The Liberal Party of Australia as seen by Liberal Backbenchers of the House of Representatives

by

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THE LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

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INTRODUCTION

As the title indicates, this study tries to find out how a group of Liberal backbenchers of the Federal Parliament envisage the Liberal Party. Behind this, of course, is the idea that their "images" of the Party will throw some light upon its nature.

One might well ask at the outset why this somewhat round-about "hearsay" approach, instead of a more direct and objective one, should be used to investigate the nature of the Liberal Party.

A more direct and comprehensive approach would try to deduce the nature of the party primarily from its objective machinery, membership and actions. It would study formal and actual policies and the objective characteristics of Liberal voters. It would attempt an analysis, in concrete situations, of power relations within the party, including the influence of particular personalities and interest groups. No doubt this would get one nearer to a rounded, objective analysis of the Liberal Party.

Nevertheless, there is also value in considering the views of leading sections of participants in Party activity themselves. One must assume that their beliefs and ideas have some effect on action within the Party and are thus an important element in understanding the Party. That is, their ideas and convictions point to the actual ways in which political phenomena are accepted and sustained by this particular group of people. Further, people's concepts (especially as one probes closer to their less superficial conscious and even unconscious attitudes and motives) may point in themselves to the significant external factors helping to determine them. In other words, subjective concepts, objective actions, and the relationship between these, all need to be considered equally in trying to explain political phenomena. The Members' concept of the Liberal Party must therefore give some insight into its nature (whether that of the Parliamentary Party alone or of the Party as a whole). 1.

More direct and comprehensive explanations and theories of parties do stress various factors which are not wholly objective, which partly exist as ideas and feelings - and not simply those in the mind of the analyst. This is notably so of factors like "class" and, perhaps to a lesser extent, "interest", which are in fact hypothetical constructs. But even organizational and power relationships are partly a matter of people's attitudes and interpretations, whilst the same is perhaps even true, to a lesser degree, of policy. So it is entirely proper and often most fruitful to examine directly the participants' concept of a party and their ideas about it. This has been attempted quite extensively in the case of voters, but less commonly in the case of Members of Parliament.

II

An interview in which the Members were asked a series of written questions, handed to them, supplemented by further oral questions, was the method used to find out how

1. This question, and the whole question of what has been learned about the party from this survey, are considered in Chapter VI.
they envisage the Liberal Party. The questionnaire was thus of fundamental importance for the study.

The structure of the questionnaire was based on the asking of general questions followed by more specific and pointed questions. This method was employed in the division of the written questionnaire into sections. Section A asked general questions about the party as such, which could be answered in terms of any one or more of the specific aspects of the party probed in later sections. It tried to find out the dominant aspects in the Members' surface image of the party. The answers given in this section could then be compared with the answers to more detailed and specific questions in the later sections. The same method was also employed with each individual question. That is, the main written questions were asked in a general way and were then followed, according to what the Member said, by more pointed probe questions. The answers to the latter then acted as a check on the answers to the former.

The questionnaire was designed this way to elicit from the Members, in sum and in the end, as rounded an account of their concept of the party as possible, and to do this as tactfully as possible. The general, written questions were designed to be such that they neither suggested the exact type of answer required nor put the Member on the defensive. The probe questions were then designed to deal with more specific and more sensitive aspects of the question in a way which seemed to follow naturally from the Members' own answers.

Underlying the desire to be tactful in the written questions, of course, was the notion that the Members would have a concept of what the party ought to be and anything to the contrary would be regarded as an "admission". The probe questions were thus designed to get beyond what the Members wanted to see, or thought they ought to see, to what they really see and think, still without antagonizing them in the process. At the same time the two types of questions were designed between them to distinguish and clarify what exactly are the ideals and the myths, with what strength these are held, and what is the relationship between them and other facts which the Members acknowledge.

A copy of the interviewer's questionnaire follows. Section A deals with the party as such. Section B then goes on to deal specifically with the party's philosophy and policy. Section C is concerned with the party's relationship to class and Section D with its relationship to interest groups. Finally, Section E treats the subject of party structure and organization and the locus of power.

The questionnaire must first be prefaced by an explanation of its form. As set out here it contains three types of questions.

Firstly, there are questions henceforward referred to as "main questions" (and designated "AI, 2, .... BL, 2, ...." etc). At the beginning of the interview the Members were given a typed copy of the questionnaire to have in front of them throughout the interview. This contained only the main questions. The fact that the Members had a copy of these gave the interview definite structure and facilitated their grasping the main questions quickly and easily. These questions fitted with ease onto two foolscap pages, giving the impression of something fairly comprehensive but not inordinately long and tedious. Neither did these questions seem difficult or too pointed.
Secondly, there are a number of questions henceforth referred to as "supplementary questions" (and designated "A3 Supplementary." etc). These are essentially of the same order as main questions, except that they did not appear on the Members' copy of the questionnaire, for fear of making it look too long. As they did not require long answers, and seemed to bear some relevance to what the Members had first been talking about in answer to the previous written question, they were inserted like probe questions. They differ from probe questions, however, in that, like main questions, they were always asked (i.e. of all the Members).

Thirdly, most main questions are followed by "probe questions" (designated "(i) (ii) (iii)" etc). These were not always asked or asked in the order listed, whilst sometimes they were slightly varied. Whether and how they were asked generally depended on what the Member said in answer to the main question, as they were designed to lead him on to certain aspects he might not have dealt with, or to illuminate what he had already said. Occasionally they were not asked for fear of damaging the rapport, but generally when they were not asked it was due to a shortage of time in interviews which were already consuming more than average time.

INTERVIEWER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

[Interviewer: "This first section has very broad questions which come up in more detail later. So I hope you won't mind first generalizing briefly."]

A1 What would you say are the most important differences between the Liberal Party and the Labour Party?

(i) Do you mean particular policies and issues or broad ideals and values?

A2 Would you say that the Liberal Party and the Country Party are very similar in most respects or not?

(i) What about the groups who support them?
(ii) What about their policies?
(iii) What about the leaders and Members of the parties?
(iv) So do you regard the alliance with the Country Party more as a matter of necessity or similarity?

A3 What do you feel are some of the things which most often make people vote Liberal?

(i) Do you think particular public figures are important here?

A3 - SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION Do you feel that some Liberal voters probably have a rather different view of the Fault to yours?

A4 Could you tell me what were some of the reasons which made you decide to enter Parliament?

A5 When there are differences of opinion within the Party, what sort of issues do you feel they are most often caused by?

(i) Are there differences over basic principles or only over specific policies?
(ii) Do you think the type of electorate, or the type of interests a Member has been associated with, affect differences?

... What about previous occupations?

(iii) Are more personal differences involved?

(iv) Are differences of position within the Party involved?

(v) What causes differences within the Organization, and between the Organization and the Parliamentary Party?

A6 Do you see a particular need for change in any direction in the Liberal Party or not?

A6 - SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION Just on this question of change in the Liberal Party - Do you feel that any particular reasons are responsible for the greater unity and stability which the Liberal Party seems to have compared with its non-Labour predecessors?

(i) Do you think it could collapse again?

SECTION B

[Interviewer: "This next section is all about the policy and ideas of the party"]

B1 Do you see the Liberal Party more as a purely practical party or as one acting upon certain beliefs?

(i) To what extent is it each?

(ii) Is this as it should be?

(iii) What do you see as the really fundamental beliefs of the Liberal Party?

B1 - SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION Do you think some of the ideas the Liberal Party had when it was formed have been modified since 1949? (for instance on free enterprise, anti-socialism and anti-bureaucracy?)

(i) [If answer Yes]

(a) Why do you think this has occurred?

(b) Is it just the experience of government, or do you think a real change of thinking has grown up - Members seeing a need for a more managed economy?

(c) That is, do you think Keynesian ideas have been accepted?

(ii) [If answer No]

(a) You don't feel that the experience of government has brought about a change?

(b) Do you feel at all that there has been a change of thinking - Members seeing a need for a more managed economy?

(c) That is, do you feel Keynesian ideas have been accepted at all?

B2 Could you tell me what you feel is the right policy

(A) on foreign investment in Australia?

(B) for keeping the economy moving swiftly ahead but stable: control by taxation policy and other measures, or the use of direct controls over prices, rents, etc?

(C) regarding industrial and resources development: control by Government-instituted priorities and other guide-lines, or indirect influence through taxation, loan-expenditure and other like policies?

(D) on restrictive trade practices?
B3 How important a part do you think Communism in Australia should play in Liberal thinking?

(i) I mean, how significant a problem do you feel it is?
(ii) Do you think any connection between the A.L.P. and Communism exists and should be stressed by Liberals?
(iii) Do you think the Communist Party Dissolution Bill of 1950 was the right policy for the Liberal Government?
(iv) What about the proposed amendments to the Crimes Act in 1960?
(v) Do you think the Liberal Party should be doing anything else?

B4 How significant a part do you think should be played in Australian foreign policy by

(A) Britain and the Commonwealth, and
(B) The United States?

(i) Which do you feel is the most important to us?
(ii) Do you think there is any danger of Australia being too dependent on the United States?
(iii) Is it too dependent now?

B5 How important is the preservation of Federalism in your view?

(i) Do you think there is any need for an extension of the Commonwealth Government's economic powers?

B5 - SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION Just before we finish this section - could you tell me what you see as the most important achievements of the Liberal record in government?

SECTION C

[ Interviewer: "This next section is about some of the characteristics of Liberal voters and Liberal Members"]

C1 If you had to generalize, what sort of people would you say most Liberal voters are?

(i) [If answer a particular group, such as 'middle class']

(a) Why is this so?
(b) Do you think they want to keep the economic and social system much as it is?
(c) Is it also because they own some property?

(ii) [If answer all groups, or groups bearing no relationship to class]

(a) Nevertheless, though all groups vote Liberal, do you feel that some groups, rather more than others, do tend to vote Liberal?
(b) Nevertheless, do you feel that strong Liberal electorates do tend to contain more of some groups than others?
(c) Do you feel that some occupational groups are possibly more likely to vote Liberal than others?

[Then, if the Members agreed to any of these propositions, they were asked the questions in (i) above]
(iii) [If still no mention of class, or something akin to it]

(a) Do you feel there are any class differences in Australia?
(b) Do these have any effect on voting Liberal?

[Then, if the Member still answered No, he was asked only parts (b) and (c) of (i) above]

**C1 - FIRST SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**
Do the different religions people belong to effect their willingness to vote Liberal?

(i) Nevertheless, thinking of the actual membership of the Party and its Organization, do you see the Liberal Party as a strongly Protestant party?

(ii) What do you mean, more exactly, by the middle class?

**C2**
Sir Frederic Eggleston, in his book Reflections of an Australian Liberal, expressed the opinion that in Australian politics the Labour Party and the Country Party tend to have the initiative, because the role of the Liberal Party is to a certain extent to maintain the existing economic and social system. How much truth do you feel there is in this view?

(i) Well, would you agree with his view that some of the Liberal Party's welfare policy is a reflection of and response to the A.L.P.?
(ii) (and its rural policy to the Country Party?)

**C3**
As you remember it, for which party did your parents usually vote in elections when you were too young to vote?

(i) [If answer Liberal]

(a) Well, do you feel that your background was in some way 'typically Liberal'?
(b) Then did you grow up naturally into the Party, or did you join it at a specific time for a specific reason?

(ii) [If answer Labour or something else other than Liberal]

(a) Well, why did you come to join the Liberal Party?
(b) When? etc

**C4**
To what extent would you describe yourself as a typical Liberal Member of Parliament?

(i) Do you feel that you share your general outlook and family background with the other Members?
(iii) Do you feel that you have more in common with them in this sort of way or over specific policies?

**C5**
What would be your opinion on the statement that "in Australia people in certain jobs get paid too much and in others not enough"?
(i) Do you think this is a significant problem?

SECTION D

[Interviewer: "This next small section is about Australian government as a whole, not just the Liberal Party"]

D1 Do you see Australian governments as subject to differing pressures from various organized interest groups?

(i) How far do you see politics as basically an attempt to achieve compromise between these differing interest groups?

(ii) To what extent do you regard the three parties as organs to advance the interests of particular groups?

(iii) Is there anything which differentiates the Liberal Party from the other parties in this regard?

(iv) Do you think that some groups, rather more than others, do tend to have some influence with the Liberal Party?

(v) Would you say that the more important business and industrial groups have a special influence?

(vi) How far would you say that the weakening of the restrictive trade practices legislation might have been due to the influence of these groups?

SECTION E

[Interviewer: "This last section is mostly about party structure and organization"]

E1 What changes (if any) do you think would be desirable in the relationship between the Parliamentary Party and the Nonparliamentary wing?

(i) You don't think the Parliamentary Party should be in closer contact with, or more responsible to, the nonparliamentary wing?

E1 - SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION Do you find that your position as a Member of Parliament makes you see the Party differently from non-parliamentary members?

(i) Do you think that before coming into Parliament you saw the Party very differently from the way you do now? . . . In what ways? . . . . Do you think that the view of the Party depends on one's position in it?

E2 Do you think there should be tighter or looser discipline in the Parliamentary Party on (A) voting in divisions and (B) lines in debate?

E3 What is your view on the idea that Ministers and Cabinets should be elected by the whole Parliamentary Party?
E3 - SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Do you think the powers and functions which the leader of the Liberal Party has had have been the best possible arrangement?

(i) Do you feel that the Liberal Party as a whole tends to function on the basis of a few key individuals?

E4

What do you feel are the centres of greatest influence within the Liberal Party as a whole?

(i) I mean, who has the greatest power over policy-making and decision-making?
(ii) How does the influence within the Party of the top men of the Organization (say, Federal Executive) compare with that of the backbenchers?

E5

To what extent do you think most Liberal Members of Parliament are concerned with their position within the Party?

(i) I mean, how far are they concerned about preferment, rivalries and influence?
(ii) Does this have much effect on party life?
(iii) Is it a good or bad thing?

E6

How much activity do you think there is generally among the members of Liberal Party branches?

(i) Does it matter whether there is much activity?

E7

How much identity do you feel with state Liberal parties?

(i) Do you think that all the Liberal Parties of Australia are basically similar?
(ii) Does the Liberal Party to you mean the party as a whole or the Federal Party?

III

The "subjects" were thirty-four Liberal backbenchers of the House of Representatives in the first 1966 Session of the Twenty-fifth Parliament. This timing, as it happened, followed immediately upon the passing over of the Liberal Leadership and the Prime Ministership by Sir Robert Menzies to H. E. Holt. This was accidental and its effect, if any, on my results indeterminate. The "subjects" included all Liberal backbenchers except two, one of whom was ill. (These two did not answer my letter of request and, when I tried to contact them subsequently, had left Canberra). None of the Members interviewed are identified by name at any point in the thesis. Two Ministers were also interviewed. As they were, however, neither a representative sample of Ministers nor backbenchers, I eventually decided not to include their answers amongst the data analysed in this thesis.

The request for an interview was made in a letter which the Members received in the second week of the Session. These letters gave two suggested times for interviews, from which the Members, if they were willing to be interviewed, could choose, or else arrange a different time altogether. I was delighted by the prompt and pleasant replies which I received. To be frank, I expect these must be attributed, in order of increasing significance, to a kind response to a plea for help, to the fact that the interview was to be confidential with no names mentioned in writing up the report, and to the fortunate fact that I could say "my father... suggested that you might be able to help me."
The interviews took place in the last six sitting weeks of the Session. As I had suggested times, the interviews were fairly evenly divided between the six weeks. This meant about six interviews each week, usually with two on each of the sitting days. I had asked for an hour's interview, but the interviews generally took an hour and a quarter, sometimes longer. The times for interviews had to be worked out in accordance with the Parliamentary routine of question times, party meetings, committee meetings and important statements at 8 p.m. The best times for interviews were after Question Time or from 8.30 onwards in the evening.

The Members could not have been more cooperative, and showed great good humour towards me and the questionnaire. Most seemed to become genuinely interested in the questions, perhaps enjoying something which was not part of the ordinary routine. There were only one or two Members who seemed to be wary to the point of guarding their every word. Most were obviously fairly frank, sometimes surprisingly so. The form of the questionnaire also proved to be very successful in this regard.

There were a few difficulties, but they were generally very minor (or perhaps even added to the savour of interviewing Members of Parliament.) It was often difficult to arrange times, especially once the original times had been changed. For it was hard to contact Members by telephone, which made it necessary to wait like a true lobbyist and try to catch them after Question Time, asking politely whether it was possible to make an appointment this week. Even when an appointment had been arranged, it was a rare Member who had remembered and was waiting. Most had forgotten and had to be paged at length. A Member would get up to speak just at the appointed hour (or perhaps would have to be disturbed in the midst of a critical game of billiards). These things, of course, did not matter, except that they sometimes cut an interview shorter than one would have liked or meant that one interview followed upon another at a rather alarming pace.

There were likewise difficulties when once the Members had been secured for the interview. Some obviously began (and a few also ended) by regarding the interview as definitely a nuisance. Generally, however, they softened after a while, and sometimes it was a relief to find that "an appointment in half an hour" could somehow melt away as a Member became more interested. When such appointments did materialize, the Members would generally volunteer to continue the interview at a later date. Sometimes, of course, I was simply lucky. One Member, for instance, pinned his hopes of escape on the fact that he simply had to hear the start of a certain debate which was due to begin in a quarter of an hour. Although he eagerly switched on his transistor at frequent intervals, the previous debate droned on remorselessly, leaving ample time to complete the interview. Divisions, too, were a natural and frequent source of interruption.

The fact that many Members share rooms also proved on several occasions an interviewing hazard. Usually the other Member would retire with a good (or fairly good) grace, but on a few occasions he decided to stay. Despite the protestations of not minding, and of knowing or sharing all their views, which such a situation called forth from the Members, the presence of the other Member had an obviously inhibiting effect on the views expressed, until such time as he decided to go away. For similar reasons I had to stave off suggestions to hold the interview over afternoon tea or sitting in King's Hall. In such cases, producing
the questionnaire, and saying how long it was and how I needed to write, generally saved the situation. I can, however, express only the warmest gratitude for the splendid cooperation of these busy men.

IV

The outcomes of these interviews themselves took the form of thirty-four longish screeds containing each Member's answers. During the interviews I jotted down the main points the Members made in answer to each question. On the central issues of each question I tried to take down their views verbatim, as the particular words and phrases used often seemed to be very revealing in themselves. Of course, copying down answers, asking questions, and looking interested, all at the same time, meant that these notes would have been well nigh unintelligible in two months time. So I wrote up the interviews at greater length immediately afterwards while they were still freshly in mind.

The first step in analyzing the results was to bring some order into the chaos of lengthy and conflicting views by reducing the various answers to each question to a fairly small number of types, and noting how many Members gave answers of each type. This had to be done carefully as there was inevitably a certain amount of subjective judgement at the margin in assigning answers to a particular group. Although this task looked easy at first sight, subtle but important shades of difference in the Members' answers made it difficult. Nevertheless, despite its laboriousness, this process also proved a useful way of getting to know the material.

Following upon this, it was necessary to consider the implications of certain types of answers, to compare the answers to main questions with the answers to probe questions, to compare the answers to questions in Section A with the answers to more specific questions in later sections, and to compare the answers to different questions in the same section.

The second step, arising from this, was to consider who were the particular Members who gave certain sorts of answers. Did a significant number of the Members giving the same type of answer to a question have a common characteristic which might explain their answer? Further, did a significant number of the Members giving the same answer to one question also give the same answer as the others to other questions? In other words, did the Members tend to divide into clear groupings?

The common characteristics which were considered here were, amongst others, the type of electorate (swing, country etc), the State, occupational background, age, date of recruitment to and length of time in Parliament, and background in the Party Organization.

As I had only one term in which to analyze the results and write the subthesis, I did not attempt to use a computer or employ any sophisticated statistical analysis in looking for these correlations. A computer could certainly have investigated the possible existence of many more detailed correlations than I could hope to determine unaided. Nevertheless, by means of a rather large and formidable chart, it was possible to check in a rough, but adequate, way whether the major correlations which I expected between certain types of answers and certain factors did exist.
In fact, I found a surprising lack of such correlations. Because of this I have devoted one chapter to each of the sections of the questionnaire, explaining the types of answers to each question and the general implications of these, rather than devoting my main attention to particular types and groups of Members. At appropriate points throughout, I have discussed the existence or, more usually, the nonexistence of certain correlations. At the same time I have tried to give possible reasons why this should be so.
CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL AND SURFACE IMAGE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY.

In this chapter I am concerned with the answers to the questions in the first section of the questionnaire.

The aim of these questions was to find out which were the dominant aspects in the Members' general concept of the party. Thus all the questions are general and about the party as such, rather than some specific aspect of it as in the later sections. They could, of course, be answered in terms of any of the specific factors which are later probed in more detail. These factors are philosophy and policy, party organization, and the relationship of the party to classes and to interest groups.

This group of questions was also likely to elicit the Members' automatic, unthinking, surface image of the party because it came first. The interview was only getting under way, later questions had not affected Members' attitudes and the first few questions were ones that appeared familiar and easy.

Question A.4. proved important as it placed the party itself in a wider context by asking the Members what were their reasons for entering Parliament.

The striking result is that less than half the Members mentioned reasons directly connected with the Liberal Party, and of these only five gave no other reason. Reasons unconnected with the party were given by almost everyone. Some actually seemed rather proud of their non-party origins:

"...I was young and went in for the experience. I'd never been to a political meeting and I beat the machine in getting in. There was a general air of excitement and I was looking for an opportunity..."

The most common reasons unconnected with the party were the attraction of the job itself, a sense of service and duty, and a deep interest in politics.

"I was always fascinated by politics. Then there was an innate sense of service. And Parliament is the forum to express your views - I like this - it's the totality of the parliamentary existence that attracted me".

"The law treated me well and I felt I should give something back. I would rather have Australia as a client...more interesting and more worthwhile".

"I felt from the time I was fourteen or fifteen I wanted to go into politics. I'm a professional politician. You could get romantic about this - if I was a minister of religion I would say I was called to politics."

There were some other variations on the non-party theme. Some said their previous record in public affairs led to standing. Thus one began his career in a country town "where I held thirty-two positions in various bodies, public and private". And another said "all my life I wanted to be with people, associate with them". One Member stood "with the point of view of the rural industries in my electorate." A few gave or implied as their reason that they wanted power for certain good ends. Quoth the most striking of these:
"The overwhelming reason was a seeking after ultimate power so as to perform the ultimate good to the ultimate number of people... If you want to do the absolute amount of good or evil to men you must go to the ultimate seat of power - in a democracy that's Parliament... Another reason is natural ambition. I could put it 'Love and Lust'... This is a motivation in all public figures".

Several Members also gave as a reason their concern with particular issues and policies, such as foreign policy, Communism or social services.

