SOME LESSER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN QUEENSLAND

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Colonial Parliaments in Australia during the 19th century were markedly different in one way at least from those to which we are now accustomed. To-day the rule of party is strong, and woe betide the individual member who flouts the orders of his party leaders. It is true that an energetic member or group of members from the back-benches may sometimes force re-consideration of particular issues, as for example occurred recently in the Federal Senate, or during the Suez crisis in England, but in general such revolts are rare. It is also true that the back-bencher has his say during discussions in the party room, but once a decision is reached there he is bound to it and may not diverge from it, at risk of losing party endorsement in the next election. Whether this is right or wrong, necessary or unnecessary, I do not propose to discuss here. My sole purpose is to remind you—if a reminder be necessary, in view of fairly recent events in Queensland politics—of the present day strength of party rule.

No Strong Party Organisation

But in the last century the dominating feature of politics was the lack of strong party organisation. Men held ideas that were often very much their own, so much so that it is extremely difficult to see how men with such differing views could ever be combined into anything like a modern party. In fact, the prevailing climate of opinion when Queensland became a separate colony was one of opposition to party: as the Courier summed it up: "Party is the madness of the many for the gain of the few." (1) In these circumstances the personalities of the individual members and their attitudes to life became of major importance. The task of a political leader in winning—and holding—the support of a majority of members in the House was no

(1) Courier 24 June, 1862.
light one. The occasion called forth the men, of whom Herbert, Palmer, Griffith, and McIlwraith must be considered outstanding. But to appreciate their greatness we must consider the character of those whom they were leading, including some of their more important lieutenants. Hence I have ventured to offer you this paper, not in an attempt to give any detailed biographies, but to try to show you what kind of men they were, or perhaps, what kind of men they seemed to me to have been.

**Tough Squatter Types**

For the first Parliament, of course, the choice was largely limited, for practically all those available were squatters. As a group they possessed a number of characteristics in general. Men of courage and initiative, they had behind them a record of daring and unwillingness to be thwarted in achieving their ends; they were accustomed to driving straight towards the goals they had set up for themselves. Most of them had known hardship and hard living; they were hard riders, hard drivers and — as many of them, such as Arthur Palmer, had been forced at times to drive their own bullock waggons — hard swearers. Mostly large men, they could never reject a challenge. On one occasion, twelve teamsters challenged twelve members of the Australian Club in Ipswich to battle with fists. The squatters obliged — and drove the teamsters from the field.

Some of them had their own ideas of entertainment too. One who was to become a member of the Legislative Council used to sit on a verandah in Texas, armed with a revolver which he fired at passers-by, to see how close he could go without hitting them. It is even on record that while staying in Sydney he lashed a chair to the outside of the railing of the hotel balcony, and sat there with a revolver on each knee, glaring down at the crowds. I have not been able to discover whether he fired any shots there.

A parliament selected from men such as these promised to be at least interesting, especially when it is recalled that very few had ever seen the inside of a legislative chamber, much less sat in it either as elected or nominated members, though, to be quite fair to them, it must be added that almost all the first members were men of good families and wide education.
Someone had to be found to keep them in parliamentary order and to ensure that they followed the proper procedures within the House. Herbert, of course, was to set a remarkable example, but he had to have assistance. Hence the character of one member of the first Legislative Assembly became of supreme importance, and that member of course was the first Speaker. What sort of a man was chosen to keep these ebullient enthusiasts within bounds?

Gilbert Eliott Chosen

The man chosen for this difficult but important task was Gilbert Eliott, the first member of the new electorate of Wide Bay, which then included Maryborough. Born in 1796 as the third son of an ancient Scottish noble family, he entered the Royal Artillery where he held the rank of Captain. He served in France in 1814 as a member of the Army of the Occupation, and later in other parts of the globe. But the new opportunities in Australia called him, along with many other younger sons of the Scottish nobility, and about 1840 he resigned his commission and emigrated to New South Wales. There he soon established himself on extensive pastoral holdings, including some in the Northern Districts, as the future Queensland was then called. Perhaps as a result of his military experience, he was appointed Sheriff of New South Wales, and also Chief Commissioner of Police for the City of Sydney. He served some years in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, and in 1858 was returned for one of the new Moreton Bay electorates, which included his own run of Yenda. Early in 1859 he aroused some hostile comment in the north by supporting a late effort to prevent the separation of the Northern Districts from New South Wales, but any resentment appeared to be short-lived, for he had little difficulty in gaining election to the first Queensland Parliament in 1860.

His presence in the Assembly was especially valuable, for he had experience of the proper conduct of a legislature. Perhaps, too, his military and police experience had given him some extra qualifications to deal with men such as I have described. In the event Eliott was the unhesitating choice of the Assembly. He amply justified the confidence reposed in him and served as Speaker until his retirement from the
Assembly in 1870. During this whole period he did not miss a single day's sitting. On the announcement of his death the Brisbane Courier\(^2\) paid him the following tribute:

"The important public duties devolving upon him during those years he discharged with marked ability, his diligence and aptitude for details forming a fitting model for the imitation of younger men. He seemed to look upon a public trust as involving a question of duty rather than of self-interest or convenience."

