THE NATURALISATION OF DEPENDENCE: 
THE STATE, THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS 
AND WOMEN WORKERS 1830-1930 

by 

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DECLARATION

Except where otherwise indicated this dissertation is my own work. I declare that this work has not been submitted in whole or in part for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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November 1985
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ABBREVIATIONS

ACJ Articled Clerks' Journal
ADB *Australian Dictionary of Biography*
AEHR *Australian Economic History Review*
AGPS Australian Government Publishing Service
AJPH *Australian Journal of Politics and History*
AMG *Australasian Medical Gazette*
AMP Australian Mutual Provident Society
ANU The Australian National University
ANZJS *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*
ANZAAS Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science
APSA Australian Political Studies Association
ASE Amalgamated Society of Engineers
BPP British Parliamentary Papers
CPP Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers
CSB Civil Service Board
CUP Cambridge University Press
DGPH Director-General of Public Health
DT *Daily Telegraph*
Ed. Editorial
ETS Electric Telegraph Society
GG *Government Gazette*
HS *Historical Studies*
IMJA *Intercolonial Medical Journal of Australia*
JAHS *Journal of the Australian Historical Society*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>JRAHS</td>
<td>Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society</td>
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<td>LC</td>
<td>Legislative Council</td>
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<td>LH</td>
<td>Labour History</td>
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<tr>
<td>MJA</td>
<td>Medical Journal of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
<td>Medical Officer of Health, Metropolitan Combined Sanitary Districts, Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUP</td>
<td>Melbourne University Press</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUP</td>
<td>Oxford University Press</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Public Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Parliamentary Debates</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLL</td>
<td>Political Labour League</td>
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<td>PMG</td>
<td>Postmaster-General</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSA</td>
<td>Public Service Association of New South Wales</td>
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<td>PSB</td>
<td>Public Service Board</td>
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<td>PSC</td>
<td>Public Service Commission</td>
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<td>PSI</td>
<td>Public Service Inspector</td>
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<td>PSJ</td>
<td>Public Service Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>QPP</td>
<td>Queensland Parliamentary Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCCS</td>
<td>Royal Commission on the Civil Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUP</td>
<td>Sydney University Press</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCJ</td>
<td>Town and Country Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>Trades and Labour Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>UQP</td>
<td>University of Queensland Press</td>
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<tr>
<td>V &amp; P</td>
<td>Votes and Proceedings of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic.</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>VPP</td>
<td>Victorian Parliamentary Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>WOC</td>
<td>Women’s Organising Committee, Political Labour League</td>
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<td>WSL</td>
<td>Womanhood Suffrage League</td>
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This thesis challenges current neo-Marxist, feminist and neo-Weberian theories of the state which ignore or underestimate the role of state bureaucrats in the construction of state institutions and the formulation and implementation of state policies. Drawing on theories of the new middle class and intellectuals which emphasise the potential of educated workers for autonomous and united action, the thesis examines the role of public servants, doctors and lawyers in determining the form of the New South Wales state and some of its major institutions and policies between 1830 and 1930.

The thesis focusses in particular on the influence of new middle class men on state labour market and family policies concerning women. Using the New South Wales public service as a case study, it explores aspects of the development of the new middle class during this period, and documents the strategies by which three groups within this class - male public servants, doctors and lawyers - attempted to extend and control their labour markets through the agency of the state, and the effect of those strategies on educated women workers.

The study finds a contrast between an early period of relative tolerance of labour market competition from women and a later period of exclusion, domination and marginalisation in which women were confined to a secondary labour market. It relates these changes to variations in the labour market conditions and political power of new middle class men and women. Arguing that the economic and political conditions of the period after 1882 gave new middle class men the motivation and power to use the coercive and ideological resources of the state to protect their own labour market position, it shows, through a study of the interpretation of occupational statistics, public personnel policies, the infant welfare program and the arbitration system, how new middle class men contributed to the intensification of gender differentiation, the exclusion of women from the primary labour market, and to the institutionalisation of dependence as the natural status of women.
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... when we speak of the state's influence we mean the influence that is to be exerted by government officials and government clerks! They are all very fine fellows, to be sure, but however much they have been improved or chastened by their sense of responsibility, by discipline or pride of office, they nevertheless possess all human capacities and all human frailties. Like all men, they have eyes they can open or shut at will and mouths that can on occasion speak, be silent or even eat. They too can sin through pride, sloth, cupidity and vanity. They too have their sympathies, their friendships and aversions, their passions and interests - and among their interests an interest in keeping their jobs or even in slipping into better ones if the occasion offers.

Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class*

* Italian *mangiare*, to eat, take 'graft'*
CHAPTER 1
RESCUING THE POOR PUBLIC SERVANT: 
SOCIAL THEORY, STATE OFFICIALS 
AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The state bureaucrat is almost a forgotten figure in current studies of the state. The strong reaction of New Left and feminist writers in the last two decades against views of the state as a set of beneficent or irrelevant institutions has placed the state back on the theoretical agenda. Ironically, however, this resurgence of theoretical interest in the state has been accompanied by an 'enormous condescension' towards state officials which parallels the attitude towards members of the working class challenged by E.P. Thompson in his influential The Making of the English Working Class twenty years ago.\(^1\) Despite the growth in both numbers of state employees and the scope of state intervention in civil society, state officials - or 'public servants' in twentieth century Australian terminology - have rarely been looked at as a group with their own history, their own interests, ideologies and projects, and their own effects.

The neglect of the public servant as an active participant in the construction of state institutions and the formulation and implementation of state policies stems from the ahistorical, structuralist and Marxist frameworks within which the state has been restored to the theoretical agenda. In the more structuralist feminist and Marxist accounts, the state has been seen as a patriarchal or ruling class instrument of social control and social reproduction, and the state official has become a shadowy 'go-between', acting on behalf of men or the capitalist class, or both in collusion. Where the state has been recognised as an important institution in its own right, more voluntarist Marxists and feminists have recognised public servants as social actors, but have assumed their unvarying patriarchal or pro-capitalist stance. Neo-Weberians, on the other hand, have retained a structuralist approach which continues to ignore public servants as actors with interests and powers beyond those inherent in their institutional situation.

The condescension of current sociology towards the public servant is exacerbated by the influence of Marxist perspectives on studies of the class structure. Although there has been considerable interest in the class position of 'non-productive' workers - the new middle class who are neither owners of the means of production nor 'productive'
wage-earners, and who depend primarily on their intellectual and social skills in the labour market - there has been a strong tendency to subsume such workers into either the ruling class or the working class. By refusing to take seriously the interests and potential power of the new middle class, Marxist commentators deny the efficacy and historicity of state bureaucrats, who form an important group within this class.

The dominance of these approaches to the state and the new middle class has retarded the development of the state as a useful explanatory concept. None of these perspectives has encouraged the investigation of variations in the social background and gender of its personnel, their labour market and family interests, their access to resources, their alliances, or the extent of their organisation and unity. As a result, analysis of an important potential source of variability in the state is closed off.

This thesis argues that it is essential to examine the interests, alliances and efficacy of state officials in order to understand more fully the changing role of the state in civil society, and, in particular, its role in the construction of the gender order. It traces the history of the New South Wales public service from 1830 to 1930, and explores the relationship between state policies towards women’s work and the nature, scope and strength of public servants’ interests and influence. In doing this, it sees public servants as part of a new middle class concerned to extend and consolidate their labour market opportunities, and to control the conditions under which they live and work.

WOMEN AND THE STATE

The failure of current studies to treat the state seriously as a variable has hindered the development of an adequate understanding of the sources of women’s inequality in twentieth century society. Yet it is widely recognised that state policy has played an important part in the construction of the twentieth century gender order - that set of family and labour market institutions which have denied women access to economic independence. The influence of the state has been particularly important in Australia. Not only has it been central in fostering notions of education, housekeeping and childbearing which have been prescriptive and confining to women, but it has also given legal force to major restrictions on women’s capacities as wage-earners. The state has, therefore, been central in promoting an emphasis on gender differentiation which has helped to make dependency the ‘natural’ status of women.

Although the influence of state policy on the situation of women since the end of the nineteenth century has generally been considered by feminists as detrimental because of its reinforcement of women’s dependence, women’s relationship to the state has always been an ambiguous one. Groups of women have, in various periods, looked to the state for help in redressing inequalities, and have themselves played an active part in its
activities. Both 'first wave' and modern feminists have sought greater participation in state activities and institutions for explicitly feminist purposes, and have regarded the state as a potential ally against exploitation and discrimination. This has not necessarily, or always, been misguided. As Cora Balduck and Bettina Cass have pointed out, many of the legislative changes, cash transfers and social services won by the women's movement have been important in promoting women's independence by increasing their economic security, social autonomy and capacity for political participation.

Contributors to the volume edited by Balduck and Cass show vividly the ambivalent relationship between women and the state. On the one hand, they demonstrate that, as consistent, professional providers of social services, numbers of women have, where possible, called on the help of the state; they have been active lobbyists for widows' pensions, equal pay, an independent income for mothers through child endowment, childcare services, anti-discrimination legislation, family law reform and non-discriminatory education policy, and they have sought to promote women's influence within the bureaucracy on all aspects of economic and social policy.

On the other hand, they show the partial nature of most of women's successes, the distortions actual policies make of women's original demands, and the structural and ideological constraints which continue to maintain women's dependency, despite concessions won.

The complexities of the relationship between women and the state is illustrated by recent studies of what Jane Lewis calls 'the politics of motherhood'. Lewis examines the development of a variety of policies concerned with childbirth and infant care in Britain in the early years of this century. These included ante-natal care, skilled attendance in childbirth, infant welfare clinics, health visitors and hospital facilities for parturient women and infants. Her analysis reveals a large gulf between what the women were asking for and the state policies that were implemented. The services offered were actually very limited and met in only a minimal way the demands of women's groups campaigning for improvement in child and maternal welfare. Whereas women's groups insisted that poverty was a major factor causing infant mortality and ill-health among married women, the principal emphasis of most child and maternal welfare services was a contradictory one concerned to promote a greater sense of maternal responsibility and, at the same time, a greater dependence on middle class experts. Despite the gap between women's demands and the services provided, however, women welcomed even the small and unsatisfactory help the state offered.

Bettina Cass has described a similar situation in her study of the development of child endowment and family allowances in Australia. She shows how women's
demands for an independent income for mothers through a system of state endowment were distorted by the over-riding political conflict between capital and labour in the early twentieth century. A campaign for the rights of mothers and children to an income that was not mediated through a male wage-earner was used as a pawn in this conflict. The result was a measure that reduced male wages and supplemented the incomes of only those families with incomes below the living wage. Despite its inadequacy, however, this measure did institute a cash transfer from wage-earners and taxpayers to mothers of dependent children and gave them a source of independent income not otherwise available.

Feminists have been much less equivocal about the role of the state in confining women to a marginal place in the labour market. Although a large section of the current women's movement is actively pressing for state support for equal opportunity in the workplace, modern feminists have made an almost blanket condemnation of the protective labour legislation won by first wave feminists. However, this solid body of opinion is now being revised. Diane Kirkby has shown how protective legislation which subsequently excluded or marginalised female workers was supported by wage-earning women at the time because such a strategy was then the most economically advantageous to them. In a study of the Women's Trade Union League in the United States at the beginning of the century, she argues that the League's advocacy of legislative intervention seemed the best way of ensuring women's permanent participation in the labour force under reasonable conditions, given the weakness of female unionism. In seeking protective legislation, the League attempted to secure state help in gaining rights that many male unionists had gained by bargaining strength. Such strength eluded women workers, not because of female weakness or lack of will to organise, but because the nature of their working and living conditions made organisation almost impossible. Legislation was therefore an important aspect of the League's three-pronged 'industrial feminist' program - organisation to promote women's collective consciousness, education to give them access to better jobs and greater economic independence, and legislation to overcome their political disadvantages.

The studies discussed above demonstrate that women's groups in particular periods have seen the state as a potential ally, despite the fact that it has often been repressive or unresponsive. Not only has the state seemed more open to meeting women's demands in one period rather than another, however, but there has also been considerable variation in state response to those demands among societies at similar stages of economic development. For example, Mary Ruggie has compared state policies in Britain and Sweden designed to facilitate women's employment and to equalise men's and women's status in the labour market. She finds that the state in Britain has
adopted a 'liberal-welfare' approach in which intervention is hesitant and limited and
programs are incremental, fragmented and particularistic, focussing on women as a
separate group, rather than as an integral part of the economy. By contrast, the state in
Sweden takes a social corporatist approach, in which goals are determined by bargaining
amongst the leading partners in the governing coalition - the state, labour and capital;
the state's clientele is conceived in universalistic terms, and the attempt is made to
provide services which are more integrated and holistic. Ruggie argues that the
particular configuration of state/society relations in Sweden has allowed the
development of general social and economic policies which benefit women. In Britain, on
the other hand, state/society relations are too fragmented to mediate the impact of
economic and ideological constraints on women's labour market participation.

CURRENT APPROACHES TO THE STATE

Variations in state response and impact suggested by these studies are not
adequately accounted for in current approaches to the state. The variability of the state
has not been of great interest to many feminist and Marxist scholars, who have been
more concerned to establish its class or patriarchal nature. Where empirical studies
carried out within these perspectives have found variations in the historical development
or national incidence or impact of social policies, explanations have usually been limited
to functional ones: no matter what variations occur, and no matter how they are
perceived by the actors involved, the argument is made that state action always
corresponds, in the last instance, with the interests of the dominant group, whether the
capitalist class, men in general, or a combination of the two. The neo-Weberian
approach to the state, on the other hand, has been centrally concerned with explaining
historical and cross-national variations in social policies. However, because it has
developed in reaction to the society-centred character of the Marxist perspective, this
approach explicitly focuses on the characteristics of state structures themselves, and
does not consider the inadequacies of the class or patriarchal models of civil society
accepted by Marxists and feminists. It does not look, therefore, to the class interests
and affiliations of public servants as possible explanations for observed variations.

French Structuralism

The work of the French structuralists Louis Althusser and Nicos Poulantzas has
been highly influential in establishing current neo-Marxist and socialist-feminist
approaches to the state. Althusser and Poulantzas react against the economism of the
dominant stream of Marxist theory in the post-war period which rendered the specific
study of the state superfluous. In the economistic formulation, all other levels of the
social formation, including the state, are reducible to the economic base. Althusser contends, in opposition to this view, that the state is a separate power structure enjoying what he calls 'relative autonomy' from the economic structure. He conceptualises the relationship between the economy and the polity as that of a base and a superstructure in which there is reciprocal action of the superstructure on the base. However, the autonomy Althusser concedes to the state is more apparent than real: 'in the last instance,' he contends, the superstructure is always determined by the base. For Althusser, therefore, the state is by definition a class state which acts on behalf of the ruling class to ensure its domination over the working class. The state does this through the Repressive State Apparatus (the police, the courts, prisons, the army, the head of state, the government and the administration) and the Ideological State Apparatus (the family, the education system, law, politics, trade unions, communications and culture), which function to reproduce capitalist relations of production.

Althusser concedes little autonomy to state employees in the functioning of this system. For him the majority of teachers, for instance:

do not even begin to suspect the 'work' the system forces them to do, or worse, put all their heart and ingenuity into performing it with the most advanced awareness (the famous new methods!). So little do they suspect that their own devotion contributes to the maintenance and nourishment of this ideological representation of the School, which makes the School today as 'natural', indispensable-useful and even beneficial for our contemporaries as the Church was 'natural', indispensable and generous for our own ancestors a few centuries ago.

There is nothing in the approach of Althusser, or his close associate, Poulantzas, to encourage the empirical investigation of the role of state bureaucrats in the actions of the state. Although Poulantzas devotes much time to the study of what he calls 'the new petty bourgeoisie', the interests and motivations of this group are, for him, irrelevant to their class position, which is determined by their 'objective place in production and the ownership of the means of production'. It is therefore of no interest who participates in the state apparatus because:

if the function of the State in a determinate social formation and the interests of the dominant class in this formation coincide, it is by reason of the system itself: the direct participation of members of the ruling class in the State apparatus is not the cause but the effect, and moreover a chance and contingent one, of this objective coincidence.

Likewise, the actions of the state are not to be judged by their immediate instrumental value for the ruling class, because the state 'can only truly serve the ruling class so far as it is relatively autonomous from the diverse fractions of this class, precisely in order to be able to organize the hegemony of the whole of this class'. As R.W. Connell points out in his critique of what he calls 'the Althusserian two-step', 'when followers of
Poulantzas argue that the state bureaucracy has no power of its own, all they are really saying is that they speak a conceptual language in which whatever the state bureaucracy does, it will not count as “power”.

Socialist-feminist writers drawing on the French structuralist approach have merely added a consideration of the function of the family for capitalism to this determinist approach. For Mary McIntosh, state policies help to maintain a particular form of nuclear family in which the wife is dependent on a male breadwinner in order to ensure the reproduction of the workforce and to maintain a reserve army of labour. Both functions are seen to be ultimately in the interests of the reproduction of the capitalist system. This theoretical perspective is also adopted by Elizabeth Wilson in her study of the history of women and the welfare state in Britain and by Lucy Bland, Trish McCabe and Frank Mort in their study of three influential British government reports involving the questions of marriage, the family, sexuality and procreation.

Although both studies examine specific policies and ideologies in the context of contemporary political and ideological movements, neither investigates the particular interests or resources available to the public servants involved. William Beveridge is a central figure in both studies, but he remains a cypher in both cases. Yet Roger Davidson and Ann Schola Orloff and Theda Skocpol have shown that the development of the independent capacity of the Board of Trade at the turn of the century by a group of young progressive-minded officials, including Beveridge, provided the structural basis for the subsequent emergence of the welfare state. At the same time, the interests and experience of these progressive public servants, and their connections with a wider group of influential social scientists and reformers, provided the ideas that went into the construction of welfare state policies. Although neither study specifically examines policies towards women and families, both do suggest that an investigation of the intersecting labour market and family interests of this group of reforming public servants might provide a better understanding of the policies they advocated and their success in implementing them.

Structuralist Marxist and socialist-feminist approaches to the state have produced a sophisticated form of role theory, in which people with interests, opinions, intentions and wills disappear and become part of a determining structure. The difficulty with such an approach is that it fails to elucidate how state institutions and policies are historically produced and why they are historically variable. It does not show what Connell calls the process of ‘composition’ - the ‘tangible, active, and often difficult process of bringing elements into connection with each other and thrashing out their relationships ... the real historical process of interaction and group formation’.
British and American Instrumentalism

Although the work of the French structuralist school has tended to inhibit empirical investigation of the actions and motivations of state bureaucrats, alternative British and American schools have developed critical approaches to the working of the political and ideological systems which have made the actors in the development and implementation of state policies an object of theoretical interest. In Britain, the break from Marxist economism was made by historians and literary critics led by E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams, who stressed class culture rather than the mode of production, and examined in their works the agency of men and women in class formation and ideological production.32

This interest in culture and agency is evident in Ralph Miliband’s approach to the state. Reacting against pluralist perspectives which saw the state as a mere reflection of a society in which no interests were dominant, Miliband argues that the state is ‘a rather special institution’ which is not merely ‘the mirror which society holds up to itself’. Rather than deducing the function of the state from the class structure as Althusser and Poulantzas do, Miliband examines the process by which the state becomes the instrument of the ruling class by demonstrating the similarity of social background and congruity of interests of state personnel and the ruling class, highlighting the numerous social and business connections between them. In addition, he documents the superior resources of the ruling class in putting pressure on the state through access to government, political parties, and the media.33

A similar emphasis on culture and agency has been made by American critics of corporate liberalism influenced by Veblen and Marx. Led by Gabriel Kolko, writers in this tradition, such as James Weinstein, William Domhoff and Ronald Radosh, have described the essentially conservative nature of state intervention in the United States economy.34 Kolko is typical of this approach in arguing that businessmen define the limits of political intervention and specify its major form and thrust, and that there has been a basic consensus among political and business leaders as to what constitutes the public good, based on similar social backgrounds, education and club memberships and the extent of inter-marriage between the two groups.35 This approach has been followed in some Australian studies. John Playford, in answering the question ‘Who Rules Australia?’ argues that ‘the most important political fact about our society is the existence of concentrated private economic power, whose owners and controllers enjoy a massive preponderance in the determination of the policies and actions of the state and in the political system as a whole’.36

An instrumental approach is implicit in many feminist discussions of the state. When Anne Summers speaks of the state, it is a set of institutions and practices
populated by men and imbued with male ideologies. Edna Ryan focusses her discussion of the New South Wales Arbitration Court on 'men in decision-making office' who were 'blinker by their personal beliefs', and with Anne Conlon, she concludes that:

Enlightened women in greater numbers must take their place on wage tribunals, in government and at all decision-making levels. Women themselves must provide the antidote to the false enactments proscribing them as invaders of the so-called male territory.

Theories of Class and Gender Struggle

Like the French structuralists, the work of feminist and Marxist instrumentalists has helped place the state on the research agenda in the last two decades. In conceptualising the state as an area of power that could be captured by dominant groups, this approach has opened the way for the empirical investigation of the struggles of various social groups for control of state institutions. However, much work of this type has concentrated almost solely on the actions of capitalists, or on men as an undifferentiated group, and has not investigated the role of other classes or different groups of men in promoting and opposing specific policies.

Feminist accounts have often discussed the activities of groups such as the suffragettes and the recent women’s movement in pressing for state action, but have interpreted these campaigns as misguided examples of co-optation, rather than potentially valuable cooperation with particular groups of men. As Summers says of the early Australian feminists:

They should have realized that the readiness with which the male legislatures acceded to their post-suffrage demands signalled their failure to provide a radical alternative vision for women.

A more contested view of the capture of the state is given by some Marxist historians of the labour movement who have shown how state interventions have been promoted through the interaction of capitalists and workers. Stuart Macintyre, in his study of the state conciliation and arbitration system in Australia, demonstrates the complexity of the process by which a barely-organised labour movement and a disorganised capitalist sector negotiated the establishment of this pioneering venture in state intervention. However, in common with other neo-Marxist approaches to the study of the state, Macintyre does not take into consideration the autonomous role of state officials in the creation of the conciliation and arbitration system. He does give considerable weight to the influence of one section of the new middle class - the lawyers in the legislature - in deciding the form of the settlement between capital and labour. But he portrays such lawyers as the somewhat dubious allies of a weak capitalist class,
possessing enough autonomy to prevent the incipient industrial bourgeoisie from carrying through the sort of thoroughgoing transformation of economic and social life that has taken place in other advanced capitalist countries.

Despite the importance of the autonomy of such liberal lawyer-politicians from the capitalist class, and the fact that the form of settlement they championed was intervention by the state, Macintyre does not examine closely the interests and alliances of these men, their preference for state intervention, nor the relative capacities of state and other institutions to offer viable means of resolving the conflict between capital and labour at that time. In particular he does not examine the interests and power of state bureaucrats in the construction of the arbitration system.

A more extreme example of the class struggle approach is provided by Stewart Clegg’s analysis of the Swedish ‘dual state’. Clegg argues that the exceptionally powerful and sustained mobilisation of the Swedish working class allowed the development of a structure paralleling that of the state, in which labour developed its own expertise, policy options, planning and strategic information, giving it considerable influence on public policy. However, like Macintyre, he does not extend his analysis to consider the role of the new middle class in promoting the extensive bureaucratisation involved in this institutionalised form of class struggle.42

**Neo-Weberian Approaches to the State**

Despite their somewhat different orientations to the agency of societal actors, neo-Marxist and current feminist approaches to the state are prevalingly society-centred. In the functionalist view of the French structuralists and the socialist-feminists, the actions of state personnel are determined ultimately by the needs of the economic system. In the instrumentalist view, state actions are determined by capitalists, men, and their allies, working both inside and outside state institutions. In contrast, Theda Skocpol has repudiated the view that the state is merely a site for struggles within civil society. Instead, she has advocated a more state-centred approach based on the work of Max Weber and the German historian, Otto Hintze.43 Weber and Hintze viewed the state as a set of institutions with a separate power base resting on control of the means of coercion. Because, in this view, the state has its own basis of power, it is capable of imposing constraints on other parts of the social system, including the economy. In addition, its separate organisational existence confers interests and powers on its officials which are not derived from their class position.

In her neo-Weberian formulation, Skocpol analyses the structural constraints which the state exercises over the form and direction of societal developments. Drawing on a number of current studies, she demonstrates how state organisational
configurations, their capacities for action and their overall patterns of activity affect political culture, mould the form of political action and help set the political agenda. In particular, she cites the work of Martin Shefter, who demonstrates how state structures influence the methods by which parties appeal for electoral support; Matthew Crenson’s work, which shows how political structure helps select the type of issues that get onto the political agenda; and the work of Pierre Birnbaum, Ira Katznelson, and Susan Fainstein and Norman Fainstein on the effects of political structure on the form and degree of class organisation. She concludes that:

the formation, let alone the political capacities, of such apparently purely socioeconomic phenomena as interest groups and classes depend in significant measure upon the structures and activities of the very state the social actors, in turn, seek to influence.

The model developed by Skocpol is an interactive one in which the state is seen as a structure capable of autonomous influence. Her approach contrasts with the neo-Marxist formulation, which stresses the determinant influence, even if only ‘in the last instance’, of the economic structure on the political structure.

A second aspect of the Weber-Hintze model as interpreted by Skocpol concerns the powers and motivations of state actors. In a formulation very close to that of elite theory, Skocpol argues that state managers have distinctive resources and outlooks. First of all, they are able to draw on and deploy organisational resources such as the military, the police and the bureaucracy with its store of long-term experience and knowledge. Secondly, their strategic position in relation to other states and to society as a whole gives them access to information and inculcates outlooks and interests which are different from those of the classes of civil society. In surveying the evidence from a number of studies, Skocpol demonstrates how superior access of civil service administrators to information, analysis and expertise gives them a pervasive effect on the content and development of government policies. One important consequence of this is that organisational location can give some state actors a distinctively ‘national’ outlook.

In keeping with her project of ‘bringing the state back in’ Skocpol emphasises the ways in which institutional and organisational structures facilitate the formulation and implementation of distinctive policy preferences by state actors. Skocpol’s public servants are not the puppets or agents described by the French structuralists. They puzzle and push and negotiate, and sometimes even stage revolutions. But they have no firm roots in civil society: they have no class or gender, and are defined mainly by their organisational position. Skocpol does recognise that the formulation and implementation of goals by state actors require support for these goals from key societal groups. In addition, she emphasises that autonomous state actions will regularly take forms that
attempt to reinforce the authority, political longevity, and social control of the state organisations whose incumbents generate the relevant policies or policy ideas. However, she does not investigate whether particular groups of state actors may have wider class- or gender-based interests, or why some societal groups are more supportive of the organisational interests of state actors than others.

**STATE BUREAUCRATS AND THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS**

The approaches to the state outlined above have several problems. First of all, they employ a two-class schema which does not allow for the possibility of state bureaucrats having separate class interests from the bourgeoisie, or, alternatively, they ignore social classes altogether in favour of a focus on the state itself. Secondly, none of these approaches, with the exception of that of Miliband, conceptualises state bureaucrats as agents capable of actively constructing their world. In addition, those that employ a feminist framework do so with a conception of patriarchy which is ahistorical, or one that is limited to a consideration of the interlocking interests of patriarchy and bourgeois men.

A more voluntarist approach to the study of the state which is not tied to a rigidly Marxist or ahistorical feminist framework, or to a completely state-centred focus, is opened up by viewing state bureaucrats as part of the new middle class - an historically-evolving third class standing between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Like all classes, the new middle class is an historical product whose process of structuration is variable, making the precise definition of its boundaries difficult. However, it can be generally conceptualised as comprising those workers whose market capacity depends on educational, technical and social skills. It is ‘new’ because it can be differentiated from the ‘old’ middle classes, the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, by the fact that its members do not own the means of production; and it is a ‘middle’ class because it is differentiated from the working class by the type of labour power it has to offer on the market and by the culture and ideology which surrounds that work.

The concept of the new middle class has developed out of the strong interest in recent years in what Marx called ‘the constantly growing number of the middle classes, those that stand between the workman on the one hand and the capitalist and the landlord on the other’. This interest in the ‘couches intermédiaires’ has paralleled the renewed focus on the state over the past two decades, and it stems from a similar attempt to treat the ideological and political systems of advanced capitalist society seriously and critically. The same disenchantment with both economistic Marxism and the consensual approach of mainstream social theory led to a new, critical interest in culture and its creators during the 1960s and 1970s. This interest has led to a revival of
a long tradition based on the work of Weber and Hegel which sees the control of knowledge as an important source of social power and unity. The question of the class location of the ‘middle classes’ has been a matter of much debate, but one important strand in this debate has been the contention, based on the concepts of ‘cultural capital’ and ‘credentialism’, that some or all of the middle classes can be considered as a single class because of their distinctive market capacity and culture stemming from their monopoly of certified knowledge and valued speech and social behaviours. Out of this contention have developed the concepts of the ‘New Class’, the Professional-Managerial Class (PMC) and the ‘new middle class’.

Alvin Gouldner has stated this position in its most extreme form. He claims that cultural skills are ‘as much capital as are a factory’s buildings or machines’, especially when the process of credentialling allows such skills to be monopolised. On this basis, he argues for the existence of a New Class of humanist intellectuals and technical intelligentsia, including engineers, managers, educators, professionals, accountants, government officials and journalists. Gouldner concedes that all classes possess some cultural capital, but contends that members of the New Class have more of this valuable commodity, and that they have a distinctive version which simultaneously unites them, marks them off from the working class and the ‘Old Class’ of capitalists, and makes them essential to the running of the capitalist system. Similar claims are made by Barbara and John Ehrenreich, who see technical workers, managers and professionals forming a Professional-Managerial Class (PMC) which is often in conflict with the working class, whose skill and autonomy its members appropriate, and the bourgeoisie, with whom it struggles over occupational autonomy, control of the workplace and socialist policies. Frank Parkin also sees monopoly of educational qualifications as a basis for class formation, arguing that credentialism is a form of exclusionary social closure comparable in importance for class formation to the institution of property. Both, he points out, entail the use of ‘exclusionary rules that confer benefits and privileges on the few through denying access to the many, rules that are enshrined in law and upheld by the coercive authority of the state.

Gouldner, the Ehrenreichs and Parkin all argue that the possession of educational and cultural skills is an important basis of class formation. But Gouldner’s New Class and the Ehrenreich’s PMC comprise only those members of the middle classes who are advantaged unequivocally by their possession of highly valued knowledge - professionals and managers; and Parkin refers only to professionals. A more comprehensive interpretation of the concept of cultural capital is utilised in discussions of the ‘new middle class’ (or the ‘new petty bourgeoisie’). C. Wright Mills, Anthony Giddens and Nicos Poulantzas all place the whole of the white-collar workforce in this class on the
basis of their non-ownership of the means of production, their common and distinctive
market capacity and work situation, and their common culture. Giddens sees the
possession of education and technical skills as one of the three most important bases of
class formation, along with ownership of the means of production and the sale of labour
power, and argues that all white-collar workers can be distinguished as part of the
‘middle class’ because of their more favourable market situation and the limited social
mobility, the physical division of labour and the authority relations between the working
class and the white-collar sector. Working from a Marxist perspective, Poulantzas
makes a similar claim for the ‘new petty bourgeoisie’. He argues that the nonmanual
sector constitutes a distinct class whose members neither own the means of production
nor are producers of surplus value. They are divided from the working class not only by
their ‘unproductive’ labour, but also by the fact that they carry out the management
and supervision of productive workers, by the organisation of the workplace, and by the
appropriation by the new petty bourgeoisie of the knowledge and autonomy of the
workers. In addition, in an extended discussion of the sort of cultural capital
commanded by clerical and sales workers, he argues that ‘a whole series of rituals,
know-how, and “cultural elements”’ distinguish the new petty bourgeoisie from the
working class, extending from knowing how to write and present ideas to knowing how
to speak ‘well’, all part of the ideological differentiation between general culture and
savoir-faire on the one hand and the particular skills involved in manual labour on the
other. The common elements in the sort of work carried out by the new middle class
is summed up in Mills’s more descriptive work. The new middle class are the handlers of
‘paper and money and people’. They are:

expert at dealing with people transiently and impersonally: they are masters of
the commercial, professional, and technical relationship. The one thing they do
not live by is making things. White-collar people help turn what someone else
has made into profit for still another; some of them are closer to the means of
production, supervising the work of actual manufacture and recording what is
done. They are the people who keep track; they man the paper routines
involved in distributing what is produced. They provide technical and personal
services, and they teach others the skills which they themselves practice, as
well as all other skills transmitted by teaching.

All of these writers, whether they refer only to professionals and managers, or
whether they extend their definition of ‘intellectual’ to clerical and service workers, make
a persuasive case for the utility of the notion of a new middle class whose members share
neither the objective interests nor the subjective consciousness of the bourgeoisie or the
working class. This conclusion is given more weight by recent empirical studies of the
professions carried out under the influence of critical theory. Imported into the United
States by members of the Frankfurt School, and popularised by Marcuse, critical theory
has been particularly influential in its emphasis on ideology and politics. Marcuse’s
analysis of the cultural sources of stability in capitalist societies found a sympathetic reception among the New Left and feminists during the 1960s, and this general approach stimulated a number of critical studies of the professions, education and the family which challenged prevailing consensual views from both a Weberian and a humanist Marxist viewpoint. Eliot Freidson's pioneering study of the medical profession, *Professional Dominance*, published in 1970, was one of the first to incorporate this critical approach to the professions inspired by the Frankfurt School, and to examine medicine as an organised power group whose autonomy, monopoly of valued knowledge and domination of other health workers was supported by the state.66 This kind of critical approach to the professions has been expanded in a number of studies which have used the explicitly Weberian notion of 'social closure' to examine the professionalising project. J.L. Berlant, for example, exposes the self-interested character of professionalism and emphasises that successful monopoly is achieved only through 'a favourable constellation of interests between the professional and elite groups',67 and N. and J. Parry portray the professionalisation process as a successful collective project for upward mobility.68

These neo-Weberian studies show professionals actively constructing the conditions under which they have access to jobs and under which they work. They also indicate that the success of the professionals' projects depends to some degree on their alliances with other powerful groups, especially in the state, suggesting either a new middle class alliance between state officials and professionals, or a client relationship between professionals and a ruling class working through the state. This latter aspect of professionalisation has not been explored in any detail by the neo-Weberians, who have not been concerned with the class location of the professionals they were studying. The class location of professionals has been central, however, in the work of writers combining the insights and methods of the French structuralist and critical theory traditions. Using a two-class schema like the studies of the state discussed earlier, these studies have a paradoxical aspect, in that they provide considerable evidence of professional efficacy and independence, at the same time as they are used to demonstrate how professional activities help reproduce capitalism and patriarchy.

The most ambitious of these, by Magali Sarfatti Larson, argues that the professions sustain monopoly capitalism by projecting an ideology of individualism, expertise and equal opportunity in a period when there has been a retreat from the market principle in many other areas. Although she describes the historical development of what seem to be highly successful movements by professionals to control and extend their labour markets, Larson argues that the professions have no power of their own. For her, their apparent autonomy and control over occupational activities conceal their
real powerlessness, subordination and complicity with the capitalist class. In a similar study of the successful movement of Australian doctors to gain monopoly of the delivery of medical services and the patronage of the state, Evan Willis argues that doctors must be seen as ‘organic’ intellectuals who emerge in association with the dominant class in advanced capitalism in order to exercise what Gramsci called ‘the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government’. In Willis’s interpretation, doctors are experts in legitimation who rationalise and justify the nature of society, helping to turn capitalist values into consensual values. Specifically, Willis argues that what he calls the dominant corporatist mode of medical production is sponsored and supported by the ruling class because of its affinities with ruling class interests. This mode de-emphasises the effect of economic and social forces on health, proposes individualistic solutions to what are structural problems, and promotes an ideology of expertise which encourages a sense of apolitical passivity and fatalism on the part of those without that expertise.

Writers within the critical theory tradition proper place more emphasis on the process by which professionals disorganise and usurp traditional cultures and skills, but they still do not attribute this apparently self-interested activity to independent class interests. Christopher Lasch portrays the traditional family as invaded by the ‘so-called helping professions’. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English describe how experts have taken over many areas of traditional women’s work and knowledge and claim authority over women’s domestic activities. In keeping with their ties to the Marxist tradition, however, both Lasch and Ehrenreich and English interpret these movements as being in the interests of capital. At the same time, they have, like Larson and Willis, described large-scale projects on the part of an important section of the new middle class to increase their sphere of influence and enhance their labour market situation. In addition, they have considered the intervention of the state to uphold professional monopoly as unproblematic, whereas it seems in important question why this self-interested project should attract state support.

Towards the Recognition of New Middle Class Autonomy

Evidence of the independent power and interests of professionals and managers has caused some writers associated with the critical theory tradition to raise questions about the strength of the ties between the new middle class and the capitalist class assumed by the Marxist perspective. Barbara and John Ehrenreich, for instance, developed their concept of the Professional-Managerial Class (PMC) in response to their observation of the strong anti-capitalist stance within this section of the new middle class in recent years - a stance not shared by the working class. In support of their view that the PMC must be seen as a distinct class in conflict with both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat,
they survey the history of this group's collective project. They show how engineers and managers use scientific management to diminish workers' collective mastery over the work process and undercut the collective experience of socialised production; how public education, charity agencies, experts and public health officials penetrated and undermined working class community life; and how services and commodities which had been supplied by the working class family or community were replaced by those conceived and supplied by other classes. They argue that members of the PMC, in which they include management experts, engineers, managers, producers of culture, physicians, journalists, teachers and advertising executives, maintain their privileged positions only by the appropriation of skills and culture once indigenous to the working class (and, incidentally, women).^73

The Ehrenreichs demonstrate how progressive reforms and ideologies conformed to the material interests of the PMC:

Settlement houses, domestic-science training courses, adult-education classes in literacy, English, patriotism, etc. provided jobs for social workers ... and home economists ... Child-labor laws, compulsory-school-attendance laws, factory health and safety inspections, ... created jobs for truant officers, teachers and inspectors of various kinds. Similarly, municipal reform meant the establishment of committees of city planners, architects, engineers, statisticians, sociologists, to plan and administer the health, recreation, welfare, housing and other functions of the metropolis. At the federal level, conservationist demands (pushed by the emerging engineering professions, among others) led to the creation of Federal agencies employing engineers to watch over and plan resource use. The Pure Food and Drug Act, the establishment of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Federal Trade Commissioner, ... all, in addition to their direct impact in regulating, gathering information, etc., offered thousands of jobs. Public policy in general became dependent on input from specialists, experts, professors.^74

The Ehrenreichs see this movement as a process actively carried out by professionals and managers forming a socially coherent class whose main guarantee of security is collective action through professionalisation.^75 In their view, it not only undermined the working class, but also often took the form of attacks on capitalists: professionals and managers often criticised corporate greed and inefficiency; through scientific management, they transformed the internal functioning of the corporation; in addition, they fought for academic freedom, social reform and consumer issues that were opposed by capitalists. Critics of capitalism such as Veblen argued that engineers and managers could transform industrial output, while socialists, most of whom were professional-managerial workers, pressed for government ownership of the means of production and the expansion of social services - policies which were in the material interests of their own class.^76

Despite the evidence of new middle class agency in the development of the
professional-managerial role, and of its anti-capitalist character, the Ehrenreichs remain tied to a Marxist framework which sees the major function of the professional-managerial class as the reproduction of capitalist culture and class relations. They argue, in terms reminiscent of Poulantzas, that the apparent autonomy of the class makes it all the more effective. However, they do concede that the dominance of the capitalist class is fragile, and they interpret the radicalism of the 1960s and 1970s as an attempt by the professional-managerial class to reassert the autonomy they almost won earlier in the century.77

The functional character of new middle class activities for capital is rendered even more problematic by Kerreen Reiger in her careful examination of the role which professional experts played in modernising the Australian family.78 Reiger describes the piecemeal but coherent reforming effort of middle class experts between 1880 and 1940 which were directed at family life - in particular the wife-mother role, the rearing of children and the management of sexuality. The experts’ program described by Reiger included efforts to introduce technology into the household and to define the housewife as a ‘modern’, ‘efficient’ houseworker, to change the patterns of reproduction by placing contraception, pregnancy and childbirth under conscious, usually professional control, to alter childrearing practices in the light of physical and mental ‘hygiene’, and to lift the veil of prudery and silence from sexuality.

In Reiger’s account, these reforming efforts were initiated by an emergent class of professionals, technocrats and experts including members of the medical profession, teachers and kindergarten workers, and domestic science and child guidance specialists. She argues that, although they often worked hand in hand with fractions of the bourgeoisie, middle class reformers undermined not only the working class family, but also the bourgeois family, in their attempt to extend the principles of science and instrumental reason to the operations of the household and the management of personal relations. This middle class ‘disenchantment of the home’ helped, therefore, to destroy the bourgeois ideal of the family as a private refuge of warmth and emotional intimacy and as a natural entity based on women’s essential ‘femininity’. Bourgeois assumptions about the naturalness of women’s maternal and household roles were threatened by the novel middle class emphasis on mothercraft and domesticity as something that had to be learned.

Reiger concludes that the middle class experts had their own project that was not necessarily functional for capital. She reveals the interlocking efforts of a network of professional and technical experts who corresponded and met with each other, both professionally and socially, and generally supported each other’s efforts. The same people regularly appeared on committees and on government enquiries, and the same
professional concerns were evident in various contexts. She also finds indications of similar social backgrounds amongst the professional experts she studies, and suggests that they were part of an emerging social group for whom formal education and particular skills promised greater prestige and power than were enjoyed by their professional and petty bourgeois parents. The group she describes also shared similar patterns of formal training and work experience which led them to emphasise an ideology of efficiency. As Reiger points out:

Not only was this the motif of the emerging industrial order as exemplified by Taylorism, but it was seen as the golden rule of all social life. The experts' stress on technical efficiency, on the application of scientific knowledge to practical problems, reflected their own material interests and became their general pattern of consciousness. It took form in a variety of ways such as style of language, the precision of terminology and orderly arrangement characteristic of the later childrearing literature for example. The emphasis on measurement and regular routine, so typical of the infant welfare movement, provided organizing principles for the rituals of everyday life ... So the technocratic consciousness was not confined to the public sphere. The professional middle class aspired to extend it throughout society, through all social classes and all aspects of life. Management therefore became a favourite term not only in industry and commerce but in discussion of housework, childrearing and sexuality.

Reiger concludes, therefore, that 'the experts had a particular message of their own, a representation of reality which meshed with their own experience of the world, especially their position in the labour market and the skills related to it'.

Like other students of the professions, Reiger notices the special relationship between the professionals' project and the state. But she does examine this relationship more carefully. She points out that the state was not only supporting professional monopoly, but was also providing experts with a significant institutional base, so that professionals were, to some extent, becoming the state. In addition, the quantitative and qualitative expansion of the state gave the experts' professionalising strategy considerable material support and legitimacy. By providing universal services and disseminating them widely, the state actively aided the experts' intervention in the family, and this intervention was not only into the working class family, but also into that of the bourgeoisie.

Reiger's conclusions that we need to take the new middle class more seriously as social actors with their own interests and powers than the French structuralists and their followers, or even the American critical theorists, have done are supported by Gouldner in his discussion of the New Class. Pushing this argument further than either the Ehrenreichs or Reiger, he claims that intellectuals and technical intelligentsia form a potentially revolutionary class which comes into conflict with the old capitalist class over autonomy, superior expertise, and questions of patronage and consumer and environmental rights.
In contrast to the Ehrenreichs, Gouldner sees the bourgeoisie as dependent on the ‘New Class’ because of the latter’s knowledge and expertise, which give it considerable de facto control over the mode of production. The fundamental objectives of the ‘New Class’ are, in Gouldner’s opinion, to increase their share of the national product, to produce and reproduce the special social conditions enabling them to appropriate privately larger shares of the incomes produced by the special culture they possess, to control their work and work settings, and to increase their political power. Through the strategy of professionalisation, the New Class assert their control over definitions of, and access to, knowledge. Members of the New Class are, according to Gouldner, unified by common interests in cultural capital and a common mode of thought and expression which Gouldner calls ‘the culture of critical discourse’. This mode of thought endows the New Class with superior capacity for political diagnosis, impartiality and legitimacy. In addition, its members’ access to the media and other sources of cultural dissemination gives the New Class considerable power to ‘harass the old, sabotage it, critique it, expose it and muckrake it, express moral, technical, and cultural superiority to it, and hold it up to contempt and ridicule’. Although Gouldner’s analysis is insightful, he exaggerates the autonomy, unity and radicalism of the highly educated workers he discusses, and he fails to examine their relationship with the lower educated strata - the clerks and service workers seen by Mills, Giddens and Poulantzas as sharing class membership with professionals and managers. Recent studies have questioned the continued radicalism and unity of highly educated workers in the United States in the 1970s, suggesting that the degree of class structuration of intellectual workers may vary considerably over time. The extensive review of the literature on the middle classes by Nicholas Abercrombie and John Urry supports this suggestion. They show that the social category of educated workers is highly diverse and often fragmented; indeed some commentators conclude that it is merely an ‘occupational salad’, and others that it is irredeemably divided between managers and professionals on the one hand and clerks, service workers and sub-professionals on the other, groups which may properly be placed in either the capitalist or the working class. Yet there is enough evidence from the Weberian and critical theory traditions that intellectual workers, including those using lower-grade educational and social skills, can be considered as a potential class, whose power and unity is based on the control of knowledge and the labour market for work requiring skills. It is obvious from such highly divergent interpretations that, if we accept that control of knowledge is a viable basis for class formation, what Giddens calls ‘structuration’ is much more difficult and precarious for this group than Gouldner suggests. In addition, widely differing views on the class position and political loyalties of new middle class groups suggest that shifting alliances within the class and
with other classes can be at different times a source of fragmentation or an important resource in the new middle class struggle for unity and autonomy.

This sense of the process of class composition - 'the real historical process of interaction and group formation' - is found in Connell's work, though he is less successful in applying it to state formation than to the making of the Australian bourgeoisie and working class. As an active socialist, he is concerned to understand the relationship between intellectuals like himself and workers. He recognises that intellectuals have had a major effect in reshaping the working class, especially through the medium of the state, and their influence remains crucial. As he recently claimed:

The ways intellectuals jump, the degree of autonomy they can establish, and what they can do with it, are going to be very important in deciding what is the actual role of the state in the current economic trough.

Connell is also aware that intellectuals' political orientations and alliances vary considerably, and that it is essential to look at the conditions of intellectual work - intellectuals' 'practical activity' - in order to understand their ideological stances and their political activities.

Connell's interest in, and analysis of, the importance of intellectuals draws on the tradition of Antonio Gramsci, whose work was centrally concerned with the role of intellectuals in social change. Gramsci sees intellectuals as either 'organic' - tied closely to the class to which they belong - or 'traditional' - 'putting themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the social group'. Sometimes, according to Gramsci, this 'traditional' autonomy is real, especially where the higher and lower intellectual strata are unified. In other cases, however, traditional intellectuals are bound to the dominant classes of their period. For Gramsci, the task of intellectuals is to establish the hegemony of the class to which they are attached. By hegemony, Gramsci means the successful persuasion of other classes to accept the moral, political and cultural values of a particular class. 'The “normal” exercise of hegemony' by a successful regime, according to Gramsci, 'is characterised by the combination of force and consensus which vary in their balance with each other, without force exceeding consensus too much. Thus it tries to achieve that force should appear to be supported by the agreement of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public opinion - newspapers and associations ...'. The maintenance of hegemony is a continuing process, and power can shift from group to group, according to each group's success in this struggle. An important element in the construction and maintenance of hegemony is control of the state bureaucracy, and Gramsci emphasises the importance of an 'organic' state, run by intellectuals whose experience is close to that of those they represent.

Although Connell accepts Gramsci's approach to hegemony as a situation which is
historically constructed and maintained, and acknowledges the variable role of intellectuals in this process, he has not, in his own work, analysed closely the political, economic and social conditions which produce particular sorts of intellectual stances and which empower or weaken intellectuals. He often seems to suggest, instead, that intellectuals develop appropriate attitudes and power through a massive exercise of will. For instance, discussing the pattern of hegemony in modern Australia, he concludes:

One of the most important things that intellectuals can do through their proper work is to overcome ... isolation and prevent ... deflections. Being counter-hegemonic is not enough. One must be relentlessly counter-hegemonic, and in sufficient masses to do real damage, and be able to carry through to the actual construction of a human society. In both critique and construction socialist intellectuals have a massive work to do.

The lack of detailed empirical investigation in Connell’s work of the conditions in which intellectual workers produce their own lives has resulted in an approach to the role of the state in Australian life that is uncomfortably close to that he roundly criticises in Althusser. In his study of class structure in Australian history, written with T.H. Irving, he argues that ‘in a great measure, it is the state that is active in these matters [the formation and maintenance of hegemony]; in the routine management of affairs, the state is capable of substituting for the mobilisation of the ruling class’. When Connell and Irving talk about ‘the autonomy of the state’ they are not referring to the sort of independence of other power blocs that Gramsci discusses as at least a possibility for intellectuals. Instead they are referring to an apparent autonomy which allows the state to reorganise the capitalist class (which, it seems, to quote Connell on Althusser’s conception of the state, ‘can’t organise their way out of a paper bag’).

Connell and Irving’s conception of the state is at odds with their general historical approach and with Connell’s later emphasis on the variability of intellectuals’ ideas and impact. While the working class is made up, for Connell and Irving, of active subjects, mobilising and making alliances and compromises, the state remains static in its personnel and impact. Bureaucrats are always ‘traditional intellectuals’, tied to the ruling class, and, as Connell and Irving themselves point out, ‘the term “public” in public sector really meant “system-maintaining”’.

As we have seen, however, the possibility must be considered that intellectuals form a potential class, independent of the ruling class, though the process of class formation is difficult and fragile, and alliances with the bourgeoisie are often struck. Reiger’s work suggests that it would be more profitable to look at the relationship between the state and intellectuals as an alliance between bureaucratic and professional members of the same new middle class rather than the domination of capital over its various agents. The work of Weber and Skocpol also suggests that access to state
bureaucracies gives new middle class members sources of power which stem from their positions in the administrative apparatus. State bureaucrats, therefore, can be considered as crucial agents in the process of new middle class formation, because of their potential access to society-wide ideological, regulatory and coercive means to legitimate and empower intellectual workers.

WOMEN AND THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

Gender divisions constitute a major fault line within the new middle class today. Most commentators agree that intellectual workers are seriously divided between managers and professionals, on the one hand, and routine clerical, sales, service, semi-professional and technical workers on the other. The latter categories are heavily feminised, and provide a large proportion of women's paid work. Labour market conditions in these feminised categories are substantially inferior to those in the managerial and professional sector: pay is much lower, promotion prospects are poor, and work is routinised. In addition, there are barriers to movement from the lower sector of the labour market to the higher. In effect, the new middle class labour market is divided into a primary sector and a secondary sector, and women tend to be confined to the secondary labour market.

As Rosabeth Kanter has shown, the blocked opportunities and powerlessness of secondary labour market workers tend to produce and reproduce low self-esteem, conservatism and limited aspirations - characteristics that have come to be associated with women workers. Women's virtual confinement to the secondary labour market places them, therefore, on a downward spiral of disadvantage in which their dependency is reinforced by their everyday experience.

Despite the importance of clerical and semi-professional work for women, there has been little investigation of the role of factors specific to the new middle class in the development of a divided labour market amongst educated workers. A number of feminist writers have chronicled attempts by professional groups to exclude women and to subordinate female workers to their professional authority, but these writers have seen such strategies as part of a general patriarchal oppression of women. Others, writing from a socialist-feminist perspective, have seen the development of a division of labour in professional and clerical work as the result of an articulation of the needs of capital and the power of men in a patriarchal society. However, it is apparent from the literature reviewed here that members of the new middle class can plausibly be seen as having a particular interest in the organisation of their own labour market, an interest separate from capitalist and working class interests, and that they have been capable, in many instances, of dictating their own labour market conditions.
In addition, evidence from recent feminist scholarship on household economies suggests that attitudes and practices concerning the respective roles of men and women in gainful employment vary significantly amongst different economic categories. In effect, there are a variety of family forms involving different types of family/labour market strategies. Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, in their study of the development of the family-wage economy in England and France from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, and Christine Bose, in her study of household composition, resources and distribution of paid work to female adult and younger household members in the United States in 1900, have shown that households exhibit a number of different economic strategies. These include the family-wage economy, where the family survives on the wage earned by the adult male, and various forms of the family economy. This latter strategy finds its most complete form in the family farm or business, where all members of the household engage in gainful employment, but has a number of variations, including sending adolescents out to work, the employment of adult women outside the home, adding extended family members to the household to help with support, taking in boarders, and engaging in cottage industry.