Turning to the minority of Members who gave reasons directly connected with the party, most said that the process of serving in the party organization led to their standing, while a smaller number said that they were against Australian Labor Party policy or anti-Labour.

"Once you start to work for the organization it's natural you drift to the area from which members are selected".

"I was drawn into the machine and then there was a choice between business and politics".

"I worked for a couple of Members... I felt I was helping people of about the same stature as myself. So I put my name down for the pre-selection in X".

"The prime reason was that I was X (a certain position in the party) and so there were (as my wife said) 'no more worlds to conquer'. Where was I to go?... I had to go on when my star was high..."

It is clear that in some of these cases it is really a general interest in political life that has developed through the experience in the organization.

Those who said they stood to oppose Labour quoted economic policies, particularly bank nationalization. Occasional this stand was obviously connected with their personal position:

"During the Depression I was in private business and could see such going on that was wrong in terms of the development of the country... I was continually being tapped by the Labour Party for money for the unemployed. This was the wrong approach".

I have quoted at length from answers to this question because I think it is important to realize at the extent to which most of the Members see themselves first and foremost as Members of Parliament. Fundamental to so much else they have to say seems to be this basic fact that, in their eyes, the Liberal Party takes on a peculiarly parliamentary character.

Turning to the questions directly involving the Liberal Party, a consistent pattern emerges as to which aspects are dominant in the general image of the party.

The first question (A.1.) asked for the most important differences between the Liberal Party and the Labour Party. Two thirds of the Members saw a difference of philosophy, ideals, and values. For most, of course, this meant private enterprise against socialism, but for two it meant a difference over Communism and for one it meant Socialism as opposed to "the democratic and parliamentary system".
About half the Members also stressed a difference over issues, policies and methods. A considerable number named foreign policy. But only eight described the difference over socialism in terms of policy rather than principle. Thus the "extreme socialism" of the Australian Labor Party was compared, to use their own phrases, with the "lesser socialism" or "welfare state socialism" of the Liberal Party, while one member said there was a difference of method rather than aim. Three said the Labour Party was concerned with the redistribution of the cake whereas the Liberal Party wanted a "larger cake".

About half the Members also stressed a difference in terms of party organization. Their whole point here, however, was that the Liberal Party was not as highly organized. There was much less control of Members of Parliament by the party machine (or, as some said, there was no control at all).

Differences seen in any other terms were quite marginal. A few saw a difference between individuals. But there were only two who saw the difference in class terms, and one of these was at pains to point out that the Liberal Party was the only truly national party. Only two seemed to see the difference in terms of outside interest groups, pointing out that the Australian Labor Party was based on the Trade Unions, or "under outside Communist control".

The answers to this question thus create the image of a loosely organized Parliamentary party divided from its more tightly organised opponent on the grounds of philosophy and policy. Class and interest were practically not considered.

In the second question (A.2.) the Members were asked whether or not the Liberal Party and the Country Party are very similar in most respects. Practically all the members answered in terms of either the philosophy or the sectional nature of the Country Party, or both.

The most common answer was that the parties are similar in philosophy but differ because the Country Party is sectional. That is, the Country Party is also anti-Labour but is more concerned with rural matters - a narrow, selfish, horse-trading pressure group. But then, in answer to my probe question, the majority of these members went on to say that the alliance with the Country Party was one of similarity, not just of necessity. In other words, they implied the similarity of philosophy outweighed the sectional difference.

Only four members reserved their entire attention for the Country Party's sectionalism, pronouncing it entirely dissimilar and the alliance one of necessity.

In turn, some considered only the philosophy of the parties, most of them seeing a great difference because of the Country Party's "socialism". This also made the alliance one of necessity. 1

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1. It is interesting to note that of the ten Members altogether who, for different reasons, said the alliance was one of necessity, a high percentage were rural or Victorian Members.
"I don't hate them, but they are prepared to take their profits while expecting the government to take the losses - that is, they are socialists...They would be just as happy to join the Labour Party under certain circumstances".

Only about a quarter of the Members saw the parties as basically similar in all respects, thus implying an essential similarity in both philosophy and the groups supporting the parties.

"If there was no Country Party, the Liberal Party would get that vote...I think we should unify the two parties."

"They are very similar. Many factors in their platform blend in with the Liberal Party and, even though many Members of Parliament wouldn't like to admit it, it gives a better rural image than the Liberal Party could hope to by itself".

It is clear that, in most of these answers, philosophy is again given the most weight, as in answer to the first question. Where Sectionalism is considered it is generally turned against the Country Party. By contrast the positive concept of the Liberal Party as 'the only truly national party' is sometimes stressed.

The next question (A.3.) asked 'What do you feel are some of the things which most often make people vote Liberal?' Once again, practically all the Members answered in terms of the party's record and promise, or its philosophy of individualism and free enterprise. A third did answer in terms of class, habit or tradition, though only three confined themselves to this as the only reason.

In a few cases the party's record, promise or ideology was clearly combined with class.

"Economic attitudes and conditions are very important. Many object to the socialism of the Labour Party. Most desire safety and security. In my electorate the new electors, the young marrieds, vote five to three against me in the first election because of the old attitudes they bring with them. In the next election they vote five to three for me because they have settled down and are concerned with their homes."

"The Liberal Party offers an image to the average Australian of what he would like to be and how he would like to live. Policy follows accordingly".

There were only a few Members who clearly combined class with record and ideology in this way. However, it is often easy to read a connection with class into many of the answers about people voting Liberal because of the safety, security, stability, good economic policies, good tax policies, high standard of living, full employment and no nationalization.

1. This term seemed to be used generally to apply to both interests and types of voters.
"They vote Liberal because of the private enterprise outlook, the feeling that they have steady jobs, there will be no nationalization and tax policies are fair."

"Their acceptance of the fact that a country run on Liberal lines does give more opportunity to individuals - even the worker is better off because business has more chance to expand."

The significant point is, however, that the group of Members concerned did not wish to imply any connection with class. They were looking at the vote-getting process in terms of policy and philosophy.

Similarly only three Members saw voting-motivation in terms of interest. E.g. "Fear of socialism comes back to their pockets."

Quite a significant number also saw people voting Liberal because of the impact on them of individuals. This generally meant "the Liberal Party leadership", or Menzies, but sometimes it meant the individual Member of Parliament or "the better type of Liberal representative". This accords very well with the Members' tendency to see the party as a group of Parliamentary notables.

When the Members had answered this question, they were asked a supplementary question: whether they felt that some Liberal voters probably have a different view of the party from theirs. Here the Members might have answered that, as Members of Parliament, they were more conscious of philosophy, policy and the individual Member of Parliament than were most voters. In the event, only four said that, while they personally thought of philosophy and principles, most voters were concerned with other things such as particular policies, class, tradition and general party image. Most of the Members saw any difference only over emphasis regarding particular policies, some calling this a division into right and left. Others saw little difference at all. A number saw differences accountable for in terms of their special position as Members of Parliament. There was only a sprinkling of views emphasizing class or interest.

Question A.5. asked what sort of issues cause differences of opinion within the party. Further probe questions then followed about particular types of issues.

The great majority of Members said that there were differences of opinion on basic principles, or their application, or on particular policies. They seemed very frequently to be referring to the same conflicts, but differed as to the depth and significance they attached to these. Conflicts were most often seen on economic matters such as restrictive trade practices, banking, the public sector and the distribution of wealth. They were also quite often seen as divisions between right, left and centre.

A few of those who saw differences on basic principles stressed that there were comparatively few and differences over particular policies were more usual. A significant number, however, did seem to treat such basic differences as fairly common. And sometimes they were seen over issues other than economic ones:
"The extreme right has a less humanitarian view of the value of life."

"There are fundamentally different values. Some within the party see the objective as 'we must stay in government'. Others say there are some fundamental matters of democracy - it is better that these are held than that we stay in government."

Other divisive issues mentioned were conscription, Communism and Rhodesia.

Practically all the Members also mentioned differences which can be seen to stem from their situations as Members of Parliament in a parliamentary party. Thus almost two-thirds saw differences based on different types of electorates, different States, or the division between country and city. Sometimes these were seen as minor and classified as 'parochial'; but sometimes they were treated as major.

Similarly, almost two-thirds pointed to personal differences again, classified sometimes as major and sometimes as minor. They mostly referred to personal rivalries and frustrations, but sometimes to basic individual differences, or to lack of knowledge and emotionalism on particular questions.

About a quarter of the Members also stressed differences based on the division between cabinet and backbench.

Almost a quarter did also mention differences based on the previous occupation of Members. Such differences seemed to be regarded, on the surface, as personal, rather than reflect in anything deeper. Only one Member spoke explicitly of 'differences in class approach'. Similarly, only a handful of Members spoke of differences based on interest.

These answers reflect very clearly, in addition to the emphasis on philosophy and policy, a view of the party as a parliamentary group of individuals. This attitude is further underlined by the fact that, although the question referred to 'the party', only seven Members referred implicitly or explicitly to the extra-parliamentary party as well (and even this was usually as an afterthought or on my prompting).

Question A. 6. asked 'do you see a particular need for change in any direction in the Liberal Party or not?' The changes advocated once more showed a preoccupation with philosophy, policy and the parliamentary party.

About a quarter of the Members wanted changes in basic philosophy and policy, and they felt strongly on the subject.

"The Liberal Party is going downhill (and we are only saved by the state of the Labour Party). The party has lost drive. It has no particular life or policy."

Nevertheless, Members wanted conflicting changes. Some said the Liberal Party should keep more to its original principles, one invoking "the elements of conservatism to billow forth again". But others called for the Liberal Party to be more progressive, one saying "we must rethink our established attitudes!"

A quarter of the Members wanted more backbench power within the Parliamentary Party.

Others of them saw a need for organizational change in the party as a whole. With two exceptions, however, this was simply to make the position of the Parliamentary Party or the individual Member even more comfortable. They wanted a
better organization, in the sense of better research and field work, better men and better public relations. Only the two remaining Members seemed to feel that the parliamentary party actually needed more power in relation to the Organization.

A number of the Members said that no change was necessary at all, while a few confined themselves to changes in specific policies.

Only two mentioned class:

"The Liberal Party is becoming more of a class party. The existence of the D.L.P. over the years has taken away from the Liberal Party the need it has to extend its class support and allegiance. We retreat into our own class and the job is done for us".

"We need a change of emphasis in terms of the technological development of the country. We need a greater emphasis on ensuring we don't create different classes in the community - don't allow the growth of poverty or a peasant group or the very wealthy".

Question A6 was followed by a supplementary question asking why the Liberal Party seems to have greater unity and stability today, and a probe question asked whether it could collapse again.

Over half the Members put greater stability down to Menzies, while a third said it was because the Liberal Party was not sectional. The latter included the ideas that the Liberal Party is a national party because it is based broadly, organised nationally, with a national philosophy, broad policies, no vested interests or capitalist pressures, and even more socialist policies than the Labour Party. Several others attributed stability to the philosophy. Only a handful, of a rather more down to earth turn of mind, said it was due to staying in government (one of these likening the Liberal Party to a fat contented cow).

A third of the Members thought, for various reasons, that the party could collapse again. Five said that it would fall apart in opposition, mainly because of internal dissension. Five said that there could be instability under a weaker leader than Menzies. One saw collapse possibly coming because of an observable increase in conservatism and "the old school tie approach". On the other hand, another Member heralded collapse if the Liberal Party did not regain its philosophical roots in conservatism. Only one member, unrepentant, said that the Liberal Party was exactly the same as previous non-Labor parties except in name.

The other question which must briefly be mentioned is who were the Members who gave certain types of answers. From this first section of the questionnaire there were no obviously correlated characteristics of Members who gave the same answers on a particular question. There were, however, a few Members who seemed to stress the same aspects in response to different questions. This was notably so of the few Members who emphasized class. In dealing with the later sections of the questionnaire I will look in detail for such correlations, and will refer back to the Members' answers to this first section.
In conclusion, it is quite obvious from the answers to this first set of questions that, at and near the surface level, almost all the Liberal Members view the Liberal Party as a parliamentary party characterized by its beliefs and policies. The outside Organization is summarily dismissed, as are class and interest. The Liberal Party, based squarely in Parliament, rises pure, nonsectional, essentially national.

This dual concept of a parliamentary party, which is also a party of beliefs, is clearly an old-fashioned view. It has its roots in the liberal idea of party as a philosophical group. It fails to take into account the view which began with Marx of party as the battle formation of a class, or Duverger's idea of parties being distinguished by the nature of their organization.

As for party structure, the Liberal Member sees the party organized along the lines of what Duverger terms a "middle class party of the nineteenth century". The aim of such a party, says Duverger, is not so much to enlist the masses as recruit outstanding individuals. Its activity is directed to elections and parliamentary alliances. Its leadership is in the hands of parliamentary representatives and is markedly individualistic. Duverger says that this type of party survives in the form of conservative and liberal parties, particularly in the United States (though he has not yet visited Australia).

Few political scientists, however, consider Australian political parties solely on these terms. So it is interesting to find out how far the Members themselves can continue to do so when their views on particular aspects of the party are probed in more detail in later sections of the questionnaire. In fact, I think it is only possible to understand the views expressed later (particularly on class, interest and organization) if one bears in mind the conflict and interaction between the surface image of the party and certain other factors which the Members are forced to recognize.
CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHY AND POLICY.

Following from the discussion of the Members' general image of the party, one might well expect to find in the response to the second group of questions (Section B) a considerably preoccupation with the principles underlying policy. And a real concern with changing trends in the party's philosophy and policy would surely be manifested. One might also expect to find marked divisions of opinion. But one would expect the Members to fall into distinct groups on the basis of a fairly consistent approach to different questions.

In fact, however, this does not seem to be the case.

The main focus of the first question in Section B was really the supplementary question asking 'do you think some of the ideas the Liberal Party had when it was formed have been modified since 1949?' This was followed by probe questions asking any change has come about.

The picture which emerges from the answers is of a very large number of Members seeing change, approving it or accepting it, but only a small number seeing this change as the result of positive and deliberate thought and action. Only a handful strongly disapproved of the change they saw. An equally small number would admit to no change at all.

The contrast is very striking between this pattern of response and the 'philosophical' differences from the Labour Party which the majority of Members stressed in response to Section A. Moreover, the contradiction sometimes exists even in replies to this one question and its following supplementary question. Quite a number of Members saw the party as partly or wholly based on beliefs when answering the main question, but then proceeded to treat it as thoroughly pragmatic in answering the supplementary question.

There were only three Members who attributed the change wholly to 'a real change of thinking growing up - Members seeing the need for a more managed economy' (as my probe question put it).

"Yes, I should hope there has been a change - we live in a different world from 1949... There has undoubtedly been a movement to more planning and there must be more still... but changes have taken place in the thinking of bodies subject to it. People's views are changing rapidly in many ways."

"We have thrown away some important beliefs and there has been a real change of thinking. Businessman have not their downfall now because the party has taken responsibility for full employment".

However, the third Member who saw a real change of thinking did not approve. "Most of our troubles spring from socialistic measures or the modifying of our ideas".

In contrast, eleven Members attributed the change purely to practical considerations, the particular circumstances that arose, or else political expediency.

Only two of these disapproved of the situation:

"The Liberal Party has run away from principles, from

1. Only thirty-three of the thirty-four Members were asked the questions in this section.
the desire to continue to hold office. [Proby] No, the idea of a managed economy has not grown up. There are cert.ain things they do which they ought not to - the Liberal Party should not rest on controls!.

"The ideas themselves have not been modified. In practice there has been a sliding in important ways. But the battle is going on and we can't still get worthwhile win. [Proby] Why has there been this change? It's not just the experience of office. It's also the presence of the Country Party... and the increasing complexity of civilization. [Proby] No, most members have not accepted Keynesian ideas. Some don't realize these changes have occurred."

There was one Member who disapproved of the trend, yet gave it complete acceptance:

"A managed economy has been thrust on us. People demand it. I don't necessarily believe it's a good thing, but we must move with the times. (My personal belief is that I'd like to see less government in business and more business in government). I say: let's give people what they want without sinking our principles - that is, without letting the kinds of industry be tied by socialism. We have to be a bit resilient. We must be awake to changes in public thinking and be prepared to change ideas and implement them though not principles - this is our success compared with the Labour Party!"

Another of those Members who attributed change to practical considerations, but who agreed with the majority and approved, said:

"Our ideas have changed enormously. Our opponents would say it's political expediency. We would say it's a reaction to the needs and wants of the people. Some of our legislation would have been anathema to the found us. Basically I believe the old concept of extreme right and left wing parties is now outdated. We're coming more to the centre. The old laissez-faire concept is outdated".

Yet this same Member, who seemed, in answer to this question, to treat the difference between the parties as merely one of emphasis, stressed in answer to A.T. that the main difference between the parties was the Liberal Party's private enterprise philosophy. Then, at that time, I asked him was this the main difference he replied, with an air of incontestable logic, "Of course it is. For in comparing two ideologies, the differences of philosophy are the most important"

There was a third group of Members who saw the change stemming from both the experience of government and also a real change of thinking. Again the majority approved, while some disapproved. One Member appeared to do both at once. His is an extreme example of the sort of contradiction which lurks in so many answers. He began, in answer to the main question, by seeing the Liberal Party as a 'mixture': "It acts in ad hoc ways on many issues, but it definitely has certain beliefs that are not compromised". When I asked "is this as it should be?", he replied:

"No, political principles are absolutely essential or a party just rolls with the tide... Some regard these principles as a stone round their necks. I would like to see the party take more notice of the
three basic principles: the individual, free enterprise and the federal system"

But then when I asked the supplementary question about change he said:

"Yes, and I'm not worried, because of the changing Australia. The Liberal Party was born in an era of socialism when the question of free enterprise was important because it was being whittled away. It has been reestablished but a greater demand for control comes from the community. This has modified principles - but those who look to precise principles are unrealistic. (Probe: Why has this change come about! Events have caused these changes. Some chant the old ideas without realizing it. Others have modified their ideas. There is a division in the party) (Probe: Do you think a real change of thinking has grown up, etc? There is definitely a real philosophy for more planning, especially among the young)."

At this point the Member, being young, seemed to identify himself with this group.

There seems to be an almost conscious ambivalence in these statements. But in most answer the Members were completely unaware of any contradiction. This suggests subconscious rationalization. Perhaps it sometimes results from the idea of what a party ought to be conflicting with the reality which the Member sees and probably approves. Sometimes there was a tinge of hypocrisy, or just plain unclarity of thought, but more often I did sense rationalization.

Three Members answered in a rather different way. They contrasted the private enterprise sector, where the Party was said by them to stand firm, with other areas. Two contrasted it with the area of the social services and one 'the large public sector'.

"The Liberal Party, like all conservative parties, has tended to paternal measures designed to make the welfare state...In this way we are purely practical. There is no principle we apply to social welfare. These policies are often adopted for electoral reasons or in a crisis. But in the economic sphere we're not only a free enterprise party. We're a development party as well - but free enterprise should be allowed to develop Australia. (Probe: Do you think a real change of thinking has grown up, etc?) No, there is a deliberate idea things to better this way, in this type of uncontrolled economy. We would tend to resist control of prices or incomes...This is the point of principle between the parties".

Only seven Members insisted there had been no change, and of these only one completely denied all change whatsoever. The majority took the view there had been no change on fundamentals, only on points of emphasis:

"We're a private enterprise party. Bureaucracy has
Only one Member who claimed there had been no change. said this because his definition of liberal principles allowed for these adjustments:

"There have only been slight modifications of principles. We have always had nationalized transport and have exercised control of finance and banking. We have always followed a halfway policy - only those controls necessary for development...We do have this mixed and individual economy today. Today with big financial institutions you've got to exercise control, so they don't act adversely to the economy as a whole".

Following on this question, the aim of Question 2 was to test the Members' real attitude to the Government's economic policies by asking their opinions on concrete issues. The aim was to find out what use they made of 'liberal principles' and how much intervention they favoured.

Of those who said that the Government's policy was right, quite a number said that there would have to be more control in the future. Quite often, of course, this was the unidentifiable future. But sometimes it meant the near future, whilst a few others said that if workable control was possible they would support it.

Of those who said more control was needed, some did make rather qualified statements.

The Government's policy was generally supported on the grounds that it was necessary for growth and development. It was only very occasionally supported on the grounds of freedom. The arguments against foreign investment were dismissed by most of this group on the grounds that the loss of independence was exaggerated and that the government could always assert its control if necessary. Thus the argument appeared to take place at an almost wholly practical level.

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1. This proved definitely the least satisfactory question in the questionnaire, particularly parts (b) and (c). Here it would have been better to ask about specific issues as in (a) and (d). For instance, I could have asked about the credit squeeze. In addition, I should not have presented the Members with two hard and fast alternatives, one of which they could hardly be expected to agree with anyway. This phrasing tended to block any getting to the more subtle distinctions I wanted to find. These alternatives were meant to make the question clear, but they did not succeed. Many Members could not understand them and their different interpretations (particularly of (c)) may distort the comparisons between them.

Moreover, the phrasing of the main question meant I could not stop the flow of detail, irrelevant for my purposes.

Finally, a sin of omission was that I should have asked about social services policy.

However, the question was far from worthless. I picked up a number of distinctions of view and interpretation. The answers also showed how men of many different shades of opinion could agree with the Government's general policy.
On part (b) only four Members said that there should be more use of direct controls. So interest lies in the different shades of opinion expressed within the framework of 'control by tax policy and other measures'.

Seven Members indicated that the Government had gone, or could go, too far here. Too of them seemed to feel the Government had gone too far in general. One included an attack on the Arbitration Court:

"I believe the biggest influence on the economy is the Conciliation and Arbitration Court. It doesn't understand the results of its decisions to increase wages on the economy and on our ability to compete in trade with the rest of the world. Whilst this is the case, we can't have a stable economy. I believe the least regulation the better. Government regulation tends to be detrimental".

Three Members attacked the 1960 credit squeeze. Two others took issue with the question itself. They said that if moving swiftly ahead meant socialism or instability they would forgo the swiftness.

"Possibly we might need some direct controls, but I'm dead against them. We should not keep the economy moving swiftly by hook or by crook - if it means socialism is necessary. We are making tremendous progress as we are at present".

There were two Members who called for more consistent policies and an end to stop and go, while three said that more should be done within this field.

The majority of Members accepted the Government's policies unchanged. Even here, however, the differing interpretations of Government policy are revealing:

"The way we handle things at the present time by discussion with major people concerned is the only way".

"I think the laissez-faire system is to exercise the direction of monetary measures to keep the free enterprise economy going - curtail bank rates, etc.".

"I don't think a federal government of our colour should think in terms of price controls because it's too far away from the problem. Price controls should be adopted, not because of basic belief, or expediency, but because of a particular situation, as in K (this Member's State Capital)".