He evidently wore his robes without pretensions. Oscar de Satge, one of the squatter members, described him as:\(^3\)

"a benign and fine old gentleman, courteous to all members."

De Satge was clearly not alone in his opinion. On one occasion another member raised a private subscription and by it secured a full length portrait of Eliott for presentation to him. This portrait is still in Parliament House, though now cut down in size.

**Declined a Knighthood**

The Governor too wished to show his appreciation. When the Secretary of State for the Colonies asked for the names of three gentlemen in Queensland who might be considered "the most fitting subjects for knighthood" Eliott was one of the three approached. However, Eliott, being in line of succession to an old Scotch baronetcy "begged permission, most respectfully, to decline the honour though fully appreciating the kindness with which I offered to recommend him."\(^4\) One report claims that Eliott also felt his means were not adequate enough to maintain the state necessarily connected with the position. On his retirement he was created a Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. In addition he was given a retirement allowance of £400 per annum and also appointed to the Legislative Council.

Because almost his entire parliamentary life in Queensland was spent in the Speaker's Chair, he was not embroiled in any of the political controversies of

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\(^2\) Brisbane Courier, 1 July, 1871.


\(^4\) Bowen to Cardwell 6 Oct., 1864.
the period. In some ways, this was unfortunate, for the character of the man was cloaked by the anonymity of his position, with the result that the press of the day found little to say of him. Perhaps this is in itself another tribute to the greatness of his work. Once, but only once, to my knowledge, did he reveal something of squatter individualism in politics. In those days, it was customary for members to report to their constituents almost immediately after the end of the session, and he followed this convention. His address in November 1862 caused some surprise in the Brisbane press, for he spoke very strongly against the way in which the business of the country was being conducted in the House. But even this "remarkable speech," as it was described by the Queensland Guardian, failed to bring any real condemnation of the man, and it was soon forgotten.

The close of his parliamentary career came too late to allow Gilbert Eliott any long retirement. On June 30, 1871 while visiting his son, a Police Magistrate at Toowoomba, he was suddenly attacked by angina pectoris and died within a few hours. The news was received with the deepest regret throughout the colony.

Robert Ramsay Mackenzie

The Burnett electorate provided another of the major figures of the first Queensland Parliament, in the person of Robert Ramsay Mackenzie, also of noble Scottish parentage. Here perhaps some of my audience might object to his inclusion, for he early reached a high political position, being chosen by Governor Bowen as the first Treasurer of the new colony. In a despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies Bowen described him as

"a gentleman of ancient Scotch family, and one of the earliest pastoral settlers in North Australia — a man of high honour and integrity, of methodical habits of business ... possessed of an intensive knowledge of the country of his adoption and enjoying a large amount of public confidence." (6)

However, even though he was to become Premier for a short period, I feel he cannot be regarded as one of the greater figures of Queensland politics.

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(6) Bowen to Newcastle, 2 Feb., 1860.
Born on July 21, 1811, Mackenzie was the second son of the Eighth Baronet of Coul in Rossshire, Scotland, and later was to become the 10th Baronet, through the early death of his brother. He first settled in New South Wales and was married in Sydney in 1846 to the daughter of Richard Jones, who had financial interests in Moreton Bay, and later represented one of the New South Wales electorates. Soon afterwards he came north to be one of the earliest settlers in the Burnett. Later he also had a home at New Farm, Brisbane, noted for its hospitality and friendly atmosphere.

**Led “Pure Merino” Ministry**

Politically he was generally regarded as a squatter, and so was frequently the object of attack by those who termed themselves Liberals, but so small was the difference between political opponents of the day that in 1863, when he resigned from the Ministry, claiming that he and not Macalister should act as Premier during Herbert's absence in England, he was immediately accepted with glee as the Leader of the Opposition—and the government was still termed a squatter government. However, from August 1866 until August 1867 he was Premier, leading a ministry so strongly squatter in composition that it was termed the “Pure Merino Ministry.” As a Treasurer he had not been a conspicuous success—he “had the desire to keep the balance on the right side, but it was unaccompanied by firmness in resisting expenditure and foresight in anticipating the consequences of the irregularities into which he was led to participate.” But no one at any time appeared to question his honesty of purpose. Apparently he was a good organiser, for Bernays gives him full credit for all the details of the visit of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh in 1868.

A big man, he was very handsome, with a distinguished presence and a genial disposition. He had no claim to mental brilliance, but he had a considerable stock of sound common sense, which made his advice always worth having. Apparently he had little sense of humour, for none of his contemporaries

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(7) Mackenzie's daughter later married Alexander Archer, of the well-known grazing family. Both husband and wife were lost in the wreck of the Quetta in 1890.
(8) Warwick Examiner and Times, 26 Feb., 1870.
makes any reference to it. His speech was deliberate and lacking in any verbal pyrotechnics. In this way, at least, he was perhaps not a true squatter. In one feature he was disappointing; despite his large frame, his voice was high pitched and squeaky—Bernays says: "It sounded as if there were a pressing necessity for someone to apply the oilcan to his larynx."

