to look after the welfare of its members. This was evident at the first Conference of the Amalgamated Postal Linemen's, Sorters' and Letter Carriers' Union. Superannuation for Post Office employees was debated at length, and it was decided that the state branches should look closely at the Act covering superannuation and send their proposed amendments to the Act to the Executive Council for compiling a report to present to parliament.

Temporary employees required special protection by the Union. The child endowment scheme operating in the Commonwealth Public Service applied only to permanent employees. It was not a direct gift so far as the government was concerned, since the Service basic wage was reduced by a little over £11 per year to provide finance for the establishment of the scheme. The 1925 Conference endeavoured to have child endowment provided both for temporary employees and other Post Office employees who did not receive it. The Conference also decided that in future claims to the Public Service Arbitrator for an award covering temporary employees, leave of absence should be granted to such employees at the rate of one and a half days for each month's service and/or payment in lieu thereof. Because of the many unsatisfactory aspects of temporary employment in the Post Office, the Union decided to send a deputation to the Prime Minister, asking him to institute an inquiry into temporary employees in the P.M.G. The Union also proposed to take its own action to secure improved conditions for temporary employees.

An advertisement had been inserted in the leading daily newspaper in each state, calling for applications for the position of General Secretary—Treasurer to the Union at a yearly salary of £500. Applications closed on 4 December 1925. It was reported to Conference that thirty nominations for the position had been received. After the applications and credentials of all candidates for the position had been read, the following applicants were considered qualified for the job and submitted to a ballot: A.P. Colbourne, Brisbane; J.J. Flaherty, Adelaide; J. Will Sharley, Adelaide; S. Thompson, Adelaide; H.M. McKirdy, Adelaide; J.V. Dwyer, Sydney. In the voting that followed, J.V. Dwyer received 10 votes; J.J. Flaherty, 2 votes; J.W. Sharley, 1 vote; and A.P. Colborne, 1 vote. J.V. Dwyer was declared as elected to the position of first General Secretary-Treasurer.

In the ballot for the Presidency, P.W. Murphy (10 votes) defeated C.E. Parker (5 votes). In the ballot for the General Vice-Presidency, the voting was tied between A.J. Macpherson and A.L. Haswell, at 7 votes. A.H. Anderson received one vote. In the run-off, MacPherson defeated Haswell by one vote; and N.W. Burke
THINGS WE NEVER SEE

The non-unionist refusing to take the increased payments secured by the A.P.W.U. from time to time.

Postal Advocate 15 January 1929
was elected Assistant General Secretary. E. Cross, R.C. Harris, A.L. Haswell, T. Kelly and C.E. Parker were declared elected as Executive Councillors.

Other matters discussed at the Conference were: the judgment of the Arbitrator on an application by the old Postal Linemen’s Union for improved conditions on accident pay; the abolition of transparent envelopes; higher duties; travelling allowances; sick leave (Arbitration case); conduit workers (Arbitration case); Joint Conference of Service Unions; increments to temporary employees; and classification appeals. In addition, Conference was divided into three subcommittees. These three committees were in essence members belonging to the three Unions who were known as “groups”, for example the “Linemen’s Group” consisted of members of the former Postal Linemen’s Union.

It also was reported to Conference that the union had opened offices in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, and that full-time officials were operating in the three states.

With the conclusion of the Conference at 9.15 pm on Saturday, 15 December 1925, the efforts of the early pioneers of the three unions saw an amalgamated union brought into existence.

The Union’s early battles produced their own stories. After reading Gerald Caiden’s book *Career Service*, C.E. (Don) Parker wrote the following letter to the author:

I always remember the impact made upon me when I first took interest in service problems by the able and dedicated men as E.G. Meir, J.V. Dwyer, Doc. O’Hara, E.H. Burgess, E.F. Murnane, W.J. O’Reilly, G.F. McCarthy, W.J. Mossong, J.J. Peterken of Victoria, J.V. Dwyer, South Australia, amongst many others. Coming in at twenty-four years after an A.W.U. baptism in militant unionism, it was indeed strange to me to find that cap-in-hand unionism was the order of the day. Even lesser lights such as Engineer for Lines had to be approached most deferentially and thanked for receiving us, prior to any submission we dared to make.

Judge what obeisance had to be made to approach the Public Service Commissioner. Before Frank Thorpe’s time, I was not *persona grata* with the hierarchy, being termed a militant unionist by the witness in the Arbitration Court, and therefore proscribed in the holy of holies (not officially, but practically). Yea, verily, the way of the unionist was indeed like the rich man wanting to go to heaven. He, the unionist, was eyed as if he was a camel and the door to the high and mighty panjandrums was indeed a narrow one. We lost nothing by ignoring them, as the only answer they had was no.

Politicians were easier to approach, as they could sometimes gain by listening and being affable to us lowly ones. Even the blustering William Webster [the Postmaster-General] could come off his high horse when
elections were due, and I remember his agreement with the Line Staff upon the question of identification badges. They were issued to all outside staffs, and on the front was a number and "Postmaster-General". On the reverse side, it was stamped, "Anyone finding this badge will receive 2/6 on return to any Post Office." With the issue of the badge, a ukase had to be noted wherein it stated that the holder of the badge would have to pay 5/- for its loss. I ask you, what a roughie.

In those bad old days, we were paid twenty-four times a year, and when the 15th or the 31st arrived, we were flat broke. Amongst the crowd some were, as Hamlet said, indifferent honest, and to snitch a badge and get five bobs' worth of beer money was a temptation that some could not pass up. Well, we had meetings and decided to refuse to wear them. Threatening memos were issued, and the result was that the Union decided to call all the badges in on a certain day and anyone not passing them in was to be dealt with under the penalty rules. The Line Inspector refused to take the badges, so we took them to the Union office, well-knowing that if we were caught in possession, we could be dealt with both departmentally and in civil courts. On the Saturday afternoon, the badges landed on the Deputy Postmaster-General's table through our contacts in the cleaning staff. When the Deputy arrived on Monday morning, he hit the roof. Our country members then mailed them direct to the Deputy Postmaster-General. Next move was to line six of the prominent Union men up before the Chief Engineer, who demanded we take our badge back. I was spokesman and refused point blank unless the Department wiped the five bob reward from the badge and treated each less of badge for imposing a 1/- fine. An impasse was reached and I believe the Crown Law advised the Department that their position was untenable.

In the end, Webster came over and at a conference in the G.P.O., he agreed to our submissions.

Quite a humdrum episode by today's standards in respect to disputes, but for a tin-post union like the Postal Linemen to dictate terms to the hierarchy was indeed a violent departure, and, I think, a milestone insofar as the small unions were concerned.

The following story rightly has become a "classic" of postal union history.

_Dedicated to All Sawdust Caesars_

Being a succinct account of a famous race-track. The first and only race against time to have a motion, due to the unfortunate lapse of the Deity in shaping the middle portion of _homo sapiens_ without ensuring control of what goes in must come out, and therefore this tale showing that Divinity errs sometimes in shaping our ends, or rather middles.
Time and Motion

The modern idea of time and motion study, so conducive of turmoil, was not developed in the Department to any great extent, with perhaps the exception of the Fourth Division in the P.M.G.

The all-time refinement was that instituted in the Mail Branch of the G.P.O. in Sydney, known vulgarly as the “Crap House Derby”, or by an equally apt name not used in general conversation.

This was a contraption made up of a moving belt, which travelled slowly, with at one end, a locked, glassed-in receptacle. The purpose of this infernal machine was to check the time spent by mail officers in the holy of holies, the W.C.

Tokens were supplied and if the officer had to obey that natural function presided over by the internal forces over which he had only a vicarious control—bluntly put, his bowels or his bladder—he had to observe an official procedure.

Before he left his place of work, he had to get the nod from his Supervisor. He then proceeded to the contraption and placed a token on “the Derby”, the conveyor belt, and at that, was entitled to make use of the convenience.

By a law made by the high panjandrums of the Mail Branch, twelve minutes per diem was allowed for any evacuatory or ablutionary need of the mail officers. Thus he could make several trips and all would be well, provided the elapsed time was under twelve minutes.

In charge of this most practical of time and motion study contraptions was a “Clerk of the Course”, whose duty it was to note time spent as aforesaid and record any excess time. The excess time book was checked by the Supervisor and any delinquent would have to answer for his bowel or bladder, and if his answer was not deemed satisfactory, he could be, and in many cases was, fined two shillings. No appeal was allowed, except from one Caesar to another, and that useless. It would be interesting to know on what calculation and upon what evidence the twelve-minute functional time was arrived at. Did the Superintendent time himself or did he take sample time from the administrative staff, who, incidentally, had no handicap time-limit set to govern their natural functions. The passing of the Leaving Certificate exam, it appeared, absolved them from all time and motion studies of an intimate nature.

“The Derby” had been in existence some years, and efforts for its removal were not successful until Senator Ashley became Postmaster-General.

Poor conditions, bad lighting and ventilation, together with shift-work difficulties, made the Mail Branch a hot-bed of unrest, and
as a result, it was suggested to the Postmaster-General, popularly known as "Bill", that an inspection might be in order.

Ashley had been a sporting man all his life, and having spent a lot of time at Lithgow amongst miners and munition workers, he thought he had seen everything the "Simon Legrees" of industry used or tried to use in speed-up gimmicks, such as open toilets or those with cross-bars at about waist-high. His reaction was typical, for when he saw "the Derby" he watched and then said, *sotto voce*, "Well, I'll be buggered!" To the writer, who was present and knew Bill, it was evident that this reaction spelt the death-knell of "the Derby". And talking about it afterwards, Ashley wondered at the submissiveness of the staff to this insulting disregard of human dignity.

During Ashley's inspection, one of the lads at the Branch rushed up to the machine, grabbed his token, slung it on the belt and raced for the W.C., unbuttoning as he went. He raced out some minutes later and heaved a sigh of relief when he found he was within the handicap. His performance was not appreciated by the hierarchy present, or the satellites always attendant or in the offing at official deputations, but it highly delighted the mail officers watching. It is believed he went unhung.

A score of years has elapsed since the last "Derby" was run, and the initiator of that crude time and motion study has long gone into retirement, discredited and unsung by the toilers in that prison-like place, the Mail Branch.
The 1920s were years of consolidation in the Australian trade union movement. In many fields, unions were still struggling to find their feet and were endeavouring to operate with part-time officials who worked at their job during the day and attended to union business at night. It was also the decade that saw the formation of the Australasian Council of Trade Unions (A.C.T.U.).

In the Public Service, the threats to public servants of being refused the use of the arbitration system led to unions within the Service forming the High Council of Commonwealth Public Service Organizations (H.C.C.P.S.O.). This was essentially a defensive organization, which was not at first recognized by the Public Service Board. The Victorian branch of the Letter Carriers' Association affiliated with H.C.C.P.S.O., but cancelled this affiliation in 1925 at the time of the formation of the amalgamated union. The A.P.W.U. was never to be a member of the H.C.C.P.S.O. nor of its successor, the Council of Commonwealth Public Service Organizations (C.C.P.S.O.). (In 1976, it affiliated with the Council of Australian Government Employees' Organization (C.A.G.E.O.).)

During the 1920s, the great movement for stronger unions was greatly influenced by the "One Big Union" movement. There is little doubt that this had its effect throughout the Post Office, particularly in New South Wales, where those who were prominent in the campaign for the amalgamation of the Post Office unions were influenced by the propaganda on the larger and broader campaign for the One Big Union. It was partly for this reason that the A.P.W.U. did not see itself as having a role in H.C.C.P.S.O., though it did see value in affiliation with the Australian Labor Party and the Trades and Labour Councils.
In 1921, the Letter Carriers' Association was represented at the All Australian Trade Union Congress by delegate N.W. Burke later a member of the Union's first Federal Executive. The A.P.W.U. was among the 108 unions who sent 158 delegates to the All Australian Trade Union Congress in Melbourne in May 1927, when the Australasian Council of Trade Unions was formed. (The term “Australian” was not adopted until 1947.)

It was natural for the A.P.W.U. also to seek affiliation with the A.L.P., but in the mid-1920s, the main energies of the Union's officials were concentrated on the amalgamation question, and political consciousness on the part of both the membership and officials was not as great then as it was in later years. The A.P.W.U. does not seem to have been involved directly in the torrid 1925 federal election, nor in the debate about the seamen's strike and the consequent jailing of Walsh and Johnson. It apparently did not involve itself in the referenda of 4 September 1926, when the government of S.M. Bruce attempted to give to the Commonwealth parliament similar powers regarding labour as those possessed by the states. Building the new union into a well-organized force that was able to represent postal workers had prior claim.

With the election at the 1925 Annual Conference of full-time officials in three state branches, and a full-time union General Secretary-Treasurer, the limitations imposed on honorary officials due to the lack of facilities open to them to prosecute wage claims and enter into meaningful negotiations were overcome. The fact that full-time officials with permanent office staff were now able to concentrate on the detailed preparation and presentation of cases to the Arbitration Tribunal was clearly appreciated by the membership, who now could see the fruits of an amalgamated union.

Direct action did not enter into the Union’s scheme of things until after the Second World War. In the early formative years of the Union, this form of industrial activity was not judged to be a correct tactic. The founders of the Union felt that having regard to the nature of government employment, it was better to consolidate amalgamation and forge a better and more virile union in the process.

In general, the highest degree of militancy in the Union was always in evidence in New South Wales, and this no doubt was a reaction to the economic conditions under which workers in outside industry were employed. It is not possible to live in a vacuum, and the philosophy of the more advanced elements in the trade-union movement undoubtedly had its impact on the thinking of the officials in that state, and in general, this has continued to be the case.
The Union accepted arbitration as one of the facts of industrial life, but did not regard the arbitration system as something holy or without faults and limitations. An editorial in the *Postal Advocate* of 14 May 1926 indicated the Union’s attitude to industrial arbitration:

Whatever may be the result of the various cases which the Union is concerned with from time to time, it is advisable for us to always bear in mind that the machinery of industrial arbitration has its limitations, very marked at times, as a means to the achievement of reforms.

While industrial arbitration had provided the means whereby a number of benefits have been secured by the Service employees, and as a means of protection against the attacks of reactionary officialdom, it still retains a measure of value; there is nothing to be gained by deluding ourselves into a belief that its virtues in this direction are of a never-failing service.

There are a number of desirable reforms on the programme of the Union which, for various reasons, will never be secured through the medium of arbitration, but which are dependent upon Parliament for their accomplishment. It is most essential that the position in this regard should be clearly realized by the members so that the efforts of the Union can be successfully directed according to our needs.

There had been demarcation problems to a limited degree with two other unions, namely the Federated Assistants’ Association and the Australian Workers’ Union. The Letter Carriers’ Association, before amalgamation, had coverage for assistants, and naturally this flowed over into the amalgamation. One of the alleged reasons for the Federated Assistants’ Association’s objection to the amalgamation was that the new union would be encroaching on its field, but of course, this was not factually correct. There have been, down through the years, some differences of opinion between the Federated Assistants’ Association and the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, and hitherto, because of the disparity in the amount of union membership subscriptions to the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union as against the Federated Assistants’ Association, whenever the A.P.W.U. raised its fees, there were generally a few resignations and transfers to the other organization, which charged a cheaper rate of union subscription. However, in recent years, particularly since V.B. McMullan became General Secretary of the Federated Assistants’ Association, now the Commonwealth Public Service Association (Fourth Division), relationships have been much better, and in fact, it is worthwhile stressing that in a number of industrial disputes and, in particular, the attempt by the Public Service Board to change the designation of mail officers to machinists and to pay the machinists’ rates of pay for operators of coding machines, the Commonwealth Public Service Association (Fourth Division) played a helpful role.
"Votes and Numbers Count—Get Busy in Defence of your Arbitration Rights" Postal Advocate, 16 September 1929
In respect to the Australian Workers' Union, there were differences of opinion regarding the coverage of conduit workers. Prior to an award being secured for conduit workers in 1926, these employees were paid under state arbitration awards. That is, they were paid different rates in the various states. One of the amalgamated union's first acts was to lodge a claim on behalf of conduit workers. The Australian Workers' Union negotiated with the Public Service Board for an agreement that involved a lesser rate of pay than that claimed by the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union. This naturally caused ill-feeling between the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union and the Australian Workers' Union, and this was reflected in the response by those eligible to join either organization. However, although the Australian Workers' Union had joint coverage for conduit workers, with the new Linemen's Award, the Australian Workers' Union is now completely out of the picture so far as industrial relations are concerned in this particular segment of the Engineering Branch.

Unions become news during major industrial disputes, but the greater part of their work is carried out quietly, behind the scenes, and without ever making the headlines. Some instances of this can be cited, to indicate how the A.P.W.U. functioned in the 1920s.

During 1926 and 1927, claims relating to postmen and others were placed before the Public Service Arbitrator, and again gains were secured. The Postmen's Award contained a number of classifications, such as telegraph messengers, whose hours were reduced from forty-six to forty-four per week, and relieving postmen, who were on the permanent relieving staff, were paid an allowance of one shilling and sixpence per day, plus excess fares, where hitherto no allowance was paid. Travelling time was also included in the Postmen's Award, and the interval between shifts was improved.

The hearing of the claim of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union for an all-round increase in award rates of pay, based on the grounds of increased cost of living, took place before the Public Service Arbitrator on 9 June 1926. During the hearing of the case, the Board's representative advised that in respect to the question of the average expenditure for child endowment, the average since 1924 had been increased from £11.3s.7d. to £12.2s.5d. as at 30 June 1926. The number of adult males at 30 June 1926 was 19,028, and the expenditure on child endowment at that date was £230 657, giving an average expenditure per adult of £12.2s.5d.

In the case of temporary employees, far-reaching claims were made on their behalf to the Arbitrator, and as a consequence, their conditions were greatly improved. The Arbitrator granted claims
ONE UNION FOR POSTAL WORKERS

Public Service Officialdom: "We'll have a tough job splitting it now; those bands make all the difference"

*Postal Advocate* 15 July 1929
for: payment for wet weather; termination of engagement of temporary employees; re-employment of a temporary employee in another locality; sick leave (the Arbitrator allowed the accumulation of sick leave, where previously this was not the case); recreation leave; increments to temporary linemen, senior linemen and line foremen; increments to temporary mail officers; increments to temporary postmen, mail drivers and other classes of members; the position of temporary employees who received permanent appointment as linemen, mail officers, postmen and mail drivers, etc. was also clarified and in general improved.

A further claim on behalf of telegraph messengers fixed their hours as: day work, 44 hours per week; broken shifts, 42 hours per week; night work, 40 hours per week, with a proviso that if any telegraph messenger under seventeen years of age were required to work after 8.30 p.m., his hours were to be reduced to 36 hours per week.

The A.P.W.U. piled up a record of impressive performances on behalf of its members, which certainly added to its prestige.

By 1926, the A.P.W.U. had almost 11,500 members, each of whom was entitled to a monthly copy of the Postal Advocate. During the previous year, negotiations had been held with the Line Inspectors’ Association and the Postal Electricians’ Union regarding amalgamation with the A.P.W.U. At the time of the Union’s 1926 Annual Conference, the Line Inspectors’ Association was submitting the question of amalgamation to its members. This submission was rejected in the plebiscite, and is the only known instance in the Commonwealth Public Service of an amalgamation proposal being turned down in a rank-and-file vote.

The Postal Electricians’ Union Annual Conference also considered amalgamation, but rejected a proposal to submit the issue to the rank-and-file members for decision by way of a plebiscite. Approaches had also been made to the Fourth Division Postal Clerks’ Union, but its conference deferred any decision on amalgamation.

The absence of one strong union representing all employees in the postal service necessitated arranging a joint conference of Service unions to make representation to the federal government on matters of common concern.

A joint conference of the Postal Electricians’, Line Inspectors’, Postal Assistants’, Telegraphists’, Storemen and Packers; and the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Unions had been held in March 1926. Several of the Public Service unions had decided to be represented at this meeting. In order to keep Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union members informed of what was happening, details
Unionist Sinbad (to non-unionist passenger): "You're getting heavy, old man. I'll drop you hard one of these days." *Postal Advocate* 15 May 1929
of the proceedings of the conference and copies of all correspondence with Prime Minister Bruce were sent to the state branches and a report was published in the *Postal Advocate*. Some satisfaction was obtained by this method of action, but overall, the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union was not convinced that this was any substitute for further amalgamation of unions within the Post Office. The Union therefore deferred consideration on the formation of a Joint Council of Postal Unions.

By 1926, all branches of the Union, with the exception of Western Australia, had affiliated with their state branches of the Labor Party. (Western Australia was about to take a ballot of members to decide the question.) It was appreciated by the Union that many of the reforms sought could be achieved only through parliamentary legislation, and that the Union, therefore, required an active political policy. To secure the best results, it appeared necessary for the Union to conduct its political activities on both party and non-party lines, according to the political situation.

The Union's 1926 Annual Conference considered that activity on the part of the Union to secure the return of a Labor government was most essential to the best interests of members. To achieve this, it laid down the following guide lines:

(a) All Branches to affiliate with the A.L.P. in their respective states, provided that the Executive Council shall have power to exempt any Branch from such affiliation if, after investigation of the circumstances, it considers such exemption necessary.

(b) All Branches to submit proposals for inclusion in the business agenda of local conferences of the A.L.P. for consideration thereat; such proposals to be on the lines recommended by the Executive Council or Conference from time to time.

(c) All members to be urged to join up with the Labor Leagues (or Branches) in the electorates in which they reside.

(d) All Branches to make special efforts in their respective states during federal elections, either separately or in conjunction with the local Branches of other Service Unions, by means of the publication and distribution of suitable propaganda, raising of funds and convening of mass meetings of Service employees, for the purpose of helping the return of Labor candidates.

(e) All Branches to endeavour to prevail on reliable and approved members of the Union to offer themselves for selection as Labor candidates, and to utilize the Branch machinery in support of their candidature in such instances.

It was recognized by the Conference that political activity by the Union on non-party lines would be resorted to only when an anti-Labor government was in control of the federal parliament.
Action in this regard would originate with the Executive Council, supported by all branches. It was considered that non-party activities would meet with only limited success, but would demonstrate to union members the futility of supporting anti-Labor parties.

It was one thing to form an Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union; it was another to ensure that it became an effective, efficient union. The main work of the Union, though not necessarily the greatest in volume, was to obtain increased rates of pay and improved conditions of employment, and to sustain the gains in respect to such matters against infringement and attack.

For this work, the Union had to rely almost entirely on two avenues: industrial arbitration and the parliamentary process. To function effectively, the state branches had to give close attention to the collection of local data for arbitration purposes and to carrying out the political policy of the Union. It was not necessary for each Branch Secretary to do all of this work, but rather it was hoped that other members of the Union would perform some of the work or relieve the Secretary from his duties while he was employed on special arbitration or political matters.

In the first two years after the new union was formed, the total membership had shown a decline of about 300. Consequently, during 1927, the Executive Council of the Union decided that some work of organization needed to be carried out amongst members and non-unionists in each state, if the Union were to function effectively.

This was to be carried out by either part-time or full-time branch officers, acting under the control of the Committee of Management, or if desired, by the Branch Secretary, in which case he was to be released from his secretarial work and the Assistant Branch Secretary or some other officer appointed to act in his place.

It was essential that this organization drive should be carried out with fixed objectives and on uniform and clearly defined lines, which could be laid down by Conference. The objectives were:

1. Enrolment of non-members.
2. Collection of data required by the Executive Council for arbitration and other purposes.
3. Addressing members (and non-members) as to the work, past, present and future, of the Union concerning wages and working conditions, etc.
4. Addressing members (and non-members) as to the political policy of the Union and the importance of the political issue.
5. Arranging for union collectors (where required) and for proper distribution of the Union's journal.
At the 1927 Conference, these terms were agreed upon.

It was suggested that at the completion of each organizing tour, the officer carrying out such work should submit a written report of his work to the Committee of Management, and a copy of such report be furnished for the information of the Executive Council.

The expenses for this work would be met partly from branch funds and partly from head office funds. In the case of a branch deciding to employ a full-time organizer, the bulk of the expenses would be met from the funds of the branch concerned.

In order to obtain the finance needed, it was suggested that the expenses of the Annual Conference could be reduced without impairing the efficiency of the Union or imposing hardship on delegates, and the savings so effected used for the purpose of organizing. The reduction of Conference expenses could be brought about by limiting the duration of Conference to a week or ten days, and by fixing the expenses of delegates at twenty shillings a day for visiting delegates (estimated from the time of leaving their home station to the time of return thereto), and ten shillings a day for resident delegates (estimated from the opening day to the closing day of Conference).

Based on the premises of part-time organizers, the following periods were to provide a reasonable trial basis for a year's organizing work in the respective branches: Queensland, 4 weeks; South Australia, 4 weeks; West Australia, 4 weeks; Tasmania, 2 weeks; New South Wales, 8 weeks; Victoria, 8 weeks. A total of 30 weeks.

The period allotted to the Queensland, South Australian and Western Australian branches was to be worked out at the rate of one week's organizing work in each quarter, New South Wales and Victorian branches, two weeks each quarter, and Tasmanian branch, one week each half-year. The period suggested was to be extended by branches if funds permitted and it was so desired.

The work of organization had, of necessity, to be confined to the outer suburbs and the chief towns in each state. The proposal involved the approximate expenditure of:

\[
\begin{align*}
30 \text{ weeks' salary at an average of, say, £6.10s.0d. per week} & = £195 \\
x 30 \text{ weeks' travelling allowance at, say, 12.0d. a day} & = £126 \\
\text{Total} & = £321
\end{align*}
\]

This rate would apply only to country areas where the organizer would be away overnight. The allowance for suburban organizing work could be fixed at, say, 7.6d. or 10.0d. a day.
The cost of conveyance was added to that of salary, and was put down at about £65, bringing the total expenses to £386. The limiting of the duration of Conference to ten days and the fixing of allowances effected a saving of about £120, compared with the 1926 Conference, which left a balance of £266 to be met.

Obviously, one problem confronting the Union was the presence of non-unionists in the Post Office who willingly accepted the benefits won for them by the A.P.W.U., but who refused to contribute either financially or physically to the Union's work. During 1927, the Executive Council again sought to strengthen unionism among postal employees by approaching the Female Telephonists' Association, the Telegraphists' Association of the Fourth Division and the Telegraphists' Association of the Third Division regarding amalgamation with the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union. However, this was to no avail, for none of these organizations mentioned was agreeable.

What could be done about the non-unionist? It was hoped that the organizing work approved by the 1927 Conference would bring substantial numbers of non-unionists into the Union. However, so as not to rely on only one method of attack on this problem, the A.P.W.U. decided to approach the other Service unions for a drive on non-unionists and, failing the unions' co-operation, to utilize the whole of the Union's resources to return a federal government willing to stand by the principle of preference to unionists. The Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union believed that rates of pay and conditions of employment won by the Union should be confined to members of the Union.

While the A.P.W.U. used its affiliation with the Labor Party to press for continued industrial and social reform in its day-to-day operations, it had to deal with countless problems that required deputations to the federal government and to the Deputy Directors of Posts and Telegraphs in each state. Before such action was taken, there was a great deal of discussion inside the Union, and particularly within the Executive Council, regarding rates of pay and working conditions in the Public Service.

In 1927, action was taken by the Executive Council in respect to rates of pay for mail officers. It was decided to file claims for increased rates of pay and for an allowance of £20 a year for men in charge of travelling post offices. This matter was fully reported to branches and the claims were filed in September 1927.

In regard to the proposed claims for improved working conditions, it was considered advisable to keep this issue separate until the pay claims were disposed of, when attention would then be given to the issue of working conditions.
Delegates to the 1928 Annual Conference of the Union on an outing to Bulli Pass  


*Front row*: W.J. Mossong, E.L. Reddacliff, P.W. Murphy, A. Parker, J.P. Kenny
In addition, arrangements were completed for the printing of a union year book, for sale to members at one shilling per copy. An effort was also made to have the positions of cleaner and senior cleaner filled by permanent officers.

A great deal of business was remitted to the Executive Council by state branches, apart from that emanating from the Union's Annual Conferences. During 1927, this included a petition signed by some members in Queensland suggesting: the separation of cable jointers from ordinary line staff. Agenda items from other states included: deferment of increments without notice beforehand; a primary sorting test to be imposed on qualified mail officers in Adelaide and Melbourne; a delay in holding annual tests for advancement of mail officers and gazetted of successful candidates; the withholding of payment from conduit workers prevented from working by weather conditions; the employment of female staff at the Melbourne Mail Branch on Saturday afternoons; a review of excess travelling time conditions; the establishment of a centre in each engineering district for the purpose of a headquarters for line staffs; preference to be given to returned soldiers in relation to appointment as motor drivers etc.; a review of the passing over of senior men for higher positions; union representation at All-Australian Trade Union Congress; adjustments in travelling allowances; avoidance of delays in issuing winter uniforms and delays in supplying protective clothing.

Within the branches, there was discussion on the location of a headquarters for camping parties, because of the problems associated with recreation leave. It was decided to request the Executive Council to enquire into the possibility of securing a provision to have members who were transferred to camping parties being given the option of being able to return to the place from where they originally had been transferred, for the purpose of recreation leave. Restrictions also had been placed on postmen holding office in local government bodies, and it was decided to request the Executive Council to take the matter up with the government and the Parliamentary Labor Party, with the object of having this restriction removed or lessened. In addition, there was the problem of linemen working railway pump cars between their camp and place of work. The branches decided to request the Executive Council to proceed for a variation of the award so as to provide that where the Department required a member of a camping party to ride a horse or bicycle, drive a motor or horse vehicle, work a railway pump car, or carry tools between a camp and place of work, the time so occupied should be treated as working time.
Much discussion took place concerning the question of financial assistance to and affiliation with the Australasian Council of Trade Unions. It was decided to request the Executive Council to grant financial assistance to the Council on the basis of one penny per financial member and to remit the question of affiliation with that body to the branches for decision. Affiliation of the Union with the A.C.T.U. was completed by November 1928.

There was debate inside the Union about the printing cost of the *Postal Advocate*. The Executive Council sought to lessen this cost to the Union, and arranged to have the Advocate printed by another printer at a net cost of from £38 to £40 per issue of 10,000 copies. The printing firm agreed to increase the size of the journal to twenty-four pages for this price, and advertising rights were increased to four pages per issue. The cost of the journal to branches was correspondingly reduced.

Trade unions are democratic organizations whose internal elections are fought with some vigour. At times within the A.P.W.U., that vigour went too far and in 1927, the Federal Executive reported that its attention had been drawn to circulars issued by members in Queensland and New South Wales branches reflecting on candidates for office and the affairs of the Union.

This question had been discussed at the 1927 Annual Conference on a complaint from the Tasmanian branch, when the view was recorded that it was not in the best interests of the Union to issue circulars in connection with the election of officers. The Federal Executive considered that the affairs of the Union should be discussed and decided in the manner provided by the Union's Rules, and that no good purpose was likely to be served by the issuing of circulars by individual members without the sanction of the Annual General Meeting. Subsequently, a new rule (Rule 42A) was inserted in the Union's Rule Book to prevent the issue of circulars etc., but this was later disallowed by the Commonwealth Industrial Court.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, as a national body, was concerned with employees in the Post Office throughout all parts of Australia. However, even national organizations have to cope with local jealousies. These were evident in Tasmania in the 1920s.

In 1928, local differences manifested themselves between the membership at Launceston and at Hobart as to the location of the Tasmanian branch office. This argument culminated in a plebiscite being conducted to determine where the branch office should be located, and resulted in 180 votes in favour of Launceston and 141 in favour of Hobart.
The Executive Council subsequently received correspondence from a number of members resident in the Hobart area, complaining against the removal of the branch office to Launceston. The Council replied that as everything was in order, it had no alternative but to hold to the plebiscite decision of the majority.

However, when the state delegates arrived at the 1928 Annual Conference, the Executive Council reported that the old trouble in the Tasmanian branch over the question of the location of the branch office still continued, and that a considerable amount of the time of the Executive Council was being taken up considering and answering correspondence from both Hobart sub-branch and the branch office in Launceston, particularly the former, in connection with the matter.

After considerable debate, with the old problems again being rehearsed, it was decided that the matter should be deferred, to be discussed at the 1929 Annual Conference. However, again at this Conference no acceptable decision was arrived at.

The 1930 Annual Conference further considered the functioning of the Tasmanian branch, under directions from the Conference, and it was determined that a further plebiscite should be held to finally resolve the question of the location of the Tasmanian branch. The plebiscite resulted in favour of Hobart, 155 votes to 141. As a consequence, the Tasmanian branch office was transferred to Hobart, and subsequently the union rules were amended to provide that a headquarters branch must be located in a capital city.

Internal problems of particular state branches had to be watched closely by the Executive Council of the Union, since a weakness or an internal dispute in one branch could affect the entire union. The first occasion on which the Executive Council was called on to exercise its authority was in 1928, when the internal problems of the South Australian branch were causing concern to other state branches.

The 1928 Annual Conference had before it the question of the functioning of the South Australian branch. A motion was proposed that the Executive Council should take over control of the South Australian branch. It was ultimately agreed that in order to bring about the proper and efficient functioning of the South Australian branch, the Executive Council was directed to take action:

1. To request the Secretary (J.P. Hughes) of the South Australian Branch to tender his resignation, and to select and appoint some other person as Secretary in his stead.
2. To request the South Australian Branch to furnish the Executive Council with a copy of the minutes of all meetings of the Branch until further notice.
3. To request the Branch to hold two Committee meetings a month until such time as the affairs of the Branch are on a satisfactory footing.

4. To request the Branch to make payment of additional expenses up to the sum of 5/- to any officer of the Branch attending a meeting of the Committee of Management where the regular allowance is insufficient to meet the expenses actually incurred by the officer.

5. To remove any officer of the South Australian Branch found to be hampering the efficient functioning of the Branch, and to replace him by such other person as the Executive Council may see fit to appoint in his stead.

As the 1920s came to a close, the economic indicators pointed to troubles ahead for Australia and its workers. It is interesting to relate that before the Depression was recognized as a fact of life, the Committee of Management of the Queensland branch of the A.P.W.U. had been concerned at the retrenchment of temporary linemen in Queensland, and had pointed out that the position had reached the stage where action should be taken by the Committee. The Committee ascertained that the wage estimates for the current year had been reduced from £150,000 to £70,000. Under direction from the Committee, the Branch Secretary interviewed Colonel Donald Cameron, the federal member for Brisbane, in regard to the building of lines without any safeguard in stipulating the rate of wages to be paid to linemen, many of whom were returned soldiers. They requested that the same pay be provided by private contractors as the Department had to do in connection with their own line work.

As the economic situation deteriorated, the full impact of the Depression produced some traumatic changes in the P.M.G. Recruitment was reduced, temporary employment virtually came to a halt, a number of temporary employees were dismissed and many employees were reduced in status. One of the victims of this economy campaign was T.A. Housley, later Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs. Housley was a junior mechanic in training and was reduced in status to that of a telephonist.

In the reshuffling of positions, a number of employees on the postal side were transferred as linemen or telephonists in training and remained in those sections of the Department for the rest of their departmental career. In fact, it was widely believed that at one stage the Department and the Public Service Board had under consideration the retrenchment of a number of permanent mechanics in training. If such were the case, this would have been not only a backward step so far as the future development of the Australian telecommunications system was concerned, but would have produced shattering results in respect to the morale of the Public Service.
5

The Depression

The late 1920s were turbulent years for the trade-union movement. There were several long and bitter strikes and lock-outs, and the Commonwealth government, led by Stanley Melbourne Bruce of the National Party and Earle Christmas Page of the Country Party, attempted to deal with these disputes by looking under the bed for "red agitators". These men had little idea of how labour relations were actually conducted and placed great reliance on legalistic formulae.

In 1929, the Bruce–Page government introduced legislation into the federal parliament that provided for the return of all federal arbitration powers to the states, and also included a proposal for the abolition of the position of Public Service Arbitrator and with it the repeal of the Public Service Act.

The Bill was defeated in the House of Representatives as a result of the defection of a number of government members, including the former Prime Minister, W.M. Hughes. As a result, Prime Minister Bruce asked the Governor-General for a dissolution of the House of Representatives, and upon the request being granted, an election was held at which the government sustained an overwhelming defeat, the Prime Minister losing his seat of Flinders in the debacle. A Labor government under Jim Scullin was swept into office. Scullin's government, like those of Gough Whitlam between 1972 and 1974, and 1974 and 1975, had majorities in the House of Representatives, but lacked a majority in the Senate. This absence of a Senate majority was to prove disastrous for Scullin's government and for the Australian worker.

The American bank crashes and business failures in Wall Street had adversely affected the American economy, and this had world-
The Depression

wide repercussions. Despite a hostile Senate, the Scullin government was successful in the administration area. J.A. Beasley, a former President of the New South Wales Labour Council, was appointed by the Prime Minister as the minister responsible for Public Service union matters. J.A. Lyons, a former Tasmanian Premier, was the new Postmaster-General, but it could be fairly stated that not much progress was made so far as the Service unions were concerned in their dealings with him. The attitude of the Chairman of the Commonwealth Bank Board, Sir Robert Gibson, was one of undisguised hostility to the Scullin government, and the propaganda of the daily press was casting doubts as to whether Australia could pay its way in the international sphere.

A team of so-called advisers visited Australia to examine the state of the Australian economy. The mission was headed by Sir Otto Niemeyer of the Bank of England. This “advisory” team laid down a blueprint for Australia, which consisted of massive wage cuts, the continuance of unemployment on a large scale and other measures that clearly attacked the interests of the working-class people of the nation. The year 1931 could truly be described as a crisis year in the Australian labour movement, both in politics and industry.

The Niemeyer recommendations resulted in the adoption by the Commonwealth and state parliaments of a proposal generally known as “the Premiers’ Plan”. The so-called Premiers’ Plan caused a division in the Labor movement in Australia and had the ultimate effect of the New South Wales branch of the A.L.P. being disaffiliated from the federal body. The Premier of New South Wales, Jack Lang, refused to sign the Plan, although it was alleged that in private he had agreed to do so. Later he strenuously denied this allegation.

On 3 July 1931, the Financial Emergency Bill of 1931 was introduced into the federal parliament. The Bill briefly stated the proposals of the Scullin government to reduce Public Service wages and salaries on the following basis: 18 per cent for salaries up to £250 per annum; 20 per cent for salaries between £250 and £1000 per annum; 22½ per cent for salaries above £2000 per annum. In addition, cost of living adjustments amounting to £34 per annum had already been withheld, and the following year a further cost of living adjustment of £8 per annum also was not paid. The unions strenuously opposed these wage cuts, but the die had been cast and the Financial Emergency Bill of 1931 became law.

Pensions and social services were also affected by the Financial Emergency Act. After the proposed cuts had been imposed in the federal area, it was revealed that the state governments had not
imposed cuts as drastic and savage as those carried out in the Commonwealth Public Service.

The Commonwealth Treasurer, Ted Theodore, in introducing the legislation, was questioned by a number of New South Wales Labor members concerning details of the Act, including Beasley, who enquired of Theodore as to whether judges were affected by the reduction in salaries. Theodore's answer was that they were so far as payment of allowances were concerned, that is, payment of travelling allowances, and that judges who had retired and who were on pensions would also have a reduction made in their entitlements. However, it is clear beyond any doubt that High Court and federal judges did not take any reduction in salary, while less-fortunate members of the community sustained savage wage cuts and had inroads made into their economic well-being.

State governments, with the exception of that of New South Wales, introduced similar legislation into state parliaments. This was remedied for that state when Premier Lang was dismissed from office by Sir Phillip Game, the Governor of New South Wales.

Due to internal divisions within the Labor movement, Beasley, on behalf of the Lang Labor Party, moved a resolution that had the effect of being a "no confidence" motion in the House of Representatives. This action brought about the fall of the Scullin Labor government, and at the ensuing election, the government was decisively defeated at the polls in five out of the six states, Queensland being the lone exception. In Queensland, the main factor that operated in Labor's favour was the high unemployment rate, which was attributed to the Moore anti-Labor government. Paradoxically, Labor won the Senate in Queensland for the first time in fourteen years.

One of the worst aspects of the impact of government policies on employment conditions in the Public Service was reflected in the lack of promotional opportunities for juniors. A number of junior members on the staff did not receive adult rates of pay on reaching the age of twenty-one years, and quite a number had to wait until they were twenty-three years of age before they received the adult rate.

The Amalgamated Postal Worker's Union was prominent in the campaign to secure the restoration of wage cuts imposed under the Financial Emergency Act, and within the limits of its capacity, did its best to safeguard the economic well-being of its members, which at times was a very difficult process, having regard to the economic climate of the times.

A campaign for restoration of the salary cuts was conducted by the A.P.W.U. and the High Council of Commonwealth Public
THE PACK STILL HUNTS.
Postal Advocate 14 March 1931
Service Unions. A partial restoration was conceded in the 1933 budget, with the result that reductions in all salaries under £260 per annum were restored in full. A further restoration was announced in the budget of 1934, wherein it was revealed that all salaries under £389 per annum would be restored in full, those between £388 and £1000 would be reduced from 20 per cent to 12½ per cent, those between £1000 and £2000 from 22½ per cent to 15 per cent and those over £2000 from 25 per cent to 17½ per cent. The question of payment of adult rates to juniors under twenty-three years of age occupying junior positions and associated matters such as a reduction in working hours and cost of living adjustments were not resolved. A further restoration was made in 1935 and also in 1936. All adults in junior positions were then classified as Assistants Grade I and were paid adult rates of pay, as prescribed in various determinations of the Public Service Arbitrator. Later, the restoration was accorded to all salary-earners in the higher brackets.

It took many years for the provision for wage cuts to be finally erased from the arbitration awards in the private sector; and this did not take place until shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

One of the most divisive elements in the Labor movement during the Depression was the New South Wales Labor Premier, Jack Lang and his machine, which had split the New South Wales A.L.P. into a “Lang” Labor Party and an official Labor Party known as the “federal” A.L.P. Although the influence of Langism was most in evidence in New South Wales, Lang did have a base in some other states, notably in South Australia. In general, the influence of Langism within the A.P.W.U. was felt more in the New South Wales branch, and at one stage, the Langites were able to secure the dismissal of the Assistant Branch Secretary of the time, Andy MacPherson, by having the numbers at a General Meeting declare his position to be an honorary one instead of that of a full-time post. Nevertheless, while this was the situation in Sydney when a plebiscite was taken on a state-wide basis, to determine whether the state branch of the Union should link up with the federal A.L.P. as against the Lang-controlled state Labor Party, the result was a majority vote for affiliation with the federal body.

The steps leading to the taking of the plebiscite were outlined in the Federal Executive Annual Report to the 1932 Annual Conference of the Union. The Federal Executive stated to Conference that a request had been received from the New South Wales branch for authority to take a local plebiscite of members on the
question of political affiliation as between the federal Labor Party and the state Labor Party. The necessary authority for the taking of the plebiscite was granted by the Federal Executive, in accordance with the provisions of the political policy of the Union, as amended by the 1931 Conference. The final vote was: federal Labor Party, 710; state Labor Party, 394. In keeping with this decision, the branch maintained affiliation with the federal body until the reaffiliation of the New South Wales Branch, controlled by the Lang Machine, with the Federal A.L.P.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union was one of the four unions in New South Wales that continued their affiliation with the federal A.L.P., the only Labor Party in New South Wales recognized by the other state Labor Parties. This in itself was an important decision, because for all practical purposes, the Lang party was the Labor Party in that state. Most of the unions were affiliated to it, and Lang attracted a number of people with his messianic fervour.

Times have now changed and the attitude to government employment has changed with it. Prior to the Second World War, a government job was the be all and end all so far as an important segment of the community was concerned, but this philosophy has altered over the years.

In May 1932, a joint conference of accredited representatives, of the various federal Service unions was held for the purpose of considering a number of important matters of general concern to Public Service organizations: reduction of wages under the Financial Emergency Act; restoration of monetary compensation for overtime; operation of cost-of-living adjustment provisions of awards as from 1 July 1932; and the problem of excess staffs.

The report of this conference was considered at the 1932 and 1933 Annual Conferences of the A.P.W.U. However, the General Secretary reported that the delegation to Canberra to take the question of wage cuts further had not been proceeded with owing to the lack of co-operation on the part of the High Council of Service Unions. Notwithstanding this setback, the campaign for salary restoration was carried on by the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union and the Service unions.

The Federal Executive reported at the 1932 Annual Conference that consideration had been given to the statement made by the Prime Minister in the federal parliament on 10 November 1932, relating to the improved financial position of the Commonwealth and the proposals of the government for the remission of taxation. The General Secretary further reported that immediately following on the statement by the Prime Minister, the following steps
UNIONIST: "Come on; off with your coat and give a hand to build something decent."
NON-UNIONIST: "You keep going. I'll live in it when you've finished the good work."

*Postal Advocate 15 March 1930*
had been taken through the Federation of Postal Unions:

1. Forwarding of communication to Government requesting that serious consideration be given to the remission of some part of the heavy wage reductions imposed on Federal Service employees, and furnishing reasons in support of the request.
2. Forwarding of communication to Leader of Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, requesting the assistance of the Opposition in voicing the claims of the Federal Service to some remission of wage reductions, and furnishing statement setting out the case for the Service.
3. Forwarding of communication to High Council of Service Unions advising action taken by the Federation and urging similar action on part of High Council in furtherance of the common object.
4. Forwarding of communications to combined committees of local branches of Federal Service Unions in several states requesting local action by such bodies on certain defined lines.
5. Furnishing of short statement to Sydney daily papers relating to the claim of the Service for consideration in view of the substantial improvement in the finances of the Commonwealth.
6. Requesting co-operation of High Council of Service Unions in combined delegation to Canberra for purpose of interviewing the Prime Minister and government supporters in furtherance of some remission of the wage reductions.

The 1932 Annual Conference was informed of the action of the Lyons government in moving in the Senate for the rejection of the award obtained by the Union for payment of not less than the minimum living wage to employees of adult age, regardless of the work on which they were employed. The motion was carried on a strict party division by 17 votes to 8.

Following on the action of the Senate, the Federal Executive, in association with other Service unions, arranged for the leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party to bring the matter up in the House of Representatives and to force a vote on the question in that chamber. At the same time, efforts were made to prevail on some of the government supporters to uphold the principle of observance of awards and the principle of the minimum living wage, but without success.

Action was also taken by the Federal Executive, in association with other Service unions, to broadcast addresses from Sydney and Melbourne radio stations commenting on the action of the government in rejecting this award. At a later date, the matter was made the subject of correspondence to branches, in which it was suggested that action be taken to have a resolution of protest conveyed to the government by the local Trades Hall Council, or Trades and Labour Council.
The problem of the disposal of employees on reaching adult age was considered by the former Labor government early in 1931, when it was decided to pay these employees the minimum living wage until such time as adult positions could be found for them. At that time, the basic wage for the Public Service was much higher and the financial position of the Commonwealth infinitely worse than at the time the award was rejected by the Lyons government, which completely disposed of any defence that might be offered by the government on that score.

As the position then stood, the only course open to the A.P.W.U. to secure redress was by way of political action aimed at the election of a Labor government.

This point had been brought out by the President, P.W. Murphy, in his address to the 1932 Annual Conference in November of that year, when he said:

The federal elections were held shortly after the close of last Conference and resulted in the return of an anti-Labor government. As a result, the task of the Union has been made ever so much harder. The ill-consequences to postal workers by the election of anti-Labor government in the federal sphere at this critical period were clearly foreseeable by last Conference.

He also noted the work done by the Union's Federal Executive to carry through the directions of the Conference:

The action taken by the Federal Executive on the resolutions of last Conference and other important business is set out for the consideration of Conference in the report of the Federal Executive and calls for very little comment from me at this stage. I might point out in passing, however, that every resolution remitted to the Federal Executive for attention by last Conference, is accounted for in the report of the Federal Executive, which is what should be done in every properly conducted organization. We do know that in many organizations various resolutions are never accounted for, which means that the time, thought and money expended in the deliberations are absolutely wasted.

At the 1932 Annual Conference, the Federal Executive reported that a reply would be received from the Public Service Board that the restriction previously imposed on certain classes of postal employees as regards holding offices on local government bodies would be relaxed, and that in future each case would be considered on its merits. Amending instructions were issued by the Board to this effect.

Among the items submitted for the agenda of the 1933 Annual Conference was that a claim be made to the Arbitrator for a reduction of hours to thirty-six hours per week for night work and forty hours per week for shift work in the case of mail officers.
The Union's 1933 Annual Report also drew attention to the fact that the Federal Executive had been directed to withdraw from affiliation with the Federation of Postal Unions in the event of less than four organizations retaining affiliation, and that in the event of withdrawal, arrangements were to be made to maintain contact with the High Council of Service Unions and with organizations not affiliated with the High Council, for the purpose of co-operation on matters of common concern.

The Report further stated that the Postal Electricians' Union (later the P.T.T.A. and now the A.T.E.A.) had decided to withdraw from the Federation of Postal Unions, thus ending the existence of that body, which had done a very useful job of work over the years.

The Federal Executive reported that following on the 1932 Conference direction, an endeavour was made to arrange with the Department for the deduction of union dues from the salaries of members each pay period, where members were agreeable to this course. This matter had been submitted to the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, but the request was not acceded to, principally because of the attitude of the Treasury. The Federal Executive concluded that the proposal was really refused as a matter of government policy, and that nothing could be achieved by further representation at that stage.

As the 1932 Conference had recorded its entire satisfaction with the manner in which the General Secretary-Treasurer, J.V. Dwyer, had carried out the duties of his office, and that he be granted a further term of office of three years commencing from the expiration of his present term (i.e. from 1 October 1933), the Federal Executive had arranged for the necessary agreement to be drawn up by the union's solicitor relating to the re-appointment of the General Secretary-Treasurer for a further period of office, in accordance with the terms of the direction from Conference. The 1933 Annual Conference adopted the agreement.

The important subject of wage reductions was accorded high priority at the 1933 Annual Conference. The report dealing with this matter had regard to the decisions of the 1932 Conference, which read:

The question of wage reductions in the Federal Service is not an ordinary variation, such as may happen in normal times, but arises from causes associated with the present social system. The question is one affecting all sections of the community, which must be handled as a fundamental economic problem.

It is extremely doubtful whether any real or lasting improvement can be looked for by Federal Service employees or the general body of wage-
earners without some fundamental re-organization of the present social system, which is based on production for profit regardless of the general welfare of the community.

We therefore record our support for the social ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange to replace the present private ownership, thus achieving the complete change of the present social system.

Pending the achievement of the objective of social ownership, the following proposals are endorsed as an immediate objective for the purpose of alleviating the present adverse conditions: opposition to continuance of present policy of deflation; reduction of working hours, without reduction of pay, as a means of lessening unemployment; relief from interest payments on external debts; control of banking system and credit controlling institutions in the interests of the people as a whole; reform of the monetary system; raising of price levels or the scaling down of public and private debts commensurate with the increased purchasing power of money between the time of incurring the debt and the present moment.

The report also considered all aspects of the Joint Conference of Federal Service Unions which took place in that year, including a report of a special committee relating to the effects of the economic crisis on Service wages and conditions, and measures for redress.

The issue of most importance to the Union was that of the emergency wage cuts that the Depression had brought. The 1933 Annual Conference therefore spent most of its time on this subject. The Union's views were expressed in the resolution:

That having regard to the finances of the Commonwealth, this Conference, representing over 10,000 postal employees throughout Australia, is of opinion that the federal government should immediately provide for the complete restoration of the emergency wage cuts imposed on Federal Service employees, and we view the measure of restoration recently provided for by the government as being inadequate to meet the needs of the case. That the action taken by the Federal Executive in association with other Service Unions for the restoration of emergency wage cuts and the statement of policy adopted by the 1933 Joint Conference of Federal Service Unions relating to this question be endorsed. That the Federal Executive be directed to continue the campaign for the complete restoration of emergency wage cuts in association with other Federal Service Unions on the lines decided upon by the 1932 Conference of the union, as re-affirmed by this Conference, and in accordance with the policy decided upon by the 1933 Joint Conference of Federal Service Unions.

By the time of the 1934 Annual Report to Conference, the Federal Executive, in association with other Service unions, had used the resolution to influence the government to make provision
in the 1934–35 budget for complete restoration of “emergency” wage cuts to all sections of the Service. Having regard to the fact that from 1 July 1934, the Service was faced with a further cost of living reduction of £6 a year in the case of adult males, with proportionate reductions in the case of females and minors, and that a number of adult male employees classified in junior positions were still being paid less than the basic wage, it was decided to couple these two matters with the restoration of emergency wage cuts.

Although there was still large-scale unemployment throughout Australia, the worst of the Depression seemed to be passing by 1934. For some workers, however, their first regular job would not be until 1939, when the Second A.I.F. was being formed.
As Australia slowly recovered from the Depression, which historians tell us was more severe in this country than in the United States, Britain or Germany, two problems faced the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union. These were firstly, the continuing disunity in the Labor movement caused by the Lang faction in New South Wales and secondly, the need to restore the wage cuts lost at the height of the Depression.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union, consisting as it did of members employed exclusively by the Commonwealth government, was anxious to achieve unity in the Labor movement on an Australia-wide basis. The Union was under no illusions about what it could achieve for its members from the United Australia Party under Joe Lyons, or from the Country Party under Earle Page. The A.P.W.U. Federal Executive therefore wrote to the Australasian Council of Trade Unions, asking that body to convene a conference of unions and Labor organizations, to try to resolve their differences. At the Union's 1934 Annual Conference, the Executive reported that following correspondence with the A.C.T.U., it was expected that an early conference would be held, and that the committee was hopeful of good results. The Conference discussed the unity problem and the A.C.T.U. correspondence at some length before resolving:

That unity of the political Labor movement on an Australia-wide basis is essential for the welfare of the movement and the general body of wage-earners.