Bose demonstrates that where the male householder is self-employed as a farmer or a merchant, female members of the household are not very likely to have gainful employment outside the home. Where he is in high-status professional or managerial employment, the women of the household are even less likely to be gainfully employed. In contrast, in households where the adult male is a labourer, an operative, or unemployed, female family members often have outside employment. Wives and daughters of artisans and clerks are much less likely than those of operatives, etc., to be working outside the home, but a little more likely than those of professionals and managers.

These different household economic strategies have been well-documented. The nineteenth-century ideal of the privatised family with the wife confined to the domestic sphere has been shown to be associated with the rise of the bourgeoisie in the first half of the nineteenth century. Beverley Kingston has pointed out that behind the rhetoric of the home as a haven and women as 'angels in the house' was the economic reality of bourgeois life. The entertainments, the visits, the paying and returning of calls were functions required to oil the social machinery:

The complex business of maintaining caste, status, and hierarchy in society, of ensuring that marriages were arranged that were suitable or advantageous to the family, the business or the property, of celebrating the birth of heirs, entertaining the right people, or keeping the close-knit circles of family and friends fully functioning, was, in the hands of a capable woman, as important and impressive as her husband's political, diplomatic, or entrepreneurial activity.
A similar strategy has been shown to operate in professional and managerial families. Hanna Papanek uses the term ‘two-person single career’ to describe those operations in which the wife is expected to participate in her husband’s career, although her participation is neither directly acknowledged nor remunerated. A number of studies have demonstrated this type of family strategy amongst members of the diplomatic service, corporate executives, academics, politicians and the protestant ministry.

A variation on the bourgeois/professional family type is that of the craft worker. Cynthia Cockburn has shown how the exclusion of women is an important element in the male solidarity of the craft unionist. Jane Humphries has demonstrated how the exclusion of women from the labour market is an integral part of the economic strategy of the craft worker’s family, giving the family (though not necessarily the women within it) greater bargaining power for a higher ‘family wage’ and greater resilience to resist pauperisation and fragmentation.

Outside of these three social groups, however, a different form of family economic strategy is widespread, in which all members of the family contribute directly to family production or family income. Studies of families in the early colonial period of Australia, of farming families, and of families in which the adult male does not command high wages and secure employment show a pattern of improvisation whereby family members contribute income or labour according to family needs and individual ability. The selector’s wife in colonial Australia often ran the farm while her husband worked as a shearer or contractor to make ends meet. Wives of the urban poor or casually employed often ran boarding houses. In other cases, mothers worked when children were young, but retired when children were old enough to substitute for them in the workforce.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS, THE STATE AND THE DUAL LABOUR MARKET: A CASE STUDY

The variety of ways in which different economic groups organise family and gender relationships, and the evidence of separate new middle class interests and resources, suggest that it is necessary to examine the specific labour market and family situations of new middle class men and women in order to understand the development of the dual labour market in intellectual work and the role of the state in institutionalising the respective labour market and family roles of men and women. This thesis presents a case study of the New South Wales public service from 1830 to 1930, and examines changes in women’s access to equal pay and opportunity in the clerical labour market in relation to variations in the labour market security, political power and perceived family
priorities of the new middle class. It argues that it is impossible to understand the observed changes in women's labour market position without analysing the separate interests and power of the new middle class.

The historical record provides a rich source of data for such a study. Blue Books and Public Service Lists published from the late 1850s give almost complete documentation of public service clerical personnel on such important dimensions of labour market experience as age, date of appointment, career progression, salary, numbers and collegial networks. In addition, a continuing commentary is provided on labour market developments in parliamentary debates and inquiries, departmental reports, public personnel authority reports and public service union records. This mass of detailed information, combined with the invaluable biographical material available in the Australian Dictionary of Biography and the personal papers and publications of such central public servants as T.A. Coghlan, provides the opportunity for the delineation of relatively precise historical relationships between political, economic and social developments and labour market changes.

The New South Wales case is not only rich in data, but it also provides unique opportunities for comparison between periods, as it offers one of the few documented instances of a nineteenth century labour market in which women's access and progress had no formal impediments and in which women enjoyed equal pay. Although this was only one small section of a labour market that was otherwise segregated and discriminatory, the existence of this pocket of relative equality and the history of its erosion provides a more dramatic contrast between periods than is usually available to scholars of female labour markets.

Analytic Strategy

In analysing the material of the case study, several distinct stages of women's labour market situation have been identified. In the period from 1830 to 1896, some educated women, mainly in country and suburban post offices, enjoyed what I have called equality by default. There were no formal impediments to their career, and they were paid the same as men in equivalent positions. From 1896 to 1903 there was a period of more deliberate encouragement of equality for some women, which I have called selective equality. During this period, women's work was subject to special regulation, with some women being specifically excluded from the workforce and the employment of others encouraged. In the third period, from 1904 to 1930, the social engineering approach to women's employment established in the previous period was used to exclude, dominate and segregate potential and actual female clerical workers. During this period, a secondary labour market was established in clerical work, and women were confined almost exclusively to that section of the labour market.
These stages in the labour market situation of public service women have been related to stages in the security, unity and autonomy of the public service as a whole. Autonomy has been measured by the degree of independence the bureaucracy enjoys from the appointed or elected executive. The study identifies four stages. Before 1856, the relationship between the bureaucracy and the executive could be characterised as one of *decentralised patronage*. Distribution and control of government jobs and policy decisions were diffused amongst a number of authorities and individual public servants had considerable security and control over their own jobs. The period from 1856 to 1896 was one of *centralised patronage*, in which control and distribution of government jobs and policy decision-making was largely centralised in the hands of elected representatives, and public servants had little control over their terms and conditions of employment. In the third period, from 1896 to 1903, the public service enjoyed *autonomous bureaucracy*, in which personnel policy and policy-making was controlled to a large degree by the bureaucracy itself. This type of relationship was increasingly challenged in the early twentieth century, making the period to 1930 one of *embattled autonomy*.

Throughout the period of the study, the nature of the relationship between capital and labour has been considered as having a potential impact on both the strength of the new middle class and the wages and conditions of women workers. Where conflict between capital and labour is muted or disorganised, the new middle class has more opportunity to exert political influence in its own right and to make advantageous alliances. Once that conflict is open and disciplined, political issues and organisation tend to focus more exclusively on the interests of capital and labour. With regard to the wages and conditions of women workers, muted or disorganised conflict between capital and labour allows greater scope for other centres of power to influence labour market policies, whereas organised conflict places greater stress on resolution of conflict by accommodation between the most powerful sections of the labour movement and capital. This situation has usually meant the intensification of discrimination against ascriptive groups such as women.

This study identifies four periods in the relationship between capital and labour from 1830 to 1930. Prior to 1840, the social structure was in flux. From 1840 to 1885 class conflict and organisation were muted in what R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving have called 'the hegemony of the mercantile bourgeoisie'. Between 1885 and 1904, in a period of transition, capital and labour came into more open conflict, with first labour and then capital organising politically. From 1904 to 1930, there was a period of confrontation in which each side was fairly evenly balanced in terms of political power. For purposes of analysis, therefore, three periods of labour/capital relations are utilised -
hegemonic from 1856 to the mid-1880s, transitional from the 1880s to 1904, and confrontationist from 1904 to 1930.

Plan of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into three parts according to the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the state bureaucracy, and each part deals with developments affecting the bureaucracy and then considers the influence of these developments on the labour market conditions of women.

Part I examines the period from 1830 to 1882, during which a system of decentralised patronage, largely under the control of public servants themselves, was transformed into a system of centralised patronage controlled by politicians, and during which some women, mainly in country and suburban post and telegraph offices, enjoyed equality by default.

Chapter 2 describes the decentralised and heterogeneous public service the colonial politicians found in place on the introduction of responsible government in 1856, and their successful attempts to transform parts of the service into a more centralised, politically-controlled machine for the joint purposes of colonial development and the distribution of patronage - political policies which benefitted large segments of the population, muted class conflict, and allowed the formation of viable governments by factions held together by loyalty and patronage. Before 1856, some departmental heads had considerable power over policy and personnel, public servants in Sydney had some protection from arbitrary personnel decisions, and many public servants scattered throughout the country districts enjoyed almost complete autonomy and unhampered opportunities for the exercise of family patronage. The replacement of top departmental officials by close associates or persons of similar social background allowed politicians to gain control over crucial areas of the public service without major conflict; the partial nature of the exercise of political control left some large departments free to continue decentralised personnel practices; and the unprecedented government prosperity of the 1870s due to the sale of large amounts of Crown land dampened public service concern over their loss of autonomy. Despite these factors, there was a strong current of resistance to political control amongst public servants throughout the period, reaching a peak in the early 1870s and surfacing again later in the decade, as the flow of government funds from Crown lands began to falter. The effectiveness of this resistance, however, was lowered by divisions between senior and junior officers of the service.

Chapter 3 examines how the system of decentralised patronage prior to 1856 benefitted some women, due to the prevalence of family patronage amongst public servants in the country districts. It demonstrates how the equality of pay and lack of
formal career barriers enjoyed by women in country post offices remained unchallenged during the 1870s and 1880s, and was extended to women in the telegraph office, because failure to centralise the post and telegraph offices and the general prosperity of the period allowed old practices to continue unquestioned.

Part II examines the period from 1883 to 1903, during which a battle for public service control of the terms and conditions of public employment was waged successfully, and public service leaders began to formally regulate the employment of women.

Chapter 4 describes the conditions which precipitated major attempts to loosen political control over the state bureaucracy and lowered politicians’ resistance to these moves. A drastic and permanent fall in revenue from Crown lands brought the period of class and bureaucratic accommodation to an end. Without a reliable source of funds for development projects and public service jobs, an important means of holding governing factions together was lost. Governments had to find new ways of gaining electoral and parliamentary support and new ways of raising government revenue or lowering expenditure. In a period of economic and political instability, political parties began to form around alternative methods of taxation, there were constant threats of public service retrenchment, and governments began to divest themselves of control of parts of the public service which had become political liabilities. Public servants failed to turn those developments to their advantage, however. Instead, a hastily-conceived and elitist Civil Service Act passed in 1884 brought only short-term gains to a small minority of public servants, earned public service leaders the lasting distrust of junior officers, and left younger officers with the burden of an unviable superannuation fund likely to benefit only older officers and the government’s retrenchment policies.

Chapter 5 discusses how the effects of a decade of insecurity and disappointed hopes for greater labour market control radicalised the public service and unified it behind a group of young public service leaders exemplified by T.A. Coghlan. It demonstrates how the vacuum of political power left by the demise of faction politics and the inefficacy of the new Protectionist and Free Trade Parties opened the way for the rise of a tightly-disciplined Labor Party and a highly influential public bureaucracy. It also shows how the close ties between the new public service leaders and the labour movement, and the dependence of the Free Trade Party on public service expertise and new middle class electoral support, gained public servants a substantial degree of autonomy through the Public Service Act of 1895, and enabled them to establish the public service as an important medium of social reform.

Chapters 6 and 7 examine the effects of the long period of labour market anxiety on the attitudes of public service leaders to women workers, and some of the ways in which these attitudes were put into effect by the powerful new leaders, establishing a strong basis for the acceptance of the family-wage concept.
Chapter 6 discusses the source of T.A. Coghlan’s ideas about married women workers, and the way he used the occupational census to disseminate the idea that married women were not legitimate participants in the labour force. Chapter 7 shows how Coghlan used his position as creator of the Public Service Act and member of the first Public Service Board to regulate the employment of women through a policy of selective equality. This involved the exclusion of married women and the carefully monitored extension of equal pay and opportunity to single women in order to protect male workers from unfair competition.

Part III examines the legacy of these policies towards women workers in a period of decreasing new middle class unity and influence and increasing political polarisation around capital and labour.

Chapter 8 describes the swift realignment of radical and conservative forces into organised parties of labour and capital in the early twentieth century, the demise of new middle class power and unity, and the battle of various sections of the new middle class to retain autonomy and influence. In this new situation, the Public Service Board was emasculated. However, professional groups, such as lawyers and doctors, who had gained greater autonomy and unity and expanded labour market opportunities in state organisations during the period of new middle class ascendancy in the late 1890s, were able to capitalise on political requirements for relatively conservative and economical solutions to social problems in order to further consolidate their position through the state industrial arbitration machinery and state health programs.

Chapters 9 and 10 show the effect of these developments on women, and demonstrate how new middle class policies towards women in the labour market and in the family intersected to create an image of women as dependents, which was made real by the implementation of a family-wage policy which granted women half the wages of men, and the segregation of women in secondary labour markets which offered them no opportunity for upward career mobility or satisfying work. Chapter 9 describes the deterioration of women’s labour market situation in the first thirty years of the twentieth century and women’s strong resistance to these developments. Under increasing pressure to economise, the Public Service Board used its power to regulate the employment of women to institute economies which created a clerical secondary labour market to which women were gradually confined. This process was escalated by the surrender of public service wage regulation to the Industrial Court in 1919, when the application of the family-wage concept to clerical women’s wages drastically lowered female wages in relation to those of men, and opened the way for more overt discrimination against women and segregation of the labour market into two quite separate categories according to sex.
Chapter 10 demonstrates how the dependence of politicians on administrative action for the implementation of social policies gave the medical profession the resources to extend their authority over infant and child care, and, in the process, reinforce and give wide currency to the emerging ideology of women as dependents that was embodied in the theory and practice of the Industrial Court.

In the final chapter, the consequences of these developments for the construction of the dependent woman are discussed, and the implications of the evidence of new middle class activity in this process are examined in the light of the theoretical issues raised in this chapter.
Notes


7. Baldock (n.3 above).

8. Cass (n.3 above).


14. ‘Redistribution to Children’ (n.3 above).


24. Ibid., p.247.


26. N.2 above.

27. N.2 above.

28. ‘Sexuality and Reproduction: Three “Official” Instances’, in Ideology and


36. ‘Who Rules Australia?’ in Australian Capitalism: Towards a Socialist


38. N.3 above, esp. p.10.

39. N.3 above, p.175.


49. N.43 above, p.52.


60. C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (NY: OUP, 1951), Giddens (n.52 above); Poulantzas (n.22 above).


64. N.60 above, pp.65-6.


73. N.58 above. See other articles in this book for critiques and the Ehrenreichs’ reply.

74. Ibid., p.20.

75. Ibid., pp.25-27.

76. Ibid., pp.22-5.

77. Ibid., pp.12, 22, 25, 31.


79. Ibid., pp.212-5, esp. 213, 4.

80. Ibid., 212-3.


83. Ibid., pp.19-20.

84. Ibid., pp.28-30.

85. Ibid., pp.85-9.

86. Ibid., p.17.


88. N.54 above.

89. Mills (n.60 above), p.17.

90. See Abercrombie and Urry (n.54 above), chapters 4 and 5 for review of literature. For influential formulations, see G. Carchedi, On the Economic Identification of Social Classes (London: RKP, 1977); Poulantzas (n.22 above).

91. For structuration see Giddens (n.52 above).


102. E.g. *ibid.*, pp.111-12; for Connell on Althusser, see ‘Complexities of Fury Leave’ (n.25 above), p.126.

103. *Class Structure*, pp.112, 201.


118. Connell and Irving (n.94 above), chapter 3.
PART I

FROM DECENTRALISED PATRONAGE

TO CENTRALISED PATRONAGE 1830-1882
The 1880s comprised a watershed in the development of Australian political and administrative institutions. Although capitalists, wage-earners, and the educated classes of professionals, administrators and writers constituted clearly identifiable groups for several decades prior to 1880, these groups took on more institutional forms in the 1880s, boundaries between them became more defined, and relationships and alliances amongst them changed. This was particularly marked in the colony of New South Wales, where the class-based party system and the formally autonomous state bureaucracy characteristic of twentieth century Australia emerged clearly between 1883 and 1904.

From the early 1860s, soon after New South Wales was granted responsible government, until the mid-1880s, the interests of labour, capital, professionals and bureaucrats merged in a policy of government-led development funded by the sale of Crown land. This policy provided the foundation for a hegemonic system of politics in which the merchants, professionals and landowners who dominated the elected Legislative Assembly were able to win electoral and parliamentary support and bureaucratic acquiescence by the extension and distribution of public works, services and jobs. Their dominance flourished despite the existence of almost universal male suffrage after 1858 and the tradition of a strong and independent public service. A party system based on class, working in tandem with an influential bureaucracy, was not to emerge for another forty years. Instead, politics were organised around factions, which were held together by loyalty to a leader and by the distribution of patronage, while the public service was, in part, a closely-controlled administrative machine which organised this distribution.

The faction system was successful because the cement which helped to hold it together - patronage in jobs, services and resources - had benefits for large segments of the community. Landowners gained from improved transport facilities provided by railways, roads and bridges. Male workers - skilled and unskilled - enjoyed the full employment facilitated by a vigorous program of public works, and were able to command high wages in an economy where one of the largest employers, the government, did not have to show a profit. Educated workers, including some women, found expanding opportunities in the clerical and professional areas of the public service. Merchants, shopkeepers and professionals benefitted from the expansion of business which came from the development of a well-to-do community. All welcomed the freedom from direct and indirect taxation which was made possible by the generous flow of revenue from Crown lands.
This hegemonic system of politics was not easily constructed, and its maintenance was always precarious. The working class had begun to organise prior to 1860 and men, as well as some women, were quick to manifest their discontent if there was not sufficient work for all. The public service, whose support was central to the success of the system, had a high degree of autonomy before the introduction of responsible government, and both its leaders and rank-and-file personnel were unwilling to give up their independence. In order to gather power over public works, services and jobs into their own hands, ministers had to bring the public bureaucracy under political control. This was an uneven process, leaving some pockets of autonomy. On the whole, however, public servants had little real independence in the development of policy or control over their conditions of work. Once the faction system of politics was established, workers, whether white collar or blue collar, were dependent directly or indirectly on the government for full employment and good working conditions. So long as the system operated to their advantage, their relative powerlessness was not strongly felt, and class consciousness and class organisation remained undeveloped. But the system was inherently unstable. Firstly, its success depended on a ready and uncontentious supply of government revenue, which only the sale of Crown land could provide. Secondly, its emphasis on full employment through public sector growth helped to build up a strong institutional base for the working class and the new middle class. Thirdly, its centralising tendencies provided opportunities for the growth of solidarity amongst sections of these workers. Consequently, when wage-earners, public servants and professionals found themselves possible victims of the instability of the system once revenue from Crown land could no longer be relied on, the structural conditions for the development of class-based politics and administrative autonomy were already in place.

The uneven pattern of centralisation and political control of the public service had important consequences for the women who worked in the public bureaucracy. This is readily illustrated by the position of women in the post offices scattered throughout the colony. Under the system of local autonomy in the period prior to responsible government, a small number of women had established themselves in the post office on equal terms with men through local and family patronage. Undisturbed by the political processes which brought patronage in other departments under the control of departmental heads and politicians, country and suburban post offices continued to employ women under conditions similar to those of male employees, paying them the same wages and placing no formal bars on the scope of their employment. A slender tradition of equal treatment for women was therefore carried into the labour market struggles among men and women of the new middle class and the working class in a period of great change during the 1890s.
CHAPTER 2
THE MANUFACTURE OF HEGEMONY

When the first ministry responsible to the electors of New South Wales was formed in 1856 it took over from the British colonial authorities a permanent public bureaucracy of about 2,500 persons, a tiny one per cent of the colony’s population. This public service was, for the most part, decentralised and heterogeneous, and its administration was personalised, providing opportunities for the exercise of family and community patronage which sometimes included women. However, a more regulated and unified service was developing in Sydney and in the vast areas outside the Settled Districts. In these areas departmental heads based in Sydney had considerable power over policy and personnel. Again patronage prevailed, but in this case, it rarely favoured women.

The new politicians who wished to gain control over the public service, and thus over the direction of development and the dispensation of patronage, had a twofold problem: they had to establish control over the scattered public servants throughout the countryside; and they had to break the hold of powerful public servants over departmental policy and staff. They were only partly successful, leaving pockets of autonomy, especially in the country. Where they persisted, the process of establishing political control was resisted by public servants, especially in times of financial crisis, but serious divisions between senior and junior members of the service and the remarkable prosperity of the 1870s made resistance weak and ineffective until the 1880s. Throughout the period 1856 to 1884, therefore, control of public service employment was divided between family and local communities, department heads and politicians.

DECENTRALISED AUTONOMY BEFORE 1856
Local Autonomy

Despite some progress towards a centralised and regulated public service, most government employees and agents in 1856 had a high degree of autonomy from central control. Only about five hundred public servants worked in Sydney. The other 2,000 were scattered throughout the length and breadth of the colony. Just over a thousand of these were police, authority for whom was divided amongst local magistrates, the Inspector-General of Police, the Gold Commissioners and Commissioners of Crown
lands. Over two hundred male and female school teachers worked in isolated conditions in the thirty-eight national and 164 denominational schools funded by the government but controlled by two separate and independent boards. About two hundred postal officials, some of them women, a hundred customs officers, a hundred ports and harbours officials and about sixty officers of the Surveyor-General’s Department administered the posts, customs and shipping, and surveyed the land. Twenty-six Stipendiary Magistrates and about six hundred unpaid Justices of the Peace presided over the Courts of Petty Sessions, aided by around sixty Petty Sessions clerks. Commissioners for Crown Lands and the Goldfields settled disputes over land and mining rights outside the Settled Districts and on the goldfields.

Central control of this disparate group of public officers was hindered by problems of communication and transport, the strong British precedent for decentralised authority, the attenuated chain of command from London, and considerations of economy. The colony covered an area over two and a half times that of Great Britain and Ireland, even without including the Port Phillip and Moreton Bay Districts which became, respectively, Victoria and Queensland in 1851 and 1859. Travel was difficult and dangerous. The first few miles of railway in this vast territory were not opened till 1855. Roads were poor or non-existent, and river traffic relatively undeveloped. In periods of recession, bushrangers preyed on travellers. The Post Office was the main means of communication, as the first telegraph lines were not built for several years after 1856. Inspection by any central authority, whether the head of department or the governor, was difficult. As it was, only the school and post office systems attempted any sort of inspection. Where any control at all was exerted over country officers, it was likely to be exercised locally, by the magistrate, or informally by the community.

The magistrate was the central agent of the government in the country areas except on the goldfields and outside the Limits of Location, where Land and Gold Commissioners played an important policing and reporting role. In 1856, there were very few paid magistrates, most districts being served by an honorary Justice of the Peace. Like their British counterparts, the magistrates, whether paid or unpaid, presided over local courts, and carried out a variety of policing and licencing functions with little outside control.

As government functions increased, these tended to accumulate around the office of the magistrate, giving that position considerable influence in the distribution of local patronage. Although the magistrate’s formal authority outside his judicial functions extended only to the appointment and control of local police, as the representative of the government in his district, he could be decisive in allocating the various official duties for which fees or salaries were paid. At first, these extra duties were often given to the
paid court official, the Clerk of Petty Sessions. For instance, the first country postmasters were also Petty Session clerks.

As such positions became more substantial, they became important jobs in their own right, providing those in charge of post offices, for example, with salaries of up to £230, augmented by commissions on the sale of stamps. Such well-paid positions were, therefore, eagerly sought after. Lack of central control of personnel matters provided the opportunity for the exercise of family patronage to keep positions in the family. Many magistrates carried out their duties in a desultory manner, and where this was the case, it gave the present incumbent of a position considerable freedom to nominate his or her successor, subject only to informal community approval. This meant, in practical terms, that some jobs tended to become family concerns, passed on from husband to wife, from father to son and from mother to daughter in a way that was consistent with the family economy of the region.6

Where a country public service position had not developed around the magistracy, its incumbent often had almost complete autonomy. This resulted from the Governor's limited power over major departmental appointments. These were in the patronage of the British Secretary of State,7 but once appointments were made, the distance between London and Sydney gave such appointees great freedom. There was little pressure, therefore, on men such as the Surveyor-General, Sir Thomas Mitchell, to control their scattered personnel closely. Mitchell was more interested in exploration and literary and scientific work than in departmental administration. Of his twenty-seven years in office he spent seven in London and another three in exploration. His department was left very much to its own devices, unsupervised surveyors neglected their work with impunity, and there was little check on their corruption by powerful local interests.8

The vacuum of authority in country areas was exacerbated by lack of finance for more complex organisational structures. This was particularly the case during the 1840s. A severe depression and the struggle between the Legislative Council and the Governor over the financing of police and gaols led to tight budgetary control. Attempts to replace Justices of the Peace with Stipendiary Magistrates, and to bring the disparate elements of the police force under one central authority, foundered on lack of finance. Instead, most Stipendiary Magistrates were retrenched; and by 1846 there were only seven left. Many surveyors were dismissed and re-employed on licence or a fee-paying basis, giving them even greater independence than before.9 In general, limited government finance led to a very independent public service workforce in the rural areas. Many had other sources of income: for instance, the post office was often run by the local storekeeper; the policeman was a tradesman or farmer as well; most surveyors had rights to independent work. In addition, many public officials held several jobs in tandem, which meant that lines of authority were uncertain and tenuous.
In keeping with this pattern of financial stringency and local control, some government responsibilities were left in the hands of boards of private citizens. The school system, which was heavily subsidised by the government, was run after 1848 by two such boards. At the local level patrons or school boards were responsible for raising money for school buildings and certifying the salary claims of teachers. These local boards had considerable control over the appointment and supervision of teachers, especially in the church system, where the local clergyman was usually highly influential. Other boards, elected by subscribers, distributed government funds to a number of charitable institutions.

Towards Centralised Autonomy

Although many public servants prior to 1856 were autonomous or subject to only haphazard and informal supervision by unpaid magistrates and their local communities, a number of factors encouraged their unification and regulation in Sydney and outside the Settled Districts. The difficulty of recruiting suitable staff from Britain, the growth of interest in education, the introduction of assisted immigration and the concomitant closure of easy access to land combined to encourage the development of a small, tight-knit new middle class dependent on government employment. At the same time the extraordinary policing requirements brought about by the squatters’ occupation of the vast lands outside the Settled Districts led to the development of a more centralised system of supervision in these regions, and to renewed interest in unification of the police force. In addition, the prominent and influential position of leading officials who formed a sort of ‘cabinet’ under the system of representative government from 1842 conferred prestige on the public service as a whole and unity on its top echelons.

Public service appointments and promotions were formally controlled by the British Secretary of State in the period before responsible government. However, the difficulties of maintaining a steady stream of suitable recruits from Britain meant that positions below the level of head of department were usually filled in the colony. In Sydney appointments were made by either the Governor or the head of department. In the country, this duty usually devolved informally on the magistrate or the current incumbent of a position.

The difficulties of attracting suitable persons for clerical positions in Sydney head offices led in 1826 and 1827 to the first attempts to establish a regulated and uniform public service. These regulations were concerned mainly with Sydney and exclusively with men. At that time land grants and the availability of good land attracted most young men to agricultural and pastoral pursuits. Governor Darling attempted to make the public service more attractive by introducing a range of clerical salaries starting at
£100 and going beyond £300. In addition he established classification by position, promotion by merit, and automatic annual salary increments. In an attempt to centralise the public service, Darling also made the Colonial Secretary’s Department the channel for official business. A further attempt on Darling’s part to inculcate a sense of unity and pride in the service was his suggestion that ‘Officers and Civil Servants’ should wear a uniform - ‘a Blue Coat, lined with white or buff coloured silk’ with a button with a crown for heads and deputies of departments, and an unlined coat with no crown on the button for assistants, writers and clerks. We do not know the fate of this suggestion, but it illustrates the trend of Darling’s thinking towards a centralised and unified public service.

Darling’s provisions were supplemented by Governor Bourke in 1838. Bourke introduced a test examination for entrance to the clerical ranks and age limits for appointment. At the same time he established a board to examine candidates’ qualifications for professional appointment in the Surveyor-General’s Department. Together, the regulations of Governors Darling and Bourke gave some public servants protection from arbitrary personnel decisions. They also gave the service uniformity and widened public service clerks’ promotion opportunities by facilitating movement from one department to another. Bourke also gave departmental heads greater control over the efficiency of their staff by introducing probation and annual salary increments which were subject to the head of department’s recommendation. In addition, public officers were forbidden to engage in private business or to take fees, gratuities or awards. These reforms provided checks on outside influence, protecting both subordinate officers and their heads, and providing a clear statement of the relationship between them.

Local male recruitment to clerical positions below £300 a year was actively encouraged after 1842, possibly in response to the demands of the radical new middle class which emerged at that time. Even before the reforms of Darling and Bourke, the public service attracted some educated ex-convicts, their sons and the sons of officials. As access to the land diminished with the cessation of land grants in 1831 and with increases in the minimum price of land over the next decade, the public service, teaching and journalism provided important employment opportunities for these men. In a ‘push from the bush’, the depression of the 1840s brought other educated men to Sydney and the large country towns in search for work when their farming ventures failed. The assisted immigration of the 1830s and 1840s brought many more who were disappointed in the opportunities they found for settling on the land, and who spurned the harsh, lonely and poorly-paid existence offered by agricultural and pastoral wage labour. To these were added teachers whose expectations of major educational developments did not eventuate until the late 1840s. By the early part of that decade, these teachers,
journalists and clerks were an important part of the small radical and literary circle of Sydney, where they joined the more vocal artisans and labourers to demand responsible government, the opening up of squatters' land to small settlers, and the extension of government services and works. The system of local recruitment from a small radical community, and protection from the worst excesses of favouritism by the reforms of Darling and Bourke, gave unity and independence to Sydney public servants. By the early 1850s the 246 government clerks in Sydney had sufficient solidarity to make collective demands for improved salaries and a public service pension scheme.

Outside of Sydney, the spread of settlement beyond the Settled Districts led to the development of more centralised government control in these distant areas. By 1840 there were more than 7,000 people, 718 stations and 1,329,000 sheep beyond the New South Wales Limits of Location, excluding the Port Phillip District. With no legal entitlement to the land on which they squatted, pastoralists posed a major problem of order and control to the government. Attempting to avoid the problems of class bias posed by the appointment of prominent landowners as Justices of the Peace in the Settled Districts, the government appointed special officers known as Commissioners of Crown Lands. These officers had to ensure that no Crown land was occupied without a licence, to collect a tax on stock, and to see that law and order was maintained in an area of around 120,000 squares miles. Instead of being part of the local community as Justices of the Peace were, Land Commissioners were ‘the eyes and ears of the government at Sydney on practically every aspect of life in their far-flung districts’. When similar problems of order and control developed on the goldfields in the early 1850s the Land Commissioners provided a model for the Gold Commissioners then appointed.

Further movement towards centralisation and uniformity seemed impossible in the 1840s and early 1850s, despite apparent Legislative Council interest. The Council had, since its inception in 1842, carried on a bitter struggle with the Governor over public service expenditure. From 1848, in a more prosperous economic climate and with a more conciliatory Governor, the Council turned instead to getting better value for money from the service. A wave of interest in departmental organisation and efficiency drew heavily on the experience of the Land Commissioners. In 1850, William Mayne, former Land Commissioner for the western district of Wellington, reported to a Legislative Council Select Committee on the divided state of the police. He stressed that unity of action, centralised information and a single executive head were essential for efficiency, recommendations very similar to those of the Bigge Commission in the 1820s. This time, however, the suggested reforms were incorporated into the Police Regulations Act of 1850. In 1852 Mayne was appointed Inspector-General of Police, but little came
of his attempts to centralise the police. The Act was disallowed on a technicality, and the Legislative Council which passed a new Act in 1853 did not support him adequately. When Mayne relinquished his task to the Inspector for Sydney, John McLerie, in 1856, scant progress had been made towards a centralised police force.20

A more successful attempt at centralisation was made in the school system. Prior to 1848 the government had supported education by subsidies to schools run by the various religious denominations. A national system was mooted by Governor Bourke in the 1830s and a Select Committee of the Legislative Council in 1844 in an attempt at greater efficiency and economy. In 1848, a dual system of education was introduced which established a government system supervised by a National Board and gave the government some control over church schools through a Denominational Board. In both cases, however, government control was at first indirect and minimal.

The degree of success eventually achieved by the government in centralising the school system can be attributed largely to the strong motivation of the man brought from England to train teachers for the National System. Although New South Wales had a number of progressive educationalists who had fought for national schooling for two decades, the National Board sent to England for a headmaster for their Model School. In doing so they introduced into Australia a man whose career was to be a model of new middle class entrepreneurship, William Wilkins. Wilkins, the son of a parish poor law official, attended a school for pauper children and then trained as one of the first pupil-teachers at the progressive Battersea College founded by Dr James Kay-Shuttleworth and Carleton Tufnell. He arrived in Australia in 1851 at the age of 24, and set about single-mindedly to centralise, regulate and unify the education system in New South Wales. In doing so he also raised the status of the teaching profession, extended employment opportunities for teachers and increased the status and power of leading educational officials.

In 1854 Wilkins was made Inspector and Superintendent of National Schools in New South Wales, and soon after he was appointed one of three commissioners to assist a Legislative Council Select Committee inquiring into the education system. Wilkins used the report of this Commission, for which he was largely responsible, to recommend a unified system administered by one managing body with at least one paid officer. He recommended the employment of at least six professional inspectors and teachers trained by the pupil-teacher method supplemented by a professional training school.

As Inspector, Wilkins classified teachers according to their academic attainments and teaching skill, measured by examinations and inspection. By 1856 he had extended the pupil-teacher system into the country areas, opened a training school, standardised the curriculum and extended the inspectorate. Though these were small steps towards
the centralisation and regulation of what was still a divided and heterogeneous education system, Wilkins demonstrated what could be achieved by a determined and ambitious head of department with political support.21

Another Legislative Council Select Committee examined the Post Office in 1850-51, and condemned the lax management of the Postmaster-General, James Raymond, who had allowed country postmasters and postmistresses to get into serious arrears.22 Major Christie, formerly Secretary of the Denominational School Board and Serjeant-at-Arms in the Legislative Council, who had been a member of the Select Committee, was appointed Postmaster-General in 1852. He took a greater interest in the appointment of country officials and decisions about the establishment of new post offices. By 1856 he was calling for the appointment of postal inspectors in line with British practice, where Post Office Surveyors acted as the ‘Eyes of the Department’. Christie also improved the salaries of the country officers in an attempt to attract better recruits to some of these positions, and strongly supported the establishment of the public service pension scheme advocated in 1854.23

A further Select Committee in 1855 revealed the disorganised state of the Surveyor-General’s Department.24 As a consequence, the department was placed under the control of Colonel George Barney, the first Chief Commissioner of Lands appointed in 1849. His administration therefore brought together supervision, occupation and survey of Crown land.25 Yet another Select Committee of that year investigated the charitable institutions which the government subsidised without exercising any control over their expenditure. Although the Committee was critical of this system, nothing was done to change it until 1862.26

Despite the slow progress of the 1840s and early 1850s, there was by 1856 a clear movement towards the development of a unified and regulated public service in which departmental heads had considerable power over personnel within guidelines which gave rank-and-file public servants some protection from arbitrary decisions. The autonomy and power of the service was strengthened by the visibility and influence of leading public servants under the system of representative government introduced in 1842. The system provided for a Legislative Council of thirty-six members, twenty-four elected and twelve nominated. Half of the nominees were government officials. Legislation dealing with local issues had to pass the Council and could originate there. The Governor had to approve legislation and the imperial government could disallow it; nevertheless the Council was a powerful body. The six official nominees made up the Executive Council, thus forming an unofficial cabinet. With their dual legislative and executive status the officials held positions closer to that of politician than public servant. Most of the officials on the Legislative Council before the introduction of responsible government
retired or went into the new parliament in 1856. However, their successors’ expectations about their role were strongly coloured by the experience of these powerful public servants.27

SELECTIVE POLITICAL CONTROL AND CENTRALISATION 1856-1885

The Public Service as a Political Resource

The new system of responsible government radically changed the role and organisation of the public service. First of all, public officials were excluded from membership of the legislature. They were also subjected to closer and more effective formal control, as responsibility for executive action passed from the divided authority of the Governor and the imperial authorities to individual ministers. At the same time, control of the public service as a whole was fragmented among ministers, destroying much of the unity the Governor’s administration had imposed, although this fragmentation was modified by the workings of cabinet. Finally, public departments became potential political resources through which ministers could win votes and position.28

The political, economic and social conditions of New South Wales in the first thirty years of responsible government encouraged the maximum use of departmental resources for political purposes, bringing about selective political control and centralisation of individual departments which helped disunify the public service as a whole. The distinctive characteristic of political life from 1856 to 1885 was the absence of stable and organised political parties. Once the effect of the extended franchise diminished the conservative influence of pastoralists and former officials, most groups in the colony supported a policy of free trade and development involving government provision of railways, roads, public buildings and services funded by revenue from the sale of Crown lands and supplemented, where necessary, by overseas loans. With few strong differences of principle, belief or interest around which to organise political parties, politicians had to rely partly on personal loyalty and partly on their success in bargaining for public works, services and jobs to secure electoral and parliamentary support.29 In the system of factional alignments which resulted, ministers’ success depended, to a large extent, on their effective control of departmental policy and personnel in those areas of executive action which were most politically advantageous. The reliance of ministers on the control of crucial areas of their departments led to a steady increase of political control of the public service which diminished the autonomy of leading public servants, decreased rank-and-file control over salaries and conditions, and divided the interests of public service leaders and their staffs. At the same time, less politically-useful public service areas were left virtually untouched. As a result, pockets of local and family patronage remained throughout this period.
For a number of years after the establishment of responsible government, the process of establishing political control was piecemeal, as the lack of a reliable source of government revenue made it unclear what areas of government action were most advantageous politically. The landowners, merchants and professionals who dominated the parliament expressed their various self-interests in supporting policies of railway construction, closer land settlement and free trade, and hoped that the land reforms of 1861 would help accomplish these ends by opening up the land to small settlers and providing a steady source of government revenue. These reforms allowed free selection before survey of unalienated land, and purchase on credit terms. Squatters who had occupied the major part of the unalienated lands beyond the Settled Districts on licence or lease were forced by the resultant competition from selectors for their runs to purchase much of the land they previously held for a nominal amount. The new measures were a virtual tax on squatters, intended to take the place of income tax, stamp duty or customs duty, all of which would have fallen heavily on the urban population. The new land laws were expected to stimulate trade and commerce by opening up the land to closer settlement, provide employment for the working class and transport facilities for farmers by providing revenue for railway development, and boost the banking industry with which many urban merchants were associated.

However, revenue from Crown land sales under the new provisions was disappointingly small. Work was begun on the railway trunk lines within months of the land reforms being implemented, but these and other public works could only be maintained by the additional imposition of unpopular measures such as stamp duty and increased customs duty, and unfamiliar expedients like the raising of overseas loans. A succession of government financial crises from 1863 to 1871 contributed to the rapid demise of five faction ministries and to the instability of faction alliances. Without reliable revenue for railways and public works, it was difficult to forge strong parliamentary alliances and to secure electoral support. By 1871, only 359 miles of railway were open for traffic - from Sydney to Goulburn in the south, from Sydney to Bowenfels in the west and from Newcastle to Muswellbrook in the north. In the face of inadequate government revenue for major public works, a Legislative Assembly Select Committee recommended major curtailment of railway building.

During this period of financial uncertainty, governments brought a variety of functions more firmly under their control. With railway development proceeding slowly, the Post Office remained an important means of communication, and the provision of reliable postal services was an important vote catcher. The Customs Department also became a central policy department in this period as it seemed that supplementary sources of finance had to be found. In 1865 and 1866, when railway development had
virtually ceased, politicians looking for other sources of electoral appeal turned to education and charitable support for groups disadvantaged by widespread unemployment. Attention was also paid to the greater centralisation and professionalisation of the police and the magistracy, as uncertain economic conditions made bushranging a major problem.

Interest in political control of a wide variety of government functions waned, however, in the 1870s, as revenue from Crown lands began to flow generously. In 1872, when Henry Parkes formed his first non-coalition ministry, he resolved the economic stalemate by vastly increasing the amount of land put up for auction. As this was the method most favoured by squatters, this administrative change increased squatters' opportunity to buy their own runs. In 1873, 277,000 acres were sold by auction, compared with 62,000 in 1872. By 1877 six times the 1873 acreage was sold in this way. Revenue from land sales jumped from £436,000 in 1872 to £2.8m in 1877 (see Figure 1). This large increase in revenue allowed increased government spending and reduced taxes. In 1872 government expenditure was £3m; by 1877 it had risen to £5.6m, an increase from around £5 10s per head in 1873 to £8 per head in 1877 (see Figure 2). Large-scale railway extensions were begun, and school building, road and bridge construction were increased. Despite a fall in land sales from 1877 to 1879, expenditure per head faltered only slightly and accumulated cash balances allowed the trend to continue upwards. Further increases in expenditure per head were permitted by changes made in 1880. The Parkes-Robertson government liberalised the conditions under which some purchases could be made, and allowed large amounts of expensive town and suburban land to be offered at auction for the first time. Town and suburban land proved a large source of revenue, with town land rising from £17 8s per acre between 1880 and 1882 and suburban land rising from £4 5s to £6 1s 9d.

During the period of almost continually expanding revenue from public lands from 1872 to 1882 government expenditure more than trebled, reaching £10m in 1882 (see Figure 2). Railways and public works expanded enormously, providing considerable opportunity for the exercise of patronage (see Figure 1). As one parliamentary critic of the system put it succinctly:

The Minister for Works says, 'I shall want £50,000,' and the Minister for Lands says, 'Here are 50,000 acres.'

T.A. Coghlan, writing in 1918, described the latter part of this period as one of unbridled log-rolling throughout eastern Australia:

The first years of the operation of the vigorous policy of public works were marked with considerable caution in the choice of works to be carried out, and the Parliaments carefully scrutinized proposals for the expenditure of public money; but presently all caution was thrown to the winds, and Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, having money to spend, authorized the
construction of many works, the expenditure on which was indefensible from the point of view either of present requirements or of future utility. There was in fact a scramble amongst the parliamentary representatives of country constituencies for as much local expenditure as they could procure for their individual districts. In New South Wales, railways of an expensive character were constructed entirely without regard to any consideration other than satisfying the clamour of the parliamentary representatives of the districts served; while smaller works, like roads, wharves, bridges, and buildings, were also constructed with no more legitimate object.

With railways and public works providing an important element holding factions together, governments could afford to let their control over other activities slacken. There was little follow-up in the 1870s to the movement towards greater political control of the Post Office, the police, and charitable institutions, and it was not until 1880 that the education system was placed under the control of its own minister. The period from 1856 to 1884 was characterised, therefore, by uneven development of the public service, with some departments placed under close political control and others almost untouched by these trends.

Political Control of the Public Service Personnel System

Successful political control of the public service required the establishment of a centralised bureaucracy with cooperative public service leaders and a fluid personnel system. This task was not easy because all levels of the service were used to a considerable degree of autonomy. Departmental heads had often been powerful policy makers who controlled appointments, promotions and discipline in their own departments; but they did this within the guidelines of regulations which safeguarded the rights of rank-and-file officers. Much of the service was scattered throughout the length and breadth of the colony and, without any system of inspection, was not amenable to central control from Sydney. In addition, a number of government services were controlled by elected boards whose members resented any encroachment on their independence.

The Co-optation of Public Service Leaders: One of the first requirements for control of the public service by politicians was the appointment to leading positions of persons likely to be cooperative or who had interests in common with those in political power. This task was made easier in the case of the principal positions of Under Secretary to the Colonial Secretary, the Colonial Treasurer and Secretary of Finance and Trade, the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, and the Secretary of Lands and Public Works, as these were either new positions (in the case of Lands and Public Works) or their former occupants had retired or remained in the legislature. The case of the Auditor-General was similar, in that this office became a public service position and its former incumbent elected to go to the Legislative Council. The fact that these
Figure 1

Gross Capital Formation, Railways 1860-1900


Receipts from Crown Land Sales 1860-1900

Figure 2

Estimated Total Net Expenditure, New South Wales 1860-1900

positions were either new or vacant meant that they could be filled by officers chosen by the new political masters for compatibility of outlook and principle. The same was the case for the new professional positions created in the first few years of responsible government to organise the building of railways, roads, public buildings and telegraphs. In their case, however, the commonality of interests of the experts and the politicians in the expansion of these services made social and political compatibility less important. In a number of subsidiary departments and boards, however, potentially uncooperative public servants inherited from the previous regime had to be removed.

The practice of local recruitment to subsidiary positions in the public service over many years had created a pool of career officers whose interests and outlook were similar to those of many politicians. These career officers, many of whom were impecunious educated immigrants or the sons of educated ex-convicts and minor officials, came from the same upwardly-mobile liberal and radical world as the politicians such as Henry Parkes and James Martin who came to power by the end of 1857.35

Michael Fitzpatrick,36 who was appointed Under Secretary for Lands and Public Works in 1856, Henry Halloran,37 Under Secretary to the Colonial Secretary from 1866, and Geoffrey Eagar,38 Minister for the Treasury during the 1860s and then Under Secretary to that important department from 1872 to 1891, were all sons of ex-convicts. All were active in the political and cultural life of the colony. After a long career in the public service, Fitzpatrick entered the Legislative Assembly in 1869. He was Colonial Secretary in the Farnell ministry from 1877 to 1878 and was leader of the opposition against the Parkes-Robertson government until his death in 1881. Halloran was considered by many as the colony’s leading poet. He was a close literary and political associate of the great master of the faction system, Henry Parkes, who appointed Halloran as his Under Secretary on gaining his first ministry in 1866. Eagar had a stormy political career in the Martin governments of the 1860s before Martin gave him a public service post in 1871. Like Halloran, he was active in the literary world, writing for liberal papers in the mid-1830s and editing the radical church paper, The Church Sentinel, in 1859.

Most other public servants appointed to leading positions in this period were the sons of officials and half-pay officers who were probably too poor to settle their sons on the land. The public service provided them with an alternative opportunity for upward mobility. William Elyard,39 the first Principal Secretary after responsible government, was the son of one of the numerous naval and military officers on half-pay who came to Australia after the Napoleonic wars. The Moriarty brothers, Abram and Edward,40 who became respectively Chief Commissioner for Crown Lands and Engineer-in-Chief for Harbours and Rivers, and the two McLeans, Alexander and Harold,41 respectively
Surveyor-General and Sheriff, were all sons of minor officials. At least Elyard and the Moriartys frequented literary and political circles. Elyard's brother was a well-known artist and the Moriarty family was active in New South Wales politics.

While these sons of former convicts and officials gained accelerated promotion after 1856, a number of ex-army officers who had influential connections with the old regime were quickly replaced by career public servants and friends of the new politicians. Major Christie, the Postmaster-General, was a founder and secretary of the conservative Australian Club. Despite his apparent efficiency, he was not allowed to remain in his position long once it became apparent that it was useful politically. Christie resisted the political control of appointments and promotions in his department between 1860 and 1863, but he retired, under some pressure, in 1865 at the age of fifty-six. A Board of Inquiry had recommended in 1862 that his position become a political one, and the Cowper-Robertson government wanted the position to offer to Henry Parkes in 1865. From that time the position was held by a minister.42

Two other officers were retired or removed in favour of much younger and more cooperative men, despite the fact that they had been active reformers of their departments. The Surveyor-General and Commissioner for Crown Lands, Colonel Barney, was replaced at the age of 64 by the 35-year-old Alexander McLean.43 Captain Mayne,44 the former Inspector-General of Police who had been Auditor-General since 1856, was summarily removed by Treasurer Eagar in 1861 when seen to be potentially obstructive to Eagar's financial reforms. At 56, he was replaced by Christopher Rolleston, the 47-year-old Registrar-General and former Commissioner for Crown Lands for the Darling Downs. Rolleston was the only highly-connected public servant of the period who managed to survive and thrive under the change of political regime.45

The final victim of the new political masters was Colonel Gibbes, the Collector of Customs.46 Gibbes, reputedly the son of the Duke of York, the second son of George III, lived in style at Admiralty House in Sydney and on his retirement moved to Yarralumla on the site of present-day Canberra - both houses now vice-regal residences. Following two critical reports on his department, the Cowper-Robertson government retired the ageing Gibbes in 1859 and replaced him with W.A. Duncan, Henry Parkes' friend, who was Sub-collector of Customs in Moreton Bay. The position had previously been offered to Parkes himself, then suffering bankruptcy and exclusion from the Legislative Assembly after the failure of the Empire. Parkes, however, wanted to re-enter politics, and the position was offered to Duncan.

Duncan and Parkes had been close political and literary associates in the 1840s, and the replacement of Gibbes by one of these two former radical allies epitomises the changes that took place in the public service after self-government. Gibbes had been
Parkes’ remote head when he worked in the Customs Department in his first steady job after his arrival in Australia as a penniless immigrant in 1839. While engaged on this work, Parkes wrote the poetry that brought him to the attention of Duncan, then the radical editor of the first Catholic newspaper in the colony, the *Australasian Chronicle*. Parkes’ friendship with Duncan launched him into the small literary and political world of Sydney and into his long and successful political career. Duncan, meanwhile, became a public servant when his own paper, the *Weekly Register*, folded in 1846, and he accepted the appointment in Moreton Bay which took him out of the mainstream of New South Wales politics.47

One last area of government where the influence of the conservatives appointed before responsible government had to be removed was on government boards. The Cowper ministry announced its opposition to boards in 1857, and in 1858 moved against the chairman of one of the most important, the National Schools Board. This Board had been accustomed to considerable autonomy in the disposal of government funds, and it resisted efforts by governments after 1856 to obtain more precise information about its expenditure. Matters were brought to a head by the Board’s attempt to extend assistance to new categories of schools without parliamentary sanction. The Board’s action, coming only a month after Cowper’s public condemnation of boards, seemed to be deliberately provocative, and resulted in the removal of the chairman, Hubert Plunkett, the former Attorney-General. One of the men who was to replace Plunkett on the National Schools Board was W.A. Duncan, the new Collector of Customs, who had been campaigning for a unified scheme of national schools since the early 1840s.48

While the new political regime reorganised the top of the public service to make its personnel more compatible with its own interests and intentions, it also gathered around it a number of technical experts. These professional men were central to the development projects that were the basis of the faction system, building railways, roads and telegraphs, and clearing the harbours and rivers. Most of them were imported from Britain, though Edward Moriarty became Engineer-in-Chief for Harbours and Rivers in 1858 after early experience in the Survey Department. The other prominent experts were British-trained. They came as young men to the top positions in expanding departments, and remained in those positions for thirty years or more. William Bennett, Commissioner for Main Roads from 1862 to 1889, was recruited by Sir Thomas Mitchell while visiting Sydney in 1855. Edward Cracknell, Superintendent of Telegraphs from 1861 to 1893, came to Australia with Charles Todd to build the South Australian telegraphs in 1855, and moved to New South Wales to supervise the first telegraphs there in 1858. John Whitton was recruited directly from England to the position of Engineer-in-Chief of the Railways in 1856, and remained in that position until 1889.
The interests of these men usually coincided with those of successive governments, except in times of financial crisis, when friction sometimes occurred. In general, however, they remained supreme in their departments and retained close control of their staff.49

From 1856, therefore, the new political leaders consolidated their control over the top echelon of the public service. They replaced supporters of the old regime with their own men. At the same time, they imported a number of professional experts whose interests coincided with their own. These moves were resisted by the men who were being replaced and by their patrons, but by the mid-1860s the top of the public service was effectively transformed.