After his premiership his stay in Queensland was short, for his inheritance of the baronetcy meant that he had to return to Scotland. His return to his native land did not end his interest in Queensland politics, for he remained in correspondence with Arthur Palmer. But, like Gilbert Eliott, he had little time to enjoy his retirement, for he died on September 19, 1873. He left behind him a most respected name, and many friends, one of whom has perpetuated his name on the map of Queensland with Aramac (R. R. Mac). Reports differ who it was: most say it was Landsborough, but James Crombie, M.L.A. for a western electorate in 1889, declared it was Fred Walker while on the search for Burke and Wills.^(10)

**Haly of Taabinga**

At that time, the Burnett returned two members, the second of whom was C. R. Haly of Taabinga. He never rose to the same heights as Eliott or Mackenzie and remained a back bencher, but he nevertheless was held in high esteem, not only by his fellow members but by the leading journalists of the day. For example, George Hall, better known as "Bohemian," paid him frequent tributes, even though he held different political opinions. Haly had five hobby horses which he rode constantly, namely steam ploughs, irrigation, fluke in sheep, worms in cattle, and the preservation of indigenous grasses. Apart from these he had little to say in the House but he was essentially fair-minded. Even though the *Brisbane Courier* opposed the squatters it spoke of Haly's "integrity of purpose and his independence of spirit"^(11) and added:

"There is not a squatting member who takes a more honest view of things ... We believe him to be conscientious enough to vote even against his interests when he knows a certain cause to be right."

However, Haly was a special target for one columnist whose work appeared first in the *Burnett Argus*

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^(10) *Brisbane Courier*, 13 Nov., 1889.
^(11) *ibid.*, 12 March, 1862.
and later in the Maryborough Chronicle, under the pseudonym of "The Ghost of BanBan." This was none other than William Henry Walsh of Degilbo.

**William Henry Walsh**

W. H. Walsh was born in Oxfordshire and came to New South Wales in 1844. His early career followed the pattern common to young men of good family. He first gained pastoral experience with one of the New South Wales squatters, in this instance a Mr. Perrier of Bathurst. In 1847, he took up a new station for Mr. Perrier on the McIntyre River, but soon struck out for himself, by taking part in the new land rush to the north, where he first established himself in the Burnett. Early in 1859 he was returned as a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, where he joined Eliott in opposing the separation of Queensland. But he did not follow Eliott's example in reconciling himself to the new situation. He refused to accept nomination to the Legislative Council or to stand for election to the Assembly. At the same time he strenuously opposed Brisbane as the capital, and joined Maurice O'Connell in endeavouring to have the seat of government moved to Gladstone. He refused to attend and give evidence before a Select Committee into the conduct of the Native Police. Moreover, he bitterly opposed the plans for the first railway, on the grounds that the colony was not yet wealthy enough, and that the outlying districts would be paying for the benefit of a favoured group in the south-east. In other words, W. H. Walsh was a fighter, and in some quarters his tongue was almost feared. One of the Brisbane papers, opposed to him politically, christened him "The Demon of Discord."

**Railway Administration**

He soon found that skirmishing from outside was unsatisfactory, and in 1865 he plunged into the middle of the fray, being returned as the member for the new electorate of Maryborough. He took little time to make his mark, because for the next few years the Parliament was to pass through a series of disturbances, all of which gave him much opportunity for vigorous comment. In 1870 he attained Cabinet rank, becoming Secretary for Public Works in the Palmer Government. Time brings its strange ironies, for this
portfolio included responsibility for the railways whose construction he had once opposed so bitterly, and Walsh's administration of the Railways brought him great credit. He carried through many reforms, and was responsible for extensive reorganisation. Among his most important actions were the appointment of Mr. Ballard as the engineer responsible for taking the Rockhampton railway west to the Comet River, and the decision that for this railway at least the government should act as its own contractor, a venture that was highly successful.

On one occasion, however, he caused a storm. He ordered that rail tickets should not be sold to "improper ladies" and unfortunately for him an overzealous station master refused tickets to two ladies of unimpeachable character. He made a further contribution to the improvement of the colony's transport by the inception of Road Boards, which did much in some areas to improve the roads, and which were also some preparation for the establishment of a system of local government throughout the State.

He remained in office until the fall of the Palmer Government in 1873. In the following year he accepted appointment as Speaker, a most surprising position for one as combative by nature as W. H. Walsh. The new Liberal Government was certainly glad to see him muzzled in this fashion, and there is also some suggestion that his colleagues were also a little relieved — political life in the company of William Henry Walsh could become a little wearing. He held the post until 1876. Something of his old fire seemed to have gone by this time, and in 1879 he ascended to the more rarefied atmosphere of the Legislative Council. He died on April 5, 1888.