As for the four Members who wanted some use of direct controls, one wanted "ad hoc temporary subsidies where and when needed". Another wanted direct controls "exercised with great care in limited areas after investigation". But there was only one Member who stood for their general use:

"Both are needed. The trouble about tax control is it can move into sheer bureaucracy of the most undesirable sort for instance the recent tax legislation. The only alternative is either ad hoc tax policy (which leaves things to departmental discretion) or direct controls over prices, rents etc. There must be a judicious mixture".
Turning to part (c), eight Members saw a need for more planning through government-instituted priorities. Their ideas were not, however, very specific, and sometimes seemed rather qualified and half-hearted. The majority said that only 'indirect influence through taxation or loan expenditure' should be used, or else that there should be no change in the type of policy the Government was pursuing. A small but significant number of those who said the latter regarded Government policy as including both indirect influence and government-instituted priorities and guidelines. Moreover, this whole group, like those who wanted more planning, were generally fairly vague on the whole subject. Principles, in so far as they were mentioned, certainly did not provide a firm base for argument. Their use can be summed up, without too much exaggeration, in the following answer:

"Indirect influence every time and damn priorities and guide lines. This is one of the differences between socialism and conservatism (that is, in these regrettable radical days)".

Another Member, who took the private enterprise line, was then considerably baffled by the results:

"We shouldn't have government-instituted priorities. Indirect influence is right (plus subsidies). Private enterprise should be doing more. I'm ashamed of the thought that Australians haven't more confidence in their country than to spend so little. I don't know why. But I'm ashamed of it. I don't know who's at fault. It may be the fault of past policies - stop and go - for instance import licensing and the credit squeeze".

In the majority group there were only three Members who thought the Government had gone too far. Two said that present policy was too haphazard and needed to be more extensively planned. As I have said, there were also several who regarded present policy as including both priorities and indirect influence. But most seemed to regard it as providing only for indirect influence.

As to those who wanted more planning, the most striking was the Member (surely an aberration in the Liberal camp) who said:

"I'm mixed on this. Frankly, in many ways it wouldn't be a bad idea if we had a five-year plan, though indirect influence also has much to recommend it".

The 'planners' were in general no more definite than the non-planners, and they seemed unconcerned with their position in relation to principles.

"I'm not against planning at all, but I don't believe every prediction of its effects...I'd like to see a bit more in some fields - but there is more planning than the party sees".

Finally, on restrictive trade practices, eighteen Members thought the legislation was right, but eight disapproved of it and six thought it should have been stronger. Different interpretations of liberal principles were used for more to support the Members' views on this subject than on the others. Thus one Member who supported the legislation said:
"Again we are back to our definition - the right of the individual to compete. Where a business practice prevents this there must be government action. The Government's legislation is not too weak. This is a quite new field and we haven't enough knowledge".

(Incidently quite a number of the Members took this view that the legislation was experimental and might get stronger).

Those who disapproved of the legislation often did so very vigorously:

"The legislation of the Menzies Government was appalling and outrageous. The administrative tribunal violates every principle of liberalism in the Australian situation. It takes us a long way from the conservation of institutions. It entrones the 'New Deepotism'."

In the case of the majority of Members who thought the legislation was too strong there was a clear correlation with a previous business background (which, in a few cases, was a background in fairly big business). It was not usually quite as blatant as the following:

"We are against controls and we bring in bureaucratic controls. I've seen price-cutting as a menace. Many people didn't know the dangers here. There are abuses of price-fixing but often it is protecting people from insolvency".

Finally there were the few who thought the legislation should have been stronger:

"Restrictive trade practices seek to restrict what the Liberal Party stands for. I'm against restriction on people whether by combine or government. Private enterprise to me means a small factory as much as B.H.P. Here I may differ from some. I think the legislation should have been tougher than it was".

The question which naturally arises next is who were the Members who gave certain types of answers? Were there groups who took a consistently rightist or leftist line on all four subjects? Were the Members' views on each particular subject, and on all four subjects, consistent with what they said in answer to other questions? Finally, did the Members who gave the same answers share any common characteristics which might explain why they hold these views?

It must be remembered that quite a number of the Members themselves seem convinced of the existence of clearly identifiable right, left or centre, conservative or progressive groups within the Parliamentary Party. In answer to Questions A. 5 1, and C. 4 2, many placed themselves firmly in a particular group, generally right or centre rather than left. These divisions were generally described as referring to economic policies, and they were treated as firmly fixed. It is true they were not generally seen as the cause of tremendous disruption within the party, but this was because the groups were seen as willing to compromise with each other rather than because the groups themselves were seen as fluid. The Members often saw the policy questions in B. 2 in the context of these divisions: e.g. "Your leftwinger would say the legislation was

1. See Chapter I p. 16
2. See Chapter IV p. 69
not strong enough, but you must think of the economy"

If we identify a right-wing Liberal position as that most nearly approaching the 19th Century ideal of free competition, essentially a really right-wing group would hold that there should be no more control of foreign investment, that the restrictive trade practices legislation is too strong, that only indirect influence should be used to keep the economy stable and moving swiftly, and that no further use of priorities and guide lines should be resorted to in national development. Presumably a really left-wing Liberal group would place its emphasis in the opposite direction in regard to each of these questions.

I found only seven Members who maintained this consistently rightist line. On the other hand, only one Member maintained a really consistent leftist line, four almost did, and three others were definitely more to the left than the average. However, this suggests at once that the leftist group is less consistent or extreme and so there cannot be a really clear cut confrontation of groups with opposed values.

In examining the Members who compose these groups one might expect to find that they share certain common characteristics. Following Coleman 1 one might expect to find the right-wing group older and consisting of men of '46 and '49. They would be men who cling to principles, wanting to stop change in party attitudes or not seeing it at all. Conversely, the left-wing group would consist of younger men who came into Parliament later, welcoming changes, and seeking for-rethinking of Liberal beliefs. In addition, one would expect to find the left-wing group tending to come from swing seats and the right-wing group tending to have a background in business, in safe seats and perhaps in the party organization.

Considering the designated right-wing group of seven, it is true that all except one are older men. However, only two entered Parliament in 1949 (most came in during the '50's and two in the '60's). Again, although most of them said in answer to the previous question that there had been no change or that they disapproved of change, there were significant exceptions. Too actually granted a certain amount of approval to change, and two others gave more qualified approval to some aspects of change. Similarly in answer to A. 6, where the Members were asked if they saw a need for change in the party, only one of these particular Members called for a return to the original principles. Moreover, in answering A. 1 not all these members saw the difference between the parties in terms of ideology. Three of them saw it in policy terms. Surprisingly too, in those questions where certain Members identified themselves as right-wing, only three of these particular Members did so. One of them was even at pains to dilute his conservatism:

"I'm not a dyed-in-the-wool conservative. I think that as a conservative party the Australian Liberal Party is much more liberal than the conservative party in England. I'm not a right-wing conservative by any means!"

There did appear to be some correlation with background. Four of them had a straight out business background. Two had been in business at some stage but had then left it for a different occupation. One had no business background at all. In addition, all except two gave "party" reasons for entering Parliament - their experience in the organization or the fact that they were "anti-Labour".

At this point the question arises as to the other people who considered themselves right-wing, opposed change, entered Parliament for party reasons and so on. Why did they not take a consistently rightist line on economic policy issues? Sometimes it seems easy to trace the reason. To take an example, one such Member described himself thus:

"In general I'm right of centre, more conservative than the average. I'm a conservative not a progressive Liberal..."

Then he suddenly called for more government-instituted priorities:

"A system of priorities is very important and we haven't got it for public works. There is too much Queensland against N.S.W., etc. regardless of the greatest need. We should adopt a more grown up national outlook. State jealousies have retarded development".

He evidently did not regard this demand for priorities as a departure from accustomed principle, but then, after all, he was a Queenslander.

Another Member who saw himself as right-wing (defining this in terms of economic non-interventionism), who disapproved of change, and who even saw a 'battle' between left and right, then proceeded to call for greater control of foreign investment and stronger restrictive trade practices legislation. I am at a loss to explain why in terms of either his stated principles or his interests. Such inexplicable deviations occurred in several cases.

Quite a number of Members who seemed generally right-wingish in their answers to other questions and in their own estimation took a different view on B.2 only in approving of the restrictive trade practices legislation. However, several Members who seemed more truly centre or even leftist in their general attitudes revealed on other questions, also answered B.2 according to what I have defined as the right-wing pattern except that they approved of the restrictive trade practices legislation.

Turning now to the more left-wing group of eight, half of them, it is true, were young Members who came into Parliament in the 1950's. But half of them were older and of an older political vintage, two of them being 'men of '49'. One of the latter was the only Member consistently leftist on all four subjects.

The attitude of this group of eight towards the party's changes in ideas is interesting. Only two put this tendency down, in answering B.1, to a real change of party thinking. The majority attributed it to practical responses to events alone. As one would expect, the majority approved of the changes. However, one Member did not approve of them, he just completely accepted them. And another did not approve of the character of the changes. He called them rather bitterly 'a change of non-thinking'.
Only three of these Members called, in response to A. 5, for a rethinking of old attitudes. Even in this group a number of Members seemed to be drifting, as unconcerned with basic ideas as their more conservatively inclined colleagues. Answering A. 1, two of them still saw a clear ideological difference with the Australian Labor Party despite their own marked acceptance of change. The views of half of them under B. 2 were very inconsistently leftist. There was no common approach underlying their views on all these subjects.

In this "Leftist" group of eight, a slightly lesser number of Members than in the "Rightist" group had been in business. In addition, only one gave a "party" reason for entering Parliament, although more than that had in fact had experience in the Organization. Three of them had swing seats (but, for that matter, so did two of the "Rightists").

If one looks separately at the answers to each question, there are again no obvious connections between the Members who held certain views in common. It is only when one takes Members individually that it seems possible, in most cases, to detect which factor is determining their views. If one takes the Members as a whole, there are no clear over-riding patterns of response based on interest or background which one can see dividing them into groups.

In conclusion it is clear, first of all, that although principles seem to be so important in the general image of the party they are in practice very little considered in their application to concrete economic policies. The great majority of Members are, to say the least, pragmatic.

Secondly, it is clear that, while the division between conservative and progressive attitudes is a deep and perhaps permanent cleavage in the non-labor party on each issue, the fact is that it could not be shown consistently to divide well-defined groups. Neither attitude can be simply and consistently attributed to "the men of '49" or any other obvious category.

Thirdly, the picture which emerges of the party is substantially one of consensus - consensus partly in the sense of compromise but partly understood also as something more fundamental. On at least some issues left-wingers and right-wingers find themselves, from whatever variety of reasons, in real agreement. Indeed many more things unite them than divide them. This must make compromise on other things easier and more likely. It probably explains the general and often rather vague agreement on government policies.

II.

On the question of the importance of preserving federalism (B. 5.) the Members were fairly evenly divided. Thirteen thought preservation was important, and fifteen unimportant, whilst five sat on the fence.

Furthermore, although there was some slight tendency for Members who were generally leftist on economic policies to think continuation of federalism unimportant, it was no more than a tendency. Similarly, there did not seem to be any obvious correlation between, say, a background in business and the desire to preserve federalism.

This casts doubt on Crisp's thesis on this subject, at least as applied to Federal Liberal backbenchers:
"There are now many in the anti-Labour camp who no longer (if they ever did) value Federation primarily as an ideal framework of government. Rather they cherish it first of all as the most powerful available defence of property against government". 1

Doubt is reinforced by the reasons Members gave in support of their views.

Of the thirteen who thought preservation of Federalism important, seven took the line Crisp's thesis would lead one to expect. They said Federalism was a safeguard of freedom or against socialism. Some said the Commonwealth government did not need more power.

"This is most important because, if nothing else, it prevents a chance election on an emotional question putting in a government which can overnight change the whole basis of our system and economic policies".

The other Members supported federalism, however, on the grounds that it safeguarded States' rights,2 or, which sometimes meant the same thing, that centralization would not be a good thing in such a vast country. These ideas were obviously quite genuine in most cases. For instance, one of the most left-wing Members on economic policy expressed himself thus:

"It's quite important in a country this size. The Senate is not doing enough to preserve it [i.e., federalism and States' rights]. Responsibility is not going with powers. There are dangers in the Liberal Party of separatism and power being concentrated in the more largely populated states of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. [Prob] The Commonwealth has enough economic power related to the centrally-organized economy".

But few of the Members advocated any definite and positive action. There was only one exception:

"In my view it's very important - in fact it's one of my babies. Australia should be cut up into more States. I think that, unless this happens, we are going to get more and more unification...We should give authority back".

Of the fifteen who said Federalism was not important, four said this on the ground that it was finished anyway. This included three "left-wingers". The remaining Members said or implied that more Commonwealth power was needed. It was, however, most surprising to find in this group some Members who were very "rightist" in answering most questions on economic policies:

"I used to believe in it [preservation of Federalism] once, but no more...The States are unnecessarily destructive of our powers - we need greater economic powers. After all, Australia is Australia-

2. Three-quarters of the Queenslanders supported Federalism, a third of the South Australians, twenty-five per cent of New South Wales members, and half of the Victorian members.
health, mining etc." (Significantly this Member was on the Committee dealing with resources development and mining.

Quite a number of Members, with varying views on federalism, pointed with great dissatisfaction to the gap between power and responsibility for taxation. Some said that if this continued they could not support federalism any more, while others used it as a reason why federalism is no longer important.

Crisp's thesis may well be truer of Liberals outside the Federal Parliament. Quite a lot of the members spoke of their views having changed whilst they were in Parliament. For some sitting on the fence the process of transition was clearly in evidence:

"I think it's important to preserve, but the more I stay in Parliament the more I see powers which ought to be transferred to the Federal Government"!

"There is less need for federalism today... Against this I would be wary of the use which the Labour Party would make of a unified Australia"!

In addition, only a few Members advocated positive action to end federalism. This could indicate they know the party would be too divided. However, on what most Members actually said, Crisp's view does not stand up.

III.

On the subject of Communism in Australia (Question B3), there was a good deal of unanimity on the general theme of its being extremely important and also on the suggestion of a connection between the Labour Party and Communism. The Members were fairly evenly divided over the Communist Party Dissolution Bill (though not on the grounds of Liberal principles). Where they suggested other action the Liberal Party should take, there was again division.

Twenty-six Members said that the problem of Communism in Australia was tremendously important. A small minority of seven said or implied that it was a danger which could be exaggerated.

Some of those who stressed its importance in Australia seemed to be generalizing on ideological grounds or upon the basis of Communist power overseas.

"It should play a very large part. This is the line of demarcation of our age. I'm very rigid on this - more than X, though he talks more. This is the only other ideology in the world today and it is opposed to the basis of our society".

"It's so important that - well, you can't over estimate the ramifications of the Communist conspiracy - for instance, the Viet Nam demonstrations outside Parliament House. Photos will be sent to Hanoi..."

Others were thinking even more concretely in Australian terms:

"This is a big challenge - a bigger threat than most people think inside Australia. In some areas Australia is one of the most advanced countries in
terms of the decay of institutions by Communist thinking - for instance the Churches accept Communist front activity".

However, Communism in Australia was most often seen working through the organization of the Trade Unions and the Australian Labour Party. Either of their own accord or in answer to my follow-up question, all the Members except three said that a connection between the Labour Party and Communism should be stressed.

Moreover, a significant number of Members actually connected Communism with the Parliamentary Labour Party. Even one of the few members who said Communism was not a great problem, went on:

"The link with the Labour Party is what worries me. The Labour Party seems to have a close affiliation with the Communist Party, particularly in Victoria. If we had a division in the Labour Party the left-wing, for its own survival, would be obliged to call for Communist support. If it became the alternative government this would be very dangerous. In fifteen to twenty years this could happen ".

There were also a few Members who seemed actually to equate socialism and communism.

Seven Members dissented from the general, and often violent, emphasis on Communism in Australia. Most of them said that at present it was not a big problem though it could become so. One of them made his point in general terms:

"I don't think it's very important. We should not set ourselves up as an anti-Communist party, though we are one by definition. It should not play a very important part in our thinking".

Turning to the kind of action advocated to deal with Communism, twelve of the Members felt the Communist Party Dissolution Bill was the right policy, while seventeen said it was wrong. However, only three said it was wrong on the grounds of illiberalism:

"As a lawyer, I don't support suppression".
"As a free-thinker I say it's got to exist here and should not be driven underground".
"No, this is not a liberal way of thinking".

All the other critics were concerned in a purely practical way with the fact that to drive the Communist Party underground was not the best way to suppress it.

As for those who supported the bill, it was interesting to notice that many felt compelled to dismiss the charge that it was illiberal, even if in a rather peremptory way.

"There is a good deal of double talk here about interfering with the individual. People can't exercise freedom to the detriment of others".
"When a thing is bad there's nothing wrong with banning it".
"It's a conspiracy, not a party".
As for alternative action, several said that Communism should not be treated as an election bogey, but instead there should be serious education. Others said that it should not be stressed by the wrong people as at present.

"The people want it from the right direction. For instance I took an hour daunting it in an Anzac Day speech at X and it was greeted with great applause. But A and B do no good".

A White Paper and an impartial committee were also suggested.

Only two Members took the view that Communism should be combatted by knowing and satisfying the aspirations of those susceptible to its influence. One of these Members wanted the Liberal Party "to organize among that ideological class".

Four Members wanted more forceful, and distinctly illiberal, action. Two wanted much stricter censorship and one wanted to declare a "defence emergency".

"We are now allowing the New China Newsagency to go untrammeled. I think at the present stage we should declare an emergency to rid us of these things".

At the other extreme four Members explicitly sanctioned the use of Communism for a political tactic. Some of them thought that in fact it was not a significant problem:

"This is quite important but should not be overdone. It should be polished up on the right occasions".

Perhaps the most striking thing is really that, though most Members expressed themselves in violent terms against Communism in Australia, there was a lack of serious and constructive suggestions as to what the Liberal Party should do.

In conclusion, three points in particular emerge from the answers to this question.

So long as there continues to be no apparent serious consideration of practical steps against Communism in Australia by the Government and the Liberal Party the near-unanimity and strong feeling amongst the Parliamentary Party on this subject must act as a strong emotional bond amongst its membership. But the Members' answers suggest that the production of a set of concrete proposals for action could, as in 1950 and 1960*, cause some conflict amongst Liberal Members.

Secondly, the almost complete absence of 'liberal principles' in the discussion of this subject is noteworthy.

Thirdly, attitudes and views on Communism do not correlate with those on other issues. This again no doubt aids the party as a consensus party.

IV.

In general, most of the Members said that, of Britain and the United States, the latter is the more important to Australia. A few seemed to see them as equally important, but only one or two saw Britain and the Commonwealth as the more important.

* 1950 Communist Party Dissolution Bill; 1960 Crimes Act Amendment Bill.
The attitude to Britain was striking. A certain number of Members said with complete composure that Britain was no longer important to Australia (while a larger number completely dismissed the Commonwealth). However, in general, the question of Britain called forth the expression of much regret and nostalgia (and sometimes also of disillusionment). The most common attitude was to say with regret that Britain was not as important to us now as formerly, though sometimes with the rider that its importance was underestimated.

The attitude to my probe question about the possibility of being too dependent on America was also significant. Only a few said that this was a danger or something actively to work against; or even that we should be more independent. Quite a large number seemed passively to accept the idea as inevitable. Not a few Members took the line that we are completely independent but must bear both these countries in mind, work in a team with them, and so on. Some of these statements seemed sensible but some were just rather platitudinous and liable to be woolly and contradictory.

There were only a few signs of thinking of foreign policy in different terms altogether.

In general I think it would be true to say that the old attitude to Britain no longer has significant effect in the way it did. It certainly does not stand in the way of extensive alignment with America and often remains really only as nostalgia. At the significant, deeper level the old dependent attitude towards Britain seems often to have been completely transformed into a new dependence on America.

Again, there was no obvious correlation between degree of attachment to Britain and such things as being older or 'rightist' in any sense, economic or otherwise.

Perhaps the most striking thing again is the general and apparently growing consensus on this question.

V.

In response to the final supplementary question in Section B, the great majority saw the most important achievement of the Liberal government variously as general development, stability, prosperity, good economic policies and full employment. They seemed to be stressing the development rather than the private enterprise side of Liberal ideas. This expresses that general satisfaction with and acceptance of the government economic policies in the round which was noted earlier. It perhaps comes back to the satisfaction of being in government for a long time and of pretty general prosperity and well-being.

Fourteen Members also saw foreign policy as a great achievement. This accords with the general solidarity on the subject shown in the earlier question.

Significantly, only six mentioned social services, and six education.

VI.

I would like to make three points in conclusion:

(1) Neither traditional Liberal principles nor consciously revised principles were usually taken seriously into account in dealing with any of the questions covered in Section B. This conflicts directly and markedly with the general image of the party.
(2) On the economic questions and on Federalism there were many differences of opinion and emphasis but no closely correlating groups. Neither were there closely correlating groups on the five questions in this Section. Although there were occasional deep cleavages, what emerges is a picture of a consensus party. Practical and expedient compromises obviously occur, but also there must be real agreement between different people on a really significant range of things. This is so even within the realm of economic matters, but it must definitely be so when one considers the full range of broad areas of policy. Moreover, the feeling of a general if sometimes vague satisfaction with the whole "package" of government policies is sustained by the fact that everyone must be really satisfied with many of the components of the "package".

(3) In addition, there was a far more explicit sense of unity on Communism and foreign policy than on economic questions. It is likely that, with the outside world impinging so strongly upon the Australian consciousness, it is the substantial agreement of Members in these areas of policy which gives the party its keenest sense of ideological unity today.
CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION

I

The first question in Section E asked the Members whether they felt that any change was desirable in the relationship between the Parliamentary Party and the nonparliamentary wing. The answers took very much the form one would expect from the general image of the party.

Twenty-two Members said that no change was desirable. Moreover, many of them were at pains to stress that the present situation was one of cooperation with but not answerability to the organisation.

"There should be no change. Parliamentary Members represent those who put them in."

"Our Liberal Party relationship is sound. The non-parliamentary wing is happy to recommend and the Parliamentary Party happy to receive its recommendations. There must be no responsibility. We must have independence."

Among those who gave such answers there were only rare traces of a realization that those in the Organization might take a different view of their powers. But some of the Members did not even think of the question initially in power terms:

"I can't see any need for change. The situation is excellent - there's a general air of respect between one group and the other."

There were also quite a number of Members who took the view that closer association and cooperation were needed but not more responsibility of parliamentarians to the Organization.

"Perhaps there should be greater liaison, though the Liberal Party is very good with its state conferences... policy couldn't be arrived at more democratically. I wouldn't like it to get more like the Labour Party. No outside body should tell the Member how to vote. If they elect him they should trust his judgment."