That it is imperative that the Labor movement should agree to act under a single leader, and to speak with one voice in the advocacy of one political programme throughout Australia.
That any unity agreement should provide for reasonable representa-
tion of all sections of the movement throughout Australia, and that
special precautions be taken to prevent the domination of the movement
by any particular section or persons.
That efforts be made by the Union in conjunction with other Unions
to achieve the desired consolidation of the movement.

Throughout 1935, various people in the trade-union movement
and in the Labor Party tried to effect a reconciliation of the factions
within the Labor movement in New South Wales. The future
Federal Treasurer and Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, was a key
figure in these moves and his role has been well recorded by
L.F. Crisp in his biography of Chifley.*

At the 1937 Annual Conference of the Union, the Federal
Executive reported agreement had been reached between the federal
A.L.P. and the New South Wales state Labor Party by which the
latter body re-joined the federal body, thus restoring unity on an
Australia-wide basis. Some trouble subsequently arose over the non-
admission of certain members of the federal A.L.P. by the New
South Wales body, but it was expected that this would eventually
be dissolved.

Just before the Conference, further disunity arose within the
Labor movement in New South Wales as a result of rebellion by
a number of trade unions and Labor Leagues against those in
control of the Labor machinery in that state. This happening,
however, was of local origin, and had nothing at all to do with
the disunity that previously had existed between the federal A.L.P.
and the New South Wales Labor Party.

The discussion on the dispute within the New South Wales Labor
Party took a great deal of the Conference’s time. The Amalgamated
Postal Workers’ Union’s opinion was finally expressed in a resolu-
tion moved by N.W. Burke and G. McCarthy of New South Wales,
which stated:

That this Union condemns the action of the New South Wales Branch
of the A.L.P. in expelling a number of accredited Union and parlia-
mentary representatives for attending the Industrial Conference held
in Sydney on the 1 August 1936, and that in the event of the New
South Wales Branch of the A.L.P. failing to grant the reasonable
requests of the Industrial Conference, the Federal Executive of the
Union is hereby authorized to allow the New South Wales Branch of
the Union to discontinue affiliation with the A.L.P. in the state of New
South Wales, if the facts are considered to justify this course, until
otherwise decided by the Federal Executive or the Annual Conference
of the Union.

The dispute in the Labor movement was again touched upon at the 1937 Annual Conference, where delegates were told that no request had been received from the New South Wales branch of the Union concerning the question of disaffiliation with the local A.L.P. since the close of the previous Conference, consequently no action was required of the Federal Executive. The trouble between the industrial and political sections of the Labour movement in New South Wales had been partly settled as the result of the meeting of the Federal Executive of the A.L.P., which had been held in the previous April, and with the near approach of the federal elections, the remaining matters in dispute were more or less in abeyance for the time being. However, despite the hope that had been held out for a solution of the New South Wales problem in 1937, the delegates to the 1938 Annual Conference found that they were again required to discuss what had become a running sore for the whole of the Australian Labor movement.

The Union's 1938 Annual Report noted that the trouble between the industrial and political sections of the labour movement in New South Wales in fact had grown since the close of the last Conference, and at the present moment the division was greater than ever. The Report went on to say that the New South Wales branch had advised the Federal Executive of the Union that as the merits of the rival forces in that state were the subject of frequent discussions at general meetings, with changing decisions, action was being taken to obtain a wider expression of opinion from union members in New South Wales by means of a ballot, to be held in conjunction with the annual election of branch officers.

A plebiscite was then held among New South Wales members on the question: "Pending unity being achieved in the Labor movement, do you favour continuation of affiliation with the Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales?" The result of the voting was: "Yes", 954; "No", 516.

It was clear that a large majority of members of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union in New South Wales were in favour of retaining the Union's affiliation with the Labor Party in that state. It was fortunate for both the political and industrial labour movements that the leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party then was John Curtin, unquestionably the greatest Labor leader and the greatest Prime Minister in Australian History. Curtin had recently addressed a conference of the federal Labor Party in New South Wales, the official branch of the A.L.P. in that state, and the Union's Annual Conference of 1939 decided to endorse his five-point proposal as a reasonable and equitable basis for securing unity in the Labor movement. The five points were:
1. Direct representation to be given to Unions at Conferences.
2. That Parliamentary Labor Party elect its own officers.
3. Conference to elect the Executive.
4. That Parliamentary Labor Party to be given full authority to decide in caucus the interpretation of the party platform.
5. The party funds to be held by trustees.

Shortly after the close of the 1939 Conference, a rival Labor Party was formed in New South Wales, under the leadership of J.T. Lang and J.A. Beasley, on the plea that the officially recognized A.L.P. Executive in that state was dominated by communists. The rival body decided to function under the title of the Australian Labor Party (Non-Communist), but its scope did not extend beyond the boundaries of New South Wales. The formation of this rival Labor Party was reported in the pages of the *Postal Advocate* of 15 May 1940.

Further trouble arose owing to the opposition of the State Executive of the A.L.P. in New South Wales to the policy laid down by the Interstate Conference of the Labor Party, and the refusal of that Executive to abide by the decisions of the federal authority of the A.L.P., which led to the suspension of the State Executive by the federal authority and the appointment of a new Executive to take over the control of the New South Wales branch.

Members of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union were kept up to date with the continuing New South Wales problems. A report on this latest trouble and the action taken for the re-organization of the official Labor Party in New South Wales appeared in the *Postal Advocate* of 14 September 1940. At this time, three separate and distinct bodies claiming to represent the Labor movement were endeavouring to function in New South Wales: the official A.L.P., under the leadership of John Curtin and W.J. McKell; the non-communist party, under the leadership of Lang and Beasley; and the recently suspended Executive group, under the leadership of J.R. Hughes and W. Evans.

Having regard to the decisions of the Annual Conferences of the Union relating to political policy, the Federal Executive stood by the official A.L.P., which was an Australia-wide party, functioning in every state of the Commonwealth. The counsel of Curtin and Chifley prevailed in the end and the Lang faction was brought back into the Labor Party. Sol Rosevar, a Langite, who defeated Theodore in 1931, became Speaker of the House of Representatives in 1943, while Jack Beasley, Eddie Ward and H.P. Lazzarini, three prominent Langites, became ministers in Curtin's government in October 1941.
STRONGER UNIONISM MEANS GREATER PROGRESS

Postal Advocate 15 November 1937

"When I learn once in a while as I go round that some postal employees are outside of the organisation that is responsible for the improvement that he received the benefits of to-day, I cannot help but think it is due to ignorance of the worst type, gross ignorance perhaps." Congressman Clyde Kelly, U.S.A.
While the Union as a whole had been deeply concerned about the disunity that Langism had produced in New South Wales, its principal concern had to be for the immediate and future well-being of its members. Boots for postmen was such an issue. During 1933 and 1934, representations had been made to the Department for the free issue of two pairs of boots annually to postmen. This was discussed with officers of the Central Administration, but without success. The Department referred to the uniforms, headgear and protective clothing supplied to postmen and intimated that the additional expenditure that would be involved in granting this request could not be acceded to. Over twenty years were to elapse before the Union’s claims were conceded.

The major issue facing the Union in the 1930s was the restoration of emergency wage cuts. At the 1935 Annual Conference, it was noted that there had been a removal of emergency wage cuts from certain sections of the federal Service. The Union requested the removal of such wage cuts from the remainder of the Service and agreed to co-operate with other Service unions to this end. Action in this matter was taken by the Federal Executive through the machinery of the Special Committee of the Joint Conference of Federal Service Unions, which was charged with the responsibility of instituting action for the abolition of emergency wage cuts.

Representations were subsequently made to the federal government for the complete removal of emergency wage cuts from all sections of the federal Service, and by 1935, the government had announced that the wage cuts would be entirely removed from salaries up to £485 a year (1930 salary scales) and that the cuts would be further lessened on salaries exceeding £485 a year.

It was necessary to bear in mind, continued the report however unpalatable it might be, that emergency wage cuts were still in force in respect of certain sections of the federal and state governments. The existence of this undesirable state of affairs was calculated to react adversely against any claim by the remaining sections of the federal and state Service for improved rates of pay, and for this reason, if for no higher motive, it appeared essential for all sections to unite for the purpose of securing the complete abolition of these emergency cuts.

During 1936, the question of a Thursday pay day was taken up with the Central Office of the Department, which agreed to confer with the Treasury to see what could be done to meet the wishes of the Union. The Department subsequently advised that the Treasury held that if any change were made, it would be necessary for the Commonwealth to retain two days’ pay in hand, as was then the rule, and that the views of all Service unions would have
C.E. (Don) Parker, General President 1934–1947
to be obtained on this basis before any decision could be made. Subsequently, payment of wages on Thursdays was conceded in the post-war era; when this happened, the Treasury did not press its point that the Commonwealth should retain two days’ pay in hand.

Two matters of importance emerged in 1937, one of which referred to representations being made by the Federal Executive to the incoming government for weekly payment of salaries. The representations were made, but the request was refused and fortnightly payment of salaries is still in existence.

The second matter concerned the retaining of adult employees in junior positions. Following the receipt of correspondence from the New South Wales branch, the Federal Executive agreed to give further consideration to the question of members reaching the age of twenty-one and not given incremental advancement and were still pegged on the minimum salary even though they were performing adult duties. The Federal Executive eventually decided to file a claim with the Public Service Arbitrator based on the principle of credit for service, for incremental advancement purposes, on the basis of promotion or transfer to an adult position at twenty-one years of age, regardless of the age of the employee on promotion thereto.

The Public Service Board formally objected to the claim and discussions were subsequently entered into between the Union and the Board. The result was reported to Conferences when the Board later advised the Federal Executive that action would be taken to meet the wishes of the Union in respect of “acting” service in adult positions by adults classified in junior positions in all cases where the employees concerned were not in receipt of at least £244 per annum (1 July 1926 standard) as at 1 January 1937. The effect of this arrangement was to quicken the incremental advancement of the employees concerned. Prior to the Depression period, when a number of adults were classified in junior positions, on a salary appropriate to the junior positions, it was the practice to classify all juniors on reaching adult age as Assistant, Grade 1, the maximum salary for which position was £244 per annum (1926 standard rate).

The Union’s 1937 Annual Report revealed that there had been virtually a mass resignation from the Union by mail officers employed in travelling post offices. Attempts had then been made by those members who resigned to form a Travelling Post Office Mail Officers’ Union.

At the 1937 Annual Conference, the standing orders were suspended to permit V.J. Brady, the solicitor representing the travelling post office employees, and the employees’ representatives,
to address Conference concerning the question of the submission of a sectional claim confined to mail officers on travelling post office duties and the proposed registration of a separate union for travelling post office staff. Addressing the Conference in support of the wishes of travelling post office employees, Brady referred to the fact that the employees in question were confined to New South Wales, and he contended that their work was entirely dissimilar to other mail officers and called for separate treatment. He urged the Conference to agree to submit a separate case to the Arbitrator relating to rates of pay and conditions of travelling post office staff, which, if agreed to, would result in the employees in question rejoining the Union and withdrawing their application before the Deputy-Registrar for registration as a separate union.

Mr Whatham, a representative of the travelling post office employees, also addressed the Conference concerning the nature of the duties performed. He contended that the employees' work carried a much greater measure of responsibility than the work done at the head office, and that they were worth about £1 a week more than head office mail officers. Questions were asked of the speakers by Conference delegates concerning the points in dispute, and it was eventually resolved that the following points be agreed to as a fair and reasonable settlement of the matter in dispute:

(a) Mail officers employed on travelling post office services be afforded an opportunity to tender evidence during the hearing of the claim already filed by the Union for increased rates of pay for mail officers in general, and that failing success in that case, consideration be then given by the Union to the submission of a sectional claim to the Arbitrator confined to travelling post office employees.

(b) If and when agreement is reached with the travelling post office employees, the Union to file a claim for improved conditions for travelling post office employees, as distinct from rates of pay, on such terms as may be agreed upon between the Union and the employees concerned.

(c) That in the event of agreement being reached with the travelling post office employees, the Conference recommends that the employees in question be re-admitted to membership without penalty, provided that application for re-admission is made within one month of the date of agreement.

The Federal Executive took up the matter in 1938, and the Conference that year, in dealing with the subject, decided that the conditions laid down by the 1937 Conference be regarded as a fair and reasonable settlement of the dispute between T.P.O. officers of the Union, and that in the event of the application of the T.P.O. officers for registration as a separate union being proceeded with
before the Industrial Registrar, the Federal Executive was to engage the services of a solicitor to assist officer of the Union in opposition to the application. The action of the Committee of Management of the New South Wales branch in imposing an entrance fee on travelling post office employees who delayed applying for re-admission to membership of the Union until after the 15 July 1938, was not interfered with by the Conference.

By 1938, the dispute was well on the way to settlement. The question of a general reduction of working hours was discussed with other Service unions in October 1938, when agreement was reached that an approach be made to the government by a combined deputation in support of the introduction of a maximum working week of forty hours in the federal Service. This matter was based on favourable remarks made by the Public Service Arbitrator in his judgment on a case that was presented to him in the previous year on behalf of the combined Service unions for the granting of the forty-hour week to Service employees.

Efforts were made to prevail on the government to receive the combined deputation at an early date, and after discussion with the union, Victorian Labor Senator J.M. Sheehan raised the matter in the Senate, and was answered by the Postmaster-General on behalf of the government.

The Postal Advocate of 15 November 1938 reported both questions and answers:

1. Is it a fact that Mr Westhoven, the Federal Public Service Arbitrator, in the Federal Unions' claim for a maximum 40-hour working week, expressed the opinion that in present-day conditions the 40-hour week was warranted?

2. Is the Arbitrator of the opinion that the initiative in this matter rightly belongs to parliament?

3. If the answers to questions 1 and 2 are in the affirmative, what steps, if any, is the government taking to give effect in the Commonwealth Public Service to the Arbitrator's opinions?

In reply, Senator A.J. McLachlan, the Acting Leader of the government said:

1. Yes, but Mr Westhoven prefaced his remarks by saying that he spoke as an individual.

2. A statement to that effect was made to Mr Westhoven.

3. The government's policy has already been announced, viz., that it considers that before there can be any general adoption of shorter hours in Australia, the full facts regarding the economic effects must be ascertained. As previously announced, the government would be prepared to do anything in its power to facilitate the determination by the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration of the question of a shorter working week.
The question of joint arbitration action regarding long-service leave to temporary employees also was discussed with other Service unions in October 1938. As a result of this discussion, a proposal was made for the submission of a joint claim to the Arbitrator for the granting of furlough to persons whose employment was virtually of a permanent character, although not specifically reckoned as permanent under the Commonwealth Public Service Act. As far as the Federal Executive was then aware, the only class of employees covered by the Union who were likely to have the necessary period of continuous service to entitle them to long-service leave was male cleaners, who would come within the category of the proposed claim.

The proposal referred to was subsequently considered by the other Service unions, who decided that they were unfavourably disposed to the submission of any claim to the Arbitrator for the granting of furlough to temporary employees. Fortunately, the viewpoint of other Service unions has changed over the years, and long-service leave or furlough is now granted virtually on the same basis to temporary officers as that which applies to permanent officers.

The rights of temporary employees in so far as incremental advancement was concerned was raised at the 1938 Annual Conference. It was decided that temporary employees who had earned increments during a previous period of employment and who were eligible to retain same under the existing terms of the respective awards, should, if re-employed in a similar capacity, be again entitled to such increments upon completion of twelve months' service within the preceding two years, provided the break in service did not exceed five years.

This matter had been discussed with the Public Service Board in relation to temporary employees in general and temporary linemen in particular. In the course of discussion, the Board expressed the view that the Union’s proposal to add further provisions would increase administrative work and create confusion, but consideration would be given to devising a simpler method to meet the cases cited by the Union. The Board subsequently notified the Federal Executive that careful consideration had been given to the Union’s proposal, but it was unable to agree to any variation of the existing conditions, which applied generally throughout the Service.

The 1938 Annual Conference also agreed that representation be made to the Public Service Board or the Department to advise that there would be no delivery of correspondence by postmen on Labour Day.
Unions work hard for their members, but they are also employers in their own right. They have in their employ elected officers and staff members. In 1939, the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union decided that there should be a scheme of long-service leave for its own union officials. The scheme as outlined laid down:

(a) That full-time officers of the Union, unless dismissed for dereliction of duty, shall be granted long-service leave or pay in lieu on retirement on the following basis:
   4 years and less than 8 years' service — 2 months
   8 years and less than 12 years' service — 3 months
   12 years and less than 16 years' service — 4 months
   16 years and less than 20 years' service — 5 months
   20 years' service — 6 months

(b) After completing 20 years' service, such officers shall be granted further leave or pay in lieu on the same basis as for the first 20 years' service.

(c) Any officer having completed not less than 4 years' service in a full-time office if defeated at an election for office, shall be deemed to have been retired for the purpose of this resolution.

The scheme has subsequently been varied over the years to meet the changes in the Public Service Act and the policy of the Union.

In 1940, Australia was again at war. The question concerning the payment or otherwise of union dues by members absent on war service was referred to the Federal Executive for decision. After full consideration of the matter, in consultation with branches, the Executive decided that union members absent from duty on war service (as defined by the Public Service Board) should be exempt from payment of union dues during their period of absence from duty, regardless of the duration of such absence.
The War and Post-war Reconstruction

The war of 1939–45 had a great impact on the Australian Post Office. The Postmaster-General’s Department’s Annual Reports covering the war years bear testimony to the assistance rendered by the Department and its employees in this great conflict. The 1946 Annual Report indicates that over 8000 Post Office male employees were released for war service, and a considerable number of women were temporarily engaged to take their place, particularly in such occupations as mail officers and postwomen. Although no precise figures are available, a significant number of those who did enlist were Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union members.

Up to 30 June 1944, 109 employees had made the supreme sacrifice. When Darwin was bombed on the 19 February 1942, the Department suffered a tragic loss when as a result of a direct hit by an enemy bomb, ten postal employees were killed.

There is little doubt that only for the fact that a number of Service jobs were treated as reserve occupations, there would have been many more enlistments. The Post Office undertook a large amount of specialized work on behalf of the Defence Forces, which meant the diversion of numerous highly skilled technicians and other officers from their normal duties, and this continued throughout the period of the war. By the end of hostilities, nearly 6000 women were engaged on work normally carried out by men, and an additional 150 were being trained for such work.

It is worth recalling that during the war years, the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union was the first union to secure from the Women’s Employment Board the full male rate for mail officers and 90 per cent of the male rate for postwomen.
With a rapid change of the military situation in 1942 and the possibility of invasion by the Japanese, it had been decided, with the approval of the government, to organize from among the male members of the staff of the Department a body of employees to undertake, should occasion demand, the protection of the communication services under the control of the Department, with due regard to the obligations imposed upon the Department by the Commonwealth War Book. The scheme afforded male employees of the Department, including those engaged in reserved occupations, an opportunity to render useful service to the nation as Commonwealth peace officers or watchmen on a voluntary basis, and at the same time to continue their normal tasks of providing and maintaining the various communication services. Approximately 5000 volunteers were so engaged, spread over the Commonwealth. The Post Office Women’s Auxiliary was established to help assist the war effort, and the activities of such organizations as War Savings Certificates groups, the Comforts Fund and the Red Cross were also assisted materially by those who were manning the home front.

As was the case during World War I, union activity was restricted during the period of hostilities. There was also a freeze on wages, and prices were controlled. These policies were pursued into the post-war era, with the result that there was rising discontent amongst Post Office unions, and particularly from the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, who demanded the lifting of the wage freeze. One method of circumventing the freeze was to change the name of the designation of officers; for example, a new position of Postal Officer was created, which encompassed the former designations of Postman, Postal Assistant Grade I and Assistant Grade I, and an increase was granted for this new designation. This resulted in a form of wage justice being accorded to low-wage employees. A Consent Award was entered into early in 1947, to give effect to this change.

One of the features of the Annual Conference that opened at the head office of the Union at the Trades Hall in Sydney on Monday, 24 October 1941, was the significant reduction in the number of agenda items. Clearly, the war had resulted in a lessening in union activity and this also had had an impact on the membership. Nevertheless, the Union had an obligation not only to look after its members during the conflict but also to plan for post-war reconstruction.

One of the items submitted to Conference by the New South Wales branch in 1941 read: “Had Conference considered the
question of furlough being granted upon completion of 10 years' service and pro rata thereafter?" Reforms in working conditions often came slowly, and it took almost thirty-three years for this objective to be realized. Another agenda item raised the question of the value of superannuation units being increased to fifteen shillings per unit, as against the amount of ten shillings per unit in operation at that time.

The most significant section of the Union's 1942 Annual Report related to the fact that a Labor government led by John Curtin had come into power in October 1941. This government was a minority government and was supported in the House of Representatives by two Independent members, but it did not possess a majority in the Senate. However, in 1943, an election for both Houses of Parliament resulted in the Curtin government receiving an overwhelming mandate from the electors in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and as a consequence, the 1943 Annual Conference discussed the propositions:

That in view of the federal political success of Labor in both Houses, Conference elect and send a deputation to Canberra to interview Labor caucus or other governmental authority, upon matters affecting the welfare of members of our Union on which action taken to date of Conference has produced no successful results. Items for such deputation to include the following:

(a) Demand for adjustment of anomaly regarding Linemen's Award whereby employees in the incremental stages did not receive the immediate award increase.

(b) To demand that the regulations requiring surrender of coupons for protective clothing (overalls, waterproofs, etc.), formally supplied unconditionally by Department, be cancelled.

(c) To demand that employment of juvenile labour in adult positions at juvenile rates of pay be immediately stopped.

(d) To register an emphatic protest against the imposition of taxation on incomes of the basic wage or less and to demand a revision of the whole taxation question, particularly in relation to incomes of six pounds (£6) a week and less, with a view to abolition of taxation on such incomes or a substantial reduction on same.

(e) That in view of the National Security Regulations pegging wages (quoted by Public Service Board when the case for Linemen, Grade 2, engaged on statistical work was presented for increased wages), the deputation seek authority from the responsible minister to have the case for these employees heard by the competent authority.

(f) To represent to the Labor Caucus or other governmental authority any other matters deemed necessary of representation by Conference.

That if Conference considers that time, finance or any other factor renders a deputation to Canberra impracticable, Conference to empower
the Federal Executive to arrange a deputation to Canberra within two (2) months of Conference dispersing, to place the items mentioned in the preceding resolution (a. b. c. d. e. & f.) before the Labor Caucus or other governmental authority.

On the whole, the advent of the Labor government of 1941 opened up a new era of industrial relationship between the government, the Public Service Board, the Department and the unions.

During the early part of the war the Australian Communist Party was banned by Menzies, and this ban was lifted by the Curtin government once it took office. With the change of the direction of the war, in particular after the invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler's armies, the Communist Party took up a different stance and was wholeheartedly behind the war effort. The Curtin government's lifting of the ban on the operations of the party secured the strong support of the Labour movement. Some organizations, such as the Australian Workers’ Union, opposed the Curtin government's decision.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union assisted the Labor Party both numerically and financially in the 1943 federal election. W.G. Bryson, the honorary Assistant Secretary of the Victorian branch, was successful in the 1943 election, defeating Maurice Blackburn for the Victorian seat of Bourke. The 1944 referendum to seek additional power for the Commonwealth parliament was also supported by the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union and the trade union movement in general.

Although the Post Office was a partially reserved occupation, nevertheless it was required to make contributions to the war effort in the form of manpower to the appropriate authorities. An amusing story is told of one post office worker in Queensland. The postmaster, after receiving requests for additional men, decided to send one of his workers to the manpower authorities, knowing full well he would never pass the medical examination. The worker was called up, went to the appropriate military depot at Redbank, near Brisbane, and was passed unfit by the doctor because of his defective eyesight. As a consequence of his being enlisted into the Forces, although he in fact only spent some two or three days at the Army depot, he was considered to be an ex-serviceman, within the meaning of the Re-establishment and Employment Act.

The Post Office Annual Reports from 1944 onwards mention the post-war programme of the Department, and point out that in order to overtake the heavy arrears that had accumulated since the outbreak of war, and also to enable the Department to play its full part in assisting in the development of primary and secondary industry in Australia, a comprehensive programme of post-war
works was being prepared. The first stage of the programme involved an expenditure of approximately £18,000,000.

The initial section of the post-war programme comprised mainly those works having a high degree of priority and designed to effect urgently needed improvements in the postal, telecommunication and broadcasting services of the Commonwealth. The execution of the projects would form the Post Office’s contribution towards the stabilization of early post-war economic conditions.

Special attention was to be paid to building requirements, and approximately one-third of the total programme would cover the erection of new buildings or alterations to, and remodelling of, existing premises, which were required to meet the substantial development in postal business that had taken place in past years. In addition to buildings, the main works to be undertaken in the capital cities included the establishment of new automatic telephone exchanges and the provision of additional underground cable plant to serve both exchanges and subscribers, to meet the expected increased demand for telephone services.

The union movement collectively was right behind the government’s post-war reconstruction plans, and the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, in common with the Australasian Council of Trade Unions and other bodies, signified its approval of these policies. Albert Monk became the first full-time secretary of the A.C.T.U. in 1943. Monk had been the part-time President of the A.C.T.U. since 1932. In 1949, the presidency of the A.C.T.U. was made a full-time position and Albert Monk then was appointed to that position and Reg Broadby was brought in as secretary. The creation of a full-time position of secretary of the A.C.T.U. was long overdue, and Albert Monk’s appointment was welcomed by the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union and universally endorsed by the trade-union movement.

The Labour movement also took up a united position in respect to the formation of the United Nations. The union movement had an almost vested interest in the continuance of the International Labor Organization, and the I.L.O. became the first specialized agency of the new international body.

There is little doubt that during the war years, Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union members were required to make a special sacrifice in the form of long hours of duty, particularly so far as overtime was concerned, and their interest in the successful outcome of the war motivated them considerably in this regard.

In 1946, General Secretary, Jack Dwyer was appointed by the Chifley government to serve on the Committee of Inquiry into promotions of officers in the Commonwealth Public Service, which
resulted in the establishment of the Promotions Appeal Committee.

The 1944 Annual Conference discussed an agenda item from the Western Australian branch: that the Federal Executive make representations to the government for the reintroduction of its policy of preference in employment to unionists. This policy was subsequently implemented.

With the end of the war, the Union was anxious to take up again its fight for better working and living conditions for its members. The New South Wales branch of the Union, in particular, requested the Federal Executive to hold stop-work meetings if the wage freeze continued. The Chifley government, per the medium of a Consent Award in March 1947, increased the margins of all members of the Union. Subsequently, there was a further adjustment as from August 1947.

In 1946 a sum of £150 was donated from the funds of the Federal Executive to the leader of the Federal Labor Party and the Federal Executive of the A.L.P., to support the campaign for the re-election of a Labor government. This was supplemented by donations from branches, including £1000 from the Victorian branch, to the A.L.P. Campaign Committee in their respective states. The pages of the Postal Advocate were also used in support of A.L.P. candidates and the carrying of the referendum proposals, and the various branches issued circulars for similar purposes.

The Labor government was returned with a good working majority, but the result of the referendum was clouded in doubt; that section dealing with social services was carried, but the other two matters submitted: marketing of primary products and industrial employment, received the majority approval of the electors, but not in a majority of states.

The post-war years were turbulent in the industrial area. Accusations flew about regarding communist and other influences in the trade-union movement, and it became necessary for the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union to spell out clearly where it stood. At the 1946 Annual Conference, the General President, C.E. (Don) Parker, made the following statement:

Having regard to the apparently conflicting views expressed by a number of members concerning the recent industrial trouble arising out of the strike of steelworkers, miners, and seamen in New South Wales, with its inevitable repercussions throughout Australia, it appears advisable for a statement to be made concerning the policy of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union for the information and guidance of Union officials and members.

For this purpose, I have to announce that our Union is affiliated with both the A.C.T.U. and the Australian Labor Party, and we are bound, therefore, to give some measure of support to the decisions reached by
"We want raincoats that will keep us dry, more soap to keep us clean, and adequate supplies of boot polish so we can be tidy." A deputation of P.M.G. delivery boys to the Superintendent of Telegraphs, Brisbane, led by the Queensland Secretary of the APWU Frank Waters (1 to 7): A.M. Cook (Senior Welfare Officer), A.J. Talbot (Delivery Branch Overseer), Frank Waters, Kevin Moore, Ron Mair, Greg McKenzie, P.J. Gribble (Assistant Superintendent Telegraphs), A.Jones (Superintendent of Telegraphs) (Photo by courtesy of Brisbane Telegraph)
these recognized bodies on industrial and political questions, while retaining at all times our sovereign rights as a self-governing organization.

I have further to announce that the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union has no association of any kind with any other party or section, and we owe no allegiance whatsoever to any other party or to Trades Union officials subject to the influence or direction of any other Party or section.

In 1947, a campaign initiated by the New South Wales branch sought increases in salaries for all sections of the union membership. Subsequently, the Public Service Arbitrator conceded marginal increases to all sections.

At the 1947 Annual Conference, the New South Wales branch submitted five proposals for further increases:

(a) An all-round increase of twenty-seven per cent on actual salaries and wages in the Commonwealth Public Service.
(b) Minimum increments of twenty-six pounds a year.
(c) Increased rates for juniors on the same percentage.
(d) Rate for the job irrespective of sex.
(e) Reduction in prices of all consumer goods.

These proposals constituted the basis of a wages campaign in which the union sought the support of other unions.

The Federal Executive reported in 1948 that the Minister for Post-war Reconstruction, John Dedman, on behalf of the Prime Minister, had received a delegation comprising representatives of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union, the Federated Clerks' Union, the Commonwealth Line Inspectors' Association, the Third Division Telegraphists and Postal Clerk's Union and the Association of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors and Draughtsmen.

The union submission covered the following four points:

1. Establishment of adequate wage rates to give an improved standard of living.
2. Restoration of value of margins of not less than those of 1939.
4. Equal pay for the job.

In support of items 1. and 2., statistics covering the national income production and earnings of manufacturing industries were quoted; reference also was made to the remarks of the Public Service Arbitrator when delivering judgment in the marginal increase case. Comment was made on the adverse position of Commonwealth Public Service employees (which had deteriorated since the 1947 marginal increases) and to the further lessened value of the pound.
APPEAL BY PRIME MINISTER.

"For 20 months, the Labor Government has striven to maintain this country as a free land. It believes that it has secured our soil from invasion by the enemy. That has not been done without exercising stern authority. Had the Government faltered all would have been lost. The effect on the civilian population has been a certain amount of deprivation, but certainly not distress. What man in Australia to-day lacks a bed, three meals and a safe roof over his head? Surely, the winning of a victorious peace warrants an individual demanding little more than that?

"The return of the Labor Government is important to you, for Labor's purpose is victory in war, victory for the peace. The task of re-shaping the lives of over 1,000,000 persons now engaged in war services, when peace comes cannot be entrusted to an anti-Labor Government if the best interests of the masses are to be safeguarded.

"I ask you all to throw in your weight behind your own Government.

"JOHN CURTIN, Prime Minister."
The Minister requested, in view of the technical nature of the submissions, that a document be prepared setting out the statistical and other references. Upon its receipt, he would carefully consider them, with the object of deciding whether consultations would be required with the Public Service Board.

Subsequent to the deputation to the Minister, wage increases were conceded to members of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union and to employees of the Fourth Division, effective from 7 October 1948. However, Dedman, on behalf of the government, replied to the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union on 16 February 1949, rejecting the union submissions having regard to the 7 October 1948 wage increases.

The Union was involved in three other campaigns in the immediate post-war period. These related to superannuation, recreation leave and the 40-hour week.

On the question of superannuation, discussions had taken place between the A.P.W.U. and the full Superannuation Board in Sydney on 15 October 1946, in association with representatives of other federal Service unions. The discussions covered a wide variety of points, including:

1. The objections, if any, to placing contributions to the Superannuation Fund on an optional basis.
2. The objections, if any, to affording contributors greater opportunities to come under the Provident Account in preference to the Superannuation Fund, where so desired.
3. Various points associated with the valuation of the Superannuation Fund.
4. How the high percentage of cost of Superannuation pensions paid from consolidated revenue is made up.
5. Issue of a booklet containing Superannuation information to contributors.
6. Appeals against decisions of Commonwealth Medical Officer.
7. Information regarding savings effected by the Fund by reason of non-retirement of officers entitled to pension.
8. Conditions of other Superannuation Funds.

Matters relating to the Superannuation Fund, based on the conference that had been held with the Superannuation Board, were discussed with accredited representatives of federal Service organizations on the day following 16 October. It was eventually agreed that the following features of the fund should be made the subject of discussion with the leader of the government:

(a) Fund to be made optional.
(b) Contributors to be allowed option of coming under Superannuation Fund or Provident Account.
(c) Consideration of case of contributors entitled to retire on pension at 60 years of age who continue in Service after reaching 60 years of age.

(d) Collection and tabulation of information relating to superannuation schemes in operation throughout Australia and Public Services in other English-speaking countries.

The questions of superannuation pensions and the liberalizing of the "means" test as an alternative to an increase in superannuation pensions were also discussed, in the light of previous discussions with the government. The matters agreed upon were presented by the Union to the Prime Minister, J.B. Chifley, in Canberra on 22 October 1946, in association with representatives of other Service unions. No immediate improvements to the Superannuation Fund were secured as a result of the discussions with the Prime Minister, but there was a gradual increase in benefits over the years.

In 1948, it was decided at the Annual Conference that the government be approached to have the provisions of the Commonwealth Public Service Act governing furlough amended to provide for three months' furlough being granted to employees after the completion of ten years' service, in lieu of the present provision of six months after twenty years' service. Also that the provisions of the Act be extended to provide for proportionate furlough being granted for each twelve months of service, and that the co-operation of other Service unions be sought. If this was not obtained, the matter was to be taken up by the Federal Executive.

It was resolved that action be taken to obtain pro rata furlough for ten years' service and beyond forty years. The Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union, either on its own behalf or in conjunction with other Service unions, would endeavour to have Section 73 (3) of the Public Service Act amended by deleting the words "dependants of the officer" and substituting the words:

Upon the death of an officer, who, at the date of his death, was eligible under this Section for the grant of leave of absence, the Board may authorize payment to his next of kin or some beneficiary under his will of a sum equivalent to the amount of salary which would, under this Section, have been granted to the officer had he retired immediately prior to the date of his death.

The matters embraced by the direction were covered by items placed on the agenda for consideration by the Joint Council. Furlough on completion of ten years' service was not favourably viewed by the Public Service Board. However, the furlough conditions were amended to provide for the granting of furlough on a different basis to that formerly in existence, namely that the
qualifying period should be fifteen years, with the exception of those employees who retired from the Department on the grounds of invalidity, or those who had died whilst employed by the Department with less than fifteen years’ service. The accumulation of furlough was then to take place on a yearly basis (i.e. three-tenths of a month’s furlough for each completed year of service after fifteen years).

Legislation was also subsequently introduced to provide for the payment of furlough after forty years’ service. For example, if an employee had entered the Post Office at the age of fourteen years and had accumulated fifty years’ service at the date of retirement, he could receive the equivalent of fifteen months’ furlough, instead of the maximum of twelve months, which hitherto prevailed.

Overall, the most important development throughout Australia in 1948, so far as the trade-union movement was concerned, was the decision of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to introduce a 40-hour week for all awards within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Court. This decision posed some problems in a number of directions. Firstly, in respect of Mail Branch employees and all shift workers, for example, those working the midnight shift, because of the application of the time differential, were working less than forty hours per week. That is to say, the 44-hour week was reduced to 38½ hours by the application of the time differential, which allowed for a reduction of 8 minutes for every hour worked between 7.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m.

The Board’s method of approach to overcome this difficulty was to propose the introduction of a system of penalty rates for shift workers. The Public Service Arbitrator eventually allowed a variation of the 40-hour week decision to apply; namely, that for all duty commenced from 6.00 a.m. and for each shift that would finish after 6.00 p.m., a 10 per cent penalty rate would be applicable. The award was then amended to allow for payment of the 10 per cent penalty rate to all who commenced work before 6.30 a.m. Subsequently, a variation of the Saturday duty penalty rates was applied to allow for any shift worker, as defined (i.e. workers who were employed on rotating and alternating shifts) to receive a penalty payment of 50 per cent additional for work performed on a Saturday. The Arbitrator’s decision in respect to Saturday penalty rates applied retrospectively to the 40-hour week principle, which was dated from 1 January 1948. A 25 per cent penalty rate also applied to those required to work wholly between 6.00 p.m. and 8.00 a.m. for a period of more than four weeks.

Another problem encountered by the Union related to linemen, in respect of the time allowance for men performing duties that
involved cable jointing, which involved working in a cramped position, or other physically distressing situations. The Board argued that it would be unreasonable for a reduction in the hours from 44 to 40 to take place, and also to incorporate the time allowance that had been functioning into the new reduction, which provided for a half hour’s reduction in duty for people working in conditions as mentioned. This provision had operated in the Linemen’s Award since 1915.

The Union then directed its members to endorse on their working reports that they, in fact, had been working in conditions that were physically distressing. The Department took strong objection to this instruction from the Union and almost threatened confrontation, but the matter was subsequently argued before the Public Service Arbitrator, who found in the Union’s favour. It then was determined that only those members of the line staff whose working reports had such an endorsement would receive the additional payment. There were considerable sums of money involved in retrospective payments, which showed that the Union’s fears of what could subsequently happen if endorsement were not made on the working reports were completely justified.
With the salaries campaign under way and the 40-hour week becoming a reality, the Union could turn to other industrial questions, and also look at its own organization and structure. Trade unions achieve many of their industrial goals only after years of patient work, as the examples given below show.

The 1947 Annual Conference had submitted that further representations be made by the Federal Executive to have union dues deducted by the Department from the salary of members, where agreed upon, and paid over to the Union at such times as might be arranged. In this instance, the Conference also submitted that the matter be referred to the Joint Council for consideration. At a meeting of that body, it was decided by a majority vote that this was to be regarded as an arrangement between the unions and the Treasury. It took over twenty years for this objective to be realized.

Another matter that took a long time to bring to fruition was the question of the removal of the Post Office from the Public Service and its establishment as a statutory corporation. This is dealt with in more detail later in the book, but an interesting item from the agenda of the 1948 Annual Conference was one from the Queensland branch: that the Union endorse the proposal to have all sections of the P.M.G. Department detached from Public Service Board control, and that a commission be established to control the operations of the Department. The Union had to wait until the Whitlam Labor government came to office in 1972 to achieve this objective.

The 1948 Annual Conference also dealt with the question of letter deliveries over the Easter period, and asked that these be dispensed with altogether. It took approximately twenty-six years
for this reform to be introduced. During 1949, representations were made to the Postmaster-General, Senator Don Cameron, on this matter. Senator Cameron replied that:

The matter has received careful consideration in the light of arrangements proposed for the observance of Easter Saturday in business circles. The reports indicate that the day will not be observed uniformly as a holiday, and the position appears to be similar as applied in previous years, which were that postings on Easter Eve and Good Friday would be held up for delivery until the following Tuesday.

Further, that deliveries on Easter Saturday exceed those of a normal Saturday, and if these accumulated until the Tuesday, the delivery service would be delayed considerably and long hours entailed.

It is regretted that, in the interests of a proper standard of service to the public, as well as for practical reasons, it is not advisable to accede to the request.

Similar reasons were given in relation to the Union’s request concerning mail delivery on Boxing Day.

During 1947 and 1948, the Union took up with the Post Office the question of Saturday postal deliveries.

The Federal Executive was directed to contact the Postmaster-General with a request that deliveries of mail by postmen on Saturday mornings be restricted to first-class mail matter, as a temporary measure. The Union was anticipating the eventual elimination of the delivery of mail on Saturday, and was prepared to first take the action necessary for the abolition of the delivery of Saturday mail by postmen. In conjunction with other Service unions, the Federal Executive sought the closing of all post offices on Saturday.

Action was taken by deputation to both the Board and the Department, also to the Postmaster-General. Instructions were issued that catalogues could be left over until Monday and the question of newspapers was stood over. The Department had been asked its intentions in relation to the latter aspect. Since a large number of union and trade journals were received for delivery on Saturday mornings, it was suggested that branches should endeavour to prevail upon those bodies to arrange for the publication of their journal one or two days earlier in the week. Although other unions were contacted the matter had wider implications and was not resolved until the abolition of Saturday postal deliveries early in 1974.

As Post Office employees could be transferred to other centres and to country towns, in 1948 the Union asked that the P.M.G. Department build houses for rental to employees in country towns, in the same manner as the Department of Civil Aviation was doing.
for its employees. The Minister, Senator Don Cameron, in reply to union submissions, stated:

Action to purchase existing houses or to erect residences for Commonwealth employees in country districts where lack of residential accommodation is causing hardship may now proceed, and standards have been drawn up and rentals to be merged.

Action has also been taken to invite tenders for the supply, complete with all materials, components, fittings and equipment, of 1,000 single-story pre-cut or pre-fabricated houses, and if this is successful, further orders will be placed. Of this 1,000 houses, a substantial portion is expected to be made available for the use of employees of the Postal Department.

The 1949 Annual Conference heard a report from the Federal Executive regarding a request that the Department be urged to take more effective safeguards to protect employees from attacks of savage dogs. An amendment of the Post and Telegraphs Act was sought to ensure the safety of all employees likely to come in contact with savage animals during the course of their employment. The Director-General had replied that the legal position would be ascertained, after which consideration would be given to an amendment of the Postal and Telegraph Regulations or departmental rules to protect employees against such attacks.

However, despite the co-operation of the Department in this regard, postmen and other departmental employees, from time to time, were still being bitten by savage dogs. As W.S. Gilbert might have said, “A postman’s lot is not a happy one” when dogs were about. Cartoons by “Fingers” that appeared in the Postal Advocate at the time illustrated the problem.*

Employment of juniors doing adult work had for a long time been a matter of concern to the Union. During 1949, this question was again raised, but no variation of the old philosophy, that juniors should be paid lower rates of pay, was obtained until 1970. It then was prescribed on the postal side that if a junior was employed for fifteen months, and was acting in an adult position at 18½ years of age, the adult rate would then be applied. Unfortunately, this principle was not applied to all those working in the P.M.G. Department. However no junior rate applied in the Linemen’s Award or in some other designations.

By 1949, the Union had fully recovered from the problems of the war and had begun to look more closely at its own organization. In 1947, it was decided that there should be an annual meeting of state Branch Secretaries. This proved a success in 1948, and was continued until 1955, when the Federal Executive was re-

* See Postscript, p. 261
constituted to provide for a representative from each state branch on the Executive, in addition to the federal officers.

The question of the creation of the full-time position of Assistant General Secretary was also raised at the 1949 Annual Conference, following upon a report from the Federal Executive. It was noted that this position had been advertised in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, with a recommendation that a subcommittee be appointed to investigate the applications. However, no action was taken at this stage, and the matter was considered again the following year.

In 1950, an election was held for the position of Assistant General Secretary, which resulted in C.J. McGrane being elected by a vote of the membership, this being the first time that the membership had voted the election of officers on the Federal Executive. (Officers were previously elected by the Annual Conference.)

Saturday, 10 December 1949 was noteworthy in that the Chifley government was defeated at the polls, and the administration led by R.G. Menzies took over control of the Treasury Benches. Both the Curtin and Chifley governments had done a tremendous job of work during their period of government and were very cooperative and helpful in their dealings with postal trade unions. With the return of a Liberal government, now the unions had to rely solely on their industrial strength to obtain the improvements in wages and working conditions needed for their members.

A further political problem for the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, and indeed for most unions, was the emergence of the A.L.P. Industrial Groups. These are dealt with in a later chapter, but it should be noted that the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union had become suspicious of the Groups and the people behind them as far back as 1948. The Federal Executive reported to the 1949 Conference that, in pursuance of the 1948 Conference decision that no support be given to A.L.P. Industrial Groups or to antiworking-class bodies, branches had been instructed that no discrimination should be practised against any member because of his religious or political views, which included the right to nominate for any position or office in the union.

In June 1950, a Special Conference of the Union was held to discuss a new wages claim. This again came up for discussion at the Annual Conference in 1950, when a resolution was passed that:

the Special Conference of the Union instruct Branches to organize the widest possible protest at the Arbitrator’s failure to accord comparative wage justice to our members, including stop-work meetings where no other course is available for full consideration of the effects of the determination. That attention is drawn—

1. to the undeniable evidence that margins for other comparable classes
of workers are higher than postal officers, mail officers, etc.

2. The lengthening of salary scales by the addition of two increments is contrary to the tendency over the last few years and to the objective of the Union.

That Conference instruct the Federal Executive to organize a deputation to interview Labor M.H.R.'s and Senators and the Board with a view to an instruction being issued by the Public Service Board to accord all-round increases to all classifications.

A delegation consisting of the General President, General Secretary and the Secretaries of the New South Wales, Victorian, Queensland and South Australian branches visited Canberra on 15 and 16 June 1950. The delegation also included J. Hickey, C. Elphick of the Third Division Telegraphists and Postal Clerks' Union and J. Slattery of the Fourth Division Postmasters', Postal Clerks' and Telegraphists' Union. The members of the delegation interviewed the Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party and also Labor M.H.R.s and Senators.

Efforts were made to arrange a deputation to the Prime Minister, but without success, this being attributed to his having been absent from Canberra. However, members of the deputation were later informed by the Chairman of the Public Service Board that the Prime Minister had conferred with him the previous afternoon in relation to the determination and had requested the Board to discuss the problem with the organizational representatives. The Prime Minister felt this met the purpose for which the delegation desired to interview him. The delegation agreed that was so. Accordingly, the Postmaster-General was interviewed in Sydney on 19 June.

During the course of the interview with the Board, the Chairman intimated that the determination of the Public Service Arbitrator must be accepted in relation to the minimum and maximum wage rate, but consideration would be given to any formula the unions desired to submit in relation to employees on the respective salary or wage ranges between the minimum and maximum.

Several schemes were drafted by the representatives, which the Board agreed to consider. In the event of their acceptance, some increases would be received by all members, with the exception of those on the minimum wage rate. In their case, it was hopeful of some amount being granted above the first increment on completion of twelve months' service. At the subsequent interview with the Board, the Chairman intimated it would be necessary for the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union to submit applications to the Public Service Arbitrator seeking a variation of the incremental scales in the determinations in respect of postal officers, mail officers and postal assistants (mail), since these provided for a certain
number of increments of £12. The Board was agreeable to the first increment being £24, with a reduction in the £12 increments of two. Upon this being done, the Board was to advance employees in the respective subdivisions on a point-to-point basis.

It was agreed that the applications would be lodged and the Senior Inspector (Arbitration), Public Service Board was asked to arrange a conference with the Public Service Arbitrator for the Union’s General Secretary and himself, with the object of the applications being listed for early determination.

The applications were forwarded on 4 August 1950 and the conference was held on 10 August. The parties agreed to the applications with retrospectivity to 29 December 1949, and Determination No. 36 of 1950, in accordance therewith, was issued on 22 August. Some delay occurred in the issue of instructions concerning the implementation of Determination Nos. 27 and 36, the Board attributing this to its desire to issue both adjustments as close together as possible, but until the Determination (No. 36 of 1950) had been tabled in the parliament, it was not deemed advisable to instruct the Department in connection with the adjustments.

However, the delay was advantageous to mail officers and others on the maximum. Final instructions issued were to the effect that those on the maximum for over twelve months at 29 December 1949, were to be advanced the full £36 from that date. Instructions issued to the respective Deputy Directors requested that every effort be made to effect payment with the least possible delay, and it was understood action in this respect was observed.

The hearing of the applications in respect to other classes took place in Sydney on 19 and 20 October, and in Melbourne on 17 to 19 October and 24 to 27 October, the decision being reserved. The Board made a general offer of £18 on the minimum and maximum of all working classifications and £18 to £24 for supervisory grades. With relation to assistants’ positions, the Board had made certain offers to the Federated Assistants’ Association and the Federated Clerks’ Union of £12 increases on minimum rates and £36 on the maximum of Grade 4 positions, which had been accepted pending the introduction of a new structure for clerical assistants.

In view of this, the Board’s offer was accepted, but discussions took place in relation to female assistants. The rates for cleaners, watchmen, labourers and lift attendants were also subject to further negotiations.

Stores Branch employees’ relativity, which existed in 1939 with mail officers, it was argued, should be preserved, also that of foremen should be advanced from £42 to £60. The progress of
storemen under certain awards in New South Wales, it was claimed, showed a greater percentage increase. Similar arguments were adduced in relation to transport staffs, and an increase of at least £18, it was claimed, was justified. In relation to drivers-in-charge, the minimum of a Senior Mail Officer, Grade 1, £410, should be the minimum and that of the Grade 2, £428, the maximum.

The offer of £12 to linemen and £18 to line foremen, was classed as totally inadequate, and it was claimed £18 was more than justified for Linemen, Grade 1. In relation to Linemen, Grade 1, it was argued that words should be added to the prescription, "qualified for permanent appointment", or "had training in aerial cable or conduit work." During discussion, the point was raised regarding the deletion of the rates for men "not qualified for permanent appointment", this being left to the Arbitrator for decision. Line foremen, it was argued, should be advanced from £36 to £60, based upon relativity with mail officers and senior mail officers, and also under the schedules prescribed by Determination 47 of 1950, relating to members of the C.P.S. Clerical Association and the Architects, Surveyors' Organization. The latter was also submitted in support of greater increases for foremen storemen.

Union members were anxious to have their claims settled and to receive the pay increases. The Public Service Arbitrator delivered his judgment, Determination 87, on 19 December 1950.

Conflict arose between the Federal Executive and the New South Wales branch concerning the holding of stop-work meetings, one of which (by the conduit workers) was held without the authority of the Federal Executive. Authority was given to the New South Wales branch for an observance of regulations and the branch organized such an observance by postal officers (delivery) on 17 and 18 August, and of motor drivers at a later date.

The Federal Executive directed branches to continue an agitation for increased wage rates and, resulting from replies received, it was decided to again draw the branches' attention to the Special Conference decision, and ascertain whether it was considered the intentions of that decision had been given effect to.

The replies of branches were considered at a Federal Executive minute held on 20 October, when the following decision was reached:

That because of the hearing of all outstanding claims now being in the course of preparation regarding the one pound increase in the basic wage, the near approach of Conference at which the whole question would be discussed, and accordingly no useful purpose would be served, at this juncture, by the actions proposed by some Branches.

From the experience gained in the wages campaign, it became
apparent that if the Union was to become involved in protracted negotiations or industrial action over future claims, then it would have to establish a fighting fund. However, there was some opposition to this within the Union.

A report submitted to the Special Conference of 1950 stated that the Tasmanian branch, by resolution of a General Meeting, opposed the establishment of the fund. The Western Australian branch intimated the question was being submitted to a plebiscite vote of its membership. This vote was taken in conjunction with the ballot for the Annual Election of Officers and resulted in—"Yes", 358 votes, "No", 485. On the other hand, the South Australian branch had decided to contribute 5 per cent of members' contributions to the fund. The Special Conference directed that the branch be informed the fund should be financed by payments apart from union contributions.

Ultimately, the fighting fund was accepted as an integral part of union machinery.

As has been mentioned, the Communist Party of Australia had a meteoric rise in influence and an increase in numbers during the Second World War, due to the fact that after Russia entered the war, the party contributed greatly to the war effort, and it was natural, as a consequence, that it should attract support to its banner.

After the war came to an end, there were a number of industrial strikes, which had a definite impact on the economy of the nation. It was generally accepted that communist trade-union leaders were the driving-force behind the strikes, most of which stemmed from outdated wage-pegging regulations.

One of the Chifley government's answers to these moves was to introduce legislation freezing trade-union funds, which would have prevented strike pay being paid to those in dispute. A number of unions led by communists, namely the Federated Ironworkers, Miners and Waterside Workers, refused to obey the letter of the law and their leaders were jailed for contempt of court.

It is arguable whether this legislation did much to improve the government's stocks among the workers, though it was welcomed by newspaper editorialists and big business. It was a case where wiser counsels should have prevailed on both sides. H.V. Evatt told the writer that the legislation was Chifley's brain-child; whether this is correct or otherwise, it made a bad impression on many earnest Labor supporters who still loyally supported the Chifley government.

(In retrospect, the legislation seems to be out of character for
men like Chifley and Evatt, both of whom had a long record as progressive thinkers and fought the “Movement” influence in the Labor Party.)

In Queensland, some communist trade-union leaders were gaoled as a result of incidents flowing from prolonged strikes. Again, this action might have been avoided if common sense had been used on both sides.

Just as there were a number of “Movement” supporters in the ranks of the Union, the same applied in respect to Communist Party members. It would be true to say that this was the position in most unions in the Australian industrial spectrum; however, “Movement” supporters branded left-wingers as communists without much hesitation. But as Evatt once pointed out, the Labor movement, of necessity, had to be a radical movement, and were it not for our more radical forebears, the Labor Party and the industrial unions would certainly have lost their momentum.