John Bramston

Thus far we have spoken of men who made their homes in their own electorates, but sometimes electorates were represented by men who had little if any direct connection with them. Two such men are of special note, John Bramston and John Douglas. The first of these, John Bramston, spent only a relatively few years in Queensland. Born in England on November 14, 1832, and educated first at Winchester, he graduated from Balliol in 1854 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts and in 1855 was a Fellow of All Souls,
a very high honour indeed. Called to the Bar in 1857, he continued his legal studies and in 1863 gained the degree of Bachelor of Civil Laws, also from Oxford. By this time he was in Queensland, for in 1859 he had left England as one of Governor Bowen's private secretaries. He was very friendly with R. G. W. Herbert, Bowen's secretary, who became Queensland's first — and youngest — Premier. In Brisbane the two young men were almost inseparable; they even lived together. The name they chose for their home still bears witness to the closeness of their association and it has now been perpetuated in the Brisbane suburb of Herston. In July, 1863 Bramston was appointed to the Legislative Council, and at the same time became a Minister without portfolio in Herbert's Cabinet. For one short period, in August and September 1865, he served as Attorney-General. Soon he returned to England for two years during which time he acted as Assistant Boundary Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall under the Reform Act of 1867. In 1868 he came back to Queensland and from May 1870 until he resigned in 1873 he was Attorney-General in the Palmer Government. During his tenancy of this office he became M.L.A. for the Burnett in April 1871.

In 1873 he went to Hongkong, where he was appointed Attorney-General, and from February to May 1874 he became a Judge. But England called him again. There he found Herbert firmly established as Under-Secretary in the Colonial Office, and Herbert soon had Bramston working beside him as Assistant Under-Secretary for the Colonies. Here the two continued their old partnership, especially in Queensland affairs, and a survey of the Colonial Office records of the period shows how they completely dominated official decisions in relation to this colony. In 1886 Bramston was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath.

John Douglas

The career of John Douglas was completely different; though he did not live in Maryborough, one electorate which he represented for a period, he made Queensland his home, and made his contributions within the colony. With Douglas we remain in aristocratic company, for he was the third son of a baronet, who was brother to the Marquis of Queensberry. Born
on March 6, 1828, he was educated at Harrow and later the University of Durham. Some authorities say his school was Rugby, but Serle in his Dictionary of Australian Biography declares that the school lists at Rugby do not show his name. In 1851 he joined the long list of cadets from noble houses who migrated to New South Wales, where he was soon appointed a Goldfields Commissioner. Before long, however, he took up pastoral pursuits, though he never appears to have been as deeply interested in them as most others in his position had become. Quite soon he developed an interest in political affairs, and was in succession representative for Darling Downs and Camden in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in pre-separation days.

**Dropped from Macalister’s Ministry**

In 1863 he stood for Port Curtis, a Queensland electorate in which he had grazing interests, and was returned, to take his seat in opposition to the Herbert Government, and in 1866 he became Postmaster-General in the first Macalister Government of that year. In Macalister’s second administration of that year Douglas was Treasurer, but he could not agree with Macalister and was dropped. While in opposition during the Mackenzie administration of 1867-8 Douglas made strong allegations concerning the prevalence of dummying on the Darling Downs and a Select Committee (subsequently referred to as the Dummying Committee or the Mare’s Nest Committee, according to the politics of the commentator) was appointed which found that the allegations were not proved. Douglas, although Chairman of the Committee, refused to accept its verdict.\(^{(12)}\)

When the Lilley Government took office in 1868 Douglas again came into favour, with Macalister not so popular, and once more he went up to the Legislative Council to preside over the Post Office and to lead the government in that chamber. But this time there were strings attached to it — Douglas had accepted only on the condition that he receive an appointment as Immigration Agent in England with, in addition, the privileges of Agent-General. Unfortunately for him, he had not ensured that this arrangement was put

down on paper, with the result that he and the Palmer Ministry soon found it impossible to agree, and he was recalled in 1871.\(^{(13)}\)

He then made three attempts to gain election to the Legislative Assembly. In East Moreton he was defeated by Hemmant, and in North Brisbane by R. M. Stewart, in this latter case sectarian bitterness helping to defeat him. On the third attempt he was returned for Maryborough.

**Replaced Thorn as Premier**

He joined the Thorn Ministry in June 1876 as Minister for Lands, but in the following year he replaced Thorn as Premier. On one occasion while he was Premier, his Maryborough constituents laid a trap for him. Kent Street, one of the longest in Queensland, was in dire need of repair, so the locals arranged a ceremonial drive for the Premier which would take him the entire length of that street. They thought the experience would be conclusive. But Douglas was by now an old hand at politics, and, scenting something wrong, managed to have the drive excluded from his programme.

His tenure as Premier was short, for the Liberals were losing popular support, and moreover Griffith was steadily undermining him so successfully that by the election of 1879 Griffith was the real leader. After the government’s defeat in that election Douglas took little further part in politics. For a time he was on the literary staff of the Brisbane Courier but in 1885 was made Government Resident and Police Magistrate at Thursday Island. He hoped to be appointed as Special Commissioner to the Protectorate of New Guinea but this position was given to Sir Peter Scratchley. The setback was only temporary, for Scratchley died, and Douglas took over the position until the status of the Protectorate was raised. On the arrival of MacGregor as Lieutenant-Governor, Douglas returned to Thursday Island, with whose history he was henceforth identified.