Centralisation: Paralleling the transformation of the top echelons of the public service was an attempt to centralise control of departmental policy and personnel. Centralisation helped ministers gain greater control over policy decisions such as the disposal of land, the route of a railway, or the placement of a bridge, a school or a post office. At the same time it enabled ministers to eliminate departmental, family and local patronage, placing more jobs at the disposal of the minister. Through the elimination of independent boards and commissions and the establishment of hierarchical organisations and systems of inspection, ministers gathered control into their own hands.

The provision of railways and public works was the mainstay of the patronage system. These functions were, therefore, quickly brought under ministerial control. The establishment of a system of local government had been prevented before 1856 by quarrels between the imperial government and the Legislative Council over the funding of police and gaols. The unsatisfactory measures introduced after 1856 did nothing to encourage the further growth of an autonomous local government system.50 Instead, governments kept control of public works in their own hands. The fledgling railways were controlled by a commission in 1856, and action was already under way to recruit a military engineer from England to direct the railways and other public works. By the time this officer, Captain Ben Martindale, had arrived to take up the position of Chief Commissioner of Roads, Railways and Telegraphs in July 1857, moves had been made to bring these functions under closer government control. Martindale fought for freedom from political interference, but the Railways Act which came into effect in 1858 subjected the Commissioner to the minister completely. Political control was made even more effective in the following year when Lands and Public Works were separated into two Departments, each with its own minister. Martindale became Under Secretary for Public Works and Commissioner for Railways, fully responsible in both positions to the Minister for Public Works. With his independence removed, he resigned a year later, and the position went to career public servant and former town clerk, John Rae, who
had been Secretary and Accountant for Railways under Martindale. A member of Sydney's artistic community, Rae fitted well into the reconstructed public service elite of the post-1856 period.51

Although railways and public works were the most important elements of the patronage system from 1856 to 1885, efforts were made during the 1860s to centralise a number of other functions that were politically important at that time. However, as they became overshadowed in the 1870s by the great growth of the railways, the importance of these other functions faded, and moves for their centralisation became less compelling. The strongest moves towards centralisation were made in the education system, where the ambitious and energetic William Wilkins made use of every opportunity to push for greater centralisation, standardisation and professionalisation of the system under his control. In 1866 the Parkes-Martin government abolished the two school Boards and appointed a Council of Education comprising the minister and four of his appointees, three of whom were members of parliament. The Council reduced the power of local boards, discouraged denominational schools, established a system of government inspection, took over the appointment and removal of teachers and the establishment of their salaries and conditions, and imposed a uniform curriculum.52

Greater control over the establishment of post offices and their staff was also attempted in the early 1860s. A number of Official Post Offices were established in major country towns. Postmasters and Postmistresses in these offices were required to devote themselves entirely to postal business. The system of inspection was extended, and the office of Postmaster-General was made political. Little attention was paid to political control of the Post office after the mid-1860s, however. Plans to develop a system of districts supervised by the Official Post Offices failed to eventuate, inspection was reduced, and the Post Office became an unimportant backwater which preserved the recruitment practices and organisation of earlier periods.53

Moves were also made in the 1860s to centralise and bring under greater political control the police force, the gaols, the magistrates and charitable institutions.54 As in the case of the Post Office, however, little progress was made in these areas over the next twenty years. The result of this selective centralisation was that by 1885 there was enormous diversity in the organisation and personnel practices of the various government departments.

A Flexible Personnel System: A third requirement for the effective political control of the public service was a personnel system which allowed political intervention in appointment, promotion and disciplinary procedures. Prior to responsible government, the patronage system had been modified to give departmental heads some control over the quality and discipline of their staff and provide rank-and-file public
servants with some protection from the effects of favouritism. The application of these restraints on the excesses of patronage was generally abandoned in 1856. Where it was politically useful, and where professional requirements allowed it, ministers took over the appointment, promotion and discipline of departmental staff.\textsuperscript{55}

**Public Service Resistance**

The political control of departmental personnel posed considerable problems for departmental heads. Subject themselves to appointment and removal by their minister, their vulnerability was intensified by lack of control over the quality and discipline of their staff. The potential for conflict inherent in this situation was muted, however, by the political and social closeness of public service leaders and their ministers, the lack of uniformity in the practice of patronage, and the mutual interest of ministers and public servants in the centralisation of control that usually accompanied ministerial control of patronage.

The burden of lack of control by public service heads fell selectively on departments that were politically sensitive or had many relatively unskilled jobs which could be given to political supporters. The Post Office in the early 1860s, the Customs Department, and the Traffic Branch of the Railways Department seemed to bear the brunt of political patronage in jobs, while politically unimportant departments such as the Post Office after the 1860s, and those requiring educated or professional personnel, such as Whitton’s Engineering Branch in the Railways, were left relatively undisturbed by ministerial interference in personnel matters. If open conflict did flare up, it was in the more vulnerable departments. Major Christie at the Post Office and W.A. Duncan in Customs in the 1860s, and Richard Moody in the Railway Traffic Branch in the early 1870s, complained bitterly about their loss of, or lack of, effective departmental control. In Duncan’s case, the political sensitivity of the Customs Department during the taxation controversies of the 1860s brought the underlying conflict between public servant and minister to tinder point. Despite his closeness to Parkes, who was then Colonial Secretary, Duncan was dismissed by his enraged minister, Geoffrey Eagar, for insubordination. Although he was subsequently reinstated, Duncan’s dismissal demonstrated vividly the insecurity of leading public servants in this period.\textsuperscript{56}

There is little evidence of rank-and-file reaction to their loss of protective regulations. Public service unions did not develop until the early 1880s, although a civil service club, in which Fitzpatrick had a leading role, was formed in 1864. Until then there were only sporadic letters in the press and an extended newspaper correspondence in 1878 to indicate discontent with the new system.\textsuperscript{57} The silence of the records does not necessarily indicate rank-and-file acceptance of the political patronage system. It is
more likely to have been a question of tactics in the period up till 1873, and a false sense of security during the expansion of the 1870s.

During the 1860s, the rank-and-file of the service seemed content to let senior officers take the lead in pressure for reform. In the early 1870s, however, the government’s financial situation was so bad that there were large-scale cuts in public service salaries and some reduction in numbers. This threat to their security caused junior public servants to take matters into their own hands, but they relied on the traditional political method of public meetings and petitions to redress particular grievances. The failure of these tactics might have stimulated the formation of public service unions at that time had the remarkable and sudden prosperity and public service expansion of 1873 not intervened. Meanwhile, disenchantment with the public service elite’s obvious weakness, or lack of interest in the welfare of the service as a whole, divided the service and laid the foundation for the ‘massacre of the ancients’ of the 1890s.

The leadership role of senior public servants in the 1860s emerged naturally from personal influence and their motivation to regain some departmental control. Early in the 1860s they seemed optimistic of success. Major Christie wrote in his *Annual Report* in June 1863 of the ‘additional attraction’ that would be given to government employment by contemplated superannuation arrangements. He also expected the passage of a Civil Service Bill, probably along the lines of that just passed in the neighbouring colony of Victoria. Christie envisaged a comprehensive Bill which would classify officers, confer security of salary, provide protection against patronage, establish rules for leave of absence, and introduce a modified system of annual salary increments. However, government financial difficulties over the next ten years proved this faith in the influence of the senior public service and the beneficence of the government unfounded.

In October 1863, soon after Christie wrote so hopefully about public service reform, the government introduced a Superannuation Bill to regulate public service retirement pensions. It had just announced the £4.5m deficit which was to usher in the sustained government financial crisis of the 1860s. The Superannuation Act passed without division in either house was a token gesture to the principle of pension entitlement. What it did in practice was to limit the government’s liability for pensions, and shift much of the burden onto younger members of the service. Lacking a secure actuarial basis and strong financial backing from the government, the scheme quickly failed, and was finally terminated early in 1873 by the Parkes government.

The unhappy consequences of the Superannuation Act left younger public servants deeply suspicious of the public service elite. During its lifetime, the Act provided
generous pensions for retiring public servants at the expense of younger officers, whose contributions were wasted when the scheme collapsed. However, whether the odium incurred by the elite was fully deserved is unclear. Certainly a Civil Service Committee which included Under Secretary for Lands Fitzpatrick, and possibly Auditor-General Rolleston, drafted an amending Bill in 1866 incorporating the demands of a civil service petition of the previous year for a more effective government guarantee of the superannuation fund. Despite numerous attempts to introduce this Bill, and a number of petitions from public servants, it was never passed as the government’s financial problems worsened. Whatever the role played by Rolleston and Fitzpatrick in the framing of the original Bill and in pressing for its amendment, the Act of 1864 went down in public service memory as the work of ‘certain high officials behind the scenes’.

The sense of betrayal on the part of the younger public servants over the superannuation fiasco was intensified by senior officers’ failure to bring about the expected Civil Service Act. From the end of 1865, the need for public service protection was pressing. The financial problems of the government, exacerbated by their lack of success in introducing new forms of taxation, led to strenuous attempts to reduce public service numbers. Fitzpatrick and Rolleston led a movement of senior public servants for a Civil Service Act in 1866. This was probably the same Committee that drafted the Superannuation Amendment Bill that year.

Little is known about the Civil Service Bill the senior officers drew up in 1866. However, it is likely that it contained provisions similar to those in operation before responsible government. This was certainly the case in the recommendations of the 1871-3 Select Committee on the Civil Service which reported early in 1873. This inquiry was promoted by factionally unaligned members of parliament led by Captain Arthur Onslow, who took advantage of current public service discontent to attempt to deal a blow to the leading factions by depriving ministers of their power of patronage. There is no evidence that Onslow was influenced directly by rank-and-file public servants, but he and fellow parliamentarian, David Buchanan, consistently challenged the government’s retrenchment policies and championed public service reform. His original report showed strong commitment to the removal of privilege in public service recruitment and promotion, and the opening up of the service to ‘the humbler classes’. The Committee also included Fitzpatrick, by then a member of the Legislative Assembly. When he was appointed to the Committee he was an independent, but by the time the final report was drafted he was a supporter of Parkes, so he may have modified his views over that period. However, it is doubtful if he was ever in favour of radical changes to public service recruitment practices. Certainly none of the public service leaders who testified to the inquiry were in favour of competitive examinations and complete independence of
personnel matters from political control. Fitzpatrick had been responsible for the introduction of test examinations to the service early in 1871 as a compromise for the competitive examinations suggested by Onslow at that time. In his capacity as a member of the Select Committee he again undermined Onslow, removing Onslow's radical recommendations for competitive examinations, and toning down the more critical aspects of the draft report.

The final version of the report of the Select Committee on the Civil Service was not the radical document Onslow originally drafted. It made recommendations that would only have restored conditions of service enjoyed prior to 1856. If accepted by the government, these recommendations would have curbed the excesses of patronage, but not destroyed it. As it was, however, even these mild reforms were rejected by the Parkes government when it considered the report early in 1873. By that time, government finances were making a dramatic recovery and New South Wales was entering a period of unprecedented prosperity. In this new situation, a program of extensive political patronage was once more possible, and it was important that politicians retain control of the public service for this purpose.

The only result of this period of turmoil for the public service itself was the continuation of the inadequate test examination for entrance to the service which Fitzpatrick had introduced. The public service elite had been shown to be ineffective, if not untrustworthy. Any confrontation which may have developed between the rank-and-file and senior public servants and the government was prevented, however, by the restoration of prosperity in 1873. The resentment and suspicion of junior public servants merely went underground. In 1878, when government financial problems again loomed, these hostilities flared up in a bitter and public debate.

Again the major source of contention was the superannuation question, and the underlying concern was for legislation to protect public servants from political patronage. Ever since the repeal of the Superannuation Act and the rejection of the Select Committee's recommendations in 1873, successive governments had promised a Civil Service Bill to give public servants some protection. Robertson's new Treasurer, Alexander Stuart, a leading merchant and banker, drew up a Bill which was introduced late in 1876 but never proceeded with. In December the following year a group of independents led by Farnell and Fitzgerald took office, with Fitzgerald as Colonial Secretary. Public service leaders, led by Geoffrey Eagar, and two younger public servants, James Dalgarno and Archibald Fraser, took the opportunity to press for a new Superannuation Act. They drew up a scheme and had it ratified at a large meeting of public servants in May 1878.

This action brought a storm of protest from, or on behalf of, junior public servants
who objected to the elitist way the scheme had been proposed. A long debate ensued in the columns of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, with the opponents of the scheme even placing a public notice in the *Herald* warning public servants that:

**THIS SELFISH SCHEME** confers on you no advantages WORTH YOUR HOPING TO REALISE till you are 60 or cripples - no sure promotion, no guarantee of position, no security for what you now enjoy - but simply provides for an annual compulsory deduction from your salaries to support the PROMOTERS, who ought to have provided for themselves whilst they had youth, health, and ample pay.70

Those who opposed the scheme accused senior officers of thinking only of their own security, and urged that the interests of the service as a whole would be better served by insisting on a comprehensive Civil Service Act. P. Drummond of the Mines Department put the case well in his letter to the *Herald*:

One of the avowed objects of the scheme is to secure and promote the efficiency of the Public service and to ensure to the junior members a sort of left-hand promotion. Who ever dreams (I scarcely imagine the House will) of securing these most desirable objects by a Superannuation Act? ... An ... immediate effect of such an Act would be to place the vacant appointments at the disposal of Ministers; and there is at present no security to the general service as to who would be the recipients, no matter what individual claims might be ... What the younger officers look and pray to the House for is a Civil Service Act, not a Superannuation Act. They don't want facilities for retiring, but encouragement for working and progress. This is the proper and only way to promote the efficiency of the service, not the other, which would be the 'cart before the horse'. We young officers (by which phrase I mean those who are a long way from thinking or wishing to retire) are 'the horse'. A Superannuation Act and its effects would be the 'cart', which we are to drag.71

The concern of public servants for such a Civil Service Act was exacerbated by events in neighbouring Victoria. On ‘Black Wednesday’, 9 January 1878, Victorian civil servants had been dismissed without warning in a political crisis, and many had not been re-employed.72

The divided state of the New South Wales service and the instability of the Farnell government militated against the introduction of a Civil Service Act in 1878. However, a renewed interest in civil service regulation was stimulated in 1880 when further government financial problems again brought threats of retrenchment.73 By the end of 1883, when the faction system began to break down with the defeat of the Parkes-Robertson coalition, the question of public service reform had become an important election issue. The events of the 1880s were to bring it to the forefront of the political agenda.
Notes


2. The Settled Districts or Limits of Location stretched in an arc of about 200 miles around Sydney and comprised the original nineteen counties of the colony.


6. Where not otherwise stated information on careers and salaries comes from the *Blue Book*. For reluctance of unpaid magistrates to carry out duties, see Lorraine Barlow, “A Strictly Temporary Office?” N.S.W. Police Magistrates 1830-1860’, paper delivered to Law in History Conference, La Trobe University, May 1985, p.6.

7. For personnel practices before 1856, see McMartin (n.1 above); S.G. Foster, *Colonial Improver: Edward Deas Thomson 1800-1879* (Carlton, Vic.: MUP, 1978); Brian Fletcher, ‘Administrative Reform in New South Wales under Governor Darling,’ *AJPA* 38, no. 3 (September 1979):246-62.


12. Fletcher (n.7 above), pp.249-52, 260; McMartin (n.1 above), pp.179-80.


18. Foster (n.7 above), pp.64-83; McMartin, pp.229-237.

19. For a detailed overview of this period and the strong influence of the Colonial Secretary, Edward Deas Thomson, see Foster, pp.84-125.
20. J. Bach, 'William Spain', *ADB* 1788-1850, p.463; Hazel King, 'Francis Nicholas Rossi', *ibid.*, pp.399-400; 'John McLerie', *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.188-9; 'Mayne' and 'Some Aspects of Police Administration' (n.9 above); McMartin (n.1 above), pp.241-6. An Edward Mayne, the brother of the London Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Richard Mayne, was also a Land Commissioner, but was dismissed for misuse of his position. William Mayne may have been related to this family, as all three were born in Dublin. See McMartin, p.207.


22. Select Committee on the Post Office (LC V & P, 1851, 2nd sess.).


25. 'George Barney' (unattrib.), *ADB* 1788-1850, pp.60-1; McMartin (n.1 above), pp.205, 216, 280-81, 290.


27. Foster (n.7 above), pp.64-125; McMartin (n.1 above), p.256.

28. For descriptions of the constitutional and administrative changes on the transfer to responsible government see Brian Dickey, 'Responsible Government in New South Wales: The Transfer of Power in a Colony of Settlement', *JRAHS* 60, pt. 4 (December 1974):217-42; Foster (n.7 above), pp.142-4; McMartin (n.1 above), pp.251-92.


35. All of the politicians who became premier or coalition leader in the faction period, except for the independent, Farnell, came from new middle class or working class backgrounds and most were active literary men. Henry Parkes was the son of a failed English tenant farmer and day labourer; an ivory turner by trade, he ran a small shop and the Empire when he was first elected to the Legislative Council in 1854. James Martin’s father was a groom; when he was elected to the Legislative Council in 1848 he was a successful young lawyer and journalist. William Forster, James Robertson and Charles Cowper were all prosperous landowners, but Forster’s father had been an army surgeon. James Robertson’s father a watchmaker, and Cowper’s father the assistant Colonial Chaplain. Parkes, Martin and Forster were prominent poets and writers. Robertson was a friend of Charles Harpur, the poet whom he appointed Gold Commissioner in 1859 on becoming Minister for Lands and Public Works. For the interactions of these politicians and public servants in the literary and political world see Martin, Parkes; Nadel; and Normington-Rawling (n.15 above); Roe (n.5 above). For the ‘middling-class’ nature of liberal and radical politics in the 1850s and 1860s see Baker, ‘Origins’ (n.30 above), pp.172-9; Connolly; and Irving (n.29 above); Martin, Parkes (n.15 above), pp.46-199, esp. 47-8. See also Bede Nairn, ‘Sir James Martin’, ADB 1851-1890, pp.216-9; and ‘William Forster’, ibid., pp.199-201; K.J. Cable, ‘Sir Charles Cowper’, ibid., pp.475-82. For Robertson see Baker, p.172; Bede Nairn, ‘Sir John Robertson’, ibid., pp.38-46; Normington-Rawling, esp. p.232.
36. Fitzpatrick (1818-1881) was born in New South Wales five years after his father, who later became Chief Bailiff of the Supreme Court, was transported. Educated first by his school teacher mother, and then at J.D. Lang’s Australian College, he joined progressive educationalist Henry Carmichael at his new teachers training college in 1835. When Bourke’s education reforms did not eventuate, the school failed, and Fitzpatrick joined the Lands Office in 1837. In 1851 he became Clerk of the Executive Council and helped devise the administrative arrangements when responsible government was introduced. When Lands and Public Works divided in 1859, he remained Under Secretary of Lands. As a politician, he supported the Cowper-Robertson faction from 1869-1870 and Parkes from 1872 to 1877. See Brian Dickey, ‘Michael Fitzpatrick’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.184-5; and ‘Responsible Government’ (n.28 above), pp.228-36; Foster (n.7 above); E.J. Lea-Scarlett, ‘Columbus Fitzpatrick’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.183-4; Loveday (n.29 above), pp.346-7; McMartin (n.1 above); Martin, *Parkes* (n.15 above).

37. Henry Halloran’s father, Laurence, was transported to New South Wales in 1819. He set up the Sydney Grammar School, which was supported by wealthy emancipists, and was joined by Henry (1811-1893) and his mother in 1822. By 1827 Laurence’s various educational and journalistic schemes had collapsed, and Henry joined the Survey Department as a clerk. By 1856 he was Chief Clerk. In 1859 he helped Robertson reorganise the Survey Department and the Crown Lands Office. He remained as Principal Under Secretary until 1878. He is chiefly remembered in women’s history for the fact that he married the first woman graduate of Melbourne University, Bella Guerin (MA 1885), at the age of 79 after writing a poem to her achievement which led them to meet. See A.G. Austin, ‘Laurence Halloran’, *ADB* 1788-1850, pp.506-7; Brian Dickey, ‘Henry Halloran’, *ADB* 1851-1890, p.327; McMartin (n.1 above), p.281; Martin, *Parkes*; Normington-Rawling. Henry Kendall provides a delightful glimpse of the combined literary and public service world in a letter to Harpur, where he describes Halloran calling him into his office each morning to treat him to ‘an emphatic recital of his latest’ (Normington-Rawling, pp.264-5). When Halloran became ‘the Secretary’s secretary’ in 1866 and Kendall joined the same office, *Punch* printed verses satirising the three public servant poets (Normington-Rawling, p.290).

38. Geoffrey Eagar’s mother was deserted by her prominent ex-convict husband when he was a child. She supported the children by running a business which collapsed in the early 1830s, when Eagar (1818-1891) started work. Normington-Rawling (p.23) claims he printed Laurence Halloran’s *Gleaner*, but Austin (see below) says this paper lasted only a few months in 1827; Eagar would have been only nine then. He worked his way up in the mercantile world as a clerk and accountant. In 1854 he gained an important position in the emancipist’s bank, the Bank of New South Wales. In 1859 he
was appointed to the Legislative Council and became Minister for Public Works in the ministry of his old school friend Forster. He entered the Legislative Assembly in 1863 and was Treasurer in Martin’s ministry from 1863 to 1865 and Martin’s and Parkes’ ministry from 1866 to 1868. He retired from politics in 1868; in 1871 Martin, again Premier, appointed him to the Treasury, and the following year made him Under Secretary. For Eagar’s literary career see Lamb, ‘Eagar’ (n.31 above), pp.29-30; Normington-Rawling, p.23. For his early career see R.F. Holder, *Bank of New South Wales: A History* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1970); Lamb, ‘Eagar’; Financing of Government Expenditure; and ‘Early Overseas Borrowing’ (n.31 above); N. McLachlan, ‘Edward Eagar (1787-1866): A Colonial Spokesman in Sydney and London’, *HS* 10, no. 40 (May, 1963):431-56.

39. William Elyard (1804-1865) joined the Colonial Secretary’s Department soon after he arrived in New South Wales in 1821. He became Chief Clerk in 1841 and succeeded Edward Deas Thomson as Principal Secretary in 1856. His brother Samuel was in the same Department from 1837 to 1868; he had attended the Australian College with Fitzpatrick. See M.J. Saclier, ‘William and Samuel Elyard’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.139-40; Foster (n.7 above), pp.139-40, 144; McMartin (n.1 above).

40. The Moriartys were sons of Merion Moriarty, Portmaster and Harbormaster from 1843 to 1857, member of the Legislative Assembly from 1860 to 1864, and land reformer. Abram (1830-1918) joined the Colonial Secretary’s Department in 1846. By 1853 he was Chief Clerk in the Lands Department. In 1857 he became Police Magistrate and Commissioner of Crown Lands for New England. After a short period as a member of the Legislative Assembly he became Clerk of the Executive Council in 1858. In 1859-60 he assisted Governor Bowen to establish the Queensland civil service. In 1860 was appointed Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands in NSW, and assisted Robertson to draft his land legislation. He became Under Secretary of Lands as well in 1869 on Fitzpatrick’s resignation. He was dismissed from both positions a year later, and then had a chequered career in the Lands Department until he retired as President of the Goulburn Land Board in 1896. Edward (1825-1896) joined the Survey Department in 1849. He became Engineer-in-Chief for Harbours and Rivers in 1858, a position he held until 1888. See Baker, ‘Origins’ (n.30 above), p.173; J.T. Maher, ‘Abram Orpen Moriarty’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.289-90; Alan Powell, ‘Merion Marshall Moriarty’, *ibid.*, pp.290-91 (this includes information on Edward); V & P 1870-71, vol. III, pp.781-806.

41. Alexander McLean (1824-1862) and Harold Maclean (sic) (1828-1889) were sons of Captain John Maclean, Superintendent of Convicts from 1837 to 1855. Alexander joined the Survey Department in 1842. He became Chief Draftsman in 1856 and was Secretary to the Court of Claims from 1854 to 1859. When Robertson and
Halloran reorganised the department in 1859, McLean was made Acting Surveyor-General over the hand of the generalist Halloran. In 1861 he was confirmed in the position, but died in the following year. Harold joined the Colonial Secretary's Department in 1844. By 1852 he was Assistant Gold Commissioner and from 1858 to 1864 was Senior Gold Commissioner on the western goldfields. He became Sheriff in 1864 and in 1874 Comptroller-General of Prisons, a post he held until 1889. See C. Davis, ‘Alexander Grant McLean’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.182-3; Suzanne Edgar, ‘Harold MacLean’, *ibid.*, pp.183-4; McMartin (n.1 above), pp.280-82; M.L. Sernack Cruise, Penal Reform in New South Wales: Frederick William Neitenstein 1896-1909, Ph.D thesis, University of Sydney, 1980 (for Harold).

42. Christie (1808-1873) held a number of unimportant posts, often simultaneously, from 1840, following a period of military service in the colony. In 1852 he was appointed Postmaster-General at a salary of £1,000. See Haworth (n.23 above); Board of Inquiry into the Post Office Department, *Report* (V & P 1862, vol. III), esp. 5, 6, 31-2, 57, 68, 72; Correspondence Concerning Official Post Offices, *ibid.*, vol. II, pp.922-4; PMG, *Annual Report* 1860 (V & P 1861-62, vol. II), p.10; Martin, *Parkes* (n.15 above), p.211.

43. Barney (1792-1862) served under Governors Bourke and Gipps as Colonial Engineer, and in 1846-7 led an abortive attempt to establish a new convict settlement at Port Curtis. In 1849 he became Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands and in 1855, Surveyor-General as well, inheriting Mitchell's disorganised department. In 1851 he was appointed to the Legislative Council. See n.25 above; McMartin (n.1 above), p.281.

44. Mayne (1808-1902) was appointed Land Commissioner for Wellington after attempting to establish himself on the land. He was Inspector-General of Police from 1852 to 1856, when he became Auditor-General. He was on the Legislative Council from 1852 to 1856, and was reappointed briefly by the conservative Donaldson ministry in 1856. He was made Government Commercial Agent in London in 1864. See King, ‘Mayne’ (n.21 above); Lamb, ‘Eagar’ (n.32 above), p.34.

45. Rolleston (1817-1888) became Land Commissioner in 1842 after attempting farming. In 1854 he married Katherine Leslie, daughter of the Laird of Warthill and sister of Patrick Leslie. He reputedly declined the presidency of Montserrat and returned to New South Wales as private secretary to the Governor. At the end of 1855 he was appointed Registrar-General. He was Auditor-General from 1864 to 1883, during which time he also became a major pastoralist and a company director. See Chris Cunneen, ‘Christopher Rolleston’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.55-6; Lamb, ‘Eagar’, pp.34-5; McMartin.

46. Gibbes (1787-1873) held positions as Collector of Customs in Jamaica and

47. Duncan (1811-1885) was a Catholic convert, publisher, bookseller, journalist and teacher in Scotland before coming to NSW in 1837 to teach in the Catholic system. He was foundation editor of the *Australasian Chronicle* in 1839. He established his own paper in 1843. He had wide historical, literary and political interests, and was critic, publisher, patron and friend of colonial poets. He remained Collector of Customs until 1881. Parkes, Halloran, Duncan and Harpur became friends while Duncan ran the *Chronicle* and the *Register*. See Martin, *Parkes*, pp.30-41; Nadel; and Normington-Rawling (n.15 above); Michael Roe, 'William Augustine Duncan', *ADB 1788-1850*, p.335-7; and *Quest* (n.5 above).


Official Post Offices were listed for the first time in the 1862 Blue Book. By 1871 interest in centralisation had receded and the number of separate Official Post Offices was reduced from 18 to 5. See PMG, Annual Report 1870 (V & P 1870-71, vol. III), p.15; Annual Report 1871 (V & P 1872, vol. I), p.4; Blue Book 1871.


55. For detailed discussion of regulations and practice see Loveday (n.29 above). See also McMartin (n.1 above), pp.274-8, 289-92.

56. PMG, Annual Report 1860, p.10; Board of Inquiry, evid. of Christie, p.6; and Correspondence (n.42 above); G.E. Caiden, 'The Study of Australian Administrative History', paper delivered at APSA Conference, Melbourne, August 1963, p.9; Correspondence Respecting Removal Of W.A. Duncan, Esq. from the Office of Collector of Customs; Further Correspondence; and Correspondence Respecting Removal of Messrs Berney and Jones, and Reinstatement of Mr Duncan (V & P 1868-9, vol. II); Lamb, 'Eagar' (n.31 above), pp.27, 37-9; Martin, Parkes (n.15 above), pp.245-6; Select Committee on the Civil Service, Minutes of Evidence (V & P 1872-3, vol. I) evid. of Moody, pp.9-13, 31-4, 44-5.

57. Athenaeum 8 January 1876, p.18; Testis 15 January 1876, p.28, both quoted in Kenneth W. Knight, The Development of the Public Service of New South Wales from Responsible Government (1856) to the Establishment of the Public Service Board (1895), MA thesis, University of Sydney, 1954, p.58; DT 27 March 1880, quoted in Caiden, p.10. For 1878 correspondence see n.70 below. For club see PSB, Annual Report 1899 (V & P 1900, vol. II), App. XXII.

58. For attempts at retrenchment during 1869-70, see V & P 1870, vol. I, pp.1009-40. For persons retrenched, see p.1044. A petition from public servants concerning proposed salary reductions was presented on 16 February 1871; on 20 February a public meeting was held with William Brookes as chair, and a further petition was presented. The inhabitants of Newcastle presented another petition on 25 April. See V & P 1870-71, vol. II, pp.1115-9. For reductions in salaries in Public Works Department see ibid., pp.1085-114; and V & P 1872, vol. I, pp.1299-315.


60. Treasurer Smart announced the deficit on 4 September. The Superannuation Act (27 Vic. No. 11) was assented to 22 April 1864. The Superannuation Repeal Act (36 Vic. No. 29) was assented to 1 May 1873.

62. Amending Bills were introduced in July 1865, February 1870, May 1871 and November 1872. Only the 1871 Bill reached second reading. An actuarial report from George Black was made in April 1870 (*V & P* 1870, vol. I), pp.1047-53. The quotation is from George Reid, later Premier of New South Wales, who joined the Treasury soon after the 1864 Act as a temporary replacement for Accountant, James Thomson.

63. Loveday (n.29 above), pp.346-7; Select Committee on the Civil Service (n.56 above), evid. of Rolleston, pp.17-18. For retrenchment see *V & P* 1866, vol. I, p.324.

64. Select Committee, *Report and Proceedings of Committee*, esp. p.9. For Buchanan see *V & P* 1872, vol. I, p.67; for Onslow, p.288. For evidence of leaders see *Progress Report* (n.13 above). The Select Committee was set up on 21 November 1871 by the Martin-Robertson coalition a year after Onslow first mooted an inquiry on 15 November 1870; it was re-established by the Parkes government in July 1872 and made a progress report on 2 August. The final report was made on 5 March 1873.


66. For finances see Lamb, ‘Crown Land Policy’ (n.31 above).

67. Dalley, *PD* 1883-5, p.3718. Alexander Stuart (1824-1886), the son of a schoolteacher and clerk, came to New South Wales from Scotland in 1851 at the age of 27 after a career as a mercantile and banking clerk in several countries. He joined the Bank of New South Wales in 1852 and in 1854 was promoted to Secretary. Eagar also joined the bank in 1854 and claimed to have been offered the secretaryship at that time. Stuart went into business in 1855 but remained a director of the bank in 1855-61, 1867-76 and 1877-9. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1876 and became Treasurer in Robertson’s government until March 1877. He was elected again from 1880 to 1885. In August 1882 he succeeded Fitzpatrick as leader of the opposition, and in November defeated the Parkes-Robertson government on the land question. After the ensuing elections he became Premier in January 1883. His government reformed the land laws and introduced a Civil Service Act in 1884. He suffered a severe stroke in October 1884 and resigned a year later. See Bede Nairn and Martha Rutledge, ‘Sir Alexander Stuart’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.211-4; Lamb, ‘Eagar’ (n.31 above), p.31.

68. James Dalgarno was born in Sydney in 1841. He began training as an engineer, but his father died and he joined the merchants Brierly, Dean and Co. for four years. In 1858 he became a clerk in the General Post Office. In 1873, he accompanied the minister, Saul Samuel, to the US and UK to organise the overseas mail service. (This position was offered to George Reid, who was then at the Treasury. Eagar would not release him, and earned Reid’s lasting dislike.) In 1889 he became Assistant
Secretary and in 1893 Secretary. He finally became Deputy Postmaster-General in 1901, after Lambton, who had held the top job since 1866, retired at the age of 67. He helped establish technical education and promoted the School of Arts and the Art Society. Active in public service affairs, he tried to establish a Public Service Association in 1895. See *Illustrated Sydney News* 26 December 1889, p.18; *PSJ* June 1900, p.6; *Transmitter* November 1895, p.9; January 1904, p.5; Sir George Houstoun Reid, *My Reminiscences* (London: Cassell & Co., 1917), p.24.

69. Archibald Fraser (1832-1896), the son of an Indian Army officer, was educated at Sandhurst Military College and qualified in law at the University of Edinburgh. He arrived in Australia in 1852 and in 1854 joined the NSW public service as a clerk in the Immigration Office. He transferred to the Crown Law Office in 1857 and by 1870 had become Clerk of the Peace. From 1887 to 1896 he was Under Secretary for Justice. He was active in public service affairs: in the early 1870s he and his friend Charles Goodchap helped establish the Civil Service Cooperative Society; he was credited with a major role in the Civil Service Bill of 1884, and he and Goodchap were members of the first Civil Service Board, where they clashed with Eagar, Fraser's former head, John Williams, and Stuart. In 1896 he was retired by the new Public Service Board and died soon after, predeceased by four days by Goodchap. See Bruce Mitchell, 'Archibald Colquhoun Fraser', *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.214-5; *SMH* 18 April 1871, p.5; 26 October 1896, p.4; *TCJ* 9 February 1889, p.28; CSB, *Report* 1885 (V & P 1885-6, vol. II), pp.46-51; *PD* 1896, pp.1009-38, 24 June 1896; J.H. Forsyth, ‘Charles Augustus Goodchap’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.261-2.

70. *SMH* 8 June 1878, p.10. A notice of the meeting appeared 27 May and a report on 29 May. Letters appeared every day from 30 May to 1 June, 3-4, 7-8, 12-13, 15, 19 and 24-18 June, and 1, 6 and 8 July. The *SMH* commented in an editorial 5 June.

71. 1 June, p.3.

72. Caiden (n.56 above), p.4.

73. E.g. *DT* 27 March 1880, p.6.
CHAPTER 3
WOMEN WORKERS AND THE STATE: EQUALITY BY DEFAULT

The system of local and family patronage in public service employment which flourished in the period before self-government in New South Wales was highly beneficial to some women. Women's position as working partners in family economic activities, and their prominence in the commercial affairs of large country towns, placed them in a favourable position for appointment on equal terms with men to the post offices of the Settled Districts. Several factors helped to preserve the equal pay and conditions enjoyed by these women throughout the century, and to extend it to women recruited to the new telegraph offices after 1870. Failure to effectively centralise control of post and telegraph activities in the 1860s, and the relative lack of political importance of these departments in the 1870s and 1880s, meant that these departments escaped centralised control of patronage. The high rate of young widowhood throughout the period, the growth of the petty bourgeoisie and the new middle class in the large country towns and the suburbs of Sydney, and the failure of many post-1861 selections to provide a living for farming households generated pressures for the employment of widows, wives and daughters. The general affluence and high employment rate of the 1870s and early 1880s allowed women's equal treatment to remain unchallenged until political and economic conditions changed radically after 1884.

DECENTRALISED AUTONOMY AND THE WOMEN OF THE POST OFFICE

Local Autonomy and Local Business

In 1856 there were 177 post offices in New South Wales servicing a tiny population of 270,000. These post offices were scattered over a distance of 1,280 miles from Gladstone in the north to Albury in the south, and over 400 miles from Sydney in the east to Deniliquin in the west. Prior to 1851 this vast colony had also included the territory which became Victoria. Lack of development of roads, railways and river navigation and the dangers of bushranging made communications between Sydney and this system of post offices difficult and slow. In addition, there had been no attempt at central organisation of the Postal Department before 1853. Little supervision was
exercised over the country post offices, and there was no system of inspection until the recently-appointed Postmaster-General, Major Christie, attempted to institute this in 1856.¹

The extreme decentralisation of the Post Office Department brought about by geography, lack of development and inefficiency meant that appointments of local postal officials were usually left to the community the post office served, even though the Postmaster-General was officially responsible for their nomination. Major Christie, the energetic Postmaster-General who had been appointed just before self-government, lamented in his second Report in 1856 that he had to rely on local information in making decisions about the establishment of post offices because of the difficulties of travelling and the lack of an inspector to be the ‘Eyes of the Department’.² Giving instructions on how to apply for a postal line, Christie made it clear that such an application should be accompanied by a firm recommendation as to a likely incumbent for the post office.³ Over a decade later local recommendation was still the crucial factor in deciding who should have charge of the post office. Postmaster-General John Docker pointed out in his Report for 1870 that the residents of a town ‘generally nominate’ and their recommendation ‘is for the most part adopted’ ... [for] ‘It is impossible for the head office, at this great distance from most of the country post offices, to exercise any check upon this matter’.⁴ There was also considerable doubt as to whether city clerks would be willing to take up positions in the country.⁵ Certainly the relatives of influential city men preferred positions in Sydney. When Sir Charles Cowper’s son, Charles, was looking for a government billet in 1869, he accepted the police magistracy at Bourke only on condition that he be transferred to Sydney as soon as possible. He stayed in Bourke for less than a year before he took up a Sydney appointment.⁶ In any case, local residents were jealous of the privilege of choosing their own Postmaster or Postmistress. In 1879 the residents of Lower Gundaroo complained about the removal of an old established resident from the position of Postmaster and the appointment of a ‘comparative stranger’ who had only been in the district for a couple of years.⁷

The first appointments to post offices in the larger country towns were given to Clerks of Petty Sessions. Where a town was not a centre for the justice system, or the Petty Sessions Clerk was already overburdened with work, storekeepers and innkeepers were obvious candidates for post office duties. The public house and the store were the central institutions of the early town,⁸ and both provided convenient locations and suitable personnel for the post office. Prior to 1862 there were no official post office buildings, so persons assuming postal duties had to have ample premises in a central street. Storekeepers and innkeepers had such premises. In addition, their character and
financial soundness were well-known. From the point of view of the business people involved, the post office attracted customers to their shop or inn, so the position of Postmaster or Postmistress was eagerly sought after. Colin Ross, the pioneer storekeeper at Inverell, also established the first Post Office there in 1855. Thomas Dangar, member of the Legislative Assembly from 1861 to 1864, had been the first innkeeper, storekeeper and Postmaster at Scone from 1836 to 1840. George Wickham, the Postmaster at Parramatta before his wife, Jemima, took over in 1838, was a chemist and grocer. By 1862, 274 of the 368 post offices were run by people with other sources of income, ranging from publicans to farmers to surgeons, despite the fact that the volume of work at a number of post offices had grown so that it provided a living by itself. Most frequently, these combined post offices and businesses were run by storekeepers.

Women in the Post Office

The prominent part played by women in retailing and innkeeping in the large country towns of New South Wales paved the way for their entry into an equally strong place in the towns' post offices. At West Maitland, Parramatta and Brisbane, the three largest towns outside Sydney in 1856, Mrs Daly, Mrs Wickham and Mrs Barney presided over establishments of some size and importance, and in small towns and hamlets throughout the countryside women ran the post office under the same terms and conditions as men.

The evidence is too scanty to explain the position of these women definitively. However, it does suggest that the high incidence of young widowhood and the prevalence of prosperous family enterprises involving husbands and wives as working partners gave women an active role in the commercial life of the country towns. These activities made them respected members of the commercial community and their right to responsible positions and equality of pay was not questioned.

The positions the leading postmistresses held were of considerable importance. The Post Office was the principal means of communication before the advent of the railway and the telegraph. Apart from the personal news it carried from one end of the colony to the other and to and from the world outside Australia, it was important for business and for politics. In particular, the Post Office carried enormous numbers of newspapers all over the colony, extending the influence of the city, and bringing knowledge of the outside world to the country areas. Politicians, newspaper editors and local residents were all anxious to have a reliable and efficient postal service.

The towns in which Mrs Daly, Mrs Wickham and Mrs Barney presided over the Post Office were the largest in the country areas. When Mrs Wickham became
Postmistress at Parramatta in 1838 it was already the largest town outside Sydney, with a population of 5,000 in 1841. Mrs Daly took over the Post Office at West Maitland in 1853 when it was a town of over 3,000 people. Brisbane had a population of over 2,500 people when Mrs Barney became Postmistress in 1855, and it had grown to 7,000 by 1860. D.N. Jeans calls these towns ‘halfway metropolises’, which headed the regional hierarchy with their wide range of government officials and services, cultural occupations, tradespeople and specialist shops.  

In keeping with the size of the towns in which they were located, these Post Offices were among the busiest in the colony. Witnesses at inquiries into the Post Office in 1858 and 1862 agreed that Mrs Daly at West Maitland had the greatest amount of business in the colony. Recognition of this fact was made in 1862 when she was made one of the eighteen Official Postmasters and Postmistresses and awarded one of the highest salaries of this select band. In 1869 she became the highest-paid Postmistress or Postmaster in New South Wales, with a salary of £300. Two other Official Post Offices established in 1862 were run by women: Mrs Wickham at Parramatta continued to be one of the highest-paid with a salary of £280, and at Penrith, Mrs Kellett was made Official Postmistress with a salary of £200.  

These Official Post Offices were conceived as coordinating offices for the surrounding district, and had considerable status and responsibility. Official Post Office buildings with quarters attached were planned, and many of the substantial and attractive Post Office buildings still to be seen in New South Wales country towns testify to the standard of housing supplied with these jobs. The work of Official Post Offices was expanded to incorporate the Money Order Office which had just been established. Official Postmistresses and Postmasters were expected to devote themselves entirely to the business of the Post Office, and salaries of £200 to £300, plus commission on stamps and money orders, were meant to compensate for any loss of revenue that had previously been earned in other businesses. Official Postmistresses and Postmasters were considered as part of a career service and had to be prepared to move to another locality if required by the Department.  

By the time the Official Post Offices were established, Brisbane was the capital of the newly-separated colony of Queensland. Mrs Barney, the Brisbane Postmistress, had become the virtual head of the Postal Department of Queensland when it became a separate colony in 1860. In that year she described her duties to a Select Committee inquiry in the following terms:

... general supervision of, and responsibility for, all the business of the Office (excepting the accounts); noting and correcting irregularities of other Post Offices; collecting reports of the due performance of the contracts; receiving and replying to all correspondence connected with the Letter Branch of the
Department; attending to any complaints that do not require to be referred to the Postmaster-General [who was a Minister of the Government]; keeping the ship receipt and despatch book of mails, foreign and extra colonial, and the registered letters connected with the same; assisting each and all when they require it, which is very frequently.  

The Committee agreed with the Acting Postmaster-General that 'the working of the Department is at present in every respect satisfactory' and recommended that Mrs Barney's salary be raised to £350 per annum.  

As well as being of some importance in the colony, the positions that the Postmistresses held were much sought after. Thomas Dangar reported to the Inquiry into the Post Office in 1862 that positions in even the smallest hamlets generally had three, four or five applicants for them, and the Superintendent of the Letter Branch of the Sydney office testified in 1858 that there was no problem getting efficient staff in the larger towns such as West Maitland and Parramatta because the salaries there were 'very good'. The bitter conflict that broke out in Queensland over Mrs Barney's job in 1863 illustrated the sort of rivalry that the right to such a position could engender.  

At least two of the leading Postmistresses of the period had dependent children, but their maternal responsibilities were apparently not seen as a hindrance to carrying out their postal work. This is despite the fact that they had to receive or meet the mails at all hours of the day and night. Little information is available on these women, and we know nothing about Jemima Wickham's family. As she was retired in 1870, she was probably about thirty-three in 1838 when she was appointed to the Post Office. It is likely, therefore, that she had children. Eliza Daly had at least two children. Her son was working as her assistant in 1864 and her daughter in 1878, so they were probably small children in 1853 when she took up her post. She retired in 1883, so was probably about thirty-five when she became Postmistress. This would be consistent with her having young children at the time. Mrs Barney was probably older. As she was retired early, it is not possible to calculate her age from that date. However, her son started work in her office in 1859, four years after she became Postmistress. She also had a daughter, but her age and occupation are not known. As she was not working in her mother’s office, she was probably younger than her brother.  

A glimpse of the demanding nature of the work of the post office is given us by Henry Handel Richardson in the fictional recreation of her mother’s life in *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Although she is talking about Victoria at a later period, it is probably an accurate, though negative, picture of a postmistress’s work:  

had there been the day’s work only to contend with, she would not have complained. It was the nights that wore her down. The nights were cruel. On every one of them without exception, between half-past one and a quarter to two, there came a knocking like thunder at the front door. This was the coach
arriving with the night mail: she had to open up the office, drag a heavy mail-bag in, haul another out. Not until this was over could there be any question of sleep for her.27

Richardson’s mother ran a small country post office. The volume of work at large offices like West Maitland and Penrith was enormous in comparison. Mrs Daly was responsible for 134 incoming mails and 128 outgoing mails a week in 1862, and her office was open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and 1 to 2 p.m. on Sundays. Mrs Kellett at Penrith had, in addition to over 150 daytime mails, thirty that were despatched during the night. Her office was open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and for two hours morning and evening on Sundays.28

None of the official inquiries that investigated the post office in 1858, 1860 and 1862 questioned the fact that the leading post offices were run by women earning high salaries, and with dependent children, even though the volume of work and the salaries of these offices were discussed. Instead, Mrs Daly and Mrs Wickham were singled out for special mention as examples of ‘very good’ postmasters (sic),29 and Mrs Barney received the following testimonial from Major Christie at the time of the separation of Queensland:

Our official connection so rapidly approaches its termination, that I cannot allow it to close without expressing to you my sense of the very efficient manner in which you conducted the office immediately under your control, and your supervision of the various post offices and mail contractors in Queensland; and I have great pleasure in being able to say that duties of so onerous, and frequently of so difficult a nature, could scarcely be performed more satisfactorily. During the whole tenure of office, I cannot recollect one serious complaint having been made against you, and in postal matters this is saying a great deal. Your accounts were also regularly and correctly rendered, and, in fact, the whole business of your office was performed with zeal and ability, and evidently with a perfect knowledge of postal duties.30

It was only when a change of regime brought to bear a new set of political and economic factors that Mrs Barney’s competence to fill such a role was challenged, and she was dismissed after a long and bitter struggle.31 In New South Wales, however, no such radical change took place, and the position of women such as Eliza Daly and Jemima Wickham remained unquestioned.

Women in the Commercial Community

Little is known about the situation of women in the large country towns of New South Wales in this period. However, what we know of women’s economic activity generally, and of particular aspects which are well-documented, suggests that their active participation in the commercial life of these towns gave them their entrée into responsible positions in the Post Office.

The contribution made by wives and daughters of pastoralists and farmers in the
pioneering period has been well-documented, from accounts of small settlers like Sarah Midgley to large pastoralists such as Elizabeth Macarthur at Parramatta and Harriet King at Penrith. The lives of small townspeople have not received the same attention. We do know, however, that women played an important role in retailing and innkeeping in the early days of settlement. Katrina Alford refers to ‘a distinct pattern of some female involvement in commerce, real estate, manufacturing and retailing’ which seemed to recede as the century unfolded. This perception appears to be accurate for large-scale commercial activity in Sydney, although Shirley Fisher reports the continued presence of the ‘working widow’, the small businesswoman and the working wife of the urban poor between 1870 and 1890, and literary evidence supports this observation. Alan Atkinson’s study of women publicans in 1838 confirms Alford’s picture of decreasing commercial activity by Sydney women. He suggests, however, that women retained their status as leading innkeepers in the larger country towns, even though their participation was starting to decline in the capital.

The most direct evidence of the part played by women in the commercial life of the country town comes from such studies of publicans. Not only did publicans have to be licensed, but local historians, travellers’ accounts and advertisements reveal the important role of the publican’s wife even where she was not the nominal licensee.

In 1838, thirteen of the 244 country inns were licensed by women. These inns were clustered in the town centres of the older settlements of Parramatta, the Hawkesbury, Maitland and Bathurst. At Campbelltown, two of the seven innkeepers were women and at Bathurst three out of nine. In Parramatta, two of the inns in the main street, including the famous Red Cow, were run by women. These figures reveal only the cases where women were the actual licensees of the inn. Many of them were widows who had no doubt run the hotel in partnership with their husbands while he held the licence. Advertisements for the sale or lease of hotels often specified their suitability for a ‘steady industrious couple’, and some revealed that the business had been given up because of the ill-health or death of the licensee’s wife. Testimonials were often made to ‘the excellent conduct and great exertions’ of a licencee’s wife. At Maitland Elizabeth Muir managed the Union Inn from its inception in 1829, even though her husband, the Chief Constable at Newcastle, was the nominal licencee; after he died in 1833 she continued to run the new Family Hotel they had just built. The Ross Inn at Penrith was run by John and Susannah Perry, even though only John’s name would have appeared on the licence. The Red Cow at Parramatta was run from 1800 by the licencee Charles Walker and his wife Hannah. When he died in 1826, Hannah took over the licence and ran the hotel till her death in 1841. Even when Charles Walker was alive, it was acknowledged as Hannah’s business. Michael Fitzpatrick, who was born in 1818, claimed in later years that he was born ‘just opposite Mother Walker’s “Red Cow”’.
These inns were large establishments which supplied an important social focus for the town, and their proprietors were respected for their excellent establishments. In 1841 the Red Cow had a staff of 12 persons. The traveller John Hood testified to its efficient management in 1843 when he described this 'sweet, English-looking, unpretending hostelry ... kept by Mrs Walker.' According to his account there was 'None better in England [and] none so good in Sydney.'

There is little evidence about women as retailers in these large country towns, but the similarities of storekeeping and innkeeping make it feasible to assume that where women were active as hotelkeepers, they were also active as retailers. An examination of Brabazon's Town Directory of 1843 supports this supposition. In Parramatta, a town of about 5,000 persons, there were listed three women publicans, a draper, a grocer, a chemist, a dealer, a stationer, a template worker, a bonnet maker and a bonnet cleaner, all married women or widows.

The activities of women in the commercial life of the towns of the Settled Districts before 1856 suggest that men and women worked together as economic partners in this pioneering period just as they did on the land. An examination of the local histories of these large country towns reveals the inhabitants struggling to make a living in a variety of ventures which involved all members of the family. For instance Elizabeth Muir, the innkeeper at Maitland, and her husband George, worked a farm while he held the position of Police Constable at nearby Newcastle and she ran the Union Inn and the Post Office. After George's death in 1833, Elizabeth continued to run the new hotel they had just built until 1840.

This same sort of economic partnership is described by a Parramatta resident in a letter to relatives in England in 1820:

Myself and my husband have had many hard struggles to gain the means of an honest livelihood. To accomplish it we have worked night and day. I thank God that he crowned our endeavours with success. I rose early and went to market bringing home my articles on my head, to furnish my shop to the best advantage. With the greatest care of our little profits, and the greatest frugality in housekeeping, we collected together a small sum sufficient to buy a little house. I then applied to the Gentlemen of the Colony, for a Licence; which they not only granted, but said they would assist me and my husband in any way in their power, as they had noticed our industry and that we associated with none but persons of good character ...

It is probably also important that these family enterprises were generally successful. Marilyn Lake has shown the bitterness and cruelty that could be engendered in family enterprises that failed in the later period of small farming selections and soldier settlement farms in Victoria. The present study shows the important difference lack of economic success made to relationships between men and women in the last two
decades of the century. In this early period, however, country towns were prosperous and growing, and enterprising families could see the success of their cooperative efforts.

Early Widowhood and the Post Office

The prevalence of early widowhood was another important factor in women’s active participation in the commercial life of the country towns. Demographic evidence for Victoria in 1881 provides a picture of expectation of life in a society not too far removed from mid-century New South Wales. Where the wife was aged 15-19 there was a one-in-seven chance that her marriage would be ended by the death of one partner ten years later. The proportion rose to one in five for wives aged 30-34 and one in three for wives 45-49. Despite high fertility rates and a high incidence of maternal mortality, husbands were more likely to die than wives, even in women’s peak reproductive years. The high incidence of early death among husbands was the result of the occupational hazards of pioneering life, where death by accident was common. The result of the high male death rate was that the widow with dependent children was the second most common family type in 1891, when an estimated 10 per cent of families - a total of 20,000 women and 30,000 children - comprised widows with children under fifteen.