The Industrial Groupers continued to propound their view that every union member who did not support their reactionary views was a communist or a supporter of that party; however, most union members would not accept this point of view.

In the 1949 election, R.G. Menzies, the Liberal Party Leader, in his policy speech, which embraced both the Liberal and Country Parties, promised to abolish the Communist Party if he were returned to power. A prominent Liberal public relations officer told the writer in later years that this promise originated with Arthur Fadden, the Leader of the Country Party. It appears that it was at Fadden’s insistence that this particular plank was placed in Menzies’ policy speech. It did not take the Menzies–Fadden government long to translate its policies into practice, and the Communist Party Dissolution Bill, which sought to outlaw that party, was introduced into the parliament in 1950.

Some incredible blunders were made by Menzies in the federal parliament. Acting on information supplied by his advisers, who nominated a number of people as communists who were in fact not communists, the Prime Minister was obliged subsequently to retract his branding of these people as Communists when the Bill was further debated in parliament.

The Labor Party, under Ben Chifley’s leadership, strenuously opposed the legislation, but as a result of pressure applied by right-wing elements who were under the influence of the “Movement”, there was discord developing within a section of the party. However, when the Bill became law, the legality of the legislation was challenged in the High Court. Dr H.V. Evatt accepted a brief from the Waterside Workers’ Federation, and it is generally considered
that as a result of his advocacy and his legal submissions, the High Court found by a majority of 6 to 1 that the government's legislation was invalid. Not to be dissuaded, the government then introduced further legislation to put the matter to a referendum of the people and a Bill entitled the Constitution Alteration (Power to deal with Communists and Communism) Bill was carried in the parliament, again creating dissension within the Labor Party because of the undoubted influence of the extreme right-wing of the A.L.P. in tacitly supporting the government's reactionary programme.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union had opposed the anti-communist Dissolution Bill, and an editorial in the Postal Advocate of 21 May 1950 pointed out the inherent dangers to members of the Commonwealth Public Service in this anti-democratic legislation. The editorial went on to say:

A section of the Bill of concern to this Union and other Service organizations is that relating to the removal or dismissal of declared persons from their position in the Public Service, despite the fact that upon entry thereto under Section 33(1) of the C.P.S. Act they were required to make an Oath of Affirmation, as is outlined, of their loyalty and allegiance to the King. We strongly suggest unless it is proven a person has broken that Oath or Affirmation, no grounds exist for their dismissal or removal from the Service. However, where it is alleged they have broken the Oath or Affirmation, ample provision is contained in the C.P.S. Act to prefer a charge against them, also machinery which places the onus on the authorities to prove the charge.

Other contents of the Bill, if adopted, will grant widespread powers whereby organizations may be attacked, causing workers to suffer deprivation of hard-won conditions.

In the Queensland branch notes of 21 May 1950, attention was drawn to the fact that the banks had subscribed £750 000 towards the Liberal Party's election expenses and now wanted a return on their investment, hence the introduction of this reactionary Bill.

After an election in which the Menzies government was returned, Menzies and Fadden then introduced the Constitution Alteration Bill, and a referendum was to be held to determine whether or not the Communist Party of Australia should be outlawed.

An editorial in the Postal Advocate of 21 July 1951 pointed out that at the Annual Conference of the New South Wales branch of the A.L.P., held on 9 June of that year, the late Mr Chifley had stated that the present government desired "tame-cat unions" and warned that, politically and industrially, Labor faced a tremendous struggle in the coming months. How prophetic Chifley's words were can be judged from the fact that in the first session of parliament, the government introduced three Bills covering
drastic amendments to the Arbitration Act, Referendum re Communists and Defence Preparations. The editorial concluded by calling upon members to cast a "No" vote.

There is little doubt that as a result of the sterling fight put up by Dr Evatt, who had, by this time, succeeded the late Ben Chifley as Leader of the Labor Party, the referendum was defeated, the voting being: "Yes", Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia; "No", New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. The referendum proposal was defeated on the popular vote by 2 370 009 to 2 317 927. However, not all state branches of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union gave wholehearted support to the Union's opposition to the referendum.

In retrospect, there is little doubt that Dr Evatt's place in history is assured by his efforts to defeat the infamous referendum proposals, which, would have imperilled the freedom of the great majority of Australian citizens. Because of this courageous stand, Evatt incurred the undying enmity of the "Movement" and its supporters throughout the nation. It would be fair to say that the overwhelming majority of people who agreed with Evatt's submissions were, in fact, not communists, but will be acclaimed by historians as lovers of liberty.

In the immediate post-war period, in respect to the alleged domination of the A.P.W.U. by the Communist Party, in some states, notably Tasmania, where there was no evidence at all of Communist Party or left-wing organization, the "Movement" was particularly strong. It was also strong in Victoria, but did not reach the peak of its power in New South Wales until the early fifties. In brief, there was no evidence to suggest that the Communist Party had any influence on the day-to-day operations of the Union. The influence of the Australian Communist Party on the trade-union Movement slumped after the 1950s, and schisms developed that resulted in the formation of the three communist parties now functioning in Australia.
The Troubled Fifties

During the early 1950s, the Union was again faced with some questions of organization. The presence of the Industrial Groups and the “Movement” partly accounted for these, but there were also the normal issues that emerge if a union is not to stagnate.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union had always been of the opinion that there were too many unions in the Post Office, which was substantially one industry and therefore capable of sustaining one union that would cover all employees in all the branches of the Service.

At the 1951 Annual Conference, the Federal Executive reported that requests had been made for a conference between representatives of the Federal Executive of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union and the Executive of the other Post Office unions—Line Inspectors’ Association, Postal Overseers’ Union, Australian Telephone Officers’ Association and the Fourth Division Postmasters’, Postal Clerks’ and Telegraphists’ Union—to discuss the question of amalgamation.

As with earlier attempts at amalgamation, little progress was made. In 1954, the General Secretary reported that discussions had taken place with the General Secretary of the Line Inspectors’ Association, the object being that the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union General Secretary be afforded an opportunity of addressing the union’s annual meeting in relation to amalgamation. However, nothing emerged from these overtures.

Affiliation with the Australian Labor Party had been a cardinal part of Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union policy. In the early 1950s, the Western Australian branch of the Union and the Western Australian branch of the Australian Labor Party found themselves in disagreement over affiliation fees.
The affiliation of the Western Australian branch of the Union with the Australian Labor Party was discussed at the 1952 Annual Conference, and it was ultimately agreed that the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union General Secretary confer with the General Secretary of the federal A.L.P. in relation to the matter. Subsequent to the Conference decision, the Western Australian branch approached the Australian Labor Party branch in that state, in an effort to arrive at a satisfactory basis upon which the branch could effect affiliation with the party. The Secretary of the Australian Labor Party of Western Australia informed the Branch President and Secretary of the Union that they were bound by the decision of Congress, which in its wisdom, had voted that the rate of 4.6d. per financial member be retained, the decision being made by a 2 to 1 majority. The General Secretary of the A.L.P. in Western Australia wrote to the A.P.W.U. General Secretary, informing the Union of the interview and the attitude of the party as had been reaffirmed by Congress.

In reply, the A.L.P., Western Australian branch, was informed of the policy of the Union, on affiliation with the A.L.P., which the Western Australian branch was unable to observe, due to the high rate of affiliation fee. The General Secretary was assured, despite non-affiliation, of the loyal support of the Union in that state.

In 1955, the division within the Victorian branch of the A.L.P. was discussed at the Annual Conference of the Union. There were now two organizations in Victoria, each claiming to be the “true” A.L.P. in that state. It was essential that the Union move in and support the Labor Party that was based on the trade-union movement. Consequently, the Annual Conference passed the resolution that:

All Branches be required to affiliate with the A.L.P. in their respective states, provided that the Federal Executive shall have power to exempt any Branch from such affiliation if, after investigation of the circumstances, it considers such exemption necessary, and provided further that where more than one political Labor body is functioning in any state, the Federal Executive shall have authority to allow the Branch covering members in that stage to affiliate with one or the other of the rival Labor bodies as may be decided by plebiscite vote of members attached to the Branch.

It was clear which party the Union supported in Victoria, when the 1955 Annual Conference also decided to endorse the decisions of the Federal A.L.P. Conference held in Hobart during March 1955. The 1955 Federal Executive Annual Report also brought to light the fact that the Victorian branch of the Union had sought...
POSTAL WORKERS UNION

**Amalgamated**

*They Shall Not Steal Hands Off 40 Hour Week*

Float in the Lismore Six-Hour Day Procession November 1951 *Postal Advocate*, 21 November 1951
permission to conduct a plebiscite to determine whether or not branches should continue the affiliation with the A.L.P. In this particular instance, the vote to continue affiliation to the A.L.P., despite the propaganda of the Industrial Groups section in the Union, was carried by the substantial margin of 807 votes to 397.

During the 1950s, positions on the Union’s Federal Executive, and some state positions, were keenly contested. In 1951, the Returning Officer reported that F.W. Burgess had been elected as General President, T.P. Kenny as General Vice-President and M.G. Lovelock as Assistant General Secretary. In 1952, F.W. Burgess was elected unopposed as General President, T.P. Kenny defeated D.A. Hepher for the position of General Vice-President and C.J. McGrane defeated M.G. Lovelock and F.H. Miller for the position of Assistant General Secretary. In 1953, C.J. McGrane again defeated M.B. Lovelock by 23 votes for the position of Assistant General Secretary.

In 1954, as a result of the new provisions in the Conciliation and Arbitration Act relating to court-controlled ballots, an approach was made by the Industrial Groupers in the Union for the holding of court ballots for some state branches and for federal positions. The Federal Executive Annual Report revealed that a request signed under the provisions of Section 96M of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act by almost 1500 members in New South Wales, had sought that the Industrial Registrar arrange for the conduct of the ballot for the election of the offices of General President, General Vice-President, Executive Councillors (5) and delegates from the New South Wales branch to the Annual Conference of the organization (2), and for the offices in the branch of President, Secretary-Treasurer, Vice-Presidents (2), Organizer and Group Representatives on the Committee of Management of the branch (12).

The Industrial Registrar stated that the request had been lodged within the time fixed by the Regulations, and having made such enquiries as he considered necessary, he decided the request had been duly made under Section 96M, and he advised the branch and organization accordingly. The Industrial Registrar subsequently notified that J. Martin, Commonwealth Electoral Officer, New South Wales, had been appointed to conduct the elections.

At an interview in Melbourne, the General Secretary and the Secretary of the Victorian branch were informed by the Industrial Registrar that should the request be as outlined in a copy shown him and be signed by over 1000 members, the election of officers for the Federal Executive would have to be conducted throughout all branches by whomever he appointed under the provisions of Section 96M of the Act, there being no provision that the request had to be signed by members in more than one branch.
sackings of 10,000 Commonwealth public servants. Postal Advocate, 21 November 1951

Union Float in the Lismore Six-Hour Day Procession November 1951 protesting against the Commonwealth Government's

10,000 SACKS WON'T STOP INFLATION

COMMUNICATIONS

POST OFFICE
The election of officers of the New South Wales branch for the year 1954 resulted in the defeat of the Secretary, R.E. Wellard, and the election of J.N. Lynch, and thus the Industrial Groups faction in the Union secured control of that branch.

New South Wales remained the most important branch in the Union, but it was beset by problems of disunity during the 1950s as a result of the battle for control of the Union by the Industrial Groups.

In 1953, the New South Wales branch had advanced proposals to alter the basis of representation of branches at the Federal Conference. From the 1926 Conference onwards, each state branch of the Union was represented by two delegates, but the voting power of delegates was assessed on the basis of the financial membership of the branch as at the end of the financial year. The result was that two states (i.e. New South Wales and Victoria, or New South Wales and Queensland) could command enough support by using this method of voting to ensure the passage of any proposal that was listed on the agenda of the Conference. However, from 1947 onwards, some branches took exception to this method of voting and a number of proposals were formulated that did not give satisfaction to smaller branches. This opposition was perhaps unrealistic, since the rules of most of the important unions in Australia provided that larger states had greater representation than the smaller branches at their Annual Conferences.

The proposal of the New South Wales branch in this instance was: delete Rule 6 (d), which then stated: “Each Branch of the Union shall be entitled to appoint 2 delegates at Conference, provided that Conference shall be properly constituted if delegates representing at least 4 Branches are present”, and in its place, substitute: “Each Branch of the Union shall be represented at Conference in the following proportion: New South Wales, 14 delegates; Victoria, 10 delegates; Queensland, 8 delegates; South Australia, 6 delegates; Western Australia, 2 delegates; Tasmania, 2 delegates.”

New South Wales also sought to amend Rule 6A (b), which stated: “A Special Conference shall be constituted of one delegate from each Branch, together with the General President and the General Secretary. The General President and General Secretary shall be entitled to speak on any question before Conference, but they shall not be entitled to vote thereon”, by deleting “one delegate from each Branch” and substituting “delegates representing Branches in the following proportion: New South Wales, 7 delegates; Victoria, 5 delegates; Queensland, 4 delegates; South Australia, 3 delegates; Western Australia, 1 delegate; Tasmania, 1 delegate.”
"Been waiting long?"

"The Troubled Fifties"
The New South Wales proposals, however, were defeated. Ultimately, a plebiscite of the membership was conducted, which determined that the method of voting at the Annual Conference should be on the basis of each delegate exercising one vote. This anomalous situation has resulted in the smallest state branch having the same voting power as the New South Wales branch, which is the largest branch of the Union.

An attempt was also made at the 1953 Conference to alter the rules relating to the composition of the Federal Executive, to provide that the Federal Executive consist of one representative from each state, elected by the members in that state. This proposal was defeated, as was a proposal to alter the voting power of delegates at Conference.

At the 1954 Annual Meeting of state Branch Secretaries, the problems of disunity in the New South Wales branch were discussed at length. The meeting made the following recommendation to the Federal Executive:

That this meeting of Branch Secretaries held in Sydney expresses grave concern at the lack of unity operating in the New South Wales Branch, which has the effect of reducing the efficiency of the Branch, and tends in the process, for the problems of members to be overlooked.

We express the wish that an attempt be made to reconcile differences existing among opposing factions within the Branch and that the Federal Executive of the A.P.W.U. be asked to use their best endeavours to bring about unity.

Unless unity can be achieved by the next Annual Conference, that appropriate action be taken by Conference in conformity with the Rules of the organization.

The Federal Executive adopted the recommendation and convened a conference of the two factions, which was held on 15 June 1954. At the conference, the Federal Executive submitted the following six clauses as the basis for discussion:

1. The need for unity
2. That immediate steps be undertaken by both factions to discontinue criticisms of the bona fides of the opposite section.
3. That comment made in any circular, leaflet, or by other means, be confined to fact but free of personal attack upon any member or section of members.
4. That the pages of the Branch journal, *Mercury*, be not utilized for critical comment of any section of the membership, but confined to the publication of information of concern and interest to members.
5. That consideration be given to an arrangement of a limit being placed on the number of candidates to be nominated by each opposing section for the respective offices on the Federal Executive and/or
Lineman Chris Byrnes of Leeton was awarded the British Empire Medal for his work during the flood of June 1952. *Postal Advocate*, 21 June 1953
on the Branch Committee of Management.

6. That it be agreed, in future, the policy of the organization be strictly observed of all affairs of the Union being considered and settled within the Union.

The General Secretary then said that although the points raised in the statement permitted an open and frank discussion at Conference, in this regard, it could be said that while there was suspicion of motives of one, no real basis of unity was achievable. Therefore, "speaking with a belief in the sincerity of every representative assembled in [the] room of the need of an organization unified in spirit and with a will to work for the welfare and the interests of the membership as a whole", he suggested that "no earthly reason should exist to prevent differences being sunk and a formula reached upon a working basis of unity".

A general discussion then ensued around the question of the name of the factions and methods of conducting union ballots.

J.F. Gill, the leader of the Industrial Groups, stated that one of the principal matters for discussion in this regard was the cause of disunity. In the opinion of the members of the Industrial Groups, the present leadership of the New South Wales branch of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union was propagating international communism. R.E. Wellard, the Secretary of the New South Wales branch, stated that in the opinion of the left-wing group, the causes of disunity were, firstly, the policy of the Union not being adhered to by the Industrial Groups in regard to union ballots; secondly, the existence of the Industrial Groups; and thirdly, the campaigns during elections. General discussion then ensued around these points.

On the second clause for discussion, L.G. Daymon, a prominent Industrial Grouper, suggested:

That the Agenda for Branch General Meetings be confined to important Union matters affecting the membership, and where questions of a highly controversial nature are included, they be posted for the information of members as early as practicable prior to the date of the meeting.

This was agreed. Wellard also agreed to consult the President as to the appointment of an additional guardian on the door at all General Meetings to prevent unauthorized persons attending.

The contents of various Union pamphlets were then discussed, recent issues of both factions being produced for examination. It was agreed that comments made in any circular, leaflet, or by any other means, were to be confined entirely to fact, and that members could submit articles for publication in the state Union journal.
There was no agreement on the fifth clause of discussion regarding the limitation on the number of candidates that each faction could nominate. The last clause was to be given further consideration by the Industrial Groups.

Earlier in 1954, the Arbitration Court had disallowed the union rule prohibiting the issuing of circulars in union elections.

In regard to the disunity in the New South Wales branch, the writer successfully moved at the 1954 Federal Conference in Sydney:

That Conference deplores the disunity existing in the New South Wales Branch. We call upon the members of all factions in the Branch to drop personal differences and work in a united way for the betterment of the membership. We urge our members to reject advice from persons outside the Union but to settle all matters within the ranks of the Union.

William Keith Spence, a mail officer from Brisbane and a member of the Union, in an affidavit sworn on 5 May 1955, made application to the Arbitration Court for disallowance of Rule 12 (a), (c) and (d) of the Constitution and Rules of the Union. The grounds specified in Section 80 of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904–1952, on which he based his application, were:

(a) That the said Rule 12 (a), (c) and (d) is contrary to law; and/or
(b) is tyrannical or oppressive; and/or (c) imposes unreasonable conditions upon the membership of any member.

The reasons on which he based his application were:

(a) That the said Rule 12 (a), (c) and (d) does not make any adequate provision for absent voting; and (b) does not provide for the election of the Federal Officers of the said Union by the individual members of the Union.

The respondents named were the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union of Australia, James John Donnellan and Nathaniel Willie Burke, respectively General President and General Secretary-Treasurer of the Union. The matter came on for hearing before the Arbitration Court on 31 May 1955, and resulted in Spence’s application being partially successful.

The Federal Executive Annual Report for 1955 drew attention to the terms and conditions of the General Secretary-Treasurer’s appointment:

(i) That applications be called for the position in the manner prescribed under the Rules.
(ii) That the 1955 Annual Conference make the election.
O.H. Rosser, Secretary South Australian Branch, being congratulated by N.W. Burke, General Secretary, on his retirement from the Secretaryship of the South Australian Branch in 1953.
(iii) That the term of office be for three years, subject to provisions of Rules.
(iv) Salary to be as at present.
(v) That all applicants must have been financial member of a recognized trade union for a period of 5 years up to the date of nominations in 1955.
(vi) That a recommendation be made to the 1955 Annual Conference that the services of Mr N.W. Burke be retained as a part-time adviser to the new General Secretary-Treasurer.

These conditions were observed when calling applications for the position of General Secretary.

During 1955, the battle for control of the Union by the Industrial Groups and anti-Industrial Group members reached a peak. Nominations for positions in the federal area were the heaviest ever. The General Returning Officer notified that nominations had been received for:

**General President:**
- J.J. Donnellan
- D.A. Hepher*
- T.P. Kenny†

**General Vice-President:**
- T.P. Kenny†
- M.J. Cuskelley†
- C. Anson†
- V.G. Stubbs.*
- L.H. Hammond.*
- D.A. Hepher*

**General Secretary-Treasurer:**
- F.J. Waters*
- C.J.J. McGrane†

Interesting points were raised prior to the holding of the ballot for the election of the Union Secretariat, which was the last ballot of its type held to elect the federal officers. Up to and including 1955, federal officers were elected by the collegiate system, as distinct from a vote of the whole of the membership, which operated from 1956.

P.J. Stirling, the Western Australian delegate and President of the branch, raised the question of the financial standing of his fellow delegate, L.J. Rice, the Secretary of the Western Australian branch, and read correspondence that had been received from the Acting Secretary, R.F. Power, which claimed that Rice was unfinancial at the time of the 1954 Annual Conference and was at present unfinancial. However, Rice contested this statement by declaring that he had that morning sent a money order telegram to the Western Australian branch, making himself financial.

* indicates non-grouper
† indicates grouper
To say the least, this was an extraordinary state of affairs, that a Secretary of a branch of the Union could attend an Annual Conference and not be a financial member of the Union. Subsequently, in 1959, Rice was defeated for the position of Secretary by R.F. Power.

Again, the 1955 Annual Conference created history, because there were two tied ballots for the three positions on the Executive. Both C.J. McGrane and F.J. Waters received 6 votes each on the first two ballots for the position of General Secretary-Treasurer, while on the third ballot, one delegate cast an informal vote and McGrane, the recognized leader of the Industrial Group, was elected by 6 votes to 5. For the position of General President, three ballots were also held. J.J. Donnellan, a Grouper, was elected on the third ballot, while D.A. Hepher, an opponent of the Groups, was elected General Vice-President, also on the third ballot.

The General Returning Officer also reported to the 1955 Annual Conference that a plebiscite had been conducted to amend the rules to provide for the election of all federal officers of the Union by the rank-and-file. The plebiscite resulted in a majority of 1130 in favour of the proposal, the voting being:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Informal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>1408</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>1353</td>
<td>1627</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4492</td>
<td>3362</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of this plebiscite, all federal positions are now determined by a vote of the Union’s rank-and-file.

In retrospect, the 1955 Annual Conference was one of the most important conferences that had taken place since amalgamation. Firstly, it witnessed the departure of N.W. (Bill) Burke as General Secretary, he being virtually the last of the early pioneers of the Union and one who played an outstanding role in its formation. Secondly, it resulted in the election of a Grouper, C.J. McGrane as General Secretary. However, because of his narrow victory (6 votes to 5), the grip of the Groupers was to be fairly tenuous.

The 1955 Annual Conference also decided to assist the finances of the Western Australian branch by granting the amount of £300 for:

(a) the purposes of rehabilitating the finance of the Branch.
(b) to enable organizing of the Branch to be carried out.
(c) to direct the Western Australian Branch to apply more efficient methods in collecting subscriptions and the carrying out of general
office work.

(d) This grant is not to be taken as a precedent, as Conference considers this amount will enable the Branch to become self-supporting and the strength of the membership is sufficient to enable the Branch to remain on a sound economic footing.

The Returning Officer's Annual Report for 1956 showed that J. Gill had been elected as Assistant General Secretary, defeating J. McPherson by 4709 to 4452 votes. The election for the General Presidency between J.J. Donnellan and P.P. Lowe resulted in Donnellan being elected by a majority of 4 votes, after distribution of preferences. The General Returning Officer reported that there had been a re-count for the position, and although Lowe was initially elected by 6 votes, the re-count disclosed that Donnellan had been elected by 4545 votes to 4541. For the position of General Vice-President, T.P. Kenny secured an absolute majority over D.A. Hepher.

Another major battle for the presidency and vice-presidency of the Union occurred in 1957, when a Court-controlled ballot was held.

The Commonwealth Electoral Office Annual Report for 1957 showed that for the office of General President, the candidates were: E.I. Phillips, D.A. Hepher, E.T. Ashmore, T.A. McLachlan and P.P. Lowe. After the counting of first-preference votes, the results were: Phillips, 599; Hepher, 430; Ashmore, 2846; McLachlan, 4262; Lowe, 1968. And after distribution of preferences: Ashmore, 5252; McLachlan, 4853. E.T. Ashmore, President of the Queensland branch, was therefore elected General President of the Union, and was the first member outside New South Wales to hold this important position.

For the office of General Vice-President, the candidates were: A.C. Downard, T.P. Kenny, P.P. Lowe and D.A. Hepher. The first-preference voting resulted in: Downard, 1806; Kenny, 4213; Lowe, 712; Hepher, 3351. And after distribution of preferences: Kenny, 5012; Hepher, 5070. D.A. Hepher therefore became General Vice-President.

The 1957 Annual Conference also amended Rule 11, to provide for a maximum term of office of five years for the General Secretary. The General Returning Officer's Annual Report for 1958 revealed that C.J. McGrane had been re-elected as General Secretary, with 6090 votes; to P.P. Lowe, 2070; and J.D. McPherson, 1768.

In 1954, the then General Secretary, N.W. Burke, gave a short report to Conference on his visit overseas. Burke's visit had created union history because he was the first member of the Amalgamated
Postal Workers' Union to attend the Postal and Telegraph and Telephone International World Congress, which had been held in Wiesbaden.

Such overseas visits were of great value to the Union and its officers. The writer, as Secretary of the Queensland branch, furnished a report to the 1958 Annual Conference in relation to a visit to Japan and China in that year. This visit broke new ground, to the extent that he was the first representative of any postal union to visit both countries. The report is included in the minutes of that conference, and since then, of course, many union delegates have visited Japan, and an official delegation from the A.P.W.U. has also visited the People's Republic of China.

The General Returning Officer's Report for 1959 disclosed that T.A. MacLachlan had been elected General President, defeating E.T. Ashmore; and that D.W. Ash had been elected General Vice-President, defeating D.A. Hepher.

The 1958 Conference had also broken new ground, to the extent that it was the first occasion on which a Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs had addressed the Conference, namely in the person of M.R.C. Stradwick.*

The year 1955 unquestionably pointed to the future course of events within the Union. This was particularly the case so far as Victoria was concerned, where the Industrial Group candidates for the position of Assistant Secretary and organiser, J. Hickey and J.J. Moloney, were defeated by G. Slater and A.C. Downard respectively.

Victoria was the home base of the Industrial Group movement, which was strongly influenced by a body commonly known as “the Movement”, an organization that now functions under the name of the National Civic Council. The Industrial Groups also served as the nucleus for the establishment of the Democratic Labor Party. By the mid-1950s, the Industrial Groupers had obviously overreached themselves. They thought that they were in an unassailable position, but the rank-and-file soon put them in no doubt as to the future course of events in respect of the political and industrial sections of the labour movement.

Naturally, the A.P.W.U. was not totally concerned with internal issues throughout the 1950s. There were, of course, numerous industrial issues, some of which have a special historical interest to members.

After Menzies and Fadden had led the Liberal and Country Parties to success in the 1949 federal elections, the media and the

* This address alluded to the history of unionism in the Public Service and his remarks are reprinted in Appendix 3, p. 284.
more reactionary section of the government’s own supporters in the parliament were pressing for a reduction in the size of the Commonwealth Public Service. Out of the blue, in July 1951, came an announcement that the government proposed to cut the numbers of the Service by 10 000.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union and the High Council of Commonwealth Public Service Unions combined in a joint campaign to fight this move. Public meetings were called in all the capital cities and the large provincial cities and towns throughout the nation, and the issue was raised by the Labor leader, Dr H.V. Evatt, in the House of Representatives. However, the Menzies government went ahead with its plans and the membership of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union was one of the main casualties; so far as the Service proper was concerned, most of the dismissals took place in the Engineering Branch of the Postmaster-General’s Department, and the Line Section was badly hit as a result. The numbers retrenched actually exceeded 10 000, measured over the whole spectrum of the Service. New telephone services also were seriously affected by the government’s savage attacks on the Union’s membership.

Although Menzies claimed that the reduction in staff members was part of a policy to combat inflation, no one took this type of word-spinning seriously. The workers had had first-hand results of what anti-Labor government policies meant when translated into reality.

The Federal Executive Report for 1952 also mentioned that the seating accommodation of some line trucks left much to be desired, and indicated that the Director-General had been requested to issue an instruction that no member of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union should be required to ride on trucks not having proper seating accommodation and canopy coverage.

An interesting aspect of the position of the Aboriginal people at that time was contained in the Annual Report of the Federal Executive for 1953. The Executive stated that discussion had taken place with the Public Service Board, seeking the application of the award rate for protection labourers on behalf of the Aborigines working in line parties.

The Board’s reply revealed the thinking of the times:

The Union considered that the existing rate of payment to Aborigines of 30/- per month, was too low. The Board’s representatives explained the basis of fixation of the present rate of 30/- per month, indicating that this rate had been fixed after discussion with the Deputy Commissioner of Native Affairs and the Secretary, Pastoralists’ Association in Western Australia; consultation had also taken place with the
Secretary to the Police Department of Western Australia. The Board would not be prepared to meet the request of the Union to apply Clause 36 of Det. 22 of 1935, mainly on the ground that it would be contrary to the policy of Native Welfare Boards etc., to pay to Aborigines rates which were unnecessarily high in relation to their standard of living.

It was finally agreed that the Board would write to the Public Service Inspector, W.A., to see if there had been any local revision of the standard of remuneration of Aborigines since the existing rate of 30/- per month was adopted by the Board in 1950.

It was decided at the 1953 Annual Conference that the Union request an amendment to the Public Service Act so that ex-employees of the P.M.G. Department (Great Britain), who left the Public Service in that country to commence with the P.M.G. Department in Australia, be given credit for service for furlough purposes; or that representation be made to the British government to extend the benefit of the English Act to employees who left its service to take up P.M.G. employment in Australia.

Again in 1954, an agenda item from the Tasmanian branch also dealt with the question of divorcing the Post Office from control of the Public Service.

The Tasmanian branch resolution was:

That the administration and control of the P.M.G.'s Department be relinquished by the federal parliament. That the portfolio of Postmaster-General become a nominal position for the purpose of liaison, and in lieu thereof, a Board of Administration be appointed to continue the activities of the P.M.G. Department. Such Board to contain a representative of the Fourth Division.

The history of how the Union finally achieved this goal is an interesting one. It shows the value to unions and workers generally of unions being affiliated with the A.L.P. and having a Labor government in office. Chapter 18 gives the later story.
The Union’s First Strike

In the first fifty years of the twentieth century, the vast majority of strikes had occurred in the “blue-collar”, private enterprise sections of Australian industry. This pattern began to change in the 1950s, when unions with predominant membership in the Public Service and in white-collar areas began to accept that they would have to develop and use their industrial strength on behalf of their members. It was easy enough for people outside a particular union to cry “communist”, but the members of the union knew that there were substantial reasons for their use of the strike weapon.

The first recorded strike in the history of the Post Office commenced on Friday, 14 September 1956. Strangely enough, there is no record in the Annual Report of the Federal Executive of this strike. The strike had its origin in the Union’s claim for an all-round increase of £54 per annum. This was later reduced to £30 per annum, since a cost-of-living adjustment amounting to £24 had been granted by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court.

A “work-to-regulations” campaign had commenced in Tasmania prior to strike action being taken, and was enforced for seven to eight weeks. The Tasmanian membership rightly claimed that economic conditions in that state, from the point of view of purchasing power, were worse than those on the mainland. However, the government and the Public Service Board, and the Department, refused to acknowledge this claim. Tension mounted, and the Victorian branch decided to begin a regulation strike as a result of a General Meeting held on 3 September. This decision was endorsed by the Federal Executive, and subsequently, it was decided by the Executive that a nation-wide work-to-regulations campaign should commence on Monday, 10 September. One of the
prime targets of the campaign was the banning of window envelopes, and there was sufficient backing in the Department's own regulations, according to Postal Rule 10, for this to take place. Unquestionably, some window envelopes were difficult to read, and the Department had appeared to take little action in endeavouring to settle the matter satisfactorily.

In Sydney, matters rapidly moved towards a climax, and although the Department made amendments to its own regulations, particularly with regard to Postal Rule 13, which dealt with the addresses of letters, the Union told its members to ignore such amendments.

On the afternoon of Friday, 14 September 1956, the dispute began after the New South Wales Director of Posts and Telegraphs, C.C. Smith, had read over the G.P.O. amplifying system a message from the Postmaster-General, C.W. Davidson, which said that mail delivery had further deteriorated due, principally, to the disregard by some employees of lawful instructions from departmental officers. He went on to say that some officials of the A.P.W.U. in Sydney were assuming the right to direct members to reject mail without any legal justification whatsoever, and that G.P.O. supervisors had been told to order sorters to deal with mail awaiting handling. "If those orders are obeyed, as I hope your good sense will see that they are," he said, "we will endeavour to get out of this mess peaceably." He continued:

If they are not obeyed, then the law will take its course. In your interests, I must remind you that refusal to obey lawful orders will involve the immediate dismissal of a temporary employee.

It will mean the suspension without payment of a permanent officer, who will then be charged formally with failing to carry out a lawful order.

The reading of the announcement brought hoots and boos from the men.

There were two versions of the suspension and sackings that came next. One was a spurious newspaper report. Regarding the other, one suspended man said:

I was one who booed the announcement. After it, I was instructed to sort certain articles three times. I did sort them—into the reject, three times. Then I was suspended.

There was trouble also when some men were told that they had to work overtime. Union officials said that the agreement with the P.M.G. Department provided that notice to work overtime should be given by 4.30 p.m. each day. It was then 7.00 p.m. and, according to one report, two men who refused to work overtime were suspended. A third man, a temporary hand, was sacked.
ly, all men working in the inland sorting section walked off the job.

The men adjourned to the Trades Hall, where a meeting took place and it was decided that all mail officers in the Sydney Mail Branch should stop work. A meeting of the Federal Executive was hastily convened and met on Saturday, 15 September in the Trades Hall, where it was decided to convene a mass meeting of all members of the Union, to be held on Sunday, 16 September in the Leichhardt Stadium. The second meeting was addressed by some members of the Federal Executive, together with federal Labor members, J. Cope and E.J. (Eddie) Ward.

After the mass meeting had adjourned, a further meeting of the Federal Executive took place on the Sunday evening in the Trades Hall. The meeting was continuously in contact with the President of the A.C.T.U., Albert Monk, by telephone, who was present at a conference being held at the home of the then Labour Minister, Harold Holt. The Postmaster-General, C.W. Davidson the Secretary of the Department of Labour, H. Bland, and the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, G.T. Chippindall, were also in attendance at the conference.

Threats of various forms of punitive action were made by the government to the Federal Executive, through Monk, who acted as an intermediary, and who, of course, did not endorse the government’s action. One of these threats was that members would be charged under Section 55 and/or Section 66 of the Public Service Act for engaging in strike action, and that the troops would be put into the Mail Branch to help re-start operations.

There are two Sections of the Commonwealth Public Service Act that govern the question of strikes, the first being Section 66, which reads:

Any officer or officers of the Commonwealth Service directly fomenting or taking part in any strike which interferes with or prevents the carrying on of any part of the Public Services or utilities of the Commonwealth shall be deemed to have committed an illegal action against the peace and good order of the Commonwealth, and any such officer or officers adjudged by the Board, after investigation and hearing, to be guilty of such action, shall therefore be summarily dismissed by the Board from the Service, without regard to the procedure prescribed in this Act for dealing with offences under the Act.

In addition, Section 55 of the Commonwealth Public Service Act then carried a maximum penalty, a fine of £20 for permanent officers and dismissal for temporary men. The penalties provided for under this Section of the Act were:
(i) fine the officer any sum not exceeding twenty pounds; or
(ii) reduce his salary; or
(iii) reduce him to a lower Division, class or position, and salary; or
(iv) transfer him to some other position or locality, which transfer may be in addition to fine or reduction; or
(v) recommend to the Board the dismissal of the officer from the Service.

After a long discussion, the Federal Executive resolved to convene a further meeting on Monday afternoon, 17 September, again at the Leichhardt Stadium, at which a proposal was put before the meeting that a "return to work" should take place.

A number of proposals placed before the membership included:

That a "return to work" should take place on the following conditions, to which the government should agree:

(a) The reinstatement of all men involved in the dispute without penalty, including two men suspended and one dismissed for disobeying orders on Friday night, 14 September; and
(b) Re-employment of all strikers under the same conditions as when they came out.

The terms also provided that the Department would facilitate an early re-hearing by the Public Service Arbitrator of the claim for a £2 per week pay increase. Although opposition to the terms of settlement was encountered from some of those present, the decision to return to work was carried by an overwhelming majority.

The minutes of the meeting convened by the Federal Executive of the Union, held in the Leichhardt Stadium on Monday, 17 September 1956, are worth quoting at length:

The General President, Mr Donnellan, occupied the chair and called on the General Secretary, Mr McGrane, to report to the meeting. The General Secretary, Mr McGrane, then addressed the meeting and stated that he had been in touch with Mr Monk, President of the A.C.T.U. and had been informed that there had been discussions between Mr Davidson, the Postmaster-General, Mr Holt, Minister for Labour and National Service, and Mr Bland, and that finally Mr Davidson, the Postmaster-General, had informed Mr Monk that if the men returned to work in Sydney not later than 6.00 p.m. Monday, and members of the Union in all States thenceforth work under normal working conditions, that is to abandon the regulation strike, the Department will be prepared to:

1. Reinstate those involved in the Sydney stoppage subject only to normal loss of pay during their absence from duty.
2. Resume discussion with the Union on matters within the competence of the Department. This will not include matters of wage determination which, as the government has already stated, are the concern
of the arbitration system. If the Union desires to make any new claim to the Public Service Arbitrator, the Department will be prepared to discuss with the Union means of facilitating a hearing of such claim.

That since this message from Mr Monk there had been quite a discussion by the Federal Executive in regard to this information and that the Federal Executive wanted further clarification of certain points and had again got in touch with Mr Monk, with the result that the point was clarified regarding reinstatement and suspension. Further, that the Union had a number of matters under discussion with the Department which would now be dealt with and the Department would be prepared to fully discuss these matters within the ambit of the Department. This raised the question of reclassification and so on, though Mr Davidson stated the government would not shift on the question of the rise in rates of pay as demanded by the Union, though they would facilitate a hearing before the Public Service Arbitrator. If the men did not go back to work, Mr Monk said he was informed that the government was then prepared to move in on the dispute and attempt to restore Mail Branch services and that they intended to take action in regard to the de-registration of the Union.

Mr McGrane informed the meeting that the only Union to survive action such as this was the Building Workers' Industrial Union, because registration was effected in the state courts. Further, the General Secretary informed the meeting that he requested an assurance from the government that action would be taken to facilitate the claim before the Arbitration Court. He also informed the meeting that the Waterside Workers' Federation had to take similar action and go back to work, and that at a later stage had obtained another £1 per week rise in rates of pay. That Mr Monk had asked the point-blank question as to whether we intended to accept the proposal and that the A.C.T.U. would be meeting in Adelaide on Tuesday afternoon and that his organization would exert all in their power to assist the case. As far as he was concerned, the A.C.T.U. would take control of the dispute. Mr McGrane then informed the meeting that he had requested that he be given the opportunity to put the resolution carried by the Federal Executive before the meeting; that the decision which he intended to submit had been given long and careful consideration, and that it was considered to be in the best interests of the members. That the members would be covered by the resolution and direction which he intended to read to the meeting:

1. That the meeting of the Federal Executive congratulates the membership of the New South Wales Branch on their sterling display of solidarity in reaffirming a fundamental trade union principle that an injustice to one is the concern of all.
2. We declare that the action of the Postmaster-General in agreeing to the reinstatement, without penalty, of all men involved in the dispute, including men against whom punitive action was taken, and the indication by the Department that they are prepared to negotiate on matters within the ambit of the Postmaster-General and facilitate
an approach to the Public Service Arbitrator constitutes a victory for the Union.

3. The A.C.T.U. advises the Union to return to work in Sydney immediately, and the A.C.T.U. will still be prepared to handle the dispute on Tuesday in the same manner as they would have under the circumstances which existed when the stoppage occurred.

4. The Union requests Mr Davidson, Postmaster-General, to recommend that a separate administration will be considered to administer and control the P.M.G.'s Department and to recommend a complete reclassification of all positions occupied by members of the A.P.W.U. in all states.

5. We, in view of the obvious inconvenience being caused the public, are prepared to negotiate with the Department for the purpose of submitting a further claim to arbitration, in association with the A.C.T.U., or a new claim to the Arbitrator, whichever is agreed after consultation with the A.C.T.U. Interstate Executive.

6. Having regard to the best interests of the Union, the Federal Executive directs members on the midnight shift in Sydney Mail Branch to resume normal duty on their shift at 10 p.m. and members on the immediate shift as soon as practicable after 6 p.m. That other states be directed to instruct members to resume normal conditions in all states as soon as practicable.

Mr A. Saint, one of the suspended mail officers, then addressed the meeting and said, “This afternoon we are presented with a direction and can do nothing about it, and that he would like to move a recommendation to the Federal Executive with a view to the fight being continued at a later state, if the necessity arose.”

Mr Saint then moved:

1. That the three members suspended or dismissed shall be first to enter the Mail Branch on their respective shifts, but in the event of refusal to allow any member to recommence duty, this meeting reconvene at 10 a.m. at the Trades Hall on 18.9.56 to discuss further action.

2. On return to duty we undertake to carry out our duties, normally observing the regulations at present in existence until 5 p.m., Monday, 24th September 1956, in order to enable the Postmaster-General to demonstrate his willingness to expedite the hearing of the Union's claim for a £2 per week increase for all members, and we recommend to the Federal Executive that all State Branches do likewise.

3. In the event of the Postmaster-General failing to demonstrate that he has taken every step possible to expedite the hearing of our claim by 5 p.m. on 24th September 1956, that all Branches throughout the Commonwealth be directed to resume strict observance of departmental regulations as from midnight, 24th September 1956.

Speaking to the meeting, B.V. Lynch, Secretary, Tasmanian Branch, said: “So far as Launceston, Hobart, Burnie and Devonport are concerned, the mail was stacked to the windows.” He said he disagreed with the recommendation of the Federal Executive so far as “work to
regulations” was concerned. He said he did not agree there was any sell-out, and that the A.C.T.U. would take some action in regard to the dispute. He informed the meeting that his Branch would carry out the direction of the Federal Executive.

F.J. Waters, Secretary, Queensland Branch, said: “In view of the decision arrived at by the members on Sunday, undoubtedly the decision was unpalatable, but we were only part of the trade union movement and in this fight, if we are not united we cannot win, and the A.C.T.U. should not be castigated at this stage. We were not the only union which had been involved in a big dispute and had carried out a retreat.”

He commended the members on their solidarity in sticking to the victimized members and said he considered that the New South Wales members had taken a courageous stand in regard to the question of victimization.

The recommendation of A. Saint was seconded by B.T. Carey, another mail officer who had been suspended. The Federal Executive direction and the recommendation proposed by Saint were then put to the meeting and both were carried.

Although some members were critical of the Federal Executive’s direction, in the light of all the circumstances, this was the correct decision at that time.

In retrospect, some of the threats that were being bandied about by the government during the strike would not have helped, had they been put into execution. For example, the threat to bring in the troops, which was tried a few years ago in New York, when postal workers in that city were on strike, proved pointless, to which most people who viewed their efforts on television will testify. However, the 1956 strike was an historic one, in that as a result, Section 66 of the Commonwealth Public Service Act was shown to lack effectiveness.

Now that the Union’s members had been blooded in battle, they realized their own strength so far as future conflicts were concerned. Subsequently, a claim was made to the Public Service Arbitrator for a £2 per week increase across the board, but this was rejected by J.M. Galvin, the then Public Service Arbitrator.

More importantly, because of the 1956 strike, the members of the Union now appreciated that they could “stick”, and that neither the ground nor big snakes swallowed those who stood up for their industrial rights.
“The Movement”

Trade unions are accustomed to attack from a variety of sources: self-righteous Liberal and Country Party politicians, newspaper editors, some employers’ organizations and a crop of correspondents (often anonymous) in the “Letters to the Editor” columns. However, the unions found in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s that they were being attacked from within by organizations known as the “Industrial Groups”. Many unionists, in all honesty, had joined these Industrial Groups in the ‘forties and ‘fifties, believing them to be simply organizations formed to fight against communist candidates in trade-union elections. What these unionists did not know, and what, in fact, the vast majority of non-Grouper trade unionists did not know either, was that behind the Industrial Groups was a powerfully organized body, later identified as “The Movement”, that struck at the very core of Australian democracy and the Australian trade-union movement.

Political organizations tend to reflect the ideology of their founders and the political climate of the period of their conception. Although the “Movement” was formed in the early 1940s, its conception had taken place in the mid-1930s. Its founder and ideological guide, Bartholomew Santamaria, became a public defender of General Franco’s military destruction of democracy and the elected government of Spain during the Spanish Civil War. Mr Santamaria was also an outspoken defender of Mussolini and his merciless attacks on Abyssinia. Although he had been a supporter of Catholic social justice in the early 1930s, by the end of that decade, Santamaria’s concern for social justice had changed to support for the Falangists in Spain and the Fascists in Italy. It would be fair to say that he sought, through the “Movement”, to
create a similarly ordered, corporate state in Australia.

There was no place in the Country Party or in the United Australia Party (now the Liberal Party) for a Catholic of Sicilian parentage. Both these parties were bastions of Freemasons, whom Santamaria later denounced as being his enemies. In Santamaria's judgement, a small secret body controlling the trade unions could then hope to control the Labor Party, and ultimately Labor governments. Unfortunately for Santamaria, and fortunately for Australia and its trade unions, his logic was faulty, his methods were faulty, and in the end, his whole scheme collapsed.

No one doubts Santamaria's stand against communism. He is as genuine in this regard as were Franco, Mussolini and Hitler; their corporate states might be regarded as his models. "The Movement" infiltrated and penetrated the Labor Party and the trade unions and sought to oust not only communist officials in the unions, but also those political and industrial Labour leaders who belonged to the radical and reforming traditions of the Labour movement. All this was done under the cloak of anti-communism and in the guise of Catholic Action. It was therefore a relatively simple matter for Santamaria to obtain the physical and financial support of the Catholic hierarchy who were theologically opposed to communism. The tragedy was that many of these bishops and priests who had been lifelong supporters of social justice and trade unions, found themselves pitted against their former friends.

"The Movement" and the Industrial Groups were to have a profound influence upon the politics of the nation following their formation. The Catholic Worker fixed the foundation date of this new organization, which functioned under many aliases, as sometime between 1941 and 1942. (Santamaria, who was editor of the Catholic Worker from 1936 to 1940, parted company with the journal in 1940.) The downfall of the Movement and its replacement by the National Civic Council was to cause such a split between Santamaria and the Catholic Worker that Archbishop Mannix banned its sale from outside Catholic churches in Melbourne.

Robert Murray in a series of articles in the Financial Review in July 1972, gives a more precise date for the establishment of this highly secret body. Murray states that the Movement had its first meeting in an insurance meeting-hall in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, on 14 August 1942, the date of Santamaria's twenty-seventh birthday. The organization was successively variously called "the Movement", "the Catholic Social Studies Movement", "the Organization", "the Catholic Social Movement" and "the National Civic Council". Murray continues that several preliminary meetings
had preceded this meeting, including a meeting of parish priests organized by the late Archbishop Mannix to provide names of dependable parishioners with trade-union sympathies to be the founders.

It is important to note the year 1942, because although the Industrial Groups were endorsed by the A.L.P. in 1945, this highly secret organization had been functioning for three years prior to such endorsement being given. It is also important to note that the "Movement" began its penetration of the trade-union movement in 1942, because at that stage, the Australian Communist Party was still a comparatively small organization, which had not obtained any significant power within the unions. In short, the "Movement" predates any great communist influence in the unions, and its earlier foundations throws into serious question its later claims to have been formed solely as an anti-communist organization.

One must look more closely at Santamaria's own theories and philosophies, and his strange hold over Archbishop Mannix, to explain what the "Movement" really hoped to achieve by infiltrating and gaining control of the Australian trade-union movement. Santamaria wanted power. He hoped to use the power gained in the trade-union movement to make himself the backroom power behind any Labor government, which then would legislate as he commanded.

The origin and operation of the Industrial Groups and the secret "Movement" cells that operated the Groups were well documented and analyzed in an article in the Catholic Worker in July 1959. The Catholic Worker summarized the Groups and the "Movement" thus:

The Movement, an organization to work in the trade unions, was started under Mr Santamaria's direction not earlier than 1941 and not later than the end of 1942.

He directed The Movement secretly, and simultaneously, while he was Assistant Director, and later Director, of the Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action and Secretary of the National Catholic Rural Movement.

Between 1942 and 1945, the existence of Catholics fighting Communists, and fighting them with moderate success, was used as an argument for the setting-up of Industrial Groups under the auspices of the Labor Party. The nature and organization of this Catholic body were glimpsed only dimly by the anti-Communist Labor men who worked with it but did not belong to it. The Movement, while being the mainstay of the Industrial Groups, continued to exist in them as a secret constituent; secret in the sense that many members of the Industrial Groups did not even know of its existence and those who did were, for the most part, ignorant of certain relevant facts about it.
At some time, up to 1945, Mr Santamaria approached the Bishops to get their formal (but unpublicized) sponsorship of his activities. He used the offices of the Catholic Action organizations as a vehicle for the organization and direction of The Movement's activities. The Movement received solid and consistent support from the Hierarchy to back their direct approval and sponsorship of it.

How was the Movement organized? How did it gain such strength inside the Catholic Church, even though its presence was unknown to most Catholics? Again, let us refer to the authoritative *Catholic Worker* article:

Generally, its organization seems to have followed the lines of the Church's own organization (in parish groups), as well as the organization of genuine Catholic Action Groups (at the place of work). This gave it unusual strength, for it could not only grow, but it could also use the Church's basic organization to help it in its growth.

The Movement was organized in those dioceses in which the Bishop wanted it, and groups were organized in parishes where the parish priest was agreeable or could be persuaded to co-operate with The Movement and to appoint curates to be its chaplains. Individual dissidents among the parish priests were, however, able to make good their protest.

There were leader-groups to co-ordinate at a regional level the activities of parish groups. There were full-time paid regional organizers stationed at the most important centres.

At the top, there appears to have been a National Executive and this appears to have been not only The Movement's ruling body, but the link between it and the Hierarchy.

The Catholic Church in Australia had a strong Irish element, who were in a real sense "natural rebels". It also had intelligent members who respected the long-standing division of Church and State, and thousands of good solid trade-unionists who felt that neither religion and politics nor religion and unionism mixed. The opposition to the Movement grew inside the trade-union movement and inside the Church. The *Catholic Worker* explained the opposition in these terms:

It was an opposition exerted not by public debate, for the means hardly existed for a public debate. On the other hand, neither was it a fight between factions striving against each other for power. Generally, it was a difference not only about the rights and status of organizations, but also about principles.

It had several roots. First, of course, The Movement's infiltration of trade unions and manipulation of many Labor Party branches caused it to affront, attack and pressurize out of office certain Catholics as well as non-Catholics among the Labor men who were not amenable to its methods.

Some of these men were just as honestly Catholic and just as honestly
Eric Burke, Assistant Secretary, Queensland Branch

R.E. Wellard, Secretary of the New South Wales Branch

A.E. Savage, Secretary of the Victorian Branch
anti-Communist as The Movement men; and they naturally protested at being pushed around by a body whose aims were political but which passed itself off as officially sponsored and financed by the Church.

Second, leaders of bona fide Catholic Action organizations, which had their own mandates from the Bishops, objected to The Movement using political propaganda among their members, trying to supersede them in their various fields and, even, in one or two cases, trying to capture their executives and use them for its own purposes.

Third, many Catholics came to the view that such a body was out of keeping with the nature and mission of the Church and infringed the common good of Australian society.

Catholic unionists, along with Protestant and agnostic unionists, were rightly confused that organs of the Catholic Church that once seemed to be on the side of the worker, now were linked with anti-union forces. Santamaria did not understand the great differences between the indigenous radical and militant forces in Australian trade unions and the ideology of the Communist Party. His description of himself in 1942 as “a person who was quite ignorant of what was going on in the trade unions” perhaps lasted longer than his associates realized. He could never be accused, however, of any political softness. He and his “Movement” forces were among the most ruthless elements ever produced in Australian politics or unionism. No trick was too dirty that it could not be used; no reputation, particularly that of a strong Catholic, was so high it could not be dragged scurrilously through sectarian or any other mud.

Jim Ormonde, a fervent Catholic journalist and later a Senator, told the writer of his family’s saying a rosary around the bedside of his mother-in-law. A knock at the door revealed a nun, who asked for “Mr Ormonde, the communist”. The nun readily admitted that she had been instructed to spread that description. In 1972, Jim Ormonde’s son Paul, who was on the editorial board of the Catholic Worker for twelve years, in an excellent book titled The Movement, related many similar stories.*

Was this ruthless denigration of Catholics who opposed the operation of the “Movement” and the Industrial Groups an innocent part of the Group’s fight against communists in union elections? Perhaps we should again look at the Catholic Worker’s analysis of the “Movement”:

Victory in the Union fight meant keeping the fruits of victory by electing “Groupers” to the Union executives. This, in turn, meant manoeuvring in the Unions not only against pro-Communists but also against unionists (including many Catholics) who seemed, to the perhaps impatient eyes of the Groupers, to be neutralists in the industrial power

situation. And it meant, in addition, manoeuvring against all sorts of people in the Labor Party, as well as in the Unions; manoeuvring against them in order to ensure that both the political and industrial wings of the Labor movement were in the hands of Movement nominees.