*“Something of a Dandy”*

John Douglas was a man of fine physique, handsome, dignified, and something of a dandy. According to a contemporary observer, his voice was full and

\(^{(13)}\) Ibid., 1872, p.1441.
sonorous and free from mannerism, but he could not be described as an orator. He was neither epigrammatic nor logically argumentive, and he very rarely became vehement. His speeches were diffusive, and contained much repetition as if he were arguing continually around the same point to convince himself. His language was clear and grammatical and completely removed from vulgarity. Thus, while he never reached the heights of eloquence, "it is a relief after being bored with the prosiness of some popular members to listen for a time to the gentlemanly talk of John Douglas." (14)

At times he could be almost obstinate, as in the Select Committee to enquire into dummying. On another occasion, after he had revealed to the Press what purported to be a precis of the evidence in the Steel Rails enquiry, he was adjudged by the Assembly guilty of "contempt for having wilfully disobeyed an order of this Assembly." Asked to apologise to the House, he refused, even when threatened with commitment to the custody of the Sergeant at Arms.

He steadily maintained his principle that railways should be built out of the proceeds of land sales, and his determination to insist on placing a special tax on Chinese on the goldfields resulted in the withdrawal of opposition by the Imperial authorities. He saw the Australian colonies as independent communities, and, when Governor Cairns insisted on reserving the proposal relating to the Chinese for Imperial approval, Douglas wrote a circular letter to the other Australian premiers insisting on the right of independent action by the colonies. (15)

Thus John Douglas too was of considerable importance in the life of the new colony and played an important part in shaping its destinies, and the colony was much poorer after his death on July 23, 1904. A skilled politician, he was very able at wire-pulling, so necessary in the disturbed political state of the period when party allegiances were far from fixed, and his period as Premier helped much in the development of a formed Liberal Party, even though he lost his own place to a much more able politician. Not the least of his services to the community was the family he left

(14) William Coote, the Week, 19 May, 1877.
behind, two of whom, R. J. Douglas and E. A. Douglas, both adorned the bench of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

**Hubert Edward King**

Another important member who rendered valuable service but never reached the level of greatness was Hubert Edward King. Of Irish descent, he was born in County Limerick on June 9, 1832, but was educated at Gloucester in England. Coming to Australia in 1852 when the gold fever was still at its height he was perhaps naturally interested in mining rather than the pastoral industry. His experience in this made him of considerable value to Queensland, where he was appointed Commissioner for the Gympie goldfield. In the exercise of his duties there he became very popular with the community. In 1870 he succeeded Gilbert Eliott as member for Wide Bay, and in his first session made a very favourable impression upon the House. But the years from 1870 to 1872 were amongst the most troubled in the history of the Assembly, including two elections within ten months, and a complete refusal by the Opposition to allow the business of the House to proceed. In the election of 1871 King challenged W. H. Walsh for Maryborough, and was only narrowly defeated. However, he was immediately afterwards returned for Wide Bay—elections in those days spread over many days. When the Assembly was dissolved in 1873, he retired temporarily from parliamentary life, leaving behind him a reputation for industry and for skill in debate—though the latter was somewhat marred by too much acidity and too great a tendency to personal attack.

When McIlwraith left the Macalister Administration in 1874, King was appointed in his place as Minister for Works, and immediately found a safe seat at Ravenswood. As an administrator he was very thorough, and his speech was now rather less sharp than formerly, though he could still sting.

**Pushed Him Upstairs**

Macalister, the Premier, and Hemmant, the Treasurer, professed to be disturbed by the cost of King's administration of his department, and decided to push him out of office. But they had no wish to push him over into opposition, for his criticisms could
be formidable and even destructive. Hence they decided to remove the danger by pushing him upstairs, and, on the retirement of W. H. Walsh from the Speakership in 1876, appointed him to the vacant post, in which he performed most creditably. As William Coote put it: (16)

"Too sturdy at times for a colleague, too dangerous for an opponent; I think the prudence of both sides was justified in elevating him to his present position."

In 1879 he succeeded in winning the election for the Maryborough seat, but in 1883 he disappeared from the House. Five years later, in 1888, he again attempted to secure election for Maryborough, but he was once again defeated. King then left politics and turned to the law where he served for some years as Crown Prosecutor. All were glad to see him doing well in his new life, but the Assembly was much poorer for his departure. In politics he was a colonial Liberal, with a strong tendency towards schemes for federation and independence.

But probably his most notable claim to fame was the quality of his oratory. He had extraordinary fluency, and he always had something of value to say. Apparently the only blemish was that at times he concentrated more on the form of his speech than its substance, although the latter was always there for those who took the trouble to look beyond his smooth and even flow of language.