Literary evidence reinforces this statistical picture of a life with considerable danger for men. In one family history alone, death and widowhood abound. In Portrait in a Mirror, Alexandra Hasluck describes the life of one of her great-grandfathers who lost his son and the husbands of two of his daughters. At an advanced age he was left with responsibility for the three widows and their sixteen children. Her grandmother on the other side of the family saw her husband being swept away in the floods of 1870 as she clung, pregnant with one child, and two small children in her arms, to the roof of their house.

The matter-of-fact nature of early male death and the necessity for widows to fend for themselves is conveyed well in a vignette from the Florence Nightingale’s correspondence. One of the Nightingale nurses who came to New South Wales in 1868, Bessie Chant, was found making love to a patient by Lucy Osburn, the Lady Superintendent. Presumably she later married the man in question, because Lucy Osburn subsequently arranged with the Minister of Works, in an exercise of patronage such as we discussed in the previous chapter, to get Bessie’s husband a stationmaster’s position in the Railways. But as Bessie put it herself many years later, when she was Matron of the Gladesville Hospital for the Insane, ‘shortly afterwards death intervened and I went back to my profession, taking up Insanity.’

The high incidence of widowhood was not necessarily compensated for by the well-known fact of the imbalance of the sexes in early New South Wales. In 1846,
women made up almost half of the population of the Settled Districts, and it was only in
the pastoral districts outside the Limits of Settlement that seven people out of every ten
were males. If the figures for Victoria in the 1880s are even a rough guide to the
situation in New South Wales in the earlier period, the possibilities of remarriage for
women over thirty were very low, even though they were higher than in Britain.49

Many of the women who worked in the Post Office in this period were probably
widows. Mrs Barney certainly was, as she took over from her late husband, Captain
John Barney, in 1855. Mrs Daly took over from a J. Daly at the age of about
thirty-five. There is evidence that J. Daly was a publican, and he was probably her
husband. We do not know whether he was still living. The same is the case for Mrs
Kellett, who took over the Post Office and its accompanying stationery shop from her
husband in 1860. However, we do know in the case of Mrs Wickham that her husband
was still a chemist and grocer in Parramatta five years after she had become
Postmistress.50

From the evidence of these few cases which are available to us, widowhood played
a part in placing women in jobs in the Post Office, but the economic cooperation of all
members of families was just as important. An examination of the Blue Book after
1862, when information was fuller, reveals this mixed pattern of female participation in
the Post Office workforce. Sometimes wives and daughters worked alongside husbands
and fathers; sometimes wives and daughters filled Post and Telegraph jobs while
husbands and sons filled other government positions; sometimes wives or daughters took
over from deceased husbands and fathers.51 In general, the system of local and family
patronage, the need for many women to support themselves and their children, and the
visible and respected status of women as participants in the commercial life of the
country town, seem to have combined to allow women a place in the Post Office, where
they were treated on equal terms with men.

FAILURE TO CENTRALISE AND THE
CONTINUING TRADITION OF EQUALITY

The retention of local and family patronage in the Post Office, and its importation
into the new Telegraphs Department in the second half of the nineteenth century,
ensured that women continued to obtain well-paid and responsible positions in those
departments. In the early 1860s, attempts were made to centralise the Post Office
Department. However, the struggle for power between the government and the
Postmaster-General left the latter in a weakened position, and the power gained by the
Minister remained unused, as the importance of the Post Office declined in the face of
large-scale railway development. Little political interest was shown, therefore, in
country appointments, except for the brief flurry in 1862 when the Official Post Offices were established.

During the 1860s the growth of the Telegraphs Department opened up a new source of jobs throughout New South Wales. The first telegraph line between Sydney and Liverpool was opened in January 1858. By October of that year, the line had been completed to Albury on the border between New South Wales and Victoria, establishing telegraphic communication with Melbourne. The northern line to Brisbane was completed in November 1861, and lines had also been established to Goulburn, Bathurst and the other large towns by that time. The first overseas cable was opened in 1872, and by August 1873 the telegraph line extended west as far as Bourke. By 1874 there were 115 telegraph stations in New South Wales and 681 post offices, many of them run jointly or sharing office accommodation.\(^{52}\)

Like the Post Office, the Telegraphs Department was never effectively centralised and placed under political control. Although it was part of the Postmaster-General’s Department from 1867, it was run as virtually a separate department by its Superintendent, Edward Cracknell, until his death in 1893. Cracknell was typical of the professional experts who dominated sections of the public service in this period. More interested in the technical aspects of his job, his paternalistic regime never established any systematic personnel policy. He failed to develop any recruitment and training scheme for the large number of telegraph operators required for his expanding service, and he left the country offices to run more-or-less by themselves.\(^{53}\) Cracknell’s personalised administration of the Telegraphs Department left the way open for a system of local and family patronage similar to that of the Post Office. There was no Telegraphy School until 1890, so most telegraph operators came from the ranks of messenger boys or husbands, wives and children of telegraphists.\(^{54}\)

Failure to establish central control of country Post and Telegraph Offices left old ways of doing things unquestioned. It also separated the interests and practices of head office from those of country offices and the suburban offices which mushroomed in the period of rapid suburbanisation from 1870 to 1890.\(^{55}\) In country and suburban Post and Telegraph Offices, community pressure, supported by local members of parliament, extended opportunities for the employment of women, while at head office passive resistance on the part of departmental heads to change of any sort kept those offices exclusively male.

The combination of decentralised authority, established practice and pressure for employment opportunities for country girls enabled the women of the Post Office to survive the government’s financial crisis of 1870-72 with their equality of pay and conditions intact. The public service suffered severe salary cuts and dismissals at this
time, but in the absence of any central personnel authority to plan an alternative strategy, these cuts fell across the board, with no regard for gender. Jemima Wickham was retired from her position at Parramatta, but she had been Postmistress there since 1838, and must have been at or beyond what could be considered retiring age. Her male successor took office at a reduced salary of £120. Mrs Daly also had her salary reduced, but so did the Postmasters at the twelve other separate Official Post Offices, while Faith Kellett at Penrith retained her salary of £200. Only five Official Post Offices remained unscathed, those at Goulburn (£300), Bathurst (£300), Penrith (£200) and Yass (£200) keeping their pre-1870 salaries and status.

The tradition of equal pay and opportunity for women in country Post Offices was given support by country members of parliament anxious to extend employment opportunities for young women. This support, combined with the traditional system of local and family patronage and the return of government prosperity, succeeded in opening the field of telegraphy to women in the mid-70s. Country members' concern about employment opportunities for women reflected the fact that a new generation of women was now growing to adulthood with the expectation of earning a living and the need to do so. A number of factors contributed to the members' concern. The tradition of family enterprise on farms and small businesses in which in country towns engendered expectations that each member of the family should contribute to the family economy. As the population of the country towns grew at the expense of the farming community, the number of new middle class managers, government employees and journalists without family businesses in which to employ their children increased. Their children, and those of the petty bourgeoisie who could not be accommodated in family businesses, had to seek work in the paid labour force. To their number were added the children of selectors. By the 1870s many selectors who had hoped to make a living on the land were beginning to fail, and their children were also seeking work in the towns.

The first evidence of the country parliamentarians' concern about women's employment opportunities was a question in 1871 from Edward Greville, the journalist who was member for Braidwood. Greville asked the Attorney-General whether there was any objection to the employment of ladies as telegraph operators, to which Sir James Martin replied that there was not. This question probably indicates a wider discussion of women's employment which surfaces more clearly in the proceedings of the Select Committee on the Civil Service later in the year.

Members of the Select Committee showed interest in the British experience of the employment of women in the Post Office. Although the Committee made no specific recommendations concerning women in their report, discussion during the hearing of evidence is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is no indication that the
members of parliament who were introducing the question of women's employment were doing so in the interests of economy, despite the current financial straits of the government. In Victoria at this time, in contrast, Post Office officials were following British precedent and encouraging the employment of women at much cheaper rates than men. Secondly, there was a marked difference between the apparently positive attitude of the parliamentarians towards the question of female employment and the indifference of the public servants and academics they questioned.

The Committee questioned Anthony Trollope about the experience of the British Post Office, and, despite Trollope's fairly conservative estimates of women's usefulness as workers, the questioner, William Forster, tended to try to elicit positive answers by such leading questions as:

676. Has it been found that women are more steady in their attention to their duties than men - I have heard that said?

678. Have you ever heard ... whether women are considered more efficient or more useful in the particular departments in which they are employed.®

The Committee's Chairman, Arthur Onslow, who maintained a continuing interest in the employment of women, also seemed to be leading his witness in a positive direction when questioning Professor Charles Badham, Professor of Logic and Classics at Sydney University and former examiner for the Indian Civil Service; but he too failed to elicit much enthusiasm for the employment of women from his witness.

The pattern of positive support from country politicians and indifference from public servants shown in the proceedings of the Select Committee characterises approaches to women's employment in the service over the next twenty years. Most country members were still committed to the extension of employment opportunities for women on equal terms with men in 1895, when the question was discussed at length in the debate over the Public Service Bill. William Lyne, the member for Hume, strongly defended women's right to employment, whether they were married or single. In particular he described his attempts to persuade the Posts and Telegraphs Departments to employ more women in the 1880s. The Post Office refused to extend women's employment opportunities (presumably as sorters and clerk, as they were already employed as Postmistresses in some numbers). The Superintendent of the Telegraphs Department had replied that in no circumstances would he agree to their employment (probably as telephonists, who were introduced in the early 1880s), as they could not keep a secret. According to Lyne, Cracknell argued that 'if they were employed ... young fellows would be dancing around the windows, and if they wanted to get a secret out of the women they would succeed in doing so.'®

Cracknell's statement is extraordinary in view of the fact that women had been
employed as operators and station mistresses for at least ten years by the mid-1880s, and in 1886 ran thirteen of the thirty-three suburban telegraph offices and two of the thirteen city branch offices, as well as a number of country offices. It can only be explained by the fact that he viewed the country, suburban and branch offices as quite separate from head office, and that the continued employment of women in these offices was due to inertia rather than any principled position on his part. The same was the case with the Secretary of the Post Office who, when asked by the Select Committee on the Civil Service in 1871 whether his department employed any women, made the curious reply that it did not. Like Cracknell, he was obviously referring only to head office.

The indifference of department heads to the personnel practices of the country offices, combined with the restoration of government prosperity and relative political stability after 1873, allowed women to infiltrate the Telegraph Department and continue in the Post Office on the same terms as men more or less by default until Cracknell’s death in 1893. For the most part this was done through the operation of local and family patronage. In 1874 the first female telegraph operator recorded in the Blue Book, Emma Williams, was appointed at Clarence River Heads (later Yamba). She was probably the daughter of the Clerk of Petty Sessions. She married local customs official A.H. Pegus the following year and, as Emma Pegus, remained Post and Telegraph Mistress at Yamba until 1896, when she was retired at the age of 42 under the provisions of the Public Service Act of 1895 which barred the employment of public servants’ wives. The same pattern of family patronage was followed in the next two female appointments made in 1875 when Charlotta Dee was appointed Junior Operator at the Parramatta Street Post Office, where her father or husband was Postmaster, and Mary Buckley was appointed by her Postmaster father as Telegraph Operator at Deniliquin.

A brief period of more positive action in 1875 relieves this pattern of local and family recruitment and training. Probably in response to the pressure of country members and the prosperous conditions of the mid-70s, fourteen women were appointed to the Telegraph Department as Perforators on the new Wheatstone system introduced between Sydney and Tenterfield and Sydney and Albury in 1875. Six were appointed to the Chief Telegraph Office in Sydney and four each to the offices at Tenterfield and Albury. It is not clear why women were appointed exclusively to these positions. They were not employed as cheap labour: the women appointed in Sydney had salaries of £75, considerably more than the £52 that male and female operators of the old equipment received as beginners; the country appointees received £104, probably including some sort of district allowance. In the absence of further evidence, it could perhaps be explained as an attempt at positive discrimination in favour of women.
If this episode did represent an attempt to discriminate positively in favour of women, it did not last. When the Wheatstone system was abandoned soon after its introduction, due to lack of cooperation from neighbouring colonies, the systematic recruitment of women to the department and their employment at the Chief Telegraph Office ceased. The women recruited for the Wheatstone system were used to staff the growing suburban and branch offices in Sydney, where many of them had long careers until their death or retirement in the 1890s and 1900s.66

Family and local recruitment continued, however, until 1896, and women appeared to encounter no active discrimination until 1893. By the 1870s, public service families were developing, in which jobs were passed on from one generation to another, and these families seemed to have a strong tradition of working women. Despite the difficulties of tracing the careers of married women from their single names, it is possible to identify at least three women who continued their Post and Telegraph careers from their recruitment as single women in their early twenties, through their marriages and continued employment, until their dismissal in 1896 after unbroken careers of over twenty years. From the evidence available, all these women came from families with a long tradition of public service work.67

CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN

The consequences for women of the continuation of family and local patronage and equality of pay and conditions outside the head offices of their departments were double-edged. On the one hand, individual women were able to enjoy well-paid and prestigious positions, a tradition of male and female equality was built up, and women were seen to be capable of responsible and continuing employment whether married or unmarried, with children or childless. On the other hand, the numbers of women employed were fewer than in other states, where women were employed under inferior conditions to those of New South Wales.

The positive benefits of the New South Wales situation can be seen by an examination of the status of leading Postmistresses in that colony in 1880. By 1880 Eliza Daly was one of the highest-paid postal officials in New South Wales. As Postmistress at West Maitland, one of the colony’s largest towns, her basic salary of £262 per annum was a little less than that of the Dean of Sydney and a little more than that of an Assistant Professor at Sydney University, who earned £300 and £234 respectively. Mrs Daly’s salary was supplemented by commission on the sale of stamps and on money order and savings bank business. This probably brought her earnings up to over £400 a year. In addition she was provided with substantial official Post Office quarters and an allowance for fuel. This comfortable situation was enhanced by her
privilege of dispensing minor patronage, enabling her to employ her daughter, Margaret, as her assistant at a salary of £100. With a family income of over £500 a year, with quarters and fuel provided, Mrs Daly’s financial standing compared favourably with the most senior officials in the Postal Department, where the five Chief Clerks immediately responsible to the Secretary earned £400 and £500, and the four Postal Inspectors earned £450.

As Postmistress at West Maitland Mrs Daly was one of an exclusive group of men and women who ran the 250 Official Post Offices of New South Wales. The other 700-odd unofficial Post Offices were usually run in conjunction with some other business and were remunerated with a nominal salary and commission on the sale of stamps. Most of the 250 Official Post Offices were combined with Telegraph Offices, with the officer-in-charge carrying out both duties. However, thirty-three towns were large enough to have separate postal and telegraph offices, each presided over by a senior officer of their respective departments, and it was to this select band that Mrs Daly belonged.

The thirty-three leading Post Offices paid salaries of between £100 and £330 per annum. Twelve were branch offices of the General Post Office in the city of Sydney, paying salaries of £150 to £190. Most of the twenty-one country offices provided a better living, with the Postmasters at Newcastle, Bathurst and Albury, and the Postmistress at West Maitland earning £330, £300, £263 and £262 respectively. Although Mrs Daly was the only Postmistress earning over £250, three other post offices among this group of thirty-three were run by women. In the city, Catherine Chape ran the Balmain Post Office for a salary of £150. At East Maitland Anna Arnott earned £153, and at Camden Amelia Pearson earned £110. An examination of the Blue Book and other official publications shows that the salaries these women earned were the same as those of men in comparable positions. For instance, Mrs Daly’s remuneration was commensurate with the amount of business conducted by her Post Office. Mrs Arnott received the same salary as her husband had in the same position. Mrs Chape had received a salary rise of £30 over her husband’s salary when she had succeeded him in 1874, in line with the upgrading of post office salaries in that year.

The positions that these Postmistresses held were responsible ones which involved controlling male staff and considerable business. At West Maitland Mrs Daly had two assistants, one of whom was a male, as well as letter carriers and mail boys. At East Maitland Mrs Arnott had one male assistant in addition to letter carriers and mail boys. West Maitland, East Maitland and Camden were important country centres in 1880, with populations of 5,300, 2,004 and 505 in a period when there were only 25 towns outside Sydney with populations over 2,000. Balmain was a rapidly growing
municipality with a population of about 11,000. In 1882 the West Maitland Post Office handled 316,000 letters, one of the highest tallies of the colony. It issued 2,000 money orders to the value of £6,800 and paid £13,700 on 4,000 money orders, amounts exceeded only by Newcastle, Goulburn and Bathurst. East Maitland handled 55,000 letters and £5,000 worth of money orders, and Camden 43,000 letters and £3,000 worth of money orders. In the city Post Office of Balmain Mrs Chape handled 86,000 letters in 1882, as well as £9,000 worth of money order business.

Although women such as these were able to enjoy access to the highest echelons of the country, suburban and branch post offices under the same conditions as men, their enviable position had disadvantages for women as a whole. Women did not fill nearly as great a proportion of the post and telegraph workforce as they did in Victoria. In that colony, women were barred from appointment to offices over £100 and were paid considerably less than men in comparable positions. There, women were sought after for post and telegraph work because they were cheap. Consequently they made up over half the suburban and country Postmasters and Postmistresses, and they were employed in large numbers as telegraph operators, sorters and minor clerks. In New South Wales, by contrast, women ran only about a quarter of even the lowest level of post office; they ran only about a tenth of the combined Post and Telegraph Offices; they made up only a small proportion of telegraph operators, clustered in branch, suburban and country offices; and there were no women at all employed at head office in Sydney, as there were in Melbourne. It is obvious, therefore, that although they enjoyed equal pay and had no bars to their careers, they experienced considerable informal discrimination in recruitment practices.

The situation in New South Wales was an unusual one. The pattern of employment of women in Victoria followed that of the English Post Office, where women were employed in a variety of jobs with low pay and restrictions on advancement. In the United States, female clerks were paid less than men, and by the early 1890s made up almost a third of office holders in executive departments in Washington. It is not possible without a detailed study of the political and economic conditions of these other colonies and countries to specify accurately what made New South Wales different. The evidence of this chapter suggests, however, that the difference can be traced to the establishment of the Post Office in a period of prosperous family economy, and the continuation of the employment practices of that period during a time of government expansion, due to a failure to centralise and gain political control over those practices. Whatever the case, the pattern of employment in New South Wales brought a slender tradition of equality into debates on women's labour force participation in the 1890s.
Notes


2. Ibid.


9. Board of Inquiry (n.5 above).

10. Wood (n.8 above), pp.254, 271, 303.

11. Walker (n.8 above), p.56.


18. Select Committee on Retrenchment (n.16 above), p.112; Board of Inquiry (n.5 above), p.25.


21. *Ibid.*, pp.344-5. Mrs Barney was subsequently removed, however, in 1863, following a change in regime. See *Papers and Correspondence Concerning Defalcations in the General Post Office* (QPP 1865, pp.901-913); *Evidence Taken Before Commission to Inquire into Defalcations in the General Post Office* (pp.914-31); Select Committee on the Post Office and Money Order Department, *Minutes of Evidence* (pp.1061-107).

22. Board of Inquiry (n.5 above), p.83.

23. Select Committee on Retrenchment (n.16 above), p.112.


25. She was still alive in 1890 when she was listed in the *Blue Book* as a government pensioner.

26. Select Committee (n.21 above).


29. Select Committee on Retrenchment (n.16 above), p.112.

31. *Papers and Correspondence; Evidence Taken Before Commission*; and *Minutes of Evidence* (n.21 above). An understanding of the attack on Elise Barney requires a study of the politics and economy of Queensland which this thesis cannot pursue. However, it is probably connected with the failure of pastoralist ventures at that time, and the political influence of these pastoralists in the reorganisation of power following the separation of Queensland. Thomas Murray-Prior, who displaced Mrs Barney, was a failed pastoralist who became a Legislative Councillor and minister in 1866. See H.J. Gibbney, ‘Thomas Lodge Murray-Prior’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.323-4.


34. Ibid., p.195.


36. N.33 above, p.95.

37. Ibid., pp.89, 91, 94, 100, 104; Jervis (n.8 above), pp.98-9; Wood (n.8 above), pp.248, 254, 297.

38. *SMH* 6 June 1878, p.5.


40. Atkinson (n.33 above), p.89.

42. N.13 above.

43. Wood (n.8 above), pp.248, 254, 297.

44. Teale (n.32 above), p.34.


47. *Portrait in a Mirror: An Autobiography* (Melbourne: OUP, n.d.), 12-13, 36. The child who was born soon after was Evelyn Hill, one of the first women graduates in the 1890s.


50. *Brabazon* (n.13 above). On pp.162-4 he is also listed as Postmaster.

51. No staff lists were published before 1858 (*Country Postmasters*, (V & P 1858, vol. III, pp.1026-8)). Further lists were given in the 1860 *Annual Report* (V & P 1861-2, vol. II), pp.12-15; *Post Office Return* (n.14 above) in 1862; and the 1867 *Annual Report* (V & P 1868-9, vol. II). The *Blue Book* published details of Official Postmasters and Postmistresses from 1862. After the Posts and Telegraphs Departments began to amalgamate offices in 1867, the Post Office gave only the staff of separate Official Offices, while the Telegraph Department gave a complete list. In 1882 a full list of Post and Telegraph positions (without names) was given in the *Annual Report* (V & P 1883-4, vol. IX), pp.25-51. From 1883 all staff of Official Post Offices were listed in the *Blue Book*. Birth dates were not given until the *Public Service List* replaced the *Blue Book* in 1898. Women’s Post Office careers and the succession of family members can only be followed haphazardly until 1882, though information from local histories and town directories helps to piece together the stories of the most prominent women.


56. The rural population (i.e. those living outside municipalities and towns of over 500) declined from 53% of the population in 1871 to 42% in 1881. By 1891 it made up only 35% (calculated from N.G. Butlin, 'Colonial Socialism in Australia, 1860-1900' in *The State and Economic Growth*, ed. Hugh G.J. Aitken (NY: Social Science Research Council, 1959), pp.26-78, esp. 29). Between 1861 and 1901 the number of workers on the land fell from one-third to one-quarter of total employers and employees. See Jeans (n.17 above), p.297.

57. The rate of failure was high. Of the 170,000 conditional purchases made to the end of 1882, the actual number of resident selectors was less than 20,000. See T.A. Coghlan, *Labour and Industry in Australia: From the First Settlement in 1788 to the Establishment of the Commonwealth in 1901* (London: OUP, 1918), p.1358.

58. For Greville see Radi, Spearritt and Hinton.


60. McCuskey (n.27 above).


62. Q.745, p.27. See also Onslow, *PD* 1879-80, p.1185, 18 February 1880.


64. Select Committee on the Civil Service (n.61 above), p.39.

65. For this system see *Cyclopaedia of New South Wales*, p.251.

66. Four of the country recruits resigned, probably because they could not get appointments in their home towns. Henrietta North, Minnie Knott, Angelina Dargin, Mary Davies, Annie Halloran and Minnie Husing had long careers, ending as Post and Telegraph Mistresses at Edgecliff, Glebe, Randwick, Hunter's Hill, Lower Botany and Darlington Point. In 1891 Glebe had a population of 17,000, Randwick 6,000, Hunter's Hill 3,600, and Botany 2,000. See Kelly (n.55 above), pp.197-8.

67. Lizzie Isaac, aged 25, was appointed Postmistress and Junior Operator at the Waverley Post and Telegraph Office in 1876 at a salary of £73. In 1878 she married Thomas Ferris, who, by 1894 was First Clerk in the Accounts Branch of the Post Office
Department, with a salary of £313 a year. She was Post and Telegraph Mistress at Waverley until her dismissal in 1896, when she was earning £218. She may have been part of the Isaac family who ran the Scone Post Office from at least 1860 to the late 1890s, and her husband may have been related to Mrs Ferris, the Postmistress at Petersham, who died in 1895. Ellen Pegus was appointed Junior Operator at South Creek in 1875. In 1878 she married an officer named Cross who rose to a senior position in the Railways. They moved to Sydney in 1883, where she became Post and Telegraph Mistress at Leichhardt. She was 43 years old and earning £180 on her dismissal in 1896. She may have been related by marriage to Emma Pegus (née Williams), the first female Telegraph Operator who was Post and Telegraph Mistress at Yamba from 1874 to 1896. Agnes Pegus, who worked at the Leichhardt Post Office from 1885, was probably her sister. For Mrs Cross and Mrs Ferris see PD 1895, pp.1827-8, 17 October 1895.

68. Linge (n.17 above), p.383; Census of NSW 1881, Summary Tables.

69. Calculated from Kelly (n.55 above), pp.8, 197.


72. McCuskey (n.27 above).


PART II

TOWARDS AUTONOMOUS BUREAUCRACY 1883-1903
The political consensus of the early years of self-government began to falter in the late 1870s, as revenue from Crown lands, which supported government development policies and political patronage, became less reliable. When Crown land sales fell permanently in 1883, a period of increasing political and economic instability followed, in which unemployment and insecurity grew, and more permanent interest groups began to separate out. Both white-collar and blue-collar unions became more numerous and militant, and women’s groups formed to protect women’s specific interests, and to demand the right to vote.

With the distribution of patronage becoming a less viable means of securing electoral and parliamentary support, politicians turned to more organised mobilisation of supporters on the basis of ideological and programmatic appeals to particular interest groups. The immediate need to find an alternative source of government revenue to replace Crown land sales lent prominence to the controversy between supporters of direct and indirect taxes, and the first political parties developed around this division, magnified into an ideological debate over the merits of free trade and protection. Neither party could command sufficient support for major tax reforms, however, and government expenditure fluctuated wildly as governments responded to contradictory demands for jobs and retrenchment.

Public servants, anxious for security in this unstable situation, pressed for an end to political patronage in public service personnel matters. Governments were not yet ready to give up control of the public service at the beginning of the period, when a hastily-conceived, ineffectual and elitist Civil Service Act was pushed through by senior public servants and almost totally repealed two years later. The Parkes government relinquished control of railways administration to an independent commission in 1888 when that department became a political liability. However, subsequent governments were unwilling to abandon political patronage altogether, as the two parties struggled to maintain reliable support. The public service became a political football as the questions of retrenchment and public service reform were exploited for political advantage. A number of government inquiries, a long-drawn-out Royal Commission, the activities of a ‘retrenchment party’, and the imminent breakdown of the superannuation fund that was the unwanted legacy of the Civil Service Act, constantly reminded public servants of their precarious position.

These threats to public service security unified and mobilised public servants behind a group of young leaders, including T.A. Coghlan, who articulated, through their practice and their theoretical formulations, the interests of the new middle class in the
abolition of privilege, freedom from political control, the establishment of stable economic conditions which provided a reliable source of government revenue, and the extension of public service influence and labour market opportunities through government intervention into new fields of social reform. The size of the public service, its political importance in a period of unstable political allegiance, its organisational resources and expertise, and the close ties of leaders such as Coghlan with the emerging labour movement and the radical press, gave the public service considerable power by the early 1890s. Leading public servants were able to exert a major influence over politicians in a confused political situation. Coghlan, for instance, was able to capitalise on Premier George Reid's dependence on his advice to win a high degree of public service autonomy through the Public Service Act of 1895, which he drafted, and a greater degree of stability for government revenue through his influence on taxation and general financial matters.

With the establishment of the Public Service Board in 1896 with Coghlan as a member, the remnants of the old guard of public servants of the faction period were replaced by young, innovative officers, many of whom were close friends or colleagues. This network of new public service leaders favourable to reform and extension of the government's role helped establish the new public personnel system and consolidate the position of the public service as the logical medium of social reform.

The campaign for labour market control and extension by public servants was a defensive one in a period of labour market insecurity. It did not, therefore, extend its universalistic criteria to women. Borrowing from the traditions of craft unionism with which he was familiar, the leading spokesman of the reforming public servants, T.A. Coghlan, considered the competition of married women for jobs a danger to the maintenance of high wages, and ultimately to the prosperity of the nation. He attempted, therefore, through his control over ideological resources, such as the census reports he prepared as Government Statistician, and coercive resources, such as the Public Service Act and the Public Service Board, of which he was creator and member, to de-legitimize married women as gainful workers.

At the same time, however, he had to come to terms with the demands of the women of the new middle class for the right to work, and the disinclination of many new middle class men to support their sisters and adult daughters. Accordingly, he attempted to ensure that carefully monitored groups of single women be admitted to the service on the same terms as men, thus preventing the danger of men's wages and conditions being undercut.

The result of the public service reforms of the 1890s was very different, therefore, for men and women. Instead of autonomy and control of their labour market situation,
women faced exclusion and regulation, processes which formed the basis of segregation and domination in the different social and economic conditions of the period after 1904.
'Hang your reforms!' said Mr. Chichely. 'There's no greater humbug in the world. You never hear of a reform, but it means some trick to put in new men.'

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*
CHAPTER 4
THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS AND AUTONOMY: FALSE STARTS

The fall of the Parkes-Robertson government in 1882 marked the beginning of the end of the faction system and the political consensus it maintained. The spectacular growth of government works, services and jobs which helped keep the system intact during the 1870s and early 1880s had been fuelled by the sale of Crown lands. From 1877 revenue from land sales began to fall off, but governments were able to maintain government spending, with only minor fluctuations, by drawing on the Treasury's cash balances and releasing large quantities of town and suburban land for sale to those who were flocking to the city.

The brief resurgence of land sales between 1880 and 1882 was the last time a government was able to retrieve its finances by selling off the national estate. Widespread dissatisfaction with the administration of Crown lands brought down the combined government of the two old warriors of faction politics. The land policy of the Stuart government and the new land laws they introduced in 1884 drastically cut revenue from Crown lands, precipitating a long period of political and economic instability. During this period, interest groups began to crystallise around country and city interests, alternative policies on taxation and government expenditure, and work- and gender-based interests, and embryo parties, militant trade unions and a feminist movement began to emerge. With their security threatened, public servants pressed for greater protection for their livelihoods, but the limited nature of the measures they achieved only served to drive a final wedge between the interests of the old guard of public service leaders and a younger group with closer ties to the rank-and-file of the service, and to turn these young leaders to exclusionary tactics which were to have important consequences for women.

THE FAILURE OF THE 1861 LAND ACTS AND THE DEMISE OF THE FACTION SYSTEM

The Robertson land laws of 1861 had been a failure for small selectors hoping to settle on the land, and an irritant to pastoralists who were forced to go into debt to buy up the best parts of their runs. By the early 1880s the rivalry and resentment built up
between squatters and selectors, and anxiety about the effect of the wholesale alienation of the Crown lands on the stability of the economy, combined to cause the repudiation of mere cosmetic changes proposed in the late 1870s and early 1880s by Robertson. A new government, led by Sydney merchant and banker, Alexander Stuart, acted decisively. Land auctions were immediately limited, and new land laws passed in 1884 diminished much of the competition between squatters and selectors which had stimulated land sales in the past.¹

The immediate result of the defeat of Parkes and Robertson and the passage of new land laws was a fall in land sales from the 1882 high of £2.5m to £1.3m in 1883, at which low level they remained until the end of the century (see Figure 1).² The Stuart government expected to be able to replace this loss with a property tax, so they did not halt the growth in government expenditure which had risen from £3.1m in 1873 to £7.8 in 1880. From 1883 to 1885, major overseas borrowings allowed government expenditure to rise to a peak of £14.2m in 1885 (see Figure 2). Stuart had underestimated the resistance of New South Wales residents to taxation, however. Unable to introduce the desired tax, the government faced increasing budget deficits which reached £2m by 1886.³

Continued expenditure at the current rate required a new source of funds, either from customs duty, land tax or income tax. The alternative was a reduction of government expenditure. Each of these alternatives was unpopular with some section of the community. From 1886 to 1894 a bitter battle was fought over alternative forms of direct and indirect taxation, while government expenditure fluctuated wildly and unemployment grew.

The struggle over the relative merits of property, land and income tax, selective and ad valorem duties, or reduced government expenditure by a policy of retrenchment, was a struggle over who should bear the economic burden once revenue from Crown lands had dried up. Advocacy of one alternative over another did not coincide with any simple social divisions. Property, land and income tax were unpopular with the wealthy in general and the larger landowners and pastoralists in particular. They preferred ad valorem duties, which took the burden of taxation off their shoulders alone. Merchants and shopkeepers, however, tended to oppose customs duties, while some manufacturers advocated selective duties to protect the infant industries of the colony. Lower-grade clerical workers and manual workers naturally opposed ad valorem taxes, which were thought to impose a disproportionate burden on low income-earners.

Despite this confusion of interests, some clearer divisions did stand out. In general, country people, whether small or large landholders, preferred some form of customs duty. Agriculturalists had a strong interest in protective tariffs for their
products, while all land owners feared land and income tax. Most city people, on the other hand, preferred some form of direct tax, preferably including a land tax. Retrenchment was more clearly a class matter. Cuts in government spending fell heavily on members of the working class, who had become accustomed to the high wages and full employment provided by the government’s policy of development through public works. Their interest in maintaining high levels of government spending was shared by members of the petty bourgeoisie and the new middle class, who found congenial, well-paid work and upward social mobility in the expanding ranks of public service clerical workers in the economically buoyant years of the 1870s and early 1880s. But even these divisions were not clear-cut. Merchants and shopkeepers who might suffer from the imposition of income or property tax still favoured government-backed development because it stimulated population growth and affluence. Many politicians, whatever their backgrounds and constituencies, had come to rely on the distribution of patronage which heavy government expenditure allowed as an important element in their electoral strategy, and found it difficult to turn to other means of gaining support.4

Overlaying all of these divisions was a general resistance by the people of New South Wales to being taxed at all. They had never paid high taxes, and throughout the prosperous 1870s had been very lightly taxed indeed. In 1879 they paid an average £1 16s 10d per head, mostly in the form of customs duties on common items of consumption such as wine and spirits, ale and beer, tea, coffee, sugar and rice. In 1880, in response to declining land sales, stamp duty had been reimposed. This added another 6s 3d per head by 1886.5 In that year, failure to introduce a property tax and the budget deficits of 1885-6 forced the Jennings government to bring the question of substantial increases in customs duty before the parliament.

Amid disorderly scenes, Jennings won the battle but lost the war. The long battle in the House over the issue solidified the division over direct and indirect taxation which had been developing. Within months of Jennings’ Customs Duties Act being passed, a Free Trade party led by Parkes had formed a government and immediately abolished most of the new duties.6

The refusal of the residents of New South Wales to be taxed kept a free trade-protectionist division alive long enough to provide a transition between the faction system and the class-based party system that developed in the 1890s and 1900s. With less reliable patronage at their disposal, politicians were forced to turn to more organised mass mobilisation of supporters on the basis of programmatic appeals to particular interest groups. At the same time these interest groups, no longer able to rely on the ready satisfaction of their needs by politicians, took on more permanent organised form and developed more sophisticated ideological justifications for their claims.7
The immediate question of direct or indirect taxation provided a basis for embryo party formation, and two groups, rather misleadingly identified as 'Protectionist' and 'Free Trade', organised politicians and electors into a two-party system for the first time. The interest groups that these two 'parties' represented were too varied and shifting to allow them to develop the ideological coherence and organisational discipline that would make them permanent parts of the political system. However, these parties did give politicians an alternative means of organising parliamentary and electoral support, and enabled the more adept of them to abandon much of the personalised politics of the previous period. By the time it was apparent that the protectionist-free trade division was not going to provide a stable basis for parliamentary politics, the way had been cleared for the appearance of the Labor Party in 1891, with its tightly-disciplined organisation and its mass mobilisation of supporters on the basis of class interests.8

HOPES FOR PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM

Public servants were quick to take advantage of the period of political change to try to break the hegemony of their political masters and gain more control over their labour market conditions. Several factors seemed to be in their favour: they were anxious for reform; they had the support of elements of the new radical press; and they had some political leverage as a large and influential group in the uncertain political situation of 1882-4.

Public service reform had already been the subject of major public discussion in 1878. The continuing debate in Victoria since the mass dismissal of public servants on 'Black Wednesday', and threats of retrenchment during the financial crisis of 1880, had kept the issue alive. In 1882 extensive discussion of a proposed bill to abolish patronage in the Victorian railways helped focus attention on the subject of reform in New South Wales.9

Public service concern about the dangers of indiscriminate retrenchment and the disadvantages of the patronage system was shared by the more radical sections of the press. Chief among these was the newly-established Bulletin, which was to become the most influential Australian magazine of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The founders of the Bulletin, John Haynes and J.F. Archibald, shared the small-town origins of many of the younger public servants. Archibald was the son of a country policeman, and had himself been a supernumerary clerk in the Victorian Education Department for two years. During this period he observed at first hand the effect of 'Black Wednesday' on his fellow workers, and this was the occasion for his first public campaign for justice. His Chief Clerk, a 'sadly overworked, dyspeptic and
irritable, but just and generous man’, was dismissed. Archibald was deeply affected by the effect of the dismissal:

[The Chief Clerk] appeared at the office, trembling, in an evident state of deep dejection, and though ... there was between us a clear line of official demarcation (and I had never eaten his salt), I ventured, while receiving from him for the last time some official papers, to express my sympathy with him in his illness and misfortune. He looked at me for a moment in a way which made me at first feel I had taken an undue liberty, but tears came into his eyes, his voice faltered, and he shook my hand. I left the room, feeling bitter at the injustice done to this old and weary man, whom all around him knew, despite his occasional impatience, to be an honourable and kindly gentleman. I determined to put in a blow for him.10

Not only did Archibald use his newspaper connections to have his Chief Clerk re-appointed, but he continued to fight for the public service when he established his own journal in Sydney two years later. In August 1880, in its first year of publication, the Bulletin castigated the government’s retrenchment policy as ‘an inordinate tax upon a class of people whose voice cannot be raised in their own defence, and who, for this reason, naturally look to the Government for protection’:

It is unfortunate that nearly every legitimate and sensible mode of raising revenue by means of new or additional taxation has been tabooed, and consequently the only resource left to mediocrity is the delusive and mischievous cry of retrenchment. Economy in Government expenditure is both proper and necessary at all times, but spasmodic efforts to make ends meet by arbitrarily cutting down the pay of employees is greatly to be deprecated ... the first principle of economy in regard to the Civil Service is to secure a good and efficient organisation, which can only be effected by reposing confidence in responsible officers, and giving them assurance that they will not be liable to have their domestic arrangements thrown into confusion by capricious and sudden curtailment of their salaries, which it may be fairly assumed have been granted with due regard to the importance of the duties entrusted to them.11

In 1882, the Bulletin, already a paper with a circulation of 20,000, turned its guns on patronage:

... no one has any right to expect efficiency from a Service in which men are promoted chiefly by favour, and unfriended officers, however efficient, learn by experience that the most strenuous industry has but very subordinate influence upon their fortunes. Every day they know of new men being pitchforked into superior positions which old officers for years hoped some time to attain. Every day they see incapables, who chance to have friends at court, kicked up-stairs into desirable vacancies, on which, according to every rule of justice and fitness, older and abler officers had a distinct claim ... Until we have high-minded legislators, who would scorn to solicit billets for their relatives and hangers-on, irrespective of fitness, the service must remain as it is. And until we have constituencies too enlightened to return to Parliament any but men of elevated character, Civil service patronage must still be one of the instruments of corruption.12

With public service reform a matter of public concern, neither government nor opposition could afford to ignore it in the close-fought battle between Stuart and the
combined forces of Robertson and Parkes at the end of 1882. By 1884 there were over 11,000 public servants, out of a population of about 904,000, and a workforce of about 318,000. Many more worked for the government on contract or as day labourers. T.A. Coghlan estimated for 1887 that 24,000 of the 440,000 in the workforce were government and municipal officers and employees. Many of these public employees lived in Sydney, which contained one-third of the New South Wales population in 1884. The public service formed, therefore, a formidable potential voting bloc, especially in the metropolitan constituencies where, it was pointed out in the debate on the Civil Service Bill in 1884, ‘the civil servants have great power.’

Parkes and Robertson promised a Civil Service Bill in August 1882, and Parkes met with public servants to discuss the issue. However, the government’s defeat in November prevented any further action on their part. Many candidates promised public service reform in their electoral campaigns, and when Stuart emerged victorious after the elections, his government included a Civil Service Bill amongst its first priorities:

The serious defects which exist in the regulation of the civil service of the country require that no time should be lost in remedying them so as to secure the just recognition of merit and service, and thereby increase the efficiency of the various departments of the Government. The urgency of the matter seems to my advisors sufficient to justify them in providing remedies of a provisionary character by administering arrangements which will to some extent meet the difficulties of the case until a comprehensive measure for the regulation of the service may be submitted to Parliament.

It is unclear whether the Stuart government would have redeemed this promise any more readily than previous governments if they had not been further pressed by public servants themselves. It took a year for Stuart to introduce the Civil Service Bill into parliament, and even then it seemed doomed to be lost under the weight of events. A Bill was introduced at the beginning of the government’s third session on 19 December 1883, but was withdrawn. Another was introduced on 17 January the following year, but the crisis induced by the alarming financial statement of 24 January, and the long struggle over the Lands Bill, effectively removed public service reform from the political agenda for the time being.

The Treasurer’s financial statement revealed the first effects of the new lands policy: revenue for the previous year had fallen below expectations by £343,000. Proposals for a property tax and changes to the tariff were rejected by the government’s own supporters, and Treasurer George Dibbs was forced to suggest retrenchment in their place. In such an atmosphere it was impossible to press on with a Bill which removed government control of public service salaries and retirement allowances.

This renewed threat of retrenchment gave public servants fresh cause for anxiety and less reason to trust in the beneficence of political patrons. Their immediate interest
was in the possibility of a salary freeze or dismissal without adequate pension rights. Salary increments and retirement allowances were subject to the scrutiny of parliament in the annual parliamentary debate on supply. At the best of times this system made public servants dependent on influence, and subject to arbitrary treatment. As Premier Stuart characterised the process in 1884:

... there is great inequality in the tangible recognition of [officers'] services [because] the mode of recognition has been marked by fits and starts; influence has been brought to bear in favour of some [while] certain civil servants who discharge their duties faithfully and honorably have not sufficient influence or interest to get their cases brought under the notice of the Minister, who has to recommend to Parliament what the remuneration of the officers under him should be, or to get the attention of members of Parliament directed to them. 18

In times of budgetary crisis even those with influence were not immune from across-the-board cuts or devastating public attacks on their personal efficiency and integrity under the protection of parliamentary privilege. 19

The strength of public service feeling and strong popular support for the abolition of patronage 20 probably persuaded Stuart to introduce a third Civil Service Bill on 5 August 1884, despite the fact that the government was still engrossed with the Land Bill. The government needed all the support it could get after a gruelling session, during which it was seriously weakened by the budgetary crisis and divisions over the Land Bill. Successful loan raisings provided the right political climate to introduce such a bill. It was also politically advantageous to be seen fighting corruption at a time when the government was allocating a record vote of £13m loan money for public works. 21

The Civil Service Bill appears to have been pushed through almost solely by the will of the public service. Members paid little attention to it. Under the pressure of the end of an exhausting thirteen-month session, they often barely made up a quorum. Those interested in the measure requested time to study it, but the government pressed on after 1,569 public servants petitioned them to proceed. Urged on by another petition, they pushed the Bill through the committee stage by 1 October. It seemed destined for withdrawal, however, as Stuart suffered a stroke early that month. Public servants continued to press for the Bill to proceed, and it was finally considered in the Council between 14 and 23 October. It was then a race to settle differences between the two houses before parliament adjourned on 1 November. On 31 October the Civil Service Bill was passed. 22

**Hopes Disappointed**

The legislation that emerged from this hurried act of political expediency pleased no-one. Although it gave the illusion of transferring authority over personnel matters to an independent board in the interests of removing patronage, and of providing liberal
salary increases and retiring allowances independent of parliamentary scrutiny, it was, in fact, a half-hearted measure which gave the board little power. In addition, it was extremely restrictive in its applicability.

The Act provided for the appointment of a Civil Service Board to classify the public service, prescribe examinations for appointment and promotion, recommend promotions, and limit other discretionary powers of ministers. It prescribed generous annual increments in salary to clerical and professional staff and provided a superannuation scheme for all permanent government employees. The Act made no specific distinctions between male and female employees.

The Civil Service Board established by the Act had little actual or potential power. It was a part-time Board, made up of members who already held busy full-time positions at the top of the public service and in business. In addition, its powers were severely restricted by the Act. In classifying the public service, the Board was tied to the divisions and classes, and the annual increments within these, specified in the Act. More significantly, it was tied to classifying officers according to their current salaries. In addition, it had no power over appointments to the service: it could only prescribe qualifying examinations and report on all appointments made without examination or probation. It could comment on decisions concerning increments and make recommendations concerning promotions, but final decisions were made by the minister. The Board could be asked to investigate misdemeanours, but decisions on dismissals and disciplinary action also lay with the minister. One of the few things the Board could actually decide on was cases of premature retirement through ill-health.

The Act left ministers, therefore, with their powers virtually intact. They could still select persons for appointment from qualified candidates; they could make temporary appointments, appoint specially qualified persons without examination or promotion, disallow increments, make final selections for promotion, discipline officers and grant leave of absence. The Act did provide some guidelines for the exercise of these powers, and the board had a watchdog role. But as long as members of the Board included public servants whose own security depended on the goodwill of ministers, the watchdog had no effective power.

As well as being severely circumscribed, the Act was also elitist and divisive in its effects. Its benefits were restricted to a small number of clerical and professional officers, and the authority of the Board, limited as it was, was confined to this select group. Teachers, police, temporary employees and large numbers of non-clerical workers and borderline clerical and professional staff were excluded from its provisions under sections 7 and 8, leaving most of the staff of large departments like Public Instruction, Railways, Posts and Telegraphs, and the Printing Office outside the Act. In all, only
1,867 public servants were subject to the appointments, promotions and salary provisions of the Act, out of a total of about 13,000. Only 5,057 were subject to the compulsory superannuation provisions, although all 10,256 permanent public servants could join the scheme if they wished, and the police had their own superannuation fund.

The exclusion of this large body of staff from the provisions of the Civil Service Act made invidious comparisons between the conditions of the elite two thousand officers and the rest of the service inevitable. Officers in the General (clerical) and Professional Divisions automatically received increments of £20 to £30 a year until they reached the top of their range. After another four years they could move up to the next range, where they were eligible for further automatic increments. In contrast, salary increases for the 1,539 non-clerical workers classified under section 8 remained subject to the scrutiny of parliament in the annual estimates and were restricted to a maximum of £10 per annum. The 3,214 workers who were included under the sub-clerical and sub-professional classification of section 7 remained subject to rules and regulations of employment already drawn up by departments. These usually provided for increments of £5 to £10 per annum, and promotion to the next range only when a vacancy occurred. The 3,190 teachers employed by the Public Instruction Department were subject to an elaborate system of classification and promotion under their own Act. They were, however, compelled to join the superannuation fund set up by the Civil Service Act. As it was a fund ill-suited to a workforce with a high turnover like the teaching profession, it became a source of resentment to many teachers.

The limitations of the Act stemmed from the restricted aims of the public servants and politicians who designed it, the compromises they were forced to make between their divergent interests, the haste with which these measures were considered and the concessions Stuart was compelled to make to parliamentary defenders of patronage. These limitations demonstrated that parliament was not yet ready to relinquish its powers of patronage and its control of the service. More significantly, the circumscribed and limited nature of the Act revealed that leading public servants still had a restricted view of public service reform, a view which reflected their personal interests rather than those aimed at more broadly-based social and industrial reform.

Although there is no direct evidence of the negotiations that preceded the drafting of the Civil Service Bill, there is considerable indirect evidence that senior public servants played an active part. This evidence, the focus of the Bill and the Board's administration on the salaries and conditions of the elite, and the preoccupation and ill-health of Stuart and his deputy, William Dalley, at the time, all suggest that influential public servants were responsible for many of the defects of the Act.

Senior officers had presented a united front in 1878 in an attempt to steamroll the
service and the parliament into a superannuation scheme which many younger officers considered elitist. When Parkes was Premier, he had consulted public servants - presumably the same group - about the proposed Civil Service Act of 1882. Archibald Fraser, the Clerk of the Peace, was the leading organiser of the 1878 group. In 1884 he and his close friend, Charles Goodchap, the Commissioner for Railways, appear to have been the central figures in consultations on the Bill. The *Town and Country Journal* asserted in 1889 that it was 'an open secret that the civil servants owe the Civil Service Act (without its faults, however), chiefly to the exertions of Mr Fraser'. Twenty-five Goodchap's role is indicated by Robertson's reference to him in the debate on the Bill as the person on whom the government most depended for advice. The behaviour and comments of Fraser and Goodchap after the Act was put into operation suggest that they had an intimate knowledge of public service expectations of the Bill, and that they were disappointed in its final form and administration. Fraser's dismissal by the young, reforming Public Service Board in 1896, despite his criticisms of the 1884 Act and the protests of influential supporters, suggests that he was classed among those senior officers who, 'though men of ability, were not such as they cared to entrust with the carrying out of the far-reaching reforms which they felt were necessary'. This rejection of Fraser as an effective reformer in 1896 suggests that junior public servants blamed him for the limitations of the 1884 Act.

The Bill that emerged from the negotiations between leading public servants and the Stuart government in 1884 had limited goals which represented a compromise between the interests of its framers. A restricted number of public servants were to gain guaranteed, specified salaries, and a secure retirement income. In return, ministers were to retain patronage in appointments and a large degree of control over the salaries and promotions of non-clerical and non-professional staff. However, concessions to other interested parties during the debate on the Bill, in combination with the deteriorating economic conditions of the following year, severely reduced the expected gains of public servants, and made the Act much more restrictive than they had intended. As a result, neither the elite of the service nor the rank-and-file were satisfied, and young public servants were resentful of their leaders' betrayal and inefficiency.

When the Bill was introduced it was intended to apply to twice as many people as it finally covered. Stuart referred in his second reading speech to 3,500 persons eligible for classification into the General and Professional Divisions, and thus for automatic annual increments - 2,800 in the General and 700 in the Professional. The Board's first *Report* of 1885 refers to only 1,725 officers in the General Division and 142 in the Professional. It also refers to the fact that 1,249 appeals had been received from public servants disappointed in their classification. Those sections of the service in which
women were chiefly employed were amongst those excluded from the General and Professional Divisions, though most such employees were men. Telegraph operators protested against their classification with sub-professional and sub-clerical workers under section 7 rather than as professionals. As they pointed out, they considered that their duties were ‘more scientific, intellectual, and professional than many of the classified officers’. Postmasters and Postmistresses, who were also placed in section 7, argued that they should be included in the clerical staff of the General Division. Amongst the exclusively male occupations, draftsmen resented their classification in the General rather than the Professional Division, and masters of dredges, who considered themselves engineers, were angry at their exclusion from the Professional Division. Obviously all of these groups had been led to believe that they would be included under the protection of the Act."^^

The exclusion of half of the people intended originally to be covered by the Act was the result of the haste with which the Bill was considered, and strong pressure on both the government and the Board for economy in the first months of the Act’s operation. Apparently as a last minute concession of autonomy from Board authority, Stuart added to the exclusion of the Railways Department under section 7 all other departments with established rules and regulations. In itself, this exclusion of most of the public service from the authority of the Civil Service Board indicates how far Stuart and many departmental heads were from conceiving of the board as a central personnel authority. The exclusion of these departments was not meant as an economy measure. Stuart explained that he had arranged with the Railways Commissioner (Goodchap) to increase the increments provided in his regulations in conformity with the Bill’s provisions; presumably he intended to do the same with the other departments he placed so precipitantly under section 7.30

However, in the financial climate of 1885, both the Board and the government found it difficult to make good the previous year’s intentions. The Board had the authority to place any officers they wished in the General and Professional Divisions, even if they were in departments excluded by section 7, and some clerical and professional officers from those departments were classified in this way. The Board was anxious, however, to limit the number of people to whom the generous increments provided in the Act would apply, as too great a call on the limited resources of the government would mean the end of the whole scheme. Therefore they used section 7 as an excuse to exclude borderline groups such as telegraphists and draftsmen.31 The government, meanwhile, did nothing to ensure that these groups were given comparable treatment under their departmental regulations.32

If many public servants were bitterly disappointed with the Act, so too were two
of its leading advocates, Goodchap and Fraser, though for different reasons. The powers that they expected the Board to gain were reduced during the debate on the Bill, and were further restricted by the more conservative Board members and the government the following year.