What was to follow the victory of the Movement's nominees in the political and industrial wings of the labour movement? That was the question that emerged strongly in the 1950s and in the 1960s, when the National Civic Council replaced the "Movement". A study of Santamaria's own writings suggests a type of theocracy based on his own philosophies of turning the clock back several hundred years. It was certainly to be nothing like the broad humanitarian goals of the traditional political and industrial sections of the Labour movements.

The underlying fact associated with this secret organization, the "Movement", and its obvious control of the Industrial Groups, was a cover-up for the real nature of the organization. In Europe, Christian trade unions operate quite openly and leave no doubt as to their origins, but this organization, which virtually controlled the Industrial Groups, was hypocritically horrified at the mere mention of its religious foundations and claimed that people attacking it were indulging in a sectarian smear campaign.

Subsequent disclosures, particularly in Santamaria's address to a meeting of Catholic laymen in Sydney in March 1953, entitled "The Movement of Ideas", his articles in the Bombay Examiner and correspondence that has since come to light from the headquarters of the "Movement" to the Catholic bishops, leave no doubt as to the fact that above and beyond the control of this organization, which was, in essence, formulating Labor policy, both political and industrial, there was an outside alien influence that had no part in the Australian scheme of things.

Some astute observers claim that one of the reasons for the ultimate decline of the "Movement" and its offspring, the Industrial Groups, was that the plotting of the Groups was conceived by people who operated on the Sicilian concept of politics as against that of the Irish. This thesis is in no way intended to denigrate the Italian way of life, for the struggle of Garibaldi in the nineteenth century for political freedom is still remembered not only in Italy, but by lovers of liberty throughout the world, and the stance of the Italian people on modern social problems in recent years and the fight against the oppression of the Mussolini fascist regime by thousands of courageous people, bear testimony to their struggle for liberty. Whether or not Santamaria's Sicilian background and the influence he held over an ageing Dr Mannix were major factors, it seems that the pragmatic approach to the problem of the Church influence
in political affairs, as seen by Cardinal Gilroy in New South Wales, compared to that of Dr Mannix, Mr Santamaria and others, underlined the reasons why the "Movement" did not gain the success in New South Wales that it did in Victoria and Queensland.

Ultimately, of course, the bubble burst and the "Movement" was exposed for what it was. Apparently, instructions were then given by the Vatican that this organization, with its many aliases, had to function outside the authority of the Church. The full-time staff of the "Movement" resigned from that body in August 1956, and commenced business under another name in September of that year. Late in 1957, the National Civic Council was established and still operates without the direct authority of the Church. However, while the Groups were disbanded by the A.L.P. and the "Movement's" wings were clipped, as such, Santamaria and his cohorts continued on their merry way, and while their influence may not be as great today as it was in their hey-day when the Groups and the "Movement" were in almost virtual control of the Labor movement in Australia, nevertheless they are still a force to be reckoned with.

In an appraisal of the 1957 A.C.T.U. Congress, Santamaria was particularly critical of some of his former Sydney colleagues for their desertion. He was also critical of Freemasons, claiming that an alliance between Freemasons, left-wing unions and communist supporters at the Congress was responsible for the defeat of former "Movement" men for executive positions on one hand and for the policies that they espoused on the other.

John P. Maynes, who was the Federal President of the Clerk's Union, and who, some years ago, was a full-time employee of the National Civic Council, is regarded as the N.C.C.'s chief industrial strategist. Others who played a prominent role in industrial and political affairs were also employed by the National Civic Council in a full-time capacity and included William Thornton, who is now President of the Clerk's Union in Queensland. Maynes is quite a capable speaker and is a familiar figure at A.C.T.U. Congresses.

There is little doubt that Bob Santamaria's organizing capacity and oratorical ability were responsible for the early development of the "Movement" and the later efforts of the National Civic Council. Santamaria is recognized as one of the most gifted speakers in Australia, and it is easy enough to draw the conclusion that most of the policies that the Catholic bishops and others have put forward on industrial matters originated from his pen.

The National Civic Council, apparently, is still spending money in a big way. During the 1976 branch elections of the Clerks' Union of Queensland, thousands of dollars poured in to help the National Civic Council candidates, who, ultimately, were successful. It is
reasonable to ask where that money came from. Several sources, including various political parties, have been mentioned. The National Civic Council uses Liberal and National Country Party politicians as its chief fund-raisers. The National Civic Council asks the local Liberal or National Party state member to form a sponsoring committee of local citizens who are in sympathy with the extreme right-wing aspirations of the Council. A luncheon or supper is arranged, during which either the Council's State President or its National Secretary, Gerald Mercer, sends chills down the spines of his affluent listeners, warning of the impending communist take-over. Only the National Civic Council, by its infiltration of white-collar unions, teachers' organizations and student bodies, can hold the line! Write out your cheque or fill in the bank-order form immediately! For $83 a month, $250 a quarter, $500 a half-year or $1000 a year, you can support the National Civic Council—with no questions asked as to how the money is spent.

At a meeting at the Redcliffe Golf Club in Queensland in July 1976, it was claimed that $240 000 had been spent during that year on the training of members of the National Civic Council to infiltrate unions, political parties, teachers' organizations and university and student bodies. It is interesting that, along with the Liberal and Country Party politicians who sponsored the National Civic Council fund-raising function at Redcliffe, was Sir Douglas Fraser, whom Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen appointed as Chairman of the Electoral Redistribution Commissioners to draw the Queensland electoral boundaries in 1971 and 1977. John Hodges, M.H.R., Jim Houghton, M.L.A., Speaker of the Queensland parliament, and Des Frawley, M.L.A. were the other sponsors. In view of Mr Santamaria's claims about Freemasons and communists conspiring to thwart the Movement at the 1957 A.C.T.U. Congress, what would he say about this "unity ticket" of Freemasons and the National Civic Council? Queensland is now supposed to have nine full-time National Civic Council organizers and an office staff of six.

The A.L.P.'s endorsement of the Industrial Groups in 1945 and 1946 was crucial to the success of the "Movement" and, clearly, the "Movement" capitalized on this fact and was successful in having its own people planted in the organizations of the party. In New South Wales, for example, Messrs J. Kane, F. Rooney and F. Pembleton were all "Movement" men working in full-time capacities, prior to being placed on the payroll of the A.L.P. in that state. In Victoria, Frank McManus, a well known "Movement" man was appointed Assistant Secretary of the A.L.P.
Queensland, Brian Mullins, who is now President of the National Civic Council, was private secretary to Premier Vince Gair. Minutes of meetings of the interstate liaison committee of the A.L.P. Industrial Groups revealed that many prominent people were associated with the committee, including G. Neilly, now a Labor M.L.A. in New South Wales; Laurie Short, National Secretary of the Ironworkers’ Association; Lloyd Ross, Secretary of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Railways Union, the late J. Bukowski, Southern District Secretary of the Australian Workers’ Union and the late M. Brosnan, Organizer of the Queensland branch of the Electrical Trades Union of Queensland. C. McGrane, who at that time was Assistant General Secretary of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, Jack Kane, Assistant Secretary of the New South Wales Branch of the A.L.P., J. Maynes, R.B. Marsh, Secretary of the Redfern branch of the Boilermakers Society and later Secretary of the New South Wales Labor Council, and H. Hurrell of the Ironworkers’ were also committee members. This group met regularly in Sydney and plotted a strategy for the operations of the Groups throughout Australia.

It was clear that the Industrial Groups were receiving finance from outside sources, and this was reflected in the balance sheet of Groups in Queensland. In the early 1950s, donations of £100 were received from Allan & Stark, Hyne & Son, Howards Limited, Meadowlea Margarine, Australia Plywood, Peters Ice Cream, while a further amount of £200 was received from Howards on 3 March 1954. It appears that Evans Deakin & Company donated £50, as did the Metal Trades Employers’ Association. The U.L.V.A. made a donation and the Brisbane Liquor Trades also contributed. The only union that appears to have donated money was the Foodstuffs Union, which made a donation of £10. However, it is clear that money was paid over secretly to the Groups, and this was not shown in the balance sheets.

Mick Brosnan, in Adelaide in the late 1950s, told the writer he would like to have known how much Joe Bukowski had in the “little black box”, which was apparently a receptacle for monies that were received and paid out for special projects. In the southern states, some large companies were contributors to the Groups’ operations, and probably still are contributing to the activities of the National Civic Council.

Jack Schmella, the Secretary of the Queensland Central Executive of the A.L.P., stated that one of the strong supporters of the Groups was the Shell Company, but that the money was “laundered”, as the Americans term such an operation, by being paid through a public relations company. There were also stories
of a certain American attaché paying over the sum of £10 000 to people in the Industrial Groups in New South Wales for the purpose of fighting communism in the trade unions. Some cynics noted that shortly after this took place, those concerned were seen wagering substantial amounts of money on horses, trotters and dogs, and when the attaché called for an accounting of the money, the reply was that they did not operate that way in Australia. Also the names of the people who received the money could not be revealed, since it had been paid over in confidence, and that would be a breach of trust. It is understood that the attaché was recalled to the United States shortly afterwards.

In a recent article in the journal *Labour History*, it was revealed that when the correspondence of the Catholic Social Studies movement in Adelaide dating from the 1950s was examined, there was clear evidence that American sources, through the U.S. Embassy, had been providing assistance in "kind" rather than in "cash".* The lurid anti-union pamphlets of the 1950s that were supposedly anti-communist in their intent were all printed in the United States for distribution in Australia by the "Movement" and the Industrial Groups.

The credit for the disbandment of the Groups must be substantially given to Dr H.V. Evatt, for in October 1954, he issued a lengthy statement pointing out that outside influences were operating in the Labor movement and in the parliamentary sphere, and that Victorian federal parliamentarians S.M. Keon, J.M. Mullens and W.M. Bourke were among the leaders of this group. It was also claimed that in Victoria, the State Executive of the A.L.P. was substantially under the influence of "Movement" men, and as a consequence, "Movement" policies were being adopted by the Executive in that state. As a result of a complaint signed by over twenty unions in Victoria, the Federal Executive of the A.L.P. intervened and suspended the Victorian State Executive of the A.L.P. A special conference was called at which a new Executive was elected, and when the famous Hobart Federal Conference of the A.L.P. was held in 1955, the suspended Executive endeavoured to obtain representation. However, it was unable to get the numbers, and as a result, a split developed in the Labor Party in Victoria that paved the way for the creation of the D.L.P.

As has been mentioned, Dr Evatt's denunciation brought to public notice the fact that the "Movement", through the Catholic Church, had been actively intervening in the political arena. This

caused dissension amongst many loyal Labor Catholics and resulted in the Vatican intervening by virtually clipping the wings of the "Movement". However, Santamaria and company were not to be outdone and the National Civic Council was later established, without formal Church control but with substantial secret Church blessings, in late 1957. Active support was given by a number of Catholic bishops in various dioceses to the new organization, such as Wagga and Armidale in New South Wales; Brisbane, Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Townsville in Queensland; and in Melbourne (although Archbishop Simonds did not encourage its growth), Sale, Sandhurst, Bendigo and Ballarat in Victoria. There was some support for the Council in Western Australia, but apparently no support was forthcoming from among the South Australian bishops, and only a minimum of support in New South Wales. The operations of the "Movement" through the D.L.P. succeeded in keeping the A.L.P. out of office until 1972, when Gough Whitlam was returned as Prime Minister. In the 1974 elections, all D.L.P. Senators were defeated at the polls and the D.L.P.'s effectiveness as a political unit has been substantially weakened, though not entirely destroyed.

It would seem that the National Civic Council is here to stay, and it will be necessary for the Labour movement to be ever vigilant to protect the workings of both the political and industrial wings from its influence. One of Bob Santamaria's former supporters wrote to him in May 1975 about the strength of the Council in Queensland, but with a sense of personal disillusion about the N.C.C.:

I believe we are recruiting the wrong people. We are generally getting people who are white-collar workers and are substantially either non-unionists or do not have the union mentality. I am particularly worried about the non-industrial background of these people in the light of our agreed move that our prime purpose for being in the industrial field is political . . .

I have been fairly active in the industrial committee, the businessman's committee, in the education and propaganda side and in the Group. In a whole range of areas people do not accept us for a number of reasons . . . I think also if we were to be more outgoing from the top to the bottom and less defensive, we could secure a better release of our propaganda statements. I believe many Movement members take the "conspiracy" attitude too far.

I have no arguments with the proposition that the Movement has been badly treated by a whole range of people, including the Liberal Party and others. We have proved at the union level that there are elements of the Conservative Parties with whom we can do business. There are a wide range of people in the A.L.P. and the trade union
movement who are making soundings as to our attitudes, whether they can rely on us for support, whether we are in fact extremists. I believe these opportunities may not arise again. It may be our last chance and I believe that they should be seized, although with mature and discreet consideration of each issue.

Labor Party and trade-union officials have had many a chuckle in recent years when National Civic Council members have been nominated by the Liberal Party as candidates for parliament. The Liberal Party should remember that infiltration and “boring from within” is not confined to the Communist Party, as is claimed by the N.C.C. The National Civic Council, like the “Movement”, proceeds on the tactics of accusing its opponents of the methods that the Council itself uses.

It may be asked what was the purpose of Santamaria’s strategy. Briefly, it can be summed up as: By obtaining the control of the trade-union movement and the Australian Labor Party, he then would be able to pull strings in relation to the election of Labor’s federal leader and the selection of the Cabinet. Furthermore, he would then be in a position to discuss with important sections of the business community the alternative type of government Labor could offer when the Liberals came to the end of their tether. Hence the “roping-in” of prominent business and professional men to form the nucleus of an organization that could, on a regular basis, supply finance to enable the National Civic Council to pursue its objectives; and in the process, foster the illusion that they were the backroom boys who controlled the nation, when in reality, they were but puppets on a string, manipulated by Santamaria and his cohorts on behalf of the forces of reaction.
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Industrial Groups in the Union

The rise of the Industrial Groups in the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union was assisted to a large degree by the retirement of some of the Old Guard officials of the organization. In addition, there were also changes of personnel in the states of Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, while in the federal arena, General Secretary, Jack Dwyer was appointed a Conciliation Commissioner in 1947 and was succeeded by the New South Wales Branch Secretary, N.W. (Bill) Burke.

The major reason given for the establishment of the Industrial Groups after the war had been the emergence of the Communist Party of Australia as a strong force in the unions during World War II.

During the war years, the prestige of the party had risen enormously, due to the support that communist leaders had given to the war effort, and this was reflected at A.C.T.U. Congresses, where Communist Party leaders were almost within an ace of taking control of the A.C.T.U. However, due to a number of tactical blunders, they tended to alienate themselves from the mainstream of the industrial movement.

It is clear that the Industrial Groups had begun to interfere in a limited way in union affairs in 1942 and became increasingly active by the end of the war in 1945. As Victoria was the centre of the “Movement's” activities, the A.P.W.U. received close attention by Santamaria and his organization in that state. This would have taken place not later than 1946, and more than likely in 1945. By 1946, there was an Industrial Group organization in New South Wales, whilst in Queensland, all the evidence points to the Industrial Groups having been established in the Amalgamated
Postal Workers' Union in either 1946 or early 1947. There does not appear to have been any formal organization in Tasmania, although the then Secretary, B.V. (Barney) Lynch was a dedicated supporter of the "Movement." Similarly, in South Australia, there was not the same degree of penetration by the Groups, no doubt due to the fact that the Catholic Church in that state did not favour their activities. In Western Australia, there were tenuous links with the eastern states, particularly after W. Creech retired as State Secretary of the Western Australian branch and L.J. Rice succeeded him.

With the retirement of Joe Peterken at the end of 1947, A.E. (Les) Savage took up duty as Secretary of the Victorian branch. Savage was and still is a member of the A.L.P. However, the Grouper influence was beginning to assert itself and a "Movement" man, in the person of J. Hickey, was elected as Assistant Secretary. Later, J. Moloney, a Grouper, was appointed an Acting Organizer. Both men held their positions until the Labor split in 1955.

In New South Wales, following upon the election of Bill Burke as General Secretary early in 1948, R.E. ("Tiny") Wellard was elected to the secretaryship of that branch. The Industrial Groups had been working in New South Wales branch ever since they first had been given encouragement in the form of an article in the Postal Advocate in 1946, which contained laudatory references to the work that the Groups were carrying out in their alleged fight against communism. Jack Gill was the original leader of the Industrial Groups in New South Wales, but he was later supplanted by J.N. (Nev) Lynch.

Chris McGrane, who was employed as a vehicle builder at the Eveleigh Railway Workshop, surfaced about 1950. The rules of the Union permitted virtually anyone to contest office, and McGrane was elected as Assistant General Secretary of the organization. He appeared to take a dominant role, but did not have the organizing flair of Nev Lynch. McGrane was defeated for the position by Max Lovelock an anti-Grouper, in 1951, but again was successful in 1952. Lynch defeated Wellard in 1954 as Secretary of the New South Wales branch, and the Groupers took control of the branch in the same ballot. Internecine battles between McGrane and Lynch, together with the rising tide within the Union of distrust of the Groupers, paved the way for the eventual destruction. Nev Lynch lost the secretaryship in 1961 on a technicality, and two years later, McGrane was defeated by George Slater. Immediately prior to his defeat, and thereafter until his death, Nev Lynch took on a much more progressive role so far as the affairs of the Union were concerned.
Neil Mayell, a supporter of the Groupers, was elected Secretary of the New South Wales branch following the displacement of Nev Lynch in 1961, and held that post until he resigned due to further internal trouble within the Union, in January 1965. Fred Richardson, who had no political affiliations, was elected as Secretary of the branch, and later became a member of the A.L.P. Fred was the Union’s Industrial Officer in New South Wales and was generally accepted by all factions. In Victoria, the Labor split of 1955 brought about the end of the Grouper control of the union in that state. George Slater defeated J. Hickey in the elections for Assistant Secretary of the branch, and Alan Downard was successful in the ballot against J. Moloney as Branch Organizer.

In the formative years of the Groups, it was clear that the then leaders of the Union, namely Jack Dwyer, the General Secretary, and C.E. (Don) Parker, the General President, were misled by the ultimate aims of this group of industrial saboteurs. Both Parker and Dwyer had, in the early years of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, adopted a militant attitude and were clearly men of considerable ability, yet they fell victims to the wiles of the Industrial Groupers.

A.L.P. leaders in the various states gave the Industrial Groupers their blessing, and it was not without coincidence that when the split in the Labor movement finally took place in 1955, most of those who had been in the forefront of support for the Groupers deserted the A.L.P. and helped to form the Democratic Labor Party. It was clear that the vital Australian Labor Party Federal Conference at Hobart in 1955 was the beginning of the end for the Groupers when at the Conference the federal body withdrew its support for their activities.

Dan Minogue, President of the Victorian branch, together with Hickey and Moloney, led the Groupers in Victoria. Opposed to them were such men as Bert Raven, Dick Longmore, Wally Wood and others.

At the time of the Labor split, the Groupers endeavoured to have the Victorian branch of the Union disaffiliated from the A.L.P. The case for disaffiliation from the A.L.P. was prepared by Jack Moloney, and that for affiliation by George Slater. The Groupers were handsomely defeated by 807 votes to 397 in a plebiscite that was conducted for that purpose, and the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union maintained its affiliation with the A.L.P. in Victoria. This then gave the impetus for anti-Groupers to contest office at the union election in 1955, and as a consequence, new leaders emerged, as mentioned earlier in mesrs George Slater and Alan Downard. George Slater was subsequently elected General Secretary in 1963.
In 1947, the Groupers had the numbers at a General Meeting of the Queensland branch and were able to elect W.R. Canfell as Returning Officer. However, at the ensuing election of officers, the progressive forces secured a resounding victory. The Queensland Central Executive of the A.L.P. established an Industrial Group Committee and this was led by R.J. Bukowski, who was the then Southern District Secretary and later the State Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, M. Brosnan, Organizer of the Electrical Trades Union and later M.L.A., T. Rasey, M.L.A., and the State Organizer of the A.L.P., E.J. Walsh. Walsh was a former Queensland Cabinet Minister and was later re-elected to the Queensland parliament in 1950 as the Member for Bundaberg. He again became a Cabinet minister and deserted, with Rasey and Brosnan, to the Queensland Labor Party, which later became the Democratic Labor Party.

In 1955, the role of the Australian Workers' Union changed so far as support for the Groupers was concerned, and the Australian Workers' Union withdrew its endorsement of the Groups. The General Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, Tom Dougherty, attacked the Groupers and all that they stood for, and this attitude was reflected on an Australia-wide basis throughout the Australian Workers' Union.

Although the Groupers were strong in the Brisbane Mail Branch, they had no basis of support within the postal or line groups, and in 1948 they secured only one position in the mail officers' group on the Committee of Management. A test of strength took place at the General Meeting held on 27 April 1948, when two Notices of Motion were lodged: (i) for the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union not to march in the Labour Day Procession, and (ii) that every member of the State Executive should declare himself as to whether he was a communist, a fellow traveller or a supporter of the left wing.

At the General Meeting, the Groupers were in a majority, but were not able to get the necessary two-thirds majority to suspend standing orders, but were able to have the meeting adjourned to Sunday, 2 May. It is claimed that at the meeting held on 27 April, supervisors in the Mail Branch had released a number of the staff from duty to come and vote for the Grouper proposals. However, at the adjourned meeting held on Sunday, 2 May, the Groupers were defeated and an amendment was carried in essence that every member should be allowed to nominate for office irrespective of his religious or political views, and there should be no discrimination whatsoever in this regard. The vote was carried by 120 to 96, and this had the effect of dampening the ardour of the Industrial Group.
members. Subsequently, their attendance at General Meetings became smaller and they did not contest office for approximately twenty years.

Eric Burke, who was the Branch Assistant Secretary, played a very important role at the Sunday meeting. The Grouper elements pulled out all stops in their endeavour to create an “anti-communist” and “Red Menace” climate for those in attendance. A decent, naïve member, no doubt “egged” on by secretarian leaders, asked Eric Burke whether he had been in the Mail Branch during the week, preaching sectarian propaganda. Eric gave a denial to this suggestion, but added that there was a sectarian organization at work within the Union and that its name was “Catholic Action”. Pandemonium ensued, but the thrust found a vital weakness in the armour of the “Movement” supporters. It is pleasing to know that a number of members who had been inflamed against union leaders, admitted their mistake and subsequently became strong supporters of the Union.

The Groups never really survived the 1955 Federal A.L.P. Conference, although they were active in the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria, for some years after. However, their divisive and disruptive role gradually became clear to the average member of the Union and today their influence is almost negligible.

Santamaria was undoubtedly a good organizer and was able to enlist the support of churchmen to provide him with a sound basis on which to conduct his operations. The 1974 federal election saw the demise of the political representatives of the Groups, namely the D.L.P., from the federal parliament, and it is unlikely that they will return. Jack Kane was also a capable exponent of the Group principles and in the political arena, Keon, Mullens and Bourke were very much to the fore.

As far as the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union was concerned, Minogue and Moloney were perhaps the most vocal exponents in Victoria, whilst in New South Wales, C. McGrane, J.N. Lynch and J. Gill played a dominant role. B.V. (Barney) Lynch was a capable leader of the Groups in Tasmania, and in his capacity as Secretary of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union in that state, undoubtedly helped the Groups’ cause immensely. However, after Viv Deegan was elected State Secretary, he quickly took steps to eliminate their influence. O.H. (Tom) Rosser and Doug Allen were rock-solid in their opposition to the Industrial Groups in South Australia, and Doug Allen played an outstanding role both in his own state and at Federal Executive Meetings and Annual Conferences of the Union, to prevent a Grouper takeover.
APWU Annual Conference, 1957  *Sitting (l to r):* C.R. Johnson (South Australian), D.J. Allen (South Australian), J.F. Gill, Assistant Secretary, M.R.C. Strudwick, Director-General, T. McLachlan, General President, C.J. McGrane, General Secretary, A.E. Savage (Victoria), G. Slater (Victoria), V. Deegan (Tasmania)  *m W. Alexander (Tasmania)  Back row: G. Tilley (New South Wales), F.J. Waters (Queensland), R.F. Power (Western Australia), D. Ash (General Vice-President), E.W. Burke (Queensland), A. Donnelly (Western Australia), J.N. Lynch (New South Wales)
of the organization, particularly after he succeeded Tom Rossner as State Secretary.

In Western Australia, Roly Power and Percy Stirling were in the vanguard of the battle against the Groups, and after he was elected as State Secretary of the Western Australian branch, Roly was largely instrumental in removing the power of the Groups established by the former Secretary, Laurie Rice. In this battle, he received considerable assistance from Len Hale (who succeeded him as Secretary of the branch), Alf Donnelly, Cyril Buswell and many others.

In Queensland, Jim Ryan and Reg Kennedy also played an active role as Group leaders, but when the Groups lost their influence, for a period of a little over twenty years, there was no election of officers for the Queensland branch of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union. Ted Ashmore, the Queensland President, took up a positive attitude from the start and was assisted in this respect by Eric Burke. Doc Spence, who became active in the Union after his return from war service, also played a most important role in the defeat of the Groups. It was due principally to the work carried out by Eric Burke, Doc Spence and Frank Waters that the Groupers ceased to be the force that they were in their early period of activity.

In the fight against the Industrial Groups in New South Wales, personalities such as Reg Cunningham, Reg Wellard, Harold Baker, Ron Southwell and Dave Hepher fought the good fight and ultimately most of the early leaders of the Groups were defeated.

Summed up, the era of the Groupers was a disaster for the Union. Their role was a divisive one and a good deal of the Union's time and efforts could have been diverted to more useful purposes.

The defeat of C.J. McGrane by George Slater in 1963 clearly was a turning-point in the history of the union. This was noted at the time by the *News Weekly*, the organ of the Groupers. Although McGrane endeavoured to stage a comeback at the following ballot, he was defeated in all states for the position of General Secretary and was subsequently expelled from the Union.

Elections within the ranks of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union have been rugged affairs, and overall, no holds have been barred in respect to the propaganda issued by the various candidates and factions. This was particularly the case after the development of the Industrial Group organizations within the Union. The Annual Conference of the Union had been concerned, early in the Union's history, at the circulation of propaganda that commented adversely on the functioning of the Union, and took steps to correct the situation by the insertion of a new regulation (Rule 42A) in the Union Rules, in an attempt to prevent a repetition. (The Rule was
Ted Ashmore, President of the Queensland Branch of the A.P.W.U.

B.V. Lynch, Secretary, Tasmanian Branch

L.J. Rice, Secretary of the Western Australian Branch
subsequently disallowed by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court.) However, the paper war, particularly after 1946, continued unabated, and looking back on the various elections for both state and federal officers, it is clear that the laws of libel were completely disregarded.

One of the developments that have taken place has been the forwarding of "how-to-vote" cards to all financial members of the Union. This has proved a costly venture, but it would seem that there is no escape from this situation, at least not in the foreseeable future.

Random selection of "gems" from ballot propaganda makes interesting reading. In the 1967 election, one card was headed: ASKS PRIESTS AND POSTMASTERS TO CANVASS IN A.P.W.U. BALLOT.

A headline in the Melbourne Age of 7 September 1967 illustrates the keeness of the manner in which the ballot was fought:

UNITY TICKET WITH D.L.P.—LABOR INQUIRY

A "unity ticket" row yesterday intensified the bitter fight now under way for control of key Federal and Victorian positions in the powerful Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union.

A.L.P. secretaries in four States received complaints that Victorian A.P.W.U. organizer Mr A. Downard, a senior Victorian A.L.P. branch member, was being supported on a how-to-vote ticket issued by D.L.P. supporters.

Last night, Mr Downard, who was celebrating his 54th birthday, repudiated the alleged unity ticket.

The A.P.W.U. elections are being conducted by postal vote, which opened last Friday and closed on September 21.

Mr Downard, supported by the union's assistant federal secretary (Mr W. O'Grady), is heading a team of A.L.P. and non-party candidates.

A team comprising only A.L.P. members is headed by the industrial officer of the Victorian Branch (Mr. A. Peeler) and supported by the union's federal secretary (Mr G. Slater).

The DLP-supported Industrial Group is supporting Mr Downard and most of his candidates.

Before yesterday's "unity ticket" allegations, the warring factions had conducted savage campaigns, marred by the publication of anonymous pamphlets attacking opponents in terms described by some union officials as "filthy".

The "unity ticket" allegations against Mr Downard were lodged with A.L.P. secretaries in Victoria, N.S.W., South Australia and Queensland.

They claimed Mr Downard was in breach of A.L.P. Federal rules because the Industrial Group how-to-vote ticket indicated that he had established political unity with members of the D.L.P.

Mr Downard, an A.L.P. member of 24 years, said last night: "The
Chris McGrane, Federal Secretary 1956–1963
Industrial Group ticket was prepared without my knowledge or consent. What the Industrial Group does is no concern of mine.” Mr Downard is contesting one of the two vacancies for the position of Victorian Organizer. Also, he is challenging Mr F.J. Waters for the union’s Federal presidency.

In recent ballots, two-way contests between A.L.P. and Industrial Group candidates have been won by the A.L.P. team with two-to-one majorities.

The current A.L.P. split follows a decision by a caucus of the Victorian branch to drop Mr Downard from the “official” A.L.P. ticket.

In the main, the Industrial Group factions were responsible for the circulation of scurrilous material in branch and federal elections, and since the passing from the scene of most of these early leaders, this type of propaganda has tended to disappear.

In the 1963 election, which was responsible for a change in the top leadership, when General Secretary Chris McGrane was challenged for his position by George Slater, then Secretary of the Victorian branch of the Union, one pamphlet is of particular interest:

**WARNING!**

**Santamaria Incorporated Active in the A.P.W.U.**

The anti-working-class, gangster, Santamaria Incorporated machine is now very active in the A.P.W.U.

- It is working secretly.
- There is no shortage of money.
- Conferences have been held in Sydney and they have been attended by representatives from all states.

*The central aim of all this activity is to prevent George Slater, an A.L.P. man, from becoming General Secretary.*

The Santamaria machine is backing the present General Secretary, McGrane.

A nation-wide smear campaign against George Slater, a close associate of Arthur Calwell, the leader of the Federal Labor Party Opposition, is now under way on a big scale.

*George Slater has a splendid fighting record. He believes that the strength of the union lies in an active rank and file.*

- He is against a union leadership bureaucracy on a high salary.
- General Secretary McGrane receives £4000 a year. How can a man on such a salary have an understanding of the needs, hopes and difficulties of the rank and file?

- Of course he cannot.
- We must alter all this. We will with your support. The £4000-a-year General Secretary McGrane wants to jack up union fees to £7/10/-
per annum.

He is supported in this by Mayell and O'Grady of the N.S.W. Branch. They are not making this public until the ballot for the Federal positions is conducted.

The Department heads are sympathetic to McGrane because of his so-called “co-operation”.

This “co-operation” will result in a breaking down of the demand for four weeks’ leave for mail officers if the McGrane clique get back.

We don’t want this sort of “co-operation”.

McGrane’s policies do not flow from the needs of the rank and file.

They come from outside—from Santamaria Incorporated.

There is no place in the leadership of our union for Santamaria men who are, in fact, the direct agents of the Menzies Government and its supporters.

Who is it that keeps Menzies in office?

_The D.L.P.—a part of the Santamaria Incorporated machine._

**KEEP THE UNION FREE OF OUTSIDE INFLUENCE.**

Perhaps the pamphlet invited retaliation. The Postal Workers’ Union Industrial Group in Victoria, in reply, issued a pamphlet that said, in part:

**COMS BACK SLATER—LYNCH GRAB FOR FEDERAL CONTROL**

Throughout Australia, the Communist Party is backing the Slater/Lynch attack upon our Federal leadership.

The unscrupulous Slater, matched in self-seeking opportunism only by his running mate Lynch, is regarded by the Communist Party as their best bet in the circumstances to restore their outside control of our union.

Since the defeat of Wellard by the Industrial Group forces in 1952, our union in most States and at the Federal level has been free of the Communist taint.

Slater and Lynch are now opening the door for their comeback. Not that they necessarily have this end in view. Lynch has a long list of disqualifications for office, but he is known as an anti-Communist of a sort. Slater does not enjoy such a reputation.

But in pursuit of their own self-advancement they will use anything or anybody and worry about the pay-off later.

The thought of what our union would be like under their joint control beggars the imagination.

An unsigned roneod pamphlet issued during the same campaign had a number of interesting headings, one of which took pride of place:

**NO PLACE FOR RATS**

McGrane and O'Grady, in a desperate effort to hold on to their “cushy”
jobs, while you the members pay their "fat salaries", have RATTED on their fellow A.L.P. members who were responsible for their election in the first place.

The only difference between Messrs McGrane and O'Grady and Messrs Maloney and Cahill is that Messrs Maloney and Cahill claim to be members of the D.L.P., and Messrs McGrane and O'Grady claim to be members of the A.L.P.

In point of fact they are all tarred with the one brush and it is strongly recommended that members reject those who have BETRAYED their mates.

Some members may think that this is not possible and if you need any further convincing we suggest that you should cast a glance at the D.L.P. "How to Vote" ticket in the current elections, it is headed Postal Views, and as anticipated is one of the worst SMEAR SHEETS we have ever seen in a Trade Union election.

In the top right hand corner Mr Maloney recommends that you vote for Ash, McGrane and O'Grady, and if this is not the case then there must be something wrong with our eye sight.

The ticket issued for New South Wales was claimed to be the only Labor ticket, and tendered this advice:

JOINT STATEMENT BY SUB-BRANCH OFFICERS

Have no doubts, members, this is the only genuine A.L.P. Tem. We strongly recommend that all members vote this ticket. All opposition tickets are bogus, and have the full backing of the D.L.P. Remember, the LABOR WAY is the only way.

KEEP GROUPEIRISM AND COMMUNISM OUT OF OUR UNION BY VOTING THIS TICKET!

WARNING! Beware of D.L.P. door-knockers. Don't hand your ballot paper to them. Fill it in yourself and POST it personally—IMMEDIATELY on receipt of same.

The ballot resulted in the defeat of the incumbent C.J. McGrane, and was claimed by the press to be one of the greatest upsets in Australian trade-union history.

The Sydney Daily Mirror of 27 September 1963 headlined the result:

POSTAL WORKERS GET LEFT-WING SECRETARY

Mr G. Slater, a Victorian left-winger, is the new Federal Secretary of the Postal Workers' Union.

Commenting upon the result, McGrane was reported as saying that he hoped to return to the Union at the next elections in two years, and went on to declare: "I do not believe any professed left-winger can do any good for the postal workers."

As was expected, the News Weekly, the official organ of the
National Civic Council, gave a different slant on the result:

POSTAL WORKERS: SLATER WINS BITTER ELECTION FIGHT

After one of the most bitter faction fights in the history of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union, the position of Federal secretary was won by Mr G Slater, secretary of the Victorian Branch of the union, who was the Communist-backed candidate.

The ballot, which was conducted by the Commonwealth Electoral Officer, Mr C. Mallon, gave Slater a 446 majority over the former holder of the post, Mr C.J. McGrane of New South Wales. McGrane is a moderate member of the Australian Labor Party and Slater a Left-wing member of the Victorian A.L.P.

Slater, who had the backing of the Left-wing Communist union junta, which exerts major influence on the Victorian A.L.P. executive, contested the Federal seat of Deakin at the 1961 elections, receiving endorsement under the Victorian A.L.P.'s system of "democratic centralism".

SECTARIAN CAMPAIGN

His union campaign was marked by a sectarian build-up in the A.P.W.U.'s official journal against the Democratic Labor Party and the National Civic Council.

The retiring Federal president of the Union, Mr D. Ash, a member of the NSW branch of the A.L.P., also lost his post in the election to Mr D. Allen of South Australia.

Mr W. O'Grady, the union's assistant Federal secretary, retained his position by defeating Mr J.N. Lynch of NSW, by 1300 votes. Lynch, the central figure in a faction fight in the NSW Branch of the union some two years ago, was a former secretary of that branch.

APATHY WAS A FEATURE

He was Slater's chief assistant against McGrane and his supporters in the poll just concluded.

In the Victorian branch elections, the A.L.P Left-wing-supported team was successful.

In the NSW branch, the retiring A.L.P. moderates led by the secretary, Mr N.R. Mayell, retained all positions, winning 17 of the 21 positions on the union's committee of management. The apathy which has so often resulted in the return of "militants" and Communists to controlling positions in unions, was a feature of this poll.

Of a total of 25,000 postal entitled to vote, only 11,000—or 44 per cent—voted.

The new Federal office-bearers take office at the end of November.

In the 1965 ballot for the post of General Secretary, when McGrane endeavoured to stage a comeback, but was decisively defeated, an unsigned pamphlet issued by "The Amalgamated
Postal Workers' Union Rank and File Committee" said in part:

It has long been apparent with J.A. Ronan that he sees the union only as a stepping-stone in his climb to the cushiest job he can get himself into. He is exploiting the Labor Movement and would dump the membership tomorrow if he could crack it for a safe job.

Ronan possesses a very similar outlook to D. Barney, Organiser. They have about the same amount of brains and the best that can be said for them is that they deserve each other.

None of McGrane's new-found friends can boast of A.L.P. membership prior to 1963. His only intention is to surround himself with "Yes men" on the Executive and pick his own cronies for full-time and other preferred positions.

A body describing itself as "the Linemen's Defence Committee", in the same ballot, issued a circular headed "Slater Must Go", while another supporting the candidature of L.W. Hopkinson for General President, enjoined members to keep the Union independent from outside control.

A circular issued by General Secretary George Slater in the 1965 ballot, warned members to beware of tickets issued carrying photographs of Arthur Calwell and Gough Whitlam, and said that McGrane had no authority from parliamentary leaders. This was also the case in Tasmania, it warned, where V.J. Deegan and H. Bowman had denounced the misuse of their names by McGrane and stated that they did not support his ticket.

The Toowoomba Chronicle of 2 September 1965 also indicated that Victorian officials of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union would charge three New South Wales members of the Union with having collaborated with D.L.P. members on a "unity ticket" in the Union's current elections. The members concerned, it said, were C.J. McGrane, former Federal Secretary and now an Organiser of the New South Wales branch of the Union; A.J. Ronan, Vice-President of the New South Wales branch; and J. Wyner, a member of the New South Wales branch.

Advice to Union members was also given in a leaflet issued by George Slater:

**UNION BALLOT.**
**BEWARE—**
THE N.C.-SANTAMARIA
DOOR KNOCKERS.
DON'T HAND OVER BALLOT PAPERS.
FILL THEM IN AND POST THEM YOURSELF.
THROW THE DOOR KNOCKERS OUT.
A “how-to-vote” ticket issued by the Victorian officials and authorized by Arch Peeler, gave this advice to members:

Beware—As predicted those Door knockers have been and still are Very Active through Victoria. These D.L.P. and Industrial Group Supporters are keeping a Record of Your Reaction to their visit for Future Reference—Don’t be tricked by them.

An interesting sidelight of this particular election were the telegrams sent to and received from Gough Whitlam, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

WHITLAM
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
CANBERRA
MEMBERS OF QUEENSLAND BRANCH A.P.W.U. VERY CONCERNED AT YOUR PHOTO APPEARING ON A UNION HOW TO VOTE TICKET SPONSORING WYNER RONAN AND MCGRANE STOP TICKET IS A CLEAR BREACH OF A FEDERAL A.L.P. CONFERENCE DECISION REFUSING PERMISSION OF INDIVIDUALS TO CLAIM A.L.P. SPONSORSHIP STOP D.L.P. AND SANTAMARIA MACHINE HAVE ENDORSED SAME THREE CANDIDATES IN VICTORIA STOP SUGGEST YOU REPUDIATE THIS TICKET

Date: 1/9/65
Time: 3.15 p.m.

F.J. WATERS
SECRETARY A.P.W.U.
TRADES HALL, BRISBANE

MR FRANK WATERS
POSTAL WORKERS UNION OF AUSTRALIA
ROOM 60 TRADES HALL
EDWARD STREET
BRISBANE QLD
YOUR LETTER OF 1ST SEPTEMBER RECEIVED TODAY STOP MY PHOTO APPEARED ON HOW TO VOTE TICKET WITHOUT MY PERMISSION STOP I CONFIRMED TELEGRAM SENT BY ARTHUR CALWELL ON 1ST SEPTEMBER IN ANSWER TO TELEGRAMS YOU SENT US BOTH

GOUGH WHITLAM

The Victorian Postal Workers' Industrial Group also gave some advice on the election in a one-page circular that advised members to use their vote, claiming that Slater, Doherty and Co. hadn’t the ability to do their jobs, and that the job of General Secretary was too much for George Slater, and that certain bonds had been
cashed. The Victorian Industrial Groupers were suggesting by implication that funds built up by Bill Burke and McGrane were unwisely spent or mis-spent. The authors of the pamphlet forgot to add that when George Slater took over as General Secretary, there was not enough money in the till to pay the telephone account.

The election results, however, were very convincing, as the official report of the Commonwealth Electoral Officer records:

For the office of—ONE GENERAL PRESIDENT
Candidates—Hopkinson, L.W.; Wyner, J.; Waters, Francis John
Number-of-Votes—Hopkinson 693
Wyner 2915
Waters 6894
I declare Mr Francis John WATERS elected

For the office of—ONE GENERAL VICE PRESIDENT
Candidates—Allen, D.J.; Newton, John Ormiston; Ronan, A.J.
Number-of-Votes—Allen 6722
Newton 822
Ronan 2967
I declare Mr D.J. ALLEN elected.

For the office of—ONE GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER
Candidates—Slater, George; Lindsay, Patrick Arthur; McGrane, Chris
Number-of-Votes—Slater 6752
Lindsay 636
McGrane 3120
I declare Mr George SLATER elected.

In the 1959 ballot for the election of officers of the Queensland branch, the then Secretary Frank Waters was opposed by two nominees from New South Wales, one of whom, D.F. O’Hanlon, was a mail officer and the other, R.O. Barton, a retired police officer who had been invalided out of the New South Wales Police Force. However, much was made in the campaign by officials of the Queensland branch that it would be somewhat difficult for an ex-police officer with a limited knowledge of the intricacies of postal trade unionism to carry out the duties of Branch Secretary. Attention was also drawn on the “how-to-vote” ticket issued on behalf of Frank Waters to the fact that O’Hanlon, was also contesting office in the New South Wales branch ballot, and it would rather difficult for him to hold office in two states.

The results of the election made it clear that the candidature of O’Hanlon and Barton had not been taken seriously by the membership, Waters being elected by an overwhelming majority of 2113 votes, from Hanlon, 128 votes and Barton, 65.
Automation

The early 1960s had seen the defeat of the Industrial Groups as a force within the Union. It was in this period also that the Union had to face a new problem—that of automation. However, there were some other industrial matters that arose prior to this.

In the broader industrial spectrum, 1961 saw the Industrial Commission decide finally to make the automatic adjustments of the basic wage on an annual basis. Additionally, internally within the Service, a new type of uniform for postmen and other uniformed staff was also in the process of being supplied.

The perennial question of the action that the Department should take against owners of dogs that attacked departmental employees was also highlighted in the 1961 Annual Report of the Australian Post Office. The Department was greatly concerned about the number of its employees who had been attacked or bitten by dogs. The Directors in the various states were requested to seek the cooperation of dog-owners, the police, local municipal authorities and other organizations, to keep the dogs off the street, unless under proper control. The Department warned that delivery would be withdrawn in any case where an owner failed to place a dog under proper control whilst the delivery officer was in the area, and the Postmaster-General announced in parliament that legal action would be taken against the owners of dogs that attacked departmental personnel. (These warnings were of little avail, for to this day, Post Office employees whose duties involve the delivery of mail or telegrams are still at the mercy of the dog population.

In 1961, the Treasury agreed to pay furlough (long-service leave) to female cleaners who worked twenty-four hours a week over four days per week, this being a substantial advance on previous furlough
payments to part-time employees. However, the general question of payment of furlough to part-time employees was not resolved until 1976.

The largest single matter affecting members of Post Office staffs during 1961 was the question of the Public Service Board’s proposals for the re-organization of the Post Office. In general, the so-called Post Office re-organization resulted in a general decline in the economic standards of the membership. In retrospect, it would appear that not enough consideration was given by the Union to the far-reaching proposals made by the Department and the Board. It would seem that in any re-organization of this magnitude involved in Post Office re-organization, there should have been more expertise by the Department on one hand and, so far as the Union was concerned, the inclusion of capable rank-and-file representatives on the other.

The 1961 Annual Report of the Commonwealth Electoral Officer, who by now controlled the ballot for the election of federal officers of the Union, revealed that F.J. Waters, the Secretary of the Queensland branch, had been elected as the new General President. Waters’ election was due, in no small degree, to the assistance rendered by the then State Secretary of New South Wales, J.N. Lynch, for which Lynch incurred the unremitting hostility of the extreme right wing and the Industrial Group factions within the Union. Waters was the first full-time official General President elected to the position, which is an honorary post, and after his retirement, he was succeeded by the Secretary of the Tasmanian branch, V.J. Deegan.

The General Vice-Presidency was retained by D.W. Ash, while another change took place in regard to the full-time position of Assistant General Secretary, W. O’Grady of Victoria defeating the incumbent J.F. (Jack) Gill, who was prominent in the activities of the Industrial Groups movement in New South Wales. These new faces indicated that the organization was to undergo further changes in subsequent elections, though perhaps the full impact of the change was not realized by many people at the time.

The next year, 1962, was a further milestone in the Union’s history. In that year, the General President, F.J. Waters, was selected as one of the Australian delegates to the International Labour Organization Conference in Geneva, the first occasion on which an Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union official had been selected to represent the Australian trade-union movement overseas. In addition to visiting Geneva, Waters also visited West Berlin, where he attended the Conference of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. He also paid visits to a number of other
The author as his members knew him
countries, where he studied trends in automation in mail exchanges. In the same year, George Slater, the Victorian Branch Secretary, visited New Zealand as a guest of the New Zealand Post Office Association.

On the political front, the period 1961–62 was almost a red-letter one for postal organizations, for it seemed at one stage during the counting of the ballot for the House of Representatives in 1961 that a federal Labor government would be returned to the Treasury benches for the first time since 1949. However, Labor failed by one seat to achieve this objective. The Union made a substantial contribution to A.L.P. funds. George Slater was the unsuccessful A.L.P. candidate for the federal electorate of Deakin, where the final result showed a swing of 13 per cent to Labor.

In 1961, the Union again raised the question of the Department giving consideration to affording the organization office space in new Mail Exchange Branch buildings in each state. The request was rejected by the administration on two grounds: firstly, that no union had been given space in Commonwealth-owned buildings; and secondly, that if the proposition were approved, the situation could arise where union activities could cause interference to employees during their working hours. The Department stated that although this request could not be agreed to, provision was being made at the Redfern and the Roma Street buildings for conference, interview or similar purposes, and consideration would be given by state administrations to written requests from the Union for use of this conference space.

Advice was also received from the Department that a contract had been entered into with T.E.I. Pty Ltd for the manufacture and installation of electronic mail-handling facilities in the new Sydney Mail Exchange building at Redfern.

The lack of consultation and co-operation with the Union was in evidence very early in the Federal Executive's 1961 Annual Report, which stated that an interview had been arranged with the Planning and Development Branch (P.M.G. Central Administration), in an effort to obtain more information regarding the new machinery to be installed at Redfern. However, the departmental representatives were unable to make available any plans or information relating to the new equipment, which they said was still in the drawing-up stage. The Union was given an undertaking that it would be informed of any further developments, and plans would be supplied when available, but the sorry state of affairs that has bedevilled the Redfern Mail Exchange had its origin in the lack of communication between the administration and the Union.

At the time, the Union was given to understand that the existing
George Slater, General Secretary of the A.P.W.U. since 1963
workforce of mail officers would operate the electronic coding letter-sorting machines. Assurances were given by the Department that although a lesser number of staff would be required, there would be no dismissals as a result of the introduction of this automated process; wastage of staff by retirement, resignation, etc. would take care of that aspect. The Union was advised that it would be kept informed on matters relative to the introduction of the new equipment.

In the three years that followed prior to the completion of the manufacture of the letter-sorting machines, at no time was the Union advised that it was the intention of the administration to engage operatives other than the existing mail officers workforce. The Union was invited to attend a conference at the Central Office of the Postmaster-General's Department on 5 November 1965, for the purpose of discussing proposed arrangements relative to the introduction of the new equipment. The Department advised that some of the electronic coding machines were ready for trial operation and union representatives were invited to attend a trial operation of the equipment at the premises of the manufacturer, T.E.I. Pty Ltd, at Meadowbank, New South Wales, on 12 November.

At this conference, representatives of other unions were also present, namely the Postal Overseers' Union, the Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association and the Federated Public Service Assistants' Association. It was clear why the first two of these three unions should be represented, since they had coverage for supervisory staff in the Mail Branch area. The Federated Public Service Assistants' Association was not in this category, it at no time ever having coverage for any members within the precincts of Mail Exchange branches, and was not affiliated with the A.C.T.U.

The Director-General, in opening the conference, stated that the Department desired to convey to the representatives of the various unions information concerning its proposals in relation to the introduction of electronic coding letter-sorting machines. He then proceeded to outline these proposals. Two machines were to be installed in the Redfern Mail Exchange building in the middle of February 1966, and additional machines would be installed as they became available from T.E.I., and if trials were satisfactory at Redfern they would be introduced in other Mail Exchange branches in Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide.

It was then that the bombshell was dropped. The Director-General then went on to say that the operators of the machines would be designated Coding Machinists (Female), with female rates of pay. It was even proposed that junior female rates should be
"Sorry Madam, we are closed till Monday ... but you can deposit your money at any post office tomorrow morning!"

"I'm afraid I've got a bit of bad news for you Mr. Shufflebottom...!"

By courtesy of "Australian Telegraphist"
prescribed and that girls fifteen years of age be recruited and trained in the coding operation, and they be required to perform all shifts, including night duty.

It then became evident why the representatives of the Federal Public Service Assistants’ Association were present. The Department was hoping to get under the guard of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union by paving the way for this organization to obtain coverage for the proposed new designation. The Department was now maintaining that the work of the electronic coding machine operators bore a relationship to that carried out by card punch operators, a designation that is covered by the Federated Public Service Assistants’ Association. This was an untenable situation as far as the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union was concerned, and one that could only lead to industrial action, which inevitably occurred shortly afterwards.

A further uneventful meeting took place with the Department on 25 November. At this meeting, the Director-General said the Department was not prepared to vary its proposals; however, he said he was agreeable to further discussions taking place. The General Secretary of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union said he would convey the events of the meeting to officials of the A.C.T.U. the next day, and requested that the Department outline its attitude in writing. The Director-General agreed to this and the next day forwarded such a letter, with additional copies for the information of the A.C.T.U.

On 26 November, three officers of the Union—George Slater, Fred Richardson and Kevin Doherty—conferred with the President of the A.C.T.U., A.E. Monk, and the Secretary, H. Souter. After the A.C.T.U. officers had been made fully aware of all points that had been raised in negotiations with the Department and had been acquainted with the Union’s viewpoint, Monk said he would endeavour to arrange a conference between the Postmaster-General, the Director-General, and officers of the A.C.T.U. and the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union. However, he said, in the first instance, the matter would be discussed on the A.C.T.U. Executive Officer level, and if agreed, he would then proceed.

As the Secretary of the Queensland branch of the Union and as Federal President, F.J. Waters, set out his views when opening the 1965 Conference:

Automation as a reality is here to stay so far as the Post Office is concerned. We have seen a step-by-step progress so far as the introduction to automatic methods of mail handling is concerned. However, out of the blue we were confronted by the Director-General at a conference held in Melbourne with the fact that coding machines,
to be installed in the Redfern Mail Exchange branch, are to be operated by female labour at a much lower rate of pay than that enjoyed by mail officers.

On the question of wage rates for coding machine operators, we have sent letters to our overseas affiliates, asking as to the rate of payment and classification of coding machine operators in various countries, and, in each case, there is no distinction between the male and the female rate; in other words, equal pay is the order of the day in all overseas countries where women are employed in mail rooms.

We cannot oppose the introduction of machines because technological development means that machines will come into many places of work. We have seen the effect of changes taking place in all sections of the Department—a microwave link—between Sydney, Lismore, Brisbane and Cairns will undoubtedly have an impact so far as maintenance is concerned: that is, that fewer men will be employed on this type of work in the future.

However, in regard to the question of the coding machines in the Sydney Mail Exchange branch, the Union must strive to obtain the male rate for females and must also obtain coverage from the Industrial Registrar.

The Conference discussed the introduction of coding machines into the Sydney Mail Exchange branch, and a committee elected to prepare a proposal concerning coding machines brought down the following resolution, which was carried unanimously:

This Conference welcomes the support being given by the A.C.T.U. to the Union in its efforts to secure the best possible conditions for mail officers upon the development of electronic mail-handling machinery in the Post Office.

We declare that the following points must be finalized to the satisfaction of the Union in this matter.

1. We demand the coding operation be performed by mail officers.
2. That mail officer award rates of pay be applied.
3. That the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union possess sole right to enrol members employed on the coding process.
4. That the Union will not tolerate the introduction of cheap female labour on scab rates of pay.
5. That, in the event of females being employed on this function, male mail officer award rates be applied.