Charles John Graham

Both Douglas, to some extent, and King, to a much greater degree, were evidence of a new trend in representation, away from the dominance of the squatter, and our next figure Charles John Graham will further illustrate this trend. Graham's career, like King's, also reveals the difficulty experienced by men without large personal resources in remaining in parliament for long periods, when they could no longer hold ministerial office. The son of a vicar, Graham was born at Hinxton in Cambridgeshire. Well educated, he graduated in Arts from Cambridge, but poor health prevented him from establishing himself firmly in England. The colonies called, offering him both new

(16) Week, 30 June. 1877.
opportunities and the chance of a healthier climate, so in 1862 he came to Australia. First he gained pastoral experience with Ralph Gore in the Warwick district, and then went into partnership with him on properties on Peak Downs. But the bad years from 1866 to 1868 wrecked the venture. Gore returned to Warwick but Graham remained in the Central West subsisting as best he could. In 1870 he entered on a new field of endeavour. When C. H. Buzacott sold the Peak Downs Telegram to a printer named Mackay from Rockhampton, Graham joined Mackay, to act as editor of the paper in return for a share of the profits. So successful was he that he was soon able to buy out Mackay.

In 1872 he was returned as member for Clermont, without a single vote being cast against him in the town. Clermont people then showed even more clearly how highly they esteemed Graham—they paid him £300 a year as their member—members of parliament were not paid in those days. Although not a squatter he joined the group led by Palmer and became Minister for Lands in July 1872. His conduct both in the House and in office impressed not only Palmer but also Griffith.

**Role in Education**

Soon after the fall of the Palmer Ministry in 1874 Griffith became Minister for Public Instruction and looked around him for an able permanent head of his department. He offered the post of Under-Secretary to Graham, who was at first hesitant about accepting such a present from a political opponent. Graham then consulted Palmer—whose views on education were in fact remarkably similar to those of Lilley and Griffith—and was warmly urged to accept. In the successful establishment of Queensland's new educational system Graham played no small part. When failing health forced him to resign the post on October 31, 1878, he received not only a presentation from all teachers in the service of the government, but also another from the Sisters of All Hallows. Even after his departure to New South Wales he was offered two important posts by the Queensland Government, one of them being that of Under Colonial Secretary.

In Orange he joined in partnership with Waddell, formerly manager of the A.J.S. Bank in Clermont, to establish a brewery, a venture which was highly
successful. He took a vigorous part in community life also, and was a Captain in the local Volunteer Force. In 1884 he sold his business and returned to England for two years. But the climate there did not suit him, so he was forced to return to Australia. Near Colombo he fell ill with heart trouble, but the rest in port seemed to set him up again. The passage across the Indian Ocean proved too much strain for him, and at Albany he was forced to leave the ship to seek rest on land. But it was too late; two days later he died.

Thomas Macdonald-Paterson

Now let us consider one who rose through the world of business, Thomas Macdonald-Paterson, or “Mac-Pat,” as he was often later called. A Scot, he was born in Glasgow on May 9, 1844. While still in his teens he heard a lecture by that old friend to Queensland, John Dunmore Lang, and without delay decided to put all to hazard and migrate to that colony. Near the end of 1861 the figure of this lonely Scottish seventeen-year-old lad, sitting on a Brisbane verandah, caught the eye of another Caledonian, John Mackay, who promptly invited the newcomer to “a dram or a glass of something or ither.” The young man gratefully accepted the gesture, but drank ginger ale. John Jardine also took an interest in the newcomer and secured him a post as clerk in Watt's butcher shop in Rockhampton. Very soon “Mac-Pat” was in business for himself, first in partnership with Jager, and then in the company, T. M. Paterson and Co. So great an impact did he make on the growing Rockhampton community that five years after his arrival there he became an alderman, and in 1870, by unanimous vote, the Mayor.

In 1878 he stood for Parliament and soundly defeated C. H. Buzacott, despite the latter's advantage in entering the contest as the holder of the office of Postmaster-General. This brought him into Parliament for the notorious Steel Rails affair, and although he privately disapproved of the way in which Griffith had proceeded, he stuck by him when it came to the vote. Not long afterwards he met grave financial troubles, forcing him into insolvency, but he kept careful record of his debts and did not rest until he had paid every one of his creditors in full, a course which had also been followed by C. J. Graham after his pastoral failure.
Macdonald-Paterson then turned to the law and by sheer courage and hard work obtained his qualifications. He entered into partnership with W. E. Murphy, who looked after legal matters for James Tyson, and this proved to be the real turning point for "Mac-Pat." Tyson was impressed by him from the beginning, and after the death of Murphy made Macdonald-Paterson not only his legal adviser but his close confidante.