"The burden is too much on our Parliamentary Party. We should be in closer contact, which could be organized. We should not be responsible to them; they should advise us."

This type of answer shows a desire to have things both ways. The Organization should have more power to help the Parliamentary Party but not more power over the Parliamentary Party. But the Members did not see the matter in this light, as they seem to have practically no conception at all of possible rights of the Organization.

The answers to this question reflect a very widespread satisfaction with the present arrangement. There were only two Members whose idea of freedom for the Parliamentary Party led them to complain that the Organization had too much power:

"The Parliamentary Party should not be responsible to the non-parliamentary wing. We're wrong in providing penalties against the parliamentarian who doesn't get preselection. You want a real party not just an organization."
The Members of Parliament should have a more definite say in making policy (the normal branch member has ample opportunity). The importance of the Policy Committee, which includes Members, has not been recognized. And we sink or swim by the Members and policy."

There were only two Members in the whole party who held the view that the Parliamentary Party owed some definite responsibility to the nonparliamentary wing. Significantly they were both Members who had played notably active roles in the Organization and had entered Parliament fairly recently. But only one of them wanted greater responsibility as a general rule:

"Greater prestige should be given to a man who has served the Party Organization than is given at present. Importing Parliamentary Members from outside the party should be a rare occurrence. There are too many from outside.

The Parliamentary Party should be more responsible to the Organization. The organization and structure of parties, once they have grown bigger than mere parliamentary parties, is very important in making the party receptive to the wishes of the community. It enables MPs to be criticized with impunity by the rank and file in the party and forces flexibility on the parliamentary organization."

The other Member took a more qualified view:

"In the Federal sphere greater cooperation is needed. No more responsibility is needed . . . There should be no dictation except on principles - for instance on bank nationalization, if this was introduced by a Liberal government. Then real pressure can be exerted on occasion. The power of the Federal Organization has been increasing since 1961."

When the Members had answered this question I asked them the supplementary question, "Do you find that your position as a Member of Parliament makes you see the party differently from nonparliamentary members?"

This question succeeded in eliciting from over half of the Members a surprisingly different view of the relationship with the Organization from that expressed previously. And in the case of almost all it gave a most revealing picture of their personal feelings towards the nonparliamentary wing. Nevertheless, I must say at the outset that the basic conviction that the Parliamentary Party possesses and should possess the final power remained unchanged. And differing views on the part of the Organization were generally not seen as threatening. Neither were they understood. As I have said before, there seemed to be absolutely no conception of the Organization having rights. Its attitudes and aspirations were treated as perhaps rather strange and certainly very trying.

Only seven members said that being a Member of Parliament did not make them see the Party differently. All the rest admitted it caused various differences on their outlook.

Eight of the Members said that the Organization wanted more power over the Parliamentary Party.

"There is in Queensland a tendency on the part of the Liberal Organization to lay down the law and treat us as employees of the party. I don't approve of this. But they have made some headway. My prime interest is to do all I can to keep the Liberal Party-Country Party government in power."
Another Queensland Member complained that "headquarters personnel are often inferior and dictatorial."

Most of the Members, however, were reluctant to grant that it was more than a minority in the Organization who wanted more power or that this minority had any success.

"The party machine isn't as important in policy-making as it thinks - that is, in detailed policy-making."

"Some think the Organization should be more powerful. But this is not the view of Liberal supporters in general, who would rather deal with the politicians than the organizational cliques... Some little people in some branches might see the matter differently. But few in the [Electorate]Conference would think they should direct me... Maybe Spooner (before he came into Parliament) thought so, and Carrick. I don't know - but probably not."

"I have brushed off the Organization members who tried to tell me what to do."

"When I was a member of the Organization I never saw my role to dictate to the Member of Parliament. I exercised my right when Chairman of the Conference to challenge the sitting Member because he was not doing his job. But I resigned and gave warning. He beat me."

(It is interesting that for quite a lot of Members "the Organization" is treated as meaning their own branches rather than a 'party machine')

Nine Members said or implied that the main aim of the Parliamentary Party is to be in power. They saw Members of Parliament as more 'practical' and 'liberal' than members of the Organization who, they said, are more 'theoretical' and tend to treat the party as supreme. Where Organizational members are in touch with Liberal supporters, the Members saw themselves in touch with the people as a whole.

"The Member of Parliament is more sensitive, practical and liberal (with a small l). He is not a theorist. The Member of Parliament sees the party differently - he gets accustomed to its shortcomings quicker."

"Yes, the organizational officers do see the party differently. The organizational officers have a strong tendency to regard the party as of prime importance, but as a Member of Parliament this is only a portion of your responsibility. A Member of Parliament probably does more for people of non-Liberal thinking than for his supporters. The Organization overlooks this. It is too wrapped up in the party for party's sake. The party often does wrong. The Member of Parliament is concerned with the good of the electorate."

"I'm inclined to be sniffing the political wind in a different way. They are thinking of the grass-roots Liberal supporters while we are thinking of the Labour Party's reaction."

"For a Parliamentary Party the main thing is to be in power. The nonparliamentary wing is sometimes not in a position to make a proper appreciation in regard to some questions. So there is a gulf - but not like the Labour Party where the executive is all-powerful. Ours is the right situation. The nonparliamentary party knows its position. Discretion is left to the Parliamentary Party."
There were only two Members who saw this situation and disapproved of it. They, of course, were the two who felt the Parliamentary Party did owe some specific responsibility to the Organization.

"Yes. Members of Parliament with little connection with the Organization tend to be contemptuous of it. They feel they are God's gift to the electorate and forget who put them there."

Another group of Members saw the Organization as lacking information, parochial and never deciding anything of significance. In contrast, the Members saw themselves as much better informed, with a clearer judgement of issues and the ability to "see the whole." Of course, quite often this merged with the type of view discussed above. But here the idea that the Organization is more concerned with Liberal supporters and the party for party's sake is not clearly enunciated. We must infer it. It is perhaps clearest in two Members who also spoke of pressures:

. "Frankly I have a rather healthy disrespect for the non-parliamentary wing as a group. In the electorate they are excellent, but they never decide anything of significance. They are often representatives of pressure groups so they can't abide by decisions at the parliamentary level. They don't represent huge sections. In contrast, I take a rather intolerant view of the non-parliamentary wing collectively. They're not worth much and don't make good decisions."

. "I find nonparliamentary members are often influenced to a great extent by pressure and by nonfactual propaganda. But as soon as a Member can give the true facts they readily accept these and follow him. It is usually just a case of the ignorance of non-parliamentary members."

. "This is my experience: In my state the lay members of the state party committees on various subjects belong to the state executive. So presumably they are the most active and informed. But their political naivety and lack of information is extraordinary. They are worse than the less able federal colleagues here, who at least know the political score and background."

. "The Member of Parliament sees it differently because he regards himself as on a different level. He has a clearer judgement on issues... The Parliamentary Party is really the custodian of the Liberal soul."

There were only seven Members who did not feel they viewed the party differently from Organization members. Several said that, despite the latter's lack of information, they shared a basically similar philosophy. Two others saw themselves as liaison officers whose job was to give the branches the facts, whereupon the branches would follow faithfully. However, one member who had previously asserted the supremacy of the Parliamentary Party came out with an amazingly different view at this point. He did not see the Party differently because "I still believe in branch autonomy and their thinking."

I also asked nineteen of the Members whether they had a different view of the Party before entering Parliament. Only three admitted that they had previously shared the nefarious organizational attitude. Moreover, there were two (the two you would now expect) who said they still largely retained their organizational outlook. Most just denied that they had had a different view. But a certain number said quite honestly that they had previously had the same view or no view at all because they were not in the Organization.
"As to the party, I didn't see it at all before I came in. I had just done a bit of reading, but had given it no thought."

There was not really any pattern in these answers on the basis of previous experience in the Organization. The only observable correlation was that those who had no experience in the Organization and gave a non-party reason for entering Parliament tended to stress, as a difference from the Organization, that Members of Parliament were better informed and had clearer judgement. As noted above, this view tended to cloak reasons for stress arising from the position and attitudes of the Organization itself. Those with previous experience tended to give views showing rather more understanding of these stresses.

Thus it seems clear from these answers that although the Members are convinced of the supremacy of the Parliamentary Party, they do feel the existence of real or potential or contingent tensions in the relationship with the nonparliamentary wing. These are not understood (in the sense of recognized as having a just or natural basis) because frequently the Organization has almost no place in their view of the Party. Its place is to be useful in practical - especially electoral - matters.

At this point it will be convenient to examine further the Members' view of the Organization by considering their answers to Question 6 about branch activity.

In answer to the question of how much branch activity there is, a majority of nineteen answered simply: "very little." Eleven said there is a moderate amount. Only four said there is considerable liveliness. More interesting, of course, was their attitude to this state of affairs (that is, their answer to my probe question 'does it matter whether there is much activity?').

Most took the view that branch activity is only important to the extent that it is necessary to have aid at elections and in time of "necessity" and controversy. This usually meant satisfaction with the present relatively modest amount of activity.

"I have a few branches that are pretty good but they're mostly pretty nominal [Probe] This matters only in so far as numbers and interest are concerned at the time of elections or a crisis - if there arises an acute political situation where the party attitude needs propagating, for example conscription for Viet Nam."

The same view was obviously held even by some of the Members who had very active branches:

"My own are very active . . . they never fail to do anything they're asked."

". . . Happily most are evangelical [Probe] I'd like no more, no less activity. I'm happy with the status quo."

Five Members even said quite explicitly that it was a good thing there was little activity. They seemed to discourage too much:

"Very little. This doesn't matter. In fact, its not a bad thing. There are always some which function, particularly at election time and this is enough. The Member sees to this. They are nowhere near regular, but I find if I pump them continuously with philosophy they fade away. Key them up with the idea of an
election and you get the most from them (Also, I send them my speeches).

"There's damn all. At elections there's a lot; but, generally, a nucleus. This is a characteristic of human nature. Other Members might tell you they actively discourage activity because of potential opponents."

"It's mainly appalling. But there's more than one way to look at it - it means everyone's happy. [Probe]
I don't think it matters except to the young enthusiastic Member of Parliament who wants to address them all the time. I haven't stirred them up unduly... I'm inclined to think that if all's O.K., it's better to talk to members of the electorate generally and to members of vocational groups. After all, why worry? - but at first I was horrified."

This last statement leads us on to another attitude which was very common. This was to treat lack of activity as bad because it reflects apathy. This was, however, a decrying of general political apathy as much as Liberal Party apathy:

"Branch activity is a good thing. It keeps people active, alive and informed."

"It matters because people don't take an intelligent interest in the way the country is run. It wouldn't make much different to how I act, but I'd like to have a more thinking and interested group. .."

There were only six Members who treated branch activity as such as to any degree an important part of the party.

These included of course the two who saw a need for responsibility on the part of the Parliamentary Party. One of them said "It does matter - it shows the party is active at the level of the rank and file". However the other Member made a surprising statement which revealed (in addition to its unwonted sophistication) that the party organization to which the Parliamentary Party was to be responsible meant the party machine:

"This is an important fiction - like the fiction that the doctor is always right... the average branch member must feel he has a role to play, one more important than it really is. Resolutions must be made and reports come back on them... Its important to maintain this fiction, the image they have of this right and power - but often their suggestions are impractical and of a budgetary character."

The Member quoted earlier who suddenly stood for 'branch autonomy' also explained his view:

"Liberal Party branches should know what the Member and the Party are doing. They meet, if we are lucky, once a month and flit from flower to flower... In my electorate I have gone back and said I want guidance and instruction... but the top men in the district say 'You're the Member, you know best.' They should have some control and instruct the member. They have the right in my mind (though not formally). But they don't do this. If I take a contrary view from them, however, I should also have the right to dissuade them."

There were really no similar patterns of response on the basis of a common characteristic which could be observed in the Members' attitude to branch activity. As to the
activity itself, three of the four who claimed much branch activity had swing seats. (But then other holders of swing seats said they had little activity, or even discouraged too much)

In conclusion on branch activity, it is again clear that in the case of the great majority of Members their concept of the Liberal Party does not include the branches as a necessary and basic part of the party where its important activities and central purposes are concerned. The branches exist to be useful.

As an addendum here, there was one Member who accused me at the end of the interview of having left something out. The something turned out to be his great concern about "the danger of a development of a federal party not in contact with the people." Yet in his long discussion of this concern of his he never mentioned the official Liberal Party organization of the people. His ideas on such a subject were totally concentrated on the Parliamentary Party. He defined his problem as "silver-tails and tall poppies among the Members of Parliament". He went on:

"This is not a matter of social position. It's a matter of personality mainly - you need people who like mixing. This is important to the party image - whether or not the party likes them. You need extroverts. There are fewer and fewer characters in the party today. In the old days character was all over the countryside. Now you get people like X - takes you eight times as long to get to know him. There's not necessarily a clash between ability and stiffness . . . I see some of my colleagues as stereotyped in the old schoolie fashion. But will you get respect this way? It leads to intolerance and ignorance. You need men like Y who could address the waterfront."

Perhaps it is wrong to take these theorisings too seriously, but they do suggest a desire to transform an old-style parliamentary party into a mass party by a painless shortcut.

Thus far we have seen that the Members continued to regard the Parliamentary Party as supreme. The moment of truth came, however, in response to Question E4. Suddenly the supremacy of "the Parliamentary Party" turned into the supremacy of Prime Minister and Cabinet. For, considering the backbenchers alone, many Members felt their power did not measure up to that of the Organization.

Question 4 asked 'What do you feel are the centres of greatest influence within the Liberal Party as a whole?'

Twenty eight of the Members saw greatest power in the party lying with the PM and Cabinet. (1) (The probe question, of course, later explored the Members' views of the power structure in rather more detail)

At this point there were several other explanations, but only two really reinstated the backbenchers and denied complete power to Prime Minister and Cabinet. One of these exceptions insisted

"The policy of our party comes from the party meetings. If backbenchers express themselves in positive terms, they have just as much effect as ministers themselves. We all need to do more work on policy matters. The criticism

1. Here it must be remembered that many Liberal Members have never known the Federal Parliamentary Liberal Party in Opposition.
that we haven't had a chance to do anything about something is unjustified - just covering up. The party meeting sows many seeds which germinate in Cabinet."

The other exception saw power at the parliamentary level in "a minority group - not ministers or backbenchers, but a group emerging in both, depending on the issue."

Apart from one Member who said that power lay in the "NSW-Victorian establishment", the Members who gave other explanations stressed the Organization. Four started off by saying that greatest influence lies in the branch structure leading up to the conferences. After a little more questioning, however, they said Prime Minister and Cabinet have the greatest power. Finally there were two who saw power in what one of them called "a balanced merging of the federal executive and Cabinet."

"The policy-making committee works with the inner cabinet. Having decided something, they then enunciate this to the Parliamentary Party. They could reject it, as it has to have their approval. If strong enough, they can have more weight. There have been several such occasions. . ."

This rather surprising view (in terms of the idea of the supreme power of the Parliamentary Party) turns out to be in accord with quite a number of answers to the probe question. This asked 'how does the influence within the party [or on the PM and Cabinet] of the top men in the Organization, say Federal Executive, compare with that of the backbenchers?'

Eleven of the Members said straight out that the Organization has more power than the backbenchers. Nevertheless, many were anxious to point out that backbenchers are not powerless or could have more power. Also there were significantly different interpretations of the meaning of 'the Organization' in this context. Most followed my question and considered the 'top men', by which they meant either Federal Executive or just the professionals. Others considered outside pressures. A few reverted to the branches and preselection.

"It varies with personalities. For instance Carrick [N.S.W. Secretary] had more power with Menzies than Willoughby [Federal Director]. The backbenchers have less power, but it is not non-existent. It depends on personalities again"

"Federal Executive has more power. The backbench has the first say in putting in the leader, but afterwards, though it can alter things, it does not have the greatest influence".

"We're not powerless, but not one of the centres of greatest influence. One is the people who support the party financially. They can threaten to withhold money."

"The process interests me but eludes me. The old influence of the Liberal Party came from the old blue blooded graziers. I still think, while it is much weakened, there is still quite an influence from them. [Here followed an illustrative tale about a recent preselection] This doesn't influence the cabinet, but the machine. The machine is a big thing - you can't buck it. Backbenchers are rubber stamps. (But I must be fair . . . If the backbencher presents his case well enough to the Minister the way is open to do a tremendous amount of work in this field)."
"Backbenchers don't have as much influence as the Organization. But this is supposed to reflect the opinions of the party members so perhaps that's not a bad thing. But I can think of times the backbenchers have influenced cabinet - about four times."

"In terms of sensitivity to the electorate, interpreting the mood of the community and forcing change, perhaps the Organization is more important. But they are complementary. The growth of the party Organization over recent years is the great thing. Of course if we were in opposition the Organization would have much more power and authority" (1)

In addition there were eight Members who said that the Organization and the backbenchers have the same amount of influence (which was generally deemed small):

"Backbenchers, if they wanted to, could exert more pressure, but they haven't. It's the same with the Federal Executive. Cabinet has dominated both."

"There are three influences: first, the Cabinet dominated by the Prime Minister; second, the rank and file of the Parliamentary Party, who are sometimes more influential than you think; third, a small group outside, an inner group, which works with the inner group in Cabinet. The latter group sometimes has less influence than the backbenchers, sometimes more. The backbench exerts a more continuous influence".

Thirteen of the Members did assert that the backbenchers have greater influence than the Organization. (2) However, only three of them made completely unqualified and wholehearted statements to this effect. To begin with, half of them based their opinion on the fact that the backbenchers could be the most influential, or were likely to become so if the situation continued to change under Holt. In other words, their answer was more or less pure deduction from their general notion of the power of the Parliamentary Party.

"It's a matter of Menzies and the capacity of the Federal Executive and the quality of the men in Parliament. . . The backbenchers are the most influential group in the party. They can jack up if they want to. If they don't its their own fault. It's been due to a lack of capacity, courage and homework."

"The private member in party meetings could exert much more influence of mind and will - this will increase . . . The Organization's influence is minimal".

Others qualified their statements of backbench power by applying them to particular issues or particular groups:

"The backbenchers have more influence than is recognized. But they are disorganized and do not have enough information. So unless something is of great moment they can't influence it. And concerted action is necessary."

"I have proved conclusively a group of vigorous hardworking backbenchers can have an enormous influence on Cabinet and policy. I'm ashamed to say that of thirty backbenchers only half a dozen are prepared to do any work in Parliament - that is, of a constructive nature not affecting personal electoral success (and then people are jealous and suspicious of you and want to keep you down)"

1. This statement belongs to the member who most strongly advocated responsibility to the Organization.
2. Incidentally, it was not the case that Members with little previous organizational experience tended to underrate the Organization's power, or vice versa.
It was interesting that there were some Members who, despite the terms of my question, which was sometimes repeated, insisted on ignoring the Organization part of it and replying only about backbenchers. It seemed they could not or would not consider the Organization in power terms. Judging from the remarks of some of the Members, I think sometimes it really may have been 'could not'. Thus the most fervent believer in backbench power (whom I quoted at the beginning of my account of answers to question C4) gave this answer to the probe question:

"Backbenchers. But I don't know what influence the Organization has - but to this point I believe its thinking has been parallel"

Such explicit statements of knowing little about/Organization's power were made several times, and other Members clearly betrayed a similar lack of knowledge. It was also interesting that those who denied non-parliamentary power tended rather more than others (despite the question) to treat the Organization as meaning the branches. It seems likely that in the Members' previous answers, when they stressed the subordinate position of 'the Organization,' many were really thinking solely of the branches. In reality 'the Organization' consists of two parts: the branch structure and 'the machine'. The latter includes the idea of a small influential group at the top consisting perhaps of some of the leading State Executive members, professionals and people with 'important outside interests.' In this question 'the Organization' was much more explicitly identified with 'the machine'. This fact could be taken as explaining the apparent inconsistencies between the different estimates of the Organization's power which Members maintained at different points. Nevertheless, we are still left with the task of explaining why and how, in speaking of the 'Organization', the Members could manage to generalize from the subordinate position of the local branches and ignore the position of 'the machine'.

In conclusion, therefore, on this question, there still remains something of a paradox between the earlier view of the Parliamentary Party's supremacy over the Organization and the widespread opinion now expressed that the backbenchers do not have more power than the Organization. Needless to say, most Members were not conscious of any contradiction. The resolution of the paradox may lie in the fact that backbenchers were previously identifying with the Prime Minister and Cabinet, whom they saw dominating all parts of the Organization, and equating them with the Parliamentary Party itself. (1) In the next section (which deals with the Members' view of relationships within the Parliamentary Party itself) I hope to show how this sort of identification and equation of the leadership with a parliamentary party of free sovereign individuals can take place.

1. This raises the complex question of the relationship between reality and the members' concept of the Party, with which I will deal more fully in the Conclusion. On the one hand, the identification of the Parliamentary Party's power with the leadership can be explained by Menzies' dominance in the Party. He personally dominated the Organization and fostered the view of parliamentary supremacy. On the other hand, the fact that the Members do believe in a certain context that the MP is supreme (and certainly supreme in the branches) must, firstly, affect reality and, secondly, cannot be completely at odds with reality.
In Question E2 the Members were asked whether they thought there should be tighter or looser discipline in the Parliamentary Party.

Eighteen Members, the majority, saw the present situation as right, and almost all interpreted it as loose. Many of them based this interpretation on the fact that Members can vote against the government.

"No, it should be no tighter. I believe in the individuality of Members. The situation is wonderful now, just right. I have been against the Government seven or eight times and no one has asked me why".

Only two said that the present discipline, which they saw as right, was strict. The first said "The fault is that our Parliament is too small. The party machine is a fact of life. If we had a larger Parliament we would have broader views expressed and there would be greater opportunities to take different lines".

The second Member saw a tight moral discipline:

"There should not be tighter discipline. There is no need. Members who take a rigid attitude find they have to become more flexible. This is right."

A minority group of eight called for looser discipline. Two Members said there should be more freedom to vote and speak against the government on details. A third agreed with them, but said the Members did not have a clear and workable alternative to disciplined debates. One Member took the view that more freedom was necessary where a Member's fundamental thinking was concerned. Only one Member attacked the Whip system, and his bitterness suggests he bore it a very personal grudge:

"The present method which allows the Whip to decide who speaks is disgusting - the arbitrary judgment of one's competitors. Jealousies play a tremendous part. There is no attention paid to teamwork or the best man for the job. This is the most deplorable thing in our organization."

Only two Members took a broader view of the loosening of discipline:

"I have a preference for looser discipline. At present the spectre of sanctions looms behind - if I do such and such I won't get on. The prospect of advancement leads to conformity. This is appalling. The rarest thing in politics is moral courage . . . "

A small minority of seven took the opposite view and said discipline should be tighter. This shared view seemed to have absolutely no consistent connection with their other views (except that all except one were against elected Cabinets). It did not reflect a shared view of the nature of party responsibility which applied to the relationship with the Organization as well. If it reflected anything, it was a view of the party as a disciplined team. There was no other connection between these Members either - amongst them were old and young, leftist and rightist, the up and coming and some beyond the stage of advancement.