Whilst this Conference does not oppose the advancement of automation in the Post Office, we stress that concurrent with the introduction of electronic mail-handling equipment, the employees involved should receive improvements in working conditions. We believe that with the increased productivity attainable by electronic mail-handling equipment, that the time has arranged for the introduction of a shorter working week, namely thirty-five hours.

This Conference calls for a Joint Conference of Postal Unions with the express purpose of examining the introduction of automated processes into the Post Office and subsequent effects on Post Office employees.
We call on the membership to fully support in a united manner the efforts of the Federal Executive in conjunction with the A.C.T.U. to secure the best possible conditions of employment in the coming era of automation. Conference instructs the Federal Executive to secure coverage under the Rules and Constitution of the Union of all persons employed on the coding process in the Mail Exchange branches.

A conference was subsequently held with the Postmaster-General on 21 January 1966. The Chairman of the Public Service Board, the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs and other officials of the Public Service Board and the Department were also in attendance. The Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union was represented by F.J. Waters, George Slater and Fred Richardson, and the A.C.T.U. by Monk and Souter. This meeting also proved fruitless, the Postmaster-General evading the question so far as equal pay was concerned, and refusing to accept any responsibility in the matter generally, saying it was a matter that should be resolved between the Union, the Public Service Board and the Department. The General Secretary of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union stated that, on the basis of the Board's proposals, there was no chance of the existing proposition being accepted by the membership, and unless a satisfactory result was obtained, no guarantee could be given that direct action would not result. Upon conclusion of this conference, it was agreed that the Union and the Department should confer at an early date and, following upon these discussions, that a conference would then take place with the Board.

Arising from the conference with the Postmaster-General, further discussions took place with the Department on 7 February. The Union was represented by Waters, Slater, Richardson and Doherty. No progress was made, the Department refusing to depart from its original proposal. It was decided that the Union should make a request to the Public Service Board for a further conference, and the departmental representatives intimated that they desired to be in attendance.

A further conference, as agreed, took place between representatives of the Union, the Department and the Public Service Board on the 2 and 3 March. Again, no concessions were made to the Union, and the original proposal stood. The Board refused to budge, either on the question of designation or rates of pay.

In relation to the question of equal pay for the sexes, the Chairman of the Public Service Board said both the Board and the Department were powerless to implement this proposal, since the Arbitration Commission had a superior jurisdiction to any wage-fixing authority in Australia, and the Board must follow the policy
laid down. He stated, in reply to an A.C.T.U. deputation led by Monk, that the government had also laid down principles relating to equal pay. Dealing with the legal aspects of the matter, the Chairman of the Board pointed out that the Board could only introduce equal pay by way of regulation, which had to be approved by the Governor-in-Council. He said a Consent Award also required a Minister to sign the document, in addition to the Public Service Board and the Union.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union delegates stated they could not accept the stand taken by the Board, and the Union considered the coding machines should be operated by mail officers at male rates of pay. The position was untenable so far as the A.P.W.U. was concerned and consultations would now take place with the A.C.T.U., to determine the future course of action.

Two further conferences took place with the Department and the Public Service Board and on both these occasions, the A.C.T.U. was also represented, the first being on 17 and 18 March and the second on 26 March. Arising from these conferences, the Board conceded some considerable increases in the rates of pay originally offered for the operators of electronic coding machines; it also indicated that it would be agreeable to concede the designation Mail Officer (Coding) in lieu of the originally proposed designation of Coding Machinist (Female). Whilst these concessions could be regarded as some improvement, they fell very far short of the demands of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union.

Although conceding a change in the name of the designation to Mail Officer (Coding) at higher rates of pay than originally offered, these rates still were not equal to those of the mail officer salary range. In effect, it was still a downgrading of the mail officers’ position. The Union refused to accept this situation and demanded the retention of the mail officer designation for the coding function. The Union sought only the right for the existing workforce of mail officers to perform this new method of letter-sorting, a function that has historically belonged to this designation, at the existing rate of pay of mail officers.

The Board’s last word had been spoken, and it was prepared to go no further. The officers of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union were not prepared to accept such iniquitous proposals, nor were the rank-and-file members of the Union. Mail officers rightly wanted to preserve for themselves the right to perform the coding operation, which, in effect, was only a new method of mail-sorting, the chief function of the mail officer designation.

It was felt that insufficient assurances had been given in regard to future redundancy of the existing workforce. Even if such
assurances could be accepted, which was extremely doubtful, the fact could not be escaped that even if unionists were not to be downgraded in their present positions, a downgrading was to occur whereby a new designation was to take over a large portion of the mail officers’ functions at a rate of pay substantially below that of a mail officer.

To further worsen the position, it was proposed that cheap female labour was to be used to carry out work functions that had been performed previously by male labour or at male rates of pay. At these stop-work meetings, mail officers in all states expressed unanimous solidarity with their fellow mail officers in New South Wales, and adopted the recommendation of the Federal Executive to ban overtime and work to regulation. In the days that followed, mail officers in all states set an outstanding example of solidarity, so much so that the Prime Minister enlisted the aid of the Public Service Arbitrator, with a view of settling the dispute.

It was only under great pressure that the Federal Executive finally agreed to allow the question to be arbitrated. The statement of the Arbitrator that it was within his power to determine the question of “designation” was another influencing factor. The matter of determination of “designation” was previously held to have been the sole right of management.

The hearing before the Public Service Arbitrator commenced on 19 April and concluded on 5 September 1966. The General Secretary co-opted the services of J.S. Baker, General Secretary of the Third Division Postal Clerks’ and Telegraphists’ Union, as Assistant in Advocacy, and who placed before the Arbitrator a wealth of overseas expert views on technological change.

The Secretary also called a number of other authoritative witnesses. These included the General President, F.J. Waters, who gave evidence based on his knowledge of mail-sorting practices in overseas countries; T.P. Walsh, General Secretary of the Fourth Division Postmasters’, Postal Clerks’ and Telegraphists’ Union, who gave evidence in relation to the introduction of T.R.E.S.S., an automated process that had been introduced into the Telegraph Branch, and the retention of the telegraphist designation; R. Thomson, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of New South Wales, who was formerly employed at the P.M.G. Central Office, where he was carrying out work involving the selection of staff for various positions; and B.T. Carey, mail officer, Sydney Mail Exchange Branch.

In giving evidence, Thomson said:

I think the machine process is merely the mail officers’ present skills automated, with some trivial changes in the component element, and
that the mail officer is the best man to retain, unless we have evidence come forward to the contrary. Prima facie, however, the mail officer would be the most ultimately familiar with the type of industrial process which is to be carried out.

The Arbitrator in his decision rejected the Union submission to have the mail officer (coding) paid the full mail office rate. The main effect of the Public Service Arbitrator's decision may be summarized as:
1. The designation Mail Officer (Coding) was created, to cover operation of the electronic sorting machines.
2. As a consequence, re-training of mail officers to operate the new machines was not applicable.
3. Tentative rates of pay were adopted, being those proposed by the Public Service Board, with one variation: a $100 proficiency allowance.
4. These pay rates were subject to review after about six months of the operation of the new machines. If on review, there were matters which called for remedies, they could be provided.
5. It would be open to the Union to obtain the benefit of any further general automation inquiry (which could make different decisions on some of the issues presently in dispute).

In regard to the great amount of material on automation presented in evidence by the Union, the Public Service Arbitrator said:

From all this material, although the special facts in certain instances may not have a direct relevance to the present situation, there emerges sufficient to justify the need for careful study.

In considering the problems arising in this matter, I have kept constantly in mind the two most significant features, namely—the need to ensure that present employees are fairly treated, and the desirability of the community accruing benefit from the introduction of the new system.

If, for example, it were the position that regular full-time mail officers at the Sydney Mail Exchange lost their positions as such and were made surplus to requirements, it may be necessary to take quite a different course from that proposed.

Bearing in mind particularly the undertakings and the surety that they will be honoured, much of the force of the argument based upon automation and its consequences is lost.

The undertakings apply to regular full-time mail officers. The undertakings are confined to the Sydney Mail Exchange, and at present there is no certainty that a similar course would be followed elsewhere.

In his decision, the Arbitrator appeared to be critical of the lack of consultation with the Union:
Mr Slater's objection that the administration had some years of foreknowledge of the proposed and yet had adopted the course of delaying an invitation to the Union to consider methods by which the new installation may be introduced, seems to be fairly taken.

However, the Arbitrator praised the work of the advocates on both sides, saying: "Mr Young on the one hand, and Mr Slater and Mr Baker on the other, have presented their cases ably and appear to have left out little, if any thing, of relevance."

Commenting on the Arbitrator's decision, George Slater, General Secretary of the A.P.W.U., said:

It seems that the Arbitrator agrees with much of the argument put forward by the Union, yet it is clear that his decision substantially does what the respondents asked him to do. There is no profit in an Arbitrator heaping praise on advocates and then disallowing their claims. I am sure the Union advocates would much rather have received criticism of their advocacy, but that the claims of the Union be substantially met.

The history of our Mail Branch automation dispute is a lesson for the whole trade union movement. What happens in one industry can, in these days of far-reaching technological change, happen in other industries. In our struggle, we had two main objects in view—firstly, to avoid the downgrading of a designation employed on a work function that had been subject to technological change, secondly, to ensure that male labour be continued to be used on a function which had always been carried out by males or, alternatively, equal pay granted to females undertaking this work.

With regard to the question of designation, we failed to achieve our objective. Had we continued with a course of industrial action, perhaps a different story may have been told. However, the "umpire's" decision has been given and the question is—"Where do we go from here?"

On the matter of equal pay, a most vital issue, it seems that we were defeated before we started. The government, although a party to the I.L.O. decision ratifying equal pay, is not obviously in favour of implementing it. On the other hand, we are precluded, by decision of the A.C.T.U. Congress, as we understand it, from going to arbitration on the question of the $428 basic wage differential.

Slater went on to say:

In these days of rapid technological change, some serious thought will have to be given to these matters by the trade union movement.

It is a fact of life that with many of the automated processes which are being introduced into various industries, the gate is thrown open to a flood of female labour, as in many of these instances it becomes possible for women to effectively operate the new type machinery largely because of the fact that the physical tasks associated with the former
means of production are eliminated. This Union feels that the question of automation and equal pay are not to be regarded lightly.

He concluded:

Urgent action is needed, before it is too late, to ensure that downgradings are to be avoided in the light of technological change, and that equal pay is implemented as soon as possible to avoid the inevitable flood of female labour, at cheap rates of pay, into automated industries.

The coding machines underwent a trial for a lengthy period, and during this exercise, all mail matter was manually checked, to ensure that it was correctly sorted to its final destination point. A small volume of mail matter was also damaged during the early period of the trial, but this was later corrected and the machines now function efficiently.

The main lesson to be learned from the introduction of the coding machines at Redfern is that when major policies involving technological change are introduced into sensitive areas such as mail exchanges or any other place of work in the Service, discussions must take place with the unions before their installation. Fortunately, this lesson has also been learned by the administration, who have since discussed pending changes to existing procedures with the postal and telecom unions prior to their introduction.
14

Three Historic Disputes

The Sydney Mail Room Strike of 1964

In the reporting of strikes, it is usually the "union bosses" who come in for criticism for supposedly forcing unwilling workers to go out on strike. However, the worker or the unionist is not some sort of automaton who reacts to buttons pushed by diabolic union bosses sitting in a trades hall. As any serious student or observer of Australian unionism knows, there are many strikes that the workers themselves demand, over the heads of their elected union officials. Such a strike occurred among Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union members in Sydney in 1964, when a complete stoppage of work in the Sydney Mail Branch, where over 2700 mail officers were employed, took place on Thursday, 2 April.

The genesis of the dispute was the question of a new roster—the Department had proposed altering the intermediate or afternoon shift, which commenced at 2.00 p.m. and ceased at 10.30 p.m., to commencing time of 2.30 p.m. and a finishing time of 11.00 p.m.

As a consequence, the Federal Executive of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union received a request from the New South Wales branch, asking for permission to conduct a stop-work meeting. This request was refused by a majority of the Federal Executive Councillors. However, on Thursday, 2 April, disregarding this decision, the men ceased work, which meant a complete breakdown in the sorting of mail in the largest city in Australia.

A meeting was held shortly after the men walked out, and it was decided that a further meeting should be held on the following morning, Friday, 3 April. At this meeting, a resolution was carried
reaffirming the men's opposition to the roster, and the men resolved to meet again on Monday, 6 April.

Over the weekend, the General Secretary of the A.P.W.U., George Slater, the General President, F.J. Waters, and the Secretary of the New South Wales branch, Neil Mayell, proceeded to Canberra and had unofficial discussions with the Chairman of the Public Service Board with a view to avoiding a deadlock.

On Monday, 6 April, a second mass meeting was held in the Sydney Town Hall, when the General Secretary notified the men that although he had been opposed to the Federal Executive decision not to endorse the stoppage, the Executive had ordered him to tell the men to return to duty. The men decided to disregard the Federal Executive's direction and continue with the strike.

The following day, Tuesday, 7 April, the Union's representatives again visited Canberra and consulted with two officials of the A.C.T.U., the President, Albert Monk, and the Vice-President, Jim Kenny. Subsequently, discussions took place late that night and continued until 2.40 a.m. on the morning of Wednesday, 8 April. It was claimed that during discussions with the Board, the Department and with the government, a prominent Cabinet Minister had proposed that Section 66 of the Public Service Act be invoked; that is the section dealing with dismissal of permanent officers who indulge in strikes. However, this was strongly opposed by the Director-General, Frank O'Grady, and it is understood that the Prime Minister, R.G. Menzies, had forebodings of the futility of such action. In addition, the possibility of using Section 55 of the Public Service Act, which deals with disciplinary action that the government might invoke against the men, was also canvassed.

Early in the morning of Wednesday, 8 April, an agreement was drawn up between the Postmaster-General, Alan Hulme, the President of the A.C.T.U., the General President of the Amalgamated Workers' Union and the General Secretary. Clause 1 of the agreement read:

To supplement the regular full-time staff, the Union agrees that labour (male and female) will be employed on a regular short shift basis within the Intermediate Shift only, and the Union and Department will make an immediate approach to the Arbitrator to determine the rates.

The Department had stated that it had at present a shortage of 108 mail officers in the Sydney Mail Exchange, and that despite intensive advertising in the press, and on radio and television, they were not able to secure labour. (Part-time labour in the post office is a feature of employment in a number of European countries and also in other sections of the Australian Post Office.) The Union's
objective was to obtain, before the Public Service Arbitrator, equal pay for the female casuals, and also a higher hourly rate than at present prescribed. The Union also submitted to the Department that as soon as full-time labour became available, part-time labour would be withdrawn. This was agreed to in Clause 2 of the agreement:

The Department will reconstruct the roster to provide for 50 per cent of the regular full-time staff completing the Intermediate Shift at 10.30 p.m. and 50 per cent at 11.00 p.m. When labour is engaged under item (1), a new appropriate roster will be constructed after consultation with the A.C.T.U. and A.P.W.U.

The Postmaster-General and the Director-General indicated that as conditions improved, it would be possible for a complete review of the staffing of the intermediate shift to take place. This would be closely watched by the Federal Executive, the New South Wales branch and the A.C.T.U., and every effort would be made to reduce the number of intermediate shifts that were to be worked in accordance with the prevailing conditions at any given point of time.

In regard to the hours of duty on the intermediate shift, an important concession had been made by the government. It was felt that with the endorsement of the agreement, further improvements in the ratio of shifts would be brought about.

Clause 3:
To clear the backlog of mail, Mail Branch workers will work all reasonable overtime and the Department will re-engage trained staff normally engaged for the Christmas rush.

The Union agreed to this provision because it was in the public interest, and those workers employed would only be employed until such time as the backlog of mail arising from the dispute had been cleared. Such staff were to be employed on the prescribed rates hitherto agreed by the Public Service Board and the Union, without foregoing the Union's right to argue a case for equal pay for equal work. They would be recruited into the Union and would receive full union entitlements and would work under all conditions that had been obtained by the Union. There was to be no breaking down of conditions already enjoyed by the regular staff by such employment.

Clause 4:
Having regard to the foregoing, the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, will, exercising his powers under the penalty provisions of Section 55 of the Public Service Act, severely reprimand the permanent officers. A similar severe reprimand will be administered to the temporary employees concerned. On this occasion, the future service
of temporary employees will be subject to no break in continuity because of the stoppage. For their part, the A.C.T.U. and the A.P.W.U. will not support any stoppage of work on any industrial issue in future, but will negotiate and failing agreement, will go to arbitration. In the event of the men stopping work, the A.C.T.U. and the A.P.W.U. agree that the prescribed penalty provisions of the Act will be appropriately applied.

The Union regarded this clause in the agreement as most important, for in reality, it meant that while important industrial unions were being fined in the Arbitration Court almost daily for unauthorized stoppages by their members, no penalty of any kind was imposed upon A.P.W.U. members. This was the first time a union had succeeded in having penal clauses in the Public Service Act withdrawn by the government.

This condition, yielded grudgingly by the government, was one of the most significant decisions in the history of the trade-union movement in this country. The Union was to be congratulated on its achievement and its steadfastness of purpose. In essence, the officers of the A.C.T.U. and the General President and General Secretary of the Union had said: “We oppose the penal clauses and we will never condone their use against members of the Union when actions of the members have the endorsement of the A.C.T.U. and the Federal Executive of the Union.”

Whilst the policy of the Union has always been one of conciliation and arbitration, the Agreement provided that should it be necessary at any time for industrial action to be taken, a firm formula had been laid down in which the approval of the A.C.T.U. and the Federal Executive had to be obtained in the first instance. This in no way affected a decision that might be taken to use the industrial strength of the Union to protect unwarranted attacks by the Department on conditions, on members’ rights, or on the Union’s obligations to its membership.

Clause 5:
A joint statement to be made by the Postmaster-General and the President of the A.C.T.U. covering the above terms of settlement.

On Thursday, 9 April 1964, a meeting was convened by the Federal Executive and held in the Trades Hall to explain the terms of settlement of the Sydney Mail Branch dispute to the members concerned. The following resolution was carried at the meeting:

The agreement arrived at between the A.P.W.U. and the A.C.T.U. and the government be endorsed, and this meeting of Mail Branch delegates assembled before the Federal Executive wishes to declare:

1. We reaffirm the unanimous endorsement of the terms of settlement,
given to our Federal Secretary at yesterday’s Town Hall meeting, and congratulate all those responsible for reaching a satisfactory settlement of the roster dispute.

2. We resolve that on returning to our Sections, we will work to clarify the questions disturbing some members and be vigilant against those who would disrupt the unity which we have demonstrated in this dispute.

3. We request a summoned meeting of Mail Officers on Wednesday, April 22nd, to hear a more detailed explanation of the terms of settlement from the General Secretary, and that a full explanation be drawn up by the state and federal officials, explaining each clause.

Later in the morning of Wednesday, 8 April, a second meeting had been held in the Sydney Town Hall at which the decisions of the union officials were endorsed, and a return to work was decided upon. However, subsequently there was a storm of protest, because it was claimed that all the details of the agreement entered into by the Union and the Department and the government were not fully reported upon, and this caused considerable controversy on the job. One of the principal factors emerging from the agreement was the engagement of part-time staff, which, to some extent, overcame the objections of the men relating to the shifts that they were complaining about. However, the engagements of part-time staff later also created a number of problems that were not foreseen at the time of the agreement.

Clearly, one of the after-effects of the dispute was that more nails had been driven into the coffin of Section 66 of the Public Service Act. Although the union officials who signed the agreement on 8 April came in for considerable criticism in respect of their action, nevertheless, it is well to point out that the alternatives proposed by the government provided for disciplinary action to be taken against those on strike.

There was considerable pressure being applied on the Director-General of the Postmaster-General’s Department and the Public Service Board to fine the permanent officers who were involved in the stoppage. To that extent, the action of the union officials averted any such issue of penalties, and when, in fact, penalties were subsequently notified to permanent officers in 1967 on the Saturday-closing issue, they were subsequently withdrawn because of union pressures.

To sum up, two important gains had been achieved: firstly, rosters would be reviewed and, secondly, no monetary penalty or loss of privileges would be inflicted upon the union membership. (A maximum fine of £54 000 could have been imposed if each of the 2700 mail officers had been fined £20, as was prescribed under the
United Mass Action

THE ONLY WAY

ARBITRATION IS A FARCE

Once again we postal workers are taking mass industrial action in support of our wage claims... claims that are just and absolutely necessary in order that we can live like human beings.

Life has again taught us that arbitration is a farce; that it is a device to stall off the workers, keep their wages pegged at low levels and to prevent them from struggling for their just rights.

We must smash through all this and we have the power to do it, the power of our united strength.

The millionaire press has already started to sing its hackneyed song that we are “holding the public up to ransom...” No mention, of course, that it is precisely the decisions of the so-called “umpires” of arbitration which cause the disruption of the vital postal service.

The public is not fooled by this cheap talk. Most of the public are working people like ourselves and they know that our cause is just and that it is their cause. All sections of the working people are struggling for higher wages so that they can make ends meet. A victory for us cannot do anything else but pave the way for general wage rises. This is what the foreign-dominated Gorton government is terrified of.

We are being constantly told that we live in an “affluent society”... Affluent for whom? Certainly not for the workers.

A glance at the financial pages of the millionaire press any day of the week will tell you the real story. It is the rich minority class that owns the factories, mines, ships and land that are “affluent”. Their profits have never been greater. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

In every dispute with “authority” we are taught the simple truth that talking gets us nowhere. Mass action is decisive. It is only when we use our industrial strength that we get anywhere.

We should all bear this well in mind as we enter this latest struggle. Our cause is just; it is the cause of the ordinary working people. We don’t have to spell out our position. Everyone knows that wages are falling further and further behind living costs.

The time for talking has passed. We look to the organised trade union movement, especially the central ACTU apparatus, to give us support. It is generally accepted in the trade union movement that arbitration is the instrument of the class that exploits and stands opposed to the workers. If the whole trade union movement said with one voice “enough” then arbitration would crumble. There is no power which can stop the united action of the working people.

We have every confidence in our members. We know that they will back action in support of their just claims.

We intend to take action, and keep taking it until we have won what is justly ours.

Let us go forward as one and we will win — quickly and decisively.

G. SLATER,
General Secretary, A.P.W.U.

Authorised by G. Slater for the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union of Australia.
Commonwealth Public Service Act.)

The strike was a memorable one. Satisfaction had been obtained, and although some discordant elements endeavoured to upset the terms of settlement, the majority of mail officers took the common-sense view that this was a union victory of unprecedented importance.

By 1966, following the administration's attempt to introduce automatic sorting machines into the Redfern Mail Exchange, industrial relations between the Public Service Board, the Postmaster-General's Department and the unions had deteriorated. As a result, the Federal Executive of the Union determined that a letter should be sent to the Public Service Board, the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, the Postmaster-General, Alan Hulme, and the President of the A.C.T.U., Albert Monk. The letter read:

Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union
228 Clarendon Street,
East Melbourne, C.2
29th March 1966

Dear Sir,

Adverting to the terms of settlement agreed upon the 8th April 1964, between the Postmaster-General, the Hon. A.S. Hulme, the President of the A.C.T.U., Mr A.E. Monk, the Federal President of the A.P.W.U., Mr F.J. Waters, and the Federal Secretary of the A.P.W.U., Mr G. Slater, we hereby give notice of our intention to withdraw from the agreement arrived at on the above date, namely the 8th April 1964, because we feel that the Postmaster-General and the Public Service Board have shown bad faith in not consulting with this Union on the details associated with the introduction of electronic coding machines and thereby creating the possibilities for industrial action.

Yours faithfully,

[signed] [signed]
F.J. Waters G. Slater
General President General Secretary-Treasurer

Saturday Closing in the Australian Post Office, 1967

A campaign to bring about Saturday closing in the Australian Post Office, in relation specifically to counter staffs, had been a cardinal feature of union policy for many years. Deputations had been sent to successive Postmasters-General without any significant gains being accomplished.

As a result of negotiations that were initiated in July 1966, the
W. Dolhegvy

H.C. Baker, Assistant Secretary, New South Wales Branch

R.F. Power, Secretary of the Western Australian Branch
Director-General, T.A. Housley, over a period of time, examined the position of the Post Office staff on Saturdays and, ultimately, a submission was made to the government that post offices should close at 11.00 a.m. However, Cabinet overrode this submission and, as a consequence, considerable feeling was engendered amongst post office staffs as a result. Off-duty meetings were held in all capital cities protesting against the government's flat-footed policy. The meetings laid down directions to the various unions, stating that if the government would not give a sympathetic response to their demands for a five-day week in post offices, stop-work action would be taken on Saturday, 1 July 1967.

Although further conferences took place with the Acting Postmaster-General and departmental officials, no common ground was reached, and consequently the proposed stoppage took place on 1 July. In the metropolitan areas in the various capital cities, the call for stopwork action was successful; 98 per cent of the staff did, in fact, stop work. In country areas, where communications were somewhat difficult between the unions and union members, a number of staff did not heed the unions' call.

Following the stoppage, the government then used Section 55 of the Commonwealth Public Service Act, which is primarily designed to deal with minor disciplinary breaches, and fined all permanent officers the sum of $4. Temporary and exempt employees were not fined, but were given a warning, since the Act did not provide for any such penalty to be imposed. A temporary employee who commits a misdemeanor is either reprimanded, warned or dismissed, and as the staffing position was so critical at that time, the administration was not likely to cut off its life-blood by sacking workers who were irreplaceable.

In this situation, the government inflicted a double penalty: firstly, the loss of pay because of the men's absence from work on the Saturday, and then the use of Section 55 to impose a disciplinary fine. This produced a very strong reaction amongst the staff and, as a consequence, the A.C.T.U., which handled the dispute, arranged for a conference to take place between the A.C.T.U., the unions, the Postmaster-General and the Minister for Labour and National Service. No substantial progress was made at the conference and it seemed fairly clear that, although the government had no immediate intention of collecting the fines that were imposed, these would be held over the heads of the membership in a bid to intimidate workers to agree to the government's policy.

A disquieting feature of the imposition of these fines was that junior postal workers, who received very low salaries, and female
workers, who received 75 per cent of the male basic wage, all incurred the same penalty as adult males. Clearly, there was no justice in this type of penalty. So far as the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union was concerned, it regarded the lifting of the fines as a central issue in the dispute and argued that if such fines were to be imposed on postal workers who stopped work in a just cause, then, in essence, they could be considered as being downgraded to second-class citizens, and this would not be tolerated.

Following the stoppage of 1 July, a series of conferences took place with the Public Service Board and the Postmaster-General's Department and in which the A.C.T.U. also participated. The stoppage undoubtedly had brought the goal of Saturday closing nearer to realization. The first tangible result was the decision by the Department and the Public Service Board to close a limited number of post offices in the capital cities and large provincial towns, and secondly, to restrict the trading hours of other post offices. With the closing of some post offices in the capital cities, the Postmaster-General's Department provided that if a post office were closed, that an adjoining office would remain open, so that the public would not be greatly inconvenienced.

As a result of continued pressure by the unions, the government, through the Public Service Board, announced that the fines imposed for the stoppage on 1 July, would not be collected, the legal fiction being that the fines in fact had not been imposed, but only notified to the permanent officers involved. Be that as it may, the government clearly had had second thoughts in respect to the wisdom of the imposition of such fines and was retreating from its original stand.

Subsequently, the demand from postmen to have Saturday mail deliveries eliminated was also pressed by the Union. However, it was not until the advent of the Whitlam Labor government that post office staffs were no longer required to work on a Saturday. The Department and the Union then entered into negotiations for the elimination of Saturday mail deliveries. This took effect early in 1974, and as a consequence, the unions whose members were engaged on counter duties, instructed their members not to present themselves for Saturday duty. The main drive in this connection came from the Union of Postal Clerks and Telegraphists. The important factor, however, was that, overall, Saturday work in so far as opening of post offices is concerned, has been eliminated, except in those offices where mails are required to be received and despatched.

The elimination of Saturday mail deliveries was not without its problems, due to the reduction in the take-home pay of the postmen.
Subsequently, negotiations were instituted with the Department and the Board that resulted in the restoration of much of the income that had been lost because of no Saturday attendance by postmen.

One factor that no doubt impelled the Department to agree to the elimination of Saturday mail deliveries and the closing of post offices, was the enormous loss that was being shown by keeping post offices open on this day.

Now that Saturday closing and the elimination of Saturday mail deliveries have been facts of life for over three years, there have been no tangible ill-effects so far as the general public is concerned. Clearly, there is a world-wide trend in this direction.

The March of Progress sometimes almost comes to a halt, or the advance appears to be very small indeed, but the important conclusion to draw is that the early members of the Union who had the wisdom to project a number of the policies that today have been achieved, have, in fact, been justified by history.

Mail Drivers’ Dispute, 1968

The year 1968 witnessed the longest stoppage of work ever seen in the Australian Post Office. The wheels of the Australian postal machine came to a virtual halt for almost two weeks in January 1968. The strike had its origin in the failure of the Commonwealth Public Service Board to adjust salary claims of mail-van drivers.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, whose membership includes mail-van drivers, lodged a claim for increased rates of pay for the drivers on the 4 August 1967. The rates sought were an increase of $122 per annum on the minimum and $175 per annum on the maximum. The Public Service Board rejected the union claims at a conference on 12 December. The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union representatives at the conference, F.J. Waters, General President, and G. Slater, General Secretary, warned the Public Service Board of the serious nature of its ill-considered decision.

Following upon the rejection of their wage claims, mass meetings of mail-van drivers were held in all states, to consider a petition signed by 130 drivers in Brisbane that a “work-to-regulations campaign” (work-to-rule) should be commenced immediately and should last until wage justice was obtained for the drivers. Mass meetings in all the capital cities and large provincial centres where mail drivers were employed endorsed the Queensland proposal and a work-to-regulations campaign began forthwith.
Although the P.M.G. Department asserted that the work-to-rule had a negligible impact on the flow of mail, it was certainly having a considerable effect and, as the regulations were being followed implicitly by the drivers, it was clear that it was hurting departmental operations. Events culminated in the dismissal of a driver at the Redfern Mail Exchange, Australia’s largest mail exchange, in the evening of 10 January 1968, whereupon all Sydney mail drivers stopped work. This action was followed by a similar stoppage in Melbourne and Perth, and on the following day, Brisbane and Adelaide drivers followed suit and also stopped work. Drivers in Hobart and Launceston joint their colleagues on strike early in the following week.

Despite an offer to the government by the leadership of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union through its General Secretary, George Slater, to confer, with a view to bringing about an early settlement of the dispute, the government dug in its toes and refused to come to the conference table. Instead, it decided to call for what was euphemistically called “volunteer labour”, or what is generally known to the trade-union movement as “scab labour”.

“Scab” drivers were recruited mainly from the ranks of students, and some workers who were on recreation leave. These “volunteers” did not accomplish very much for the Department, for mail officers at all mail exchanges in the capital cities refused to handle “black mail”. Meanwhile, following the lead given by the Trades and Labour Council of Queensland, which gave unqualified support to the men on strike, a meeting was called of the Council’s Disputes Committee that resulted in the Council and its key unions, namely the Transport Workers’ Union, the Australian Railways Union, the Waterside Workers’ (dockers or longshoremen) and the Storemen and Packers’ Union declaring mail delivered by scab labour “black” and refusing to handle same.

Similar action was taken by the unions on a federal basis throughout Australia. Large unions such as the Miscellaneous Workers’ Union also joined the fray. The government, through the Postmaster-General’s Department, had to learn the hard way. Trucks driven by scab labour, when conveying mail to airports, railway terminals and wharves, were not allowed to unload, or to collect incoming mail. The assistance of these key unions in the dispute cannot be overestimated. For example, in Queensland and other states, drivers of petrol trucks were instructed by their union, the Transport Workers’ Union, not to deliver gasoline products to P.M.G. installations where scab labour was being used, or to airlines handling “black” mail.

After scab motor drivers were employed, mail officers in all
capital cities and large provincial centres refused to load or unload the mail delivered by these trucks and, as a result, members of the permanent staff were suspended and temporary staff were dismissed. These suspensions and sackings took place in all states, though in Sydney and Melbourne, mail exchange members anticipated the departmental action by walking off the job en masse.

Postmen at post offices and postal depots refused to handle "black" mail collected by scab drivers and also received the same treatment as the mail officers, being either suspended or sacked.

The government then decided to recruit scab labour to sort mail in the various mail exchanges. Again, the bulk of those offering were students, though it can be said to the credit of other university students that they picketed the Post Office recruiting offices, to persuade their fellow students from scabbing. The National Union of University Students in Sydney and the Melbourne University and Monash University Labour Clubs in Victoria publicly appealed to students not to act as strike-breakers.

The government also threatened to establish regional mail centres, to enable people to collect and post mail, but all these schemes were to no avail.

The Federal Executive of the A.P.W.U. was summoned to Canberra and was in almost continuous session. Frank Waters, the General President, had suffered a minor stroke over the New Year holiday, but was in consultation with federal officials by telephone. However, the dispute was capably handled by Doug Allen, General Vice-President, and the General Secretary, George Slater, and other Executive members.

The government's action in recruiting scab labour, and its provocative attitude generally in the dispute, so disgusted A.P.W.U. members in all states that there was a call for a general stoppage. In fact, lines staff stopped work in South Australia, but were advised to return to work by the Union’s Federal Executive. A.P.W.U. members in Sydney employed on counter duties also stopped work.

Throughout the dispute, the government clearly was reluctant to negotiate with the Union, to bring about a satisfactory settlement. It apparently had planned an exercise "in depth", which turned out to be extremely shallow. Despite its recruitment of scab drivers and mail officers, the mails were not being moved, due to support from several key unions.

All the government's "schemes" came unstuck, and when the President of the A.C.T.U. convened a meeting of the A.C.T.U. Interstate Executive, with a view to resolving the dispute and, in particular, preventing any further escalation, the government indicated that it was willing to confer with the A.C.T.U. and A.P.W.U. leaders. Initially, a discussion took place between Ex-
executive members of the A.C.T.U. and the A.P.W.U. Subsequently, on Sunday, 21 January 1968, a conference was held between the Minister for Labour and National Service, Leslie Bury, the Postmaster-General, Alan Hulme, departmental officers, the A.C.T.U. delegation, led by Albert Monk, and A.P.W.U. representatives, comprising George Slater, Doug Allen, Eric Burke, the Assistant Secretary of the Queensland branch, and Fred Richardson, the Secretary of the New South Wales branch.

The conference lasted until 3.00 a.m. on Monday, 22 January. The terms of settlement agreed upon were:

Noting that the dispute had been placed in the hands of the A.C.T.U. Executive, this agreement made between the Postmaster-General and the Minister for Labour and National Service and the A.C.T.U. for immediate resumption of normal work, provides:

1. All officers or employees who have been dismissed or suspended be reinstated immediately upon resumption of full normal working without loss of any entitlements, including continuity of employment for all purposes.

2. The services of the special casual staff recruited by the Postmaster-General since Friday, 12 January 1968, for the work areas in dispute, will be withdrawn on the resumption of normal work in each area concerned.

3. The P.M.G. will cease the special casual labour at the end of the last shift immediately before the shift on which the first resuming shift of A.P.W.U. starts work on a full staffing basis and from then on the special casual labour will be fully withdrawn. To overcome the present backlog of mail, resort will be had as need be to the employment of Christmas casual staff. Normal replacement and additional recruitment will proceed on same basis as before the stoppage.

4. That there be no victimization whatsoever either by the Department or the Union.

5. Immediate removal of the outside impediments (black bans etc.) to the movement of the mails.

6. It was noted that the A.C.T.U. Executive supports the A.P.W.U. in its wage claim for Transport Drivers and allied designations, namely: an increase of $122/$175 per annum.

7. It was also noted that, notwithstanding the basis of the wage claim referred to in Item 6 and in conformity with A.C.T.U. policy, this claim is not related to any claim which may be made arising from the Metal Trades Award increases and the rights of the A.P.W.U. are reserved for subsequent consideration of this matter.

8. On the resumption of normal work, the Public Service Board, in association with the Department, will immediately proceed with the conference which had been previously arranged with the A.P.W.U., to enable the Union to present its further submissions and press its views on a fair settlement of its pay claim. The Board will ensure
that there are no avoidable delays in the completion of the discussions and the issue of its decision. As the dispute has been placed in the hands of the A.C.T.U., if the A.P.W.U. is dissatisfied with the Board's decision, it will confer with the A.C.T.U. and regard will be had to the provisions of the Public Service Arbitration Act.

The terms of settlement were referred to mass meetings held on Monday, 22 January and Tuesday, 23 January 1968, and were adopted unanimously at most meetings and with overwhelming majorities where votes were taken. A return to work took place commencing at 2.30 p.m. on 23 January in most states, and at 9.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. in other states. The scabs were given a half-hour's notice prior to their dismissal, but in many instances, waiting A.P.W.U. members gave them a typical working-class farewell.

Negotiations for wage increases for mail drivers opened in Canberra on Friday, 26 January, between representatives of the Public Service Board and an A.P.W.U. delegation led by George Slater and Doug Allen. The discussions were continued on Wednesday, 31 January and Thursday, 1 February, and resulted in a complete and utter rejection of the A.P.W.U. claims, which the A.C.T.U. supported.

After consultation with the A.C.T.U., the A.P.W.U. agreed to approach the Public Service Arbitrator, in an endeavour to have the Public Service Board conform to the terms of settlement and arrive at a fair settlement of the driver's claims.

The 1968 stoppage was an historic one in that mail-van drivers, mail officers and postmen were on strike together on an Australia-wide basis for the first time. The dispute also revealed that in the future the government would need to overhaul its negotiating machinery. For example, to allow the Public Service Board to make decisions that then would have to be implemented by the Postmaster-General's Department was an anachronism and clearly showed the necessity for the P.M.G. to be divorced from Public Service Board control.

The general consensus of the Union's Federal Executive was that, if the A.P.W.U. had been able to negotiate directly with the P.M.G., with that Department having the right to make decisions, the strike could have been avoided.

Following the resumption of work, a claim for an increase in the wages of mail-van drivers was lodged with the Public Service Arbitrator on 9 February 1968. The increased rates sought were from $122 to $175 per annum. The reasons given in support of the application were:

1. The circumstances of work of the designations in question have changed to an extent which makes present rates of pay inadequate
recompense for the work performed.

2. These circumstances concern both the environment within which the work is performed and the nature of the work itself.

3. As to the environment within which the work is performed, a multiplicity of factors, including increasing traffic density, growth of traffic regulatory devices and changing traffic laws, have operated and are operating to make the exercise of the skill of driving more onerous upon the person exercising that skill.

4. As to the nature of the work itself, circumstances have changed in a manner which has operated to increase both the complexity and the volume of the work performed.

5. The levels of remuneration for comparable work in outside industry serve to confirm the conviction that the current rates of pay in question are inadequate.

6. Without limiting the organization, the applicant will submit that all factors going to the abovementioned considerations which have been presented to the Board in recent months should be re-assessed in terms of the present industrial situation.

The Public Service Arbitrator, E.A. Chambers, delivered judgment on the 3 May, and awarded an increase of $105 per annum across the board. The end result of this particular decision was that the same increase eventually flowed on to linemen drivers who were employed in the P.M.G. Some attempt was made later in the year to employ some of the "volunteers" or scabs over the Christmas period, but the Department eventually backed away from this decision, which undoubtedly would have caused another stoppage. In this regard, the Union was helped very considerably by the attitude of the Federated Assistants' Association General Secretary, Bryan McMullan, and the Postal Telecommunications Technicians' Association General Secretary, Larry Glover.
The Union Looks to the Future

During the 1960s, the Union was able to consolidate its internal strength and its position within the Labour movement. As the disruptive elements within its membership who had been associated with the "Movement", the Industrial Groups and the D.L.P. were voted out of positions, the Union was able to concentrate more fully on its industrial and political role.

By 1965, it was clear that the rank-and-file branch members of the Union were satisfied with their federal officers. The Annual Report of Commonwealth Electoral Officer for that year showed that the General President, F.J. Waters, and the General Vice-President, D.J. Allen, and the General Secretary, George Slater, had been re-elected by overwhelming majorities.

The question of amalgamation was again raised at the 1965 Annual Conference and it was resolved that arrangements would be made to hold a conference with other postal unions early in 1966, with a view to discussing amalgamation proposals.

The General President's report to the 1966 Conference stated:

On the question of amalgamation, there are some very good signs taking place. The Third and Fourth Postal Clerks and Telegraphists' Unions are to take a ballot in January 1966, on the question of amalgamation and this should then lead to another phase in which the newly amalgamated body can be brought into the ranks of the A.P.W.U. If this is able to come about, it will certainly help both these organizations and our own, for the new blood that we can draw into an amalgamated body must undoubtedly be helpful so far as the future is concerned.

However, no positive results flowed from the resolution.

With the passing of the Industrial Groups challenge and the growing realization among all unions in the Public Service that they
had similar problems, there was a greater desire among unions to pull together. The General President, in his address to the 1965 Conference, affirmed:

In respect to our relationships with other unions, I think it is safe to say that over the last couple of years our relationship and understanding with other unions has never been higher. Since there has been a change in the High Council leadership, the relationships have been extremely good. If we do not have amalgamation, we should at least have good relationships with our colleagues on the High Council, for there has been a complete transformation of attitude and thought of the High Council leadership, which is a good augury so far as the future is concerned.

There has been in effect complete understanding between the A.P.W.U. on one hand and the High Council representatives on the other in all of our dealings with the Public Service Board, which was not the position in the past.

The 1965 Annual Conference was noteworthy in that two former officials of the Union, namely N.R. Mayell, formerly the Secretary of the New South Wales branch and C.J. McGrane, the former General Secretary, were called upon to show cause why they should not be fined or expelled from membership of the Union, or disqualified from holding office in the Union, on a number of grounds. In the case of Maywell, Conference determined that he should be found guilty of the charges, and he was disqualified from holding office in the Union for a period of ten years. Maywell, at that stage, was, and still is, employed outside the postal industry.

In the case of McGrane, he was summoned to appear before the Conference on Friday, 10 December 1965, but failed to appear. The charges related to alleged financial transactions. However, the charges were laid, and it was resolved that McGrane be found guilty, and on a subsequent resolution, it was determined that he be expelled from the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union of Australia.

At the Conference, the Victorian branch had submitted an agenda item seeking the creation of the position of Arbitration and Research Officer on a federal basis. However, it took approximately two years for the position to be created. This was done at the 1967 Annual Conference, and as a result, the Research Section of the Union has been a great success since its establishment.

An agenda item forwarded by the Victorian branch sought to amend Rule 14, by altering the location of the head office of the Union from Sydney to Melbourne, in which city the headquarters of the Australian Post Office was located. The rule change was adopted by the 1965 Annual Conference and the Union's head office was transferred to Melbourne early in 1966.
Due to internal divisions within the New South Wales branch, the financial position of that branch had reached an all-time low, and as a consequence, it was unable to meet its obligations to the Federal Executive. Its delegates therefore were unable to be present at the 1965 Annual Conference; however, two representatives were present as observers. Faction fighting was the major cause of these internal divisions, which came to a head after the resignation of the Branch Secretary, Neil Mayell. Several members of the State Executive acted as Secretary following the departure of Mayell, but the Executive was evenly divided numerically, and on almost every issue that it was confronted with, the branch was not capable of making any progress, until Fred Richardson was elected Secretary on the 1965 ballot.

A committee comprising D.J. Allen, General Vice-President, E.W. Burke, Queensland Branch Councillor, and G. Slater, General Secretary, was appointed by the Federal Executive to conduct an inquiry into the New South Wales branch, which commenced on 10 May 1965. The Committee was most concerned with the existence of certain elements in the New South Wales branch who were pursuing a line of activity that could only destroy the good name of the Union.

The Annual Report of the Federal Executive for 1965 indicated that it was unfortunate that the Union was forced to cancel arrangements for the holding of the P.T.T.I. Asian Regional Conference in Australia, due to the financial position of the Union.

Some of the industrial challenges faced by the Union in the 1960s were new and resulted from the introduction of advances in technology into the postal service. Others were continuing challenges that the Union had faced throughout its history.

During 1963, following a decision of the Full Bench of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission regarding annual leave for the metal trades industry, an application was submitted to the Public Service Arbitrator, seeking an additional week’s leave for shift workers (as defined) within the Postmaster-General’s Department. Steps were also taken to acquaint other organization with the terms of the application, and several other unions had lodged an application in similar terms. The outcome of the discussions before the Arbitrator and with the Public Service Board resulted in an additional week’s leave being granted to shift workers.

Action also was taken during that same year by representation to the Public Service Board, the Treasury and also to the Postmaster-General, seeking an amendment to the Furlough Act to provide that: (a) furlough became a right instead of a privilege;
(b) the minimum period for the taking of furlough be reduced from fifteen years to ten years; (c) the minimum qualifying period upon retirement on the grounds of ill-health or age, for temporary and exempt employees, be reduced to five years, in place of the present eight years; (d) the rate of furlough be three months after ten years; (e) payment in lieu of a pro rata basis be made for service in the last year of service; and (f) payment in lieu be made to the estate of a deceased widower who died without dependants.

Resistance to the Union’s submissions by the Board was encountered; nevertheless, as a result of persistent pressures exerted by the Union and other Public Service organizations, most of the objectives of the 1963 representations are now written into the Public Service Act. Furlough has become a right instead of a privilege. (The Public Service Board originally took the view that if furlough was to be a right and not a privilege, this could affect taxation so far as an officer’s estate is concerned, but this fear has not been realized.) The minimum period for the acquisition of furlough rights is now reduced to ten years. The minimum qualifying period upon retirement on the grounds of invalidity or age or death has been reduced to four years. For temporary and exempt employees, the rate of furlough is now three months after ten years, thus bringing temporary and exempt employees’ conditions into line with those of permanent officers. And payment is now made to the estate of a deceased widower who dies without dependants.

During 1964, the Federal Executive requested the government to remove from office the Assistant to the Public Service Arbitrator, J. Birkett, on account of the unreal and unjust attitude adopted by him in making his report and recommendations to the Public Service Arbitrator. It was a matter of history that up to November 1965, the Linemen’s Award of 1964 had been varied by consent in no less than nine instances since the decision was originally handed down by Birkett. The Union learned a number of lessons from this particular case, and the first conclusion obviously was that it should hesitate in future to prosecute a wage value case before the Arbitrator. It was far better, if at all possible, to negotiate with the Public Service Board rather than go to court. It was clear that the Arbitrator did not have that degree of understanding of the industry necessary to make a reasoned judgment, hence the sorry mess that was made of the award. The Union membership stood firm when it was required to do so, and there is little doubt that the militancy displayed by members at crucial periods did help, in the long run, to achieve a better result.

One of the biggest challenges confronting the Union as far as
the Mail Exchange Branch was concerned, was the departmental
plan to introduce industrial closed-circuit television in mail branches
on a Commonwealth-wide basis, purportedly as a means of detect­
ing theft. The Union firmly opposed the scheme, taking the stand
that it considered the observation galleries to be adequate for this
purpose, and feared the possibility that use would be made of the
television circuit for supervisory purposes, despite departmental
assurances to the contrary. Subsequently, an undertaking was given
by the government that the closed-circuit television would only be
used for crime-detection purposes, and this agreement has been
observed. One of the points set out in the agreement was the right
of union officials, upon sufficient notice being given, to watch the
operation of the television cameras.

The Union's Federal Executive, in fact, had authorized stop-work
action over the issue. However, at a roof-top meeting held at the
Sydney G.P.O., and following the advice of New South Wales
branch officials, the membership decided to accept the introduction
of industrial television, having regard to the assurances given by
the Postmaster-General and the Director-General.

By 1966, there were still problems in the New South Wales
branch, the most important single branch of the Union. In his
opening address at the 1966 Conference, the General President, F.J.
Waters, said:

The position of the New South Wales branch must give serious concern
to all delegates to the Conference, and indeed to all people who have
the welfare of the organization at heart. It is not right or proper for
the Federal Executive to in any way whatsoever give directions as to
who should constitute the leadership of any branch of the Union, but
the Federal Executive have a clear obligation to ensure that each branch
functions in the manner intended by the framers of our registered rules
and constitution. It cannot be said that this has been done in New
South Wales, which is the largest branch of the Union and where the
financial position is deplorable.

I have pointed out on previous occasions that the New South Wales
branch should be giving leadership to the Union as a whole, because
New South Wales, without doubt, is the most militant state in the
Commonwealth, and in the past the branch was in the forefront of the
fight for better wages and conditions. However, it appears that most
of the time of the branch has been taken up with internal disputations
and the result is that there are staggering amounts of money owing
by members to the branch.

A more responsible attitude was subsequently adopted by New
South Wales branch officials but there has been a deal of friction
between the branch and the Federal Executive from time to time. However, this is in no way intended to denigrate the magnificent
A.C.T.U. President Bob Hawke congratulates Frank Waters after his being presented with A.P.W.U. honorary life membership certificate by George Slater, General Secretary A.P.W.U.
record of members of the New South Wales branch over the years. With the work of the Union increasing each year, it became apparent that the full-time staff of the Union would have to be increased. In 1967, attention was drawn to the fact that the federal office staff of the Union consisted of two full-time officials and, as a consequence, that insufficient time was given to the needs of the membership.

The Federal Executive’s Report to the 1967 Annual Conference summed up the situation in these words:

It is surely a ridiculous proposition that a federal office staff of two full-time officials should attend to the demands relating to occupational structures, classifications, evaluation of appropriate salary rates and conditions, and research the necessary criteria by which work levels in the different sections should be differentiated, and at the same time attend to the secretarial and procedural requirements of a national union organization covering almost 40 000 workers.

Union education was a second area where it was recognized that there was a need for a rethinking on union organization.

By 1968, there were a number of officials who were getting to the stage when, on the maximum of four years, they would be departing from the scene and others would be taking over. It was sometimes difficult to interest members in taking full-time office, for a variety of reasons, but so far as the future was concerned, those who were going to take on full-time office should be equipped with the necessary trade-union education to do so.

In Great Britain, no one would have the temerity to aspire to full-time office in any union unless he had been to a trade-union school, or unless he had passed through the Workers Education Association (W.E.A.) or had attended Ruskin College, a residential college for working men, that is attached to Oxford University. But unfortunately, with the machinery that the Menzies government originally set up in this country, and with the amendments to the Arbitration Act, access had been easier for those who were not well equipped to hold union office, and some achieved office in a number of unions. The Union had to face the fact that unless and until trade-union seminars were established, it was going to be difficult to get people of quality into positions where they would be of value as future leaders of the Union.

Fortunately, other unions appreciated this point and as a result, the A.C.T.U. appointed Peter Matthews as its first full-time Education Officer. State officials of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union co-operated with the Trades and Labour Councils and the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations, to provide week-end training courses for union members and
officials. The big break came when the Whitlam government established the Trade Union Training Authority, to redress the balance somewhat between government finance spent on management education and that spent on trade-union training.

It seemed to trade-union leaders like Albert Monk that the union movement in Australia had reached an important place in its history by 1968. The Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union had come through the wages campaign and the forty-hour campaign of the late 1940s and the "five-day-week dispute" in 1967. What was clear from this, and from the experiences of other union leaders besides Monk, was that the unions had to begin to equip themselves for the new battles of the last third of the twentieth century. As General President of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union, F.J. Waters, when opening the 1968 Annual Conference, expressed the views of many union officials:

The union movement, as Albert Monk has pointed out to us, has got to recast its thinking on the question of membership fees, because when you look at the forces that are arrayed against you today, you've got a number of academics, for example, in the Public Service Board's Arbitration Section both in Melbourne and in Canberra. We are like a featherweight going in to fight a heavyweight in the ring. Unless you are properly equipped with the finance to undertake research, well so much of our activity doesn't reach its fullest expression. I think in that respect every union has got to take a good look at itself so far as the question of membership fees is concerned. We have organizations in the Commonwealth Public Service in which some of them have a membership fee of $3 or $4 per year and obviously they can't effectively perform the duties that are entrusted to them and they are a drawback and hindrance so far as the move forward for better conditions.

The Metal Trades judgment has posed a number of problems too. It is going to become increasingly difficult in the future to get the end result of an increase in wages and to secure improvement in salaries and general conditions because of the limitations imposed by the Court in that particular decision, which means that more homework has to be done, and that is why I think the Union has taken a forward step in the employment of a Research Officer, Geoff Blunden, who, I believe, will not only acquit himself with credit and distinction, but I think his appointment will be a beacon so far as other unions of comparable size are concerned in this country. You have to use sophisticated material against people who have got the material easily accessible to them, and I refer to the government in particular, so that the Metal Trades decision not only is going to pose a number of problems, it will also make it more difficult for us to get the end result as we did in the past.

On the question of the unity of the trade-union movement, I think that the assistance rendered by the A.C.T.U. above all other things highlights the fact that no union, however important it is or however majestically it may look down from the heights, can afford to go it
alone. We can go it alone up to a certain point for a limited period of time, but the success that attended our efforts in the mail-van drivers' strike, I think substantially was brought about by the assistance that was rendered by the unions, the key unions in the field of transport, the Railways Union, the Waterside Workers', the Transport Workers' and the like who were able to exert the maximum of economic pressure upon the authorities to help us in our struggle and, though we have been critical in the old days of the role and attitude of the A.C.T.U., we have to be fair to them, in this situation they have done a particularly good job and they have done that job in this year insofar as the mail-van drivers' dispute is concerned on the one hand and, of course, the continuous action in respect to the five-day week. The trade-union movement has to be united.