Political Triumphs

Macdonald-Paterson had his political triumphs too. In 1883 he was returned as one of the members for Brisbane and held the seat in later elections. After a time in the Legislative Council, he was invited by the largest requisition on record for that seat to stand for Brisbane against T. J. Byrnes, whom he defeated. Federalist in politics he was a member of the Queensland delegation to the 1891 Federal Convention, when the first constitution was drafted on the Queensland Government Steam Yacht Lucinda. He was later to become a member of the Federal Parliament. In addition, he never lost his affection for Home, and made a special trip to England for the Jubilee Celebrations of 1897. While there he did talk himself into difficulties on at least one occasion. He was a confirmed leg-puller, and when an acquaintance in England expressed interest in his gidgee walking stick, he really let himself go. The tree, he explained, never died, because its root went right down to the artesian basin. The different coloured rings in the wood represented good years and bad years. Moreover, the tree bore a plum-like fruit which was a wonderful specific for birth control. Imagine his horror, on returning to Queensland, to find an order not only for 3,000 gidgee logs, but also a large quantity of the "plums!"

But "Mac-Pat" had such an engaging personality that no victim of a leg-pull by him ever retained a grudge. Moreover, he was one of the most generous men in Queensland. Any deserving case met his very practical sympathy, though commonly he took care to prevent the recipient of help from knowing whence it came. He never spared himself when the need arose, and that perhaps was the reason why he too died of heart trouble in 1906, just when everyone thought his attack was only minor.
John Donaldson

But the squatters were still something of a force in the community, and though their day was nearly over, I feel we must mention at least two more of them, this time both Australian born, John Donaldson and Ernest James Stevens. **John Donaldson** was born in October 1841 in North Western Victoria. As his father was a pastoralist, young John followed in his footsteps. At first his enterprises were small but he was so capable that he soon attracted support. Moody, Donaldson, Inglis and Co. took up Pangee station near Bourke, with Donaldson as the active partner. In 1882 the firm acquired an interest in Mt. Margaret station in Queensland and Donaldson came north to manage it. From that time on he was identified with Queensland.

He entered politics only under pressure, when all his friends urged him to contest the Warrego electorate in 1883. He won the seat and after the division of the electorate in 1887 retained part of his old seat and also his place in parliament by winning the Bulloo seat. Mcllwraith soon recognised his worth, and when returned to power in 1888, gave Donaldson the two portfolios of Postmaster-General and Secretary for Public Instruction. When Morehead took over the government, Donaldson became Treasurer.

One amusing story of this period will bear telling. In 1889, while on an official tour of the North as Treasurer, he received a deputation in Cairns. As usual, the deputation was demanding the spending of a great deal of money in that northern centre, but at the time shortage of Government finance was causing grave difficulty. The Treasurer's face grew steadily more thoughtful until suddenly an interruption came from a local resident named Kenny. "You won't get anything out of the Treasurer unless you fill him up with whisky first!" Now Donaldson was known as one of the cold tea men of Morehead's Cabinet, so he rose in anger, shouting, "I don't drink, but if I did, I could drink you under the table." Kenny accepted the challenge, but then made a survey of the Cairns Hotels to see how much whisky was available. Battle was joined and continued for hours. But at 4 a.m. Kenny rose unsteadily to his feet and staggered out the door, saying as he went, "Only shix drayloads of whisky in all of Cairnsh! And with a man like him, whatsh the yoosh of that!"
Donaldson could not accept the Griffith-McIlwraith Coalition and for a short time led the opposition against it. But his heart was no longer in politics and he soon retired. His friends in the West eagerly pressed him to return and John Leahy, the "Bull of the Barcoo," several times offered to resign in his favour, but Donaldson refused to accept the offers, preferring to concentrate on his work as Manager of the Union Mortgage Co. The pressure, however, was too great, and he contested two elections in Bulimba and Toombul, to be beaten each time by the sitting members. The pressure of his friends was not the only motive in standing again — he was worried by the labour disturbances and the rise of the Labour Party. He, himself, had always been sympathetic towards his workmen and good feelings had reigned between them. He hoped by his return to politics to restore something of this former relationship.

In 1896 he stood once again, this time for the Logan seat against E. J. Stevens. He won the election but the result was challenged, and was referred to the Elections Tribunal. Donaldson was quite confident he would win, but declined to accept such a way of gaining a seat. Hence he resigned, and prepared for a new election, which he won with a larger majority than before. But his triumph was short-lived for within a few months he was dead.

**Ernest James Stevens**

The second pastoralist was the same Ernest James Stevens whom Donaldson defeated in the Logan. But, as we shall see, his interests were not only pastoral. Born at Warrnambool July 10, 1845 he was educated in England for a time and then in Melbourne. In 1861 he was a jackeroo in Western Victoria and in 1866 came to Queensland to manage Yarrowvale on the Paroo for Russell and Bignell. In 1869 he purchased Tintinchilla on the Bulloo, the first of his many pastoral properties. After the 1879 drought he disposed of his property and then went to live first at New Farm and in 1883 at Southport. While in the west he had joined fully in the squatter life. For example he had been a member of the Roma Hunt Club for which he purchased a number of couples of hounds. While in the west he, too, yielded to pressure by his friends and stood successfully for Warrego in 1879.
In 1883 he moved to the Logan electorate and remained there until defeated by Donaldson in 1896. In one way he pleased many of his constituents. Although abstemious himself, he held that champagne was necessary for a celebration, and his order after one election of "Champagne for all" cost him £200.