Three of them took a view like the following:

"I abhor the caucus system. There is a distinct freedom to differ. . But I'm also a believer in teamwork. You can't have the team constantly discredited. . . We have our troubles - some independent-thinking Senators
who go to the extreme. They must be brought into line by the Organization, who say we can find replacements for our candidates".

Three others said that once decisions were made in the party room, there should be no disagreement

"There should be no penalties, but there should be greater moral discipline on each member, because I hold the quaint belief the party room is the only place where you should express vocal or violent criticism. Once the party has made a decision you should be loyal in the party and Parliament, both in speech and voting. The only exceptions are where the party's course of action offends moral or religious principles".

"I think it doesn't matter who the person is, the person with any difference from the government shouldn't vote against the party - rather they shouldn't vote at all . . . There are six or seven people who are bad here. If Members have grievances they should put them forward in caucus but not in public. And it's only when we have a majority that they pluck courage to cross the floor. . . The man who kicks a goal against his team is a traitor and he does it for material gain."

In conclusion, it is clear from the response to this question that only a small minority want tighter discipline. Most see discipline as loose, whilst a few want it looser. This is in keeping with a view of the Parliamentary Party as a loosely organized group of relatively independent Members of Parliament.

Question E3 asked the Members whether they were in favour of elected Cabinets. A supplementary question then went on to ask them more generally whether they thought the present powers and functions of the leader of the party were the best possible arrangement. A minority of fourteen wanted elected Cabinets, and a minority of about the same size disagreed with the present position regarding the powers and functions of the Prime Minister.

Considering first the majority, most of them favoured the present system because of their view of the proper functions of a Prime Minister. Their views may be quite adequately represented by the Member who tersely summed up "he has to run the show and so is entitled to selection". Analogies of skippers and captains selecting their teams (usually cricket teams) and of managing directors directing came thick and fast.

A smaller group of six Members opposed elected Cabinets because of the effects among the members of the Parliamentary Party. They painted a dire picture of pandering, caves, quids pro quo, likes and dislikes rampant, election by seniority and finally a block vote by Cabinet to reelect itself anyway.

There were also a few Members who based their view wholly on the practical fact that choosing a Ministry is a difficult task of balancing States, House and Senate, Liberal and the Country Parties.

Turning to the reasons given in support of the general powers and functions of the leader, the general assumption was that he does have tremendous power, on which there are practically no formal limitations. Only two Members disagreed with this basic assumption. One said the Prime Minister had no more power than the Labour Party leader and was very open to criticism. The other said the Prime Minister needed more support from the party. "More team spirit is wanted. We should lift the leader up more (and then, if it is necessary, change him ruthlessly)."
Most of the reasons given in support of the system were the same as those cited earlier. The captain needs this power. Only a few such views were given in more generalized form.

"This is right. The party should have essentially an advisory role. He must be responsible in the end"

"Menzies had terrific power - benevolent despotism. And it is in the order of things he should. This is important to the Cabinet system of democracy. And if he is an autocrat it is the fault of the men not the system."

But, generally, theoretical reasons for the leader's power never got beyond the idea that the leader of a team must have that power. Sometimes purely pragmatic reasons were adduced in support - that Cabinet was selected well and the system 'brought forth good fruit'. Some others cited practical faults in the system - the Prime Minister did not see failings, and was 'open to persuasion' - but said nevertheless it was the best system.

As to those Members who supported elected Cabinets the most general reason they gave for their view was that the Prime Minister had (or has) too much power. Usually it was rather the side-effects of selected Cabinets than the system of Prime Ministerial selection itself to which they objected:

"I'm in favour. I don't think any one man can judge the people serving him."

"I think Ministers should be elected - or some of them - because if they are not there is a tendency for Ministers to become aloof and in an ivory tower."

"There is a particular need for change here. There is much too great a gap between ministry and backbenchers. Change must come here or it will bust the party."

"... I don't have to be as subservient as younger Members who are making their way. In Federal politics ours is a full-time job, so the younger Member has to be careful. That's why I favour elected ministries ... It makes for better team work when there is not an officers' mess and a privates' mess. To lead a party you have to know how to get on with men and how to lead them."

In response to the supplementary question asking more generally about the powers and functions of the leader a number of Members held critical views. But there was little real criticism of the party arrangements themselves. I think only one Member made a statement of this type:

"The function of the Cabinet is to carry out legislation passed by Parliament. The Prime Minister should be the leader and give a lead. But he should be happy to implement whatever decision the Parliamentary Party makes."

A number of members reverted to their earlier specific criticisms of selected Cabinets, the party room and debates, whilst a couple said that the Cabinet should be taken further into the PM's confidence.

But the interesting thing was that quite a large number of Members confined their criticism entirely to the individual (that is, Menzies). It seems that they accepted the general idea of the leader's powers and managed to treat
all Menzies' years of office as a mere aberration from the norm. This was sometimes quite explicit:

"You have to relate that to individuals. Sir Robert had such a personality that he was able to influence to too great a degree. But this is a reflection on individuals. There should be no institutional changes. If Members of Parliament are not strong enough, they have only themselves to blame. It's not true in general the Prime Minister has too much power."

Many other Members, who were not quite so explicit, also complained about Menzies and then hailed the portents of change to a more 'normal' situation. This type of answer was just as common among Members who supported elected Cabinets as among those who did not. In addition, there were even a few Members who supported elected Cabinets and then proceeded, thoroughly and enthusiastically, to endorse the leader's general powers and functions.

My point is that the majority of Members supported the idea of the leader having relatively tremendous power. Even many of those who supported elected Cabinets and made various criticisms of the leadership did not directly attack the majority's assumption. Their criticisms were mostly connected with internal party life as they saw it. There was really no question of responsibility and what a party should be. The views expressed in response to this question were generally consistent with the view of party life examined in the next question. Significantly, all of those who favoured elected Cabinets were Members who saw much ambition at work, and they included four who roundly condemned this state of affairs. Incidentally, three of these four were young Members.

On the basis of what the Members actually said, an explanation of their desire for elected Cabinets in terms of their view of life within the Parliamentary Party is more plausible than S. Encel's view. (1) Encel sees elected Cabinets as an attempt by Members to enforce responsibility to outside interests, often those important in the nonparliamentary wing. (2)

Further, there would seem to be a contradiction between the views expressed in answers to Question E2 (and on the general image of the party) and in answers to Question E3. Surely there is latent conflict between the view of the Parliamentary Party as a loosely disciplined group of independent individuals and an attitude to the leader which willingly grants him (formally at least) an all powerful position. It is, perhaps, the uneasy coexistence of these two positions which sometimes explains the desire for elected Cabinets, though generally only when this conflict has been exacerbated by irritating internal party relationships. In so far as the two ideas are reconciled it must be through the gentlemanly and sporting concept of Team. Free individuals readily

(1) See for instance S. Encel "The Political Elite in Australia" Polit Stud Vol 9 1961
(2) These members were of course not ones who wanted the Organization to have more power (there were only two of these anyway). On the other hand, it must be said that most of them were among the Members who were either aware of the influence of interests on the party or rationalized it. (See Chapter 5). However, if the connection exists, it must be very much subconscious. Encel's thesis does not imply this.
follow the leader and identify with him out of Team Spirit. But probably most of the time the two ideas just exist side by side in separate compartments. And this coexistence of ideas probably explains how, as was seen earlier, the supremacy of the Parliamentary Party over the Organization could be transformed into the supremacy of the Leader and Cabinet without the Members experiencing any sense of incongruity.

Before ending this section it seems desirable to attempt a brief but somewhat fuller description of the Members' attitude to preferment and personal rivalries. (1) This can be done by looking at the answers to Question E5.

All the Members saw practically every one of their colleagues as concerned with his position within the party, the majority of them being held to be very ambitious. They saw this giving a distinct flavour to party life. But most of them actively approved of this situation, or at least accepted it. Typical comments were that it was only human, or that most were ambitious but only a few were overambitious, willing to give up beliefs for personal gain, disgruntled, and so on.

"At least two thirds of the Parliamentary Party are ambitious to be Ministers. The ambitious chap always has his eyes over his shoulder. It's noticeable. It's just human nature. If there was no ambition, it would not be good. I'm not ambitious."

Occasionally there was a note of rather stoic acceptance:

"They all are - everyone is a rugged individualist with ambition, depending on age often, and how long they have been here. Some become very frustrated and tend to give everything away and regress. Others resort to other things. Some of us feel we are doing a good job despite not holding office, with our committee work etc. Then you have much to do and get much done - I'm chairman of three committees, and my electorate gives me plenty to do. So this provides an outlet for energies - there is no frustration - and in the end, when it's time, I'll just get out."

There was also a good deal of lauding ambition for its own sake. It was said that "everyone has ambition if he's worth his salt" and that "you can't be a good backbencher if you're not ambitious". In fact, being a Member of Parliament was said in itself to show ambition. "All Members of Parliament are vain people." Others said that "ambition keeps people on their toes" and "it would be a dreadful place otherwise". The Members very rarely mentioned names, but several pointed to one Member as the exception who proved the rule, the epitomy of no ambition. Yet this very Member himself came forward with a veritable eulogy on ambition: "Anyone not ambitious is a drag to himself. Ambition's a great thing . . . I love to see people try to climb the ladder".

Only eight Members really disapproved strongly of the ambitious behaviour they observed. They spoke, often bitterly, of subservience, conformity, jealousies and skullduggery. They included four of the seven Members wanting looser discipline and four of the Members wanting elected Cabinets. They were by no means all older Members. Nor, I think, were they Members the others would pick at once as likely to feel bitter. They often seemed to be younger.

(1) The pressures and attitudes present in the Parliamentary Party as a group of men and the bonds uniting this group are also discussed in Chapter IV in considering the answers to Question C4.
Members who could not have expected to become ministers yet, but had not adjusted to the parliamentary environment, in the sense of easily accepting it. Temperament (and sometimes ideals) must enter into this question as well as the particular circumstances of a man's career.

"They exaggerate enormously the danger that can be done by the occasional independent line. They approach many issues with trepidation - not what is right but the effect of their line in the party... I feel contempt for some of our Members of Parliament."

"Every outstretched hand holds a razor. This is an amazing environment if you are a threat to their situation. There is only one number in Parliament House - number one! - more so here than anywhere else I've been."

III

The last question asked the Members: "How much identity do you feel with State Liberal Parties?" Here I wondered how far their concept of the party would reflect Katharine West's point: "Except in a strictly formal sense, there is no such thing as the Liberal Party of Australia which, in practice, is a composite of seven Parties whose distinctive characteristics are derived not only from dominant personalities but also from the environment in which they are operating..." (1) I thought that the Members' close organizational links with their States and their idea of the Liberal Party as a national party might lead them to see 'all the Liberal Parties of Australia as basically similar' (as my probe question put it). My expectations proved justified, at least at the very general level of this question. Eighteen Members felt a considerable amount of identity, ten felt a little, and only six admitted to feeling none at all.

Various reasons were given for feeling a considerable amount of identification. Some stressed the general similarity of philosophy and policy:

"I feel the Liberal Party means the party on whatever level... They are all basically similar. It's very satisfying to go to a meeting of the Liberal Party Organization in, say, Perth, and mix with people who talk your own language of the Liberal Party philosophy. It's like being in a religion - they speak a language."

(Needless to say, not all those who took this line held it quite so fervently)

Others stressed a corporate spirit and sense of partnership. There were some who stressed close personal links, often the result of having been in State Parliament at an earlier period.

"I feel a lot of identity. The problems are different, but they are basically similar. When I'm in Adelaide I have lunch every day with the State Members of Parliament and drink with them at night."

"The apprenticeship in the State House is very valuable for a Federal politician. There are too few who have had this... There is not enough dining between

(1) K. West Power in the Liberal Party (F.W. Cheshire 1965) p 261
Federal and State MPs. There are only four of us who do this in Victoria."

Others stressed close links through the Organization:

- "Of necessity I must have some identity and affiliation - the mere machinery. I never have much concern with the Federal Liberal Party Executive at all - the Secretariat, researchers etc - I see them now and again. I attend meetings as an observer and can't even open my mouth. So I feel much more identity with my own State Liberal Party than with the Federal Organization side."

- "The parties are basically similar - increasingly so today because of the role of the Staff Planning Committee. The General Secretaries of each State meet to exchange views and indirectly have a large effect through the transfusion of ideas."

The ten who felt a smaller degree of identity felt that general similarity of philosophy and policy was discounted somewhat by the different sphere and mode of operation of the State parties. In addition they often complained of "petty animosities and personal feeling" between State and Federal parliamentarians. The six who felt no identity at all with State parties based this on either the different character of the State parties or else on a very close feeling of identification with the Federal party."
The questions in Section C were of two types. The first tried to find out the real relationship which the Members actually do see between the Liberal Party and class, as this relationship reveals itself to them through voters and policy. The second tried to find out the Members' own personal feeling about class and how this affects their view of the party.

The theme which often emerges from the answers to these questions, and from comparing the answers of the same Member to different questions, is one of ambivalence and rationalization. In the answers to the questions dealing with the general relationship between the Liberal Party and class, the idea of a national party can often be seen pulling strongly against a more narrowly class view. The result is contradiction, ambivalence and rationalization. At the same time, however, this tension can be seen to have a deep basis within the party. The picture which emerges from the more personal answers could not be described as one of solid class allegiance. In quite a number of cases there seems to be a true personal ambivalence on the subject.

The first question (C1) asked the Members "If you had to generalize, what sort of people would you say most Liberal voters are?" If they answered in terms of a particular group or class, probe questions went on to ask why this was so. Was it a desire "to keep the economic and social system much as it is?" Was it because of owning property? If they did not answer in terms of a class or group, there were various probes designed to lead them to class by other routes, such as occupational groups or types of electorate.

This question, it will be noted, is only a slightly more pointed, and a good deal more persistent, version of A3. Yet the difference in the answers is very striking. In answer to A3 the great majority of Members saw Liberal voters motivated by reasons of philosophy and policy and, whilst a third mentioned habit or class, only three confined themselves to this alone. Several stressed the Liberal Party's national character. Yet in answer to this later question only three Members were able to insist through thick and thin that the Liberal Party represents a true cross-section of all groups. Nine other Members answered straight out that the Liberal Party represents certain particular groups.

The answers of two-thirds of the Members, however, took the form that Liberal voters represent all groups, a cross-section, but in particular certain groups. This final qualifying phrase was sometimes volunteered, but usually resulted from the probe questions. In addition, most Members, whatever type of answer they gave as to who Liberal voters are, went on to agree with the reasons which were suggested for voting Liberal, or else volunteered similar reasons themselves. The "cross-section, but . . ." type of answer revealed most clearly the tension between the counter ideas of the Liberal Party as a national party and as a class party. It is interesting to examine the different attitudes with which these Members (twenty-two in number) appeared to regard their admission of the party's class basis. Sometimes there was realism, sometimes rationalization and sometimes the abandonment of an almost empty slogan.

Five took what I would term a realistic view. That is, they stated at once, matter-of-factly, that though the Liberal Party receives a cross-section of votes, and a greater
cross-section than the other parties, it depends largely on the middle class vote (or on the middle and upper class vote).

Another group of five started off by pointing to a cross-section, but was easily prompted by a further question to talk about class support:

"This has changed tremendously. We are getting an amazing cross-section. Many you'd swear would vote Labour vote Liberal and vice versa. This is especially true in my electorate [Probe:] Thinking in general, I suppose they are mainly middle class - that is, the most conservative element - mainly white collar workers. [Probe: Why is this so? etc:] Yes, it's the way of life they want to keep. Property is also important here."

Another small group paid what can only be called lip service to the idea of a cross section:

- "All sorts - but it's axiomatic that the more financial people vote Liberal and the poorer don't."
- "Thinking people. [Probe:] In the main, capitalist and executive types - with, of course, also a broad cross-section of the community [Probe: why is this so? etc:] Let's face it - the preservation of what they have. They don't want to share it. Also our better and sounder policies."

The remaining Members, however, were much less willing to talk in class terms. Four Members insisted on the broad cross-sectional character of Liberal voters, but then were suddenly prompted by a later question to talk in unconsciously self-contradictory class terms. This seems to indicate a rather rigid compartmentalization of ideas in their minds, and an attempted suppression of any connection between the party and class.

- "Generally people without a chip on their shoulder. There's no particular sort of group - for instance, a large number of Trade Unionists vote for us [Probe:] No, no groups are overrepresented. I really believe not [Probe:] There are no class distinctions at all in Australia, with the exception of a few people in Toorak [Probe: Do you think Liberal voters want to keep the economic and social system much as it is.] - Yes, that's so [Probe: Is owning property important?] Owning property must have a lot to do with it - this social and economic group - this is probably one of the fundamentals."

- "A proportion of Trade Union people must vote Liberal. It's a fallacy to say we're a conservative right-wing party . . . We reject class struggle. On my state executive there are Trade Union People. . [Probe: but what about actual voters?] As to voters, I don't know. People with property tend to be Liberal voters. [Probe] And of course they want to keep the system as it is - they don't want death duties and so on."

There were a few other Members who asserted the cross-sectional character of the party to a definitely unrealistic extent. Then, pushed by further questions, they talked about class support with obvious reluctance.

"They come from all sections, not only Vaucluse and Bradfield [Probe: No, some groups are not over-represented [Probe: Nevertheless, do certain types of electorate tend to be rather more Liberal than
Differences of social status and occupational environment do affect voting Liberal - professional people by and large vote Liberal [Probe: Why is this so?] They have a vested interest in a relative status quo [Probe (property)] Yes, this makes people become more conservative.

There were also a few Members who wanted to identify Liberal voters in what one might loosely call broad status categories rather than class terms. That is, they gave a short description of the characteristics and way of life of Liberal voters. Although this description appeared to have overtones of class, these Members themselves refused to make any explicit connection with class. Their answers seem to fall, however, into the general category which stressed both all groups and particular groups or classes. But I think that by defining the particular groups who vote Liberal in this way and by summing them up as "ordinary middle of the road people" they managed to make them seem comfortably like 'everybody' again.

"[The Liberal voter is] the moderate thinking person who doesn't want to worry about politics. He has a good job, his wife can get what she wants and the children can go to good schools. The average Liberal voter is not politically conscious. [Probe] It's not a matter of classes. I'm amazed at the different classes who vote Liberal and the different types of home from which they come (You find this going round to people's doors campaigning)."

These answers are different from those of quite a number of other Members who started off defining Liberal voters in broad status terms and then, in answer to probes, spoke in more narrowly class terms.

There were only three Members who held to their view that all groups are equally likely to vote Liberal. One did this by playing down class differences as of negligible import:

"It is not a case of keeping the social system as it is. There are no hereditary differences in Australia - less classes than anywhere else in the world. As to the product of the economic system, it is spread very generally."

Another Member asserted: "I don't think the station in life makes any difference. There is no truth in the view that wealthy people vote Liberal." He clung to that view tenaciously.

Finally there were nine Members who said without equivocation that Liberal Party voters come from certain groups which they all defined in class rather than broad status terms.

At this point it seems convenient to discuss which particular groups were said to support the Liberal Party, both by those who also stressed the cross-section voting for it and those who did not. To me, these groups can all be adequately subsumed under the title of 'middle and upper classes'. Nonetheless, it is important to realize that various Members stressed significantly different groups. Of those who used the word 'class', some said the upper and middle classes, other just the middle class. The latter were then divided into those who stressed the upper middle class and those who stressed the lower middle class, while some only used the term "white collar". Others
seemed to be thinking of the property-owning factor: they saw Liberal voters as "people with more to protect," "people with property," "the top half," "the higher-income bracket," "the more financial people," "a great part of the wealthy," "the haves". Others gave definitions in terms of business, but even here there were wide variations. "Capitalist and executive types", "big business", "commercial interests" and "small business people" were all mentioned. There were some other Members who stressed only "professional people". Finally, of course, there were those who described Liberal voters in broad status terms.

Similarly, there was widespread agreement in answer to the questions "do you think they want to keep the economic and social system much as it is?" and "is it also because they own some property?". There were only eleven instances of disagreement with one or other of these questions (and very few Members disagreed with both). Nonetheless, there were again significant differences of emphasis. This was partly because, before asking these more specific questions, I asked them the open question, why is it that these groups vote Liberal.

The following quotations illustrate two significantly different attitudes revealed in somewhat similar answers:

"[Liberal Party voters are] the lower middle class - tradesmen, white collar workers and people buying their own homes [Probe: Why is this so?] They identify their search for respectability and solidity with the Liberal Party. Environment has much to do with it. If you found a housing commission home, with the kids dirty and a magnificent radiogram inside, they would never be Liberal voters."

"This will stagger you, but it is obviously true - [Liberal Party voters are] the people of whom, if you saw them in the street on Saturday, you wouldn't think it. They are not well-dressed or well-educated. They're the bourgeoisie - that is, the middle class. [Probe: why is this so?] Possibly they haven't got an axe to grind."

Hence it is true, in one sense, that almost all the answers can be reduced to the fact that the middle (and sometimes upper) class tend to vote Liberal, and that they do so to preserve the system of which they are major beneficiaries and their own property. On the other hand, significant variations and ambivalence in the views of individual Members modify this picture.

Turning briefly to the views of particular Members, the comparison with their earlier answers is revealing. For instance, ten Members stressed, in answering the supplementary question at the end of Section A, that the Liberal Party owes its greater stability to its nonsectional character. Only one of these continued to claim in answering this later question that the Liberal Party is supported by all groups. The answers of the other nine conformed to the pattern that the Liberal Party represents a cross section, but particularly certain groups. Further, some of them immediately gave or were easily prompted to give a realistic estimate of the situation.

In Section A there were also three Members notable for the fact that they stressed in several of their answers
that the Liberal Party is a national nonsectional party (1). These Members all now answered that the Liberal Party represents a cross section but particularly certain groups. Only one of them insisted on the cross-sectional nature of the party to an unrealistic extent. One was easily prompted to talk about class support and another seemed to pay mere lip service to the cross-sectional idea.

The supplementary question that followed asked "do you think the middle class has any special role to play in politics?" Here I sometimes went on to find out their feeling about Menzies' concept (2) of the middle class as the worthy backbone of the country. (If many of them upheld this idea it might point to a personal identification with the middle class. It might thus underline a hollowness in their emphasis on the Liberal Party as nonsectional).

In fact, the Members turned out to be evenly divided. Half of them saw the middle class as the important possessor of special qualities. The other half saw it as important only in a detached way (regarding it as the majority or the swinging vote) or else completely rejected the idea because their view of class rendered it meaningless.