So far as we are concerned, we've got to ensure that the struggle in the future is towards amalgamation. I think we have neglected that aspect of our work. There hasn't been any real attempt by this union to get into the day-to-day struggle to bring about amalgamation. Those of us who know the situation by moving around from post office to post office know that the average member of other organizations is more or less pleading for one single union to be operating in the Service.

Sometimes you will hear some people who try to set up break-away movements. They might endeavour to, say, get the linemen out of the A.P.W.U. or some foolish notion of that idea. They wouldn't hit the deck at all if it is really put to the test because the urge is for unity. The only way that we can achieve unity is by amalgamation. I don't believe in the principle of federation. I think it only gives the other organizations that want to lean back in the breeching and let the A.P.W.U. bring up the heavy artillery on all occasion.

When amalgamation of the A.P.W.U. was brought about in 1925, amalgamation fever was in the air in those days. At that particular stage, the technicians, or the postal electricians, as they were known in those days, carried a ballot for amalgamation, but, of course, the question was loaded. "Are you in favour of amalgamation if the majority of the unions in the service favour it?" Well, they didn't, but the technicians did, or the P.E.U., as they were then known. I think that we have got to get down to this serious matter rather than worrying about getting into federations. I think that we should, within the limits possible, strive to bring about an amalgamation on a real basis within the next couple of years.

In England, successive Postmasters-General have deplored the multiplicity of unions in the Post Office. In fact, they have told the postal unions in that country that there are far too many unions and that they are bewildered and confused by the nature of the many different representations that are being made, and as of now, I think that with the establishment of the corporation in England, they have reached this stage when virtually only four unions that will constitute a Post Office Council will receive the recognition of the authorities, that is the Union of Post Office Workers, U.P.W., the Post Office Engineering Union of Great Britain, P.O.E.U., Managements' Staffs Association and the
The arguments for amalgamation are as solid as they were in 1968, or in 1925. Perhaps the pragmatism of unions in the 1980s will achieve what the ideologies of some far-sighted union leaders of the 1920s sought.

It was not only the question of Union organization that concerned the branches, executives and conferences of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union during the 1960s, it was the organization of the Post Office itself.

The setting-up of a Post Office Corporation to control the destiny of the Postmaster-General's Department in Great Britain was watched with interest in Australia. It seemed inescapable that the same plan would have to be adopted in this country. Clearly, the activities of the Department were such that there was need for specialist control of its operations; there was no member on the Public Service Board who had any direct post office experience.

The question of the Post Office being divorced from the Public Service Board and the establishment in its stead of a public corporation had been discussed at several conferences. It was again raised at the 1966 Annual Conference, when the resolution was carried "that Annual Conference declares that the Post Office should be transformed into a Public Corporation similar to the proposed Corporation in the United Kingdom."

It was to take the election of a federal Labor government in 1972 to achieve this goal.

Because A.P.W.U. officials were conscious of the importance of international union affiliations, they were able to observe at first-hand developments in the post offices and postal unions in other countries. One of the principal factors that Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union officials discussed with overseas post office unions was that of industrial disputes. There was, in fact, a great deal of common ground that language, distance and culture could not alter. In 1968, Frank Waters told the Annual Conference of the Union:

There is hardly a country in Europe that hasn't had a dispute in the post office in which the unions have been out in strike either for a limited period or for a protracted period of time. In places like France and Italy, they have at least one strike a year in the post office, and the Japanese with their spring and winter offensives, and so on. They also are continually engaged in struggle, which leads me to the point that
those of us when we joined the Post Office many years ago, to think that we would live to see the day when there would be, in fact, industrial action taking place, was something in the nature of a pipe-dream. I don't think any of us believed at that stage in history that we would ever see that taking place. Not that I suggest that we should indulge in strike action at the drop of a hat or hit our heads up against unnecessary brick walls. That must be the reserve powers that the unions have vested in them to use when all other means of conciliation fail.

Let us be clear on the question of conciliation: we haven't got very much from the other side in the last twelve months. We can say without gilding the lily that all of the disputes that have taken place have been as a result of provocation of the Department and/or the government, and some of those more recent happenings could easily have been avoided had there been some element of common sense displayed by the Department, who seem to have it as the forefront of their objectives to bring about as much industrial discord as is possible.

On the question of international affiliations, we had an obligation so far as the Asian sector was concerned, to try and help develop the less-fortunate people in that part of the world; the main problem confronting the world today, of course, is the question of food. Many people in Asia do go hungry; they don't get enough to eat. Postal workers and other government employees are underpaid and they should be given all the facilities possible to build up strong unionism in this area, and we in the more favoured sector of this part of the world, I think, will have to help them in a financial sense.

Our international affiliations have paid off. Our standing is good throughout the world; we are able to get information from country to country on the different aspects of life and different problems confronting us because, fundamentally, the same problems confront postal workers all over the world. There isn't any great difference; it's only a question of substance when it is all boiled down, and the governments, of course, have taken up a position where, if they had their way, the post office and government employment would be low-wage employment on a greater scale than is at present the case.
The Wages of the Workers

The activities of the year 1968 reached an anti-climax with a Mail Branch dispute over the employment of Christmas casuals. The dispute developed when the Department misinterpreted the terms of settlement associated with a similar dispute that had occurred the previous January, whereupon it was agreed that "scab" labour would be withdrawn and not re-employed in future.

On 7 November, representatives of the A.C.T.U. and the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union conferred with the Minister for Labour and National Service and the Postmaster-General. The A.P.W.U. representatives proposed that:

(a) The Postmaster-General's Department shall not allocate for employment people who were volunteers during the strike in January 1968.

(b) People who stayed on the job during the current stoppage and who were employed in designations covered by the A.P.W.U. should be transferred to other work areas not covered by this Union.

The response of the Ministers was that these proposals were unacceptable to the government, but as it had agreed previously, the matters in dispute should be considered by the A.C.T.U. Executive on the 11 and 12 November 1968. An undertaking was given on behalf of the Post Office that in employing persons who were volunteers in the January dispute, preferences would not be given to those persons, but selections would be made on the basis of merit in relation to the casual staff required for Christmas 1968.

A further conference was convened on 18 November and concluded with a statement being issued that was acceptable to the parties concerned. In part, the statement read:
The trade union submitted that the special January stoppage voluntary casual labour be withdrawn. The Ministers re-affirmed government policy of preserving the employment rights of all persons, but that in order to resolve the present practical issue involving the special stoppage volunteer casual labour now in training, or commitments made for their engagement, it was agreed that these people may be placed, at Christmas casual rates, in areas of employment in the P.M.G. Department other than in Mail Branches, and other significant areas of A.P.W.U. employment.

The A.C.T.U. Executive strongly condemned the decision of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in rejecting the trade unions' claim for a primary wage increase and restoration of the real basic wage, with provisions for quarterly adjustments.

The Union was also heavily involved in negotiations and arbitration action in respect to the introduction of equal pay. The General Secretary appeared with R.J. Hawke, the A.C.T.U. Research Officer, before the Commission in the matter. The Commonwealth government intervened in the hearing and announced that it was not opposed to the principle of equal pay, provided that four main conditions were met.

(i) The work performed by females must be the same or substantially the same as that performed by males under the same award.
(ii) The females must perform the same range and volume of work as males.
(iii) Females must perform the work under the same conditions as males.
(iv) The work must not be work essentially or usually performed by females. However, a classification may qualify for the equal pay if it is one in which there is a corresponding classification in which males are employed.

A Joint Bench, in 1969, comprising Justices Moore and Williams and Commissioner Gough, with the Public Service Arbitrator, E.A. Chambers, rejected the Union's claim for the elimination of the old 25 per cent differential. Instead, the Joint Bench decided, without any specific application by the unions or the employers, on a very limited approach by adopting, in the main, the submissions of the Commonwealth government, and specifying conditions for a three-year phasing toward equal pay for certain females, provided that they were performing the same work normally performed by a male, and that they were doing the same range and volume of work as male employees.

Discussions were held between the A.C.T.U. and the government in respect to the introduction and application of the principle of
equal pay to the Union's female members. With the advent of the New Year came the introduction and application of the principle of “equal pay” for the A.P.W.U. female membership: As from 1 October 1969, female workers were to receive 85 per cent of the male rate; from 1 January 1970, 90 per cent; from 1 January 1971, 95 per cent; and from 1 January 1972, 100 per cent. Despite the limited scope of its application to industry generally, this was recognized as a radical step forward, and marked a new stage in the struggle of women for quality.

Negotiations for wage increases for the Mail Branch and the postal section of the Union were a feature of the Union's work during 1969.

On 10 December 1968, the Union had filed an application with the Public Service Arbitrator for a 25 per cent increase in the salaries of members directly engaged in providing mail and postal services. The Union indicated at that time that it would also be pressing claims for other members of the Union, particularly those who had a chose working relationship with fellow members in the mail postal area. However, at the end of December, the Board and the Department indicated their intention of introducing a new Mail/Postal Branch structure, which would broad-band or compress and would integrate the postal grades so as to comprise thirteen instead of the previous twenty designations.

The hearing, therefore, was being conducted in the context of a new structure. The Union emphasized that this new structure had been introduced at a time of changed circumstances in community wage standards. A detailed comparative wage justice exhibit was prepared and submitted to the Arbitrator that documented the Metal Trade increases, as well as many other increased wage rates in the community. Supplementing this, the Union's Research Section undertook to prepare and provide evidence of a “work-value” nature in which detailed descriptions were given of the duties and skills employed by the many designations.

Almost ten years had passed since the last Arbitration work-value inquiry into the mail postal area of work. A complete and documented case needed to be prepared, in order to do justice to the skill and the work-value of this section of the membership; nevertheless, the Union stressed, very early in the proceedings, that the hearing should proceed as quickly as possible, and that a serious effort should be made to correct the many anomalies that had crept into the new structure.

On 8 July 1969, a conference took place in Canberra between the postal unions and the Public Service Board, at which the Chairman, Sir Frederick Wheeler, reviewed an earlier offer of salary increases affecting the postal unions. The Amalgamated
Postal Workers' Union was critical of the offer, which had two quite different aspects. Firstly, an increase of 4 per cent had been offered for those workers at the bottom of the structure, whereas increases of 10 per cent had been offered for Postal Clerks, Postal Officers Grade 3 and all other postal designations higher in the structure.

After details of the offer had been examined by the unions present, the General President of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union stated that the offer was a most disappointing one and that, in particular, it was regretted the Board had not offered a distinctly higher amount for mail officers on the maximum award rate. The Chairman’s response was that the offer represented the Board's estimate of the market situation as far as the relative skills were concerned.

During the Arbitration hearing on 15 July, the Union's Research Officer, Geoff Blunden, asked the representative of the Board whether the 4 per cent offer was meant to be a full and complete up-to-date assessment of work-value, and was told that the offer was in fact “in full response” to the Union’s claim. The Deputy Public Service Arbitrator was told by the Union that it was completely and fundamentally unjust for the Board to make a 4 per cent offer for the majority of A.P.W.U. mail/postal members, when a 10 per cent increase had been given to the “clerical area” in the Post Office and elsewhere in the Public Service. The effect of the discrepancy would be to give a 4 per cent increase to mail officers on the maximum, but a 10 per cent increase to senior mail officers; and in the post offices, this would have had the effect of giving 4 per cent increases to Postal Officers Grade 2 and 10 per cent to Postal Officers Grade 3, who would be working beside mail officers on the counter. In response, the Deputy Arbitrator stated that he was unwilling to grant an interim increase before the end of the hearing.

Subsequent to the Board's offer of 8 July, and the majority decision of the branches, that the salary offer was inadequate, the Board filed an application to vary all awards, to incorporate its offer in amended awards. The Union lodged an objection following a unanimous vote of the Federal Executive.

On 19 August 1969, mail postal members were awarded, without prejudice, increases by the Deputy Arbitrator. In effect, instead of the Union “consenting” to the 4 per cent offer made for mail officers and certain other designations, the Arbitrator had awarded the increases proposed by the Board, and at the same time acknowledged the right of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union to continue its arguments for higher salaries. The salary increases determined ranged from $96 to $356 per annum and did benefit
F.J. Waters, and George McCarthy the first full-time Secretary of the Postal Linemens Union in New South Wales

Albert Monk former President of the A.C.T.U. and Frank Waters at the retirement function to Frank Waters, Melbourne November 1973
all members within the postal structure. The increases were made retrospective to 17 July.

At a later conference of the parties in the arbitration case, the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union expressed grave concern at the delay in the arbitration timetable. It was expected that the Public Service Board’s submissions would be made between 25 and 28 November and would possibly conclude between 2 and 5 December.

Despite concern expressed over the timetable, the detailed work-value evidence of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union had been substantially completed by the end of July. During the early part of the year, a meeting had taken place between representatives of the Public Service Board, the Department and the Union, to discuss other matters associated with the new postal mail structure. The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union submitted that as the principle of adult wage rates had been conceded for juniors aged 18½ years and who had been employed for fifteen months, that Assistants Grade 1 employed in the circulation and on motor cycle duties, and as Clerical Assistants Grade 1, should be paid the adult rate. The Board would not agree to extend the proposal of the payment of adult wages to Junior Clerical Assistants Grade 1, since these employees were not part of the Post Office area. The Board and the Department agreed that the designation of Assistant Grade 1 was not an appropriate designation for employees on motor cycle duties and that this issue was being examined.

The 1969 Annual Conference opened in Melbourne on 10 November. The General President noted in his opening address:

There is little doubt that this case has amply justified the appointment of Mr G. Blunden as Research Officer. Mr Blunden has not only justified his appointment in a material sense, but has added strength to the Union’s bargaining position when we have been in conference with the Public Service Board, particularly their Arbitration Section. It seems certain that the facilities of the Research Section will have to be increased because of the imperative necessity of having well documented briefs for presentation to the Public Service Arbitrator, the Department and the Public Service Board.

On the international front, the 1969 Federal Executive Annual Report showed that a delegation of the Communication Workers’ Union of the U.S.S.R., headed by the President, Madame Alexandra Kanaeva, had visited Australia, and that the delegation was well received during visits to various Post Office centres in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. The 1969 Annual Conference also made a presentation to delegate E.W. Burke, who was attending his last Conference.
A significant decision made at the 1969 A.C.T.U. Congress was the election of R.J. (Bob) Hawke as the Council’s President, succeeding Albert Monk. The A.P.W.U. delegation had supported Hawke and there was total agreement at the Union’s 1969 Annual Conference with this vote.

The 1969 national wage decision, which provided a paltry 3 per cent increase in award wages for a minimum increase of $3.50 per week, was greatly resented by the Union. The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union did not agree that it was sufficient to meet the needs of the Australian workforce. As a consequence, the A.C.T.U. Interstate Executive considered reports from its Research Officer, who had made a detailed study of the analysis of the figures in relation to the 1970 wage claim, and decided that a claim be lodged with the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission for an increase of $9 per week in the total wage rates for males and females. It argued also for an increase in the minimum wage by the same amount, with an automatic adjustment for the Consumer Price Index applied to all wage rates.

On the other hand, one of the more significant administrative achievements accomplished during the year was the agreement on the part of the Commonwealth Treasury to co-operate with the Union in implementing a scheme for the “deduction of union contributions from salary”. This principle had been fought for many years by the Union and other Public Service organizations. The deduction of union dues from salaries has been an unqualified success.

In 1970, the A.C.T.U. decided to appoint a full-time Education Officer in the person of Peter Matthews, a move that the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union endorsed wholeheartedly. Matthews had had a wide range of experience in the industrial-relations field. An Oxford graduate with degrees in Politics, Philosophy and Economics, in 1958, Matthews had joined the Trade Union Congress of the United Kingdom. From 1966, he occupied a position as Lecturer in the Department of Adult Education at the University of Sydney, and during this period, he initiated “day-release” education courses for unionists. (Matthews is now head of the Trade Union Training Centre, which was established by the Whitlam government.) The 1970 Annual Conference also determined that the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union agree to participate in the postal course of the A.C.T.U. Education Scheme, and accordingly the sum of $500 was paid to the A.C.T.U. for this purpose.

In a period during which the resources of trade unions had been extensively occupied in attempts to maintain wage and salary levels
Two trade unionists at work, Frank Waters speaking and W.K. (Doc) Spence President of the Queensland Branch of the A.P.W.U., in the chair, at a stop-work meeting in the Brisbane Trades Hall
in balance with inflationary pressures, it would have been quite easy to overlook the vital need to concentrate effort on improving some of the general conditions of service. Over some years, the Union had had nailed to its masthead the objective of securing four weeks' leave for all its members.

The existing provision for three weeks' annual leave was introduced into the General Conditions of Service Determination number 32 of 1956 as varied for the Public Service at the time of Federation. It was an Act of Parliament that recognized and indeed gave effect to the principle of paid annual holidays, and at the same time, it set a standard for employers elsewhere to follow. Nevertheless, regardless of how radical this provision may have been at the time, the fact remained that it had not been altered since that time, and as a consequence, the provisions had fallen out of line with community standards.

Despite repeated representation to the federal government—to Prime Minister Menzies in 1965; to Prime Minister Holt in 1966; and to Prime Minister Gorton in 1969—it was hardly surprising that when the unions' claim for an extra week's leave was rejected by the Cabinet, the Prime Minister of the day refrained from attempting to defend the indefensible. In twenty-three years, the Liberal–Country Party government failed to produce one piece of legislation that had altered, in any material way, the general conditions of service for Commonwealth public servants.

There were 320,000 Commonwealth employees affected by these out-dated provisions. In 1969, submissions from the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Council of Commonwealth Public Service Organization and the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Officers' Association were made to the government to amend Section 68 of the Commonwealth Public Service Act, in order to provide for a minimum of four weeks' annual leave for all Commonwealth employees.

When the federal Cabinet rejected this claim, it fell back on an earlier argument, that any change in the leave provisions would necessitate a substantial increase in staff, but this was clearly unsound when applied to the actual staff levels in government departments. Any calculation of the effect of an additional week's leave on the numbers of staff required had to recognize that in a great majority of Commonwealth departments, no separate mobile relief staff was available. The normal occurrence in the case of an extra week's leave being taken, whether it be recreation leave, long-service leave or an unexpected week of sick leave, was for the duties of the absent officer or employee to be performed either wholly or in part by other staff in the same section, or alternatively for the
F.J. Richardson, Secretary of the New South Wales Branch

D.J. Allen, Secretary of the South Australian Branch
M.J. Anthony, Secretary of the Western Australian Branch

R.J. Briskey, Secretary of the Queensland Branch of the A.P.W.U.
absent officer to clear up any back-log upon resumption of work.

The basis of the claim for an extra week's leave, as submitted on the previous occasion, in 1969 took into account:

(i) the history of progress in recreation leave conditions in the Commonwealth Public Service and in industry generally throughout Australia;
(ii) that increases in productivity make increased leisure possible and desirable;
(iii) that extra leave would not mean a substantial loss of productivity, nor would it require increases in staff;
(iv) comparisons with overseas countries, with state Public Service conditions, and with provisions contained in outside awards, show a need for a change in the existing leave entitlements.

If an examination had been made of leave entitlements applying to workers in countries with a standard of living comparable with that that existed in Australia, it would have been seen that: in the United States, 60 per cent of the workforce received four weeks' annual holidays, and more than 13 per cent received five weeks. In Sweden, four weeks' leave applied in industry generally, but public servants received entitlements that varied from a minimum of twenty-four days to a maximum of forty days, depending upon age and service grading. In Norway, the Annual Holidays Act was amended in 1964 to increase the absolute minimum amount of leave from three weeks to four weeks. Three weeks annual leave was the minimum in West Germany, with a minimum of four weeks for all employees over thirty years of age. In addition to this, 30 per cent extra "holiday pay" was a provision generally applied as an extension of working conditions within the metal trades area. In France, four weeks' leave was the normal standard in most industries. Public servants in Great Britain received from three to six weeks' leave, according to grading and length of service.

The standard set by the Commonwealth government for its employees seventy years ago had now become the prescribed minimum in all industrial awards. In New South Wales, the principle of four weeks' leave applied to all government employees, a principle that had been embodied in many of that state's industrial awards. In Queensland, all municipal officers received four weeks' leave, and in South Australia, the state government extended this provision to all of its day labour staff.

Adopting its characteristics approach to industrial problems, the Minister for Labour and National Service, B.M. Snedden, defended his government's rejection by saying that

in the case of the claim for four weeks' annual leave, the Commonwealth has consistently said that it is not able to negotiate a claim as an
individual employer separate from the entire range of the employment field, that as so many other people would be affected by a "flow-out" which would inevitably occur if the claim were granted by the Commonwealth, the claim ought to be granted through the Arbitration procedure.

Enlightened European countries had recognized that work requirements in an age of advanced technology imposed considerably greater strains and stresses upon the workforce, a situation that could be easily compensated for by increased leisure. In the long term, this could contribute towards a higher level of productivity.

Annual leave conditions had been a traditionally significant factor in the recruitment and retention of staff. Favourable annual leave conditions were, for many years, looked upon as a fringe benefit that could compete with the more flexible fringe benefits available to employees in private enterprise. However, modern-day full employment had virtually cancelled out the benefits of Public Service security.

In making its application for four weeks' leave and a 25 per cent holiday loading, the Union gave its reasons in support of this claim as: Four weeks' leave was just and reasonable having regard to present-day economic and social development. The extra week's leave was desirable in order to meet the health and family needs of Commonwealth public servants and employees. The complexity of modern work situations and the stresses of contemporary living indicated that four week's leave was a fair and reasonable demand.

However, it was not until the advent of the Whitlam Labor government following the December 1972 election that four weeks' annual leave was introduced into the Australian government service, early in 1973. There is little doubt that this decision had its impact on other wage-fixing tribunals, and today four weeks' leave is the accepted principle in respect to annual leave entitlements throughout the whole industrial spectrum.

On 12 December 1969, the public hearing of the mail postal grades case concluded when the Deputy Service Arbitrator reserved his decision. Subsequently, proceedings were re-opened at the request of the Public Service Board, for the purpose of communicating to the Deputy Arbitrator and the unions a decision made by the Board on 20 December, to grant increases of 6.6 per cent to the "physical grades" staff. These increases followed representation from the A.C.T.U. on behalf of the union concerned.

On 17 February 1970, the Deputy Arbitrator issued three determinations providing increases at Levels 1 to 4 and 11, 12 and 13 of the postal levels structure. In that decision, the Arbitrator did not agree that the 6.6 per cent extended to the "physical grades"
area should cause him to adjust the postal salaries in the same proportion.

Prior to that decision, interim increases had been awarded on 2 January and on 17 July 1969; however, in the Deputy Arbitrator's decision at the conclusion of the hearing, increases were added to the salary figures that had been proposed by the Public Service Board. These latter amounts represented increases of only $10 per annum for adult assistant postal officers, and $91 per annum for mail officers on the maximum award rate.

The decision to award such microscopic increases was regarded by the membership in the mail postal grades area as an insult to their skill and intelligence. The Union issued a five-point indictment of the decision, claiming:

(i) that the text of the decision contained serious errors of fact concerning changes in duties for certain Post Office employees.
(ii) that the Arbitrator had completely ignored important evidence given by the Assistant Director-General which confirmed the case put by the Union.
(iii) that unjust and illogical relationships flowed from the decision.
(iv) that the decision reduced the relative salaries of postal workers, despite recent increases in duties which had been admitted by the Department.
(v) that the Arbitrator's decision conflicted with both the letter and the spirit of an Act of Parliament: "the Public Service Arbitration Act", which states that all decisions must be based upon "equity" and the "substantial merits of the case".

As a consequence of such an adverse decision, a one-day stoppage was called by the Federal Executive on 24 February 1970 as an expression of protest and dissatisfaction. Supplementing this, a ban was placed upon overtime. The stoppage of work enabled mass meetings in all states to make a critical analysis of the Deputy Arbitrator's decision.

At the request of the A.C.T.U. President, Bob Hawke, the Public Service Board met with the President and the Secretary of the A.C.T.U. and representatives of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union on 3 March, to discuss the grounds for dissatisfaction. At that meeting, it was mutually agreed that the issues raised by the granting of the 6.6 per cent increase to some classifications in the Public Service, which the Deputy Arbitrator did not grant to the Assistant Postal Officer, Postman, Mail Officer and related classifications, were of such importance that a further examination was justified by another authority.

Accordingly, the Public Service Board and the Department took the unprecedented step of appealing to the Full Bench of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission against the Deputy Public
Service Arbitrator’s determination, thus providing the Commission with an opportunity to consider salaries for Postal Levels 1 to 6.

On 11 March 1970, the appeal proceedings began before the Full Bench of the Commission, constituted by the President, Sir Richard Kirby, and Mr Justice Moore and Mr Justice Wright. The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union was represented by George Slater, General Secretary, and Geoff Blunden, Research Officer. On this occasion, the Union argued that the 6.6 per cent increases awarded to Commonwealth public servants in the “physical grades” area should logically have equal application in the mail postal grades area. The Union interpreted this increase as an intention to compensate for the rising “over-award” payments prevailing in outside industry. The Union also claimed that as a result of this, a new and changing “comparative wage justice” situation had developed.

On 10 April, the President and the two Deputy Presidents of the Commission handed down a decision. Although the argument advanced by the Union for increases to be based upon the Board’s 6.6 per cent increases to the “physical grades” area was not accepted by the Full Bench, the Full Bench announced increases in salary for Postal Levels 1 to 4 that were favourable to the Union.

The further increases that resulted from the appeal ranged from $148 per annum for adult assistant postal officers and $184 per annum for mail officers on the maximum award rate. These further increases were additional to the salary increases determined by the Deputy Public Service Arbitrator on 17 February.

The Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, in giving its decision in favour of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union in the mail postal appeal hearing, thus concluded the longest and most exhaustive arbitration case in which the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union had been involved. Almost a hundred exhibits were tendered and more than twenty witnesses were called, and detailed reports appeared in the Postal Advocate while the case was in progress.

The stoppage of work was a fundamental factor leading to an early hearing before the Full Bench of the Arbitration Commission. This situation gave the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union full opportunity to successfully state its arguments about the current salary situation, and about the general circumstances of the mail postal case.

Apart from the immediate and important salary gains, there was a deeper significance in the Full Bench’s decision in favour of the Union. The decision demonstrated that the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union’s submissions put to Arbitrator O’Reilly, and to the Commission, were correct all the way through, and that the
industrial protest action against Arbitrator O'Reilly's decision was absolutely justified. The validity of A.P.W.U. arguments, and the correctness of the union position, were confirmed by the fact that the President of the Commission and two Deputy Presidents upheld the substance of A.P.W.U. arguments and decided to award distinctly higher salaries.

The final Commission decision includes the following passage:

Though the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union objected to the different treatment at different levels, the Public Service Board claim was acceded to by the Deputy Arbitrator and the salaries were varied accordingly. This difference inevitably resulted in a serious disarrangement of relativities within the postal service . . . It seems to us that the real problem arose in July 1969 when different percentage increases were granted to different levels in the postal structure . . . We consider that in our overall function of endeavouring to settle this matter in a fair way, we should apply to Levels 1 to 4 the additional 6 per cent which they would have received in July 1969 had all levels received the same percentage increase.

Arising out of this mail/postal case, at least two important principles emerged:

1. The Union had again confirmed that worthwhile salary increases could only be won when the A.P.W.U. case is backed by determined and united action of the membership.
2. The Commission had been forced to set the important precedent of applying to the lowest postal levels the same rate of increase granted to Third Division Clerical and Administrative levels. This precedent could be used by the Union in future, along with other arguments, to gain further salary increases.
During 1970, the Union maintained contact with fraternal unions in other countries. The Selection of the General President of the A.P.W.U. as an adviser to the Workers’ Delegation at the International Labour Organization Conference held in Geneva during June 1970, was regarded as a tribute to the Union. The I.L.O. is a most important body, for its considerations and decisions affect the whole of the world labour movement so far as working conditions are concerned. The General President also visited several other countries following the I.L.O. Conference, for the purpose of making a study of working conditions and technological change.

At the same time, several invitations were received from various unions in other countries to extend visits. However, it was not possible to accept all of these because of pressing commitments relating to local union activity.

On hearing that a strike had commenced in the United States Post Office over wage demands, a message of solidarity was immediately cabled by the Union to the President of the American Letter Carriers’ Association. The United States government had ordered federal troops into the Post Office to get the mails moving and to crush the strike.

As no official advice on the strike had been received from the P.T.T.I. or the American Letter Carriers’ Association, and having regard to the serious plight of fellow-American unionists, it was decided, pending clarification of the situation, to impose a ban on any mails despatched to Australia that had been processed by American troops. Later, advice was received to the effect that the troops had been used to process domestic mail only and had not processed or handled any overseas mail.
In response to a request for details, a cable was duly received from the General Secretary of the P.T.T.I., advising that the strike had not been endorsed by the American Letter Carriers’ Association. Nevertheless, the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union was commended for its solidarity.

It was clear that much remained to be done so far as amalgamation with other unions was concerned. The feeling for amalgamation seemed to be gathering momentum and direct approaches were made to other postal unions, with a view to strengthening not only the Union’s own organization but also that of other unions in the postal service.

During 1971, unity within the organization was consolidated and all branches of the Union were working towards the common goal of promoting the best interests of the membership. The A.P.W.U. had reached the stage where internal bickerings were a thing of the past. There was now concentration on the main objectives for which the Union was functioning: namely, to improve the service to its members; to ensure that higher wages and conditions were payable to members; and, generally, to assist the A.C.T.U. in its struggle to lift the living standards of the Australian people.

The financial position of the Union, however, was far from good. Most branches were showing a deficit, and with inflation, the organization faced bankruptcy unless union fees were increased. The Federal Executive therefore submitted an item to the 1971 Annual Conference to bring about this desired reform.

One aspect of the financial position that was causing disquiet was the immense amount of arrears in contributions that had not been collected by the branches. This question had been raised again and again at Annual Conferences, but unfortunately, very little had been done towards carrying out the desires and wishes of Conference in the matter. Arrears in contributions in 1971 amounted to well over $100,000 on a Commonwealth-wide basis, and more than talk was needed to reduce this considerable amount.

During the 1971 Conference, the compiling of a history of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union was discussed, and the present writer was asked to undertake the task.

During 1971, the federal officers of the Union found they were consulting with the President and other officers of the A.C.T.U. on various industrial matters.

The Full Bench of the Arbitration Commission gave its decision on the various annual leave claims on 7 December. The Commission said it regarded the hearing as “one case about annual leave for both blue-collar and white-collar workers and for employees in both the public and private sectors. The hearing was treated as a test
case by all parties and interveners, and we propose to treat it as a test case.”

The Commission’s decision dealing with three different aspects of the union case, can be briefly summarized:

1. **An increase in the minimum standard of three weeks’ annual leave to four weeks:** The Commission said that economic conditions would not justify granting this claim, and that it had taken account of the opposition expressed by the federal government. The decision also refused to acknowledge the desirability of this increased leave as a matter of general principle.

2. **A bonus of an extra week’s pay to employees on annual leave:** This claim was refused with the comment that such a provision might well help employees pay for a decent holiday, but that the Commission was not prepared to agree to the claim on the material presented.

3. **A claim for holiday pay to be based on the individual employee’s average earnings during the preceding year:** This claim met with partial success, since the Commission agreed to adopt a more limited definition of average earnings and said that it might be able to implement the decision about the time of the National Wage Case in early 1972. However, even this limited decision adopted a tentative definition of average earnings only, and implementation was to be dependent on economic circumstances in 1972.

The actual decision of December 1971 on this aspect of the claims included the following passages:

**Award Amount of Weekly Payment when on Annual Leave:**

The claim for an increase was made only for blue-collar workers and all members of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union of Australia. At present, many employees under federal awards and determinations are paid when they go on leave their award or determination rate without the addition of any over-award payments, shift allowances, etc. which they may regularly receive when they are at work.

We are in agreement that the present situation which may result in people going on leave at a rate less than their normal rate when at work could produce hardship and if it is economically feasible, prima facie, we should take some steps to improve that situation.

If we decided to make an order, we would be inclined, as at present advised, to use as a guide, a provision already set out which has been inserted in some Tasmanian determinations, that is, **that an employee taking annual leave before going on leave shall be paid the amount of wages (or salary) he would have received in respect of the ordinary time which he would have worked had he not been on leave during the relevant period.**

We point out that the provision quoted excludes overtime.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, following A.C.T.U.
policy, placed emphasis and importance on all three aspects of the claim. In respect of the four weeks’ leave claim, the Union pointed out the disadvantage felt by A.P.W.U. members, particularly in New South Wales and South Australia, where state Public Service employees received four weeks’ leave.

Another important step in the history of the union was reached during the year 1972, when for the first time national industrial action, including stopwork action, was taken up by 20,000 members of the Lines Section.

On 5 May 1972, the Arbitration Commission announced its decision in the 1971–72 National Wage Case. The total wages of all employees were increased by $2 per week and the minimum wage was increased by $4.70 per week.

Referring to this judgment, George Slater wrote:

This decision makes a farce out of the national wage hearing. The A.C.T.U. and other employee bodies put up an excellent case based on increases in prices and improvement in productivity since the last national wage decision, which became effective in January 1971.

The unions showed that prices had increased by almost 10 per cent since January 1971 up to the time of the 1972 national wage hearing. In the same period, productivity, or production per head of the workforce, increased by about 2 per cent. For all employees, the combined changes in prices and productivity justified an increase of about 12 per cent using the criteria which is specially reserved for argument in national wage cases.

The insulting $2 increase is a completely inadequate compensation for the 10 per cent increase in prices and the improvement in productivity. It is a decision which shows that the highest arbitration tribunal can make a decision which is unjust and ridiculous.

During 1972, the Commission invited submissions concerning the form of the order that would implement its decision that annual leave pay should be related in some way to the ordinary expected earnings of an employee. After hearing arguments from the A.C.T.U. and the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union and other unions about the need for a clear decision on this matter, and after hearing submissions from both sides, the Commission issued a decision setting out the principles that would apply as the basis of calculating annual leave pay. The principles adopted by the Commission were meant to be of general application, but the Commission explicitly emphasized that the arbitration tribunal, for each separate industry, in amending awards or determinations, should take account of the particular characteristics of the industry concerned.

In summary form the Commission’s principles on annual leave pay meant that shift penalty payments, higher duties payments and
certain other payments could properly be taken account of in
determining salary while on leave. On the other hand, the Full
Bench decision indicated that overtime pay and disability payments
received should not be included in any formula or award amend­
ments setting out rules for pay while on annual leave. This further
decision of the Commission in 1972 indicated that 1 November 1972
could be regarded as the likely date of effect.

In the months leading up to 1 November, the Union, in
consultation with the C.C.P.S.O., had detailed discussions with the
Public Service Board on the various allowances applicable in the
Commonwealth Public Service that might be taken account of in
drawing up a draft determination to introduce the Commission's
decision in the Commonwealth Service.

In August 1972, the Union filed a new application seeking annual
leave of four weeks for its members, as an entirely new initiative,
quite separate from the national case as described above. The
“reasons in support” had been discussed with the C.C.P.S.O., in
order to secure the widest support for a united approach to this
question. By this stage, the 1972 federal election was coming closer
and it was, of course, hoped that should a Labor government be
elected, it would legislate for annual leave of four weeks. In that
situation, there would be no need for any arbitration case.

During 1971, the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union suc­
cessfully applied to the Public Service Arbitrators to have a
determination issued increasingly penalty rates as follows: that the
shift penalty rate of 10 per cent be increased to 15 per cent; the
shift penalty rate of 25 per cent be increased to 30 per cent; and
the holiday penalty rate of double time be increased to double-time
and a half.

The Public Service Board, in making an offer to the
Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union and the C.C.P.S.O., antici­
pated that the date of effect would be 30 December 1971. However,
the A.P.W.U., and an affiliate of C.C.P.S.O., the Postal Tele­
communications Technicians' Association, engaged in a telephone
campaign to encourage and persuade forty-six unions and twenty­
eight departments to enter answers of “no objection” with the
arbitor's office before 16 December. As a result, the determina­
tion was effective for the large volume of shift work before
Christmas and for the various public holidays before the New Year.
It is estimated that this gain of a fortnight has resulted in more
than $100 000 being made available in increased penalty payments
to Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union members and other
members of the Service.

During the year 1972, the trade-union movement in general and
the A.P.W.U. in particular, noted with concern the action of the
F.J. Waters, Joe Beirne President of the P.T.T.I., George Slater, Ken Turbet General Secretary of the Postal Telecommunications and Technicians Association, at a welcome dinner for Beirne, August 1973
government in introducing a Bill in the federal parliament amending the Public Service Arbitration Act. The General President and the General Secretary conferred with the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party Industrial Committee on this issue and drew attention to the harmful effects of the legislation on Commonwealth public servants in general. The attention of the Committee was also drawn to the fact that the legislation proposed by the government fundamentally conflicted with the decisions and conventions of the International Labour Organization.

In 1972, a Special Federal Unions Conference was convened in Sydney by the A.C.T.U., to discuss amendments to the Arbitration Act that involved, in particular, an attack on the freedom of trade unions to amalgamate. At the Conference, the opportunity was taken to have the Public Service Arbitration Act amendments proposed by the Minister for Labour and National Service, Phillip Lynch, discussed. Following the discussions, the Union was successful in having the following resolution unanimously adopted by the Conference, which was moved by the Union’s General Secretary and seconded by the General President:

This conference of federal unions condemns the anti-union Legislation introduced into the federal parliament by the Minister for Labour and National Service, Mr Lynch, which has as its objective the emasculation of trade unionism in the Commonwealth Public Service.

Clearly, the amending legislation is directed against unions which have asserted their democratic right to take industrial action against this reactionary and hostile anti-union government.

This conference warns the McMahon government that it will not only forfeit the goodwill of the average trade unionists in the Commonwealth Public Service, but this will be one of the steps that will ensure its ultimate downfall if it persists in this reactionary type of legislation. We call upon all members of the federal parliament to reject this legislation.

This conference applauds the action of forty-six white-collar unions and councils meeting in Sydney on 9th March, which condemned the federal government’s policies over discriminatory legislation and wage-salary demands, and called for political action in the electorates, starting with the Lowe electorate, to defeat candidates supporting such legislation as that proposed for public servants. We call on all senators to reject the Lynch Bill and return the issue for any necessary and preliminary discussion to the A.C.T.U., A.C.S.P.A. and C.C.P.S.O. and the departments, opposition leaders and the government.

One would have thought that the A.C.T.U. Federal Unions' Conference decision would have had some influence on those senators who represented the so-called “Democratic” Labor Party. If the four D.L.P. senators had opposed this fascist anti-union
L. Senini, President Western Australian Branch of the A.P.T.U.

Geoff Blunden, Research Officer for the A.P.W.U.
legislation, then it would have been defeated; but this was not to be. D.L.P. Senator Little accused the government of cowardice in handling the recent lineman’s dispute in the Post Office. He said: “The Public Service Board has a clear right to dismiss persons for not obeying a reasonable order.” Further, he considered “that an order to connect or repair a telephone was a reasonable order”.

During the campaign against the anti-trade-union repressive Lynch-law, the Union received messages from all over the world supporting its stand. The General Secretary of the P.T.T.I. wrote to the Director of the International Labour Office, complaining that the Australian government was acting in contravention of the principles of freedom of association and the violation of trade-union rights.

Messages of support were received from many overseas unions:

The Letter Carriers’ Union of Canada wishes to express to your organization complete solidarity in your fight against the anti-labour amendments to the Public Service Arbitration Act. We repudiate such fascist legislation, aimed at destroying trade unionism in your country—we join you in your struggle to maintain decent and unrestricted trade union rights . . . Kind regards.

Fraternally,
Roger Decarie, Pres,
Letter Carriers’ Union of Canada

The Union acknowledged with sincere thanks similar messages and support from postal unions in the following countries:

Argentina
Bahamas
Belgium
Brazil
Bulgaria
Canada
Ceylon
Columbia
Finland
France
German Democratic Republic
German Federal Republic
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Japan

Luxemburg
Malaysia
Malta
Mauritius
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Rhodesia
Singapore
Spain (Spanish Union in exile)
Sweden
Switzerland (P.T.T.I.)
Tunisia
Union of Soviet Socialists Republic
United Kingdom
United States of America

During the year 1972, K.J. Brook, the Union’s Assistant General Secretary, tendered his resignation for domestic reasons and the Federal Executive, at its meeting on Friday, 28 April, in accepting
his resignation with regret, carried an appropriate resolution thanking him for his services to the Union. A Special Conference of the Union was convened on the same day, and it was resolved to accept a recommendation from the Federal Executive to amend the rules to declare the position of Assistant General Secretary an honorary position. The position was duly filled by G.H. Blunden, the Union's Research Officer, and following his election, it was decided to appoint B.G. Williams as Industrial Officer.

The position of unity established on the Federal Executive continued in 1972, and the great majority of the decisions made by the Federal Executive were arrived at on a unanimous basis after free and open discussion.

A milestone was reached in union history when members of the Lines Section took part in industrial action to secure the metal trades “flow-on” and payment of industry allowance.

It is said that practice is the great test of truth and the lesson to be learned as a result of the industrial action engaged in by the Lines Staff was that the Union was able to mount an intense campaign, exhibiting undoubted strength, yet with a minimum loss of pay having to be borne by the participants. The value of the type of action taken—the observance of certain procedures and the implementation of various types of bans and restrictions as against a straight-out stoppage or work—showed that action could be taken “inside the gate”, as it were, yet at the same time be most effective indeed.

The continuation of the historic practice of the Metal Trades Award adjustments flowing on to the Lines Staff Award was an issue that simply had to be fought. Failure to have won the dispute would have meant that Lines Staff salaries in future would have been related exclusively to market rates and/or exercises of the physical grades type.

On 5 April 1972, the Postmaster-General's Department wrote to the Union, informing it that a contract for fifteen Toshiba letter preparation lines had been placed with Mitsui & Company (Australia) Limited. The Department’s letter gave details of the number of machines to be installed in each state and the tentative dates of installation. The Union was not prepared to accept this shoddy substitute for genuine consultation, and the General Secretary/Treasurer wrote to the Director-General, E.F. Lane, in the following terms:

This Union views with disgust the events leading up to and associated with the introduction of the Toshiba culling, edging, facing and cancelling letter preparation machines into the various major mail-handling centres throughout the Commonwealth.
On behalf of the Union, I am obliged to remind you that a clear undertaking was given by your predecessor, Sir John Knott, to the effect that the Union would be given every opportunity to discuss with the Board and Department, the question of hours of work in the new machine environment, prior to the installation of machines additional to what I will term “the No. 1 Melbourne Toshiba machine”.

This undertaking was confirmed on no less than two occasions in conferences with Mr Roger Banks of your office, who was delegated the responsibility by Sir John, to keep the Union informed of technological developments in the Mail Exchanges.

These assurances were accepted in good faith by the Union at the time, and we have no intention whatsoever of accepting the fait accompli position now being projected by the Department in this matter . . .

Union officers had already spent two days in statutory conference with the Board and the Department, attempting to arrive at an agreement that would settle the dispute, and finally, on 7 September, an agreement was signed.

In relation to the Toshiba machines, the Department and the Board assured the Union that:

(a) There would be no retrenchment of regular full-time staff in the Mail Exchange Branch.
(b) No mail officer or assistant postal officer performing mail officer duties would lose his classification.
(c) No mail officer or assistant postal officer performing mail officer duties would be transferred out of the Mail Exchange Branch unless he wishes it; and
(d) If any mail officer or assistant postal officer performing mail officer duties was required to transfer to another section of the Mail Exchange Branch, he would be retrained for the new work in departmental time and at departmental expense.

The Department and the Board also agreed to discuss the Union’s claim for a 35-hour week. On the general question of changes in machinery and methods of work, the agreement said:

The Board and the Department have in the past, and will continue in the future, to inform relevant staff organizations on the reasons for change, the nature of the changes proposed and plans for the implementation of those changes and will discuss with staff organizations the effects of such changes on staff and ways and means by which any problems affecting existing staff will be handled. The Board and the Department will consider and discuss with the A.P.W.U. any proposals from the Union in relation to methods of work and working conditions.

While the Union succeeded in obtaining a number of concessions from the Board and the Department, it was clear that unless a decisive change took place in the management of the Post Office, the Union would continue to be faced with the problem of ensuring
that technical advances were used for the benefit of postal workers and the community as a whole.

The Forty-eighth Annual Conference of the Union opened in Melbourne on Monday, 20 November 1972. The opening remarks of the General President indicated the continuity of the Union's work and its problems:

The question of amalgamation must be considered in the light of current developments and clearly much more remains to be done in this direction than has been attempted in the past. The rank-and-file of all postal unions are looking forward to the day when there will be one union functioning in the Post Office and as this is a world-wide trend, clearly the advantages of amalgamation are self-evident to the average postal workers.

As a result of my occupation of the position of General President for eleven years, it is time to reflect on the manner in which this important position should be looked at so far as the Union is concerned. In my judgement, I feel that the time will shortly be reached where there will have to be a full-time General President, who can relieve the General Secretary of much of the workload which he is carrying at the present time. However, this is purely speculative in character, but future Annual Conferences will have to give this factor full consideration.

The indication given in the policy speech of Mr Gough Whitlam that if elected as a government, the A.L.P. will sever the link of the Post Office with the Public Service Board, is very important, and this viewpoint is also being supported on a world-wide basis. The British Post Office Corporation is a case in point and the trend generally is for a business institution such as the Post Office to be divorced from the bureaucracy of the Public Service Board in control, or its equivalent, in all countries. It seems to me that irrespective of this election, and I am certain that the Labor Party will win, that events will compel the divorce of the Post Office from Public Service Board control.

This year has been noteworthy in that the Research Section of the organization has been expanded. Mr Boyd Williams and Mr Alan Walker, both of whom are university graduates, have been added to the Research Section, which is presided over by Geoff Blunden. Geoff has done a notable job for the Union since his appointment as Research Officer and particularly his advocacy in arbitration proceedings. This is an age of specialization and if we are to match the talents of our opponents in arbitration and industrial negotiations, then it is clear that we will have to rely upon the academic talents of the Research Section very much more in the future.

Clyde Cameron, Shadow Minister for Labour, addressed the 1972 Annual Conference. As the delegates sensed the election of a new Labor government, his speech was listened to with great attention.
I want to say something which will go on the record and it will therefore represent what you can expect from your new employers after the 2nd of December because, as the official spokesman for the Labor Party, what I say represents the official policy which a Labor government will follow.

I will speak with a great deal of care and I will talk responsibly because I am aware of the fact that what I say is what a Labor government will be required to implement and to carry out.

I raise the issues, not necessarily in the order of their relative importance, but I begin, however, with the question of four weeks’ annual leave. We are informed that claims have been submitted to the Public Service Arbitrator for an additional one week’s annual leave—the matter has still not been determined, but at several meetings which will take place after the election I will be recommending to a Labor Cabinet that it instructs all of the twenty-seven Labor ministers to reply to those claims and to indicate to the Public Service Arbitrator that each of the respective twenty-seven ministers consents to the claim being approved. Moreover, we will consent to the claim in the form in which it has been lodged, because it has been lodged in a form which will ensure that the four weeks’ annual leave, or the extra week’s annual leave—one I suppose I should say—because continuous shift work already gives that, but the extra one week’s leave will apply as from the 1st of January next year. That does not mean that you will start to qualify from the 1st of January, but those who have a year’s service in hand as at the 1st of January will get an extra week’s leave as from January 1973.

We believe that if a thing is proper and if it is right it must not be delayed—justice delayed is justice denied—and therefore we are not prepared to say “Yes, in twelve months’ time you will get an extra week’s leave.” We say positively that it ought to apply immediately. We believe that there ought to be a national minimum wage applicable to male and female alike, and that must be the starting point for everybody, whether it is a man or woman, and we would act accordingly.

The 1972 Annual Conference welcomed the assurances from the A.L.P. in relation to changes in the administration and control of the Australian Post Office. It passed the following resolution:

This Annual Conference of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union of Australia welcomes the pledges given to Commonwealth employees by Mr Gough Whitlam in the Labor Party’s policy, and which have been described in detail by Mr Clyde Cameron at the opening of the Union’s Conference.

In particular, the A.P.W.U. welcomes the programme of the Labor Party which offers Commonwealth workers four weeks’ annual leave, equal pay, a 35-hour week and other improvements in working conditions.

The Labor Party has also made it clear that a Labor government
will act in the interest of all wage and salary-earners in Australia, who, with their families, make up the great majority of the Australian community.

The A.P.W.U. wishes to record its conviction that a Labor government will see a new era of co-operation between government and unions in the Public Service area, instead of the conflict which has been deliberately promoted by Liberal–Country Party governments in recent years.

With particular reference to the Post Office, the A.P.W.U. believes that under a Labor government there will be more community-minded policies in the fields of service standards and industrial relations. In these fields, the A.P.W.U. emphasizes its continued willingness to make its own positive contribution.

In view of all these facts, the A.P.W.U. calls on all its members and all wage and salary-earners to vote for the election of a Labor government.

Mr Cameron performed well as Minister for Labor in the Whitlam Government, and it was a bad tactical error in moving him to another portfolio.
A Labor Government

Australian politics is divided into two broad camps: a business and capital-oriented coalition of parties, and a party oriented towards labour, unions, employees and the “small man”, whether he be a farmer or businessman. Unions play a great role in the financing and organizing of the Labor Party and their members have benefited from having Labor governments in office. For unions like the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union that operate in the Commonwealth sphere, the advent of a Labor government has clearly heralded the advancement of the worker.

The second of December 1972 was an important day in the history of Australia, because at the federal election held on that day, E.G. Whitlam emerged triumphant and was installed in office as the new Labor Prime Minister. Prior to caucus selecting the Cabinet, Whitlam and his deputy, Lance Barnard, established themselves as the government, each taking over a number of portfolios, and in this way they were able to effectively introduce a number of important reforms.

In arising out of a recommendation by the A.C.T.U., and reflecting the concern and anger of its own members, protest action had been taken by the Union against the nuclear tests conducted by France in the Pacific. Mail officers and other members of the Union refused to handle mail going to French consulates, firms specializing in commercial contacts with France, French banks and certain other organizations. It was quite clear, reported the Federal Executive, that this action by the Union had sympathetic support from the general public, and it was a notable fact that the Department made almost no attempt to stop the protest action being carried out by members of the Union.
Again, in 1973, the French government, against the almost unanimous international condemnation and an injunction from the International Court in The Hague, carried out a further series of atmospheric nuclear tests in the Pacific. The Australian and New Zealand Labor governments were in the forefront of diplomatic protests.

The President of the A.C.T.U., Bob Hawke, played a leading role in mobilizing international trade-union opinion against the test series, through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and other international channels. The Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union was instrumental in calling on the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International to co-ordinate international protest action by postal workers throughout the world.

Following their initiatives, extensive communication bans on France were imposed by many P.T.T.I. affiliated unions. In Australia, trade-union protest was co-ordinated by the A.C.T.U., following a union conference; the A.C.T.U. Executive endorsed a ban on the servicing and handling of all French goods, transport and mail.

A.P.W.U., members refused to handle all communication services to and from France, with the exception of mail to and from the Australian Embassy in Paris. Internal communications with French companies in Australia were not affected, mainly as a result of A.C.T.U. policy not to cause unemployment in these firms. The Union's action received wide public support in Australia and a considerable degree of assistance, in effect, was given by the Department.

Although the French government arrogantly ignored the wide-ranging condemnation of its nuclear test programme, it seems likely that the cumulative impact of international criticism did have some effect. Whilst France did not abandon its nuclear test programme altogether, international public opinion forced it to conduct further tests underground.

As part of the Metal Trades Award of September 1972, a $17½ per cent minimum loading for employees proceeding on annual leave was included. The question of extending this loading to Australian Public Service employees was raised in discussions with the Board in November 1972, in connection with "$3 plus $3" increases. The parties agreed at that time to defer consideration of the annual leave loading until after the Arbitrator had issued a determination implementing the Full Bench decision on continuation of tentative payments during annual leave. By the time it was appropriate to file claims with the Arbitrator for this increase, the A.C.T.U. had decided that the appropriate percentage should be 20 per cent. The
Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union filed this claim on 5 March 1973.

Following a number of statements by the Minister of Labour, the Secretary of the A.C.T.U., Harold Souter, requested the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union to amend its claim to provide for the payment of the statistician’s figure for average weekly earnings to an employee proceeding on annual leave. The Union agreed to the A.C.T.U. Secretary’s request to act as a vehicle for the amendment of the claim and accordingly, on 15 August, an amended claim was filed:

Insert the following new Clause “8B” in the Determination following the existing Clause “8A”:

“8B” Prior to taking recreation leave an employee shall be paid, in addition to all other entitlements, that amount which was published by the Commonwealth Statistician as the “Average Weekly Earnings per Employed Male Unit” (seasonally adjusted) for the September quarter of the year preceding the year in which the period of leave commenced.

Souter had sought assurances from the Prime Minister that Cabinet would take an “in principle” decision in support of the union claims. These discussions proved abortive, since Whitlam was unwilling to take a lead in this matter and left it in the hands of the Public Service Board.