The original Bill gave the proposed Board considerable power to recommend the payment and disallowance of salary increments, a right which protected the independence of public servants from political interference in the preferment of particular officers. Stuart showed no commitment to giving the Board such powers when attacked by opposition leaders, Parkes and Robertson, for transferring power from ministers to what they called an irresponsible board. Assuring the House that 'the intention was that the board should be an investigating body' only, he immediately gave way on this question.33

More seriously as far as the Board was concerned was its lack of power over salary classification. The civil servants involved in the discussion on the Bill prior to its introduction had wanted a Board of Inquiry to work out an equitable system of salary classification.34 They had compromised, however, by accepting current salaries as the basis of classification, expecting that anomalies and injustices would be dealt with under section 17, which gave public servants the right of appeal to the Board.35 The Civil Service Board, which comprised Geoffrey Eagar as Chairman and John Williams, the Crown Solicitor,36 businessman W.G. Murray, Archibald Fraser and Charles Goodchap, decided, on Eagar’s casting vote, that aggrieved public servants did not have the right of appeal with regard to classification. Fraser and Goodchap dissented from this decision, arguing that it had been the intention of the Act that the Board should have the power to correct anomalies and injustices. They pointed out that, 'as the Act is now being administered, there are no means whereby an officer whose classification is unduly low, or whose emoluments are inadequate to the duties of his office, can be raised in the scale of classification or be awarded a higher rate of pay.' 'It is difficult to believe,' they go on, 'that such was the intention of the legislature when passing the Act, and it was most assuredly never contemplated by the Civil Servants when they petitioned Parliament for the Bill':

One of the chief purposes for which it was generally understood the Bill was introduced was to provide a remedy for the anomalies and cases of injustice then existing in the Civil Service (certainly not to perpetuate them); and the consent of the Civil Servants to the fixing of their positions according to the salaries of 1884, as an ultimate source of relief would, it is believed, have been withheld had they not relied upon the privilege indicated in the 17th section, of appealing to the Board against any injustice that might occur in the individual cases through such an indiscriminate mode of classification. They reasonably anticipated that, under the section, the Board would on appeal inquire into the merits of every case and report thereon to the Government, who would confirm
or otherwise recommendations made - Parliament of course having the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the result, as provided for under the same section.37

By the time this dispute was referred to Stuart for decision, his ministry was in serious financial trouble, internally divided and beset by allegations of corruption and improper practices. In less than two months parliament was dissolved, and Stuart and two of his strongest ministers had resigned.38 In this situation, Stuart was decidedly unsympathetic to any interpretation of the Board’s powers which would result in an increase in public service salaries. In his decision he asserted that:

it was never intended that the Civil Service Board should have the power of deciding whether the salaries paid were sufficient or insufficient for the services performed. I doubt whether Parliament would have allowed such, even if we had intended to ask for the power. I had no doubt that one of the effects of the Act would be to bring to light many glaring inconsistencies, owing to the mode in which appointments had previously and for so many years been made; and that it was quite possible that eventually some steps might have to be taken with regard to them; but I purposely did not encumber the Bill with any provisions to this effect, because, amongst other reasons, if the Board had been empowered within even strict limits to raise salaries which they deemed insufficient, it would also have been necessary to invest it with powers to reduce salaries which were in excess of the value of the services performed .... I am quite clear that the act neither does confer, nor was intended to confer, the power of rectification upon the Civil Service Board.39

It is clear that there had been a serious gap between the understandings of the civil servants who had been consulted on the Bill and the politicians who had ultimately introduced it. Goodchap and Fraser obviously expected more of the Bill than Stuart did, and had over-estimated Stuart’s commitment to its principles. Eagar’s casting vote against the right of appeal for public servants suggests that there was little commitment to even a mild degree of reform on the part of senior officers who were closely associated with the previous political faction system and its public personnel methods. Ten years later, when Goodchap was a member of the Legislative Council, he spoke with bitterness about his disappointment with the 1884 Act:

This clause gives power to the commissioners to enter into all the departments of the public service to make inquiries as to the performance of duties, and for the purpose of thoroughly investigating and reorganising the service. In connection with the bill which was passed in 1884 by Sir Alexander Stuart, it was understood by the majority of the civil service at that time that that measure did give that power; but after some preliminary investigation had taken place, the Civil Service Board, of which I was a member, found that this power was not conferred upon it. A more disappointing, a more evasive, and more abominable act was never passed to secure the objects which the then Government had in view. The board, I may say, was divided as to its powers to affect this good work. The board consisted of Mr Eagar, the then Under-Secretary for Finance and Trade, Mr John Williams, the Crown Solicitor, Mr Fraser, the Under-Secretary of Justice, Mr Thomas Littlejohn and myself. By the casting vote of the chairman it was decided that we did not
possess this power; but we were not content with that. Mr Fraser and myself persisted and brought the matter before the Attorney-General, who also determined that however desirable such a power would be, the act did not give it, and Sir Alexander Stuart ultimately stated that it was not his intention to grant the power. I have only to say that if the old 17th section of the act had been interpreted to mean what is proposed by this bill, the civil service of this country would have been reorganised in the direction now contemplated ten years ago, and I have no hesitation in saying that hundreds of thousands of pounds would have been saved to the country. I think it is only right, in defence of the Civil Service Board, that has done so little since 1884, to make this explanation. They tried to do the work, but they were told that the act did not confer the power upon them; in fact, it seems to me that it confers very little power indeed upon them.40

Deprived of any real power, the Board quickly fell victim to the cost-cutting of the budget crisis of 1885-6, and drew the odium of the rank-and-file and younger public service leaders as ineffectual and inextricably tied to the old political order. Following the dissolution of parliament in October 1885, the revelation of increasingly higher deficits of £1m and £1.7m led to the swift fall of ministries led by Dibbs and Robertson. When Patrick Jennings succeeded in forming a stable government at the end of February 1886, he promised major financial reform including increased taxation, Civil Service Act and Land Act amendment, local government, and improved surveillance of the Railways Department.41

A Civil Service Act Amendment Bill was introduced immediately by Treasurer Dibbs.42 However, it was put aside as the government attempted to introduce amendments to the Stamp Duties Act, a Land Tax Bill, an Income Tax Bill, and a Government Railways Bill in a stormy session during which political forces behind direct and indirect taxation began to sort themselves out into distinguishable ‘parties’ for the first time.43 Successful in none of these except the stamp duty legislation, and with the end of the session looming, the government pushed a truncated version of the Civil Service Act Amendment Bill through the house in a two-hour session beginning at midnight on 18 October 1886.44

This desperate attempt to retrench expenditure in the face of parliamentary refusal to increase taxation was designed purely ‘to strike the increments out’.45 The two previous bills introduced by Dibbs, the second as late as 22 September 1886, had been more considered. They were intended, according to Dibbs, to provide for periodical investigation, reduction and re-organisation of the civil service - for the better regulation thereof - for granting compensation for loss of office - for granting allowances and gratuities - and for other purposes connected with the administration of the said service.46

The government’s plan to establish regular inquiries into public service numbers and to introduce a compensation scheme for retrenched public servants was shelved, the provisions for automatic increments were repealed, and the Board was left to administer
an Act which had been completely emasculated. As parliamentarian John Neild observed when the original amending Bill had been introduced:

[The Act] is disliked by the service, disliked by the House, and scouted by the country. And now it is proposed to eliminate from the measure the only thing that commends it to the civil service.\(^{47}\)

THE PUBLIC SERVICE UNDER THREAT

Within months of this decisive blow to the hopes of the public service for reform, Jennings had resigned. A new government pledged to free trade was formed after an election fought for the first time by groups loosely organised around the principles of free trade and protection.\(^{48}\) Henry Parkes, the new Free Trade premier, had adeptly straddled the faction and party systems in the election, but he was faced with an entirely novel political situation when he formed his government in March 1887. Electoral and parliamentary support no longer depended principally on personal loyalty and the distribution of patronage. He now had to placate loosely organised groups advocating opposing financial policies. The old consensus was gone, along with the financial means of securing it.

In this new situation the distribution of jobs, goods and services lost its importance as a political strategy. In some cases, such as the administration of the railways or public works, political control became a liability. Parkes moved decisively, therefore, to divest his government of these millstones. He placed the railways under the control of an independent Commission and established a parliamentary committee to supervise the allocation of public money to railways and public works.\(^{49}\) A Local Government Bill designed to shift the burden of public works from the central government was also introduced, although this measure never received serious consideration.\(^{50}\)

Parkes reduced public works, decreasing expenditure on communications from over £6m to about £4.5m. Contraction of new works brought total government expenditure down from the 1885 high of £14.2m to £12.5m, a per capita decrease from £15 10s to £12 (see Figure 2). Parkes retained the more lucrative customs duties, despite his advocacy of free trade, and increased land rents. These measures, along with a general increase in prosperity, enabled him to balance the budget and build up cash surpluses.\(^{51}\)

Parkes' comfortable situation did not last long, however. The government spending cuts fell heavily on the working class, among whom unemployment had been a problem since 1883. Rural employment had fallen during the 1870s and early 1880s, as pastoralists fenced freehold land and completed their capital improvements. A severe drought in 1883 accelerated the high failure rate of small selectors. There was a general
flight to the city, causing Sydney to grow from 30 per cent of the population in 1881 to 34 per cent in 1891. Reduction of expenditure on public works in 1887-8 increased unemployment, and large numbers of destitute people were thrown on the meagre resources of the public charities.52

Parkes was forced to resume heavy expenditure on public works once more to placate the growing unrest of the working class. Drawing on cash surpluses built up in the previous period of contraction, and borrowing from London, the government went on a final spending spree in which expenditure rose to £14.8m in 1889 and a new peak of £18m in 1891 (see Figure 1). This represented a per capita increase of £4 over the 1888 level of £12. Much of this went to public works, and expenditure on railways rose from £1.4m to almost £4m (see Figure 2).53

Meanwhile Parkes made desultory attempts to reduce public service expenditure and to introduce land or property tax. In 1888 his Land Tax Bill was blocked by the conservative Council. His Property Tax Bill introduced at the end of the same session was lost when parliament was prorogued. In the next two years no serious attempt was made to introduce further taxation, despite a budget deficit of £2.6m in 1889.54

In response to attacks on public service expenditure and accusations of patronage, Parkes set up a Royal Commission on the Civil Service in December 1887.55 Despite talk of retrenchment and violent denunciations of the government by the Bulletin, the government appeared to have no serious intention of cutting back the service with this inquiry.56 It was made up of seven members, four parliamentarians, a businessman and two retired public servants.57 The turnover of members was rapid. Christopher Rolleston, the retired Auditor-General, died four months later. R.D. Fitzgerald, the former Deputy Surveyor-General, died in 1892, when the inquiry was still making its slow progress through departments. William Wilkins, who had retired from his position as head of the Public Instruction Department due to ill-health in 1884, also died in 1892, two years after his appointment to the Commission. James Thomson, the recently-retired Treasury official who succeeded Rolleston, became impatient with the ineffectiveness of the inquiry and resigned because, he was quoted as saying, 'he was of the opinion that the results of the Commission's labours were so small as to be of no practical benefit, and that more effective and judicious organization could be suggested by a Board of Public Officers'.58

The Royal Commission sat interminably, investigating the Treasury, the Department of Justice and the Department of Mines in 1888-9, the Post Office, the Money Order Office and the Telegraph Department in 1890, the Attorney-General's Department in 1891, and the Registrar-General's Office in 1893.59 It suspended operations altogether from January to July 1889. The evidence given before the
Commission was confidential and was never published, except for the report on the Post Office, Money Order Office and Telegraph Department. At least one department (probably Mines) refused to act upon its recommendation on the grounds that non-publication of the evidence made it advisory only.60

It is unlikely that the Royal Commission was meant to be anything more than window-dressing to distract attention from a return to some of the old political strategies. Between 1887 when, as the Bulletin put it, 'New South Wales began to have the retrenchment disease badly', and 1893, only about five hundred public servants were retrenched.61 This was miniscule compared with the increase in public service numbers in that same period. In 1886 there had been 12,213 public servants, exclusive of police, military and naval forces and contract and day labour.62 By 1894 this number was nearly doubled to 21,363, not counting the railways, which employed another 9,433, and the tramways, which employed 1,282. With the railways and tramways, there were 32,078 public servants in 1894. If the police, the military and navy are included, the number rises to 39,164. A comparable figure for 1886 is probably the 24,389 quoted during parliamentary debates.63 With an increase of 30 per cent between 1886 and 1894, there seemed to be considerable basis for belief in the Bulletin's allegation that retrenchment was 'merely the art and mystery of discharging a large, sensational batch of able-bodied officials, and recompensating them out of the private savings of the civil servants in general, and then appointing quietly, one by one, a crowd of personal friends and supporters in their stead.64

Although public servants did not appear to suffer greatly from actual retrenchment from 1887 to 1891, this was not at all clear to them at the time. As the Royal Commission dribbled out its secret reports, the service was kept in a continual state of anxiety. This was exacerbated by the efforts of a group of protectionists in the parliament, led by E.W. O'Sullivan, W.H. Traill and Thomas Rose, to harass the government by calling attention to the haphazard and ineffectual nature of its retrenchment programme.65

What did suffer, however, was the superannuation fund. The retrenchment of even the moderate numbers of officers dismissed after 1887 placed a heavy strain on the fund, which was in danger of collapsing. The Civil Service Board and the Bulletin kept this danger before the public, and it became, in the early 1890s, one of the central concerns of the employee associations that gathered strength in this period.66 Meanwhile, keeping all of these anxieties on the boil was the Bulletin, thundering against 'the Ministerial bushranger' who 'sallies forth with his little budget, gun in hand, and “bails up” the employees, demanding a percentage of their money to pay the debt his weakness has contracted, with the alternative of losing their official lives'.67
Public service anxieties increased at the end of 1891 when Parkes' Free Trade government was defeated and Dibbs formed a Protectionist government. Dibbs' government immediately announced a programme of retrenchment and tariff increases. Early in 1892 his government increased the number of specific duties and instituted *ad valorem* duties of 10-15 per cent. This saved the public service from immediate danger. However, O'Sullivan's group, calling themselves the 'retrenchment party', pressed for action to curb the indiscriminate growth of the service. Much to the *Bulletin*'s disgust, they even attacked the salary of the doyen of the public service, Critchett Walker, the Chief Under Secretary, in a parliamentary debate on supply in February 1892. In November of that year, in anticipation of the budget estimates, O'Sullivan's group proposed a reduction of 10 per cent on all civil servants' salaries over £300. A 5 per cent cut in salaries over £200 was introduced early the following year, and, unable to get its Income-Tax Bill through the Council, the government proposed further public service cuts as revenue from customs fell in the depressed economy of 1893. Expenditure dropped away precipitantly from £17m in 1892 and 1893 to £13.3m in 1894, a drop of £4 10s per capita from the 1891 level of £16 (see Figure 1). Meanwhile, expenditure on railways fell more sharply, from almost £4m in 1891 to £1.2m in 1892 (see Figure 2).

By the end of 1893 a stalemate had been reached. Neither Free Trade nor Protectionist governments had succeeded in introducing a viable source of revenue to replace that lost with the curtailment of land sales. Without some resolution of this crisis, the public service and the working class were in danger of suffering severe contraction of employment opportunities and deterioration of working conditions. The newly-formed Labor Party and the newly-mobilised public service were poised, therefore, to act in concert to avert this crisis.
Notes


2. Lamb, p.41.


4. For a comprehensive discussion of attitudes of different groups to various forms of taxation see A.W. Martin, ‘Free Trade and Protectionist Parties in New South Wales’, *HS* 6, no. 23 (November 1954):315-23.


17. *PD* 1884, pp.1446-64, 1909, 2040-41; Loveday and Martin (n.8 above), p.129.

18. *PD* 1883-4, p.5076, 3 September 1884.


23. Figures calculated from CSB, *Report* 1885 (V & P 1885-6, vol. II), p.3. An estimated 1,700 police are added to the 11,371 given for public servants; estimate based on *Wealth and Progress* 1886-87, p.488.


25. 9 February 1889, p.28.

26. *PD* 1883-4, p.5474. Goodchap is not named but can be identified by reference to V & P 1864, vol. I, pp.167-78. Charles Goodchap (1837-1896) was an architect’s son. After a grammar school education in England, he came to Sydney in 1853 and joined the Colonial Secretary’s Office as a clerk. He transferred to Lands and Public Works in 1856 and joined the Railways Branch in 1859. In 1869 he became Chief Clerk, in 1875 Secretary, and in 1878 Commissioner in place of John Rae. He was a bachelor who lived at the Reform Club, of which Robertson was a member. He feuded with Engineer-in-Chief John Whitton and in 1888 was more-or-less forced to resign when the Commission was set up. He was founder and honorary secretary of the Civil Service Cooperative Society in 1871, and pressed for a superannuation bill in 1878.
elected to the Legislative Assembly for the railways district of Redfern in 1889 on a Protectionist platform. After losing his seat in 1891 he was appointed to the Council in 1892. He spoke infrequently in the House, mainly on labour and public service matters. He died in October 1896, four days before his friend Fraser. See J.H. Forsyth, 'Charles August Goodchap', *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.261-2; *TCJ*, 2 March 1889, p.13.


29. *PD* 1883-4, p.5079, 3 September 1884; CSB 1885 (n.23 above), pp.3-4, 8-45, esp. 17.


31. CSB 1885 (n.23 above), pp.2-3.

32. For departmental regulations see Appendix VI to CSB 1885, pp.52-65.

33. The clauses concerned were 4, 5, and 6. See *PD* 1883-4, pp.5352-5, 23 September 1884; pp.5440-41, 5448, 25 September 1884.

34. RCCS (n.27 above).

35. CSB 1885 (n.23 above), pp.46-51, esp. 49-50.

36. John Williams (1821-1891) was born in Liverpool, the son of a solicitor. After arriving in Australia in 1835, he served his articles and was admitted as a solicitor in 1842. After a period of partnership with Richard Driver, he became Crown Solicitor in 1859, where he was Fraser’s head of department for some years. He retired in 1890 at the age of 69 and died the following year. He was a Director of the Civil Service Building Society in 1878 with Fraser and Goodchap, and was President of the Incorporated Law Institute in 1889. See Bulletin 31 October 1891, p.11; SMH 6 June, 1878, p.10; 21 October 1891, p.5; V & P 1889, vol. II, p.399.

37. CSB 1885 (n.23 above), pp.46-51, esp. 49-50.

38. Loveday and Martin (n.8 above), p.129.


41. *PD* 1885-6, p.930, 24 March 1886. Jennings (1831-1897) was a wealthy Catholic squatter. He was vice-president of the executive council in Stuart’s ministry in 1883 and leader of the opposition when Robertson’s short-lived ministry fell. He almost
succeeded in forming a coalition with Robertson, but ended up forming his own ministry. See Martin (n.1 above).

42. *PD* 1885-6, p.1007, 30 March 1886. Dibbs (1834-1904) was born in Sydney, the son of a Scottish ship’s captain who disappeared after he was born. He and his brother John were merchants, and his other brother, T.A. Dibbs, was General Manager of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney from 1882 to 1915. He entered the Legislative Assembly in 1874. After a five-year break between 1877 and 1882 he became Treasurer in Stuart’s government from 1883 to 1885. He was briefly Premier at the end of 1885, and then became Colonial Secretary under Jennings. See L.F. Crisp, *George Richard Dibbs 1834-1904: Premier of New South Wales Prophet of Unification* (Canberra: ANU Printery, 1980).

43. Loveday and Martin (n.8 above), pp.131-42.

44. Introduced 14 October; second reading 18 October 1886. See *PD* 1885-6, pp.5778, 5834.


48. Loveday and Martin (n.8 above), pp.136-42.


50. *PD* 1887, 2nd sess., pp.137-8, 22 and 28 September 1887. Similar bills were introduced on 7 May 1890 and 5 August 1891.


56. 3 December 1887, p.5.


58. *Ibid*.


60. RCCS, *Report*, p.50.

61. 20 October 1894, p.7. The *Bulletin* was quoting figures from the recently-published CSB *Report* for 1893.


63. RCCS (n.27 above), *Report*, pp.78-80 for 1894 figures; *V & P* 1885-6, vol. I, p.419 (O’Sullivan); *PD* 1885-6, p.1012, 30 March 1886 (Davies). Coghlan gives a figure of 24,000 government and municipal officers and employees in *Wealth and Progress* 1885-6, p.488, so is probably the source of these figures.

64. N.61 above.


67. 3 December 1887, p.5.

68. PD 1891-2, pp.3201-20, 1 December 1891.

69. Wealth and Progress 1898-9, p.176.

70. PD 1891-2, pp.5359-80, 17 February 1892; 1892-3, pp.1557-602, 1 November 1892; Mansfield (n.65 above), pp.112-7.


72. On 18 January Treasurer See announced the cut and suspended all new appointments. On March 8 John Neild moved a motion of disapproval of the proposed reductions (PD 1892-3, pp.4947-65). These cuts were approved and further reductions proposed on 28 March (pp.5580-81). For economy and financial crisis see Coghlan, Labour and Industry (n.1 above), pp.1673-80. For customs revenue see Wealth and Progress 1898-9, p.887; Lamb, ‘Crown Land Policy’ (n.1 above), pp.40, 66.

73. Lamb, p.65; Financing of Government Expenditure (n.3 above), p.38.
CHAPTER 5
THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS AND AUTONOMY: SUCCESS

With the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads, public servants began to act as part of a class. A concerted effort to defend and strengthen their labour market situation in the early 1890s culminated in the gain of considerable autonomy with the passing of the Public Service Act in 1895 and the establishment of a strong Public Service Board in 1896. Between 1896 and 1904 these gains were consolidated, establishing the public service as an important medium of social reform.

A number of factors contributed to the public servants’ success. Constant threats of retrenchment, the continuing financial problems of the government, the stacking of the public service for political purposes, and the weakness of the Civil Service Board provided strong motivation for public service action. The imminent breakdown of the superannuation fund provided an immediate and compelling issue around which to organise the rank-and-file of the service, while the longer-term deterioration of public service conditions and the political and social ferment of the previous decade encouraged the development of well-articulated labour market theories amongst its intellectuals. The great size of the public service made it a formidable voting bloc, and its unity was enhanced by the uniform danger of retrenchment faced by all levels of the service, the replacement of many of the old guard of senior public servants by young men who had risen through the ranks, and a strong sense of community enhanced by the centralised nature of the service by the 1890s. In addition, the size and importance of the major government departments provided an unrivalled organisational base and source of managerial expertise. This organisational superiority gave young public service leaders considerable influence in establishing the direction of government policy in a period of political reorganisation.

Further strength was added to the public servants’ campaign for control over their labour market situation by the fact that they were part of a larger movement for social reform amongst ‘the democracy’ - a miscellaneous group comprising small farmers, skilled and unskilled workers, the petty bourgeoisie and the new middle class in general. During the 1880s this movement was split between adherents of free trade and protection, and in the 1890s between these two parties and the Labor Party. The
splintered nature of the reform movement gave added importance to the young public service leaders as spearheads of reform from within the bureaucracy. This role, and close ties of background and sympathy, made them essential allies during the 1890s of the emerging Labor Party which, by 1904, became itself the focus of the reform movement.

**THE VACUUM OF POLITICAL POWER**

The Free Trade and Protectionist parties were made up of such heterogeneous elements that permanent parliamentary and extra-parliamentary support was difficult to organise. In addition, the methods of the faction system died hard, and both parties had difficulties devising and maintaining new political forms and practices. Each party had its radical populist wing comprising new middle class and petty bourgeois advocates of policies to help the 'little man'. E.W. O'Sullivan, W.H. Traill and Thomas Rose were journalists who led the Protectionist attack on abuse of the public service for political ends. They argued for a protectionist tariff that would help nascent colonial industries, rather than across-the-board revenue tariffs that fell on rich and poor alike. On the Free Trade side were the Single Taxers, led by Francis Cotton, another journalist with a rural background of shearing and droving, who was active in the formation of the Labor Party in 1890. To these new middle class radicals were added a number of working men who entered parliament before the organisation of the Labor Party. Jacob Garrard was a prominent trade unionist in the 1870s who was elected to parliament in 1880. He remained in the Free Trade party in the 1890s despite his continuing interest in labour matters, and was the first Minister for Labour and Industry from 1895 to 1898. William Schey was Secretary of the Amalgamated Railway and Tramways Service Association when he entered parliament in 1887. He supported the Protectionists and, like Garrard, maintained that loyalty despite his involvement in the Labor Party from 1891.¹

The political stalemate and economic instability brought about by these two ineffectual parties did much to further the development of an alternative radical party based principally on trade union support. The Labor Party had several advantages over the other two parties. First of all, it had more homogeneous supporters, although these were by no means confined to the working class. Secondly, it had a strong organisational base in the union movement, which had grown significantly in both the country and the city in the unstable conditions of the 1880s. In particular, the Trades and Labour Council (TLC), which had been in existence since the early 1870s, provided a central and experienced base for the formation of the new party. Thirdly, the Labor Party did not carry the baggage of old political methods which retarded innovation and adaptation to new political realities in the Protectionist and Free Trade parties.²

Despite these advantages, it took a number of years for the Labor Party to
consolidate. A number of its potential supporters were already involved in the two existing parties. Others who joined the party or entered parliament as Labor candidates were still divided on the fiscal question. It was not until Labor Party members accepted a pledge of solidarity in 1894, and the fiscal question was resolved with the introduction of direct taxes in 1895, that Labor was able to capitalise fully on its position as an influential third party. By 1904 it had absorbed most of the reform elements in the parliament and the electorate, and an organised conservative group had emerged to oppose it. In the meantime, however, there was a vacuum of parliamentary power, except for brief periods of effective government by Reid’s Free Trade party in 1895-6 and Lyne’s Protectionist party from 1899 to 1901. This vacuum of power left the way free for influential public servants to consolidate the power of their own class.

The Mobilisation of Public Servants

The same economic insecurity that precipitated the development of radical politics stimulated the growth of militancy among public servants. The expanding ranks of the Railways Department provided a large part of the membership of traditional craft unions such as the Boilermakers Union and the Australian Society of Engineers. James McGowen, the Secretary of the Boilermakers Union from 1874 to 1892, worked in the Department’s Eveleigh Workshops from 1875 to 1891. Political controversies over the railways in the mid-1880s prompted the formation of the mass Railway and Tramway Employees’ Association in 1886. In 1891 this union had almost 3,000 members. The militancy of these railway men was channelled into the TLC and the Labor Party. McGowen was on the executive of the TLC from 1888 to 1891 and became Labor member for Redfern, the railways suburb where he lived and worked, in 1891. He was the leader of the New South Wales Labor Party from 1894 to 1913 and became the first Labor Premier in 1910. William Schey, the Secretary of the Railways Union, was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1887 primarily as a working man’s representative. He was an early member of the Redfern Labour League, but remained an independent Labor man with protectionist leanings until he left parliament in 1898.3

White collar unionism in the public service developed outside the labour movement proper, but was a reaction to the same threat of government contraction and retrenchment. In 1881 telegraphists in the Chief Telegraph Office had elected a ‘Committee of Seven’ to mediate between workers and management. The elitism of the Civil Service Act turned this informal committee into a properly-constituted association. Telegraphists excluded from classification in the Professional Division formed a Vigilance Committee to try to rectify this injustice. Their lack of success led telegraphists to join with the Postmasters and Postmistresses also aggrieved by the Act
to form an Operators' Society in 1886. The Society, under the new name of the New South Wales Electric Telegraph Society (ETS), began efforts to increase its membership in 1889, as the new government financial crisis loomed. Early in 1891, at the same time as the Labor Party was being formed, the ETS confirmed its new strength and militancy with a revised constitution and the establishment of a journal, the Transmitter, which quickly achieved a wide circulation.4

By 1891 the ETS was joined by two other public service unions. Draftsmen had also considered themselves badly treated by the 1884 Act. It is not known if their association was established then, but by 1891 the Draftsmen's Association was already in existence. A Postal Clerks' Union was also established in 1891. Those three unions, led by the Draftsmen's Association, made strenuous attempts to organise a comprehensive Public Service Association.5

This burst of public service mobilisation in 1891 was a defensive reaction to the increasing instability of government finances. Loans from London were difficult to arrange in 1890-91,6 and the radical wing of the Protectionist party had begun their campaign for rational retrenchment.7 By the end of 1891 fears for public service security became more immediate with the replacement of Parkes by Dibbs's Protectionist government. At the same time, the release of a report by the actuary, Richard Teece, on the precarious state of the superannuation fund increased public service anxieties.8

The statement of the objects of the projected association was an interesting mixture of trade union and professionalising strategies:

A. To establish unity throughout the service, whereby its interests might be protected and advanced.
B. To provide a representative organisation for the purpose of thoroughly discussing all matters affecting the service, and which shall be an acknowledged authority qualified to express the voice thereof.
C. To promote social intercourse and encourage friendly feeling among members of the service, and thus sweep away jealousies and differences which will always prevail when men are disunited and have no rallying point.
D. To vindicate the rights of the service and uphold its just claims; to maintain respect for and confidence in the employees of the State, to seek to obtain recognition of the principle that there is no higher field of duty for a man than the faithful service of his country, and that such services should command due consideration and reward.
E. To advocate the abolition of patronage and to uphold the principle of advancement upon the grounds of seniority and merit.
F. To advocate amendment of the present Civil Service Act.
G. To provide a means of united action in the event of the reasonable interests of the service being endangered by sudden or extreme changes of policy.
H. To collect statistics and other data in which the service might be in any
way interested, and to establish a library where all such information would be accessible to members.  

The Bulletin, which was supportive of the beleaguered public service, was sceptical of the more gentlemanly aspects of this strategy, and advised the association to ‘drop everything except Article E, and to fight for Article E like a cart-load of wild cats’. 

The efforts of the three white collar unions to establish a wider Public Service Association foundered on the opposition of some departmental heads and the postponement of immediate danger of retrenchment by the government’s successful imposition of new customs duties. Without the support of a united public service, these sectional associations could do little except react to immediate problems such as the decline of the superannuation fund. However, their leaders gained valuable training in organisation and personnel policy which led to the absorption of these men into the top ranks of public service administrators over the next decade. Meanwhile, the determined but gentlemanly project outlined in the statement of the abortive association was carried on by a new generation of senior officers whose influence and commitment made them effective representatives for all public servants.

**The New Public Service Leaders**

By the early 1890s a ‘new guard’ of younger officers was rising to the top of the service. Like the old guard they were replacing, they were intellectuals from relatively humble backgrounds, dependent on the sale of their professional skills for their livelihood. But their skills were different and the conditions under which they marketed them gave them more independence and power. The new public service leaders were able to take advantage of the demand for their skills and the vacuum of political power to increase the autonomy of the service and ensure its continuing influence and security.

The changing political system of the 1880s demanded new skills from its senior public servants. The task of the bureaucrats of the faction period between 1856 and the mid-1880s were mainly administrative and technical, transferring resources in a relatively straightforward way from land and customs to public works, raising loans where necessary to keep this process on a steady course. The process was uncontroversial, except in its details, until the late 1870s, so did not require manipulation of public opinion to make it acceptable to the electorate. With the breakdown of the faction system in the 1880s, ideology became important in attracting and consolidating public support, and governments looked, amongst other things, for public servants skilled in the manipulation of facts and figures. The old political system had demanded that its public servants be resourceful, but not innovative, as the basic policy of government-led development was clearly laid down, and both politicians and
bureaucrats found it suited their interests. The chaotic political situation of the 1880s required new policy initiatives if both bureaucrats and politicians were to survive. The faction system did not require extraordinary organisational skills of its public servants while the supply of government revenue was assured. In a tightening financial situation, however, management became more important than building, economy and efficiency more central than spending, and skills in the manipulation of personnel and organisational forms were demanded.

The new public service leaders of the early 1890s found themselves in a very different situation from those of the earlier period. These differences made them more independent of their ministers and gave them more freedom to make alliances with other political groups. The new men of the 1890s were not restricted by the close ties of interest and loyalty that kept Eagar's generation under the hegemony of the faction politicians. They had experienced enough fluctuations in government finances not to be beguiled by sudden returns to prosperity as the public servants of 1873 were. They had observed the débacle of the 1884 Civil Service Act and the inefficacy and conservatism of the Civil Service Board, and knew that they could not trust politicians or the old guard of public service leaders to protect the rights of all public servants. The widely-discussed removal of Charles Goodchap, the capable and reform-minded Commissioner of Railways, in 1888 demonstrated that close identification with one government placed even the most powerful public servants in danger. Politicians, on the other hand, were more ready to release their hold over the public service as patronage in jobs, services and resources became less feasible as a political strategy.

The ascendancy of the new type of public servant was helped by the natural ageing process of the old guard. However, there was no mandatory retirement age, and some were still relatively young although they had held their top position for over thirty years. Henry Halloran, the Principal Secretary, was the first of the public service leaders of the faction system to retire in 1878 at the age of sixty-seven. Duncan followed in 1881 at the age of seventy. Rolleston retired in 1883 at sixty-six. William Wilkins retired from ill-health in 1884, when he was still only fifty-four. John Rae was finally eased out in 1888 at the age of seventy-five, but was soon after appointed to the Civil Service Board from which he retired finally in 1893. John Whitton took a year's leave in 1889 before he retired at seventy in 1890. Geoffrey Eagar, the architect of the financial system of the faction period, died in office in 1891 at the age of seventy-three. Edward Cracknell, who had been Superintendent of Electric Telegraphs for thirty-two years, also died in office in 1893 aged sixty-two.

Where major changes of direction were urgently required, survivors of the early days of the faction system were replaced by young officers who helped to change public
service administration radically in the 1880s and 1890s. In such cases, politicians often used public inquiries to dislodge senior public servants who had outlived their usefulness. These inquiries gave young and innovative public servants the opportunity to bring their ideas to the attention of the government.

The Lands Department was the first to attract the attention of reforming politicians. A Commission of Inquiry appointed by Farnell’s non-faction government in 1878 criticised the administration of Under Secretary William Stephen, but the return of Parkes and Robertson to power temporarily saved him from dismissal. By 1880, however, as land reform became more urgent, the Minister for Lands, Hoskins, clearly considered that Stephen was inadequate to the task and decided to get rid of him despite his close ties with Parkes and Robertson. Stephen was finally moved sideways, and a 32-year-old career officer, Charles Oliver, took his place. Oliver and William Houston, who had already carried out a major reorganisation during Farnell’s ministry, reformed and reorganised the department over the next ten years. Oliver’s innovatory skill no doubt won him the position of Commissioner of Railways in 1888 at the age of forty, when the administration of the railways was handed over to an independent commission. In 1897 he became Chief Commissioner. Houston became Under Secretary of Lands in 1890 at the age of forty-four and was one of the new-breed of public servants who helped administer the reformed public service after 1896.  

It was in the Department of Public Works, however, that the new type of public servant flourished. This large, decentralised department, which contained a number of semi-autonomous branches including the railways, all under the responsibility of the Minister for Public Works, probably employed about 12,000 to 15,000 people in the 1880s. At least 10,000 of these were in the railways. The department, and its major branches, were by far the largest organisations in the colony. The bureaucrats who ran these large and complex departments became, through practical experience, the organisational experts of their time. It is not surprising, therefore, that these departments bred a number of men who became what Deakin, when he was Commonwealth Attorney-General, called ‘the business doctors of the public service’.

The central figures who emerged from the Public Works and Railways Departments in the 1880s and 1890s were Joseph Barling and T.A. Coghlan, two members of the Public Service Board that was established by the Public Service Act of 1895, and Duncan McLachlan, the first Commonwealth Public Service Commissioner. All from petty bourgeois-artisan backgrounds and closely connected with the respectable working class railway community of Redfern, these three between them epitomised the new, independent public service leader: all were committed to the autonomy of the public service from political control; all three were specialists in personnel management -
the manipulation of men and women in organisations; Coghlan was, in addition, a skilful manipulator of words, ideas and finance.

Joseph Barling was the eldest son of an English ironmonger who migrated to New South Wales with his five sons in 1856 to try his luck on the land. This venture possibly could not support all five sons, so in 1861, at the age of 21, Barling joined the Public Works Department. He worked in both the Railways and the Harbours and Rivers branches of Public Works, and from 1871 was Chief Clerk and Accountant in Harbours and Rivers under Edward Moriarty. In these branches he came into contact with Charles Goodchap, Duncan McLachlan and T.A. Coghlan. Goodchap was his Chief Clerk in the Railways Department from 1869 to 1871. McLachlan, the son of a Redfern shopkeeper, joined them in 1869 as a junior clerk. Goodchap and McLachlan continued their association as Goodchap became successively Secretary and then Commissioner for Railways while McLachlan became Corresponding Clerk and then Chief Clerk. When Barling moved back to the Harbours and Rivers Department in 1871 he was administrative chief and patron to T.A. Coghlan, the son of an improvident Redfern plasterer and builder, who joined the department in 1873.

The drastic reorganisation of the Public Works Department in the mid-1880s opened the way for Barling to become a major influence on public service matters. During his attempts to reform public works and railways administration in 1886, William Lyne, Minister for Works in the Jennings government, had spotted Barling as a possible replacement for the ageing Rae. When the Parkes government succeeded in removing administration of the railways from direct political control in 1888, Barling was placed in charge of the new Public Works Department. He appointed McLachlan, then aged thirty-four, as his Chief Clerk and Accountant. Together they reorganised the semi-autonomous branches into a centralised department, and introduced a well-regulated personnel system which was discussed with great interest and approval by the Royal Commission on the Civil Service in 1895. In this same reorganisation of railways and public works administration, McLachlan’s brother, Hugh, a childhood friend of Coghlan’s, became Secretary to the Railway Commissioners, and Barling’s colleagues from Harbours and Rivers, Robert Hickson and George Tillett replaced William Bennett, the retiring Commissioner for Roads, and Edward Moriarty, the retiring Engineer-in-Chief for Harbours and Rivers. A network of colleagues of Barling, Coghlan and McLachlan controlled a large part of the public service, therefore, by 1890.17

T.A. Coghlan was the most important of the ‘new men’ who emerged from the Public Works Department in the 1880s. Although he trained as an engineer, he took advantage of the government’s need for someone with his particular blend of literary, mathematical and organisational skills to make himself the most influential public
servant, if not the most influential political figure, of the period. In 1886 he was appointed at the age of 31 to the new post of Government Statist. This position provided a springboard for him to quickly become an indispensable adviser to successive governments on almost every matter of importance, and a well-known public authority on all policy matters to which statistics could be applied.

Coghlan's intense interest in the welfare of the working class and his own insecure economic and social background stimulated his development as a theorist of the labour market, and he applied these theories to the situation of his own class. His flair as a publicist and his strong political influence enabled him to popularise his theories and to have them embodied in government policies.

It was indicative of the times that this ambitious young man chose to become a statistician rather than remain an engineer. The judicious distribution of jobs, services, and public works in which the engineer was a central figure was becoming an unworkable political strategy by 1886. Instead, in a situation of decreasing abundance, politicians had to make more calculated judgements about expected revenue, government expenditure, and the state of the economy and the labour market. They also had to create the illusion of working in the interests of all when this was no longer possible. Such illusions needed skilful creation and manipulation of knowledge. The statistician was the ideal person to carry out this dual role. The 'political arithmetic' of the seventeenth century had become the 'statistics' of the nineteenth century, the supposedly neutral facts which formed the basis of the science of government. The nineteenth century term 'statist' conveyed the close connection that was made between the work of the state and the work of the statistician. The statist was, theoretically, the scientific expert in matters of policy, providing empirical knowledge on which rational decisions could be made.

The concept of the statistician as a disinterested man of science was useful to both the upwardly mobile intellectual of the nineteenth century and the government who employed him. It provided socially-concerned scientists with new careers in the state service which gave them opportunities for intervention and influence. At the same time, governments were able to trade on the authority of the expert to make their policies and administration more attractive to their constituencies.

The man appointed to this controversial position was a junior engineer from the Harbours and Rivers branch of Public Works. He was an ambitious and talented young man of essentially working class background. His combination of literary and mathematical ability secured him the position over the head of the more pedestrian officer of the Registrar-General’s Department who had prepared the two previous census reports. As one of Barling’s ‘stable’ in the Public Works Department, he was part of the
group of up-and-coming young men from Redfern who were making their presence felt in this year of public service ferment.

It is not surprising that the respectable working class suburb of Redfern nurtured the organisational experts and public service reformers of the 1890s. Redfern was a fast-growing suburb just outside the Sydney municipal area. It grew up around the railway terminus built in 1855, and expanded with the growth of the railways. By the late 1870s much of the movement of goods and passengers in New South Wales flowed through the Redfern terminus and most railway repair work was carried out in its workshops. When Charles Goodchap became Railways Commissioner in 1878 he purchased the nearby Eveleigh estate to provide more extensive accommodation for repair and maintenance workshops. By 1881 Redfern was a crowded suburb of 10,868 inhabitants, and by 1886 it was second only to Balmain in size. Over 19,000 people lived there, making up 10 per cent of the Sydney suburban population. By 1894 it was heavily populated and almost exclusively working class.

Redfern was a public service suburb *par excellence*, but its character was strongly influenced by the working class nature of the employment of most of its inhabitants. Its workshops and goods yards were strongholds of traditional craft unionism and the new unionism of unskilled workers. Its offices provided work for the upwardly-mobile sons of its shopkeepers and artisans who had excelled at the elementary schooling provided by the national and church systems. These boys grew up imbued with the traditions of independence, solidarity and exclusiveness of craft unionism. They also grew up accepting as a fact of life that the state played an active part in the economy of the colony, and that its strength and stability were essential to the well-being of the working class and the new middle class.

In this close-knit community, the future public service reformers were friends as well as colleagues. McLachlan’s parents established a general store in the embryo settlement around the new terminal in the mid-1850s. Coghlan’s family moved there some time before he commenced at the Cleveland Street National School around 1859. His father was at that time a plasterer who no doubt found work and a healthy environment for his growing family in this new and expanding suburb. According to W.S. Jevons, Redfern was then a suburb of respectable tradesmen, journeymen and other wage-earners, living in houses of limited size. In the small community of the early days Coghlan and the two McLachlan brothers knew each other, although they did not go to the same school. As young public servants, they were both part of the ‘debating society, hard-reading crowd’ who developed literary, political and intellectual skills in the literary societies which proliferated in the 1870s and 1880s. They were both involved in the Redfern Literary Society, of which McLachlan was Secretary and
Coghlan a committee member when it was established in 1875. McLachlan lived in Redfern until the 1890s and Coghlan at least until the mid-1880s. They remained friends throughout their lives, corresponding regularly and frankly during Coghlan’s long period in England from 1905 to 1926.

The men that Coghlan and McLachlan came into contact with in the Public Works Department also had close ties with the railway suburb. Barling, for instance, had married into a railway family. Charles Goodchap’s close connection with the community was demonstrated in 1889 after he had been removed from his position as Commissioner of Railways, when he was elected as a member for Redfern despite his absence in England at the time.

In the early 1890s, as we shall see, real threats to the public service began to emerge. ‘New men’ such as we have been discussing, would then be well-placed to lead the reform movement from within. United and highly-motivated themselves, they had the backing of several active public service unions and close ties of community and sympathy with the wider labour movement. They were in a position, therefore, to help create a new state system which gave public servants autonomy and jointly protected the interests of the working class and the new middle class.

T.A. COGHLAN AND 'A POLITICAL ECONOMY BETTER SUITED FOR THE WORKING-MAN'

T.A. Coghlan was the most sophisticated theoretically and the most articulate of the young public service leaders. He was also the most strategically-placed to put his ideas into practice. He was, therefore, the most influential of this group of public service reformers, and the secure position of the bureaucracy after 1896 and its role in social reform can be attributed largely to his leadership.

Coghlan was born in Sydney in 1855 of Irish Catholic background. His father was a tradesman at the time, and as Sydney expanded he became quite well-to-do as a building contractor. He did not manage to lift his family out of the respectable working class suburb of Redfern however. He had some weakness of character and, in Coghlan’s words, ‘neglected his affairs’. Coghlan was the second eldest of a family of nine children. After the youngest was born in 1878 there are no further records of the father: whether he died or deserted the family is not known. Whatever the case, it is clear that Coghlan had an economically unstable childhood and that he shouldered much of the economic burdens of his younger brothers and sisters in his young manhood. He did not marry until 1897, when he was 42 years old, by which time his youngest brother, Cecil, was finally established as an articled clerk and his sister, Isa, had finished her medical degree and was settled as medical adviser to the Australian Mutual Provident insurance company (AMP).
Coghlan was largely self-educated and he had to make his own way in the world, even though his father had some influence in the early 1870s. He attended the local national school until he was twelve, and then went to Sydney Grammar School on a scholarship for two years. He did not enjoy school and left to try his hand in a commercial office, and then as a pupil teacher, until he began training as an engineer in the Harbours and Rivers Department in 1873. He applied himself vigorously to his career, presenting papers to the Institute of Engineers and accompanying the 1882 expedition to Lord Howe Island to observe the transit of Venus. His enthusiasm for self-improvement led him into the Redfern Literary Society and the Catholic Literary Society, of which he was vice-president for many years.

Coghlan's literary and debating activities gave him an entrée into journalism in a period when new journals were mushrooming. In 1880 he contributed to current religious and education controversies in the Catholic Freeman's Journal, and the following year he edited the Redfern Suburban Times, canvassing themes that were to be of enduring interest to him - success, government intervention for 'the comfort of the community', the hardships of the poorer classes, the need for state intervention on their behalf, the need for impartiality in administration, and the better organisation of Friendly Societies. Coghlan's literary and journalistic activities introduced him into Sydney's political world, and it was his close intimacy with the fledgling politician, James Toohey, that brought Coghlan to Dibbs's attention for the Statist position in 1886.

In appointing Coghlan to this position, the New South Wales government obviously wanted someone who could present facts and figures intelligibly and with authority and could publicise them with flair. Coghlan did not disappoint them. He quickly redesigned the former Statistical Year Book as a yearly series entitled The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales, which was an elegantly written exposition of the history, resources and economic characteristics of the colony. This annual production was joined in 1890 by The Seven Colonies of Australasia, which presented material on the six Australian colonies and New Zealand. In addition, he provided extensive interpretive comment on the New South Wales census which he conducted in 1891.

These official publications were supplemented by judicious use of the press. By means of press statements, reviews, informal feeds, and the publication of articles on social aspects of statistics under his own name as well as under pseudonyms, Coghlan popularised his official publications and the information he gathered. His close relationships with the management and writers of the Bulletin gave him ample opportunity to influence public opinion directly and indirectly. The editor, J.F.
Archibald, sought him out immediately he became Statist, and he formed close friendships with both Archibald and William Macleod, the *Bulletin*’s business manager, with whom he corresponded while in Britain from 1905 to 1926. He regularly wrote anonymous leading articles and pseudonymous social and economic essays for the *Bulletin*, and employed a number of *Bulletin* writers in the census office. He also wrote on economic subjects for the *Daily Telegraph*, that ‘Journal of the Great Middle Classes’.

Coghlan quickly became one of the most respected authorities in New South Wales on social and political issues. An adroit self-publicist, he often inserted into his pseudonymous articles some reference to ‘Mr Coghlan, the New South Wales Statist’ as the authority on the subject under discussion. The *Bulletin* did likewise, and he soon became a household word, especially after he suffered a personal attack by two Melbourne protectionist papers for conspiring to bolster free trade by statistical manipulation.

Despite his association with the free trade cause, successive governments found the new Statist invaluable as a source of useful information. Soon after he was appointed, Parkes, who was then Premier, commissioned him to prepare a statement of electorate expenditure in order to meet accusations of government favouritism. He was soon consulted on the government’s proposed property tax. Firmly convinced of the necessity of an income tax to place government finances on a stable footing, he persuaded the government that a property tax was not adequate. From that time he became the chief source of advice to governments on taxation, banking and finance, sickness and pension funds, local government and electoral reform. As he himself immodestly remarked in his autobiography (which was written in the third person): ‘The government recognised that they had an officer whom they could turn to in difficult matters for which specialists were employed’.

As Coghlan’s stature grew, his confidence as a social reformer grew also, and he turned increasingly to the subject which engrossed his whole life, ‘determining the causes which give the workers so little in the way of comfort’. Evidence of this lifelong interest is manifested in his monumental and authoritative social and economic history, *Labour and Industry in Australia*, which was his main intellectual preoccupation from 1905 until it was published in 1918. Unfortunately there is less evidence regarding the precise nature of his relations with the developing labour movement which he chronicles so well. He does class his knowledge of ‘some phases of the Labour movement’ with that of the banking crisis of 1893, in which he was a major participant, and with the statistics he presents, for which, he said, ‘I am my own authority’. This suggests a degree of personal involvement in the movement greater than that of merely a contemporary
observer. This suggestion is supported by the fact that his youngest brother, Cecil, whose upbringing had been his special care, was a Labor nominee to the Legislative Council from 1921 to 1924. In addition, he himself was rumoured to be the likely Labor nominee as Governor of New South Wales during the Lang government’s 1926 crisis shortly before his death. Coghlan’s son recalls that his father would not necessarily have acted as Governor in the way that Lang wished. This independent attitude probably characterised Coghlan’s approach to the labour movement - deep sympathy and understanding stemming from his background and upbringing in a working class suburb, combined with a strong conviction that the solution to labour’s problems required authority and expertise such as he himself could provide.

Coghlan’s incisive and sympathetic approach to the labour movement and the social problems of his time can be gleaned from two series of articles on political economy he published in 1889 under pseudonyms. The Daily Telegraph articles set out his ideas in scholarly fashion, while these ideas are applied to a number of current issues in the Bulletin.

Coghlan’s political economy was strongly influenced by the traditions of working class prosperity and craft unionism with which he had grown up. He rejected revolutionary socialism as theoretically misconceived. He borrowed instead from the most recent British and American marginalist economics to elevate to the status of economic ‘laws’ the necessity of cooperation between capital and labour, the right of labour to strike and combine to maintain a given standard of living, the desirability of intervention in the labour market, and the exclusion of groups such as married women and Chinese from the labour force.

Coghlan agreed with the marginalists’ rejection of the theory of value and the fundamental antagonism of capital and labour. He embraced a Christian socialism in which ‘the basis of Socialism is CHRIST’s command - Love thy neighbour’. In economic terms this meant that ‘the prosperity of the worker is identical with that of the capitalist’.

This did not mean, however, that workers were passively to accept the dictates of capital. It was, rather, an injunction to capitalists to ensure the well-being of workers in their own self-interest. Coghlan maintained that the material prosperity of the entire community depended on the standard of living of the worker; indeed, free political institutions depended upon the ‘industrial condition of the masses’. Therefore a consumption-led economy which afforded the worker a high standard of living was necessary for the well-being of all. If necessary, active intervention should be used to ensure this. Rejecting the law of supply and demand, Coghlan emphasised that culture and will played a major part in the determination of wages. Wages, for Coghlan, were
based on the cost of production of the labourer, which was determined by cultural practice and active intervention. He argued that cultures where the whole family worked together, and those where workers were extremely frugal, provided low wages and a poor standard of living. Where male workers expected and demanded high wages sufficient to keep a family, the standard of living of the whole community was highest. In particular, he argued that the competition of married women or partially-supported single women for jobs endangered the prosperity of all.54

Coghlan appears to have had no explicit theory of the role of the state or of professional experts at this time. However, his rejection of the law of supply and demand left the way open for state and expert intervention. His earliest writings had conceded the necessity for legislation and expert advice to remedy various social problems, and in 1890 he advocated land nationalisation.55 His experience of the potential power of the state to modify the environment of its citizens, his growing concern with the labour market conditions of his own class, and his increasing confidence in his own ability to diagnose and cure current social problems led him to develop a practical approach to the state as a useful base for intervention, as long as it was controlled by independent and able experts.