There did appear to be a significant correlation between answers to the main question and viewing the middle class as the possessor of specially important qualities (which, as I said above, may imply identifying with it). All but two of the nine Members who said immediately that Liberal voters come from certain groups saw the middle class as having special qualities, or as possibly having them, or at least as voting Liberal. Conversely, all but one of the Members who rejected the concept of the worthy middle class answered earlier that the Liberal Party was supported by a cross-section but particularly by certain groups. There was no correlation between explicitly rejecting the concept and stressing the nonsectional character of the party in Section A. A further correlation which did appear to exist was between some degree of overt identification with the middle class (as defined in this context) and a non-Liberal background (as stated in answer to C3).

Turning to the various views expressed, only twelve Members actually saw the middle class as possessing specially valuable qualities. These qualities included stability, conservatism and a protective instinct towards property (including home-ownership). More positive qualities mentioned included greater appreciation of human values, love of freedom, providing political leaders, activists and Members of Parliament, and being an enlightened social stratum. Sometimes the middle class was compared favourably with all other strata, sometimes specifically with those above or below it. Only two of these Members said that the special qualities of the middle class turn it to liberalism or the Liberal Party. There were three others, however, who saw the special importance of the middle class based squarely upon that fortunate fact that "theirs is the vote which puts us in."

The case of one Member, the only one who spoke very strongly about the working class, is revealing. In answering

(1) They were all Members from swing seats. This fact probably shaped their views. In one case the Member quite consciously was so affected.

(2) R. G. Menzies The Forgotten People (Angus and Robertson 1943)
Section A he was one of the three most ardent advocates of the Liberal Party as a "non-sectional" party. To C1 his answer described the Liberal Party following as 'a cross section but particularly certain groups.' Here he was easily prompted to speak in class terms. To C3 he said he did not have a typical Liberal background. Though his parents did not vote Labour, the family was hit by the depression and he 'came up the hard way'. In answer to the supplementary question about the middle class he suddenly spoke in violently class terms:

"I subscribe to the idea of the middle class as the backbone of the country. More Liberal voters come from a middle class area than anywhere else - that goes without saying. [Probe] To me the middle class means someone who owns his own home and car, has an income of £4,000 to £5,000 a year, whose children go to decent schools - I mean professional and small business. The working class, if you use that outworn title, has a rented house, or a house with a mortgage and £20 a week. He has no community sense, knows he will end on the age pension, is in the lower class by choice, lacks ambition, and has a different cultural outlook. (There is also a squattocracy)"

This declaration gained momentum as it went along. I do not think the Member intended it when he started. The key to his emotion, if it lies anywhere in the statement, is probably in the phrase that the working class man "is in the lower class by choice". This Member had worked his own way up and saw positive moral worth in those who could claim such an achievement.

Turning to those who did not see the middle class as having special moral worth, several explicitly rejected the idea or just did not see the question as meaningful because of their view of the class system.

Those who deliberately rejected on principle the idea of the middle class as the possessor of special moral worth made statements like the following:

- "I believe in social democracy - the rights of the individual in his society, but society should be so guided as to give equal opportunities to all. So I believe in the levelling of class distinctions - no one is better than another".

- "... Outside the political atmosphere do these things have to be said? It is flattery, after all, on the part of Menzies. Every section is important, even a person with an extreme Left view."

One Member was very specific on one point about the middle class: "If you mean clerical workers, etc, there are too many of them."

Others did not really see the question as meaningful:

"The middle class is the great bulk of Australia. Australian politics is middle class politics. [Probe:] We don't have classes. There are only small numbers of upper crust or down-trodden work slaves."

One Member showed in his answer a most revealing progression from pure theory, through the perplexity of dawning reality, to an apparently strong feeling of personal injury at everyday manifestations of class feeling:
"I don't accept this whole concept of class. In Australia there are not many very rich or very poor. The average Australian has a high standard of living and there is great egalitarianism. Of course wealthy people do belong to exclusive clubs. But I object to a working man who does less than forty hours a week appropriating the term worker. I've as much right to be called a worker as he has. But they have exclusive workingmen's clubs - They are often more snobbish and less willing to mix than people on top of the financial and social scale. People from this last group get rebuffed by people with chips on their shoulders." (1)

In the group who did not credit the middle class with any special intrinsic value must also be included six other Members who saw the middle class as important in a rather detached way. They saw it as the majority or the swinging vote. A number of these Members drew the obvious conclusion that "we must side with them".

It is possible, of course, that a few of the Members who, for varying reasons, would not grant the middle class a special moral worth, regarded the basic Liberal voters as coming from higher social and economic groups than the generality of the middle class. This might be the real reason why some of them did not identify with the latter. In other words, here is a problem of more precise definition. Some Members might not equate with the middle class as I did above (p.55-56)) all the various groups they see providing the basic Liberal support. They may see the middle class as of more limited extent and less identified with the Liberal Party - for instance, as two of them described it, "the small shop keepers", "the clerical workers".

Finally, there were three Members who sat on the fence, holding the balance between those who placed special emphasis on the middle class and those who did not. They saw the middle class possessing potentially valuable qualities, but these tending to remain unrealised because of significant failings. One wanted the middle class to show more interest in politics, and another said it "needs to be more politically enlightened" (which meant willing to pay the bill for what it was assumed to want)

The third said:

"If the middle class have the ideas and ability to talk the language of the people they have a special role - but not the intellectually superior middle class (which Menzies shows himself to be in The Forgotten People)"

In conclusion, it is clear from the answers to the main question (Cl and its probes) that, below the surface, the Members see a definite connection between the Liberal Party and class. Nevertheless, it is also clear that the picture of this connection is not necessarily a simple one rendered so by personal identification with the middle class. Some revealed a devious class-consciousness whilst formally rejecting the idea. Only a third of the Members agreed with a straightforward Menzies picture of the middle class as painted in his "Forgotten People" volume. Some had qualms about this view and did not fully accept it. Others recognized that much of the middle class votes for the Liberal

(1) This Member was also quoted above (p.64) where he showed unconscious selfcontradiction on the party's class support.
Party, but did not sentimentalize beyond that, whilst some saw the middle class in a quite detached way as the swinging vote or the majority.

C1 was also followed by a supplementary question asking "do the different religions people belong to affect their willingness to vote Liberal?" Nineteen Members denied that religion had any such effect. Six of these Members pointed out that this lack of connection between religion and voting was a new development, by which they meant that it arose from a change among Catholics. A few others made general statements such as "I think people isolate their religious and political affiliations." These two types of answers are quite significant inasmuch as those who denied the effect of religion seemed to be thinking either of the situation as they thought it ought to be, or else only of Catholics. Practically no one in this group mentioned Protestants. It appears that the propensity of large numbers of the latter to vote Liberal is an everyday fact so like the air the Members breathe as to be not worth mentioning.

Six other Members answered the question by saying that "this is changing." Again they seemed to be thinking only of Catholics. There were only nine Members who admitted to the effect of religion on voting. Again, only three of them mentioned Protestants.

As this question was obviously not evoking the response I wanted (that is, the Members' attitudes to the predominantly Protestant character of the Liberal Party) I introduced a further question. Eighteen Members (only) were asked "Nevertheless, in contemplating the actual membership of the Party and its organization, do you see the Liberal Party as a strongly Protestant party?" In answer to this question there was a striking change. Without any sense of incongruity after their reluctance to admit that religious affiliations motivated voting, the overwhelming majority admitted the strongly Protestant character of the party within itself. Only two disagreed. Seven agreed without qualification. Two said that this was true only in parts of the Liberal Party, while six others said the situation was changing.

The Members' attitudes to what they observed are interesting. Several of those who saw a change implied that they welcomed it (one obviously very enthusiastically). Of the whole eighteen Members asked this particular probe question, however, only five said explicitly that the Protestant character of the party was a fault. To most, acceptance of the situation seemed to come very easily.

Even the small minority of Catholic Members held differing views on this question. In answer to the first question, one view granted religion only a small effect on voting; another saw it having a tremendous effect (particularly in the case of Church of England people voting Liberal); whilst a third held that the situation was changing (this view seemed to have regard mainly to voting by Catholics). Unfortunately only two-thirds of these Catholic Members were asked the further probe question about the party membership. Their answer was that a change was taking place. Half of them, however, gave the impression of being much more deeply concerned about this question than the other half. In fact, the Catholic Members were astonishingly different in all respects. It was one more illustration of my finding that categories of Members do not seem to form on the basis of a single identifiable common characteristic. These Members had very different types of family background, for example in terms of their parents' voting habits, though some had begun with Labour sympathies. Moreover, they could
hardly have had more diverse attitudes to Communism in Australia, economic policies and the Liberal Party's relationship to class.

One of the most significant points about Question C2 was that in part it asked, in a more general and a more immediate way, the very same question as the Members had been asked in a probe following the previous question (C1). In answer to the probe the vast majority of Members had agreed that the particular groups who support the Liberal Party do so because "they want to keep the economic and social system much as it is." Now, in C2, they were asked their opinion on that view of Australian politics which sees the Labour and Country parties holding the initiative because the Liberal Party's role is "to maintain the existing economic and social order."

Needless to say, when this proposition took such a stark form far fewer Members were willing to agree with it. Preserving the established order does not sound quite the right aim for a progressively national party. Nevertheless, a third of the Members did agree. Furthermore, an analysis of the answers of those who disagreed reveals that there is far less fundamental disagreement than appears at first sight. Moreover, when the next probe question turned to a concrete area of policy, a somewhat larger number of Members was willing to agree with Eggleston.

Of the eleven Members who agreed with Eggleston's statement quoted in the main question, five did take a rather qualified view. They said there was some degree of truth in the statement but the situation was changing. Most of them implied that this was as it should be. The remaining Members, however, took a view more fully in accord with the statement:

- "That's true of the Labour Party - it does tend to have the initiative because it wants to be radical and overturn the existing order (though that's too blunt) I don't know why he's included the Country Party."

- "That is generally so. We try to improve the system in a desultory way."

- "Yes, this is correct. We are a stabilizing party. We keep control - not too far to the left or right."

- "That's reasonably true. The Labour Party initiates things and we pick the eyes from them - that's good government. The Liberal Party doesn't take the initiative."

Turning to the twenty-three Members who disagreed with Eggleston's view, the significant point is that, though they expressed dissent from the statement generally, the majority of them in fact took issue only with the part about the Labour Party. Thus only three Members pointed to particular areas of Liberal Party initiative. Similarly only three others actually hailed a new trend in this regard, or said the Liberal Party had "moved with the times". There was one more Member who said that the Liberal Party had gained the initiative but, as he gave the credit for this to the DLP, it was rather backhanded praise:

"The great achievement of this Government has been taking away the initiative in many matters of social and foreign policy from the Labour Party, thus disproving Eggleston's thesis. But it's unfair to consider this without reference to the DLP. It showed us the areas in which to pursue the initiative. This has occurred only in the last ten years - and particularly in the last three we have got the initiative."
Most of the remaining Members confined their remarks to denying that the A.L.P. took the initiative, without at the same time stating that the Liberal Party itself was the party of the initiative. Seven saw the ALP as having, or seeming to have, the initiative only because in opposition. On one occasion the fact that this did not mean Liberal Party initiative was quite explicit:

"This would have relevance now, with the Labour Party in opposition. But the fact is not that the Labour Party and Country Party have shown initiative - no one shows enough."

Another of these Members had himself obviously accepted that the Labour Party's proper role is to have the initiative:

"The ALP should have the initiative but has not been able to seize it".

Five other Members saw Eggleston's statement as untrue because of the present state of the ALP: "I think the ALP is reactionary and lives in the past. The ALP is on the defensive."

Finally, of course, there were a few Members who just dismissed the whole idea out of hand, e.g.:

"This is a vulnerable assertion. It's an irritating impertinence of Eggleston's to generalize in this manner."

The probe question was more specific. It asked the Members (1) whether they would agree with Eggleston's view that the Liberal Party's welfare policy is a reflection of and response to the Labour Party. Here, although the majority again disagreed, that majority was reduced from twenty-three to eighteen.

Most Members just contented themselves with disagreeing. Two pointed out, however, that the Liberal Party had followed the needs of the people rather than the ALP:

"Rubbish! We haven't based our welfare policy on attracting votes, but on need, and then it has been attractive. The ALP recently has done just the reverse, except the Left wing. The Right wing has been blank. This is how policy should be made. I fight against those in the Party who say do things only to win regardless of what we could do."

One Member saw initiative on welfare policy coming from committees, another from the backbench, and one from the DLP.

Turning to the fourteen who agreed with Eggleston, four gave rather qualified agreement, for instance, "This is true to some extent - no government starts from scratch." Others gave more wholehearted support to Eggleston's view. Three said the Liberal Party had managed to take over the ALP's policies in the welfare field (or, as they put it, had "stolen the ALP's trousers.") Other Members did not see the process going quite as far as this:

"There again, I'd hate to see the absence of the Labour Party. It helps to make you think whether your policy is right, whether you are as generous as you might be

(1) Two Members were not asked this probe question.
on welfare. The ALP is not entirely responsible for our policy, but it makes us think. The ALP bids up and we think perhaps we are too miserable about this or that."

Another Member did not look at the matter in quite so generous a light:

"Yes, this does tend to happen. We go reluctantly as far as we have to. But it is a matter of winning votes - so is it a response to the electorate or the ALP? . . .

[Probe: Do you mean that Liberal social services are reluctant?] Well - Yes - Realistic - Anyway, they have to be pretty generous".

On this question there were again no clear correlations, For instance, those who agreed with Eggleston were not necessarily Members who tended to the Right on policy or saw the Liberal Party as supported fairly definitely by certain groups. There was, however, an observable correlation between a non-Liberal background and disagreeing with Eggleston.

My conclusion from the answers to this question is that the idea of the Liberal Party as characterized by the aim of preserving the established order is not one to which most Members will readily admit initially at the surface level (even though the name of Eggleston undoubtedly helped). Nevertheless, the idea does very often have a definite place in their concept of the party. This was seen in the quite significant minority which agreed with Eggleston, and in the quite considerable number who, though they disagreed, did not positively support the Liberal Party's claim to initiative. Of course, it was also shown strongly in the answers to the probe question after Cl. Hence ambivalence is again revealed on the subject of the Liberal Party's relationship to class (as an important part of "the existing economic and social order")

Finally, before leaving this question, I cannot resist quoting one Member who, though his answer is very far from typical, managed to caricature perfectly the attitude of a government party in power for seventeen years:

"I agree with this. I've said it many a time. You can show much initiative in putting forward an idea, but the Liberal Party in government has to have an extreme sense of responsibility in everything it does. But it's not so easy to throw up ideas. There are not so many ideas to think of, when you come to think of it. Policy is laid down over the years and you can't go shooting off in all sorts of ways."

The last three questions in Section C were concerned to a greater extent with the Members' own personal attitude to class and the relationship of this to their view of the party. Question C3 asked for which party their parents voted. If the answer was Liberal, probe questions inquired whether they regarded their background as 'typically Liberal' and whether they 'grew up naturally into the party'. If the answer was Labour, probe questions asked why they joined the Liberal Party.

Twenty-four of the Members, that is, a little over two-thirds, said that their parents had voted Liberal. Of these, three did not see their background as typically Liberal. Another Member reported that his father voted for
"an independent on the Conservative side." The Member himself had first voted Labour. One Member had Country Party parents. He too had voted Labour. Three others said that there had been a difference between the voting habits of their mother and father. One of these Members had voted Country Party and another laid claim to having a certain degree of sympathy with the Labour Party.

Turning first to the twenty-four Members who said their parents voted Liberal, nineteen regarded their background as "typically Liberal". Several of them, however, seemed to sense the point of the question and protested that, though their background was Liberal, they themselves had made up their own minds.

Two other Members said that their background was not entirely typical because their parents were not wealthy.

"I had a classic Liberal upbringing, apart from the fact that the family didn't have money - I didn't go to Geelong."

It was interesting that both these Members were among the three keenest exponents in Section A of the Liberal Party's classless non-sectional nature. The one quoted above also asserted the cross-sectional nature of the Liberal Party to what I have called an unrealistic extent in Cl. The above statement was his first fall from grace, in the matter of consistency, in the sense that he now unconsciously and automatically assumed that typical Liberal voters would normally "have money".

Only three Members whose parents voted Liberal said that their background was definitely not typical. One of them, however, grew up automatically into the party. I felt, perhaps unfairly, that his answer had an artificial note, a tinge of self-congratulation and perhaps also of exaggeration.

"My father had a poor education, was a hard worker, and was affected by the depression. Yet, strangely enough, he implanted the idea in me that I should vote for free enterprise. You could have thought that I would be rabid Labour. I struggled up, got all my education from scholarships. . ."

The second Member said his father was a staunch conservative. His background was not, however, typical. He pointed out that he had 'come up' through a variety of occupations, having 'got his matric' and then 'gone no further because of the Depression.'

When asked why he joined the Liberal Party he went on to say:

"My first vote went to the ALP - it was a question of abolition of the arbitration system. I thought this was the only hope the workers had. Now I think we'd have been better off with collective bargaining - the arbitration system only works one way now . . . [Probe] I joined the Liberal Party twenty years ago, The Liberal Party changed - it was no longer a sectional party"

Earlier, in answer to the supplementary Question following A6, this Member explained the Liberal Party's greater stability thus:

"Because it has ceased to be a sectional party. Thirty years ago when there were the Nationalists and Moderate Labour I might have gone to moderate Labour against
Conservatism. The Liberal Party has now introduced more socialist policies than the Labour Party. "We exist for the benefit of all, not of a section."

Yet this is the same Member whose outburst against the working class I quoted earlier (p.59). One is tempted to see his ideas thus torn in different directions as a result of the contradictory circumstances of his life: "a staunch conservative" father and great economic hardship in his childhood and then a rise through his own efforts to a middle class economic position.

The other Member in this group said in answer to C3:

"My parents voted Conservative, but I think my brothers vote Labour, and I know my sister does. [Probe] I did not have a typical Liberal background. I came from the working class, really and truly, but I learnt that personal initiative gains you ground (I'm not sure my brothers learnt this) So I moved to the Liberal Party. [Probe] I voted Labour once, but that was under very particular circumstances. I joined the Liberal Party because of Bank Nationalization."

This answer quite clearly relates rising in class position to voting Liberal. This Member answered on C1 that the Liberal Party is supported by a cross section, but particularly certain groups. These groups, however, he would identify only in broad status terms. He also saw the middle class possessing certain qualities. In his general views he tended, as the previous Member did on class, to extreme or contradictory attitudes. Thus he showed intensely opposed feelings on certain aspects of party organization. On economic policy he appeared to be on the extreme right wing.

Returning to the nineteen Members who felt they had typical Liberal backgrounds only seven said they grew up naturally into the party. Seven others claimed to have joined the party for specific reasons. Four of these claimed to have been radicals in their younger days, later coming to see the light. It is difficult, however, to take these statements very seriously. They all seem to radiate a pleasant sense of the idea, which one of them actually stated, that "every younger generation that's worth its salt is radical at twenty and more conservative at forty." Two others claimed that particular public incidents led them to join the Liberal Party.

- "I was guided into the Liberal Party because when the Dutch convoy came to Sydney after the war the wharfies would not let them land (and they an ally!). I asked myself why was this? The answer was because people like me didn't take a part in politics."

- "It started when there was a disastrous strike in X [State] and the mob tried to take control of essential services. We all offered ourselves to get law and order - a group of us - who then decided to take an interest in politics and carry on our service. We looked at ways and means, considered the political parties, and decided on reforming the Liberal Party. [Probe: At that time did you think of joining the ALP?] I can't say we thought of doing that."

Inadvertantly both these statements reveal a note of class feeling through their stress on opposing an illegal takeover of power by "the wharfies" and "the mob". One Member gave a rather more down-to-earth reason for joining the
party:

"I was hanging by my shoestrings in business and it was obvious the Labour Party was just hanging on."

Five other Members said that they did not just grow up naturally into the party because they joined it at a specific time. For four of them this was shortly before they entered Parliament. The fifth recounted how he discovered very swiftly which side to be on when first he came to Australia:

"... Then I went to a political meeting soon after I arrived up the street. I didn't like the look of the crowd up the back. The next day I asked someone who they were. And then I said 'Well if that's the Labour crowd, I don't think much of them!'"

Five Members said that their parents had voted Labour. Their explanations of how they themselves became Liberal are most significant:

"My parents voted Labour [Probe] It was bank nationalization which made me join the Liberal Party. I had voted Labour before this. We lived in a middle class area and my father was an active member of the Labour Party. I was left to my own devices as a boy, and determined not to get in the same rut as my parents. I worked at night and determined to be independent. I started my own business. This would never have been possible unless the opportunity and stability had been there."

Here the Member seemed to be conscious of a relationship between his own rise in class position and his change to the Liberal Party. Nevertheless, I think it would be wrong to underestimate the importance to him of the general beliefs about "opportunity and stability" and his opposition to bank nationalization.

The answer of a second Member may have reflected the same sort of history, but unfortunately I did not have the chance to ask more about his background.

"My parents inevitably voted Labour [Probe] The first three times I voted Labour. Then when I was twenty-nine (six years after I graduated) only then did the choice become clear - was I in favour of free enterprise or state control?"

A third Member said:

"My parents voted Labour [Probe] I voted Liberal and later joined. I voted Liberal because of the presentation of the Liberal candidate to me and the comparison with the Labour man. I did vote Labour before. One thing which had a big strength in my mind when I voted Liberal was the 1949 coal strike and the activities of the Communists. After that I never looked back. When I joined, some twelve years later, I had clearly in mind how over the years I swung against the Labour Party, principally because of the image of the two parties as they presented themselves to me."

If one is devoted to a class theory one can probably trace the almost conscious effects of rising social position in this statement, particularly in the last sentence. Nevertheless, one would not be justified in treating the Members' stress on, for instance, "the 1949 coal strike" as mere rationalization.

The fourth Member whose parents voted Labour had told me in answer to A4: "I'm unique. I had three years education at a state school. I had no shoes." He also said in the midst of a related anecdote "I myself was the son of an unsuccessful cowcockey."
In answer to C3 he replied:

"My father was a fanatical socialist, a founder of the ALP [Probe: It goes back many years to the first conscription campaign in World War I - I differed from my father. I flogged it out and saw all the absurdities of the Labour attitude."

In answer to the next question he broke off to tell me more about his history in the Liberal Party. I think one is justified in seeing in this account of rising in the Liberal Party also a description of rising social position

"I joined the X [a Liberal organization] - very old school tie and exclusive - I fought my way up. My lack of education meant of course social difficulties - but I pick up education every year, though there are gaps. Coming into the X I came in conflict with the financial dominators of those days (In the X I had to do every job in a political party. Some who came in later did not have my attachment to the party - it makes a difference - I know the origin of all policies and ideas in the party)

The fifth Member looked at his change to the Liberal Party in another light, showing a different sort of consciousness of class:

"My family was an old Labour family - industrial Union officials [Probe] The egalitarian requirements of the Liberal Party are important to me. Communism can't be separated from class problems in Australian politics."