At a meeting between the Public Service Board and representatives of the A.C.T.U., C.C.P.S.O., A.C.S.P.A. and C.P.A. on 15 November, the Board made an offer to the union representatives. The offer was summarized in a document handed out at the meeting.

The Board has considered the various claims which unions/staff associations have submitted on the matter of annual leave loading and the reasons in support of those claims.

The Board’s policy approach to the determination of pay and conditions for officers and employees of the Australian Public Service is well known and understood and in its consideration of these claims, it has followed that approach. That approach involves the maintenance of pay rates and conditions in the Service in a reasonably competitive position with those in public and private employment outside the Service.

In its review of the market situation, the Board has noted that a large number of federal awards provide for a loading of 17½ per cent. It has also noted—
(a) the decision affecting persons covered by state awards in Queensland;
(b) recent decisions re certain employees in public employment in South Australia;
(c) decisions affecting those covered by Wages Board determinations in Victoria;
(d) recent developments in the state of New South Wales; and
(e) the existence of bonus schemes in many areas in private industry.

After reviewing the total market situation, the Board concluded that the payment of an annual leave loading in the Australian Public Service was now justified. In the Board’s view, the market justified a loading of 17½ per cent, subject to four conditions:

(a) Those who are entitled under the provisions of relevant determinations to receive “penalty payments” for annual leave would receive those payments or the annual leave loading on the basis of whichever is the greater, and would not receive both.
(b) The payment of the annual leave loading would be subject to a maximum rate of payment. The maximum payment would be an amount calculated on a salary of $13 000 per annum for the period of leave.
(c) The loading of 17½ per cent is to be calculated, subject to (b) above, on the officer or employee’s basic salary for the period of leave.
(d) The loading shall apply only to recreation leave which accrues on or subsequent to 1 January 1974.

The Board’s proposal, which applied to persons employed under the Public Service Act, was put forward for acceptance by all unions and staff associations and in full settlement of claims with the Board or the Arbitrator.

The new Whitlam Labor government then decided to grant an additional week’s leave to the Public Service. It therefore instructed the Public Service Board that in this case, it was to grant the extra week’s leave only to unionists. However, the agreement that had been entered into between the unions and the Public Service Board in the form of an award was disallowed in the Senate. The government then introduced an amendment to the Public Service Act, to provide for an additional week’s leave. This was granted to all employees, whether unionists or not. This showed the positive effect of a Labor government in office, and not only was the benefit of the additional week’s leave passed on to Australian government employees, the government, in essence, became a pacemaker for industry as a whole. One can say, with truth, that as a result of the Whitlam government’s decision in this respect, virtually all workers in Australia now enjoy a minimum of four weeks’ annual leave.

Immediately the Labor government was elected, and as soon as Lionel Bowen was appointed Postmaster-General, the General President and the General Secretary of the A.P.W.U. conferred with him in relation to a number of matters of concern to the Union. The Postmaster-General agreed to receive a deputation from the
Union and subsequently a number of issues were discussed with him. One decision made by the Postmaster-General of great importance to the Union was his agreement to representations from the Union that union meetings be held in official time and on departmental premises, for the purpose of reporting to the rank-and-file membership on matters of concern. Approval was also given for union officials to address new entrants for a period of forty-five minutes on topics related to the history, objectives and structure of the Union.

In its first year in office, the government proceeded with the closing or otherwise downgrading to non-official status of some three hundred post offices. During this time, the government was subjected to frustration in its attempts to have legislation approved by the Senate. Many Bills approved by the House of Representatives, and for which the government had a mandate, were rejected by the Senate. Others were adopted after being amended considerably. Bills of great importance to the trade-union movement, and to Public Service unions in particular, which were not approved by the Senate or which were approved in an amended form, included the Bill for a new Compensation Act and a Bill to update the Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

In 1973, the Union expressed support for the government’s proposed health legislation and condemned those sections of the medical profession that were carrying on a campaign of slander and smear against the legislation and the Minister of Social Security, Bill Hayden.

The Maternity (Australian Government Employees) Act became law on 18 July 1973. It did, however, contain provisions that effectively made the Act retrospective to 1 January 1973, in that it provided for the reconsideration of the resignation of females who had resigned due to approaching maternity and the recrediting of all recreation leave etc. credits for males who took such leave in circumstances in which they would have been eligible for paternity leave had the Act been in force at the time.

The basic provision of the Act was that a woman was entitled to leave on full pay for a period of twelve weeks, commencing six weeks prior to her expected date of confinement, or from six weeks before her expected date of confinement until six weeks after the actual date of confinement, whichever was the greater. Also, an employee was entitled to maternity leave whether or not she was pregnant at the time of joining the Australian Public Service. The Act also provided for an additional period of leave totalling forty weeks. This additional leave was without pay, except that the woman had the right to use existing sick leave, recreation leave
and furlough credits. The Act therefore provided that no woman could be rejected in her application for Commonwealth employment or otherwise disadvantaged (e.g. in promotion) because of possible or actual pregnancy. The granting of maternity leave also set the basis for other areas of employment.

The year 1973 saw changes in the office-bearers who held full-time positions in some states. The South Australian Branch Secretary, J.W. Olsen, resigned his position after successfully contesting the state seat of Semaphore in the South Australian state parliament. His successor was F.K. Willis, who has held the position with distinction since his election to the office.

Frank Waters, the General President of the Union, also retired from office that year and was succeeded by Viv Deegan, the Secretary of the Tasmanian branch of the Union.

The year 1973 also saw a delegation comprising P. Kirley, W. Dunn, C. Buswell and J. Ronan visiting the Soviet Union as a result of an invitation extended by the Communication Workers' Union in that country. The Union's General President and General Secretary also paid a short visit to New Zealand, to confer with the executive officers of the New Zealand Post Office Association in relation to the organization of the P.T.T.I. Asian Regional Conference.

The Annual Report of the Federal Executive also drew attention to the forthcoming P.T.T.I. Asian Regional Conference, which was scheduled to take place in 1974. The report outlined the arrangements that had been made up to that time, and reported that the P.T.T.I. had agreed to the appointment of the Union's General Secretary, George Slater, as chairman of the Conference.

The General Secretary, in the 1972–73 Annual Report on behalf of the Federal Executive, concluded on this note:

As the general pace of life increases and the demands of the membership multiply, so the burden on the officers and staff becomes heavier. Fortunately, most people who aspire to union office or who wish to work for a trade union are resilient types of human beings. The year 1972–73 has certainly proven to be a year of great activity. The election of a Labor government, as expected, has not provided the answer to all of our aims. Many objectives remain to the secured. We realize that Rome, in fact, "was not built in a day" as it were. But we are prepared to continue the struggle to realize the policy objectives of our great union and to successfully carry forward the justifiable claims of the membership who look to us for their protection and emancipation.

We can only progress towards our ultimate goal if we are united in our desire, work hard, and remain loyal to the principles upon which the fathers of our movement relied. We must do more to infuse new
blood into the Union. It will be difficult and we will have our trials and tribulations but this is something that obviously must be done.

In his last address to an Annual Conference as General President, Frank Waters said:

A matter of considerable importance to the Union will be the strengthening of its relationships with other organizations. I believe that we must play a more prominent role, particularly in so far as our relationships with the C.C.P.S.O. are concerned on one hand and the A.C.S.P.A. on the other. I believe that we should assist financially, where required, particularly with the C.C.P.S.O. in the matters involving a common purpose for all members of the service and similarly wherever necessary, our support should be thrown behind the A.C.S.P.A. and we should not forget the fact that we are an affiliate of the A.C.T.U., which has, over the years, played a very important role, not only in the settling of disputes, but also in strengthening our case for improved wages and conditions.

In relation to the activities of the A.C.T.U., while not forgetting the very dominant and outstanding role played by Bob Hawke, we must also pay tribute to his predecessor, Albert Monk, who, in his unobtrusive way, helped us when the occasion warranted it. The days are gone when a single organization can obtain far-reaching amendments involving improvements to the Public Service Act and working conditions generally in the Service; this can only be done by a united effort.

Internationally, the Union's prestige is very high in overseas countries and next year we will see the holding of the Asian Regional Conference of the P.T.T.I. in Melbourne in September. The A.P.W.U., together with other constituent bodies of the P.T.T.I., must also play its part in helping to develop trade unionism in the postal services of the underdeveloped countries. There are countries in Asia where trade-union democracy is only a figure of speech; in some countries the unions are not allowed to function at all, and we owe a responsibility to our Asian colleagues to ensure that their living standards are raised and this can only be done by a virile and active trade-union movement.

The demand for a 35-hour week must go on and delegates may recall that at the 1972 Conference, Mr Clyde Cameron, who is now Minister for Labour, virtually gave an undertaking that the 35-hour week would be introduced if the A.L.P. won the government. Although we realize that the government cannot implement its programme in one session, nevertheless, the Union must keep fighting for this very desirable objective. Too often there is the old, old catch-cry that the government has not got the money to enable reforms such as the 35-hour week to be implemented. We were tired of hearing this story from the Liberal and Country Party governments and we do not think their attitude should be repeated by a party which claims to be a progressive one and in point of fact is that, although we are conscious of the fact that the Senate is, in effect, a road-block so far as a legislation is concerned, nevertheless it will be in the interests of the government...
themselves to ensure that this far-reaching reform should be introduced into parliament on one hand, or if an application is made to the Public Service Arbitrator, then no opposition should be expressed by the government through its representatives in the Arbitrator’s Court to the establishment of a 35-hour week.

On the retirement of the General President, messages received from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, German Democratic Republic, German Federal Republic, Ireland, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States and the U.S.S.R. paid tribute to Frank Waters, for his long association with the Labor and Industrial movements, both nationally and internationally.

For many years, the Union, together with other Public Service unions, had made representations to Joint Council, Public Service Board and the government for improvements in long-service leave conditions. The Labor government decided on 3 April 1973 to make substantial improvements that were generally in line with the views expressed by the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union and other unions. The decision announced by the government was that the basic qualification period for furlough in Australian government employment would be reduced from fifteen to ten years.

Pro rata furlough entitlements were to be payable to officers and employees on cessation after five years of service, providing that in cases where employment ceased through death, ill-health, retrenchment or retirement on account of age, pro rata furlough entitlements were to be payable after one year of service.

Commonwealth staff who had transferred from local government bodies were to enjoy the same furlough rights as were enjoyed by staff who transferred from state government employment into the Commonwealth Public Service.

In the ensuing months, the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union discussed a number of points of detail with the Public Service Board. The Minister for Labour discussed with state ministers a proposal to introduce a portable long service-leave scheme for all employees and promised state ministers that while discussions were proceeding, the Commonwealth would not make any fundamental alterations to the furlough conditions of its employees.

However, due to the actions of the Liberal and Country Party-controlled Senate, this important legislation was deferred and was subsequently reintroduced in a watered-down fashion by the Fraser government, one such notable example being the decision not to increase the yearly accumulation of furlough by a half a month per year after the qualifying period of ten years’ service.

Among the decisions made at the 1973 Annual Conference was the bestowal of Honorary Life Membership on Frank Waters.
Conference also expressed its appreciation of the service rendered by the retiring General Vice-President, Alex Saint.

The matter of the separation of the Post Office from Public Service Board control had been canvassed for fifty years before it became an accomplished fact on 1 July 1975. How this was achieved is an important case-study of the fruitful affiliation of a union with the Labor Party.

There was a growing disenchantment with Public Service Board control of the Australian Post Office over the years, particularly in the 1950s, and the question had been raised at various Annual Conferences of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union. Although the 1956 Sydney Mail Branch strike was not directly related to the issue of Public Service Board control, subsequent disputes in 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968 did have a clear link with the Public Service Board dealing with matters beyond their competence. The Queensland branch of the Union submitted two items for the agenda of the March 1957 A.L.P. Federal Conference. The items that were transmitted through the Queensland branch of the A.L.P. were:

1. That Conference calls upon a future Labor government to repeal Section 66 of the Commonwealth Public Service Act, which denies to Commonwealth employees the right to strike under threat of penalty of dismissal.
2. That Conference endorses the principle that the control of the P.M.G.'s Department should be vested in a Commission, and removed from any control of the Public Service Board.

The item relating to Section 66 of the Public Service Board was adopted, but the other agenda items relating to the Postmaster-General's Department being vested in a commission and removed from Public Service Board control were discharged. However, in 1967, two state branches of the Union, South Australia and Queensland, submitted items through their respective state A.L.P. Executives for the 1967 A.L.P. Federal Conference as follows:

Item 47 (South Australia)
That the Federal Australian Labor Party Platform be amended by inserting in Section V Economic Planning after paragraph 5, a new paragraph 6, and that existing paragraph to read:
6. The severance of the Postmaster-General's Department from the Public Service Board control and this Department to be controlled by a Corporation beyond the reach of Treasury financial administration.

Item 48 (Queensland).
That the Federal A.L.P. Platform be amended by inserting in Section V Economic Planning after paragraph 5, a new paragraph 6, and that
existing paragraphs 6 and 7 be renumbered 7 and 8. New paragraph to read:

6. That the Postmaster-General’s Department be divorced from the Public Service Board control and a Corporation be established to control the activities of the Postmaster-General’s Department on the lines of the Post Office Corporation established by the Wilson Labour government in the United Kingdom.

The official report of the 1967 Federal A.L.P. Conference records that Items 47 and 48 were taken together and adopted in the following form:

That a new paragraph 6 be added to the Platform: “The severence of the Postmaster-General’s Department from the Public Service Board control and the Department to be controlled by a Corporation” and subsequent paragraphs renumbered.

(Note: The Committee believes that the principle of separation be adopted, but that the details of the Corporation structure and financial arrangements should be a matter undertaken by the government.)

Thus from 1967 onwards, the separation of the Australian Post Office from Public Service Board control became A.L.P. policy, and one of the first steps taken by the Whitlam government on the 22 February 1973 was to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the Australian Post Office, to inquire into the following matter:

In the public interest, what changes, if any, should be made in the organization, administration and operations of postal and telecommunication services (including overseas services) provided in Australia, including, inter alia, changes in relation to:

- the range of services to the public and their adequacy to meet present and future needs, including services as affected by proposals approved but not yet implemented; the financing of recurrent and capital costs; management/staff relations, including the jurisdiction of the Public Service Board;
- responsibilities of the Overseas Telecommunication Commission and the division of functions between that Commission and the Postmaster-General’s Department, urban and regional development; procurement of supplies with the aim of developing Australian industries;
- the performance of work by contract; and other matters to which the attention of the Commission is particularly directed by the Postmaster-General in the course of the inquiry.

The members of the Commission of Inquiry into the Australian Post Office were: Sir James Vernon, C.B.E. (Chairman); Mr B.J. Callinan, Commissioner of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (Engineer); Mr J.J. Kennedy, Member and Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accounts (Company director).
The Commission of Inquiry into the Australian Post Office was constituted as a Royal Commission and from the outset the Commissioners made it clear that they would not allow counsel to be briefed, but would conduct the inquiry with a minimum of legalities, so that the maximum involvement was possible and maximum evidence could be given.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union was in the forefront of organizations and public bodies who made submissions to the Commission of Inquiry into the Australian Post Office. The Union's submissions were lengthy and well-documented and were presented under the following headings:

**Section 1 Introduction**
Short history and present status of A.P.W.U.; comment on scope of A.P.W.U. submissions; reference to possible later written and spoken submissions.

**Section 2 Industrial Relations in the Post Office**
Relating to the Term of Reference—"management/staff relations, including the jurisdiction of the Public Service Board".

**Section 3 Private Contract Work**
Relating to the Terms of Reference which read: "the performance of work by contract" and "procurement of supplies with the aim of developing Australian industries".

**Section 4 Contracts and Contacts: the link between former Post Office officials and private firms**
Relating to the Term of Reference which reads: "the performance of work by contract".

**Section 5 Services to the Public**
Relating to the Term of Reference which reads: "the range of services to the public and their adequacy to meet present and future needs, including services as affected by proposals approved but not yet implemented".

**Section 6 Future Developments**
Other subjects which are relevant to the general Term of Reference which reads: "In the public interest, what changes, if any, should be made in the organization, administration and operations of postal and telecommunications services (including overseas services) provided in Australia".

The Union's case was presented by F.J. Waters, George Slater and Geoff Blunden.

In Section 2, which dealt with industrial relations in the Post Office, the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union had this to say:

*Possible Arbitration Procedures After Separation from the Public Service Board*

The A.P.W.U. submits a proposal for arbitration procedures which could come into effect after the A.P.O. has achieved independent power
in the area of salary fixation. Unlike the current situation, where the Union must negotiate principally with the Board on matters of salaries, the Union would, after "separation", negotiate directly, and only, with the Post Office. However, although this Union emphasizes the advantages of direct negotiations, with the Postmaster-General's Department being independent of the Board, there is still need for a system of arbitration in the event of negotiations not being entirely successful.

The A.P.W.U. submits that the Post Office should have its own arbitration tribunal consisting of three persons, composed of an independent chairman appointed by the government, a departmental representative and a union representative. At the present time there is some opportunity for a Public Service union to appeal to the Arbitration Commission against decisions made at the first level of formal arbitration, i.e. the Public Service Arbitrator. There seems no reason why this right should not be retained and this would mean that the A.P.W.U. and other Post Office unions would still be able to seek leave to appeal to the Arbitration Commission.

The Adverse Effects of the Public Service Board's Jurisdiction over the Post Office

The A.P.W.U. submission to the Inquiry is that the Post Office should be effectively separated from the jurisdiction of the Public Service Board. In examining this proposal, the A.P.W.U. suggests that it would be worthwhile and valuable for the Inquiry to examine at least one important "case-study" of a breakdown of industrial relations in the Post Office. In 1969-70-71 there was a related series of conflicts which involved all of Australia's postmen, mail officers, supervisors at intermediate level in mail exchanges, and many counter staff at Post Offices throughout Australia, amounting in all to about 20,000 employees and representing about half the membership of the A.P.W.U.

Further Examples of Public Service Board Failures in the Field of Industrial Relations

In addition to the serious industrial disputes described above involving the postal levels structure and post office drivers, the A.P.W.U. also lists below other disputes in recent times which show the impracticality, ineptitude and poor sense of industrial relations on the part of the Public Service Board.

1964  **Roster dispute, Sydney Mail Exchange:** Under the influence of the Board, the Department caused a major dispute by endeavouring to change the commencement time of the intermediate shift from 2 p.m. to 2.30 p.m., even though such a change was a most unpopular demand and seemed impractical in every way.

1964  **Lines Arbitration Case:** Rigid and unyielding Board submissions in this case led to a decision full of anomalies which
required a whole series of amending “Consent Determinations” in the following year.

1966 Coding operations case, relating to introduction of coding processes at Sydney Mail Exchange: The whole system of automatic letter handling was introduced with a minimum of consultation with the Union. The refusal to consult adequately led to the first-ever national stoppage of work by members of the A.P.W.U. The Public Service Board notions about prerogatives of management became in practice the exercise of power in an arrogant way which effectively destroyed any possibility of a good industrial relations climate in the coding work area and in Sydney Mail Exchange Branch (M.E.B.). Problems of the machinery and works system were a separate problem in Sydney M.E.B., but the jurisdiction of the Board was exercised in a way which created a mood of mutual hostility and suspicion.

1968 Transport drivers' dispute leading to a national stoppage in mail area: This dispute involved a number of factors, but probably the crucial factor was the insistence of the Board on using outside minimum wage awards of the Commission as a basis for driving and other salaries. Already at this time, it was generally recognized that over-award payments had become a common feature in industry. At this time, T.A.A. (for example) were paying their drivers above the award rate because the award rate was not generally observed in secondary industry. The refusal of the Board to recognize this fact led to a dispute which grew into a national stoppage. The Arbitrator’s decision, Determination No. 49 of 1968, said that the Union was correct in saying that a salary increase had been justified, and by implication shows the Board to have been bureaucratic, unreal and doctrinal in examining the down-to-earth issue of Post Office drivers’ salaries . . .

1970–3 Negotiations re new structure of lines designations: Despite the A.P.W.U.'s urgent request for productive and constructive negotiations, the Board has, over a period of almost three years, acted in a bureaucratic and negative manner and has completely ignored the need for arriving at a new structure of designations in this important work area. The work area involves about twenty thousand members of this union and the Board itself has acknowledged the need for a general revision of the work structure. During the conduct of these protracted negotiations, the Board attempted to deny the existence of a salary nexus coming from the outside metal trades area, despite the fact that the employees in the lines area had been effectively linked with the Metal Trades Award area for more than thirty years.
Amongst other things, the disputes mentioned above show the Board to be generally unaware of the need for adequate consultation. It should be pointed out that the Board has typically advised the A.P.W.U. of decisions already made and has represented such talks as "consultation".

The record of the Board in the field of industrial relations has been marked by a strong tendency to make rigid and arbitrary decisions with little ability to recognize critical points exposed by union comments. In proceedings before the Public Service Arbitrator, the Board has tended to regard union applications taken to public hearing as some sort of affront to "its own sovereignty and ability to make decisions, which were apparently regarded by the Board itself as being above criticism.

The portion of the Union's submissions is crystallized in the following paragraph:

It is of crucial importance for this Inquiry to be reminded, and for these A.P.W.U. submissions to note, that the present Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. E.G. Whitlam, stated in an official policy speech when seeking election to office: "Australia's largest employer—the Post Office—will be severed from the control of the Public Service Board."

The Commission of Inquiry, after hearing evidence, concluded:

From its consideration of the various issues involved, of the views expressed to the Commission and of the evidence before it, the Commission came to the conclusion that the separation of postal services from telecommunications would be desirable and in the general interest, and it recommends accordingly. Formal separation into two independent organizations, each with clear responsibility for a single service, would seem to have few disabilities and great potential advantage. The Commission does not believe that good purpose would be served by deferring this decision. The problems of administration and organization of the A.P.O. are unlikely to grow less with the years; indeed they are more likely to increase. The separation of the two services will provide a unique opportunity for the reconsideration of all aspects of their future organization and financing and hopefully will put them in better shape to cope with future community needs.

Legislation was introduced into the Commonwealth parliament that provided for: (a) the removal of the post and telecommunication systems from the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Public Service Board; and (b) that two separate commissions should be established to control (i) the postal sphere of operations and (ii) telecommunications operations. Some amendments were proposed to the Bill. The government accepted these amendments and the two Commissions were established as from 1 July 1975. Prior to the commissions being formally established, a joint union group representative of postal and telecom unions held regular consulta-
tions with the management of the then Postmaster-General's Department. George Slater and Viv Deegan were members of the group and active participants in the discussions.

One of the features of the establishment of the two commissions was the creation of two Consultative Councils. Viv Deegan is now Deputy Chairman of the Postal Consultative Council, while George Slater is still a member of the Telecommunications Consultative Council. The members of the two commissions as at 1 July 1975 were:

**Postal Commission:**  
J.J. Kennedy, Chairman; A.F. Spratt, Managing Director; D.M.S. Bright, Deputy Chairman; G. Ettinger, G. Slater, R. Graham and F.J. Green.

**Telecommunications Commission:**  
A.C. Gibb, Chairman; J.H. Curtis, Managing Director; Mrs J. Hancock, R.D. Somervaille, T.E. May, P.J. Lawler and K.C. Turbet.

A.C. Gibb subsequently resigned as Chairman of the Telecommunications Commission and R.D. Somervaille replaced him.

It will be noted that George Slater, General Secretary of the Australian Postal Workers' Union is a member of the Postal Commission, and Ken Turbet, General Secretary of the Australian Technical Employees' Association, is a member of the Telecommunications Commission.

On the management side, A.F. (Bert) Spratt was appointed Managing Director of the Postal Commission, and J.H. (Jack) Curtis was appointed Managing Director of the Telecommunications Commission. Both were well known in the old P.M.G. Department, Bert Spratt being a former telecom engineer, later Public Service Inspector for Victoria, and subsequently a Deputy Director-General of the Australian Post Office, while Jack Curtis was also a telecom engineer, subsequently Director of Posts and Telegraphs, Queensland, and latterly a Deputy Director-General of the Australian Post Office.

Once again the Union and a Labor government had advanced the well-being of the Australian nation.
A New Union is Born

The year 1974 was a decisive time in the history of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union, for not only did it encompass the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Union, but it also was noteworthy in that steps were taken to change the name of the organization. This change, of necessity, was brought about by the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Australian Post Office, which recommended the splitting of the activities of the Australian Post Office into two corporations, namely the Telecommunications Commission and the Australian Postal Commission.

A feature of the 1974 Federal Executive Annual Report presented to the Annual Conference was the reprinting of various items from the report of the First Annual Conference held in 1925. The 1974 Annual Report also related that the Sixth Asian Regional Conference of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International was conducted at the Chevron Hotel, Melbourne from 16 to 20 September 1974. Distinguished speakers at the Conference included R.J. Hawke, President of the A.C.T.U., the Postmaster-General, Senator R. Bishop, the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, E.F. Lane, the Deputy General Secretary of the Union of Post Office Workers of Great Britain, N. Stagg, and the General Secretary of the Singapore National Trade Union Congress, C.V. Devan Nair.

It can be said that the standing of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union, both in the local and international spheres, was enhanced by hosting the Conference and all concerned agreed that it was an excellently organized and well-run event. During the year, the A.P.W.U. sent F.J. Bourke, R.J. Briskey and L. Hale as
observers to the Public Services International Conference in Budapest. This delegation also paid a fraternal visit to our counterpart union in the German Democratic Republic. A verbal report on this visit was given by the union delegates to the 1974 Conference.

Future historians interested in the Australian Post Office and looking at the first half of the year 1974 will note that far more than the usual amount of industrial disputation had taken place.

The A.P.W.U. had a long-standing policy of a five-day week, Monday to Friday, for Post Office counter staffs and postmen. During the latter part of 1973, postmen, in particular, were demanding of the Union by letter and petition that action be taken by the leadership to secure a five-day week and that Saturday work be eliminated.

By 1973, Australian postmen were probably the only group of workers in the Australian workforce who were required to work a forty-hour week over six days, Monday to Saturday. Following the 40-hour-week decision in 1948, postmen and post office counter staffs generally throughout Australia worked seven hours a day, Monday to Friday, and made up the remaining five hours of their forty hours by working on Saturday, for which they were paid a 40 per cent penalty.

The Union had been able to achieve for its counter staffs “permissive hours”, i.e. a 36½-hour week, worked Monday to Friday. Various rostering systems were devised in a situation where some post offices opened for only one hour of a Saturday morning, while others opened for two hours and the overwhelming number were closed altogether. The position was established then, where a Post Office counter employee was required to work in many cases, say, one hour of a Saturday in every ten Saturdays. In essence, it could be said that by 1973, Saturday trading had virtually disappeared so far as post office counter transactions were concerned.

Being aware that their colleagues working inside the post offices had been conceded reduced hours, the postmen naturally started to ponder the fact that no change had taken place in their position or was even mooted for Saturday work. The Federal Executive of the Union, conscious of the growing demands of the postmen and those counter officers still required for work of a limited duration on Saturdays, resolved on 31 October 1973: “That the Union instructs all members employed on Post Office counter duties and mail deliveries not to report for work on Saturday mornings, commencing from Saturday, 5 January 1974.”

The Postmaster-General’s Department was notified of this decision and, in due course, negotiations on the issue were entered.
into. The Central Administration officers of the Department indicated that they felt that Saturday postal deliveries could and should be eliminated, and if the Union deferred action on the resolution outlined above, then the elimination of Saturday deliveries would be a fact of life some time in February 1974.

The questions to be resolved then were the weekly working hours, meal allowance conditions, etc. for postmen, within the framework of a Monday to Friday working week. The General Secretary handled the negotiations at the outset and indicated that the Union felt that the time was right, with the cessation of Saturday deliveries, to introduce a 35-hour working week for postmen; in other words, they would continue to work thirty-five hours Monday to Friday, as they had done since 1948, and also that there ought to be monetary compensation for the loss of Saturday penalty rates.

A proposition was put forward by the Department to the Union on 13 December 1973, as a basis of agreement. The General Secretary indicated that he could not enter into such agreement, but undertook to refer the matter to the Federal Executive of the Union for its consideration:

(i) The Department undertakes that all postal deliveries on Saturday will be discontinued on a date to be determined as soon as discussions with the Union are completed and which allow the necessary administrative arrangements to be made.
(ii) Late January or early February 1974 is accepted as a target date.
(iii) Basis will be that postmen are rostered to work forty hours over a five-day week, Monday to Friday.
(iv) The Union stated that its policy is for a thirty-five hour week and will be pursuing this through other channels. Subject to this reservation the Union agrees that discussions on implementation continue on the basis set out in paragraph (iii).
(v) The Union agrees that normal working continue in the light of these discussions.

The Federal Executive was given a summary of the possible effect of a five-day week for postmen on take-home pay. The effect depended on current working arrangements. The summary was supplied to the A.P.W.U. by the Department on 3 January 1974, and it was indicated that in most states about one hour’s overtime would be required on Mondays.

In the New Year period, talks with the Department took place on the practical arrangements for introduction of a five-day week. Details such as the date of introduction and possible implications for Mail Exchange and transport members were discussed. At these meetings, the Union asked for precise information on the likely reductions in gross salary for postmen following the introduction
of a five-day week. Details given by the Department in answer to these queries were contained in a memorandum dated 3 January 1974; for example, postmen could be required to work about one hour’s overtime on Mondays. Information on take-home pay could only be calculated on the basis of a postman who was working ordinary hours, and for these members, the change from Saturday penalty payments to a five-day working week was shown. However, in working discussions held on 14 January, the Department gave estimates of average fortnightly reductions in gross pay for postmen in some states as: New South Wales, $12.41; Sydney city, approximately $21.00; Victoria, $12.25; Queensland, $13.83; South Australia, $12.29; Western Australia, $9.86; Tasmania, $9.15. These estimated reductions did not include meal allowance payments, which would be lost with the introduction of an eight-hour working day and the change from the previous overtime opportunities.

In an urgent message sent to the Director-General for his personal attention, the Union stated that a five-day week for postmen had to be introduced, but equally that reductions in take-home pay were completely unacceptable. It requested that the Department consult with the Board as a matter of urgency on this claim. The Union was inundated with enquiries from postmen members concerning the early introduction of a five-day week. However, the Union was well aware that postmen and other indirectly affected A.P.W.U. members would not be able to absorb the fortnightly pay reductions as recommended by the Department. In the case of 110 motor driver members in New South Wales, the Union was informed that the reduction in gross pay would be as much as $46 per fortnight.

In addition to the proposal for an increase in the salary range for postmen, the A.P.W.U. proposed the setting up of a committee to discuss urgently all possible measures to reduce the adverse monetary effects of a five-day week for postmen. The measures to be considered were to include possible amendments to determinations, in order to take account of the particular features of postmen’s work.

Although general agreement had been expressed by branches to the proposal sent out by the General Secretary on 13 December, the information on possible reductions in gross salary (and therefore in take-home pay) represented a new element in the situation. It was suggested that the Federal Executive members carefully consider the information given, and also consider the desirability of giving this information to members, so that expressions of attitude could be obtained in the various states. This might well be, it was thought, an opportunity to obtain the five-day week for
Viv Deegan, General President of the A.P.W.U. on the retirement of Frank Waters
postmen, despite the practical effects on those members who were apparently working above-average amounts of overtime. Executive members were asked to telephone their views as soon as possible.

On 31 January 1974, the Postmaster-General's Department issued a press statement to the effect that new rosters would be introduced from Monday, 18 February, whereby postmen would work forty hours over a five-day week, Monday to Friday. There would be no street mail deliveries by postmen or other staff on and from 23 February. Additional decisions were taken by the Department in relation to the elimination of the sorting of mail to private boxes, rural roadside deliveries, outward mail despatches from country post offices and other details of staffing arrangements. These decisions were set out later in a letter to the General Secretary of the A.P.W.U. dated 7 February.

On 15 February, the Union of Postal Clerks and Telegraphists and the Australian Postmasters' Association announced that they had decided to ban Saturday work on and from 23 February. Being aware of the Department's decision relating to the five-day week for postmen, they had decided that it was time for their members to work not more than five days a week.

The A.P.W.U. Federal Executive gave consideration to the decision made by the two postal unions and decided to instruct A.P.W.U. members working on post office counters not to report for work on Saturdays on and from Saturday, 23 February. The Executive had taken into account that it would be against traditional respect for the work areas covered by other unions to allow A.P.W.U. members to operate post office counters whilst counter staffs belonging to other unions had banned such counters, and that in any case, as the postmasters would not be in attendance at each post office, the keys to the office would not be available.

Following the decision of the U.P.C.T. and the A.P.A. in particular, the then Postmaster-General, Lionel Bowen, indicated that arrangements would be made for the sale of stamps and other post office transactions at various agencies throughout the country, namely, newsagents, milk bars, etc. This proposal was never taken seriously and later was abandoned.

The General Secretary then convened a Special Meeting of the Federal Executive of the Union in Hobart on 21 and 22 February. He invited Postmaster-General Bowen to attend the meeting, but although Bowen was initially receptive to the invitation, he later declined to attend. The General Secretary indicated to the meeting that he did not think that postmen should be subjected to a loss in take-home pay, particularly in view of the fact that the reverse was actually the case in other sections of industry. Most workers
Marcia Irwin, the first lady delegate ever to the Union Annual Conference, with Frank Waters, General President, and Frank Willis in 1973
were currently receiving increases in their pay-packets, and the Department proposals to translate postmen from a six-day week to a five-day week presented an opportunity for the postmen to be given a reduction in working hours. He drew attention to the fact that the Minister for Labour, Clyde Cameron, had addressed the 1972 Annual Conference of the Union immediately prior to the election of the Labor government and had outlined the Labor Party policy for a 35-hour week. The General Secretary indicated to the Federal Executive that a reduction in working hours for postmen could be implemented without transgressing the criteria stated by Clyde Cameron. A reduction in working hours, therefore, would not mean an automatic introduction of extra regular excessive overtime. In point of fact, such a move would prevent a reduction in the numbers of postmen employed.

The General President and the General Secretary had a series of conferences with Cameron and Bowen on 8 April and put a case for a reduction in working hours for postmen and that they also should receive an industry allowance of $4.50 per week. Both Cameron and Bowen agreed to this, but said that their decision would have to be confirmed by the Prime Minister. Cameron and Bowen then discussed the proposed decision with Prime Minister Whitlam and informed the General President and the General Secretary that Whitlam had given it his blessing. The General Secretary then asked: "What about the Public Service Board? They are also respondents to A.P.W.U. determinations." Bowen assured the General President and the General Secretary that the Board would be advised of the agreement and he did not think the Union had anything to worry about. Clearly, Bowen expected the Board to consent. It was further agreed that the A.P.W.U. would draft applications to the Public Service Arbitrator, in discussion with Bowen, and these would be lodged with the Arbitrator when agreement had been reached on the drafts. This was duly done and the claims were lodged on 30 April 1974.

True to his word, Bowen consented to the applications lodged with the Public Service Arbitrator. However, the Public Service Board lodged an objection to the applications with the Public Service Arbitrator on 14 May. A double dissolution of parliament having taken place, it will be noted that on the date the Public Service Board objected, it was not clear whether, in fact, a Labor government would be returned. It has since been suggested that the Public Service Board may have been under the impression that the Labor government was about to be defeated.

When it became public knowledge within the Union that the Public Service Board had objected to the two applications lodged
by the Union, which the government had consented to through the Postmaster-General, a feeling of shock and dismay emerged both within the rank-and-file membership and the leadership of the Union. The General Secretary, having regard to the strong feeling against the Public Service Board, convened a further Special Meeting of the Federal Executive in Brisbane on 31 May. The Union's reaction to the Public Service Board's rejection was demonstrated when the Federal Executive resolved:

That unless the Industry Allowance Claim for postmen and the thirty-six and three quarter-hour week claim for postmen is consented to by the Public Service Board forthwith and also unless a favourable response is received from the Board forthwith to the Union's salary claims, all members employed in the postal levels structure be directed to:
(a) ban all overtime;
(b) ban all postmen's divides;
(c) ban all casual staff in postal services other than cleaners.
(d) ban all mail to and from the Public Service Board and the Board's offices in each state.

These bans to be applied on and from midnight the 5th June 1974 and remain in force until such time as the abovementioned claims are met.

The bans were duly implemented in all states, in accordance with the resolution.

The Public Service Arbitrator convened a Statutory Conference on the Industry Allowance Claim for postmen in Melbourne on 7 June. The Public Service Board representatives indicated in the strongest terms that they wished to continue with the objection lodged by the Board and that they were prepared to argue against the claim in public hearing. Representatives of the Postmaster-General drew to the attention of the Arbitrator the fact that the Minister had consented in writing to the Union's claim and that the application made by the Union was supported by the Department.

This was a unique situation. Possibly the first time in union history, the two respondents to A.P.W.U. determinations, i.e. the Board and the Department, were divided in their approach to the claim. The Arbitrator pointed out that, as the law stood, the Board clearly had the right to object. The Union conceded that the Board had this right under law, but expressed the view that the Board was acting most unwisely. The Arbitrator indicated that he would deal with the applications speedily in public hearing, provided the bans were lifted or even postponed for, say, a period of seven days. The Union took the position that the Board should withdraw its objections, then normal working could be resumed. However, the Arbitrator maintained his position.
The General Secretary then conferred with the President of the A.C.T.U. and the Postmaster-General. The Postmaster-General and the A.C.T.U. President expressed the view that normal working should be resumed and the bans postponed. The General President and the General Secretary recommended to the Federal Executive that this course of action be followed. Seven members of the ten-member Executive expressed support for the proposition. The branches then were notified of the majority decision of the Executive.

Following the appeals of the Postmaster-General, the President of the A.C.T.U. and the federal officers of the Union, and after much hard work, including a telephone hook-up to the Federal Executive, the bans were lifted in all states except New South Wales. The dispute was further complicated when the Union of Postal Clerks and Telegraphists announced that it would hold stopwork meetings by their members, to recommend that various bans be imposed in support of the U.P.C.T. salary claim.

Again in June 1974 and following a conference between the Postmaster-General, the A.C.T.U. President and the General President and General Secretary of the A.P.W.U., the Union's General President and the General Secretary met with the full Public Service Board in Canberra in relation to the $30 pay claim. The Board undertook to communicate with the Union within twenty-four hours. The next morning, in Melbourne, the General Secretary received a telephone call from the Board's office and was advised that the Board would meet the unions involved in Canberra on Friday, 21 June, to give an expression of its attitude to the pay claim.

The Board duly met the unions and, after much haggling, made a final offer of a $16 per week increase, on an interim basis, to all grades in the postal levels structure. The Board also resolved that, in future, salaries for mail officers (coding) and those under other coding designations would be increased at the same time and in the same way as for members within the postal levels structure. This meant that instead of mail officers and mail officers (coding) having salary changes at different times, the Board had now undertaken to introduce salary changes for these two related designations on identical dates. This was a major breakthrough and meets a union demand going back to 1966.

The decision was overwhelmingly accepted by rank-and-file meetings in the various states. The opinion of country members was also sought in the respective branches, who responded likewise.

The Arbitrator issued a determination granting the union claim for the industry allowance to postmen in five states on 21 June
1974; however, he refused to implement the decision in New South Wales because normal working had not resumed in that state. He subsequently handed down a decision granting the industry allowance to New South Wales postmen on 5 July. This meant that all postmen throughout Australia forfeited an amount of $4.50, excepting New South Wales, where the amount was $9.00. Had all state branches implemented the majority decision of the Federal Executive of the Union to postpone bans when requested to do so, the money would have been in the pockets of the postmen earlier and this forfeiture would not have arisen. In regard to the hours application, the Arbitrator handed down his decision in favour of the Union on 4 July. Had the decision of the Federal Executive been accepted by the branches, it is fair to say that the standard weekly working hours would have been reduced from 40 to 36 3/4 at least two weeks earlier.

The Union also argued that overseers (postmen) should receive the allowance. This claim was based on the outdoor duties of the overseer (postman) and on the anomalies that have arisen due to postmen getting the allowance while their supervisors missed out.

In opening the 1974 Annual Conference, the General President, V.J. Deegan, reported:

The Labor government, after twenty-three years in the wilderness, has made some mistakes. People who do not make mistakes do not make anything, but the Labor government has also done some wonderful things and we are grateful for what it has done for us so far.

We, of course, realize the benefits a Labor government, given time, can provide. We have to understand that the full Labor programme cannot be implemented overnight and the thought of the alternative is a horrifying prospect and one which should generate all supporters of the Labor movement to swing in behind the government, particularly in this period when it is under such constant and evil attack by the representatives of big business.

We pledge the Union to continue its support for the Australian Labor Party and, so far as the government is concerned, it must earn that support.

In the fifty years of amalgamation we have become the largest Public Service union in the country. We have also become by far the largest post office union in Australia. There is certainly no more powerful union in the country, but we, as a federal union, have never abused that power; we have only used it as a last resort and when provoked. We have never sought a fight; we have always painstakingly negotiated our claims before becoming involved in industrial action and we believe that is the correct way. It is unfortunate that in recent years, some elements within the Union in isolated instances have tended to go off half-cocked on their own and thus bring the Union into disrepute. Again I pay great tribute to our General Secretary for the strength of character and the
courage he has shown in these undesirable situations.

We are affiliated to the Australian Labor Party and we are proud of it. We are not in business for the purpose of sabotaging the party. Rather, we seek to work with it for our mutual benefit.

This brings me to a very important point I wish to make. With the translation of the Department of State to two Commissions, one Telecommunications and one Postal, it is time to further amalgamation. Our Union has a clear policy attitude and a decision has been taken, that being, that there should be one amalgamated union for the postal and telecommunications services and I here and now invite all of the other organizations to come together with us on this question. If there is not further amalgamation at this point, then, in my view, we deserve to be condemned by the future generations who will follow us for failing to seize the opportunity that has arisen.

We appreciate that because of the difficult times we have been through and are going through, particularly in New South Wales, this has had the effect of causing other organizations which may wish to amalgamate with us to look apprehensively at us. I can assure them that the Union will put its house in order so far as that area is concerned, for, in our view, there is too much at stake to be sacrificed because of the whims of some individuals whose real sympathy does not lie with the Labor movement in any case.

A Special Conference of the Union held in Brisbane on 3 June 1974, made decisions concerning changes to the Rules, anticipating recommendations by the Commission of Inquiry into the Australian Post Office and government decisions arising therefrom. The Special Conference decided to change the name of the Union to the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union, and an application for the change of Rule 1 was lodged with the Industrial Registrar.

In retrospect, it can be said that while provision has been made for the two Commissions to function without Public Service interference, whether or not the Commissions can be absolutely divorced from Public Service Board thinking, only time will tell.

One of the faults of control by the Public Service Board was the Board's intrusion into matters beyond its competence. But all in all, it can be said that over the years preceding the establishment of the Commissions, relationships with the Board had been much more cordial than was the case in the early and formative years of the Union. Certainly, since Sir Frederick Wheeler was appointed chairman of the Board in 1961, significant changes did in fact take place in so far as industrial relationships were concerned. This policy was continued under Sir Alan Cooley, but it is fair to say that the Board was inclined to deal with matters that were clearly beyond its competence.
The Industrial Registrar announced his decision relating to the change of name of the Union, and as from 15 December 1974, the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union ceased to exist and was replaced by the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union the following day.
Throughout the history of the Australian labour movement, there have been many cartoonists who have captured the essence of a dispute or feeling or political action in one simple drawing.

The *Postal Advocate*, throughout its sixty-year history, used the cartoons of many workers on the job. Some of these have been reproduced in this book. For a brief period in the 1960s, a cartoonist known as “Fingers” reigned in pages of the *Advocate*. His cartoons not only reflected some of the A.P.W.U.’s attitudes to industrial questions, but also retold the fund of stories about postmen and dogs. [“Fingers” was in fact Gordon Cuddeford, who was then a telegraphist with the Chief Telegraph Office in Brisbane.]
"Isn't that sweet... he wants to make friends with you!"

"Come back with my dog!"
"Give him another three paces... This one's quick off the mark!"
“Something’s up . . wonder where he is today?”

“Here’s the dollar... there’s the dog!”
Appendix 1

Post Office and Union Personalities

Union Officials

A number of very capable men helped to bring about the formation of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, principally in their capacity as honorary officials of the three unions that consummated the amalgamation, namely the Australian Letter Carriers’ Association, the Postal Sorters’ Union and the Australian Telegraph, Telephone Construction and Maintenance Union. Some of these officials stand out, in the light of history, as men not only of considerable ability but also of superior courage in resisting the snide attacks made by the early bureaucracy within the Australian Post Office and the Public Service Commission. The attitude of the administration mellowed with the years, and today there is a very good relationship between the Union and both the Postal and the Telecommunications Commissions: similarly, this was the case with the Public Service Board before the establishment of the Commissions.

Federal

P.W. (Billy) Murphy was formerly General President of the Australian Letter Carriers’ Association and was the first General President of the Amalgamated Postal Workers’ Union, and continued in that capacity until 1934. Although full-time officials naturally have the spotlight focused upon them more so than their honorary counterparts, nevertheless Billy Murphy’s role, firstly in the struggle for amalgamation, and secondly as General President, is one that entitles him to a niche in union history.
Since 1963, the Union has taken a number of forward steps and there is little doubt that since his accession to the post of General Secretary, George Slater's ability has developed over the years, and he is now recognized as one of the most competent and forthright general secretaries of any important union in Australia.

An important change in the compilation of the Federal Executive's Annual Report to Conference was one of the first steps initiated by George Slater, and since his election in 1963, there is recorded in this report a virtual year-by-year history of the work of the organization, covering each particular period.

The compilation of this history therefore has been made easy because of this. Whether George was conscious of the fact or not, he was recording the period through which we were passing much more effectively than was previously the case. Historians of the future will be indebted to him for his industry and forward thinking.

Other progressive steps taken have been in conjunction with the former General President, Frank Waters, for the appointment of the first Research Officer, Geoff Blunden, and the subsequent additions to the Research and Industrial Section staff of Boyd Williams, Allan Walker, Larry Glover, Ian Hundley and others. Clearly, in this day and age, no full-time official can carry the workload that some members expect of him, and the setting up of the Research and Industrial Section is something for which George Slater should be commended. Of course, all officials have their detractors, but suffice is to say that George has secured support from the overwhelming mass of the membership throughout Australia.

New South Wales

Perhaps one figure who stands out in the campaign for amalgamation is George McCarthy, who was Secretary of the Australian Telegraph, Telephone Construction and Maintenance Union of New South Wales (from 1919, the Postal Linemen's Union).

George was a man of great natural ability and acted as advocate for his union before the Arbitration Court when registration as a union was obtained in 1912. Possessed of a good sense of humour, but also of a desire to see postal unions take the place in trade-union society to which they were entitled, George left his mark on the structure of the postal unions. George resigned from his position as State Secretary of the New South Wales branch of the Postal Linemen's Union in 1923; at that time he was a full-time official, and had been so for some years. He returned to union activity as Assistant Secretary of the New South Wales branch of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union in 1930 and held that
position continuously until his retirement in 1950.

**J.V. (Jack) Dwyer** was also a man of great vision and outstanding ability. He was Secretary and later President of the New South Wales branch of the Postal Sorters' Union and played an outstanding part in the amalgamation of the three unions. Jack Dwyer was one of the most capable advocates to ever appear in the Public Service Arbitrator's Court, and indeed for that matter, in the Arbitration Court prior to the Public Service Arbitration Act coming into existence in 1920. He was a natural choice as General Secretary of the amalgamated union and was elected by an overwhelming majority of 10 votes to 2 at the first Annual Conference held in 1925.

Jack Dwyer held the position of General Secretary until September 1947, when he was appointed as a Conciliation Commissioner by the Chifley Labor government. Prior to that, it is understood that he was also runner-up in a Cabinet ballot for the position of Public Service Board Commissioner.

Dwyer still retained memories of the bad old days, when the administration of both the Post Office and the Public Service Board did not regard union officials being of any consequence.

**N.W. (Bill) Burke** was the original General Secretary of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union (previously known as the Amalgamated Postal Linemen's, Sorters' and Letter Carriers' Union of Australia). Due to the fact that the other two unions involved in the amalgamation applied to be deregistered, the Australian Letter Carriers' Association was the body formally charged with the responsibility of amalgamation, and as Bill Burke was the General Secretary of the Association, he naturally was the first General Secretary of the amalgamated body until the Annual Conference of 1925 determined who should be the permanent occupant of that position. (Jack Dwyer took up duty as General Secretary early in 1926.) Bill became full-time Assistant Secretary of the New South Wales branch of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union in 1926, and held that position until 1930, when he was elected to succeed E.F. Murnane as State Secretary of the New South Wales branch. He continued in that position until 1955, and was for a period of twelve months thereafter a Research and Industrial Officer for the Union. He witnessed the development and consolidation of the Union and served as State Secretary of the New South Wales branch until 1947, when he was elected as General Secretary by the Twenty-third Annual Conference, succeeding Jack Dwyer.

Bill Burke was quite a different type to Dwyer in both outlook and method, but he served the Union faithfully and well, was honest in his approach at all times, and always accepted decisions of the Federal Executive and Conference without demur.
C.E. (Don) Parker was also a man of great ability. He never held full-time office, but was N.S.W. President of the Postal Linemen's Union, and on amalgamation, became a member of the Union's Federal Executive. He later was elected as Assistant General Secretary of the Union and then General President, a post that he held from 1934 to 1947. Don Parker was a man of great intellect and vision. He was originally a bush worker and saw the futility of the multiplicity of the unions that were operating when he entered the Postal Service. He was a student of Labor history, and unquestionably left his mark on the organization.

R.E. (Reg) Wellard succeeded Bill Burke as Secretary of the New South Wales branch in 1947, and held that position until defeated by J.N. Lynch in 1954. Formerly Assistant Federal Secretary of the Clerks' Union, "Tiny", as he was called, because of his great height, also played a significant role in the history of the Union. In retrospect, it seems a pity that a man with such undoubted ability did not continue in the service of the Union, but unfortunately, that was not to be.

Tiny Wellard, very quickly in his union career, mastered the intricacies of the various awards and seemed destined for higher honours, until his defeat by Lynch took place, principally because of the intrusion of the Industrial Groupers.

J.N. (Nev) Lynch, as Secretary of the New South Wales branch was a mercurial type, and although criticized by members, he did a very good job in the Union during his period of office. Internal faction fighting brought about his removal from office, a good deal of this being associated with his support for Frank Waters when Frank was elected General President in 1961.

F.J. (Fred) Richardson was elected Secretary of the New South Wales branch in 1965, and held this position until his untimely death in 1972. Fred was a man of kindly disposition, and pressures of office in a branch of the size of New South Wales undoubtedly contributed to his early passing.

T.A. (Tom) McLachlan was President of the New South Wales branch of the Union for a number of terms, and was also General President from 1959 to 1961. Tom was a likeable character and was a life-long Labor supporter. An excellent chairman, Tom presided over many turbulent meetings, but always commanded the respect of those in attendance. Tom was an original member of the A.P.W.U. and continued to be a financial member until his retirement from the Service.

The New South Wales branch has had many full-time officials. The first Secretary was E.F. (Ted) Murnane, who suffered a breakdown in 1929 and was replaced some little time after by N.W.
(Bill) Burke. *N.R. Mayell* took over from Nev Lynch and functioned as New South Wales Secretary for approximately five years. Neil Mayell was a capable official with plenty of courage, and it was a pity that his union career as Secretary of that branch was of comparatively short duration. *D.P. Rochfort* and *R. Dowdell* both acted as Secretary for brief periods until F.J. (Fred) Richardson took over that position. Another member who distinguished himself in the New South Wales branch was *Harold Baker*, who was originally a Branch Organizer and then Assistant Secretary. Harold Baker was a very serious type of official, who worked very hard in the full-time positions that he held down, and he was also another loss to the organization. Similarly, *W. Dolheguy*, who was Organizer of the New South Wales branch for some six years, and formerly a member of the Federal Executive, also did a very good job of work for the Union.

*Des Rochfort* succeeded Fred Richardson as Secretary of the New South Wales branch and held that position until early 1976, when ill-health forced his resignation. Des was a very popular official and was well-known throughout the length and breadth of New South Wales. He was another casualty of the pressures of union work. *Ron Dowell* was a Branch Organizer for New South Wales until his defeat at the ballot. He is now Secretary of the Flight Stewards’ Association. *D.L. (Lorrie) Skelton* was also an Organizer for the branch, as were *Ron Dawson* and *Norm Underhill*.

*Jack Strange* was an Organizer for a number of years, and similarly, *Jim Andrewartha* also held down that position for a period of time. *Doug Cassidy* was an Organizer for New South Wales based at Newcastle, and was well and favourably known to all members in that area. Again, ill-health was a factor in Doug’s retirement and he is a distinct loss to the Union. *Jack Ronan* has been an Organizer for the New South Wales branch for a period of time. *D. (Des) Barney* also has been an Organizer for quite some time, and has acted as Secretary for varying periods. *Peter Evans* was originally elected an Organizer prior to becoming Assistant Secretary of the branch, and has a very firm grip of line staff matters. He also has a very good sense of history. Peter was also Assistant General Secretary (Telecom).