These provisos were important. Coghlan saw economics as an 'exact science', which worked hand-in-hand with careful investigation. He stressed the importance of empirical investigation of local conditions, criticising the labour movement where it slavishly followed British precedent. Significantly he was most critical of the anti-sweating movement and factories and shops legislation, the two areas in which he had carried out investigations and proposed solutions which were not carried out to his satisfaction.57 He was dismissive of the ability of politicians and businessmen to maintain the prosperous community he considered so essential to the well-being of all. His discussion in Labour and Industry of the administration of Crown lands before 1884, the extravagant government expenditure of the 1880s, and the depression which followed, portrayed politicians and businessmen alike as selfish, incompetent and short-sighted.58 He viewed the Premiers he worked with with a jaundiced eye, speaking of Dibbs's veniality and Reid's incapacity for work.59

Coghlan did not, however, see the public servant as necessarily any more competent or universalistic. He had a poor opinion of the bureaucrats of the earlier period, especially those of the Treasury and Lands Departments, and was contemptuous of his successors at the Public Service Board who did not maintain their independence of politicians.61 Nor was he necessarily approving of all experts. He was quick to denounce as incorrect or impractical economists who advocated profit-sharing and the single tax as panaceas for social problems.62 He was also critical of many public
servants who came to office in New South Wales after he went to London in the early 1900s. Only when there was a combination of ‘correct’ theoretical approach and independence could Coghlan whole-heartedly endorse the reign of the expert. In such a case as his friend, Captain Neitenstein, the penal reformer whose interests were close to his own, he could write approvingly, ‘You of course are supreme in your act and no minister however powerful would venture to interfere with you in the performance of your duties’.

T.A. COGHLAN AS PRACTICAL REFORMER

From these ideas on political economy flowed Coghlan’s main concerns as writer, statistician and policy adviser. The nation’s prosperity depended on the maintenance of consumption and full employment, high wages and good working conditions for European males. As a statistician, therefore, he concentrated on the measurement of the prosperity of the colony, the more accurate description of its labour market, especially of women’s labour market participation, and the improvement of indicators of prosperity such as infant mortality rates, birth rates, crime rates and the physical measurement of children. As a policy adviser, he was concerned with the development of stable financial institutions and the regulation of the labour market.

Equipped with a well-articulated economic philosophy, Coghlan embarked on a period of intense intellectual and political activity from 1889. In his own department he published the first official estimates of national income in the world, blazing a trail which other nations were to follow. He helped devise a new classification of occupations for the 1891 census which was a pioneering work in its field. At the same time, he introduced an industrial census. He also began his studies of life expectancy, maternal mortality, the birth rate, and child measurement. As a general adviser to government, he worked closely with Treasurers William McMillan and John See on their respective direct taxation proposals. He advised McMillan on bills concerning banking, finance and life assurance, and played an important part on the finance committee of the Federal Convention in 1891. During the bank crisis of May 1893, he was Dibbs’s right-hand-man in moves which saved New South Wales from the greater catastrophe that occurred in other states. His work on life expectancy led to his additional appointment as Registrar of Friendly Societies and Trade Unions and to his being consulted on the state of the public service superannuation fund. He also drew up a Factories Bill based on his investigations of industrial conditions.

Popular articles in the Bulletin on the birthrate, unemployment, women’s work, ‘superfluous’ women, state life insurance and old age pensions, which were either written by Coghlan or reflected his influence, brought the more topical aspects of his work to the
attention of the public.\textsuperscript{72} A more serious audience was tapped through the 1891 census commentary, where he published intact an address he had given to the Australian Medical Congress on life expectancy, and, in an essay on the employment of women, the substance of one of his 1889 articles on the theory of wages.\textsuperscript{73}

When George Reid formed a strong Free Trade government in August 1894, he found Coghlan established as the expert on nearly every aspect of the government’s proposed reform program. Coghlan quickly became indispensable to Reid, and the combination of Reid’s political skill and Coghlan’s energy brought into being the new state system that had been gestating since 1883.

George Reid was a former Treasury official who had replaced Henry Parkes as leader of the Free Trade Party soon after it was defeated at the end of 1891. The son of a Presbyterian clergyman, he joined the public service in 1864 after starting work at the age of thirteen in a commercial office. He educated himself through debating societies and the study of law, and by 1878 was Secretary of the Attorney-General’s Department. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1880, where he supported Alexander Stuart and became a minister in his government. Although a supporter of the Free Trade Party he would never accept office under Parkes.\textsuperscript{74}

Reid was unencumbered by the baggage of the old political system, and quickly showed himself a master of the new art of politics - the manipulation of public opinion. His convincing victory in 1894 and his even greater success in 1895 were the result of his adroit alignment of the urban and reform vote behind the Free Trade platform of direct taxation, public service reform, land reform and industrial legislation. These measures had been the stock-in-trade of reformers of both parties since 1887, but Reid managed to paint the Protectionists as conservatives intent on protecting the large landowner from taxation.\textsuperscript{75}

Reid, the astute politician, and Coghlan, the determined and opinionated public servant, made a formidable team. They shared a common interest in the welfare of ‘the democracy’ - the worker, the civil servant, the small businessman, the selector and the miner - and an understanding of this social group denied to the more patrician Free Traders such as B.R. Wise.\textsuperscript{76} While Reid organised the political numbers, Coghlan acted as theoretician, publicist and implementer of a series of measures to defend the interests of the lower middle class and the working class against the wealthy and privileged. Coghlan’s powerful position during the Reid ministry is portrayed whimsically in a poem of the period:

\textit{COGHLAN}

‘Who made the world?’ the Master cried.
Young New South Wales, with sense replied:

‘COGHLAN’

Who built Australia, can you tell?
You bet my friend I know right well.

‘COGHLAN’

Who sacked the Civil Service pray.
Reduced the teachers to half pay?

‘COGHLAN’

Now who inspires George Reid, P.C.,
And who went ‘home’ a coaching he?

‘COGHLAN’

And who with quick and practiced hand
Can make a surplus for our land?

‘COGHLAN’

Who deals with George’s deficits so
That George can a surplus show?

‘COGHLAN’

Who from the Board went back to add
Freetrade accounts, and clip the pad?

‘COGHLAN’

Who is, just now, from brains and bent,
The top spring of Government?

‘COGHLAN’

Who is in fine our rhyme to end,
Reid’s mentor, guide, factotum, friend?

‘COGHLAN’

Coghlan’s influential position provided him with the opportunity to put his labour market theories into practice in the interests of his fellow public servants. At the same time, he was able to establish a secure and independent base for social reform. Reid was committed to public service reform, having supported the rights of public servants both as a public servant himself and as a member of parliament. However, the despatch with which an inquiry was set in train, the speed with which it completed its work, the change of emphasis of the inquiry, and the decisive nature of its recommendations suggest that Coghlan and other public service reformers played a significant part in ensuring that the question was dealt with quickly and effectively.
Coghlan was well-placed to influence the establishment and outcome of the inquiry. He was working closely with Reid on the government’s land and income tax and local government proposals during this period. In addition, he had been commissioned to report on the public service superannuation fund by the previous government, and his report was released a short time before the Royal Commission on the Civil Service (RCCS) was announced.

Coghlan’s old colleague, Joseph Barling, was also in a position to influence the expeditious outcome of the inquiry. The Minister for Public Works, James Young, who was attributed with an important role in establishing the Royal Commission, was a strong supporter of Barling’s plans for the reorganisation and regulation of his department.

The choice of Commissioners for the inquiry showed the possible influence of Coghlan and Barling. Three were associated with life assurance, in conformity with the original emphasis of the terms of reference on the superannuation fund. The President, Thomas Littlejohn, was the Chairman of the AMP Society. He had been a member of the Civil Service Board for a number of years and was an obvious candidate for the Commission. James Robertson was a leading Sydney accountant. Richard Teece was General Manager of AMP and was active in the Actuarial Society, the Insurance Institute and the Australian Economic Society. He was a member of a Free Trade political family and a supporter of the Womanhood Suffrage League. He had long taken an interest in the question of public service superannuation, and had prepared an actuarial report on the fund in 1887. He was no doubt known to Coghlan as a prominent writer on economic and insurance questions. A close acquaintance is suggested by the fact that Coghlan had arranged for his sister, Isa, to become medical consultant to AMP in the early 1890s. The fourth member of the Commission indicated Barling’s possible influence. The Hon. F.T. Humphery, MLC, was the Deputy-Chairman of the Public Works Committee, where he would have had extensive dealings with Barling as head of the Public Works Department. The final member of the Commission was J.H. Storey, the Chairman of the Civil Service Board in 1894.

The instructions of the Royal Commission were ‘to inquire and report’:

1. as to the changes necessary for the purposes of placing the Public Departments upon a strictly economic and efficient footing;
2. as to the present methods of public expenditure, and as to the changes necessary to place them upon a sound and economic basis;
3. as to the state of the Civil Service Superannuation Fund, and the steps necessary to place it upon a secure footing, a) with additional Government aid, or, b) without such aid; and
4. to draw up a scheme for the better regulation of appointments and promotions in the Public Service.
When it reported, however, it reversed the order of importance, placing the question of public service regulation first. It argued that ‘unless this question be promptly and satisfactorily determined, whatever other recommendations we make will be ineffective to free the Civil Service from the influence of political patronage or control’.85

This change in emphasis to the essentially class concerns of the public servant again suggests the influence of Coghlan and Barling. In later years, Coghlan claimed complete responsibility for the 1895 Public Service Act and the ideas underlying it.86 Barling was questioned at length about his departmental reforms when he appeared before the Commission, and was highly commended in the Commission’s final report.87 The assumption that their influence was important in the establishment and proceedings of the Commission is strengthened by the fact that both Coghlan and Barling were appointed to the Public Service Board created by the Act. Coghlan’s strong interest in the question of public service reform is evidenced by the fact that he chose to accept the Public Service Board position rather than that of Commissioner of Taxation, which was offered to him at the same time.88

The Royal Commissioners considered that their most important recommendation was the establishment of an independent Board with large powers to investigate thoroughly every branch of the service. They envisaged that this Board would value the work and responsibility of every officer, determine salaries, and recommend departmental reorganisations in the interests of economy and efficiency. Political influence was to be strictly avoided, and the Board was to have full responsibility for recommending appointments and promotions. Promotion was to be by merit, from candidates drawn from the service as a whole. All candidates for appointment were to pass an examination, and to be medically fit. The Board members were to be liberally paid and were to devote their full time to their duties. The Royal Commissioners considered that by the establishment of such a Board political or other undue influence to secure appointments would cease, the frequent and pertinacious solicitation of members of Parliament by their constituents would be obviated, and Ministers would be relieved of many importunities. The Service would become more honorable and it would certainly possess a higher status than at present.89

Coghlan’s Public Service Bill was introduced into parliament by Premier Reid on 1 October 1895, as soon as his land and income tax measures had been launched. These three measures and the Act to amend the conduct of the audit, which placed the government accounts on a cash basis for the first time - all intimately involving Coghlan - dominated the August to December session.

The Public Service Bill was consciously designed by Coghlan to give large powers to the Public Service Board,90 and it introduced some measures, such as competitive
examinations and the abolition of the employment of married women, which did not appear in the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners. It can be considered as a class measure intended to provide public servants and the classes from which they sprang with a high degree of control over the public service labour market. The Bill proposed that control of the service should be moved out of the hands of ministers into the hands of a full-time Board appointed for life. Control was to be centralised and the Board was to have complete responsibility for appointments, promotions, discipline and dismissal, the classification of officers and the fixation of salaries, and the organisation of departments. Not only was the Board to have much greater powers than the Civil Service Board of 1884, but its jurisdiction was to be much wider. All employees of the service, as well as teachers in the Public Instruction Department and parliamentary officers, were to be subject to the provisions of the new Act. Only the railways, whose personnel administration was already independent of political interference, were to remain under their own Act.

The Bill passed through both houses of parliament with the basic agreement of most members. Several opposition members expressed some concern about the removal of responsibility from ministers onto an 'irresponsible' board, but they did little to obstruct the bill. The tenure of Board members was limited by parliament, a change readily agreed to by Reid. Some attempts were made to exclude teachers and the Public Works Department from the jurisdiction of the Board, but these proposals met with little support. There was considerable opposition from members of all political persuasions to the clause barring married women from the service, and a compromise clause was accepted which prohibited the employment of public servants' wives except in the Department of Public Instruction.

The Bill met with the approval of the public service except for the provisions concerning the superannuation fund. The Bill proposed an interim solution only to this question, and Reid promised a comprehensive solution to the problem as soon as the reorganisation of the service was completed. Meetings of public servants were held rather late in the day to press the government for more decisive action on the superannuation question. A deputation met Reid on the morning before the superannuation clauses were considered by the Assembly, but he remained resolute that a satisfactory resolution of the matter was not possible until the proposed Board's investigation of the service was carried out.

The appointment of Coghlan and Barling to the Public Service Board set up early in 1896 by the Public Service Act confirmed the transfer of control of public service personnel matters from politicians to public servants themselves. With a token businessman, George A. Wilson, making up a rather reluctant third member of the
the two public service reformers set about creating a service in accord with their own ideas. Within six months they had removed most of the remainder of the old guard and established a network of their own men at the top of the service. This process continued over the next few years, so that by 1900 protegés of Coghlan and Barling were well-placed to move into top positions for many years after their direct personal influence on appointments had waned. With colleagues who shared their ideas on the role and administration of the service, Coghlan and Barling established a strong system of independent personnel management and provided a secure and receptive organisational basis for a program of social reform in which the public service played an important part.

The Public Service Act had given the Board the right to retire officers over sixty years of age. It took advantage of this to rid itself of senior public servants it did not consider sympathetic to its purposes. The Board made no secret of this aim. In its first Report, it stated clearly that 'it was plain that a reform of the Public Service was impossible unless the principal officers of heads of branches were not only competent to perform the duties attaching to their positions, but willing to enter into the spirit of the Board's work.' Archibald Fraser, the architect of the 1884 Act, was one of these marked men. His replacement by the pedestrian George Miller as Under Secretary for Justice was possibly influenced by Reid; but this move allowed Coghlan's friend, Captain F.W. Neitenstein, to be appointed Comptroller-General of Prisons in Miller's place, and another friend, James Williams, to become Chief Clerk in the Justice Department at the age of twenty-six.

Harrie Wood, the recalcitrant Under Secretary of the Department of Mines, was replaced by Duncan McLachlan, who had briefly replaced Barling as Under Secretary for Public Works, G.A. McKay, the young public service activist who was President of the Draftsmen's Association in 1895, was promoted from the Lands Department to become McLachlan's Chief Draftsman: this was the beginning of the long association of these two public service reformers.

The Collector of Customs, James Powell, was replaced by a young Treasury officer, N.C. Lockyer, and the position amalgamated with that of First Commissioner of Taxation. Lockyer had been a cadet in the Treasury when Reid was an officer of that department. His investigation of a major fraud in the Public Instruction Department in 1893 and the recommendations he made concerning changes to the audit system probably brought him to the attention of Coghlan. He worked with Coghlan on the reorganisation of the Taxation Department under the new Income Tax Acts of 1895, and they remained close friends until Coghlan's death. Lockyer chose as his Secretary and Chief Clerk John D'Arcy, a 30-year-old clerk from the Public Instruction Department
whom he had probably come in contact with during his investigation of the fraud case in 1893.\textsuperscript{98}

William Stephen, the former Secretary of Lands whom Parkes had saved from dismissal in 1880 by appointing him Secretary of the Attorney-General’s Department in place of George Reid, was retired to make way for a 32-year-old barrister from outside the service, Hugh Pollock.\textsuperscript{99} Charles Cowper, the former Premier’s son who had been Sheriff since 1874, was succeeded by the 43-year-old Cecil Maybury. Charles Potter, the Government Printer, was replaced by William Gullick (1858-1922), the young manager of the commercial printing firm, John Sands Ltd. Gullick was a school-fellow of Coghlan’s colleague and fellow-statistician, John Trivett, and a close friend of Barling’s brother-in-law, John Vernon.\textsuperscript{100}

Only a few members of the older generation of public servants survived this ‘massacre of the ancients’. Edmund Fosbery remained Inspector-General of Police until 1903, when he was 69 years old.\textsuperscript{101} Stephen Lambton, who had been Secretary and then Deputy Postmaster-General since 1866, did not retire until 1902, despite the fact that James Dalgarno, an associate of Fraser and Goodchap in the public service activism of the 1870s and 1880s, was waiting in the wings.\textsuperscript{102} Henry Russell, the Government Astronomer, also escaped retirement until he reached the age of 68 in 1904.\textsuperscript{103} George Colquhoun, the 66-year-old Crown Solicitor who had only been appointed in 1894, was also retained until 1902, but the young son of a former colleague of Barling’s and Coghlan’s, John Tillet, was appointed Managing Clerk in his department.\textsuperscript{104} The final survivor from the faction days was the Principal Under Secretary, Critchett Walker. Although only 55 in 1896, he had been Under Secretary to successive premiers since Halloran retired in 1879. According to a later Under Secretary of the department, A.G. Kingsmill, Walker was marked for removal by the Board, but the protests of the Chief Secretary, James Brunker, and the Attorney-General, John Want, saved him.\textsuperscript{105}

The creation of new departments and the reorganisation of existing ones provided the opportunity for further consolidation of Coghlan’s and Barling’s influence over the top of the public service. In 1897, in a reorganisation of treasury and audit functions, three of Lockyer’s young colleagues, Percy Williams, George Brodie and Ernest Hanson, were moved from Treasury to make up a separate Audit Office with Brodie as Assistant Auditor-General and Chief Inspector of Public Accounts. Barling’s brother-in-law, John Vernon, was appointed Treasury Accountant in place of Nicholas Lockyer. Barling’s former confidential clerk in the Public Works Department, John Holliman, became Secretary to the Public Service Board and moved to the new Taxation Department when it was established.\textsuperscript{106}

The young men who were favoured by the new administration ran a large
proportion of the New South Wales and Commonwealth public services over the next twenty years. Neitenstein carried out the modernisation of the prison system in New South Wales and acted periodically as a member of the Public Service Board until his retirement in 1909. James Williams replaced Miller and Pollock as Under Secretary for the Attorney-general and Justice in 1905 at the age of 35 and in 1919 became a member of the Public Service Board. In 1925 he was appointed Chairman of the Board, where he remained until 1933. McLachlan was appointed the first Public Service Commissioner of the Commonwealth Public Service in 1902, and his report as Royal Commissioner in 1920 strongly influenced the direction of public service personnel management for many decades. McKay joined McLachlan as Commonwealth Public Service Inspector for New South Wales in 1902, and employed Charles Kraegen, the activist of the ETS, as his Chief Clerk. McKay briefly returned to the New South Wales service in 1910 as a member of the Public Service Board, but returned to the Commonwealth as the first Federal Commissioner of Land Tax. Kraegen became New South Wales Inspector in place of McKay in 1910. N.C. Lockyer became head of the Commonwealth Taxation Department in New South Wales in 1901. John D’Arcy became Under Secretary of the Department of Navigation in 1910, and was an active member of the Public Service Association (PSA) which was formed in 1899, acting as Chairman for most of the period from 1907 to his early death in 1918. Percy Williams, one of D’Arcy’s fellow-councillors on the PSA in 1903, became Comptroller of the Government Savings Bank in 1902. In 1904 he was Chairman of the PSA. George Brodie and Ernest Hanson helped to reorganise the Charities Department following the Public Service Board inquiry of 1898 and the retirement of the long-time Director, Sydney Maxted. Hanson was appointed Director of Government Charities in 1901. In 1906 he returned to the Audit Office as Chief Inspector, and George Brodie became Inspector-General of Charities. John Vernon became Auditor-General in 1903, and John Holliman became Under Secretary of the Treasury and Commissioner of Taxation in 1907. John Tillett succeeded the ageing Colquhoun as Crown Solicitor in 1902 at the age of thirty-four.

With a network of young, innovative officers at the top of the service, Reid and Coghlan made the most of the short period during which Reid controlled both houses of parliament to introduce a number of measures which were intended to favour the working class and at the same time established a new role for the State. The New South Wales government had always been interventionist by virtue of its development policies. It had also shouldered much of the burden of support for the needy and destitute, and from 1884 made *ad hoc* attempts to deal with the problems of unemployment and conflicts between capital and labour. From 1896, however, the government’s intervention into the lives of the people became much more overt. In 1896, two Acts,
the Coal Mines Regulation Act and the Factories and Shops Act, regulated the conditions of important parts of the work force. The Coloured Races Restriction Act extended restrictions on immigration of coloured races. A Public Health Act strengthened the control of the government over community health. A State Children’s Relief Act provided for the first time a form of state support for widows and deserted mothers with dependent children. A Department of Labour and Industry was established, and a large public works program was reintroduced which set standards for other employers by extensive use of day labour rather than contract labour and the provision of a minimum wage in government contracts.\textsuperscript{112}

Coghlan played an important part in at least one of these measures. He drew up the Factories and Shops bill for Reid on the basis of the bills he had previously prepared. He claimed no responsibility for the actual Act, however, which was considerably watered down in its passage through parliament.

His most important role, however, was in helping to establish a firm basis for the new interventionist State. In addition to reorganising the public bureaucracy as an independent and receptive advocate of state-led reform, he guided Reid through a series of taxation, audit and local government measures designed to ensure a reliable and publicly accountable revenue for the state. Although Reid did not succeed in introducing the local government measures which would have removed much of the responsibility for public works to local authorities, the land and income tax measures of 1895 helped stabilise government finances, and the new cash accounting system made government spending much more accessible to public scrutiny.

These gains proved much more significant than the fairly weak interventionist measures introduced by the Reid government. Reid quickly found that his conservative supporters placed severe limits on the degree to which ‘State Socialist’ measures, as they were termed, could be smuggled in under the rubric of ‘free trade’.\textsuperscript{113} His failure to achieve any further reforms lost him the support of ‘the democracy’ in 1899, and Protectionist governments led by Lyne (1899-1901) and then See (1901-1904) responded to the ‘democratic’ constituency for the last time with the introduction of old age pensions, an Early Closing Act and compulsory arbitration of industrial disputes.\textsuperscript{114} With the establishment of a clearly class-based two-party system in 1904, the overt influence of the new middle class declined. Nevertheless, during these few years of new middle class/working class hegemony, bureaucratic autonomy had been attained and a pattern of state regulation of civil society was established. This pattern became institutionalised over the next few years and had a lasting effect on the relationships between capital and labour and men and women.
Notes


3. For railway employment and unionism, the ASE and Schey see Docherty (n.1) above, esp. pp.25, 49-52. For the ASE see K.D. Buckley, *The Amalgamated Engineers
in Australia, 1852-1920 (Canberra: Dept. of Economic History, RSSS, ANU, 1970). For McGowen see Radi, Spearritt and Hinton; H.V. Evatt, The Story of W.A. Holman and the Labour Movement: Australian Labour Leader (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1940); Gollan; Nairn, esp. p.72; and Rickard. For Schey see Connolly.


5. The Postal Clerks Union was first mooted in August 1891. It held its inaugural meeting on 27 November. See Transmitter 10 August 1891, p.4; 1 December 1891, pp.5-6. A PSA was suggested in September 1891. Charles Fry and G. Richards, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the ETS, met with delegates of the two other unions to draw up a circular which was distributed through the service early in 1892. See Transmitter 10 September 1891, p.3; 14 November 1891, p.8; 9 January 1892, p.6; 20 February 1892, p.7.


7. PD 1890, pp.5681-5, 27 November 1890; Mansfield (n.1 above), pp.114-5.


9. Ibid., p.6.

10. Ibid.; see also 27 February 1892, p.7.

11. Ibid., 9 June 1892, pp.5, 8; 10 August 1892, p.6; 14 November 1895, p.9. Delegates of the three associations decided to interview leading public servants on the matter. It is not clear whether this was done; in August it was decided to take no further steps for the moment. For customs duties see Wealth and Progress 1898-9, p.176.


14. For Stephen see Suzanne Edgar. 'William Wilberforce Stephen', ADB
1851-1890, pp.192-3. Stephen replaced future Premier, George Reid, as Secretary to the Attorney-General’s Department. For Oliver and changes in the administration of Crown lands see C.J. King, *An Outline of Closer Settlement in New South Wales, Part I, The Sequence of the Land Laws 1788-1956* (NSW: Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Marketing and Agricultural Economics, 1957), esp. p.103. For Houston see Kenneth W. Knight, ‘William Houston’, *ADB* 1851-1890, p.431. He was a member, with W.H. Traill, of the Board of Inquiry set up by the Jennings government in 1886 to investigate the Lands Department. Their *Report* asserted that ‘Nothing less ... than a radical alteration in the Civil Service Act will enable the position of all officers employed in Government Service to be equitably dealt with, while the interests of the public are also secured’. See V & P 1887, 2nd sess., vol. II, pp.57-101, esp. 73. For Coghlan’s approval of the departmental changes, see Coghlan (n.6 above), pp.1361-2.

15. The Royal Commission on the Civil Service (RCCS) found that Public Works employed 4,901 persons and Railways and Tramways 9,344 and 1,282 respectively in 1894. By comparison, the Post Office and the Public Instruction Department employed about 5,000 each, and two of the largest engineering companies employed barely 1,000 each. See *Report* (V & P 1894-5, vol. III), pp.79-80; G.J.R. Linge, *Industrial Awakening: A Geography of Australian Manufacturing 1788 to 1890* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1979), p.473. William Lyne gave a figure of 10,921 railways employees when he introduced his Railways Bill in 1886. See *PD* 1885-6, p.3850, 5 August 1886.


29. *SMH* 5 July 1875, p.5.


31. Barling married Margaret Euphemia Vernon in 1868. Donald Vernon was Traffic Auditor in the Railways Department when Barling moved there in 1867. John Vernon joined them as a clerk in 1869. Barling’s death certificate was signed by his brother-in-law, John Vernon. Presumably Margaret was the sister of one or both of his colleagues.


35. Coghlan, *ibid.*, p.1; Coghlan and Willats, p.3.


38. E.g. the *Daily Telegraph* began in 1879 and the *Bulletin* in 1880. See Lawson (n.1 above), pp.47, 65-90.

39. Coghlan, *Autobiography* (n.24 above), p.4; Cordell (n.34 above), p.25. Copies of the pseudonymous and anonymous articles, probably from the *Suburban Times*, are found in Coghlan’s clippings book. It is presumed they are his work.

40. Coghlan, p.3. For Toohey see Connolly; and G.P. Walsh, ‘John Thomas Toohey and James Matthew Toohey’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.284-5. His brother, John, was chairman of directors of the protectionist paper, the *Australasian Star*. See Radi, Spearritt and Hinton.

41. For Archibald and the *Bulletin* see Lawson (n.1 above); and ‘Jules Francois Archibald’, *ADB* 1851-1890, pp.43-8; Ailsa Zainu’ddin, ‘The Early History of the *Bulletin*’, in *Historical Studies: Selected Articles*, ed. Margot Beever and F.B. Smith (Melbourne, MUP, 1967), pp.199-216. For Archibald’s initial move see Archibald to Dr Coghlan (Charles, Coghlan’s older brother), 19 May 1886, Coghlan papers. There are a
number of notes and letters from Archibald to Coghlan amongst the Coghlan papers, including one fervid one to Coghlan in London when Archibald was trying to establish the *Lone Hand* after his period of mental breakdown. For Macleod see Mrs Macleod, *Macleod of "The Bulletin": The Life and Work of William Macleod by His Wife* (Sydney: Snelling Printing Works, 1931); and Serle. A bust of Coghlan executed by Macleod is at p.xxxiv of Mrs Macleod’s book. Coghlan’s son recalls that Archibald tried to persuade Coghlan to become editor-in-chief of the *Bulletin*. This may have been in 1902 when Archibald handed over the editorship to James Edmond. See Coghlan and Willats (n.34 above), p.6. Macleod’s elder son, Norman, who managed the *Bulletin* from 1902 until his death in 1919, married Eileen O’Sullivan, the daughter of the Protectionist ‘democrat’, E.W. O’Sullivan. See Mrs Macleod, p.47.


44. Coghlan, p.4. The Melbourne Age and Daily Telegraph wrote a series of 'violent articles, mainly personal attacks on Mr Coghlan', which were reprinted in the Sydney protectionist paper, the Australasian Star. The Sydney Daily Telegraph defended Coghlan and printed an interview answering the charges.

45. Coghlan, pp.5-7.

46. Coghlan to Deakin, 12 April 1906, Coghlan papers, referring to his social and economic history of Australia which was published as Labour and Industry in Australia in 1918 (n.14 above).

47. Ibid., preface.

48. Radi, Spearritt and Hinton; Coghlan and Willatts (n.34 above), p.18.

49. Ibid., pp.22-3; Fry, 'Review Article' (n.34 above), p.449. Lang was married to Henry Lawson's wife's sister, so was part of the circle Coghlan would have known in the 1890s.

50. The currency of Coghlan's reading is demonstrated by his reference to 'an American writer' who had recently debated the question of the basis of wages 'with great ability'. (See 'The True Basis of Exchange: A Correction ... II' (n.43 above).) This was probably either Stuart Wood or J.B. Clark, who published their theories of wages in the Quarterly Journal of Economics and the Publications of the American Economic Association in 1888 and 1889. See George J. Stigler, 'Stuart Wood and the Marginal Productivity Theory', in Essays in the History of Economics (Chicago: UCP, 1965), pp.287-301.

51. 'The Socialism of Christ' (n.41 above).

52. 'The True Basis of Exchange: Labour and Capital' (n.43 above).

53. 'Material Prosperity and Political Wellbeing' (n.42 above).

54. These arguments run through all the articles. See esp. 'The True Basis of Exchange: A Correction ... II'; for the beneficial effects of strikes and combinations see 'Social Economics: The True Theory of Wages II'; for the degrading effect of the employment of families and the effect of culture see 'Social Economics: The True Theory of Wages' (all n.43 above).

55. Suburban Times articles, Coghlan papers; 'The New Panacea' (n.42 above).

56. 'The True Basis of Exchange: A Correction ... II' (n.43 above).


61. Coghlan to Neitenstein, 5 March, 19 March, 1909; Coghlan to McLachlan, 29 April 1910, Coghlan papers.


63. Coghlan papers.

64. Coghlan to Neitenstein, 19 March 1909, Coghlan papers. For Coghlan’s interest in criminology see ‘What Hanging has Done for Australia’ and ‘The Criminal Neurosis’ (n.42 above); Cordell (n.34 above), pp.64-5.


67. Cordell (n.34 above), pp.69-98.


70. RCCS (n.15 above), pp.42-3.


72. ‘Is It a Failure’; ‘The Future of New South Wales Boys’ (n.42 above); ‘Women’s Work in Sydney’, 2 February 1892, pp.6-7; ‘Superfluous Women’, 12 March 1892, p.6 (anon.); ‘State Life Assurance’, 12 August 1894, pp.6-7 (anon.); ‘Old Age Pensions’, 18 July 1896, p.6 (ed.).


77. Coghlan papers.

78. See Reid’s letters to the editor, SMH 6, 8 July 1878 concerning the superannuation question. He was temporarily out of parliament during the passage of the Civil Service Bill of 1884, but defended the rights of public servants during the debate on the amending Bills of 1886. See PD 1885-6, p.1011, 30 March 1886; pp.5835-45, 18 October 1886.


80. RCCS (n.15 above), Minutes of Evidence, pp.225-37; PD 1894-5, pp.3129-30, 6 December 1894. Young was one of the few politicians praised by Coghlan in Labour and Industry; see p.1947.


83. John’s Notable Australians, 1906; Knight; letters to editor, SMH 13, 25 June 1878 during superannuation controversy.


85. RCCS (n.15 above), pp.25, 30.


87. See n.17.


89. RCCS (n.15 above), pp.30-32, 45, esp. 31.

90. Coghlan to Neitenstein, 3 March 1909, Coghlan papers.

91. PD 1895, pp.1578-9, 9 October 1895.

92. Transmitter 14 November 1895, pp.7-12; PD 1895, pp.2095-2108, 29 October 1895.
93. The government had difficulty finding a businessman willing to take the position. Wilson was Sydney Manager of the Bank of New Zealand. See Kenneth W. Knight, The Development of the Public Service of New South Wales from Responsible Government (1856) to the Establishment of the Public Service Board (1895), MA thesis, University of Sydney, 1954, pp.153-4.


95. Miller was Chief Clerk and Acting Under Secretary of the Public Instruction Department when Reid was Minister from 1883-4. Reid's successor passed him over for the vacant Under Secretary position when Wilkins retired in 1884. Reid later supported his appointment as Comptroller-General of Prisons. For Miller, Fraser and Neitenstein and details of their appointments and Fraser's dismissal see M.L. Cruise Sernack, Penal Reform in New South Wales: Frederick William Neitenstein 1896-1909, Ph.D thesis, University of Sydney, 1980, pp.69-101, App. 21. Neitenstein was briefly on the PSB from April to October 1906 and January to June 1907. See Coghlan to Neitenstein 5, 19 March 1909, Coghlan papers. Williams was witness at Coghlan's wedding in 1897.


McKay was born in Orange, the son of the mayor and member of the Legislative Assembly. He attended Orange Public School until the age of 15, then Fort Street, where he studied under Frederick Bridges. He joined the Survey Branch of Lands in 1878, and in 1883 was promoted Second Class Draftsman. He was active in the Draftsman's Association throughout the 1890s and had accompanied McLachlan on the public service delegation to Reid on the superannuation question in 1895. See PSJ June, October 1902; Transmitter 14 November 1895, pp.9-11; 17 July 1902, p.6.

97. Lockyer was born in Sydney, the son of Major Edmund Lockyer, the founder of the British settlement at King George Sound, Western Australia. He joined the Treasury in 1868. He was Treasury Inspector from 1883-1893, Receiver of Revenue in 1893 and replaced James Pearson, who had been Treasury Accountant since 1876, in 1896. He was married to Eagar's daughter. See PSJ December 1900, p.6; John's Notable Australians 1906; RCCS (n.15 above), p.33.

98. D'Arcy was born at Rylstone, nr. Mudgee, the son of a police inspector. He joined the Public Instruction Department in 1881. He gained a BA and an LLB by part-time study and was active in the Articled Clerks Association in the early 1890s. His brother, D.G. D'Arcy, was Comptroller-General of Prisons from 1919 to 1922. Two
other brothers were in the Telegraph and Public Instruction Departments. His sister, Contance (later Dame Constance), was a pioneer woman doctor. See PSJ April 1891, pp.17-18; Sernack (n.95 above), App. 21; Hutton Neve (n.36 above); Heather Radi, ‘Dame Constance Elizabeth D’Arcy’, ADB 1891-1939, pp.205-6.

99. Pollock was born in 1864. A graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, he was admitted to the New South Wales Bar in May 1890. He resigned in October 1904. See V & P 1896, vol. II, p.16 for his appointment.

100. Maybury was first appointed in 1871. Potter was appointed in 1851, though his service was not continuous, and he became Government Printer in 1886. Gullick was born in London, but came to Australia at an early age. He founded the Ethnological Society in 1902 with John Vernon and Percy Williams. See PSB, Report 1897 (V & P 1898, vol. I), p.2; PSJ January 1906, p.14 for Potter and Gullick; April 1919, p.41 for Trivett; January 1903, p.6 for Vernon; February 1900, p.4 and September 1904, p.6 for Williams.

101. Fosbery was first appointed in 1862. He became Inspector-General of Police in 1874. He was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1904. He was on a number of government boards dealing with health and charity. From 1900 he was a member of the Old Age Pensions Board, of which Coghlan was Chairman. See Brian Dickey and Martha Rutledge, ‘Edmund Walcott Fosbery’, ADB 1851-1890, pp.204-5.

102. Lambton joined the service in 1852. See Transmitter 21 February 1893, p.11.

103. Russell joined the service in 1859. He had been Government Astronomer since 1870. See Serle.

104. For Colquhoun see PSJ May 1900, p.6. Tillett was born at Liverpool, NSW, the son of G.A.T. Tillett, later Principal Assistant Engineer for Harbours and Rivers. He was educated at Sydney Grammar School. After an aborted attempt to enter the merchant navy he was articled to Sir Joseph Abbott in 1887. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1892 and was managing clerk for Abbott and Allen when he was appointed to the Crown Law Department. See PSJ May 1902, p.6.

105. Walker was born at sea, the son of the Rev. James Walker, Anglican minister and later Headmaster of King’s School. He joined the service in 1856. He was private secretary to Cowper on several occasions and was a protegée of Parkes. Kingsmill claims that Walker had been offered one of the commissionerships of railways in 1888, and that ‘had Mr Walker chosen he might have been a member of the [PSB] from the commencement.’ The latter seems unlikely, but it may indicate dissension between the old guard Free Traders, represented by Brunker and Want, and the new, represented by Reid. Walker’s brother, R.C.W., was Principal Librarian and another brother, Philip,
was Cracknell's assistant and successor in the Telegraphs Department. See A.G. Kingsmill, 'Richard Cornelius Critchett Walker', *ADB* 1851-1890, p.341; and *Witness to History: A Short Study of the Colonial Secretary's Department* (Sydney: Alpha Books, 1972), 37-8; *PSJ* April 1900, p.6; July 1903, p.14.

106. Williams was born in London, son of an East India Company official. He came to NSW in 1871 and joined the Treasury in 1872. In 1896 he became Paymaster and in 1897 Inspector of Public Accounts, Audit Office. He was an amateur botanist who founded the Ethnological Society in 1902 with Vernon and Gullick. See *PSJ* February 1900, p.4; September 1904, p.6. Brodie was born in NSW of a well-connected English family. He joined the Treasury in 1870 at the age of 13. He became Inspector of Public Accounts in 1890, and in 1896, Chief Inspector. See *PSJ* March 1905, p.6. Hanson was born in Balmain, the son of the Government Printer who later became the proprietor of the *Empire*. He was educated at Fort Street under Frederick Bridges. He joined the Post Office in 1870 and in 1872 moved to the Treasury. In 1893 he became Inspector of Public Accounts. See *PSJ* 1901. Vernon was born in England and came to Australia in 1853 where his father became a pastoralist like Barling's father. He joined the Railways in 1869; the Donald Vernon who was Traffic Auditor and later Secretary may have been an older brother. In 1882 he became Assistant Accountant. See *PSJ* January 1903, p.6. Holliman was born in England and was in the British Civil Service before coming to NSW. He joined the Public Works Department as a temporary clerk in 1884. By 1895 he was Secretary to the Board of Reference, head of correspondence and confidential clerk to Barling. See *RCCS* (n.15 above), *Minutes of Evidence*, p.231. For reorganisation of audit see *PSB Report* 1897 (V & P 1898, vol. I), p.28.

107. See n.95 above; *PSJ* March 1922, pp.21-2.

108. Williams was born at Parramatta. He joined the Water Police Office as clerk in 1884. In 1886 he moved to the Department of Justice. In 1892 he completed his BA and in 1903 was admitted to the Bar following the completion of his LLB. He was a member of the first Council of the PSA established in 1899 and was Vice-President from 1899-1901. He and Coghlan corresponded regularly during Coghlan's period in London. See *PSJ* August 1905, p.6; April 1919, pp.3-4; *Red Tape* December 1933, p.90; *TCJ* 9 June 1915, p.45; 19 March 1919, p.5; Coghlan papers.


110. McKay was on the PSB Subcommittee on Professional Officers in 1898. From 1900 to 1902 he was on the Council of the PSA, succeeding Williams as Vice-President in 1902. He was Chairman of the PSA when appointed PSI. See n.96;
Kraegen was born at Albury where his father was one of the first telegraph operators. He was orphaned at the age of eight and brought up by his grandparents. He became a telegraph messenger in 1878 and the following year went to the Central Telegraph Office in Sydney as a cadet operator. He was a member of the original committee elected in 1885 to form the ETS. In 1887 he was secretary and in 1889 president. He was a frequent contributor to the Transmitter and editor from 1895-1900. In 1895 he was one of the secretaries to the committee formed to consider the Public Service Bill, and was on the council of the PSA from 1899-1902. He was largely responsible for the formation of the Australian Commonwealth Posts and Telegraphs Officers' Association in 1900. He married Louisa Dunkley, the leader of the Victorian Women's Post and Telegraph Association whose efforts were responsible for the granting of equal pay to women in the Commonwealth Public Service Act of 1902. See J.S. Baker, ‘Edward Charles Kraegen’, ADB 1891-1939, pp.635-6; ‘Louisa Margaret Dunkley, ibid., pp.369-70; and Communicators (n.4 above); SMH 22 October 1895; PSJ December 1902, p.6; Transmitter 17 January 1903, pp.4-5.


CHAPTER 6
EXCLUSION BY REDEFINITION:
T.A. COGHLAN AND POLITICAL ARITHMETIC

The new middle class project for labour market regulation had important consequences for women. The unpredictability of the labour market in the troubled years of the 1880s and early 1890s and the constant and novel presence of large numbers of unemployed and underemployed stimulated movements for labour market closure amongst workers and their new middle class sympathisers. The New South Wales working class had always been wary of assisted immigration, preferring to keep competition for jobs to a minimum, and opposition to such schemes intensified in this period. Craft unions, such as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, were based on the policy of exclusion in order to restrict competition, and their exclusion of women and their system of benefits to sick, elderly and unemployed members were designed to protect unionists from competition which might depress wages and conditions. These strategies were taken up by parts of the wider labour movement as a way out of the current labour market crisis. Attempts were made, therefore, to eliminate ‘unfair’ competition from groups such as women and Asian immigrants. The ideological and policy interventions of the new middle class made the strategy of exclusion particularly effective.

Women and Asians were obvious targets for labour market exclusion. They shared several characteristics which made them a danger to worker unity: both groups, according to the analyses of the period, were prepared to accept a lower standard of living, and women were not always wholly dependent on their own wage. In addition, both were relatively powerless groups, and both were set apart by ascriptive characteristics which were useful bases for the marking of group boundaries.

The period saw, therefore, a sustained attack on the immigration and work practices of Asians and the employment of women. The attack on the Asian worker culminated in restrictions on their entry to the colony and regulation of their working conditions. The campaign against the woman worker resulted in the adoption of formal and informal marriage bars and an ideology of women as dependents who had no legitimate place in the labour market.
One of the leaders of this attack, both against women workers and Asian immigration, was T.A. Coghlan. Coghlan had developed, by 1889, a well-articulated labour market theory, based on the tenets of craft unionism, which saw the employment of whole families and materially-deprived cultural groups as a danger to the nation's prosperity. His eminent position as a creator and disseminator of economic and labour market knowledge and influential policy adviser made him one of the most important protagonists in this campaign.

Coghlan's main concern with regard to women's work was with those women who, 'being wives or daughters of breadwinners, and, therefore in a measure dependent upon others, are of an age to contribute towards their maintenance by following gainful pursuits'. In accordance with his argument that wages were based on the cost of production of the labourer, he argued that the cost of living of the most expensive labourer - the man with a family to support - determined the wages of his class, as long as a family wage is the cultural norm. Where the wife and children contributed to the family income, the standard of living would be lowest. He argued, therefore, that 'the large employment of women in gainful pursuits is not a matter for gratulation', and that it could be asserted 'with some degree of certitude', that 'the condition of a country can in some measure be gauged by the number of such women as are compelled to seek occupations other than in their own domestic sphere. When the proportion of such women is large, it may be assumed that the material condition of the country is worse than that of another country where the proportion is small.'

THE POWER OF CLASSIFICATION

As Government Statist, Coghlan had access to an ideal ideological tool in the struggle for labour market closure against the women he saw as endangering the colony's prosperity. Official statistics, because of their wide dissemination and their disinterested aspect, provide a potent means of labelling groups and of heightening boundaries between them. Occupational statistics in particular have high potential for the manipulation of group images because of the degree of imprecision that is involved in the concept of 'work'. In capitalising on this, Coghlan helped to label women as non-workers during the period of consolidation of the modern Australian labour market, and to institutionalise the idea that women were not legitimate competitors for jobs.

In Australia and most other countries today it is generally accepted that those members of the population who 'work' are measured by the labour force concept. This concept, which was adopted for the Australian census in 1966, defines who is in the labour force on the basis of current economic activity. The labour force comprises the employed and the unemployed. The employed are those persons fifteen years and over
who did any work at all for wages, salary, payment or profit in the week preceding the
census, and those who had a job, business, profession or farm, full-time or part-time
during that period, even if they were temporarily absent from it. The unemployed are
those who did not work during the preceding week and who either looked for work or
were temporarily laid off without pay for the entire week, ‘looking for work’ being
indicated by certain specified activities.

Although the labour force concept provides relatively objective criteria by which to
classify a population, it involves definitions of economic activity that are to some extent
arbitrary. A wife’s work keeping house is not considered economic activity although it
could be argued that she receives payment in kind for her services. Investors and
landlords are earning money, but they are not considered to be working. Family
members who help in a family business for fifteen hours or more a week without pay are
defined as workers, but those who help for fourteen hours are not. A person may be
ready and willing to work, but is not considered as unemployed if she has not carried out
any of the activities that have been defined as looking for work. At the margins of any
classificatory system decisions have to be made which allow the importation of values.
To this extent, definitions of work can be considered as indicators of the ideologies of
their creators.

The interpretation of these definitions by the householder who, in Australia, is
responsible for completing the census form again allows values to enter the classification
system. The ‘person in charge’ must decide, for instance, whether unpaid work carried
out by a family member is work for profit or housework, and such decisions are likely to
be made according to current ideologies about women’s work.

Before the behavioural labour force concept was introduced, occupational
classification was even more open to the interpretations of householders and census
officials. Householders were merely asked the ‘Profession or Occupation’ or the
‘Industry, Trade or Service’ of members of their households, and were given vague
instructions about the line between domestic duties and other occupations. As a result,
people were enumerated according to the social perception of their usual occupation.
For instance, under this older system students doing casual work would probably be
recorded as students, whereas under the labour force concept employed today they would
be recorded as in the labour force even if they had done only one hour of work during the
census week. A housewife who did seasonal agricultural work would be recorded as
occupied with domestic duties, whereas a man, having no alternative social definition,
would be recorded as an agricultural labourer. Women doing remunerative work in the
home interspersed with household tasks would be recorded either as housewives or as
workers according to prevailing ideas about what women should be doing. This
non-behavioural approach posed difficult decisions for householders, with the result that the task of classifying female household members was often left to census officials.

The collection of occupational statistics provides, therefore, numerous opportunities for imposing definitions on groups of people and their activities, either by the groups themselves, by persons such as householders authorised to act on their behalf, or by census officials. The political usefulness of occupational statistics is enhanced by their apparent neutrality, which makes them an effective stalkinghorse for ideology. Because of the degree of discretion allowed by the non-behavioural concept of occupation, a study of census data compiled under this system can tell us as much about what householders and enumerators thought about work as it can about people's actual occupations.

FROM 'HUSBAND-AND-WIFE' TO BREADWINNER AND DEPENDENT

The censuses of Victoria and New South Wales during the second half of the nineteenth century provided a battleground for two rival conceptions of women as workers. The first, derived from the British census of 1851 and the censuses of England and Wales of 1861 and 1871, and ultimately from classical liberal doctrines, saw women as productive workers in the home, whether as housewives or as helpers in a family occupation, and presented an image of marriage as an economic partnership. The other derived from collectivist doctrines such as Coghlan espoused, and was accepted in the colonies more decisively than it was in Britain. It saw women's work in the home as unproductive, with the result that women were regarded as naturally dependent on their husbands, who were the sole legitimate breadwinners.

The Australian colonies had as their models during the late nineteenth century the 1851 British census and the censuses of England and Wales and of Scotland from 1861 to 1881. The censuses of Britain and of England and Wales from 1851 to 1871 were under the direction of the great medical statistician, William Farr, who consolidated aims, concepts and methods that had evolved since the introduction of the census in Great Britain in 1801, and stamped them with his own distinctive ideas. In his census work Farr focussed primarily on the size of the population, which he considered a measure of the nation's strength; he assumed that the unit of productive activity was the individual rather than the family; and he assumed a division of labour between men and women in the family that was complementary and equal. The British census had been introduced primarily because of an interest in population size. There was little interest in the activities of the population until 1831, and even then there was no clear differentiation of these activities on the grounds of productivity. Farr's occupational classification of
1851, refined in 1861, was the first official attempt to classify such activities scientifically, and it was based on a generous conception of productive work which derived from his view of population as 'living capital'. For Farr, the only unproductive classes were children, the infirm and sick, gypsies and vagrants, 'certain ladies' who 'like the lilies of the field, neither toil nor spin', and 'as many gentlemen' who 'would perhaps find equal difficulty in pointing out anything of value which their head or their hand produce'.

Farr's occupational statistics reversed the earlier presumption that productive activity took place in family units. Except for an abortive attempt to record individual occupations in 1801, census takers recorded family occupation up to 1831. Individual occupations of adult males and female domestics were recorded alongside family occupation in 1831, and individual occupations alone for the entire population beginning in 1841. By 1851 the census differentiated the work of family members except in farming and some small businesses, where wives and adult children were assumed to be assisting their husbands and fathers and were automatically recorded in their menfolk's occupational category. Even though the women in these family enterprises were placed in the 'Domestic Class' in 1871, they were still distinguished from other wives and daughters. Although Farr distinguished in most cases between the work of family members, he did not value one sort of work over another; he considered the production of human capital through unpaid domestic labour just as important to the nation as other occupations, and he placed such labour in one of the productive classes along with paid work of a similar kind. In fact, in 1851 Farr stated that domestic work should be the extent of women's activities because 'the most important production of a country is its population, and 'where the women are much employed from home, the children and parents perish in great numbers'. By 1871, however, Farr's appreciation of women's contribution to the nation's prosperity extended to those working outside the home. He observed with apparent approval that women's work was becoming 'infinitely diversified' and that 'noiselessly, there has been a rapid increase in the numbers and proportions of women engaged specifically in productive work'. Propounding a laissez-faire attitude toward women's access to the labour market, Farr remarked that 'a married woman of industry and talent aids her husband in his special occupation, or she follows different lines of her own ... for it is only in a few cases that the whole of a wife's lifetime is filled up with childbearing, nursing and housekeeping'; that 'many of the world's finest children are produced by hard-working women; and that one of the principal questions of the day was whether women should be excluded from the professions or be allowed 'on the principle of free trade' to compete with men. As Farr pointed out, he found 'no evidence of idle women'.

In painting this picture of Britain as a bustling community of workers, all contributing to the size and strength of the nation, Farr presented an image of women as legitimate and productive workers inside and outside the home, and of marriage as an economic partnership. Indeed, in one section of his 1851 report the head of a family is defined as the ‘husband-and-wife’. This definition, however, was contradicted only a few pages away, where the head was defined as ‘the householder, master, husband, or father’, apparently for the purpose of administering the census schedule. This administrative definition supplanted the other by 1871. Farr’s view of housework as an occupation was innovative in 1851, and it did not survive his resignation in 1880. Nor did his automatic classification of female relatives of farmers and small businessmen in a separate occupational category. In the census of 1881, women occupied with domestic duties and small businessmen’s female relatives who were not reported as assisting were included among the ‘Persons without Specified Occupations’ in the ‘Unoccupied Class’. This was a clear move towards defining women who did not have paid jobs as dependents, although the census reports of 1881 and 1891 were ambivalent about the new classification. The 1881 report stressed that classifying women in the home as unoccupied was only a technicality - that if these women were taken into account, the proportion of occupied women would be similar to that of men. The census of 1891 encouraged the reporting of women engaged in family enterprises as occupied; it was not until 1911 that any uncertainty about the treatment of women working in the home disappeared. The Scottish census officials, who presented independent reports from 1861, were highly critical of Farr’s scheme, and in 1871 eliminated the ‘Domestic Class’ and redistributed its members to show how many were dependent on each occupation. A similar scheme was proposed by the social investigator Charles Booth, and a group of economists and social scientists, including Booth, who presented a memorandum to the 1890 Committee on the Census. The Scots, more Malthusian in their fear of population growth, used the breadwinner/dependent distinction, as did Booth, to gain a more accurate picture of pockets of deprivation.