In answer to another question in Section 0 this Member said of the ALP: "It's a more class-ridden party (including half-baked intellectuals who believe Crisp's thesis)"

Considering for a moment the views expressed in other questions by these five Members, once again they did not share similar views on account of a common characteristic. As to their views on class, only one of them stressed the non-sectional character of the party at some point in Section A. By contrast, one (the last quoted) was the only Member who constantly stressed the class basis of the Liberal Party throughout Section A. On C1 this Member was the only one of the five who said straight out that the Liberal Party is largely supported by particular classes. All the others gave the answer 'a cross section, but particularly certain groups.' Three gave a fairly realistic estimate of the situation; one demonstrated unconscious self-contradiction. In the supplementary question all except one saw the middle class as having, or at least potentially having, a special role. On C2, all except one disagreed with Eggleston's thesis. The one who agreed considered this a fault in the party.

In so far as one can extract a common attitude from these varying views one can say that all these Members (subject to notable exceptions) were fairly conscious of the class basis of the party and almost all showed some degree of identification with the middle class. On the other hand, almost all disagreed with Eggleston's thesis and none was willing to accept it as casting the party in a proper role. This implies that, for them, it is particularly important for the Liberal Party to seem progressive and, to a lesser extent, to seem a broad national party.

As to the views of this group on economic policy (Bl and 2) they varied enormously. I would term one Right wing, two centre and two Left wing. Their views on intra-
party relationships also varied markedly.

There was only one Member who said his parents voted Country Party:

"I joined the Liberal Party because a Liberal Member of Parliament influenced me. I voted Labour at the start. But when they adhered to a socialistic stand we were poles apart. [Probe: In what way were you attracted to Labour?] I thought they had initiative and allowed more room for free thinking. They dabble too much in the affairs of the country, but they are forward thinkers."

One can speculate here that perhaps reasons of personal interest prevented this Member from liking the Labour Party's "favoured thinking" when it became too "socialistic."

One other Member said his father "usually voted for an Independent on the Conservative side". He then went on:

"I myself, in my younger days, because there was no talk of Socialism then - but talk of equality of opportunity - for my first two votes I voted Labour. Jack Lang changed me - not honouring overseas borrowing - you can't have dishonesty in government".

This answer is in rather the same pattern as some of the previous ones.

A difference of voting behaviour between the parents also seemed to mean heterodoxy in views, in background or in early political sympathies:

"My mother was Liberal. My father possibly could swing. I really don't know about my background [Probe] I couldn't stand the ALP. The Communist line was being shouted around and the ALP didn't seem to have much to offer. Our generation after the war wanted to do something. I could make a darned good Labour Member - if the ALP was what it ought to be, if the ALP stood for the benefit of the country. If it was a good Labour Party like the British Labour Party it could appeal to me [Probe: What do you mean exactly by a good Labour party?] I often have more sympathy with the ALP over things not in the best interests of the people [Probe: What type of things do you mean?] For instance, shipping combines - If I felt a national shipping line could be run economically and could be under control (no strikes etc) I would favour it."

"I don't know. I don't remember my father. My mother voted Country Party perhaps [Probe] I didn't have a typical Liberal background. I ran away at thirteen to a shearing shed. I had a rougher background than most Labour Members... [Probe: Then what made you join the Liberal Party?] I don't know... I was always interested in law and politics."

"My father never voted, as he was in the army. My mother would have voted anti-Labour [Probe] No, my background was almost the reverse. [Probe] I joined because I believed in the anti-Labour government. When I was in X I didn't join but voted Country Party because it was a Country Party area."

In conclusion on this question, it is clear that the Members had a considerable variety of family backgrounds. One third had non-Liberal backgrounds. This means that there is
surely real reason for personal ambivalence on the subject of the Liberal Party's relation to class, real reason for a genuine belief in the Liberal Party as a cross-sectional party (or, at any rate, in this as an ideal aim). At the same time family background did not correlate strongly with particular views of the party's class nature. This suggests that ambivalence also has other roots in the party besides family background. Nevertheless, one must not minimize the significance of the solid majority with typical Liberal backgrounds. Nor must one forget that those who had working class or lower middle class family backgrounds generally enjoyed a subsequent rise in occupational status. The point about the quite significant number of non-Liberal backgrounds is really that they do modify and temper to a certain extent the general picture of homogeneity in the Members' backgrounds.

In Question C4 the Members were asked "to what extent would you describe yourself as a typical Liberal Member?" Here I wanted to find out to what extent they would state or imply that they were typical or atypical because of social background and social attitudes. In other words, I wanted to find out to what extent the bond which unites the Parliamentary Party is one of shared social background and attitude.

In answer to the main question only two Members said that they were not typical because of their family background. A few others seemed to imply this, but they themselves were not looking at the matter in this light. In fact, in answer to this question, the Members' inclination to consider their political environment in terms of philosophy and policy and the party's parliamentary structure again came to the fore.

The Members also seemed, in their answers to the main question, to concentrate on the characteristics which they saw distinguishing them, rather than common characteristics uniting them.

The most common answer was that of fourteen of the Members who identified themselves as Left, Right or centre, progressive or conservative, on matters of philosophy and policy. Most of the Members identified themselves as Right or centre. Practically all of them said or implied they were typical, whereas the two who saw themselves as Leftist felt atypical.

"I suppose I am fairly typical. But I have a spirit of compromise which some haven't. Some are more adamant and not prepared to shift. I hope they think I'm reasonable and reliable. A lot of Members of Parliament are far more advanced in thinking than I am. I'm a generous-minded reactionary ... But over economic matters where there are Left, Right and centre groups there is compromise."

"I'm not typical and I don't claim to be. My thinking is slightly to the Left. My yardstick here is the other Members as I read them - I don't mean just their policy statements but their general outlook [Probe] I have more in common over specific policies than general outlook with the current Members of Parliament - though this is in the process of change."

The second of these Members quoted had a Labour background. It is interesting that in describing himself as atypical he did not explicitly mention this, though it is implicit. The only two Members who said explicitly they were not typical because of their background also had Labour parents.
Observable in the two answers quoted above is another characteristic of all the answers to this question, of whatever type. There was always a strong sense of the Member taking up his position in relation to the group, of aligning or not aligning, and of the feelings and tensions involved. Thus a Member who felt he was typical would begin "I flatter myself I'm typical..." Another Member, firmly ensconced in the group, yet not liking to feel quite one of the mass, would say "I'm reasonably typical. Of course, everyone thinks he's exceptional..." A third and more rare type of Member seemed to have a definite and comfortably established position somewhat outside and in opposition to the group. His attitude was more or less 'thank God I am not as other men are'. The second Member quoted above seemed less sure of his position. At the beginning there was a suggestion of inferiority: "I'm not typical and I don't claim to be". He reinstated himself only by foreseeing a change in the type of Member (with the implication that so there should be)

Returning to the different answers which Members gave, eleven saw the party divided into an uncritical conforming majority and a critical minority. Again the relationship to the parliamentary group was strongly in evidence in the answers:

1. "I suppose basically I'm reasonably typical - but I'd hate to think so in some cases. I have a certain sympathy with the Labour Party and I'm not in all circumstances a dyed-in-the-wool Liberal. The typical Liberal Member is dyed-in-the-wool and conforms. He doesn't say boo to a goose".

2. "I'm not egotistical enough to say I'm untypical. In general my views are typical - reasonably stereotyped. And I haven't voted against the government."

Seven other Members saw the Party divided into particular groups, mostly by occupation or age. Obviously these groups must exist in a sense if the Members feel they do. Yet in the answers to the questionnaire there were certainly no clear groupings on the basis of age or occupation. Perhaps these are really ways of stating how the Members fit, personally, into the parliamentary group:

"Well, I have confrères, a certain group of friends, with whom I see eye to eye on almost everything - we're very alike - about my age".

This particular group of confrères was fairly easy to identify. Yet in their answers to the questionnaire they could not have revealed more diverse opinions and attitudes.

In addition to the two Members who saw themselves as atypical on account of a Labour background, there was one other Member who seemed to feel himself atypical on account of belonging to a more paternal and aristocratic tradition: "I don't think I'm typical... I've spent all my life looking after troops or Arabs or people socially below me. It's inbred in me".

The probe question went on to ask the Members (1) whether they had more in common with other Members in general outlook and family background or in agreement over specific policies.

Only twelve Members, about half of those asked the question, said they shared general outlook and family background,

(1) Unfortunately only 22 Members were asked this question.
and only eight of these went on to say it was more important
than agreement on specific policies. In other words, we must
look for something as well as social background and attitude
giving the Members a sense of unity.

For a start four Members with Labour backgrounds
and one with a very atypical Liberal background said that they
shared the general outlook though not family background. By
the general outlook they seemed to mean the party's general
policies. Further they went on to say that they had more
in common with other Members in general outlook than over
specific policies.

"I possibly am different [in background] ... My
outlook is in general the same - I accept majority
decisions. Over specific policies I have many
difference".

In addition, three Members claimed to share not only
background and outlook but agreement on specific policies as
well. In other words, the distinction between their general
social attitudes and their opinions on particular concrete
issues did not mean anything in describing their relationship
with other Members.

Only one Member (1) said he had greater agreement
over specific policies than in general outlook.

Three Members gave altogether different explanations
of the tie. One said "I'd say we are a band of friends ... It's almost the camaraderie of war". This suggests both a
common anti-Labour sentiment (which could be social) and also,
more strongly, the very fact of being a parliamentary group as
bonds holding the Members together. The other two Members
also stressed the latter, though in different ways. The
second Member, who had a fairly typical Liberal background,
said:

"My colleagues come from so many different areas and
backgrounds, that I don't think any are typical as
individuals, but together we form a group".

The third Member, (2) though his parents voted Liberal, had an
atypical working class background. He tended to have extreme
and conflicting views, which sometimes achieved a rather violent
synthesis. His statement here is an example of this, showing
in extreme form the pressure of the Parliamentary Party of itself
to produce a common outlook:

"I don't think I'm typical - I'm awkward and independent.
But I'm a better team man than most parliamentarians up
here. This being election year, I won't be controversial,
despite my principles. [Probe] I haven't got much in common
with other Liberal Members in background. I have a working-
man's background, but it was instilled into me that benefits
come by personal efforts. But in the last couple of years
I've learnt to submerge my aggressiveness - not only for
expedience, but it helps me (I'm happier), and it helps
the Party. We must learn to live with variant views."

In conclusion to this question it seems that, in fact,
there are three elements in the bond uniting the Members. For
the majority there is a common social background, but for all

(1) Quoted above on p. 69.
(2) See p. 65.
there is both the fact of being a member of the parliamentary group, and also a general belief in the party's policy and philosophy. The life of the Parliamentary Party (especially when it is more or less synonymous with 'the party') must provide of itself a feeling of solidarity for those with a definite niche in it and great pressure to come inside for those somehow outside. In addition, one must not forget that, whatever their backgrounds, the fact that all are Members of Parliament means they share a common status as such (and carry the same - if not an equal - electoral risk.) As to the general belief in the party's policy and philosophy, we know from Section B that this in fact comes down to a general feeling of acceptance and consensus.

In Question C5 the Members were asked "What would be your opinion on the statement that 'in Australia people in certain jobs get paid too much and in others not enough'?" This question was taken from a survey of A. F. Davies (1) who deduced from his results "a rock-like complacency about social inequality". Only 20% of his respondents showed concern. The Members showed an even more rock-like complacency. It is true that 20% of them also (that is, seven) were very concerned with the subject, but only three of them were concerned about workers getting too little. Nevertheless, before this is taken as a special characteristic of the class attitudes of Liberal Members of Parliament, it must be noted that Davies found working class respondents negligibly more dissident than middle class ones, Labour voters as complacent as Liberals. In addition, for a Liberal Member to be concerned about inequality would be to invite the charge that the Liberal government should have done something about it.

Nonetheless, even with these provisos in mind, the Members remain extremely complacent. This is what one would expect. If Members are to believe that the Liberal Party is supported by a great cross-section of voters, and does not rest on class support, they must deny or belittle the importance of economic inequality in Australia.

Sixteen Members, the largest group, agreed that there were some inequalities, but dismissed them as an insignificant problem. Most of these Members assented to the idea of inequality in a general way, some saying it was inevitable. Six of them said specifically that certain people, mainly Members of Parliament and lawyers, were paid too little. One said lawyers were paid too much. Two said "drones" or "unskilled workers" got too much. It was noticeable that in all the answers to this question lawyers and doctors were mentioned most often, either as getting too much or too little. In other words there was a strong tendency to think of the question in terms of the professions.

Five other Members rejected the statement completely, saying that inequality was not a problem at all. The most common claim here was that payment is by ability. One Member, for instance, pointed out that managing directors and doctors are paid by ability. In fact, though they did not recognize it, some of these Members were verging on supporting a degree of inequality: "Any man with ability can get into a position with adequate remuneration. But if this situation [i.e. the situation of inequality described in the quotation] exists, it is the fault of the person himself."

Six Members did quite explicitly support a degree of inequality. Most of them qualified their statement by

saying that, after all, there are such good opportunities and so few disparities and inequality only exists through ability:

"There are always inequalities. But I have no general grouse on this. There are no vast disparities in Australia. And, unless there are some prizes, let's be neatly filed in card indexes; and there'd be nothing to live for. That is, they [prizes] are good as far as they are due largely to merit. There is no vast inherited wealth..."

Only one Member wholeheartedly supported inequality as such:

"I've been overseas too often. Top Australians are really underpaid. We have a tendency to level - we're a mediocr society and this is not good. It was not intended. It doesn't occur in football teams, where the best are selected, and it shouldn't happen with people. We need incentive. We pay too much to the fellow who doesn't care."

Finally there were seven Members who were very concerned with significant inequality. Two were concerned about workers getting too much and others too little. Of course, like the previous group, they were in reality upholding inequality.

"In monetary terms there is not the incentive for people to take on a profession today. The average labourer has raised his position and we have come full cycle now. There are five different unions to put in a telephone. It's damn difficult to sack anyone... the rule of law should mean that everyone is equal before the law... When you consider responsibility - take a High Court Judge for instance - he gets three times the pay of a salesman - but where does the responsibility lie? And the Prime Minister, of whichever party, gets a large emolument. A man might study law for five years and take years to reach the top. Yet when he reaches his peak it's chopped off by income tax. So in Australia there are too many drones supported by us. The community is not getting value for its money. People don't have the incentive to train themselves. Unskilled labour is too highly paid". Since the last three Members quoted represent extreme views in comparison with the other Members it must be remembered, in order to preserve a balanced picture, that a much more typical group of sixteen felt the problem of inequalities to be a fairly insignificant one.

By contrast only two members were concerned with workers getting too little and others too much, and one other Member was concerned that "the gap is too great".

"Yes, I would cut out the subsidy to medicos, who are overlionized [Probe] A tax policy, an efficient and healthy programme of redistribution of resources can do something about this. Not enough is done. But if you overcommit in the welfare state you hurt the country in the end - you need more production so as to have more to redistribute."

Two other Members were very concerned about inequalities of a different sort. One was concerned with inequality as between doctors and lawyers on the one hand and nurses and school teachers on the other. The other wanted to "emphasize in pay" "education and the humanities" rather than top civil servants and businessmen.

In conclusion on this question it is clear that almost all the Members were complacent about inequality, whilst some actively advocated it. Most also showed a greater concern and awareness about the positions of various groups
amongst the middle, upper and professional classes.

As to which Members held particular views, there were no obvious correlations on the basis of family background or previous occupation or previously revealed attitude to class. For instance, those Members with a working class background included the two who saw workers getting too little, but they also included an ardent supporter of inequality. Previous occupations did not seem to determine which general view a Member took on the subject, but they did have a very noticeable influence on the specific occupations he named as examples.

In conclusion there obviously exists below the surface in the Members' concept of the party a definite connection between the Liberal Party and the middle and upper class. Nevertheless it is important to realize that this fact is tempered by very real and significant ambivalence in the views of many Members. This was seen in the answers to the first question (C1) about Liberal voters and why they vote Liberal, and to the second question (C2) about Eggleston's view of the party.

A marked degree of middle and upper class allegiance was also revealed in the Members' personal class position and feeling about class. Two-thirds of the Members had Liberal backgrounds and practically all were complacent about inequality. On the other hand, only about one-third regarded the middle class as having a special role in politics and society. Only about a third seemed to feel that the unifying factor in the Parliamentary Party was a social one. In addition to this, a third of the Members had non-Liberal family backgrounds. The class picture is again tempered.

Ambivalence of view on the general relationship of the party to class is accompanied by real personal ambivalence on the subject.

Thus, to see the Liberal Party as the party of the owners and controllers of capital goes a large part of the way in explaining the attitudes of Liberal Members. It does not, however, give a complete explanation. A complete explanation of their concept of the party must take into account their idea of it as national and nonsectional. This in turn may be partly explained by the fact that the Liberal Party has been in government so long that a wide consensus has grown up within the party and its feeling of wide support. It may also perhaps be partly explained by the Members' view of themselves as first and foremost Members of Parliament guarding the national, rather than just the party, interest.
The aim of Section D was to find out what relationship the Members see between the party and interest groups. It tried to do this by means of a series of questions which began by asking about general and, it was hoped, undeniable propositions, and gradually became more pointed.

It must be noted at the beginning that there appears to be a close connection between the Members' attitudes to interest groups and to classes.

The idea of the party as "non-sectional", so important in the surface image of the party, obviously includes for the Members both the idea that the party does not represent certain classes alone and the idea that it is not specially responsive to certain interest groups.1 Clearly there is a real connection between these two ideas, even if class theories and interest group theories of politics are logically distinct. For if a party is supported essentially by the middle and upper classes and not by most of the working class, it must surely be particularly responsive to, or even the spokesman and instrument of, "private enterprise" interest groups. The fact that the Members do make this connection is perhaps borne out by the fact that only eight Members mentioned the Party's being influenced by interest groups other than employer groups, business groups, industrial groups and - in general - "private enterprise groups."

A connection between the party and interest groups or class has no place in the Members' explicit surface image of the party as both ideas are regarded as equally unfortunate and not to be admitted. One is not astonished, in the event, to find that the answers to Section D follow much the same pattern as the answers to question C 1 about class. First of all, there is a striking change from Section A, where only a few Members mentioned at any point a connection between the Party and interests. Even those who stressed the non-sectional character of the party in Section A now admitted varying degrees of influence on the part of interest groups.

Again, as on C 1, answers fall into three groups, most Members seeing interest groups with a subsidiary role, quite a number seeing them with a big role, and a lesser number denying them any role at all. A large number of answers also revealed rationalization and contradiction. Finally, there are clear correlations between the answers of particular Members to Section D and to Question C 1. All but one of those who regarded pressure groups as having a big role recognized at once in the earlier question that the Liberal Party is supported by certain classes, or else they were easily prompted to speak in class terms, or paid more lip-service to the idea of a cross-section Liberal vote, or gave a realistic estimate of that cross-section in terms of real people. This is true of those who, while not granting interest groups a large role, rationalized their actual influence.

That, then, are the strengths of the three groups of answers to Section D? Fourteen Members saw interest groups having a subsidiary role in relation to the party and eight

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1. See, for instance, Chapter I page 15
would not admit to their having any role at all. A group of
twelve, however, regarded them as having quite a large role.

Generalising from the varying answers to the probe
questions in Section D, the most common view would be, in
essence, something like the following. All governments are
subject to pressures from interest groups. To a certain
extent politics is a matter of compromise between them. The
other parties, however, succumb to pressures far more than
the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party, it is true, is influenced
to a certain degree by pressures, particularly business and
industrial group pressures. Admittedly, the weakening of
the restrictive trade practices legislation, for instance,
was largely brought about by such pressures. Nonetheless,
the Liberal Party is different. It is more broadly based and
its supporting interests conflict with one another, so it is
concerned with the welfare of all groups.

Despite the fact that almost all the Members believed
the Liberal Party to be far less influenced by interest groups
than the other parties, they did reveal in their answers a
number of significantly different attitudes towards the
influence of interest groups.

Almost all of them started off with the basic attitude
that interest groups, by definition, must be bad (though those
who saw pressure groups playing a big role tended to subscribe
to this view less than others). As one Member put it:

"...Of course interest groups are a very important
element, but they are not the whole explanation of
Government policies. A national interest does
emerge - a very real one - apart from these...
Interest groups, are not the whole story. Many
Liberals are not in it for the sake of getting more
dough, as clerks and so on... This is a great difference from
the other parties... For instance the interests of
importers and manufacturers conflict. So Liberals
find they may as well do the right thing by the
nation. The Liberal Party is a truly national party".

A large number of Members, though they implied that
they subscribed to a view like the above, went on to rationalize
the influence of interest groups on the Liberal Party. They
were mostly Members who saw interest groups with a definite
but subsidiary role, though sometimes they were Members who had
initially denied their influence altogether. Through
rationalization they were able to accommodate the Liberal Party's
relation to interest groups comfortably enough in their general
image of the party.

Some of these Members, while admitting that the Liberal
Party is influenced by certain groups, contrived to envisage
these particular groups as somehow not quite interest or
pressure groups in the ordinary sense. Others approved of
some particular pressures and therefore regarded these as
not being pressures at all. Sometimes they did both. This
is true of one Member who even dissented in his answer to the
first main question.

"I do not face the Government subject to pressure.
The present Liberal Government can look back on its
rejection of certain groups. The motor industry
tried to pressure us and sectional interests have
fought us. The Liberal Party is different. Sectional
interests are more apparent in our opponents."

In answer to the fourth probe he then pointed to the influence of the R.S.I. but rationalized it:

"Ex-service groups like the R.S.I. have a distinct influence - but this is doing the right thing".

Similarly, in answer to the fifth probe, he agreed to the influence of business and industrial groups, but rationalized again:

"Business groups have worked through the establishment of associations - manufacturing associations etc. These are not pressure groups. They sensibly co-ordinate views and speak with one voice".

He also recognized, though not straightforwardly, the influence of pressure on the restrictive trade practices legislation:

"It was influence wisdom to get the legislation through...compromise is so often necessary".

I then asked him the first probe about politics as compromise and he replied at great length on the theme that "compromise between groups is part of the use of politics". Through a progression of rationalizations he had ended up in complete contradiction of his original denial of the influence of groups.

Another Member asserted "The only group really with influence on the Liberal Party is those who fight to maintain private enterprise". In answer to the fourth probe he said "Some do influence the Liberal Party - if they can get an ear - but there are no big permanent ones irrespective of this". Then in answer to the fifth probe about business and industrial groups having a special influence he suddenly said:

"Yes - and this is good in a way. Organized groups are to be encouraged if they are fundamentally right".