Never a stout party man, in the House he sat on the Government cross benches. His representation of the Logan brought him into strong sympathy with the farmers, and he felt that they were not receiving sufficiently favourable treatment from Governments. Hence in 1895 he was prominent in the formation of the Farmers' Union, one of the earliest precursors of the Country Party.

He took a large part in South Coast district affairs. He helped to found Schools of Arts at Beenleigh, Redland Bay, Nerang, and Southport, in each case donating books as well. He always gave consistent support to the Nerang and South Coast Show society. When the government, in 1883, refused to provide money for a pier at Southport, he, John Cameron and R. L. Johnston found the money. The pier, when opened, was christened with champagne. Mrs. Stevens, too, played a worthy part, and solidly supported the then Canon Dixon in the early and difficult formative years of the Southport School. In all his affairs E. J. Stevens was a stickler for punctuality and he expected the same from everybody. On one occasion he had invited many friends, including ladies, to a cruise to Jumpin Pin to start at 11 a.m. As the hour drew near he stood on deck with his watch in his hand, and punctually at 11 a.m. he gave the order to cast off, although the ladies were then in sight — but not hurrying.

But perhaps his main importance was in the newspaper world. When McIlwraith, Morehead and Perkins took control of the Observer in 1881, Stevens was one of the shareholders behind them. When the Observer was taken over by the Courier Stevens retained his interest. His influence over the Brisbane Newspaper Company soon became much greater, for he was appointed the trustee of the shares held in the name of E. T. C. Browne. When the company was reorganised the year after the financial crisis of 1893, Stevens became managing director of the company. He was no figure-head but took a very active interest indeed and the Courier was a very major force in the politics of
those days, so much so, in fact, that Stevens came to be known as the maker and breaker of cabinets. His long and busy life continued until 1922, and even to-day Southport remembers him, with Ernest Junction and Stevens Street.

Charles Powers

Despite the already perhaps inordinate length of this talk I feel that I must give some consideration to at least two more figures, not only to tell something of their careers but also to show something of modern trends in political organization. The first of these is Charles Powers. In him we have a product of our own educational system, for Powers was educated at both Ipswich and Brisbane Grammar Schools, after which he became a solicitor. He was returned for Burrum in 1888 and Maryborough in 1893. At the time Queensland political parties were in a state of flux. Labour was rising to prominence, and the older parties had coalesced to oppose the new party. But in doing so they were retreating into conservatism, and at least some of the members of the Assembly were opposed to this drift. Hence these formed the Independent Opposition which came under the leadership of Powers, who, in 1895, put forward a very progressive policy, in an effort to counter the increasing appeal of Labour. In many ways this party was able to co-operate with Labour, even though Labour was as yet sitting on the cross-benches in the Assembly. But Powers found his position too difficult, so he departed from politics. In 1897 he was called to the Bar, and his rise was meteoric, for he was appointed to the Bench of the High Court of Australia where he sat for many years.

John Adamson

The second whom I wish to mention is John Adamson. He represented the older school of Labour politicians, who were much influenced by the ideas of nineteenth century Radicalism, with its emphasis upon the free choice of the individual. His early career emphasised his sympathy with the working classes; indeed, he himself had to go to work at the age of ten. Before he was twenty he began to study for the Methodist ministry, which had throughout the

(17) Brisbane Courier, 30 May, 1895.
century shown strong sympathy with the workers. Hence it was not surprising to find John Adamson joining the ranks of the Labour Party. But his innate individualism and perhaps his North Country birth and inheritance (he came from Durham county), made him resistant to direction and on several occasions he clashed with the party machine. In retrospect it now seems obvious that party loyalty and personal ideals were bound to conflict seriously. In 1916 he was faced with this unenviable choice. Labour was strongly opposing conscription and yet Adamson was intensely patriotic. With great grief he decided to part company with the Labour Party. In summing up the character of John Adamson one cannot perhaps do better than use the words of C. A. Bernays:\(^{(18)}\)

“Somewhat of a visionary, but an honest man: an earnest man who was never ashamed to blazon forth from the housetops his fervent belief in the Christian faith and his own personal doctrines.”

Queensland lost a worthy citizen when Senator John Adamson was killed by a train at Hendra.

So much, at last, for my survey of some political personalities. Perhaps I have disappointed some of you by omitting men of whom you would have liked to hear. But the field was so wide and I could take only a few as examples. More material of this kind is necessary, especially in view of our project which the Executive Committee of the Dictionary of Australian Biography hopes to arrange for next year, viz. the publication of a monograph with brief summaries—much briefer than those you have heard to-night—of the careers of all those who have ever sat in the Queensland Parliament. Mr. Smith, of the Parliamentary Library Staff, has already kindly consented to make available the results of his considerable researches into their parliamentary life. But much more is needed on the personal side. If you have enjoyed this talk to-night I am glad: if you can help us with the careers of others not mentioned I shall be exceedingly grateful.

\(^{(18)}\) C. A. Bernays, *Queensland: Our Seventh Political Decade*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1931, p.335.