In Australia, census officials in both New South Wales and Victoria adopted Farr’s classification scheme for their censuses from 1861 to 1881, but neither followed the British model completely. The Australians attempted to elicit accurate reporting of women’s work by giving the householder more explicit instructions about recording the work of relatives in family enterprises and by requiring a specific statement of the employment of wives and daughters on domestic duties. This contrasted with the British system which did not require such women to state their occupation. It seems, however, that many Australian householders still failed to record an occupation for their female relatives, leaving census officials considerable discretion in determining their classification. This discretion could be used, if necessary, for political purposes, and as a
consequence, the classification of the work of female relatives of farmers and small businessmen differed from year to year and from colony to colony, even though the form of inquiry and instructions for recording such work were more-or-less uniform.

In New South Wales in 1861 and in Victoria in 1861 and 1871, the evidence suggests that only adult daughters of farmers were automatically recorded as farmers. New South Wales began in 1871 to be concerned with the possible over-enumeration of women workers, possibly because of the depressed state of employment at that time. From that census no female relatives were assumed to be assisting in family enterprises. An opposing position was taken in Victoria in 1881, when Henry Heylyn Hayter, the newly-appointed Government Statist, was completely in charge of the census for the first time. Hayter was influenced by Farr's concern for showing how every member of the population was contributing to its prosperity, and apparently he was not satisfied that the method of self-classification gave an accurate picture of the colony's economic strength. Accordingly, he adopted the practice, which had by then been abandoned in Britain, of automatically counting farmers' wives and daughters and the wives of small businessmen in their menfolk's occupational category. To bring the 1871 statistics into line with those of 1881, he revised the earlier figures rather arbitrarily, transferring 1,000 hotelkeepers' wives, 20,000 farmers' wives, 500 graziers' wives, 400 graziers' daughters, 400 shoemakers' wives and 400 butchers' wives from the domestic to the non-domestic category. Hayter tried unsuccessfully to persuade the New South Wales statisticians to do likewise, and their refusal drew acerbic comments on their 'peculiar' and outmoded methods.

The conflict between the two colonies was decisively resolved in 1890 when, at an Australia-wide conference of Statists, Hayter's method was rejected, and all the colonies agreed to follow a new system of classification devised by T.A. Coghlan and the Tasmanian Statist, R.M. Johnston. This new classification went further than the British censuses of 1881 and 1891 in dividing the population unequivocally into two categories, breadwinners and dependents, and it followed the New South Wales practice of under-counting the female relatives of farmers and small businessmen. The new system classified women's work as domestic in the absence of a clear statement to the contrary, and classified women doing domestic work as dependents. Unpaid workers in the home were no longer considered economically active, and instead were placed in the netherworld of dependents, a category which embraced 'all persons dependent upon relatives or natural guardians, including wives, children, and others not otherwise engaged in pursuits for which remuneration is paid; and all persons depending upon private charity, or whose support is a burden on the public revenue' (my italics).
The difference that these alternative methods of enumeration made to the image of women conveyed in the census was not small. Hayter’s addition of approximately 23,000 women to their male relatives’ occupational categories in 1871 represented a major reclassification of women from domestic to non-domestic work in an adult female population of 177,000. In 1891, the number of women recorded in the farming sector in Victoria dropped by 32,000 from its 1881 level, in an adult female population of 350,000. The fact that the total number of women recorded as doing non-domestic work fell by only 4,000 meant that the 1891 method covered up a sizeable movement of women into paid work (see Appendix A). The New South Wales method yielded participation rates of between 24 and 29 per cent for the years 1871 to 1901, whereas Hayter’s more generous method gave participation rates of 41 and 43 per cent in 1871 and 1881 (Figure 3). By one method women were seen as minor economic actors, and by the other as important contributors to the nation’s prosperity.

STATISTICAL MANIPULATION AND COLONIAL RIVALRY

The choices the colonial statisticians made concerning the classification of women’s work appear to have been political ones. There was no apparent connection between changes in the organisation of work and changes in the type of classification system used. Although Victoria was slightly more industrialised than New South Wales, both colonies were almost identical in size, culture, and politics, yet each espoused a different method. Britain, when at a similar stage of industrialisation, had used the method the Australians rejected in 1891, and was more tentative in taking up the new system, even though the British economy was much more developed. The Australians were not merely following British practice; until 1891 New South Wales hardly changed the classification scheme it had adopted from the 1851 British census, except to alter the way in which women workers in family enterprises were enumerated in 1871, ten years before this change was tentatively made in England and Wales. The Victorian Statist, Henry Hayter, classified the work of such women in 1881 by a method England and Wales had abandoned in 1871; in advocating its continuation in 1891, he lagged far behind British practice. The New South Wales and Tasmanian innovators, Coghlan and Johnston, were prepared to take up the distinction between dependents and workers that was suggested by British economists and social scientists and by earlier Scottish census officials - a distinction the census office of England and Wales rejected in 1890. But the Australians adopted only the form and not the substance of the distinction; they did not use it to provide detailed information on the condition of different classes, which had been its original purpose. It seems, therefore, that the colonial statisticians were selecting from the alternatives available those classification systems that served their own interests and fitted with their own social philosophies.
Participation Rates of Women Engaged in Nondomestic Work in New South Wales and Victoria 1861-1901
According to Different Methods of Calculation

--- calculations based on Hayter's system
----- calculations based on Coghlan's system
--- calculations based on published figures adjusted for consistency with post-1966 system

Source: Decennial Censuses of New South Wales and Victoria; for detailed figures see Appendix A.
This statistical manipulation has to be understood in the context of colonial rivalry and the inter-relations of the British and Australian economies. A major preoccupation of colonial governments during this period was the promotion of their colony to prospective British investors, and an important part of the work of the official statisticians was to convince Britain of their own colony’s economic soundness. Hayter in Victoria and Coghlan in New South Wales disseminated information and propaganda about their respective colonies in an atmosphere of rivalry exacerbated by their very different social philosophies. In this competition for British investment, each used the classification of women’s work that projected what he considered the most flattering image of his colony. At the same time each was able to influence current ideas about the employment of women, helping to turn the desired image into a reality.

The rivalry between Hayter and Coghlan can be seen as a crystallisation of the great debate at the end of the nineteenth century between the proponents of *laissez-faire* economics and individualism on the one hand and state intervention and collectivism on the other. This debate was itself a source of tension between the colonies and British investors. Many British journals expressed concern about the increasingly divergent social and economic philosophies of the Australian colonies and their mother country. Through protectionist policies, increasing government intervention, immigration restrictions, and a general ‘excess’ of democracy, the colonies contravened *laissez-faire* doctrines. In the late 1880s, British distrust of these trends and fears of colonial economic collapse intensified, in part because of growing unease about the productivity of the worker under ‘State Socialism’.

Hayter and Coghlan responded to these British fears in different ways. A generation older than Coghlan, born into a well-connected British family and educated at a leading English public school, Hayter shared the British assumptions. He presented his statistics in conformity with Farr’s methods, making his case for Victoria’s progress within the framework of orthodox liberal economics. Accordingly, he used the discretion he had in the classification of women’s work to depict a large and expanding workforce. By contrast, Coghlan, who fitted the Westminster Review’s description of the colonist who demanded ‘our own science of wealth, our own theory of progress’, was passionate in his attack on many *laissez-faire* assumptions, especially those concerning the labour market. He was sympathetic to state intervention and to the collectivist strategies of trade unions, identifying these strategies with his country’s well-being and its superiority over those of Europe. He had abandoned Hayter’s and Farr’s idea that a nation’s prosperity was measured by the size and activity of its population, and based his case for the progress of New South Wales on the quality of the working population and the standard of living they enjoyed. The discretion allowed by the uncertain occupational
status of farmers' and small businessmen's female relatives was useful to his purposes, as it was to Hayter's.

Coghlan's *General Report* on the 1891 census of New South Wales, which introduced the breadwinners/dependents distinction, presented a clear exposition of his new measure of the colony's prosperity, and demonstrated how it was intimately tied to the image of women conveyed in the occupational statistics. In an essay on the employment of women in the report, he reiterated the ideas of his 1889 articles, arguing that any contribution by women to the support of their families, or competition for jobs, lowered the wages of men and the standard of living of the whole community.33

Coghlan's conclusions about the effects of working women on national prosperity led him to repudiate Hayter's assumption that 'the sum of the male and female workers compared with the whole population is a measure of the relative advance made by the community in regard to productive or wealth-giving pursuits'. Instead, he characterised women's movement into work outside the home as a matter for alarm. He was concerned, therefore, to depict an economy in which few women worked outside the home and the numbers of such women were not increasing. To this end, he revised figures from previous censuses to show that women had not replaced men as breadwinners and that their participation rate had not grown (see Figure 3); he managed at one point to make female breadwinners disappear altogether through what can only be described as statistical sleight-of-hand; and, most significantly, he advocated the changes to the classification of female relatives working in family enterprises discussed earlier.34

The classification of the work of farmers' female relatives was crucial in Coghlan's argument. In an economy where a quarter of the male workforce was employed in farming, the classification of these women as breadwinners could completely ruin the image of New South Wales he wished to convey. With his method of enumeration, Coghlan could report that only a small number of women assisted on farms, and accounted for this by 'the fact that domestic duties take up the whole of their time'35 (see Figure 4). That this was not necessarily the case was suggested, however, by the Victorian Statist's *Census Report* for the same year. There Hayter revealed that the new method of classifying farmers' female relatives was as much a deliberate act in the service of a particular image of Australia as were his own changes in 1881:

Although no doubt the female relatives of farmers, if living on the farm, attend as a rule, to the lighter duties of the poultry yard and dairy, it was felt by the Conference [of Statists] that the statement that so many females were engaged in agricultural pursuits would create an impression elsewhere that women were in the habit of working in the fields as they were in some of the older countries of the world, but certainly are not in Australia. It was therefore decided not to class any women as engaged in agricultural pursuits except those respecting
whom words were entered expressing that they were so occupied, the others to be classed in the same way as other women respecting whom no employment was entered - under the head of ‘Domestic Duties’.  

Coghlan’s approach to the nation’s prosperity was informed by his sympathy for collective action in the labour market and the quality of working men such action produced. In rejecting the measures of Hayter and Farr, he was abandoning *laissez-faire* faith in the ‘invisible hand’ and attempting to develop a political economy more appropriate to colonial conditions. In asserting the benefits to all of a political stance by workers, he was advocating for the working class the *Bulletin*’s injunction that ‘instead of figuring at the cannibal repast, trussed and roasted on a dish’, Australia should ‘sit down among the guests - but at the place of honour, with an appetite sharpened by the struggle for existence’.  

THE VICTIMS OF THE ‘CANNIBAL REPAST’

Among the victims of the cannibals’ feast, however, were working women. In presenting his view of the nation’s prosperity, Coghlan established and popularised a number of definitions containing implicit assumptions about women’s place and women’s economic contribution. His classification of housewives as dependents and his under-enumeration of women working in family enterprises as breadwinners placed much of women’s work outside the definition of economic activity. At a time when Australia was beginning to industrialise, but most work was still carried out in family enterprises, the potential impact of such a conception of women’s work was great. There were a large number of women whose work could be classified as either domestic or non-domestic, and the decision to classify doubtful cases as domestic and to consider domestic workers as dependents meant that most Australian women were labelled as non-workers during the crucial period when important new areas of the labour market were being established.  

The view of women implicit in these census definitions undoubtedly made an important contribution to the way the larger public viewed women as workers. The enormous interest in statistics in the late nineteenth century, their extensive publication in popular form, and Coghlan’s powerful position as adviser to governments and expert commentator in public forums meant that his views had considerable influence on elite and popular opinion. Women’s contribution to the maintenance and reproduction of male workers became publicly invisible, and as economic activity moved more and more out of the family, their work was discounted as consumption rather than production. Informal activities carried out in the home that might have fitted the definition of ‘breadwinning’ also disappeared from public consciousness. Australian studies suggest that such activities were common, but they were seldom seen as ‘work’. As the earlier
Figure 4

Women as Percentage of Farmers in New South Wales and Victoria 1861-1901
According to Different Methods of Calculation

Source: Decennial Censuses of New South Wales and Victoria; for detailed figures see Appendix A
heroic vision of the 'colonial helpmeet' faded, the work of farmers’ wives lost public visibility, even though many worked just as hard.\textsuperscript{42} Research in other countries shows that such work is seldom reported in occupational censuses.\textsuperscript{43} As A.J. Jaffe and Charles Stewart conclude, ‘If the culture pretends that women do not work, then the women [or the men on their behalf] tend to reply that they have no occupation ... regardless of what work they may actually do.’\textsuperscript{44}
Notes


3. For opposition to Asian migration and regulation of Asian workers see Coghlan (n.1 above), pp.1331-45, 1846, 1943-4, 2187, 2317-25. For Coghlan’s published views at the time, see the *DT* series of 1889 (chapter 5, n.43); ‘A Lesson from the Leper’, *Bulletin* 12 October 1889, pp.6-7; ‘Material Prosperity and Political Wellbeing’, *ibid.* 2 November 1889, pp.6-7. He was not opposed, however to immigration from Britain; see ‘The Future of New South Wales Boys’, *ibid.*, 3 March 1890, p.6.


5. New South Wales and Victoria held decennial censuses from 1861 to 1901. After Federation, the Commonwealth of Australia held censuses in 1911, 1921, 1933, 1947, 1954 and at five-year intervals starting in 1961. Great Britain also held decennial censuses from 1801 to 1851, as did England and Wales together, and Scotland separately, after 1861, throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.


10. *Census of Great Britain* 1851 (n.7 above), pp.lxxxviii-lxxxix, xci, xciv.


23. *Census of Victoria*, pt. II, *Report*, (Melbourne, 1862-3), p.ix states that the 'Agricultural and Pastoral Class' included 'farmers' wives, etc., if assisting on farm' and 'male and female relatives of farmers living on farms if above 15 years of age and not otherwise described'. *New South Wales Census 1871, Report* (Sydney, 1873), p.XXVII claims that most female relatives of food and drink sellers and of farmers were included in 1861 in their menfolks' classification, but a note to table 46 (p.LXIX) indicates that this was only assumed. A comparison of figures in 1861 and 1871 suggests that their 1861 practice was the same as Victoria's.

24. *New South Wales Census 1871*, p.XXVII.


29. Committee to Inquire into the Census (n.20 above), p.121.

30. See Goodwin, *Economic Enquiry and Image of Australia* (n.27 above). This and the following paragraph draw heavily on this work. The interpretation concerning Coghlan and Hayter is mine.


33. Coghlan (n.4 above), pp.276-9, esp. p.278.


38. Coghlan (n.27 above), p.280 remarks on the number of small employers and people working on their own account.


42. See e.g. Lino, ‘Women Who Work’, Argus 13 January 1902, pp.5-6.

In his role as a man of science whose name was a household word, Coghlan had considerable power to create knowledge about women, and, as part of a rising social class, he had the motivation to use that power to further the interests of his class. But he was in a position to do much more than that: in his second career as a public personnel manager, he had the opportunity to create the conditions that made that knowledge ‘true’. As a member of a self-interested and influential new middle class, he had succeeded in moving control of the public service labour market out of the hands of politicians into the hands of public service leaders, giving it a high degree of stability and protection and providing conditions of entry favourable to his own class and their allies, the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. As a creator of the Public Service Act and administrator of its provisions, he was able to regulate the employment of women in line with his own ideas of a prosperous labour market.

Finding the correct strategy with regard to women’s work was fraught with difficulties. The failure of many small selectors on the land and the growth of the new middle class in the cities had given increased urgency to demands for employment opportunities for women. These demands met with little resistance until the second half of the 1880s because of the tradition of relative equality in the country and the general prosperity of the colony. In the unstable economic and political conditions of the late 1880s and early 1890s, however, the interests of men and women began to diverge. Women became much more aware of themselves as a separate interest group and feminist organisations developed to press for equal political, social and economic rights. Coghlan, therefore, had to tread a careful line between policies that gave some opportunity for economic independence to the women of the ‘democracy’ and those which ensured what he saw as the basis of the nation’s prosperity - the family wage paid to the male worker. The result was a cautiously regulated female labour market which was to prove inimical to women’s economic independence.

THE GROWTH OF FEMINISM

The uncertain economic conditions and the changing political organisation of the
last twenty years of the century stimulated the growth of numerous interest groups. Women were no exception, and by 1896, when Coghlan began his work at the Public Service Board, they were an organised political force. Led by the Womanhood Suffrage League (WSL) under the energetic secretaryship of Rose Scott, and Louisa Lawson at the Dawn, women campaigned for the vote, legislative reforms and equal employment opportunities.

The women making these demands were the sisters, mothers, widows and daughters of the public servants, journalists, professionals and academics who made up the male half of the expanding urban educated classes. As wage labour grew at the expense of family farms and small businesses, the interests of individual family members diversified. Without a property or business to continue, widows and children often found themselves without means of support if a husband who was a sole breadwinner died. The cry of 'What shall we do with our boys?' was echoed by a similar concern about employment opportunities for girls.

At the beginning of the 1880s the outlook for what became known as the 'New Woman' looked bright. Country and suburban women continued to benefit from the long tradition of equal pay and opportunity in post and telegraph offices. Women were employed in equal numbers in the Education Department and could earn salaries of up to £340 (including house), about two-thirds to three-quarters of male salaries. High schools for girls as well as boys were set up by the new Education Act of 1880, providing the 'thorough' and 'servicable' education required to serve the 'urgent needs of the great middle class'. A teachers' training college was established for women, and in 1881 the University of Sydney was opened to them. A decade later, in 1892, the establishment of a Women's College provided accommodation for country women wishing to study at the university. At the same time, a burgeoning journal and newspaper press provided work for other women.

As the 1880s wore on, the unstable economic situation helped to loosen family ties further and to increase resistance to the competition of women in the labour market. Failure on family farms and the unaccustomed rate of unemployment and underemployment broke up families and contributed to the large floating population which inhabited Sydney's three hundred listed boarding houses. This breakdown of family influence contributed to the intellectual ferment that characterised Sydney at this time. Women and men participated in the literary societies and the variety of 'progressive' causes that engrossed the city's radical intelligentsia, and as women's situation became more difficult with the worsening of the economic situation, the feminist movement developed out of these forums.

Louisa Lawson, who started her feminist magazine, The Dawn: a Journal for
Australian Women, in 1888 and the social reform club for women, the Dawn Club, the following year, was a typical product of this period of crisis and change. She was a country girl, the daughter of a storekeeper and publican near Mudgee. She married young, and her first son, Henry, was born in a tent on the Grenfell goldfields in 1867. After some years of wandering the goldfields, Louisa and her husband took up forty acres outside Mudgee in 1873. The farm was, in Henry Lawson's words, 'a miserable little hell'. His father was away from home on contracting jobs for long periods of time, and Louisa often ran the farm, supplementing her income with dressmaking and running the local post office.\(^{10}\) The harsh and lonely life of the selector's wife has been given universal form by Henry Lawson in 'The Drover's Wife'. The truth of this story to the experience of women on these selections is indicated by the fact that Henry's wife claimed it as a story from Louisa's life; Henry claimed it was based on one of their childhood neighbours; and Mary Gilmore claimed it as part of her own family history, passed on to Lawson when they were friends in Sydney in the early 1890s.\(^{11}\)

In 1883 Louisa Lawson gave up the land and her husband. She took her children to Sydney, where she supported them by running a boarding house and then by journalism. As an outsider searching for a new way of life, she entered enthusiastically into the radical literary and intellectual life of the city.\(^{12}\) In 1887 she ran the short-lived Republican, the organ of the Republican Union, and the following year she started the Dawn, which ran until 1905.\(^{13}\)

It is not known how extensive the female 'push from the bush' was. Literary evidence of well-known figures like Louisa Lawson, Mary Gilmore, Barbara Baynton and Miles Franklin, and the examples of political activists and pioneering professionals, such as the Golding sisters and Nita Kibble, suggest it may have been extensive.\(^{14}\) It is probably not far from the truth to speculate, however, that as soon as the railway line reached one of these remote townships, discouraged wives and daughters flocked back along it to the city, as Louisa Lawson had done when the railway line reached Mudgee.

The women who followed the railway line to Sydney took with them experience of hard-working, independent women and a tradition of equal pay and opportunity in the sort of government work that was available in every small town - the post office. In addition, they often left behind them an experience of masculine failure, inadequacy or absence. Lawson's club and journal, which employed only women as writers and compositors, encouraged the movement of women into new fields of employment and attempted to assist the unionisation of women. As she pointed out, 'women must have work, for there are thousands not depending on any man for support, and yet possessing, as far as we know, as good a right to live as any other human being'.\(^{15}\)

Louisa Lawson's campaign was joined by a number of women of more privileged
background who were nonetheless responsive to the increasing divergence of men's and women's interests. A Women's Literary Society was formed in 1890,\(^\text{16}\) and increasing evidence of family breakdown and female destitution associated with unemployment and depression soon led the more radical of its members to take a more organised approach to women's interests. The possibility of the extension of the vote to women in Parkes' Electoral Bills of 1890 and 1891 stimulated the formation of the Womanhood Suffrage League (WSL) in that year of radical organisation, 1891.\(^\text{17}\) The WSL was never solely concerned with the suffrage. Its convenor, Dora Montefiore, and the secretary of the League during its lifetime from 1891 to 1902, Rose Scott, had been drawn into the movement by their interest in the rights of women to the custody of their children and the question of the age of consent for girls, and these remained constant concerns of the League.\(^\text{18}\) From its inception the League was also intimately involved in the movement for early closing and shops and factory legislation.\(^\text{19}\) They also pressed for increased employment opportunities for women, and one of their founders, Amelia Allen, was involved with the TLC in the formation of a Female Employees' Union at the same time as the WSL was established.\(^\text{20}\) Although there was wide support for women's suffrage, it took over ten years to place the measure on the statute books. This long-drawn-out campaign helped maintain women's solidarity during the 1890s, giving them an effective voice on a range of issues of concern to women.

Louisa Lawson quickly ran into problems with the TLC over her employment of women compositors. The New South Wales Typographical Union, in common with all craft unions, would not admit women as members. The *Dawn* was therefore boycotted for employing non-union labour.\(^\text{21}\) This incident brought into the open the potential conflict of interests between the trade union movement and women. As the *Dawn* pointed out:

> Associated labour seems to be in its own small way just as selfish and dictatorial as associated capital .... Trades' unions would dispute, or force out of sight if possible, the right of women to enter the labour market at all.\(^\text{22}\)

Throughout the early 1890s the labour movement wrestled with the problem of women's employment, the craft unions generally taking a conservative exclusionary stance, while intellectuals and the predominantly country union, the AWU, supported the unionisation of women.\(^\text{23}\)

The WSL was less confrontationist in its approach to the promotion of women's interests than Louisa Lawson and the *Dawn*. Rose Scott had a similar background of masculine failure and female strength and independence to that of Lawson, but her experience was cushioned by family privilege and less devastating economic conditions. Scott was the product of the first flight from the bush during the depression of the 1840s. Her father was a large property owner near Singleton, north-west of Newcastle,
who was ruined by the 1843 bank crash. For the next fourteen years he struggled to keep the family property going while working at various official positions gained through influential connections. In 1857 he finally sold the property and moved his family to Newcastle, where he was Police Magistrate until his death in 1879. Rose Scott was born in 1847, four years after the bank crash, and she left the family property in 1857 when she was ten years old. It is probable that her mother, the daughter of the government chaplain at East Maitland and sister of the historian, George Rusden, ran the property during the years her husband was trying to earn a living elsewhere. Certainly her mother was a dominant influence, and she later attributed her feminism to childhood experiences that were ‘burnt into’ her heart.

Scott’s father’s failure was cushioned by the expansion of the towns as commercial and administrative centres. Consequently he was able to keep his family in modest comfort and to leave them well enough provided for to allow Scott, her mother and her dead sister’s child to live in Sydney after his death without Scott having to seek paid work. More socially secure and influential than Louisa Lawson, Rose Scott set the tone of late nineteenth century feminism with her well-mannered but indefatigable lobbying of parliamentarians, public servants and opinion leaders by letter, delegation and personal influence at her Friday ‘salon’ at her home in Jersey Road, Woollahra.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS AND WOMEN’S WORK

Rose Scott was politically perceptive, and was careful to cultivate influential public servants like Coghlan as well as politicians. She probably came into contact with him when they were both working for factories and shops legislation. By 1902 he was obviously a valued ally in the details of her campaign, to be placated if necessary. She wrote to him after some critical press comments:

I feel so grateful to you for all your kindness and [indecipherable], and all your sympathy with regard to women, that I would feel sad if I had vexed you .... I hope you will still advise me in the matter and believe me I shall never forget all the kindness and courtesy you showed me.25

Coghlan was also brought into contact with the world of feminism in his association with the Bulletin. Sexual equality was espoused by many of the radical organisations of the period. From 1889, when it made an about-face on the ‘Great Woman Question’, the Bulletin gave a popular airing to feminist concerns, conceding reluctantly that ‘the evil is evidently becoming unavoidable and must be endured in the best way possible’. And, of course, Louisa Lawson was the mother of one of their leading writers.26

The ambivalent attitude of new middle class reformers such as Coghlan was probably close to that of the Bulletin. Without inherited wealth or assets, and without
a family business or farm in which daughters, sisters and widowed mothers could help earn a living, these men did not have the means to support the women in their families as well as a wife and young children. The inability, or unwillingness, of men to support their sisters and unmarried daughters is a constant theme in the writings of the feminists of the early twentieth century who were fighting against their loss of equal pay and opportunity at that time.\(^{27}\) The sisters and daughters of public service reformers such as Coghlan, D'Arcy and Charles Fry of the ETS were, therefore, amongst the first to take advantage of the opening of secondary and tertiary education to women in the 1880s.\(^{28}\) The reformers had to find a formula which allowed women to earn their own living if necessary, without jeopardising the standard of living of men.

In trying to reconcile these seemingly conflicting interests, the new middle class reformers faced the same problem as the trade union movement. They had two options open to them. One was to ban women altogether from male occupations, and to encourage the development of new occupational categories for women with lower pay and fewer opportunities for advancement - in other words to intensify the dual character of the labour market. The other was to admit women under absolutely equal conditions. The first was not politically feasible at that time: liberal and egalitarian feeling was strong among Free Trade and radical labour supporters whose votes were necessary for the public service reform package to succeed; the government was pledged to women's suffrage, which had wide parliamentary support, and any discrimination against women would be seen as contradictory to the spirit of that commitment; in addition, there was the long tradition of equality in the post and telegraph departments which would have to be repudiated if that strategy was followed.

Exclusion was, moreover, the weaker strategy if it merely led to segregation. The way was then open for women to undercut male wages and for employers to deskill male occupations and employ women in these ‘new’ occupations. The second option - equal treatment - was therefore preferable practically and politically. However, there was considerable doubt about the ability of women to unionise and maintain solidarity with male workers. Married women were seen as constituting a major problem: in the first place it was considered that they were not always wholly dependent on their own wages; in addition, current debates over patronage drew attention to the possibility that women could enjoy an unfair advantage in the labour market as long as they could benefit from the patronage of their husband.\(^{29}\)

The Exclusion of Married Women

The Public Service Bill devised by Coghlan suggested a compromise solution to these problems. It included two clauses designed to regulate the employment of women
in the public service without necessarily restricting opportunities for single women. One clause prohibited the employment of married women except in a few cases where the recruitment of married couples was still seen as desirable. The second gave ambivalent support to the employment of single women by granting the Board wide discretion to facilitate and make regulations concerning their employment.\[^{30}\] These clauses set women apart officially for special treatment and regulation for the first time. This special treatment contrasted with the situation for most of the period prior to 1895, and it was inconsistent with the appeal to efficiency and justice that gained the Bill the support of liberal and radical politicians. It is in these clauses that the Bill is revealed as a self-interested measure for the benefit of new middle class men.

There is considerable evidence that the clauses referring to women’s work in the Public Service Bill did not embody the wishes of Premier Reid, the government more generally, or the parliament. The main concern of most supporters of the Bill was with the abolition of patronage and the provision of equality of opportunity for all. There was political consensus that opportunities for family favouritism should be eliminated.\[^{31}\] At the same time, there was agreement that the Bill should provide women with ‘fair play in connection with public employment’.\[^{32}\] Most parliamentarians were shocked by the prohibition against married women. They saw it as a ‘barbarous restriction’ of women’s rights which was out of tune with the spirit of the Bill, as well as with custom and progress.\[^{33}\] Reid seemed to have considered that clause for the first time during the debate, and he showed no commitment to retaining it.\[^{34}\] He had himself helped to improve opportunities for women when he had opened the Sydney Girls’ High School in 1883 as Minister for Public Instruction.\[^{35}\] The debate on the Public Service Bill showed him as having no consistent stand on the question beyond some vague commitment to equal opportunity. However, he was ready to bend with the political wind, and when the \textit{SMH} joined in the denunciation of this ‘unjust and absurd’ prohibition, he quickly suggested an amendment to the offending clause. The result was a compromise which confined the prohibition to public servants’ wives.\[^{36}\]

The controversy over the prohibition of married women from the service exhausted the time and energy the parliament was prepared to expend on the question of women’s employment. As a result, the other clause on the employment of single women was not closely considered. The principle of extending women’s employment opportunities met with such complete approval that the clause was not even debated. Only Tom Bavister, the independent Labor member for Ashfield, seemed to notice that the Board was being granted large and indefinite powers, and he urged that the intentions of the parliament with regard to the necessity of equal pay for women needed to be specified.\[^{37}\] Bavister’s plea, and comments made by other members in the course of the debate on the
employment of married women, indicate that the government’s intentions and the wishes of parliament were somewhat different from what the clause actually stipulated. The whole of the debate conveyed approval of O’Sullivan’s declaration that ‘What we want is fair play, and a fair field for everybody’.\textsuperscript{38} The clause as drafted and passed by parliament, however, did not embody that maxim. It said nothing about equal pay and equal opportunity, and instead gave the Board extraordinary powers to treat women as a separate group in ways that were at the Board’s discretion to decide. Rather than freeing women from restrictions, it provided the opportunity for new ones to be imposed.

These clauses on the employment of women reflected the interests of Coghlan and other new middle class leaders in protecting the public service labour market. They capitalised on the general concern to eliminate patronage and provide equal opportunity, but took a much more regulatory approach to the employment of women than that envisaged by most of the Bill’s supporters. The provenance of the ideas expressed in the clauses is quite clear. They did not originate from the Royal Commission, which made no special inquiries or recommendations on the question of women’s employment. They do not fit with what we know of the attitudes of the women’s movement of the time. The approach taken by the Bill was, however, consistent with the ideas about women’s employment that Coghlan had espoused since his \textit{Daily Telegraph} articles of 1889.

Developments since that time indicate that Coghlan articulated clearly the less formed concerns of other members of his class. In 1892, the new leaders of the Post and Telegraph Department on the death of Cracknell, Stephen Lambton and James Dalgarno, had banned the appointment of married women to offices with a residence attached. This was greeted with some surprise by the \textit{Transmitter}, which had apparently not considered the possibility of restricting women’s rights before, but the idea appealed to them.\textsuperscript{39} In 1893, the recruitment of married women to the teaching service was suspended.\textsuperscript{40} With regard to single women, however, the \textit{Transmitter’s} main concern was with the danger of undercutting men’s labour market rights and wages.\textsuperscript{41}

It is not clear what influence the feminist movement had on the ideas embodied in the Bill. Coghlan and Rose Scott were both working on the factories and shops legislation to be introduced in 1896 at the time the Public Service Bill was being drawn up, so there were probably opportunities for Scott to make her views known. In the absence of further research on the relationship between the feminist movement and public servants in this period, it seems plausible to suggest that Coghlan’s second clause was partly a cautious response to feminist demands for increased employment opportunities for women, conceding the principle without giving away any of the labour market control he considered essential.
The Extension of Employment Opportunities for Single Women

As a member of the Public Service Board from 1896 to 1900, Coghlan was able to ensure that his intentions in framing the provisions concerning women's employment were carried out. Married women in the Post and Telegraph Department, most of whom had husbands in the service, were dismissed in August 1896.\textsuperscript{42} No further married women were appointed to clerical or professional positions, even though this was not forbidden by the Public Service Act. The employment of single women in both the Post and Telegraph Department and other areas of the service was proceeded with cautiously, first of all to telephonist, post and telegraph assistant, shorthand and typist positions, and then, in 1899, to positions of junior clerk and library assistant.\textsuperscript{43}

These were all positions that were filled mainly or exclusively by men before 1896. In carrying out their program for the more extensive employment of women, the Board generally ensured that women were recruited under the same conditions as their male counterparts. In the case of the post office positions and shorthand writers and typists, where women had been employed previously in small numbers, the Board was merely expanding on traditional practice or developments that had already begun in the more progressive departments. Joseph Barling, when he was head of the Public Works Department, had been quick to make use of the typewriters that had been introduced into Australia for the first time in 1885, and had pioneered the employment of women as typists in the public service in 1890. In that year he employed the widow of the late Commissioner for Main Roads, Jane Bennett, as typist at a salary of £150 a year. In 1893 he began to employ young women in these positions with the appointment of 19 year-old Mary Collins. T.A. Coghlan's sister, Dora Murphy, presumably a widow at that time, joined the Electoral Office as one of the pioneering female shorthand typists the same year, at the age of thirty-three.\textsuperscript{44}

The women who entered the public service as typists and shorthand writers in the 1890s had good reason to see it as a career promising good conditions, interesting work and prospects for promotion. Shorthand had long been a well-paid professional skill and a useful accessory for public service clerks.\textsuperscript{45} In 1880, the Principal Shorthand Writer, Charles Robinson, earned over £700 a year, placing him among the select few of the service. In 1886, the commercial rate for shorthand and secretarial service was £3 3s per day; for transcription it was 1s per folio.\textsuperscript{46} The Secretary to the RCCS in 1894-5, Percy Meggy, received £400 per year for his services. Shorthand was not only well-paid, but it gave public service clerks access to committees of inquiry, delegations with ministers and under secretaries, and other high-level and confidential work which brought them to the
notice of their superiors and gave them useful knowledge and experience. Hugh McLachlan moved from Junior Clerk in 1875 to Secretary to the Railways Commissioners at a salary of £700 per year in 1889 with the help of his shorthand.\textsuperscript{47} John Holliman’s shorthand skills quickly won him a position as head of correspondence and confidential clerk to Barling a few years after he joined the Public Works Department as a temporary clerk in 1884. By 1907 he was Under Secretary for Finance and Trade.\textsuperscript{48} John Garlick joined the railways in 1890 as a shorthand writer. He was Secretary to the Royal Commission on the Birth Rate in 1904 and was appointed Under Secretary for Local Government in 1916 at the age of 41 years.\textsuperscript{49}

In the late 1880s the typewriter was introduced as another useful adjunct to a clerical career. In 1889 it was being advertised as a ‘certain source of income and a powerful lever to well paid official and mercantile appointments’.\textsuperscript{50} Commercial schools aimed mainly at men had taught shorthand, bookkeeping and correspondence for some time, and by 1889 they were including typing.\textsuperscript{51} Typewriters were still scarce in the public service in 1895, when the Royal Commission showed great interest in their use. Most of the few typists employed were men. In 1890 there were three typists listed in the Blue Book, all males. These men, like the shorthand clerks, were treated as clerks who typed rather than copied their work by hand, and they had the same salaries and promotion prospects as ordinary clerks.

Women were quick to see the possibilities of typing and shorthand. The Exhibition of Women’s Work held in 1887 stimulated interest in this avenue of work and by 1889 there was a Lady’s Type-Writing Association. One of its members wrote to the Dawn that:

In Sydney, typewriting and shorthand are entirely new branches of work for women, yet the number of our members show that women here have not been slow to see the utility or profit of such work.\textsuperscript{53}

Mrs D.E. Armitage, later secretary of the National Council of Women, was running a shorthand and typing school by 1889, and in 1895 she was secretary of a Shorthand Writers’ and Typists’ Society with members of both sexes which met fortnightly and conducted examinations.\textsuperscript{54}

Although little is known about the women who became public service typists and shorthand writers in the 1890s and early 1900s beyond what is supplied in the Blue Book and the Public Service List, we do know that several of them, such as May Hickman and Florence Wearne, were active members of the women’s movement. We can glean something of their expectations from the career of Florence Wearne. She was a close friend of Rose Scott’s and was Secretary to the successor of the WSL, the Women’s Political Educational League, in 1903. She obviously took the study of typing
and shorthand seriously, winning honours in the Society's exams in 1895 and playing an active part in its activities. She was one of the first appointments by the Public Service Board in 1897, joining the Board of Health as a Shorthand-Writer and Typist at a salary of £120. Her evidence to the Women's Clerical Case before the Arbitration Court in 1921 showed that her work was that of corresponding clerk and secretary to the Board, and that she was given considerable independence and responsibility in the same way as male clerks in similar positions. She had a lifelong career in the public service, as did three others of the six women appointed to typing or shorthand-typing positions in 1897, and by 1929 was a Clerk-Librarian and Assistant Secretary to the Medical Board of the Department of Public Health at a salary of £421.55

In 1899, an entirely new departure was instituted when the clerical examination, which had been established for entrance to the clerical division of the service two years earlier, was thrown open to women. Again, women were recruited on the same terms as men. It is possible that the Board's rather tardy action was in response to pressure from Rose Scott and the WSL. Kay Daniels, Mary Murnane and Ann Picot note that the League was 'insisting that women be ... allowed to contest positions in the Public Library and Public Service' by 1900.56 The Board excused their tardiness in 1899 by referring to the lack of 'proper accommodation'. They promised that 'so soon as the required Regulations can be brought into force, and the necessary changes effected in connection with Government buildings, women's employment will be considerably further extended', and announced that the first competitive exam for women clerks would be held at the end of that year.57

Sixty-three women were among the 305 candidates who sat for the clerical exam at the end of 1899. Ten were successful,58 and over the next three years eight of these were appointed to the service. Muriel (Edith) Swain was appointed to the Friendly Societies Office, Mary Ryan to the Statistician's Office, and Elizabeth Ambler to the Botanical Gardens early in 1900, and Mary Clouston and Ivy Beattie to the Public Library and the Statistician's Office in 1901. In 1902 Morna Beaumont, Mabel Bridge and Annie Doherty joined the Central Board of Old Age Pensions. In 1903, two more women, Emily Parsons and Annie Vaughan, were appointed to the Friendly Societies Office after passing the clerical exam in 1902.

Four other young women, Margaret Armstrong, Nita Kibble, Bertha Downey and Ida Parsons circumvented the slow process of appointment from outside the service. They took advantage of encouragement given to officers of the General Division to better themselves by sitting for the clerical exam as inside candidates. Kibble, Downey and Parsons moved into the Clerical Division from Junior Library Assistant positions in the General Division which had been opened to women by Kibble's efforts in 1899.
came from a country post office family used to the tradition of equality for women. Her mother, Eliza Kibble, had taken over her late husband’s post and telegraph office at Denman in 1879, the year Nita was born, the youngest of a large family. Her sister, Annie, had been Postmistress at Waterloo for some years. Orphaned at the age of thirteen when her mother died in 1892, Nita tried teaching, and then in 1899 decided to enter the Public Library, which was until then a male bastion. She enrolled for the examination as N.B. Kibble and came out first in the competition. ‘After a great deal of doubt and hesitancy’, the library authorities decided to go ahead with her appointment, paving the way for a number of women who made careers in the library.59

Like the women who joined the Clerical Division as typists and shorthand writers in this period, the women who were appointed as clerks were seeking permanent careers in the service. They showed tenacity in getting their appointments in the first place, and several made lifelong careers despite the problems of legitimacy all such women faced after 1903, when recruitment of female clerks ceased. Of the fourteen women who became clerks, two transferred to the Commonwealth Public Service in 1902 and five remained in the state service for many years. By 1929 Nita Kibble was earning £510 as Principal Research Officer in the Public Library. Mary Ryan earned £590 as Compiler of Statistics and Literary Assistant in the Statistical Department. Edith (Muriel) Swain was Sub-editor of the *Industrial Gazette* in the Department of Labour and Industry at £321. Emily Parsons was a Compiler of Statistics at the same salary, and her sister Ida was a Senior Cataloguer in the Public Library in 1920 at £283.

In 1900, the Board was optimistic that there would be little difficulty utilising the services of women clerks.60 Within three years, however, they were writing that ‘owing to the absence of proper accommodation in the Public Offices, and for other reasons, it has not been found possible to employ women to any extent on clerical work, other than as shorthand and typing clerks, for which, as is well known, women have shown special aptitude’.61 After this, no more women were appointed as clerk until 1915, when they were recruited under inferior conditions to male clerks.

This brief period of experiment with the equal treatment of men and women in the New South Wales public service can be attributed to three main factors. Firstly, the ascendency of the new middle class in both politics and public service from 1895 to 1903 gave free play to the social engineering approach of men such as Coghlan evident in attempts to implement a well-integrated plan involving income and land tax, local government, factory inspection, early closing regulation, old age pensions, and public service regulation, in which the new middle class would become moderators between capital and labour. Regulation of the labour market according to theoretical principles was an important part of this plan.
Secondly, the employment of women was a major social issue which Coghlan and his colleagues were aware of through their personal experiences and the pressure of women's organisations with whom they had close dealings. Any plan for labour market regulation could not ignore the question of women's work. The issue gained especial prominence between 1900 and 1902, when the Victorian Women's Post and Telegraph Association, led by Louisa Dunkley, drew on the New South Wales example to campaign for equal pay and opportunity for women in the Commonwealth public service. Louisa Dunkley's active participation in the inter-colonial conferences of telegraphists held in those years, her eloquent exposition of the women's cause in the pages of the Transmitter, and her close relationship with the leading New South Wales union activist, Edward Kraegen, kept the issue before the service and won the support of many of its leaders.62

Thirdly, the Public Service Board was, in its early years, strongly identified with the interests of the service as a whole. Coghlan and Barling were the creators of the Act which gave the public service security. In their implementation of the Act, they took great pains to balance the interests of the public with those of public servants in fair and reasonable pay and conditions. They were close friends and colleagues of most of the public service leaders. Although the beginnings of rank-and-file dissatisfaction with the more high-handed actions of the Board were demonstrated by the formation of a viable Public Service Association (PSA) in 1899, the closeness of purpose of the Board and the public service union leaders was illustrated by the way in which union leaders moved into top personnel authority and departmental positions in this period.63

Despite these factors which favoured the establishment of equal pay and opportunity for female clerical workers, the board failed to carry the plan through. Large-scale changes which will be discussed in the next chapter sealed the fate of the experiment, but harbingers of its failure were already apparent in the tentativeness of the Board's approach. The Board's timidity reflected the fact that it was working on principles which conflicted with deep-seated fears of women as labour market competitors which sprang from the urban working class tradition. Coghlan's views, as we have seen, were clearly ambivalent. At the same time as he was working for the expansion of opportunities for single women, he was promoting the idea that women's place was in the home in his opposition to the paid employment of married women and his concern about the decline of the birth rate.64 The contradictions inherent in this were not lost on one public service wit who commented in verse on Coghlan's role in the birth rate furor of 1904:

Dear! let me tell you the world is discovering,
Actually thinks, that you've got off the track;
Something far worse than a war-cloud is hovering
Over the country unless you turn back;
Well meaning men in a mild sort of fury are
At your behaviour, entering their sphere

.....

Bookkeeper fair, who are working so busily,
Maid, with stenographer's pencil and book

.....

Haven't you heard the State's pitiful call?
Why won't you marry, and - keep up the average?
Coghlan is waiting to hear from you all!65

In view of this ambivalence, it took a strong commitment to theoretical principle for men such as Coghlan to promote the extension of women's employment. Coghlan had that commitment, and evidence suggests that his influence was decisive. The year of 1899 when the clerical examination was opened to women was the one period when Coghlan was not heavily engaged in other government tasks or out of the country. Most of the appointments of female clerks were to his own department or to departments with which he had close dealings. He was certainly considered by the leaders of the women's movement as an ally of sorts, as we have seen from Rose Scott's letter of 1902.

Once Coghlan left the Board in 1900, it began to express its support for women's employment in terms that aroused the fears and hostility of men in the service, and by 1903 its resolution had dissipated. From that time no further positive action was taken to recruit female clerks. The result was that only a few token women found clerical positions in a restricted number of departments.

Rosabeth Kanter has demonstrated the difficulties of token members of an ascriptive group who have to operate in a work situation that is dominated by the culture of another ascriptive group.66 In such cases it is almost impossible for members of the minority groups to succeed. The tokens are virtually turned into 'failures' by the structural constraints of their situation. It is no surprise, then, that the Board fell back on the old excuse of inadequate toilet facilities in order to terminate the experiment with female clerks. Consciously or unconsciously, the new middle class reformers had 'demonstrated' during the 1890s and early 1900s that women did not, and could not, hold a legitimate place in the labour market beside men. Along with this legacy, they left behind them a personnel authority with great discretionary powers which could, in different political circumstances, be used to close off women's access to equal pay and opportunity altogether.
Notes


2. See e.g. PD 1879-80, pp.1184-93, 18 February 1880.


6. Hole and Treweeke.


8. For failure of selectors and urbanisation see chapter 3, n.56, 57. For effect on families in Victoria see Grimshaw, Fahey et al. (n.1 above), p.133; Marilyn Lake, ‘Helpmeet, Slave, Housewife: Women in Rural Families 1870-1930’ in Grimshaw et al., Families in Colonial Australia (n.1 above), pp.173-85. For unemployment and under-employment see T.A. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia: From the


11. The story is reprinted in Kiernan, pp.85-90. See p.28; Bertha Lawson, p.11.


15. 5 October 1889, p. 6.


19. An Early Closing Bill was introduced in December 1890 by Alfred Allen, the husband of Amelia Allen. A later version was said to be drafted in Rose Scott’s home; see Summers, p. 354.


22. 5 October 1889, p. 6.


25. 7 May 1902, Coghlan papers.


27. See PSJ December 1913, p. 29; September 1914, p. 11.

28. See chapter 5, n. 34, 36, 98. For Fry see Transmitter 18 September 1896, p. 3; for Edith Fry and Millie Fry (later Muscio) see Norman (n. 4 above), pp. 215, 232.

29. PD 1895, 10 October 1895, pp. 1623-4; 17 October 1895, p. 1827; 1894-5, 6 December 1894, p. 3194-6.


35. Norman (n.4 above).

36. *SMH* 21 October 1895; *PD* 1895, p.1877-83, 1892-3, 22 October 1895.


41. 19 November 1896, p.2.

42. *Transmitter* 27 July 1896, p.3; 18 August 1896, pp.6-7.


47. *TCJ* 20 October 1909.

48. Evidence of Barling to RCCS (n.44 above), p.231.

49. *PSJ* September 1916, p.15.


54. *Ibid.*, p.28; Daniels, Murnane and Picot, p.169; *Dawn* 1 February 1895; *SMH* 18 October 1895.

55. *Dawn; SMH; PSJ* 1 September 1921, pp.27-8. Information on friendship with Scott from Judith Allen.

56. P.178.


58. *GG* 1899, pp.9167-9; 1900, p.964.

59. Arnot (n.14 above); *Transmitter* 20 February 1892, p.3; H.C.L. Anderson (n.43 above).

60. *Report* 1899 (n.43 above), pp.18-19.


Chairman of the New South Wales ETS and member of the Council of the PSA, was promoted Clerk to the Commonwealth Public Service Inspector for New South Wales at the end of 1902. He and Louisa Dunkley married in December 1903.

63. For PSA see PSJ 4 January 1900; 1 October 1921, p.6; 15 August 1928, p.177.


PART III

EMBATTLED AUTONOMY 1904-1930
The political climate that allowed the flowering of the new middle class in the 1890s contained within it the seeds of that class's eclipse. Its ally of the 1890s, the working class, strengthened its position sufficiently to form a viable opposition alone in 1904. The increasing strength of the Labor Party stimulated the consolidation of anti-Labor forces into a Liberal-Reform party, and New South Wales politics polarised around these two parties. The polarisation of political forces around capital and labour provided little opportunity for the promotion of the separate interests of the new middle class, whose political influence as a group quickly declined. The new middle class fragmented as various sections sought advantageous alliances. The rank-and-file of the public service began to identify with the working class, while the elite negotiated what autonomy it could from whatever party was in power. The Public Service Board was emasculated, but two professional groups, lawyers and doctors, emerged from this realignment of political forces with their social, political and economic strength enhanced.

The close-balanced nature of the political system in the first thirty years of the century prevented major legislative initiatives or public expenditure, and made two creations of the 1890s, the arbitration system and the public health system, central to Labor Party policy. The locus of political interest moved from the provision of jobs to the question of standards of living and social welfare. In this new political environment the legal and medical professions capitalised on the organisational strength they had developed in the 1890s and the financial weakness of successive governments to ensure that the arbitration and medical systems worked to their advantage. By the end of the 1920s, therefore, the new middle class was spent as a unified political force, but sections of it still retained considerable autonomy from both capital and labour.

The embattled position of the new middle class in this period had considerable consequences for women. A weakened Public Service Board came under increasing pressure for public service economy, and it gradually removed the rights that its women employees had maintained or won in the nineteenth century, despite the strong and organised resistance of the women themselves. When the Board lost control of public service salaries to the state Industrial Court in 1919, the process of constructing a secondary labour market in clerical work for women was intensified as lawyers in the arbitration system tried to placate both capital and labour with a family-wage policy which improved men's wages at the expense of women's. By 1930, therefore, most women in the New South Wales public service clerical division were so-called 'temporary workers', earning half the wages of the lowliest male clerk, and deprived of an opportunity for career advancement.
The gradual marginalisation of women as legitimate participants in the workforce, and the concomitant emphasis on women's exclusive roles as wives and mothers, was both capitalised on and reinforced by doctors within the state health administration. An 'educational' infant welfare program directed at mothers allowed the medical profession to increase their labour market opportunities and to establish their influence in an area of expertise that had formerly been the province of mothers and individual families. The coercive and condescending rhetoric and practice of the infant welfare program strengthened the ideology that women's place was in the home, and that women were lacking in the responsibility and resourcefulness necessary for independence, even in what had previously been considered their 'natural' sphere.
There is a very close connection between employment as experts and the enthusiasm for human welfare.

Samuel Gompers
CHAPTER 8
PUBLIC SERVANTS, PROFESSIONALS AND PARTY

The professionalisation of the public service in the 1890s was paralleled by similar movements among professional groups such as lawyers and doctors to unify their members, to regulate entry requirements and to establish a high degree of professional autonomy under the patronage of the state. These movements were not only similar in style and purpose, but were closely interrelated. Public service lawyers and doctors were active in the professional groups which developed in this period, and the establishment of the state as an important medium of social reform provided a source of new jobs as well as an ideological platform for the newly-strengthened professions to establish their authority in new fields such as industrial arbitration, obstetrics and paediatrics. The closeness of purpose and personnel of these professional projects suggests that a considerable degree of unity existed amongst different groups of intellectual workers in this period.

This unity fragmented, however, as the swift realignment of radical and conservative forces which took place in the early years of the twentieth century diminished the political importance of the new middle class. With capital and labour facing each other directly in the political arena, the various segments of the new middle class had to make allies where they could, and the victories of one group were often at the expense of others. In these circumstances, the new middle class declined as a unified and influential political force in the first thirty years of the twentieth century, but some professional groups, such as doctors and lawyers, were still able to profit from the events of the nineties to further improve their labour market situations.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE PROFESSIONS

The Legal Profession

Lawyers, like public servants, formed their first effective and lasting professional organisations in the 1880s and 1890s. These organisations pressed for the democritisation and standardisation of legal education and admission to the profession, and for the maintenance of high standards of professional behaviour monitored by the profession itself. There had been several previous attempts to organise the profession, but the urbanisation of the profession and the increasingly native-born character of its
membership provided the basis for the establishment of the Incorporated Law Institute (ILI) among New South Wales solicitors in 1884. In 1887, the Articled Clerks' Association was established to cater for articled clerks, law students and junior members of both branches of the profession. By 1889, a leading member of the profession characterised lawyers as a body marked out 'as one singularly homogenous, united, and apart from other classes, in sentiment, situation, and necessities; and therefore requiring more than other classes, to form itself into strong and effective organizations for common objects'. The formation of a Bar Association was urged from 1893 as a means of providing the profession with a united and influential voice and a source of ethical self-discipline. A Bar Association patronised mainly by the younger members of the profession was established in 1896, and a stronger Bar Council, organised by the Attorney-General, B.R. Wise, replaced it in 1902.