Another Member, who completely denied the influence of groups, explained the support of business and industrial groups in a rather dubious way:

"This has been refuted. We are supported by these groups because of the protection we give against the Trade Union movement. But we don't legislate in their favour".

Quite a number of Members used the fact of certain groups being better organized, putting forward better cases or having greater access as somehow a justification for their influence.

For instance one Member firmly denied the influence of interest groups and said:

"The whole basis of democratic government is that the views of the people are represented. But, of course, the better the case which is put forward, the more it will be listened to".

In answer to the fifth probe he was then able to say:
"Business and industrial groups have no more influence than anyone else. But they prepare their cases better. (So in this they can't help but influence)."

Another Member said:

"I don't think the Liberal Party is a pressure group for any particular interest. The Liberal Party is made up of a lot of groups of organized interests. The Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Manufacturers are opposed (to each other)".

In answer to the third probe he then justified 'some groups having more influence than others' by saying: "Yes - this is because those interests are better organized". Finally, in answer to the fifth probe, he replied:

"Yes, the Chamber of Manufacturers and big business groups [influence the Liberal Party]. Let's be brutal and accept this. Big business does influence the Liberal Party but only because it is well organized. The party is not the tool of big business".

A third Member said:

"The Liberal Party has pressures on it, for example, the Chambers of Manufacturers and Commerce and the Taxpayers' Association, but these bodies as such do not back it up with money".

In answer to the fourth probe, however, he went on:

"Some have influence. This is because they have access. They are able to bring pressure and so they must have influence. If their arguments are good they are accepted [Probe]. If they are no good, I don't know whether they are or not".

A number of other Members were able to accept the idea of a degree of pressure, not exactly by rationalizing it, but by dissociating it completely from the party. They saw all governments, equally and indiscriminately, influenced by the same interests.

"This present Liberal Party - Country Party Government almost makes a fetish of resistance to lobbying of any kind. This is one reason why people vote Liberal. There are pressures. For instance Ipec's pressures on the Government got nowhere...Pressures are normally dealt with on their merits (though sometimes they might not have been accepted without publicity). Economic pressures stem from sectors of the economy and you must take them into account".

The Member further elucidated this point in answer to the probe question asking whether business and industrial groups have a special influence:

"Not as sectional concerns. But if, for instance, they represent building and there is a depression here, the Government has to do something about it".

Many of these Members did seem to be groping towards some justification of interest groups, but found it unthinkable to justify them directly and without qualification.
Other Members were able to deny or belittle the influence of interest groups by insisting on narrowing the whole question down to backbenchers or even themselves, thus ignoring altogether the possible influence of interest groups through other parts of the party:

"No. In my experience I never remember being influenced by pressure".
"No. You only want to see pressure group letters going into the waste paper basket. I don't think as a party we have been pressurized".

Some Members had perhaps been, themselves, a vehicle for pressure. Yet for them to look at the matter in this plain light was inconceivable. Thus on the question of restrictive trade practices one Member said:

"Alterations occurred because certain facts became apparent that were not recognised at first. It was not just a case of pressure – I played quite a part..."

Another Member was more ambivalent about his own and the backbenchers' role in relation to pressure:

"It can be said, as far as our private enterprise outlook is concerned, that not just one section is benefitted. No government should foster one section. I'm a member of the Chamber of Manufacturers but I have never once been approached by them because they know I wouldn't do anything [Probe]. They can go to see Ministers. But I would say the effect of lobbying generally on the Government's ultimate decision is negligible. But representations are made and the Government is flexible".

The last probe question asked this Member whether the weakening of the restrictive trade practices legislation was due to pressure:

"Yes, especially through backbenchers. Pressure groups can approach them and it is up to the Member. Some take things up if they think there is a genuine case and it may go on the party room agenda. [Probe] Did the Liberal Organization channel pressure too? I don't know about it. I never go near it".

At this point it also seems appropriate to note that there did seem to be quite a strong correlation between Members with certain characteristics and answers which granted interest groups only a subsidiary role or no role at all in relation to the party and then went on to rationalize their influence in some way. All these Members were older and had either been in business or had some connection with business. By contrast, five of the twelve who saw pressure groups playing a large role were young Members. Five of these twelve Members also had no connection with business.

Only a handful of Members supported pressure groups as in any way good in themselves. They were all Members who saw them as very important.

"The Liberal Party is no different from others in this. Politicians are elastic and parliamentarians are no better than businessmen in seeing what's good for the economy".
..."To a large extent governments have got to compromise. They can attempt to mould opinion but they depend on the public and must reflect it even if this means changing ideas (not principles). For example, if pressure comes from a responsible section of the business community governments must modify their ideas or they're not worth their salt. For instance, on restrictive trade practices, the present Government had to take notice of what different sections thought. Anyone who says policy is not moulded by interests is blind..."

One young Member was completely frank about the pressures on himself and also advanced the only general and rather modern-sounding justification of interest groups:

"The Liberal Party makes itself more accessible to differing pressure groups because its structure is more representative. (In my position in the Organization) I spent much time making representations for pressure groups. In a democracy you must encourage pressure groups. There is a dire lack of understanding of this in Australia today. Pressure groups often work through the Organization because they provide finance and want their quid pro quo. And they have contacts!"

This statement also demonstrates another characteristic of quite a number of the answers which stressed the role of interest groups. They showed a greater awareness and frankness about the various methods which interest groups may employ and the various organs of the party through which they may work.

Thus a number of Members in this group, though they did not indiscriminately welcome the influence of interest groups, treated them realistically and almost neutrally.

"Pressure from interest groups is an important part of politics. The Liberal Party is subject to strong pressure groups, but it depends on the leadership whether or not it succumbs to the selfish interests of pressure groups. It takes some skill to channel these into a wider stream. Pro... Chambers of Manufacturers, Employers' Federations etc., have special influence, varying from State to State, but at times they have been skillfully channelled 'Prof'. As to the Federal Government, at times yes and at times no, but pressures have been resisted quite well in general".

One other Member in this group, like a number of those instances earlier, seemed to be groping by means of rationalization for some justification of pressure groups, but he could not really contemplate justifying them outright.

A few others who saw interest groups as very important seemed to denounce them as wholly unacceptable and evil:

"I think the Liberal Party reflects commercial and moneyed interests to far too great a degree - the interests of people in Bradfield. These aren't typical, but they make party policies."

In conclusion, it is clear that interest groups, like classes, have a definite place, often below the surface,
in the Members' concept of the party. Even when they are consciously recognised, however, it is often even less clearly than in the case of classes. Rationalisation often obscures from the Member the fact that he is recognising them at all. Nevertheless the ideas of class and interest groups in relation to the party are closely interrelated in the Members' minds. They try to suppress both ideas because they show the party as "sectional".
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS.

How then, by way of summary, do the Members really seem to envisage the Liberal Party, as this has emerged in their answers to the questionnaire as a whole?

Our point of departure was the Members' general image of the party.

At the surface level and at first sight, almost all of them appeared to regard the party primarily as a loosely organized Parliamentary Party united and characterized by its philosophies and policies. The outside Organization was dismissed as unimportant. Class and interest also appeared to have no place in this concept. On the contrary, the Liberal Party was sometimes hailed as "non-sectional" and "the only truly national party".

When these various aspects of the party were probed in more detail, however, a markedly different concept of the party emerged. It cannot, nevertheless, be completely isolated from the surface concept of the party. There is clearly both conflict and interaction between the two.

Taking first the party's policy, it does perhaps remain even under closer scrutiny a dominant element in the Members' real image of the party. This is so in the sense that there is no doubt about their sustained emphasis upon it. Nonetheless, it has become an emphasis on policy altogether different from that implied by the surface image. In reality, most of the Members did not take seriously into account either traditional Liberal principles or consciously-revised principles in answering the various policy questions. They did not seem to see party policies as based on a definite philosophy. Rather they appeared to treat the party as almost wholly pragmatic.

Just how pragmatic the Parliamentary Party really tends to be emerges from the fact that, although there were considerable differences of opinion on most questions, there were no consistently and strongly correlated groups of Members based on their answers to different questions. This was so even within the realm of economic policies, and was even more noticeable over the complete range of broad policy areas. This suggests that the party is not divided into definite tight groupings (such as right, left and centre groups) on the basis of particular philosophical approaches or attitudes applied consistently to all questions.

As the Members ultimately reveal it, the Parliamentary Party can perhaps be better described as a consensus party of more or less practically-minded men than as in any real sense a philosophically-based party. There is a general and often rather vague satisfaction with the Government's operational policies. This satisfaction is more the more apparent - and is no doubt the better sustained - inasmuch as there are no fixed groupings in the party. Each Member is really satisfied with some part of Government policy. On some or other of these he is then likely to find himself in agreement with a wide variety of Members. This network of different but overlapping satisfactions makes compromise or accommodation amongst them easier on matters over which
they happen to differ.

The opportunity for consensus to develop because on policy there were no fixed and ultimately irreconcilable groupings of Members can be generalized even further. There were practically no correlations on views expressed in answer to the different sections of the questionnaire (that is, on the different facets of the party) So once again there is the opportunity for men to agree closely in one area and differ very widely in another, thus facilitating processes of general compromise, and hence a general atmosphere of broad consensus.

On party organization the pattern of Members' views was paradoxical. In answer to questions about the relationship between the Organization and the Parliamentary Party, and also about branch activity, the Members stressed the subordinate position of the Organization. This was completely in line with their surface image of the party. In answer to another question about centres of influence in the party, however, it became clear that, to a large extent, the Members must have been equating the dominance of the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, and Cabinet with the dominance of the Parliamentary Party as a whole over the Organization.

The Members' ideas about the organization of the Parliamentary Party itself help to explain how they could equate the dominance of Prime Minister and Cabinet with that of the whole Parliamentary Party. On internal parliamentary organization there was again something of a paradox. Most of the Members, in line with their surface image of the party, saw the Parliamentary Party as a loosely disciplined group of independent individuals. On the other hand, most seemed willing to grant that the Leader (formally at least) had a virtually all-powerful position. In so far as the two ideas were reconciled it seemed to be through the idea of free individuals readily following the Leader and identifying with him because of "team spirit". (A conflict between the two ideas sometimes showed itself in the desire for elected Cabinets).

Thus the two dominant ideas in the surface image of the party, the stress on the party's philosophy and on the supremacy of the Parliamentary Party, were significantly modified when probed in more detail. Conversely, when the Party's relationships with class and with interest groups, suppressed in the surface image of the party, were probed, they turned out to hold a significant, though perhaps lesser, place in the Members' underlining concept of the party.

The ideas of class and of supporting or client interest groups appeared to be quite closely connected in the Members' minds as both stand in contradiction to the surface concept of the party as "non-sectional". Thus the degree to which the Members admitted a connection between the Party and either class or interest groups was very similar, as was their attitude to this admission. In both cases there was a definite but qualified admission accompanied by considerable rationalization and contradiction.

The Members did recognize, when probed, a definite connection between the Liberal Party and the middle and upper classes. They showed, however, a very real and significant ambivalence on the subject. This ambivalence was rooted in their (perhaps wishful) idea of the Liberal Party's being supported by a true cross-section of voters.

The Members also revealed a marked personal allegiance to the middle or upper class in their answers to several questions.
In their answers to others, however, significant differences and ambivalence in the Members' personal class positions and feelings about class tempered the class picture once more.

Quite a number of Members also recognized the influence of interest groups on the party, though the great majority granted them only a subsidiary role or no role at all. Such answers were, however, as in the case of class, accompanied by a very significant degree of ambivalence and rationalization. This stemmed clearly from the notion of interest groups as evilly or selfishly sectional — "sinister interests", in Benthamite terminology.

II.

The rather difficult question which must be tackled next is the problem of how much about the party can be learned from the Members' concepts of it. In other words, how far can we accept what the Members see as being the real situation? Although the answer to this question must remain somewhat speculative and debatable, it is nonetheless necessary to attempt an answer.

The Federal backbenchers are a definite and integral part of the Federal Liberal Party. On the basis of this fact one can say in a commonsense fashion that their view of the party must provide some insight into its character. But will this insight be solely into the outlook of Liberal backbenchers? To what extent is the Liberal Party only as they see it, so that, to understand the Liberal Party as a whole, one would need to balance the Members' concept of the party against that of other groups in the party? Or is it possible to detect and take into account the Members' bias so as to be left with some real insight into the nature of the party? To put it another way, must the Members' collective self-concept (or, rather, concept of the party) be treated mainly as subjective, a pure reflection of their own personal position, or will it also reflect wider objective realities? I hope to demonstrate that the latter is at least significantly the case.

We can hypothesize that the Members' bias in their view of the Liberal Party comes largely from the fact that many clearly like to regard themselves first and foremost as Members of Parliament rather than party members. Then as Members of Parliament in a governing party, who see their role as guarding the national interest, the Members cannot and will not admit many of the real conflicts in society. Yet parties appear to be based partly on just such real conflicts — and certainly act and talk as though they are. So to examine the Members' concept of the party is to probe the junction of two opposed ideas of their role. The conflict between these two ideas — Member of Parliament and member of the Liberal Party — is probably partly reflected in the conflict between the surface image of the party and the true underlying concept of the party which emerged when the surface image was probed.

We can speculate that, the surface image of the party the Member of Parliament idea is dominant and carried to its furthest extremes. Party allegiance is played down by an attempt to transform the party itself into something all-inclusive, embodying the national interest within itself (Of course this also partakes of the general and human tendency to regard one's own interests as everyone else's as well). Thus the Liberal
Party is seen as national and non-sectional, supported by a
true cross-section of voters and not responsive to particular
interest groups or class interests.

The Members' stress on the dominance of the Parliamentary
Party over the Organization also reflects something of this
emphasis in their role. For the Organization is daily recognised
as having a greater concern with "party for party's sake",
with the exclusive interests of exclusively Liberal supporters.
The Members, on the contrary, want to see themselves "concerned
with the electorate as a whole".

Although the Members seem to stress their non-party
outlook to an exaggerated extent, it should not, of course,
be overlooked that the contrast which they draw between them-
selves and Organization members probably has some basis in
fact. The difference of view which develops between the
Members and the Organization is probably a most important part
of the effect of the working of the Parliamentary system.

There are, moreover, other reasons for the Members'
stress on the dominance of the Parliamentary Party. One is
historical. In contrast to the Labour Party, the non-Labour
parties in 19th Century and early 20th Century Britain in
Parliament and only later had to move outside to organize rank
and file support in the general electorate upon a continuing
party basis. So there must be a deep-rooted feeling, for
this particularly non-Labour historical
reason, that power should reside in the Parliamentary Party. This
must be a part of the reason for most Members' reluctance to
concede any substantial measure of extra-parliamentary power.
We saw, however, that to a certain extent the Members had
asserted the power of the Parliamentary Party through identifying
with Prime Minister and Cabinet. This can be largely explained
by Menzies' personal dominance over the Organization, continued
from the founding of the party though a long and successful
reign in government. Nevertheless, in either a very general
context or in the context of the electorate, the Members still
stressed the dominance of the Parliamentary Party as a whole.
Unless one is to regard them as completely cut off from reality,
the explanation of this probably lies in the firm position
which even the individual Member has acquired through the
Parliamentary Party's being so thoroughly entrenched
in power for so long. This would perhaps tend to make the
Organization less assertive because in general more satisfied.
At all events, it would place it in a less powerful position
from which to assert itself if it wanted to do so.

If one were to regard the Members' concept of the
party as wishful and wholly determined by their position as
Members of Parliament, one would have to regard the more
underlying concept of the party which emerged from probing
as a partial concession to reality. To the extent that the
Members did not wholly abandon their surface image of the party
one would have to regard them as cut off from reality and living
in a world of illusion. This is an extreme view, as it both
denies the effect on reality of what the Members believe, and
also sees them believing many things completely at odds with
reality.

One might possibly go on to explain the Members' continuing devotion to that is left of the surface image of
the party by saying that seventeen years of government have
fostered these illusions. On the contrary, however, the
long period in government may be treated as both explaining and substantiating the Members' underlying concept of the party. If one is willing to make some identification between the Members and Liberals in general, that concept may give a real insight into the forces sustaining a governing party such as the Liberal Party has been. After all, the Liberal Organisation has greatly propagated, in its many pamphlets, an image of the party very similar to the Members' surface view. There may well be similar reasons which make both groups paint the party in this way. It may be only coincidental that this concept is particularly well suited to the Members' views of their role as Members of Parliament, thus giving them special reasons for being devoted to it.

In considering the Members' underlying concept of the party to see what light it can throw on the Liberal Party as a long-governing party, the idea of a consensus party, which is to a certain, though limited, extent broadly based, is very important.

The class attitudes of Liberal Members and their feeling about the party's relationship to class may well point to both the attitudes of many Liberal voters and the motivation of much detailed Liberal policy. The fact that the Members revealed a solid core of class allegiance which, however, quite significantly tempered by differences and ambivalence, may well be typical of Liberal voters. For, in the Australian population, there is an obviously increasing movement from rural to secondary and from secondary to tertiary occupations, with a concomitant rise in the level of education. An increasing percentage of members of households are full or part-time income earners, and there is an increase in the numbers owning or paying off homes, cars and a multiplicity of "consumer durables". These developments would contribute to an increasing percentage of middle class identification or at least to ambivalence on the subject of class.

* It seems highly likely that most of the time Liberal voters, like Liberal Members, share a feeling of broad approval of government policies. Different types of voters, like different types of Members, may be directly satisfied by certain policies and their, because of general success and prosperity, and despite disagreement in detail over some measures, may still join in the feeling of general satisfaction and consensus.

This characterisation of the Liberal Party as a "party of consensus" must, of course, apply to a certain extent to any party which wins enough votes to become the core of a comfortable majority government. Nonetheless, the Liberal Party, with its Country Party ally, has been in power so long (and in a period in which significant social changes have occurred and the Labour Opposition has been greatly weakened) that it has come to see itself as a very strong instance of a consensus party. So it is a phenomenon worth special analysis.

As to the other aspect of the Members' underlying image of the party - the finally qualified dominance of the Parliamentary Party - we saw that it too could be partly attributed to the party's long period in office.

Finally, it is not possible to see the Liberal Party as a party of broad consensus, with diminished stress on class support, without reference to the Labour Party.
The dignity and weakness of the Labour Party almost throughout the Liberal Party's term of office, its arguments about and insistence on somewhat out-dated concepts of the working-class, have all given the Liberal Party an unrivalled opportunity to present itself as, and in part to become, "the party of consensus".

III.

Thus it appears that the Members concept of the party (including both the surface and the more deeply-beded concept) can be explained largely in terms of the circumstance of the Liberal Party's having been a governing party for so long.

It is not hard to envisage the fate of the Liberal Party should it ever go into opposition (and presumably it can be assumed that this must happen). The Members' whole outlook on the party seems to depend very largely on the long-standing fact that the Liberal Party is in government. The ill-defined philosophy, so easily ignored in practice or loosely used to justify quite contradictory views, would be a weak reed for an Opposition to lean on. In practice the philosophy has been sustained by the general feeling of development, prosperity and success (which, for the Members, probably frequently comes back to the simple fact that the party is in government). The idea of the supremacy of Prime Minister, Cabinet and Parliamentary Party as a whole, to which the Members' thinking is largely geared, would also be likely to suffer rude opposition from within the party should the Parliamentary Party go out of office. Similarly the ideology of the Liberal Party, of a truly national party supported by all sections, would be largely cut away if the party was no longer in government.

Parties frequently tend to collapse in opposition, but great must be the fall of a party which enjoys an unbroken term of upwards of seventeen years in office and whose outlook becomes largely conditioned by this fact.

IV.

The Members' concept of the party - largely because of its long period in office, but also because of the way in which they envisage their role as Members of Parliament - is rather compartmentalized into a surface image and a more submerged view. Further, this deeper view is shot through by a contradiction, ambivalence and rationalization. How, then, can one evaluate and pass judgement on this situation?

Perhaps it is a positive social and political good that the Members have a surface concept of the party which stands somewhat above reality. It may act as a form of political norm or ideal likely to influence for the good their behaviour and outlook. They may try to lift reality to make it conform more closely to the ideal.

Perhaps it is better to regard this situation as neither good nor bad, but just the natural and inevitable way in which politicians see things political, and conduct political argument. This is particularly evident when we consider their view of the party as non-sectional and embodying the national interest.

One can carry these reflections further and say that a certain degree of illusion is psychologically necessary
Psychologists tell us that all individuals, in order to adjust to their environment and maintain their concept of self, use a variety of "ego-defence mechanisms" involving different types of illusion. Similarly, a certain degree of political illusion is probably made necessary by political situations. Members strive to convince others of the rightness of their behaviour, maintain their own self-esteem, and interpret their role to themselves in a coherent, meaningful and acceptable way. In the Members' answers one can clearly detect reactions to the political environment protective of the Members' idea of what the party ought to be against hostile elements of encroaching reality. They are thus akin to the ego-defence mechanisms such as denial of reality, rationalization, repression, isolation and compensation, to name a few only of the most common encountered in the Members' answers.

If this sort of reflection is accepted, then it may be argued that there is no point in passing value judgements on the Members' concept of the party or making reformatory suggestions. Perhaps, nonetheless, one could apply a psychological standard. One could say that these reactions to the political environment are quite normal and even perhaps desirable except when they are used in an extreme or consciously dishonest way.

One could say that the Members' split-level concept of the party is bad to the extent that it turns some of them into partial schizophrenics. In other words, it is bad to the extent it causes them to refuse to face reality, completely compartmentalising their ideas and simply acting in greater or less contradiction to the totality of their conceptions.

Needless to say, few attitudes were so extreme. But one could say that where they verge upon such extremity, more self-awareness and "self-sorting-out" would be desirable. It would probably result in more coherent and reasonable behaviour, and would certainly give the party better prospects if it should go into opposition.

Nonetheless, if the Members' concept of the party is rooted in their psychological reaction to the political environment, there are strict limits to the amount of change which could be induced in it without a concomitant change in the political environment. Such a great environmental change is only likely to come about through a real change in the Labour Party. If the Liberal Party has only changed partially in the direction of becoming a national non-sectional party, a change in the Labour Party, in the direction of becoming in its turn a "centre" party, a party of consensus, might return the Liberal Party to the role of a more definitely class and interest party such as some of the Members felt its predecessors to have been. 1

Unless such a change occurs, however, it is probably both inevitable, and, to a certain extent, good, that so many of the Members should envisage the Liberal Party as they do.

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1. It is possible that such an environmental change might also be brought about if the Country Party's bid to establish itself as a national party of 'the producers' should prove successful. This would call for a reconsideration of the nature of the Liberal Party particularly in terms of interests rather than classes.
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