*C.J. McGrane* was originally Assistant General Secretary of the Union, and was in turn defeated by *Max Lovelock*. Subsequently, McGrane recontested this position and was successful at the ballot. Upon the retirement of *N.W. Burke*, he was elected General Secretary by the Annual Conference after three ballots had been held. He continued in this position from 1956 until 1963, when he was defeated by George Slater, and subsequently he was a
temporary Organizer with the New South Wales branch. He recontested the position of General Secretary, but was decisively defeated by George Slater in 1965. Subsequently, he was expelled from membership of the Union.

R.W. (Reg) Cunninghame was President of the New South Wales branch for approximately twelve years, which is one of the longest periods any member has held the presidency of that branch.

Brian Carey, Jim Donnellan, Jack Gill, Tom Kenny, Leo Hodges, Charlie Anson, Dave Ash, Ron Southwell, George Laing, Fred Burgess were also in the forefront of union activity in New South Wales.

Victoria

J.J. (Joe) Peterken was elected the first full-time Secretary of the Victorian branch in 1925. He was formerly Secretary of the Linemen's Union. He had a very good all-round knowledge of all aspects of the Postal and Telecommunications Service, and held the position of State Secretary in Victoria until his retirement in 1947.

A. (Les) Savage became Secretary of the Victorian branch following the retirement of Joe Peterken in 1947. He held the secretarialship until his retirement in 1961. Les Savage had a good all-round knowledge of the Union as a whole. He was also a stabilizing force so far as the Victorian branch was concerned. He contributed much to the development of the organization in Victoria, and his role in union building cannot be over-estimated.

J.J. (Jack) Moloney was an Organizer with the Victorian branch, but was caught up in the D.L.P. structure, he being a strong supporter of that party. Jack Moloney displayed a great aptitude and knowledge of union affairs, and if he had not lined up with the D.L.P., he would have been destined for higher office.

M.K. (Kevin) Doherty, who succeeded George Slater as State Secretary in Victoria, also contributed a good deal to the organization, but he suffered from poor health and was compelled ultimately to relinquish his position.

Similarly, Allan Downard, as Organizer, also did a good job of work for the Union.

Kevin Doherty was succeeded by Doug Hamilton, who later also had to vacate office because of illness. Doug was cast in a different mould to George Slater and Kevin Doherty, but was also a good union builder.

Fred Bourke succeeded Doug Hamilton as State Secretary. Fred has a tremendous capacity for work and was also the Union's
representative on the Protective Clothing Committee until replaced by Dennis Geisler.

Pat Kirley, the full-time State President of the Victorian branch, is a man of considerable experience, having formerly been an organizer for the Timber Workers' Union in that state. Pat brings common sense to bear on the many problems confronting the Union.

Arch Peeler, who acted as Industrial Officer as well as President of the Victorian branch, also did a very good job of work over the years. Arch had a long association with the Union and gave evidence in a mail officer's case over forty years ago. He is now reaping the fruits of retirement.

Present officials of the Victorian branch, including Dennis Giesler, Robin Arndt, David Bowler and Bill Oakman, are also performing well as a team in the Victorian branch area.

W.G. (Bill) Bryson was Assistant Secretary of the Victorian branch of the Union for a lengthy period. Bill won the Victorian seat of Bourke in the federal parliament, was defeated and subsequently recontested the seat and was successful again. However, during the split in the Labor movement, he took sides with the D.L.P. and was defeated at the 1955 election.

Dan Minogue and Harry Dennett were both Presidents of the Victorian branch of the Union. Dan was an outstanding footballer in his day. Both Dan and Harry represented the Victorian branch at Annual Conferences of the Union. Vic Bristow, Alec Stewart, Jack Spence, Paul Eadie, J.D. (Jack) Macpherson, Jack Hickey, Bert Raven all played a prominent part in the Victorian Branch.

Queensland

Allan Aitken was the first full-time Secretary of the Queensland branch, holding that position from 1925 to 1946. Allan was a very efficient Secretary, but as he was also engaged in business as a public accountant, the pressures became too great for him to hold down both jobs. Allan played a very important part in the formative days of the Union, and the Queensland branch owes him a considerable debt of gratitude for all that he gave the organization during his twenty-one years of service.

F.J. (Frank) Waters succeeded Allan Aitken as Secretary of the Queensland branch in September 1946, and held that position until 31 December 1972, which was a record term of office so far as the Queensland branch was concerned. It is a remarkable feature that the term of office of Aitken and Waters encompassed a period of over forty-seven years.
Frank Waters was originally a member of the Committee of Management, then Vice-President, and subsequently Assistant Secretary of the Queensland branch, until he resigned from the service in 1932 to contest the state election as an A.L.P. candidate for Kelvin Grove, Brisbane. He was successful at that election and held office until 1938, when he was defeated. After a period of war service, he returned to union activity in 1946, and with the assistance of loyal men such as Eric Burke in the first instance, and subsequently W.K. (Doc) Spence and Ted Ashmore, built up the Queensland branch so far as membership and prestige was concerned. During their term of office, the membership was increased by two and a half times, and all in all, the branch showed a measure of stability that was reflected in the confidence shown by the membership, when for a long period of time, most of the branch officials were elected unopposed. Frank was only opposed once in the period after he was elected until his retirement in 1972, and that was in 1959, but he easily won the contest.

Frank Waters was elected as General President in 1961, and held that office until November 1973. He was a member of the Executive of the Trades and Labour Council for over twenty-six years, a delegate to the Queensland Central Executive of the A.L.P. for approximately twenty years, and represented Australia as an adviser at the International Labour Conference in 1962 and 1970. In addition, he represented the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union at a Congress of the Postal, Telephone and Telegraphists International in 1963, and again in 1966, and later in 1975. He also attended a number of regional conferences of the P.T.T.I. as a representative of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union.

Eric Burke carried out a magnificent job of work over the years, but again, ill-health compelled him to retire somewhat earlier than expected. Eric was a man of tremendous courage and considerable ability, and the part he played in the fight against the Groupers, contributed much to their eventual destruction.

E.T. (Ted) Ashmore was President of the Queensland branch of the A.P.W.U. from 1944 to 1962, and was formerly a member of the Committee of the Management of the branch prior to his accession to the presidency. Ted served in the A.I.F. during the First World War and was originally a bush worker. He joined the Engineering Branch of the Department as an exempt lineman between the two world wars and took an early interest in union affairs. He represented the Queensland branch at many Annual Conferences of the A.P.W.U. and was elected General President of the organization in 1957, and occupied that position until 1959. In addition, Ted was a delegate to the Queensland Central
Executive of the A.L.P. and the Trades and Labour Council. A self-educated man, he mastered the rules of the Union and played an outstanding role in the defeat of the Industrial Groups, who were trying to obtain control of the Union. Ted was an A.L.P. Senate candidate in the 1957 elections. A giant of a man physically, and mentally, Ted's part in the building of the Queensland branch in particular, and the A.P.W.U. in general, cannot be overestimated.

W.K. (Doc) Spence, who was a full-time official for many years, also enriched the history of the Union in Queensland. He was well-known in all parts of the state and did a magnificent job of work until ill-health compelled him to retire. Eric Burke and Doc Spence will long be remembered by members of the Queensland branch.

R.P. (Reg) Kennedy, as Assistant Secretary of the Queensland branch, did a competent job in that regard.

Frank Waters was succeeded by R.J. (Bob) Briskey for the position of State Secretary, and Bob has thoroughly justified his appointment. He will leave his mark upon the organization and has already been elected Assistant General Secretary (Telecom) of the Union.

A new group of officials was returned at the 1975 election, namely Len Code, State President, Roy Hudson, Assistant Secretary (Postal), and John James, Assistant Secretary (Telecom). These three officials, together with Bob Briskey, are doing a magnificent job in raising the prestige of the Union in Queensland.

Bill Dunn succeeded W.K. (Doc) Spence as President of the Queensland branch in 1972. Bill was formerly Vice-President and a member of the State Executive of the Queensland branch for many years. He tackled most problems with a common-sense approach and did a very good job of work until he retired on the grounds of invalidity in 1975.

Col Spence was employed as a mail officer in the Brisbane Mail Exchange prior to successfully contesting the position of Assistant Secretary of the Queensland branch in 1972. He defeated Reg Kennedy, who was attempting a comeback. Col was a popular figure on the job until ill-health forced him to retire in 1975.

South Australia

O.H. (Tom) Rosser was the first Secretary of the South Australian branch of the Union. He relinquished this position in January 1927 and later was elected President of the branch and held this position for a lengthy period. He again contested office when the secretaryship was declared a full-time position in 1947, and was successful at the ballot. Tom held down the position until December 1953, when ill-health compelled him to retire. A man of gentle disposition, but of considerable knowledge, Tom acted as a stabilizing force and adopted the role of mediator when the Annual Conference was almost evenly divided. He will long be remembered for his work in the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union.

D.J. (Doug) Allen was elected Secretary of the South Australian branch following the resignation of Tom Rosser in 1953. Doug Allen was an outstanding figure so far as the Union was concerned. He was an instructor at the Linemen Training School, Adelaide, then transferred to the Third Division, but came back to the Union when he won the secretaryship. Due to his unremitting efforts, South Australia was the first branch of the Union to erect its own building. He was an effective debater and contributed much to discussions at the meetings of the Federal Executive and the Annual Conference. He played a very significant role in the 1968 transport strike, but unfortunately his health was impaired over the years and he decided to return to the Department. He is now employed in the Postal Commission as Manager, Industrial Relations Department, South Australia. In more ways than one, it was a tragedy that he was compelled to cease his association with the Union, but the organization will be ever grateful for the magnificent job of work that he performed over the years.

J.P. Hughes was a full-time Secretary of the South Australian branch and held that position for a few years. The oncoming depression made it impossible for the branch to pay a full-time secretary, and he resigned and made way for J.V. (Joe) Dwyer, who was a part-time Secretary for almost twenty years.

C.R. (Clem) Johnson served for a lengthy period as State President of the South Australian branch of the Union. Clem did not contest the position for a period, but has now returned to his former post. Clem is a forthright speaker and contributed greatly to discussions at both the Annual Conference and the Federal Executive. He also served as General Vice-President for approximately five years. Clem has also represented Australia at regional conferences of the P.T.T.I.

Fred Walsh was formerly Organizer, but later Assistant Secre-
tary of the South Australian branch of the Union, and has done a good job of work in that regard. A former mail officer, he is familiar with the problems of the postal side.

Len Burdon, Alex Stuart, Joe Dwyer as well as many other rank and file members contributed much to placing the South Australian Branch on a sound footing.

**West Australia**

*W. (Bill) Creech* was Secretary of the Western Australian branch for a record period, assuming that position in 1925 and holding it until 1947. Bill was a very modest man. He played a worthwhile role in the development of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union in Western Australia.

*L.J. (Laurie) Rice* succeeded Bill Creech as Secretary of the Western Australian branch in 1947 and held that position until he was defeated by Roly Power.

*R.F. (Roly) Power* was Secretary of the Western Australian branch of the A.P.W.U. from 1957 until his retirement in 1970. As a result of an inquiry into the Western Australian ballot for the secretarship in 1957, the court ordered that a fresh ballot be held, at which Roly was successful. On taking office, he found that the cupboard was bare, and then proceeded, with the help of loyal colleagues, to place the branch in a stable financial position and had the satisfaction, on relinquishing the position of Secretary, that the West Australian branch was very financial indeed. Roly represented the A.P.W.U. at the Asian Regional Conference of the P.T.T.I., held in Kuala Lumpur in 1968.

*Len Hale* succeeded Roly Power as Secretary of the Western Australian branch on the latter's retirement in 1970.

*J. (Jock) Hughes* has been Assistant Secretary of the Western Australian branch of the Union for many years, and has played a worthwhile role in the destinies of the organization. A popular figure on the job, Jock was a great help in the building of the Western Australian branch of the organization.

*Alf Donnelly* carried out the duties of President of the Western Australian branch of the Union in a most capable fashion. A familiar figure at Annual Conferences, Alf, in his quiet, unobtrusive way, was a tower of strength to the branch. He was succeeded by *Cyril Buswell*, who also left his mark on the organization. Ill-health affected Cyril in later years, and he has been compelled to retire from union activity.

Percy Stirling, J.P. Kenny, "Tiger" Payne were also prominent in the affairs of the Western Australian Branch.
Tasmania

On the Tasmanian scene, others who played an important role in the early days of the union development were F. Uhlman, the first Branch Secretary, Jim Thynne, who for some years was the State Secretary, based at Launceston, when the head office was moved to that city; Charlie Durkin, who performed a worthwhile job; and later, B.V. (Barney) Lynch. Barney was a man of considerable ability, whose death was a sad loss to the Union. He was succeeded by V.J. (Viv) Deegan, who is still the occupant of that position. Viv, who in addition to being Secretary of the Tasmanian branch, is also General President, has distinguished himself in both fields of activity. During the period he has held both offices, but more particularly as State Secretary of the Tasmanian branch, the prestige of the organization has been increased very considerably.

E.D. Pinkard one of the founders of the Tasmanian Branch played a prominent part in the Tasmanian Branch affairs.

Postmasters-General

The various Postmasters-General were a complex lot; however, several names stand out—Senator Bill Ashley, Senator Don Cameron, Lionel Bowen and Senator Reg Bishop—while A.E. (Texas) Green was Postmaster-General for the comparatively short period of one year.

On the Liberal side, Don Parker claimed that Archdale Parkhill was the best of the Liberal Postmasters-General to deal with. Archie Cameron was not a very popular Minister. Most of the Country Party occupants of the position were lack-lustre types. Larry Anthony did leave his imprint on the relationships between the "Investigation Officers" (post office police) and the staff by laying down that an employee who was being interrogated by an Investigation Officer had the right to have a union official or a fellow employee present during the questioning.

Charles Davidson was a colonel in the A.I.F. prior to entering politics, and the authoritarian, inflexible military mind influenced his thinking so far as industrial relationships were concerned. For example, it was alleged that during the 1956 Sydney Mail Room stoppage, he threatened to bring in the troops to shift the mails. However, wiser counsels prevailed. People who watched troops being used in the New York letter carriers' strike on television, had a grandstand view of how inept was their performance.
Sir Alan Hulme, the last Liberal Postmaster-General, was a public accountant before his entry into politics, and had a good grip of departmental activities, but while he was long on the administrative side, he was short on industrial relations.

W.G. Spence, a legendary figure in the Australian Labor movement, was Postmaster-General in the Hughes government. Spence was a founder of the Australian Workers’ Union, and was the author of *Australia’s Awakening* and *The History of the Australian Workers’ Union*. It was apparent that Spence was a prisoner of the Post Office and Public Service Board bureaucracy, and ran into trouble with the nascent postal trade-union movement. Spence broke with the Labor Party over conscription and became a supporter of Prime Minister Hughes. It was a human tragedy to see Spence, after his life-long association with the Labor movement, go over to the ranks of the enemy.

W. Webster was another who abandoned Labor’s cause. Webster was Postmaster-General for five years. He also locked horns with the post office unions, and the early issues of the *Postal Advocate* bear testimony to the contempt of the Letter Carriers’ Association and the Postal Sorters’ Union for his policies.

Bill Ashley was Postmaster-General in the Curtin and Chifley governments, and was respected by the post office rank-and-file and the union movement. He was succeeded by Don Cameron, an old-time socialist. Bill was a kindly, likeable type and a warmhearted human being.

Joe Lyons was the first Postmaster-General in the Scullin government, and was not exactly idolized by the staff and unions in the postal service. Lyons was essentially a conservative type of Labor man, and eventually deserted to the enemies of Labor, ultimately becoming Prime Minister of the U.A.P. (Liberal) government. Lyons held the Post Office portfolio from 4 January 1931 to 6 January 1932 and was succeeded by A.E. (Texas) Green.

When the Whitlam government was swept into office in 1972, Lionel Bowen was elected a Minister and was selected as Postmaster-General by the Prime Minister. Bowen swiftly got on top of the portfolio, and in total, his relationships with the postal unions was very good. True, there were some differences, but overall he displayed ability of an outstanding order and was selected for higher office by Prime Minister Whitlam, who appointed him his Special Minister of State.

Reg Bishop succeeded Lionel Bowen as Postmaster-General, and was the last incumbent of that position, when the two Commissions, Postal and Telecommunications, commenced to function as from 1 July 1975. Reg, an ex-union official, established good relationships with the postal and telecom trade unions during his term of office.
Directors-General

The appointment of H.P. Brown as head of the Australian Post Office in December 1923 heralded changes in the administration of the Department. Brown was a former British post office engineer and did much to improve the operations of that Department. He was succeeded by D. McVey, who had an appreciation of the need for better industrial relations between the administration and the unions.

G.T. Chippindall, who succeeded L.B. Fanning in 1949, had experience in the personnel field, and this stood him in good stead in his dealings with the unions and staff. Chippindall was the first Director-General to experience a strike in the Australian Post Office, and it is believed that his advice against the precipitate action favoured by certain Cabinet Ministers in that dispute received the endorsement of the government.

P.E.R. Vanthoff followed Chippindall as Director-General, but only held that post for seven months.

M.R.C. Stradwick was appointed as Director-General in January 1959, but resigned to enter the private sector of industry after less than three years in office. Charles Stradwick rose to the top mainly through his work on the personnel side of the Department.

F.P. O'Grady followed Stradwick as Post Office chief in September 1961 and retired after four years in office. Frank O'Grady was a capable engineer, but some of the advice given him by certain of the Post Office bureaucrats and the Public Service Board in relation to the introduction of electronic coding machines in the Mail Branches was not of the highest order.

T.A. (Trevor) Housley succeeded O'Grady in 1965, and held office until his untimely death in 1968. A former member of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union, Housley was initially a junior mechanic in training, but like many others, was demoted during the depression years. He later passed the Third Division clerical examination, then subsequently qualified as an engineer and in the process, acquired a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Queensland. His relationships with the unions were very good, and all in all, his early passing was a great loss to the Department and staff.

Sir John Knott, who followed Housley, held down the job for less than four years. He was a good human being.

Eber Lane, the last of the Directors-General, assumed office in 1972 and held that position until 30 June 1975. Eber had unique
experience in the Postmaster-General's Department, having served as Director of Posts and Telegraphs in Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales prior to being appointed Director-General. Like Trevor Housley, he was a former member of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union. Eber was a kindly human being, and made a good impression in his handling of industrial matters, and in the process, established a good rapport with Post Office unions and staffs.
Appendix 2

Royal Commission of 1910

Prominent members of Post Office unions and staff associations who gave evidence before the 1910 Royal Commission included:

New South Wales: E.H. Burgess, Secretary, Construction Branch Union of Telegraph and Telephone Service; G.H. Saywell, lineman, G.P.O., Sydney; representative, Construction Branch Union of Telegraph and Telephone Service; J. Baikie, foreman lineman, Sydney; representative, Construction Branch Union of Telegraph and Telephone Service; E.C. Cross, letter carrier, Sydney; Secretary, New South Wales Letter Carriers', Mail Drivers' and Assistants' Association; W.E. Finney, senior sorter, Sydney; President, Mail Branch Association; W. Grantham, sorter, Sydney; representative, Mail Branch Association; G.E. Orriell, letter carrier, North Sydney; Vice-President, Letter Carriers', Mail Drivers' and Assistants' Association; D.J. Ryan, letter carrier, Newtown, New South Wales; President, Letter Carriers, Mail Drivers and Assistants' Association.


South Australia: A.G.S. Leslie, lineman, G.P.O., Adelaide; Secretary, Electric Telegraph and Telephone Construction Branch Union of South Australia.

Western Australia: L.O. Bowen, letter-carrier, Perth; Secretary, General Division Association of Western Australia; T.J. Myers, letter-carrier, Western Australia; President, Post and Telegraph General Division Association of Western Australia.


Other organizations that provided key witnesses were represented by: Miss C. Berridge, postmistress, Albert Park, Victoria; representative, Victorian Post and Telegram Association; W.E. Chambers, senior instrument fitter, Adelaide; representative, South Australian Post and Telegraph Electrical and Mechanical Association; T.C. Delaney, clerical assistant, Sydney; representative, Postal Clerks' and Clerical Assistants' Association of New South Wales, S.C. Francis, relieving postmaster, Sydney; Secretary, New South Wales Postmaster's Association; C.W.C. Marr, engine-driver and fitter, G.P.O., Sydney; President, Electrical and Mechanical Association of New South Wales; Secretary, Federal Post and Telegraph Electrical and Mechanical Association; and later, a federal Nationalist (Liberal) Cabinet Minister; M.J.D. Page, Secretary, Professional and Clerical Association, New South Wales; Women's Telephone Attendants' Association; New South Wales Postal Assistants' Association; Post and Telegraph Association, all states; and A.E. Green, clerk, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. Green later served as a Minister and Postmaster-General in the Scullin Labor government.
I have been refreshing my memory over the last couple of days with the history of unions and associations in the Commonwealth Public Service. I expect you are much better informed on that then I am, and will know, of course, that even though we had unions and associations in the middle of the last century, it really was not until 1911 (not so long ago, historically) that we had them in the Commonwealth Public Service. Those of you who care to, can get a fair idea of the spirit of the times around about 1911 if you read the *Tele-Technician* of February 1942, which was the journal of the then Australian Postal Electricians’ Union, now known as the Postal Telecommunications Technicians’ Association. The then General Secretary, that great stalwart, indeed, that very great man, E.F. Meir, wrote a most illuminating article on the times in which Public Service unionism was born.

It is true, of course, that we had an Arbitration and Conciliation Act in this country in 1904, but it was the belief of a lot of people in authority then, including presumably governments and members of parliament, that Commonwealth public servants were not members of industry as such. The Commonwealth Conciliation Act of 1904 was designed to cover people in industry, but industry did not include Commonwealth public servants. It was not until 1911 that the Fisher government passed the Public Service Act, which has been amended from time to time, and which recognized that status of public servants, arbitration-wise. It was in March 1912 that Meir’s Association, the Postal Electricians, filed a claim, and
between that time and about 1920, no fewer than eighty awards were made in favour of Public Service associations and unions.

What is also interesting in this article [in the *Tele-Technician*] is an account of the actual hostility to the claims of unions for recognition, and of hostility to their fair and just claims for improved wages and conditions.

But things changed after the First World War, and in 1923, with the passing of the Public Service Act as we more or less know it now, and the establishment of a Public Service Board with the late Sir Brudenell White as its first chairman, a new era commenced. I think round about that time we saw many changes and since then, in my opinion, not only have the conditions of Commonwealth public servants improved, but the relationships between the Public Service associations and organizations and the Department on the one hand, and the Public Service Board on the other, have also improved. It is true, of course, that we have our differences; that will always be the way. I have no doubt you have your differences here, and that, too, will always be the way. But relationships have undoubtedly improved and by a series of awards, agreements reached with the Board and so on, Commonwealth public servants in all classes have had conditions bettered and have had quite a lot of those that are important incorporated in Public Service regulations, general orders and arbitration awards.

While I don't want to talk about the past unnecessarily, I thought it was well to refresh my own memory on these things before coming here, because at any point of time any group of men can make the mistake of believing that they are starting from scratch. I think you will agree, since you have been in this game a long while, that you are not starting from scratch, even at this conference. This is your thirty-fourth, and surely your predecessors achieved a lot too. For my part, I feel a great sense of indebtedness to men like E.F. Meir and others back in the early years of this century, who laid foundations on which it has been possible to build. I think we have left behind us not only the worst of the conditions of the early part of this century, but we have left behind us, too, the very poor relationships that existed in those times.

I believe wholeheartedly, as you do, in a union or association of Post Office workers. I came into the Post Office back in 1920 as a telegraph messenger, and in my time have been in various associations, including this one, although I think it had a different name in those years. I have always found—and I gave myself at one stage very actively to union work—that for the most part, the people active in Public Service associations and unions are consecrated men. I know I used to regard myself that way and used
to feel that my fellow-unionists did not so regard themselves. I suppose that is just humanity working itself out. It is sometimes very difficult, as you know, to get behind the apathy and indifference of a lot of our members on things that we believe are important. This is sometimes true, of course, in departmental and administrative circles, and again we face the problem created by the fact that other people do not always see things the way we see them.

The past is behind us, and so much has been done that is worthwhile that we do not have to do it again. Much of it has been embodied in tradition, and much of it in the Public Service Act and Arbitration Act, although there is a tendency in some union circles (and I am not expressing a view on it) that maybe we “have had” the arbitration system. If I could express a personal view, I would simply remind you, and remind myself, that our present arbitration system was only obtained with the sweat, tears and tribulations of all our predecessors. I think they would turn in their graves if they knew we were thinking of tossing it out. For my own part, therefore, I feel the objective should be to improve the system, as it possibly needs improving, rather than abandon it to go back to the days when victory often went to the strongest.

Casting around in my own mind in the last day or so for a theme on which I might speak to you, I felt I could not do better than remind you and myself of our heavy responsibilities. The responsibility for running the Post Office does not reside exclusively in the Director-General. He could not possibly run the Department on his own. You all appreciate the absurdity of that. No one man, no one group could run a department representing the biggest utility, the biggest organization in this country, on his own. It is essentially a team job, and for my sins I have been made captain of the team for some time. All I can hope for, personally, will be to discharge faithfully and conscientiously the sort of duties and responsibilities that devolve upon any captain or team leader. You know what those are as well as I do. Of course, there also devolves upon the Director-General, under the Minister, a responsibility for seeing that the Department renders the service to the public which it is supposed to render. Here, again, the Director-General cannot do this on his own, and the extent to which the service is rendered successfully and efficiently can only reflect the willingness, loyalty and efficiency of all the staff. While it is true that management has a heavy responsibility, management, and the people who constitute management in this particular case, are appointed under an Act with certain statutory functions, and they have a real responsibility to render the service which is laid down and required of them under the Post and Telegraph Act.
Groups such as your own have a very heavy responsibility too—in some directions, a heavier one. I think any council, sitting as you are to consider the conditions and welfare of its members—and your own members constitute more than one-third of the Post Office staff—has an extremely heavy responsibility. Your decisions and your deliberations bear very, very strongly on the hopes and aspirations, work and welfare of many people.

I can remember when I joined the Post Office in Perth as a telegraph messenger and I was rather appalled by the physical conditions in which I worked. The actual environment of the delivery section was dirty. I was brought up in a reasonably Christian home, I think, and the language of fellow officers of my age appalled me too, and I could not help feeling that the sooner I got out of that environment the better. Had I been older, had I been charged perhaps with a bit more missionary zeal, I might perhaps have made some contribution towards changing the environment, but at that age, young fellows are possibly somewhat selfish, and I did my best to get away from it. In later years, I learned to acknowledge the responsibility that devolves not only on management but also on Public Service organizations to improve their environment as well as their relationships, and much progress has been made in regard thereto.

If I can come back to my main theme, however, and talk about the future, and in particular, the future relationships between Public Service organizations and the administration, which, after all, is only composed of members of Public Service organizations, I should like to believe that we accept an axiomatic that we have a common objective, that we are all part and parcel of an organization which has certain responsibilities to a government, whatever that government may be at any point of time, and to the public, and that in discharging that responsibility, we endeavour, as far as we are humanly capable, to achieve our objective jointly.

Those of you who are amateur photographers will know that the modern camera, fitted with a range-finder and focusing device, gives a sort of dual image until it is properly focused, when a single image is produced. Sometimes I think Post Office-cum-union relationships are like that. The union sees a problem through a particular set of spectacles and the administration sees the same problem through another. It is not until those two sets of spectacles are jointly adjusted that we start to see the problem clearly, in its proper perspective.

It is only by discussion and understanding that we get a clear appreciation of what the problem is from the administration’s point of view and the union’s point of view. That again, I think, only
highlights our own responsibilities to the Post Office, by which we
all are employed, and to each other. When the General Secretary
goes overseas next year, as I understand he will, he will have some
opportunity of seeing how this sort of thing is done in the British
Post Office, and elsewhere. As most of you know, the British Post
Office has what is called the Whitley system, which provides
machinery for the consideration of problems where those problems
are of mutual interest. We have not got that system in this country
and some people I have spoken to from England are inclined to
deplore its absence. I think it is a rather formal system, but it may
be that there are lessons to be learned from it, and I hope the
General Secretary will be given an opportunity of seeing how it
works. I have undertaken to give him any necessary introductions
for that purpose, because I think that you and I should know
whether he feels that the system offers advantages in this country.

But we don't necessarily have to wait on a Whitley system to
make progress. I think there is ample scope for greater collaboration
between Public Service organizations and the Department. We do
have it, of course, when after a conference such as this you take
to the Department and/or to the Public Service Board certain
resolutions. These are discussed, considered and debated, and in
due course a decision is given by whatever authority is charged
with making that decision. But even that does not, in my view,
offer quite the scope it should for consideration of problems. I am
inclined to think that some of them should be considered jointly
before they are even submitted. At times, I have had the opportunity
of discussing resolutions passed by this union and by others, when
the representatives of both the union and the administration have
agreed that there is nothing more that can be done about particular
resolutions. In odd cases, it has been agreed that perhaps they
should not have been submitted in the form they were, which only
suggests, I think, that the matters concerned were not given enough
consideration down the line before being translated into resolutions
and decisions. In so far as I am able, therefore, in the years ahead,
I should like to establish some sort of better background against
which we can approach this important question of joint consultation.

Better machinery for consultation should also serve a very useful
purpose in another direction, to my mind. It should bring home
to all of us our own responsibilities to our members, to the Post
Office, to the public, and it should serve to educate us. Of course,
the process is a time-taking one, and I have no doubt at all in my
own mind that that is what some of my own people will tell me.
They may say that to get around a table and discuss a problem
takes time, and that they cannot afford the time and have to get
on with the job. I think, however, that the time has to be afforded if, in the long run, the job is to be done better and more efficiently and, importantly from your point of view, with better morals, with better spirit and greater happiness by the people who have to do it.

So that I am proposing to explore ways and means of improving machinery for consultation. I should not like to make any promises in that direction at all at this stage. I did not come prepared to say what the machinery could be, but simply to offer, in good faith, my view that the devising of some such machinery should be worthwhile.

I think, too, that it should be possible to improve our relationships, although I am not suggesting for a moment that they are bad. I do not mean it that way, because I think relationships between the Post Office and Public Service organizations have never been better, and that those between the same organizations and the Board and between the Board and the Departments have never been better. But we just miss the bus sometimes when it comes to making progress on certain things. For example, I notice on your agenda about one hundred and fifty odd items; some of them were hardy annuals in my day in the Personnel Branch, and either they ought not to be on the list of resolutions when you finish, or we should do something about them. It is not much good dragging on hardy annuals if they have no merit. I think you will agree with that. If they have merit, then we should endeavour to make real progress departmentally and with the Board. The consideration of these things in earlier stages may be worthwhile and may, in the long run, facilitate progress in the final stages.

While I didn't come here to give a long address, and I am sure you won't want me to weary you by so doing, I shall be quite happy to participate in any discussion; I shall be happy, as the General Secretary suggested, to answer any questions which may arise from what I have said. I might even be persuaded to express a personal view about some of your problems, but trust you won't expect me to speak on behalf of a Department that has not as yet officially considered any of the matters that you have on your agenda, much less on behalf of the Minister.

If I could close on one note, it is this. That whatever may be shortcomings in your view of departmental attitudes or of Public Service Board attitudes to your problems, I should like to assure you that everybody does approach those problems sincerely and with a genuine desire to resolve them, even though progress may be hampered sometimes by a lack of understanding due to different points of view. But I don't know of anybody, except the odd man
here and there (and we have them in the Department, as you have them in the union) who would attempt to bring his personal point of view to bear on a problem calling for impartial judgement.

I should like to give you this final assurance. For my part, I shall do my level best to see that the excellent relationships that have been built up over the years between your organization and the Post Office are not only maintained, but are improved.
Appendix 4

Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International

It is now more than sixty years since the first tentative collaboration between trade unions of postal, telegraph and telephone (P.T.T.) workers took place. It is more than fifty years since the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (P.T.T.I.) began its existence under its present name as an international trade secretariat.

The P.T.T.I. was not the first international organization based on an industry. It was preceded on this path by the International Federation of Railway Workers, whose first congress was held at Zurich in 1893. This Federation created an international committee for the study of railway workers' interests, and could be considered the first international trade secretariat.

The P.T.T. workers have the honour of having set afoot the first international assembly in the postal sector. This meeting took place from 31 May to 3 June 1899, in Italy, and at this stage was held under government auspices. Nevertheless, making use of this occasion, the telegraphists themselves met on 1 June of that year and discussed among themselves possibilities for future exchanges among telegraphists at the international level.

The suggestion that an international trade secretariat for the P.T.T. might be created was raised by the “General Association of P.T.T. Agents” of France in the course of its congress, held at Marseille from 15 to 17 June 1910. The congress had been presented with two propositions—and for that time, extremely revolutionary ones. The first was to set up a broad national trade union for all categories of P.T.T. workers, and the second, to create an international organization. The first international conference of
P.T.T. workers took place on 16 June 1911 in the Learned Societies’ building in Paris. There were difficulties, stemming from differences of language, of character and from a lack of unity at the trade-union level in general. Nevertheless, statutes were adopted and Felix Koch was elected General Secretary. The seat of the International was fixed at Berne. Felix Koch, the first General Secretary of the P.T.T.I., had personal contacts with a colleague in the I.F.R.W., before elaborating the first statues of the International. Article 3 of these statutes defined the principal aims of the “International Federation of P.T.T. Employees” as:

- to facilitate the study of professional problems;
- to improve the moral and material situation of members;
- to encourage international solidarity among P.T.T. personnel.

Every organization that had for its aim the study of professional problems and that desired to ameliorate the moral and material level of its members could join.

In 1914, eight countries were affiliated to the Federation. Austria (3000 members), Bulgaria (1600), France (55 000), Great Britain (80 000), the Netherlands (1400), Italy (10 000), Portugal (2000) and Switzerland (6000), in total a membership of 159 000. The first congress was held very shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, on 25 and 26 June 1914. The declaration of war marked the end for the young and growing International Federation, and its General Secretary died three years later.

From 1918 onwards, at various times and in different places, a movement made itself felt for the constitution of an international P.T.T. workers' organization. This tendency was particularly strong in France, Great Britain, Italy, Belgium and Austria. The first real initiative came this time from Great Britain. Bringing with him to the Congress of the National Trade Union of P.T.T. agents of France the good wishes of his organization, the British Union of Post Office Workers, Colleague Winyard expressed the desire to see constituted a new P.T.T. International. His proposal was followed by organizations of other countries who were represented at the congress.

In 1919, a new P.T.T. trade union was founded in Austria. On 8 October of the same year, this organization sent a letter to all organizations whose existence it knew of, suggesting the holding of a multinational conference of the P.T.T. There was a considerable response, and the meeting took place on 5 and 6 February in Vienna. The accent there was on two important problems. The first concerned “war crimes”, and in spite of the bitterness that such a question raised, a compromise was found, thanks to Austrian
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membership, and a resolution was adopted condemning war as such, its consequences, and the existence of institutions that could be the cause of future wars. The second problem concerned the development of the P.T.T.I. In a particularly revolutionary atmosphere (which can be noted in the terms of the resolution protesting against the blockade of Russia, the white terror in Hungary and conditions under which the Republic of Austria had been constituted), the P.T.T.I. managed to come into being. The new Executive Committee met on 8 February, and appointed Dr Ludwig Maier provisional General Secretary.

A further conference took place on 15 and 16 June, this time at Berne. The constitutive congress held at Milan from 31 October to 2 November of the same year confirmed the appointment of Dr Maier, and J.W. Bowen, General Secretary of the Union of Post Office Workers of Great Britain, was elected President of the P.T.T.I. He was to retain this position for twenty-nine years, until he was replaced by Charles Geddes, General Secretary of the same organization, who occupied the post until 1957. His successor, William Norton of Dublin, left office in July 1960, after having been for thirty-five years a member of the P.T.T.I. Executive Committee. Carl Stenger of the German Democratic Republic was President from 1960 to 1966. He retired and was replaced by Ron Smith, general secretary of the Union of Post Office workers of Great Britain. Smith was appointed to a position in the British steel industry by the British government in 1967 and Stenger returned as president until 1969 when he retired, permanently.

These occurrences drew attention to the absence of statutory dispositions assuring the replacement of the President in cases where the President, for any reason, found it impossible to continue in his function.

The Twentieth World Congress in Berlin in 1969 adopted an amendment to the statutes, creating the post of Vice-Chairman of the P.T.T.I. Colleague J.A. Beirne of the Communication Workers of America (C.W.A.) in the United States was elected to this position. This change to the statutes showed its usefulness very soon, when Lord Delacourt-Smith from the Post Office Engineering Union of Great Britain, elected President at the Twentieth Congress, accepted shortly afterwards an important ministerial function in the British government. In application of the new statutes, Colleague Joe Beirne became President of the P.T.T.I.

This stability of presidents, which shows the stability of the International itself, is even more neatly shown in the case of its General Secretaries. Dr Maier died in 1933 after a short illness
Franz Rohner of the P.T.T. Union, Switzerland succeeded him, holding the post until 1940. On his retirement, he was replaced by another Swiss colleague, Fritz Gmur, who occupied the position until 1964, when he was replaced by the current General Secretary, Stefan Nedzynski.

The period 1920 to 1939 saw the creation and consolidation of the P.T.T.I. After this initial consolidation, the International was seriously weakened because of the extension of Nazism, which destroyed many trade unions in Italy, Germany, Austria, Danzig and Czechoslovakia.

Throughout the Second World War, from 1940 to 1945, the Secretariat of the P.T.T.I. was constrained to limit its activities to international assistance to the children of P.T.T. workers.

After the war, the first concern was to re-establish close relations between all the trade-union organizations in the European P.T.T., some of which were entirely new, and to extend the activity of the International to other continents. Starting in 1945, the P.T.T.I. made great efforts to interest the democratic countries of Europe in its activities. Later on, organizations from North America, the United States and Canada affiliated to the International.

It was also during this period that the P.T.T.I., like other international trade secretariats (I.T.S.), managed to escape a very grave danger. In February 1945, a world trade-union conference was held in London. This conference set up a committee whose work finished with the creation of the World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.). This organization was rapidly taken over by communists and no longer obeyed any instructions, except those that came from Moscow. One of its first initiatives was to try to substitute for the international trade secretariats, of which the P.T.T.I. was one, industrial departments with direct dependence on the central body.

When they met in 1949, fourteen secretariats, the P.T.T.I. among them, made a common declaration indicating that because of the present situation and the most recent developments within the W.F.T.U., "the interests of the I.T.S. will be better served if they keep their independence".

Nevertheless, realizing the necessity for contacts between the various industries and of a general common line, the P.T.T.I., like other I.T.S., was in favour of the creation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (I.C.F.T.U.), which saw the light of day in October of the same year. The autonomy of the I.T.S. is recognized and accepted by the I.C.F.T.U., whose second congress, in Milan in 1951, made the following declaration: "The I.C.F.T.U. recognizes the autonomy of the I.T.S." This declaration...
is still in force and is still respected. The World Federation of Trade Unions, for its part, has applied in the organization under its influence a system of professional or trade departments without any independent activities or budgets.

In 1950, the first mission to Latin America was undertaken, with a view to making known there the work of the P.T.T.I. This mission was followed by another in 1952, this time to Asia, Australia and New Zealand. The third mission, throughout Africa, took place the next year. These missions bore fruit in the requests for affiliation that arrived from then onwards from all the regions of the world.

Thus, during this period, the P.T.T.I. became a truly world organization, and this allowed it to undertake regional activities and to institute a regional structure. These regional activities were constantly developed, particularly as the process of decolonization gathered speed. They began with the extension of the International beyond Europe and the making of contacts with trade unions from other continents.

The first important decision concerning systematic organizations and activities in the regions represented by the International was taken in 1955, at a meeting of the Executive Committee held at Wiesbaden. It was there that it was decided to create a P.T.T.I. Office for Latin America, which was placed under the direction of Colleague Bill Doherty. The success that this Latin American Office met with led to a search for the means to obtaining similar results in other parts of the globe. In 1957, the World Congress of the P.T.T.I., meeting in Florence, decided to hold regular regional conferences every two years, to appoint Regional Representatives and to increase affiliation fees, in order to make possible these regional activities.

After this Congress, and particularly after 1958, the regional activities of the P.T.T.I. in Africa and in Asia became more and more dynamic. At its meeting in 1959 in Copenhagen, the Executive Committee decided to create a special fund for regional activities, which would be fed by yearly contributions raised by special payments from affiliates in proportion to affiliation fees, and by gifts from the solidarity fund of the I.C.F.T.U.

The International's regional activities continued to develop and the structure foreseen by the Florence Congress was progressively implemented. In 1956 the first Inter-American Regional Conference of the P.T.T.I. took place. In the next year, it was the turn of the first African Regional Conference at Accra, which was followed in 1958 by the first European Regional Conference at Macaulin in Switzerland, and in 1959, the first Asian Regional Conference in Tokyo.
Along with these developments, a structure of regional and subregional offices, representatives, etc. was constructed in various continents, in forms adapted to conditions prevailing in each region.

The part played by regional activities within the P.T.T.I. became continuously more important and made greater and greater demands on the financial means available to the organization. The 1966 Congress at Brussels voted a project for reforming affiliation fees to the P.T.T.I., so that they should better meet the needs that had been created. The new system, which is still in operation, consisted of the creation of two distinct funds. The first, the General Fund, is fed by affiliation fees, and aims at covering administrative expenses, expenses concerned with congresses, regional conferences, meetings of the Executive Committee, etc. The other, the Regional Activities and Solidarity Fund, is fed by “special contributions” and is used for all costs concerning activities in the regions—trade-union training, regional representatives at conferences and organization—and also serves the aim of helping affiliated trade unions in difficulties.

The Brussels Congress had fixed the sum of affiliation fees at five Belgian francs, roughly 40 French centimes a year for each member, and a resolution had been adopted indicating that “it was the moral duty of affiliated organizations who are financially capable, to make regular annual contributions based on the number of their members”. The resolution fixed the amount of these special contributions (which took the place of the voluntary contributions) at a level equivalent to half the normal affiliation fee, i.e. at that time, 2½ Belgian francs each year for each member.

This system, which allowed a greater number of affiliated organizations to make better contributions, on a basis of equality, to the regional activities of the International and brought greater resources than before, has allowed the P.T.T.I. to be currently one of the most active, if not the most active, I.T.S. above all those in developing regions.

The levels fixed by the Brussels Congress remained in force until 31 December 1972. The Paris Congress, held in July 1972, decided on an increase, which was made relatively light (very much less than the average rate of inflation during the six years), largely due to a spectacular growth in the number of affiliates during this period, and also to the ever-growing number of members who, now stronger themselves, undertook in their turn the “moral duty” of paying special contributions.

Thus, after beginnings that were sometimes very difficult, with the efforts of all, the constant support of affiliated organizations, the sense of international solidarity that reigns in the sector of posts
and telecommunications, and above all, the devotion to the common ideals of liberty, independence and democracy, the P.T.T.I. has been able to become one of the most respected I.T.S. It is also one of the most powerful, since the 3 150 000 P.T.T. workers that it organizes today represent around 90 per cent of all the organized P.T.T. workers in the non-Soviet bloc countries.

Sixty years is a short time in the history of an organization, though among international union organizations, the P.T.T.I. is one of the oldest. But compared with a man's lifetime—particularly an active working lifetime—it is long indeed. The youngest boy messenger represented at the 1911 conference will now be long retired, but the P.T.T.I. is just getting into its stride.

**P.T.T.I. Membership, 1976**

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**P.T.T.I. Membership Trends since 1922**

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</table>

*Source: Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International, Asian Regional Office.*
Appendix 5

Trade Union International
of Public and Allied
Employees

The Trade Union International of Public and Allied Employees (T.U.I.P.A.E.) is the organization encompassing a coverage of postal unions in socialist countries, and has also affiliated to it some postal unions from some Western and uncommitted countries.

The headquarters of the International is situated at Berlin in the German Democratic Republic; the General Secretary of the organization is Dagobert Krause, a former postal worker. Congresses are held every four years.

The Trade Union International of Public and Allied Employees has a large number of unions as affiliates, numbering in excess of five million members.

The Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union has sent observers to a number of T.U.I.P.A.E. congresses and has also accepted invitations for its delegations to visit postal unions in the U.S.S.R., Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, the People's Republic of China and Japan. In turn, delegations from the Communications Workers' Unions of the U.S.S.R., led by President Alexandra Kanaeva, and the Hungarian Postal Workers' Union, led by General Secretary, Miklos Besenyei, have visited Australia. Although there are differences between the P.T.T.I. and the T.U.I.P.A.E., none of these are insurmountable, and in a changing world, it is expected that bridges will eventually be built between the two world bodies.
## Appendix 6

Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union: Federal Officers, 1925–1977

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>General President</th>
<th>General Vice-President</th>
<th>General Secretary-Treasurer</th>
<th>Assistant General Secretary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1925-26</td>
<td>P.W. Murphy</td>
<td>A.J. MacPherson</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>Not filled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926-27</td>
<td>P.W. Murphy</td>
<td>A.J. MacPherson John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927-28</td>
<td>P.W. Murphy</td>
<td>A.L. Haswell</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928-29</td>
<td>P.W. Murphy</td>
<td>A.L. Haswell</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
<td>P.W. Murphy</td>
<td>A.L. Haswell</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-31</td>
<td>P.W. Murphy</td>
<td>A.L. Haswell</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-32</td>
<td>P.W. Murphy</td>
<td>A.L. Haswell</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-33</td>
<td>A.L. Haswell</td>
<td>W.A. Smith</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933-34</td>
<td>A.L. Haswell</td>
<td>T. Kelly</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934-35</td>
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<td>J.P. Kelly</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>C.J. Noud</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935-36</td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
<td>J.P. Kelly</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>C.J. Noud</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936-37</td>
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<td>J.P. Kelly</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>C.J. Noud</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937-38</td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
<td>J.P. Kelly</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>C.J. Noud</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
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<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>C.J. Noud</td>
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<td>1940-41</td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
<td>J.P. Kelly</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>C.J. Noud</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941-42</td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
<td>G.S. Richards</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>C.J. Noud</td>
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<td>1942-43</td>
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<td>G.S. Richards</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>G. Laing</td>
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<td>1943-44</td>
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<td>G.S. Richards</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>G. Laing</td>
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<td>1944-45</td>
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<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
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<td>1945-46</td>
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<td>G.S. Richards</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>G. Laing</td>
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<td>1946-47</td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
<td>G.S. Richards</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>G. Laing</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>G.S. Richards</td>
<td>R. Bock</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>G. Laing</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td>G.S. Richards</td>
<td>R. Bock</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>G. Laing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>G.S. Richards</td>
<td>F.M. Mason</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>L.H. Hammond</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>G. Laing</td>
<td>T.P. Kenny</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>C.J. McGrane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>F.W. Burgess</td>
<td>T.P. Kenny</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>M.G. Lovelock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Assistant General Secretary</td>
<td>General Vice-President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>J.J. Donnellan</td>
<td>T.P. Kenny</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>J.J. Donnellan</td>
<td>T.P. Kenny</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>J.J. Donnellan</td>
<td>T.P. Kenny</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>J.J. Donnellan</td>
<td>D.A. Hepher</td>
<td>C.J. McGrane</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>E.T. Ashmore</td>
<td>D.A. Hepher</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
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<td>N.W. Burke</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
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<td>D.W. Ash</td>
<td>C.J. McGrane</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
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<td>N.W. Burke</td>
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<td>1962-63</td>
<td>F.J. Waters</td>
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<td>C.J. McGrane</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>F.J. Waters</td>
<td>D.J. Allen</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
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<td>1964-65</td>
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<td>G. Slater</td>
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<td>1965-66</td>
<td>F.J. Waters</td>
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<td>G. Slater</td>
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<td>1966-67</td>
<td>F.J. Waters</td>
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<td>1967-68</td>
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<td>1968-69</td>
<td>F.J. Waters</td>
<td>D.J. Allen</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>F.J. Waters</td>
<td>C.R. Johnson</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>F.J. Waters</td>
<td>C.R. Johnson</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>F.J. Waters</td>
<td>A.W.R. Saint</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>F.J. Waters</td>
<td>A.W.R. Saint</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>V.J. Deegan</td>
<td>P. Kirley</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>V.J. Deegan</td>
<td>P. Kirley</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>V.J. Deegan</td>
<td>P. Kirley</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>V.J. Deegan</td>
<td>P. Kirley</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) In 1975, two General Vice-President positions were created, i.e. Postal and Telecommunications

(b) In 1975, two Assistant General Secretary positions were created, i.e. Postal and Telecommunications
## Appendix 7

**Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union: Federal Executive Councillors, 1925–1977**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1925–26</td>
<td>C.E. Parker, A.L. Haswell, T. Kelly, R.C. Harris, E. Cross</td>
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<td>1927–28</td>
<td>C.E. Parker, W.J. Mossong, T. Kelly, L.G. Price, W.A. Smith</td>
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<td>1931–32</td>
<td>J. O'Brien, D.A. Cahill, T. Kelly, J. Kelly, W.A. Smith</td>
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<td>1932–33</td>
<td>J. O'Brien, P.W. Murphy, T. Kelly, J. Kelly, G. Laing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940–41</td>
<td>G.S. Richards, P.W. Murphy, G. Laing, W.S. Weston, F.W. Burgess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941–42</td>
<td>W.H. Thomas, P.W. Murphy, G. Laing, W.S. Weston, F.W. Burgess</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943–44</td>
<td>A. Brown, A. Stewart, E.J. James, W.S. Weston, F.W. Burgess</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946–47</td>
<td>R. Bock, A. Brown, L. Hammond, W.S. Weston, F.W. Burgess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950–51</td>
<td>E.F. Chaucer, C. Anson, M.J. Cuskey, D. McTeigue, F.W. Burgess</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1955, a rules change resulted in the election of six Executive Councillors by state branch memberships and also the election of officers by full membership. The Executive Council to compromise: General President, General Vice-President, General Secretary-Treasurer, Assistant General Secretary and six Executive Councillors.

New South Wales was not represented during 1965 because the branch had not paid federal dues.
Appendix 8

Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union: State Officers, 1925–1977

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>New South Wales</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Victoria</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>John V. Dwyer</td>
<td>E.F. Murnane</td>
<td>C.D. Bottomley</td>
<td>V.F. Bristow</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>T. Kelly*</td>
<td>E.F. Murnane</td>
<td>W.G. Bryson</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
<td>E.F. Murnane</td>
<td>I.J. Brown</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<td>E.F. Murnane</td>
<td>M.J. Hassed</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
<td>E.F. Murnane</td>
<td>J.L. Brown</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>C.E. Parker</td>
<td>E.F. Murnane</td>
<td>J.L. Brown</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>H.G. Everingham</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>J.B. Marshall</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>H.G. Everingham</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>T.A. Maher</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>J.H. Smith</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>M.J. Hassed</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>J.H. Smith</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>I.J. Brown</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>W.J. Mossong</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>G.A. Beecher</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>A. Brown</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>J.B. Marshall</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>A. Brown</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>L.P.C. Raynor</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>A. Brown</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>R.C. Clark</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>R.W. Cunynghame</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>V.F. Bristow</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>J.R. Mogan</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>J.B. Marshall</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>J.R. Mogan</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>P. McNamara</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
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<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>L.P.C. Raynor</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
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<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>R.W. Cunynghame</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>T.A. Maher</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>R.W. Cunynghame</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>A.N. Raven</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>R.W. Cunynghame</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>D.T. Minogue</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>R.W. Cunynghame</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>T.A. Maher</td>
<td>J.J. Peterken</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>R.W. Cunynghame</td>
<td>N.W. Burke</td>
<td>H.M. Dennet</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. McCarthy (acting)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1948</td>
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<td>R.E. Wellard</td>
<td>H.M. Dennet</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
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<td>R.E. Wellard</td>
<td>H.M. Dennet</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>R.W. Cunynghame</td>
<td>R.E. Wellard</td>
<td>H.M. Dennet</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
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</table>

* C.E. * Parker
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Secretary</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>L.G. Dayman</td>
<td>J.N. Lynch</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>A.J. Stewart</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>J.N. Lynch</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>J.N. Lynch</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>J.N. Lynch</td>
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<td>A.E. Savage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>J.N. Lynch</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>J.N. Lynch</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>J.N. Lynch</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
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<td>J.N. Lynch</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>A.E. Savage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>L. Hodges</td>
<td>N.R. Mayell</td>
<td>L. Hodges</td>
<td>P.V. Edie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>B.J. Ryan</td>
<td>N.R. Mayell</td>
<td>B.J. Ryan</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>B.J. Ryan</td>
<td>N.R. Mayell</td>
<td>B.J. Ryan</td>
<td>G. Slater</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>F.J. Richardson</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
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<td>1966</td>
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<td>F.J. Richardson</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>L.H. Roberts</td>
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<tr>
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<td>F.J. Richardson</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>W.A. Peeler</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
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<td>F.J. Richardson</td>
<td>T.A. MacLachlan</td>
<td>W.A. Peeler</td>
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In January 1926, John V. Dwyer resigned as New South Wales President to take up the position as Federal Secretary. T. Kelly held the position of New South Wales President until the annual ballot in September 1926, when C.E. Parker was elected.

In January 1927, J.P. Hughes resigned as South Australian President to take up the position as State Secretary. H.B. Blakely held the position of South Australian President until the annual ballot in September 1927, when M. Flaherty was elected.
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