These organisations were concerned with upgrading the profession materially and ethically, and with establishing uniformly high and objective educational standards and entry requirements. This last aim was of particular interest to members of the profession closely associated with the University of Sydney and the increasing number of those who came from families without wealth or influence. As was the case with the public service, members of the legal profession were drawn from increasingly heterogenous social backgrounds in the 1880s. As Stewart Woodman observes in his analysis of the backgrounds of solicitors:

... by the 1880s and especially the 1890s articled clerks came from many social backgrounds from which admission to the profession would have been an important step up in the world.

Contemporary observer R.E. Twopenny noted in 1883 that the sons of small tradesmen were going into the professions, and Woodman makes the further observation that recruits to the legal profession were also being drawn from the families of lower professionals such as teachers, accountants, surveyors, engineers and journalists. George Reid, who was admitted to the Bar in 1879, was the son of a Presbyterian minister; T.A. Coghlan's elder brother, Dr Charles Coghlan, admitted in 1885, was the son of a builder and former plasterer; Charles Bull (MLA 1895-8), admitted as a solicitor in 1873, was the son of a wheelwright. Wilfred Blacket noted in his memoirs of 1927 that the 1887 barristers' list included two men who had been clergymen, one who had sold newspapers and another who had driven bullocks; others came from the civil service, journalism, teaching and banking. Despite this democratisation of the profession, admission still depended more on wealth, contacts and influence than educational qualifications, and standards of legal education varied considerably. Admission policies were attacked by the Bulletin in 1887, when they thundered at 'the monopoly which the members of the close corporation of the law already enjoy' and 'the curled
darlings of fortune whose sires possess fat banking accounts and mansions near Sir Frederick Darley's at Edgecliff Road, or in some equally aristocratic location. As Woodman says of the Bar in this period:

There was a clear need both to provide for systematic legal education in the colony and to develop new rules which were flexible enough to accommodate the many educational and social backgrounds among students at law while still maintaining the professional standards of the Bar.

Like public servants, the increasingly diverse members of the profession were anxious to standardise legal education and to establish conditions of entry which were not discriminatory. From 1885 members of the profession closely associated with the University of Sydney pressed for the establishment of a Law School and the acceptance of its degrees for admission to the profession. The Articled Clerks' Association lent its support from its inception in 1887, arguing the case for improvements in legal education in their widely-distributed journal, The Articled Clerks' Journal (later The Law Chronicle). In response to these pressures, a School of Law was established in 1889, and Professor Pitt Cobbett was appointed the following year, when degrees from the School were accepted for admission to the Bar. In 1894, the university degree was also accepted for admission as a solicitor. Over the same period, a number of impediments to the entry of less privileged men to the profession were removed.

Public servants played an important part in these movements for professional organisation. Crown Solicitor John Williams, who was active in attempts to unify and professionalise the public service as Director of the Civil Service Building Society and as a member of the ill-fated Civil Service Board, was President of the IJI until his death in 1891. Frederick Chapman, the Prothonotary, was President of the Articled Clerks' Association, and among its active members were R.R. Garran, the first President of the Council of Arbitration of 1892, A.G. Saddington, the Chief Clerk of the Supreme Court, and John D'Arcy, then a young clerk in the Department of Public Instruction and later Chairman of the Public Service Association and Under Secretary of the Department of Navigation. Alexander Oliver, Parliamentary Draftsman, intellectual and Civil Service Board member, was a leader of the movement for the establishment of the Law School.

The establishment of the Law School and the removal of impediments to those without wealth or influence made the profession even more accessible to men from relatively humble backgrounds. During the 1890s and early 1900s a number of young men associated with the labour movement entered the profession. Amongst those who later rose to prominence in politics were J.D. Fitzgerald, former president of the New South Wales Typographical Association and member of the TLC executive, who was admitted to the Bar in 1900; W.A. Holman, W.M. Hughes and D.R. Hall, three friends
who began to study for the law examinations in 1900 and were admitted to the Bar in 1903; and George Beeby, who was admitted as a solicitor in 1901. Amongst public servants were Coghlan’s close associates, John D’Arcy and James Williams, both prominent in the PSA and future permanent heads; John Tillett, Managing Clerk in the Crown Solicitor’s Office and future Crown Solicitor; T.B. Clegg, Clerk-in-Charge of the new Office of Labour and Industry from 1895-1903 and later Registrar of Old Age Pensions; and future member of the Public Service Board, J.M. Taylor. All came from working class, petty bourgeois or new middle class backgrounds.

The smooth integration of men from a wide variety of class backgrounds was aided by the nature of the professional associations which developed in this period. Firstly, all levels of the profession participated in their activities. As well as the variety of public servants who were active in the associations, senior politicians such as George Reid held office in the ACA with junior colleagues such as Edmund Barton, and senior judges such as Richard Windeyer with future members of the Bench such as H.R. Curlewis. Secondly, there were no major issues which divided the senior ranks from the junior, as there were in the public service. The problems of over-supply and competition from extra-professional organisations such as Trade Protection Societies were shortlived, and served to further unify the profession. With no problems such as public servants faced to fragment them, the legal profession remained strong and united over the ensuing decades.

The Medical Profession

Like public servants and lawyers, medical practitioners also began to organise in the 1880s. This was primarily a response to dangers of over-supply in the profession and to the threat of loss of control over salaries and conditions. The problem of over-supply stemmed from an influx of British doctors in the late 1870s and 1880s, attracted by the colony’s prosperity, and by the facilitation of study for the profession among the native-born with the establishment of the Sydney Medical School in 1883. The number of medical practitioners more than doubled in the 1880s, a trend well out of proportion with the growth of the population. At the same time, the growth of Friendly Societies and the uncertain economic climate of the late 1880s and early 1890s threatened doctors’ autonomy and incomes.

Friendly Societies, or ‘clubs’, were mutual benefit societies catering mainly to the working class and the lower middle class. They provided unemployment and other benefits to their members and employed doctors on a contract basis. By the early 1890s the clubs were arousing the bitter resentment of the medical profession. Many operated on an unsound actuarial basis, and as their members aged and unemployment increased,
clubs attempted to keep solvent by reducing their contract doctors' fees. In a market flooded with doctors, undercutting became common. It was not only salaries that were threatened. Clubs began to combine to employ doctors full-time. The largest of these, the Balmain United Friendly Societies Dispensary, served about half the suburb's 24,000 inhabitants. Three doctors received salaries of £150 a year, plus £540 divided between them according to the number of prescriptions they wrote. All operations and anaesthetics were included, and doctors received 10s 6d for a confinement.

These threats to autonomy and income stimulated the medical profession to greater militancy and unity. Doctors had been organised as a branch of the British Medical Association (BMA) since 1880. This was a small organisation in the 1880s, campaigning vigorously, but unsuccessfully, for state protection from the competition of 'irregular' practitioners. In the 1890s a number of ginger groups sprang up within the BMA: an active recruitment campaign increased the membership of the association; and a strong campaign was mounted against the 'sweating' of the profession by clubs.

With their organisation enhanced, doctors began to blacklist appointments and pledge themselves to a minimum rate. The strength of their position was increased by the reformist governments of the 1890s, who, sympathetic to professionalism, were ready to accept the doctors' claims to superior expertise. In 1898 the Reid government passed the Medical Act which the profession had been campaigning for since 1839. This Act penalised irregular practitioners who falsely advertised themselves as registered doctors. It was supplemented by two Acts passed by the Lyne government in 1900. The first made the prohibition against false advertising more specific. The second was much more far-reaching, giving the Medical Board the right to discipline its members for 'infamous' professional conduct.

At the same time as the medical profession was gaining monopoly and self-regulation, governments were attempting to place Friendly Societies on a more secure footing. This had been a long-standing interest of Coghlan's, and between 1900 and 1902 he devoted considerable time to the reform of the clubs in order to make them viable organisations for working class self-help. However, by 1902 the clubs faced a strong and unified medical profession determined to destroy their power. Fears of the introduction of a national insurance scheme on the British model led to federal organisation of the profession in 1911. By 1914, the BMA had succeeded in imposing its own conditions on clubs. The success of the BMA virtually eliminated price competition amongst doctors; the wealthiest 10 per cent of the population was excluded from club care; and exclusion of specialist services made clubs less attractive to subscribers.

These moves towards monopoly and self-regulation in the medical profession were accompanied by growth in the size and influence of public health administration. A
Board of Health and a government hospital had been set up in 1882 following an outbreak of smallpox in Sydney in the previous year. The Board’s activities were restricted by the absence of a Public Health Act until 1896, when John Ashburton Thompson, the newly-appointed Chief Medical Officer and President of the Board of Health, drafted a comprehensive Public Health Act for George Reid. Part of the consolidation of the public service as a medium of social reform that characterised the mid-90s, this Act provided for the appointment of public health officers to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, supervise sanitation and cattle slaughter, and to police the purity of food and drugs and the cleanliness of dairies. Thompson’s organisation, which became the Department of Public Health within the Colonial Secretary’s Department in 1904, quickly carried out the pioneering work of public health in Sydney. By the early 1900s Sydney was assured of a pure water supply, most houses were sewered, and the supervision of food preparation and vending was established and routinised. In addition, an outbreak of plague in 1900 forced Sydney municipalities to institute well-organised systems of public cleanliness. The activities of public health officials contributed, therefore, to the general upgrading of the image of the medical profession that was consciously being carried out by the medical associations of the period.

PARTY POLITICS AND THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

The continued strength and unity of the medical and legal professions enabled them to survive the decline of the new middle class which took place in the early years of the new century. In contrast, the public service fragmented, and the Public Service Board, which had represented the interests of the service as a whole in the 1890s, lost its political influence and universal character. The decline of the new middle class as a unified and influential political force had begun by 1900 and was well under way by 1904. It was the victim of a swift realignment of radical and conservative forces following disillusionment on the part of both labour and capital with the efficacy of the omnibus Free Trade and Protectionist Parties. This realignment was facilitated by the settlement of the federal question in 1899. The consequent federation of the six Australian states in 1901 transferred customs policy to the sphere of Commonwealth politics, removing the fiscal issue from the New South Wales political agenda. It also took the two party leaders, Reid and Lyne, into federal politics. The ties of loyalty and ideology that held radical and conservative elements together in the Free Trade and Protectionist Parties dissolved, paving the way for political reorganisation.

Reid’s Free Trade Party had fallen in 1899 because, with a bare and uncertain majority, it could no longer deliver the progressive measures expected by the more radical sections of its constituency. The radical-dominated Protectionist Party led by
Lyne until 1901, and its successor, the more conservative Progressive Party led by John See, alienated first the conservatives and then the radicals as they tried to please their diverse constituency. With neither Free Trade nor Protectionist Party able to attract stable support, the more radical elements in the electorate and parliament gravitated towards the Labor Party. Between 1898 and 1904, Labor increased its share of the vote from 11 per cent to 23 per cent at the expense of both alternative parties, and had shaken off or incorporated its more independent supporters. At the same time as the Labor Party consolidated its support, the Protectionist (Progressive) and Liberal (Free Trade) Parties split into radical and conservative camps. The conservative elements regrouped behind the Liberal Party, and the radicals gradually merged with the Labor Party, leaving O'Sullivan as a ruefully ‘unanimous and patriotic party of one’ by 1908.

Dominated by the radical democrat, O'Sullivan, and the liberal intellectual, B.R. Wise, the Protectionist Party from 1899 to 1901 did its best to secure the support of the labour movement. It introduced a system of compulsory arbitration of industrial disputes and embarked on a program of heavy public works expenditure. These policies brought short-term political gains to the party. Although the arbitration system made little immediate impact on workers’ conditions, it was welcomed by most of the working class, in which unionism had weakened since the early 1890s. The policies of large-scale spending on public works and a guaranteed minimum wage of 7s a day on government projects were even more popular, as they helped ensure full employment and a reasonable standard of living to working class men.

However, these policies attracted strong opposition from taxpayers and employers, and in 1902 and 1903 organisations advocating government economy and opposing ‘undue’ government intervention developed. By 1904 these groups presented a united front in support of the Liberal-Reform Party organised by Joseph Carruthers in 1902 on the basis of the Liberal Party. The Progressive Party crumbled under the sustained attacks of these united conservative forces: it cut government projects, thus losing the support of Labor and, at the same time, lost many of its own conservative supporters to the Liberal-Reform Party.

The election of 1904 was fought on the basis of the new conservative-radical dichotomy, and the victory of Carruthers’ Liberal-Reform Party represented a rejection of the new middle class-working class hegemony of the previous decade. The main issues of the election were government expenditure and ‘socialist’ policies. Carruthers put the voters’ choice as one between ‘a policy of extreme socialism, based on class prejudice, fomented by extremists’ and liberalism. ‘The issue’, he said, ‘is against the State persisting in its endeavours to reduce the people to the condition of an army of State employees, dependent upon political patronage for work, and upon foreign money-lenders...
for loans to pay the wages'. The Progressives suffered a catastrophic decline from forty-one seats in 1901 to sixteen in 1904, as voters moved to support either the conservative party of capital or the more radical party of labour. The Liberals, with forty-five seats, formed a government with the grudging support of some Progressives, and the Labor Party, with twenty-five seats, formed the official opposition for the first time.

The increasing prosperity of the years 1905 to 1907, and the essential moderation of Carruthers, muted confrontation between Labor and Liberals for several years. Carruthers' conservative reforms were mild. He reduced government expenditure, and finally established the system of local government which Reid had promised and Coghlan had designed in 1894. The effect of this latter change was to remove much of the burden of public works expenditure from the central government, and to prevent any large-scale return to the 'roads and bridges' strategy of securing support. Carruthers was reluctant to reduce or abolish income tax, but under attack from party supporters, he promised some taxation relief in the elections of 1907. His successor, Charles Wade, carried out these promises at the end of 1907, reducing taxation per head from 18s to less than 12s.

Conflict between the two parties intensified during Wade's premiership. The labour movement had become increasingly dissatisfied with the working of the arbitration system established by the Lyne government in 1901. When the original Act expired in 1908, Wade's government introduced an amended system which provoked dissension within the labour movement and greater confrontation between the two parliamentary parties. The small socialist left-wing of the labour movement, which opposed arbitration, strengthened in this period, and a series of industrial disputes, usually involving this group, sharpened party divisions. In the elections of October 1910, the Labor Party won by a narrow majority. From that time until the formation of the coalition ministry of the United Australia Party and the Country Party in 1932, a series of weak conservative and Labor governments alternated, rarely commanding reliable majorities or steady electoral support. It was, therefore, a period of confrontation between capital and labour in which it was impossible for either side to implement an integrated legislative program. The problems of the two parties were exacerbated by the war between 1914 and 1918, which cut off established sources of government funds and caused major fluctuations in the cost of living which continued into the 1920s. As a result income tax, salaries and the cost of living became major issues dividing the two parties.

The confrontation between capital and labour between 1904 and 1932 had major repercussions for the new middle class. With political attention focussed more decisively
on two opposing camps, concerns specific to the new middle class became peripheral, and sometimes antagonistic to the interests of both parties. Income tax, government expenditure and intervention became major sources of contention, for instance, with the result that retrenchment became a stock-in-trade for conservative governments, and weak Labor governments were often forced to sacrifice their former allies. In this situation, embattled public servants lost their unity and influence, and other sections of the new middle class - the doctors and lawyers who had been their partners in the professionalising project of the 1890s - struggled to maintain and extend their influence, often at the expense of the weaker sections of their own class.

THE EMASCULATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

The Public Service Board was an early victim of the realignment of political parties along conservative and radical lines. The expensive and interventionist policies of the Progressives aroused anti-state sentiments among their conservative opponents. Within the Protectionist and Progressive Parties themselves, there was no consistent and integrated approach to the role of the public bureaucracy. Governments tended to play off labour's demands against those of the public service, and individual ministers pushed the interests of public service areas in which they were particularly interested, rather than the service as a whole. The net result was that governments from 1899 to 1904 weakened the Public Service Board while laying the foundations for the strong intervention of professional groups through state institutions.

At the same time as they instituted large public works programs, the Lyne government moved quickly to impose economy on the rest of the public service. Throughout the period 1900 to 1904 the government controlled the number and size of increments that could be granted on salaries over £150 by limiting the amount of money available for that purpose. In 1900 the Board was forced to withhold a large number of salary increments. By 1901 it had to abandon its commitment to automatic increments on salaries up to £299 and to reduce those on salaries under £150 from £15 a year to £10. In addition, in a final attempt to secure some of the conservative vote in 1904, the new Progressive leader, Thomas Waddell, stopped all new appointments to the service.

With the resounding victory of the Liberal-Reform Party in the 1904 elections, Carruthers acceded to his supporters' demands for economy by continuing this policy of public service retrenchment. Confident that the public service vote was not essential to electoral success, he began to intervene more directly in the fixation of public service salaries and conditions. The recruitment of junior clerks was suspended from 1904 to 1907, and government control of the granting of increments was formalised in a controversial new regulation which provided that:
at the beginning of each financial year, the Treasurer shall inform the Board whether the state of the Public Finances will justify the granting of increments for that year ... and if the Government advise the Board that such increments, or any proportion thereof, may be paid, the Board shall proceed to investigate each case ...

In a further response to pressure for government economy in 1906, a system of recruitment of boys on a temporary basis was introduced in place of the suspended recruitment of career junior clerks.

There is little evidence from the published record as to how willingly the Board colluded in this interference with its independence. However, there is considerable evidence that some elements in the Protectionist and Progressive Parties deliberately set out to weaken the Board. Chief among these was Attorney-General B.R. Wise, who took over ministerial responsibility for the Board in 1899. Wise was a barrister whose father had been a Supreme Court judge and friend of Parkes. He was educated at Rugby and Oxford, where he was strongly influenced by the social reformist ideas of J.A. Hobson and Arnold Toynbee senior, and where he became a convinced advocate of free trade. Known by his contemporaries as a brilliant but untrustworthy 'twister', Wise appeared to make enemies of his former allies more readily than of his adversaries. A member of the Free Trade Party from 1887 to 1895 and Attorney-General from 1887 to 1888, he backed Parkes against Reid in 1895 and lost his seat. Returning to politics in 1898, he intrigued to bring down the Reid government and took office in Lyne's Protectionist government. How much of his subsequent attitude towards the Public Service Board was the result of his antagonism to Reid and how much was based on principle is difficult to assess.

Within days of taking office Wise called on Coghlan to choose between his position on the Board and that of Government Statistician, which he had never relinquished. At the same time he questioned the legality of the arrangement Board members had made with Reid concerning the retention of their superannuation rights. This made it virtually impossible for Coghlan to do anything but return to the Statistician's Office. The protracted correspondence between Coghlan and Wise on this occasion makes it clear that Coghlan regarded the matter as a personal attack. His anxiety about his situation was exacerbated by accusations of malpractice made against him by the Assistant Statistician, J.R. Martin. Coghlan took leave from the end of November and was incapacitated with what was probably a nervous illness for some time. He was cleared of the charges against him, but the end result was that he was effectively removed from the Board, from which he formally resigned in March 1900. Martin was transferred to Premier Lyne's department, the Treasury, as Special Clerk to the Under Secretary, where he spearheaded another major attack on Coghlan over the accounts of the Reid government.
With Coghlan gone, and his successor, Stipendiary Magistrate Cornelius Delohery, not appointed until mid-1900, the Board was considerably weakened. Two days after Coghlan went on leave, Wise moved the second reading of a Public Service Amendment Bill designed to undermine the legal powers of the Board. Wise had been attacking the Board ever since he returned to parliament in 1898. His 1899 Bill provided for the exemption of Under Secretaries from the Board’s control and the establishment of an appeal court against Board decisions. Wise argued that he was trying to restore ministerial responsibility which had been lost ‘in one of those pathetic outbursts of mistrust of its own honesty and capacity which is characteristic of modern democracy when in certain moods’. However, his opponents found it hard to see how his proposed reforms would enhance parliamentary responsibility. The Bill was lost with the close of the session, and a further Bill introduced by former journalist, Patrick Quinn, in August of the following year was not proceeded with in a crowded session. However, it is obvious that the government was not supportive of the Board as it had been constituted by Reid, and there is some evidence that at least influential Labor member W.A. Holman supported Wise in this.

The Board reacted strongly at first to its treatment by the government. In its 1899 Report (published in 1900) it observed that ‘the administration of this Act [the Public Service Act of 1895] has been subjected to the most crucial examination’, and it detailed a number of areas in which its recommendations had been over-ridden by the government. The Board questioned these decisions, publishing, in the case of the denial of salary increments to senior officers, the list of increases recommended by the Board and correspondence with the government on the matter.

By 1901, however, the Board was conceding in its Report that automatic increments were too costly, and new regulations promulgated at the beginning of that year considerably reduced rights to such increases. Long absences of Wilson and Barling from the Board during 1901 may indicate a struggle on their part with the government over this issue. In 1905 the Board commented at length on the need for economy. By 1906, when the scheme for the employment of temporary clerks was introduced, further signs of strain were evident. Delohery took seven months leave during 1906, and Wilson and Barling both took extended leaves of six and eight months before retiring well before their second term of office had expired.

The retirement of Wilson and Barling marked definitively the end of the ‘strong Board’ contemplated by the 1895 Act. The PSJ, in summing up its administration, concluded that it had, in recent years, been too complacent in its relations with the government, and that it had ‘more than tolerated’ government interference. Attorney-General Wade followed Wise’s precedent in appointing another legal officer,
E.H. Wilshire, in place of Wilson, and he chose former Under Secretary of the Treasury and Commissioner of Taxation, C.J. Saunders, to replace Barling. These appointments changed the nature of the Board from a powerful instrument of social engineering to a more limited technical and administrative tool. Coghlan’s friend, Captain Neitenstein, who spent over a year on the Board in 1906 and 1907, wrote to Coghlan in 1909 about the lack of respect commanded by the new Board. This came as no surprise to Coghlan, who considered that Saunders and Wilshire were ‘almost impossible’ and that Saunders was ‘quite unfit by temperament and training’ for the PSB post.

With ministers no longer supportive of PSB independence and members not in tune with its creators’ original intentions, the Board lost its effectiveness as a watchdog of public servants’ rights. Personnel decisions lost their principled and positive quality and became *ad hoc* responses to government pressure. The Public Service Act had given the Board large discretionary powers which had been appropriate to the political climate of the time. With the demise of new middle class political power and the development of strong parties of capital and labour, the Board’s independent defence of the public service could no longer be relied on. Coghlan had not anticipated that different political circumstances would reduce the Board’s power, and he was critical of ministers such as Wade who, he implied, improperly interfered with departmental administration. As he commented to Neitenstein in 1909, ‘When I drew up the Public Service Act it did not seem possible that any but a strong board would ever be appointed and accordingly I proposed great powers for it.’

The *PSJ* shared Coghlan’s concern about the weakness of the Board. In 1910, when Delohery was about to resign at the age of 70, it expressed the hope that the service would see ‘a young energetic and fearless man appointed to the office, who will not be liable to infection from political pressure, ancient, unjust precedents, and short cuts to avoid difficulty.’ For a short period of time, it seemed as if this might happen. In the closely-fought election of that year, the public service vote once more became important. Wade, who led the Liberal-Reform Party from 1907, courted public servants with promises of salary increases and reform. In this conciliatory mood, he appointed Coghlan’s old *protegé*, G.A. McKay, to the Board in Delohery’s place. McKay found the situation impossible, and soon after the Labor Party took office in October, he returned to the Commonwealth.

The Labor government seemed willing to take up the old partnership with the new middle class, who were thought to have contributed to Labor’s electoral success. Between 1912 and 1914 income tax was drastically increased. A minimum wage was granted to all adult male public servants in January 1911 and the following year the
starting salary and automatic increment range of male clerks were improved. Holman, who was Attorney-General from 1910 to 1914, attempted to inject new life into the Public Service Board with the appointment of the economist, R.F. Irvine. Saunders retired on the grounds of ill health early in 1913 after twelve months sick leave. If Coghlan was right in saying that ‘there is an indecipherable feeling that he should never have been on the Board at all’, Saunders may have been forced out, as he was only just over fifty at the time. However, Irvine resigned after only a year in office, and two lack-lustre colleagues were eventually found for Wilshire at the end of 1912: W.J. Hanna, the former Under Secretary of Public Works, and J.M. Taylor, who had, until the beginning of that year, been an Examiner in the Board’s office at a salary of £500. The new Board did nothing to inspire public servants’ confidence as economic problems caused by the outbreak of war threatened their conditions. The ‘prevailing gerontocracy’, was, according to a writer in the PSJ, powerless, imperceptive and pedestrian. Doubts about the Board’s ability to safeguard the service were well-founded. As the cost of living escalated, public servants suffered reductions in their salary and a deterioration in conditions of service. At the end of 1916, the Nationalist government formed by former Labor Premier, W.A. Holman, in coalition with the former Liberals reduced public works, dismissed hundreds of state employees and promised not to increase state income tax during the war. In a situation reminiscent of the early 1890s, public servants were once more aware that they were a target for expenditure cuts. A letter to the PSJ in 1916 warned:

... let the Public Service Association be alert. The shadow lurks, but the Public Service should not be the sufferers for the pass to which, not merely war conditions, but also mis-management and lack of organisation have brought industrial and public life today.

The writer urged the Public Service Board to ‘rouse themselves out of the old grooves’ because while they allowed the service to ‘rumble along in the old ruts ... there must necessarily be a great deal of expenditure which would be avoided if the Service was organised’. The Board, however, made no attempt to press the government on behalf of the service.

Faced with the Board’s inability to protect public servants in this crisis, the PSA withdrew its support. It recommended sweeping democratisation of personnel administration, and advocated the abandonment of the Board as the wage-fixing tribunal for the service. Instead, public service wages and conditions should be decided in the same way as those of other workers - by the Arbitration Court.

Deprived of the support of the rank-and-file, the Board was also abandoned by the government. Despite, or because of, its docility, the emasculated Public Service Board was no longer an effective instrument for the government in the difficult political
The government’s economy measures since the beginning of the war, combined with deliberate pegging of wage awards by the Industrial Court below cost-of-living increases, and inflamed by the conscription issue, were provoking considerable industrial unrest which paralleled the public servants’ dissatisfaction. The defection of the moderate Holman from the Labor Party strengthened its more militant industrial wing, and trade unionists, including public servants, began to take a more truculent stance opposing their deteriorating conditions. At the same time, as leader of the Nationalist Party, Holman had to respond to a conservative constituency which opposed increased taxation and government spending. In the face of these contradictory demands, the government needed a more innovatory and flexible public personnel authority than the Board provided.

The announcement just prior to the elections of March 1917 of a Royal Commission into the Public Service served two purposes. It capitalised on public service discontent with the Board (although, as the PSJ pointed out, they had not sought an inquiry); in this way it helped Holman to counter his opponent, John Storey’s active wooing of the public service vote. At the same time such an enquiry enabled Holman to carry out the reconstitution of the Board he had considered necessary since Wise’s abortive attempts at the turn of the century.

The Commission, conducted by Mason Allard, began in September 1917 in the middle of the general strike which began in the railways workshops. The inquiry dragged on for three years, but its first report late in 1918 was politically the most important. Allard condemned the Board for its mismanagement of the public service, and in a bitter confrontation in late 1918 and early 1919 the Board members were forced to resign. A new Board with enlarged powers was established, with former businessman J.S. Marks as Chairman, and W.D. Loveridge of the Board’s office and J.L. Williams, Coghlan’s old friend, as members.

The political turbulence of 1917 and 1918 demanded, however, speedier solutions than a shake-up of the Public Service Board could provide, and the Board’s new strength proved illusory, as the government handed over control of public service salaries to another group of experts - the lawyers and statisticians of the industrial arbitration system. In 1918 the Premier established a Board of Trade to assist the Arbitration Court which had been set up in 1901. This Board was empowered to declare ‘from year to year after public inquiry as to the increase and decrease of the average cost of living, what shall be the living wages to be paid’. Holman hoped by this means to dampen prevailing conflict over wages and the cost of living. He was successful to some extent in this when workers gained a considerable wage increase from the first declaration of the Board of Trade in September 1918. However, public servants were anxious to be
included in this improvement in wages, and stepped up pressure for their inclusion under the Board's jurisdiction. Following large public meetings during 1919, the government finally gave way to pressure and allowed public servants access to the arbitration system. These changes inaugurated a new phase of public personnel management. Without control of public service salaries, the PSB became increasingly the government's instrument, effecting petty economies in response to alarming wage increases caused by the Board of Trade's declarations. The PSB lost its role as guardian and regulator of public service conditions, and was reduced, during the 1920s, to a mere shadow of the body that Coghlan had conceived and instituted in 1896.
Notes


2. Woodman, ibid., p.276-80.


6. Ibid., p.251.

7. Quoted ibid., p.230.


13. P.223.


15. Ibid., p.289.


17. See chapter 4, n.36.
18. For Chapman see Woodman (n. 1 above), p.271; for Garran and Saddington see ACJ 1892, 1895; for D'Arcy see ACJ 1892, 1895 and chapter 5, n.93.


21. For D'Arcy see chapter 5, n.98, 154; for Williams see n. 95, 108, 167; for Tillett see n.104; for Clegg see Blue Book and PSL; for Taylor see n.40 this chapter.

22. ACJ 1892, 1895.


29. 60 Vic., No.38; 'John Ashburton Thompson', ABD 1934, p.365; Serle.


32. Calculated from Hughes and Graham.


35. SMH 5 August 1904, p.7, quoted in Rydon and Spann, p.49.

36. Figures from Hughes and Graham.

37. Rickard (n.31 above), pp.188-90; Rydon and Spann (n.34 above), pp.63-75; figures from Statistical Register.

39. *PSJ* June 1900, pp.1-2; May 1901, p.1; *GG* 31 December 1900, p.10178.

40. Rydon and Spann (n.34 above), p.47.


45. *PD* 1900, pp.2092-133, 22 August 1900.

46. Delohery was born 10 February 1840. His father, Cornelius, was Clerk of Petty Sessions in Sydney in the 1850s. He entered the Central Police Office as a clerk in 1860. From 1872 to 1882 he was Clerk of Petty Sessions in Maitland, where he became mayor. In 1882 he became Clerk of Petty Sessions and Chamber Magistrate in Sydney, in 1885 Deputy Stipendiary Magistrate and in 1891 Stipendiary Magistrate with a salary of £750. He was the first Chairman of the PSA in 1899, and was appointed to the PSB on 16 May 1900. He retired 14 November 1910 and went into chambers. Bennett notes that he was a 'great pleader in his day'. See *PSJ* January 1900, p.4; June 1900, pp.2, 7; Bennett (n.4 above), p.271.

47. *PD* 1898, p.2015, 2 November 1898.

48. *PD* 1899, 3rd sess., pp.2594-610, 23 November 1899, esp. 2594. For public service comment see *PSJ* January 1900, pp.1, 11; February 1900, pp.1, 14.

49. *PD* 1900, pp.1633-7, 7 August 1900.


53. Barling was absent from April to November, Wilson from September to December; see *PSB Report* 1902 (V & P 1903, vol. II), p.1.


56. February 1907, p.1.

57. Wilshire was born in 1858 and joined the service in 1878. He became a Stipendiary Magistrate in 1899 and in 1900 earned £750. He was on the Council of the PSA in 1900 with G.A. McKay.

58. Saunders was born 1 January 1858. He joined the public service 1 November 1873. In 1878 he became Second Class Draftsman in the Survey Department and in 1887 Chief Draftsman, where he was G.A. McKay’s chief. On 1 July 1896 he became Inspector of Land Boards and District Survey Offices at a salary of £550 and 8 February 1901 Commissioner of Taxation at £800. In 1904 he became Under Secretary for Finance and Trade as well. He was appointed to the PSB on 30 January 1907; between September and December 1901 he had served on the Board as Deputy Member while Wilson was on leave. See PSB *Report* 1931 (V P 1930-32, vol. IV), p.22.

59. Coghlan referred to Neitenstein’s letter in his reply of 5 March 1909; Coghlan’s comments are in a letter to McLachlan 29 April 1910 (Coghlan papers). The immediate source of Coghlan’s opinion was probably McKay, who was then on the PSB, but his opinion of Wilshire was a long-standing one which he assumed McLachlan shared, and his opinion of Saunders was already held when he wrote to Neitenstein on 19 March 1909 (Coghlan papers). Coghlan and Saunders were possibly in competition for the joint position of Under Secretary of Trade and Finance and Commissioner for Taxation in 1904. Carruthers offered Coghlan a position as ‘Financial adviser to the Treasury with supreme control over all the departments in the matter of expenditure’, and it is probably this position that Saunders eventually filled. Coghlan states cryptically in his autobiography that ‘after mature consideration, Mr Coghlan saw fit to decline the offer’. Within months he was on his way to London as Agent General, a post notoriously used to get rid of awkward political figures. See Coghlan (n.26 above), pp.12-13.

60. Coghlan to Neitenstein, 5 March 1909. In a further letter of 19 March he referred to Neitenstein’s independence of his minister and to the fact that Williams’ place (as Under Secretary to Wade) was ‘no bed of roses’, implying, in the context of the letter, that this was due to ministerial interference.

61. 1 January 1910, p.1.


63. McKay was appointed 15 January 1910. Coghlan approved of the
appointment, but by the end of April had heard that McKay was having 'some little difficulties ... His colleagues are almost impossible'. McKay resigned 30 November to become Federal Commissioner of Land Tax. See Coghlan to McKay 3(?), March 1910; Coghlan to McLachlan, 29 April 1910; McKay to Coghlan, 18 April 1910 (Coghlan papers); Brian Fitzpatrick, *The British Empire in Australia: An Economic History 1834-1939* (Carlton, Vic.: MUP, 2nd edn, 1949), p.266.

64. Rydon and Spann (n.34 above), p.124.

65. The Braddon clause, which had guaranteed the states return of the customs revenue raised in their state, was replaced in August 1909 by a per capita refund of 25s. New income tax legislation was passed in December 1911 and March 1914 which increased receipts from 7s 6d to 14s 1d per head from 1912-13 to 1913-14 and to 17s 9d in 1914-15. See Evatt (n.20 above), pp.297, 343; Rydon and Spann (n.34 above), pp.108-9; *Statistical Register*.

66. *PSJ* January 1911, p.1; February 1912, p.2; *GG* 17 January 1912, p.3654.

<table>
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<td>£50-£150 (£15 increments)</td>
<td>£60-£140 (£20 increments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£150-£180 (£15 bi-annual increments)</td>
<td>£155-£200 (£15 increments)</td>
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67. R.F. Irvine, MA, was born 30 June 1861. He joined the public service 26 March 1897 and 1 July 1900 became Examiner in the PSB, where he earned £500 in 1910. He was appointed to the Board 7 December 1910. He took 6 months leave prior to resigning on 20 June 1912 to become Professor of Economics and Commerce at Sydney University. See Bruce McFarlane, ‘Professor Irvine’s Economics in Australian Labour History, 1913-1933’ (Canberra: Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, 1966); PSB Report 1911 (V & P 1912, vol. II), p.1.


69. Hanna was born in Belfast 22 September 1854. He was educated at the Belfast Academy and the Royal Belfast Academical Institute. He served 5 years with his uncle, a civil engineer and surveyor, and came to Australia in 1878. He joined the public service in 1879. In 1890 he was appointed Assistant Engineer, Roads and Bridges Branch of the Public Works Department, and in 1907 he became Under Secretary at a salary of £1,000. He was appointed to the Board 29 January 1913. See *Cyclopaedia of New South Wales*, p.214.

70. J.M. Taylor, MA, LLB, was born in 1861 in the Illawarra district. He became a pupil teacher in 1876 and in 1882 was First Assistant Teacher at Cleveland Street. He
matriculated in 1883 and joined Peter Board (later Under Secretary of the Public Instruction Department 1905-1922) and Arthur Griffith (later Minister for Public Works 1910-15 and for Public Instruction 1915-16) in the first group of evening students at Sydney University. After gaining his BA and MA he became Master at the Practising School, Fort Street. He was admitted to the Bar in 1894 and became Assistant Examiner in the PSB. He became Chief Examiner in 1912. On 29 January 1912 he replaced Saunders temporarily and on 1 December was appointed to the Board. See PSJ March 1912, p.20.

71. 1 September 1914, p.18.

72. PSJ 1 January 1916, p.22; Evatt (n.20 above), p.380. The cost of living rose steadily from 1914 to 1920:

<table>
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<td>1505</td>
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(Source: Evatt, p.358).

73. For coalition see Evatt, pp.417-27; for reductions and tax see pp.429-30.

74. 1 December 1916, p.27.

75. See Holman’s statement, PSJ March 1917, p.18.

76. PSJ March 1916, p.5. For a resume of the campaign, see March 1919, pp.3-4, and for its beginnings see November 1914, p.1.


78. For announcement see PSJ March 1917, pp.18-19.

79. PSJ August 1917, p.1.

80. PSJ April 1917, pp.19-20.

81. PSJ March 1917, pp.18-19.

82. Royal Commission into the Public Service, First Sectional Report; Letter to

83. Evatt, pp.348-50, 462-3; Sawkins (n.77 above), pp.18-22, esp. 21.

84. Ibid., pp.21-23.

85. PSJ April 1919, pp.7-8; June 1919, pp.3-4; September 1919, p.17; November 1919, pp.13-15.
CHAPTER 9
LAWYERS, THE ARBITRATION SYSTEM, AND THE SEGREGATION OF WOMEN

In handing over public service wage fixation to the Board of Trade and the Arbitration Court the government enlarged the influence of one section of the new middle class, the legal profession, at the expense another - the public servants who had played such an important part in unifying and strengthening their class at the end of the nineteenth century. The increasing influence of the legal profession was part of a trend whereby lawyers, doctors and teachers capitalised on the developments of the 1890s to extend their influence and labour market opportunities. Unlike the public service, the unity and power of these professional groups continued to grow in the first thirty years of the new century. They were well placed, therefore, to take advantage of the extension of state social reform activities to improve their own labour market situation. Successive governments trying to cater to the working class constituency turned increasingly to reforms through existing bureaucratic organisations set up in the 1890s and early 1900s, such as the arbitration system and the public health system. Without funds or steady support for more radical programs, governments were forced into partnership with the medical and legal professions. With the support of ministers belonging to these professions and the guidance of professionals in the bureaucracy, government programs were set up which greatly enlarged the influence and employment opportunities of these two professions.

LAWYERS AND THE INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION SYSTEM

The successful establishment of a compulsory arbitration system in which lawyers played a leading part was no doubt facilitated by the strength of the legal profession in this period, the easy integration of working class, petty bourgeois and new middle class intellectuals into the profession, and the close ties between the profession and the public service. Before 1898 there was no united support from the labour movement for state intervention in labour disputes. Where such intervention was supported, there was considerable suspicion of the appointment of lawyers as arbitrators, and hostility towards lawyers appearing as counsel for either side. During the debate on the Trades Disputes Conciliation and Arbitration Act in 1892, Labor members and others opposed
the government's intention of appointing a judge or senior barrister to the office of Chairman of the Council of Arbitration and expressed the wish to exclude lawyers from arbitration proceedings. Instead the office was made elective. By 1894 there was support for compulsory inquiries into disputes, but the Reid government did not succeed in introducing an amending Bill to this effect. The issue was not considered a pressing one, however, and, despite the fact that the 1895 Labor conference adopted the aim of compulsory arbitration, it was not placed on the party's fighting platform until 1901.¹

The measure that was finally passed as the Industrial Arbitration Act in December 1901 owed as much to the new middle class as to labour movement pressure.² It was introduced by Attorney-General B.R. Wise, with the support of future Labor Party lawyers and leaders, W.A. Holman and W.M. Hughes, as part of the Lyne Government's courting of the Labor Party in 1900. The Act established a permanent tribunal comprising two elected representatives of labour and capital and a Supreme Court judge, who acted as president. The tribunal's authority was backed by provisions for compulsory inquiry and enforcement. The readiness of Labor and other members to accept the high degree of state intervention involved in this measure was no doubt facilitated by the confidence in state institutions built up by Reid and Coghlan since 1894. Their readiness to accept a lawyer as the final arbiter can also be attributed to working-class confidence in the new middle class as allies which had been established during the 1890s, and by the mobility of working-class men into the profession. The system's continued existence in the face of the hostility of employers and the left-wing of the Labor Party was due to the efforts of Labor lawyers, particularly Holman and George Beeby.

The Industrial Arbitration Act of 1901 represented a convergence of the interests of labour and the new middle class in which established members of the legal profession had a decisive influence. This is illustrated by the relationship between Wise and Holman. These two men from widely differing backgrounds entered the Legislative Assembly in 1898 and consolidated support for compulsory state arbitration. B.R. Wise, the Oxford liberal and Queen's Counsel, returned to parliament after an absence of three years. W.A. Holman, the working-class intellectual, was elected for the first time after almost a decade of Labor Party activity. Despite their differences of background, Wise and Holman shared an interest in the problems of the working class and an elitist approach to their solution. Wise's approach was paternalistic: professionals such as himself should act as arbiters between capital and labour and make decisions on their behalf. Holman's views were similar: intellectuals like himself would establish a state which would govern on behalf of the working class. The observations and theories of both were based largely on their British experience and education, though this was much
more marked in the case of Wise. Both can be contrasted with the 'organic' native intellectual, Coghlan, who was concerned primarily with establishing economic and social conditions to strengthen the working class, and who saw strikes as an effective and necessary working-class weapon.

Wise was probably influential in convincing Holman, Hughes and Beeby that compulsory judicial arbitration was the best solution for labour. Wise and Holman had maintained a close relationship from the time that Wise had defended Holman in the Daily Post affair in 1896. Wise was the intermediary between the various Labor members, including Holman, who helped oust Premier Reid in 1899. His easy relationship with these young Labor men derived to a large degree from their joint participation in an actively uniting profession in which the ready acceptance of such men as Holman, Hughes, Fitzgerald, Beeby and Hall and the absence of divisive issues, gave the established members of the profession more influence on its young radical members than had been the case in the public service.

The attitudes of Wise and Holman were embodied in the 1901 industrial arbitration measures. Confidence in the new middle class and the state is strikingly illustrated in Holman’s defense of the legal framework of the Act:

Unhappily the stress of commercial conditions and industrial life in Australia has so far done nothing towards the evolving of the same leisureed class as that to which appeal can be made in England for an impartial judgment on these matters. A member of the aristocracy, a member of the diplomatic body, a member of the cultured and leisureed middle class who happens to be in public life can always be appealed to in England ... But here it is almost impossible to find men who have no connection with either side who are of sufficient public prominence, unless we take them from the ranks of one of the professions ... We find in Australia no class corresponding to the leisureed, cultured middle class of England. We turn, then, to the best available substitute that we have - official life ...

The new field of industrial law proved to be a useful source of work for the young Labor lawyers. Holman built up his practice as an industrial lawyer, and his success in this area led to more diverse work. Beeby’s firm, Beeby and Moffatt, specialised in industrial matters. He was appointed a judge of the Industrial Court of Arbitration and President of the Board of Trade in 1920, and of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration in 1926. In 1938 he became Chief Judge of the Commonwealth Court.

Holman and Beeby worked hard throughout their careers to preserve and improve the system that Wise established in 1901. They obtained significant amendments to Wade’s Industrial Disputes Bill in 1908. After Labor came into power in 1910, they made the arbitration system more workable by reducing the number of industrial boards and more acceptable to unionists by reducing penalties for strikes and lockouts. They
established a separate Department of Labour and Industry in 1912 under its own minister, to bring together the various sections of the bureaucracy dealing with industrial matters. Holman commissioned A.B. Piddington to investigate the arbitration system in 1913, and under his premiership Mr Justice Heydon carried out his exhaustive inquiry into the cost of living. In 1918 Beeby and Holman made further attempts to make the arbitration system acceptable to both employers and employees by setting up the Board of Trade. As Judge of the Industrial Court and President of the Board of Trade appointed by the Storey government in 1920, Beeby administered new legislation on profiteering and price control.\(^6\)

This industrial arbitration system, established and jealously guarded by the legal profession and the less militant sections of the Labor Party, had devastating effects on the salaries and conditions of women clerks. As public service salaries and conditions became increasingly determined by the sharp conflict between capital and labour in the first three decades of the new century, equality of pay and opportunity became one of the casualties of the weakening of the new middle class. The tentative commitment of the 1896 PSB to equality for single women was part of a principled approach to public personnel administration. This commitment was destroyed in the clash between labour and capital from 1902 to 1904; the fragile tradition of selective equality was lost as first the Board, then the Arbitration Court, struggling for their own survival, tried to reconcile conflicting pressures from capital and labour by treating women as cheap, temporary workers. Despite strong resistance, women found themselves marginal members of the workforce by 1930, excluded from the benefits enjoyed by male workers and abandoned by the male-dominated union in which they had played an active part for twenty years.

**GOVERNMENT ECONOMY AND DETERIORATION OF WOMEN’S PAY AND CONDITIONS**

**Non-Labor Governments 1900-1910**

By the time the first women clerks were appointed in 1900, it was already too late for the innovation of expanded equality of opportunity for women to succeed. The Lyne government, led by Wise, had started to undermine the independence of the Board, government economies were beginning to arouse public service anxiety, and personnel policies began to take on an overtly social engineering aspect.

The Public Service Board, without Coghlan by the time they made their report in 1900, presented the recruitment of female clerks in social engineering terms:

No doubt the employment of women in such places as are suitable for them, will have the effect of curtailing to some extent the employment of men; but this will produce a result beneficial to the State, because an equal number of
men will be compelled to seek positions which women cannot occupy, and therefore will be available to engage in occupations tending to develop the resources of the Colony.\(^7\)

Understandably this approach had little appeal to male public servants already feeling the pinch of government economy. A long editorial in the *PSJ* reacted strongly, suggesting separate and limited career avenues for women.\(^8\)

The antagonism of the PSA was probably enough to discourage further positive action on the part of the Board in the atmosphere of retrenchment and recession of the years 1901 to 1904. Despite the efforts of the Women’s Political Education League, led by Rose Scott and public servant Florence Wearne, the Board reported the abandonment of the scheme by 1903:

Owing to the absence of proper accommodation in the Public Offices, and for other reasons, it has not been found possible to employ women to any extent on clerical work, other than as shorthand and typing clerks, for which, as is well known, women have shown special aptitude.\(^9\)

Why ‘the absence of proper accommodation’ was a problem for clerks and not for typists is unclear. No doubt the ‘other reasons’, which were not spelled out, were more compelling. In any case, the total cessation of junior clerical recruitment, male or female, from 1904 to 1907 ensured that the recruitment of female clerks came to a definite end. At the same time, the Board abandoned the labour market principles on which Coghlan’s administration of the Public Service Act was based, and began to separate ‘skilled’ from ‘routine’ clerical work. This separation allowed economy on salaries and conditions of ‘unskilled’ workers without endangering those of ‘skilled’ workers.

In accordance with this strategy, the annual salary increments of junior clerks were restored in 1903 to their 1900 levels, but typists were barred from proceeding beyond £100 a year. Their career advancement ended, therefore, £50 below the salary clerks and shorthand typists could reach by automatic annual increments.\(^10\) At this stage, women were not the only victims of the Board’s new policy. In 1906, temporary boy clerks were introduced to compensate for the suspended recruitment of permanent junior clerks.\(^11\) However, it was women public servants who bore the brunt of the Board’s economies. From mid-1900 they were invariably appointed as typists rather than as shorthand typists, even though many were accomplished and experienced shorthand writers. One such woman was May Hickman, who had transcribed the meetings and lectures of the Australian Socialist League from the time she was fifteen.\(^12\) Women were also discriminated against in the granting of discretionary increments, and were, according to the *PSJ*, ‘entirely neglected’ in the salary regrading of 1906.\(^13\)

The women of the public service and the *PSJ* protested against this injustice, but
by the time economic prosperity returned in 1907 and junior clerical recruitment had recommenced, the question of equality for women was entirely forgotten by the Board. Carruthers had promised women ‘eventual’ equal pay in the elections of 1907, but this had little relevance to the women of the public service. Women were no longer appointed to the same jobs as men, and when they were recruited to the increasingly female job of typists, it was often on a ‘temporary’ basis, despite the fact that many of these women made permanent careers in the service.

**Labor and Nationalist Governments 1910-1918 and Women’s Resistance**

Thanks to the efforts of party activists such as public servants Annie and Belle Golding and their sister, Kate Dwyer, the first President of the Women’s Organising Committee of the Political Labor League, the Labor government was pledged to equal pay when it gained office in October 1910. However, its precarious majority in the Legislative Assembly, the hostility of the Legislative Council to any new industrial legislation, and the disaffection of the left-wing of the labour movement severely restricted the government’s ability to act on principle, even if it wished to. In order to maintain the support of the larger and more organised part of its constituency, it embarked on a policy of improving the pay and conditions of male workers at the expense of female workers.

In the public service, the groundwork for this strategy had been laid since 1903. In addition, it was increasingly legitimated by the emphasis on the different roles and responsibilities of men and women made by arbitration courts, the emerging infant welfare movement, advocates of domestic science education for girls, and alarmists concerned about population growth. The PSB was in no condition to resist the strategy of discrimination against women, even if it was inclined to, as it was, from 1910 to 1913, going through the second of its major personnel changes.

In January 1911, all adult male public servants were granted a minimum wage of 110 per annum. Despite pious sentiments from Labor Attorney-General Holman, it was only after strong representations from the PSA, urged on by public service women, that the minimum wage was extended to a limited number of female public servants. However, women in occupations covered by wages board awards were denied the minimum wage, and left with annual salaries as low as £50 a year.

Announcing the extension of the minimum wage to female public servants, Holman spoke stirringly of the government’s commitment to equal pay:

> The principle we have acted upon is, as we believe, the sound one of equal pay for equal work. No operative ought to be sweated on the score of sex. If a woman really does a man’s work she should be paid a man’s wage, and the minimum is now fixed.
The operative word was 'really', and the Board proceeded, immediately the minimum wage for women was implemented, to ensure that women did not 'really' do the same work as men. The starting salary and increment range of male clerks were raised to £60 and £200 respectively, and in compensation, female shorthand typists were barred from moving into the clerical ranks over the £150 salary level. Typists and shorthand typists now formed a clerical secondary labour market, with lower pay and restricted upward mobility which prevented women from acquiring further recognised skills.

In 1913 the Board’s policy of deskilling women was intensified, with the announcement of a plan to employ women in some areas to do 'work of more or less mechanical nature' which was being performed by higher-salaried men. The Board considered this beneficial, as it released men for 'more important duties'. Following the outbreak of war, demands for economy became more urgent. Accordingly, at the end of 1915 the Board opened clerical positions to women for the first time since the turn of the century. In contrast to the conditions of relative equality they had enjoyed at that time, however, female clerks were now to have a lower starting salary, a smaller increment range, and an inferior entrance examination which was used as an excuse for the inequality of conditions governing male and female labour markets. In responding to their male trade union constituents, therefore, within the constraints of a powerful opposition, the Labor government had little hesitation in sacrificing the cause of women’s equality.

These developments were fiercely resisted by a wide range of public service women, supported by feminist organisations and Labor Party women who felt betrayed by their party. In 1910 women made up about 27 per cent of the 12,500 permanent public servants. Most of these 3,500 women were teachers, almost two hundred were poorly-paid cleaners, nurses, asylum attendants and printing office employees, and a small group of about fifty filled a tiny 2 per cent of all professional and clerical positions. Women such as Annie Golding had been office bearers in the Public School Teachers Association for many years. The other public service women followed the teachers’ lead and tried to work initially through the established union, the PSA.

The militancy of public service women was aroused soon after Labor took office by the denial of the minimum wage to those women most in need of wage justice. In September 1911, Margaret Hogg, a typist in the Stores Supply Department, began her long campaign to improve the pay and opportunities of women in the service with letters to the *SMH*, the PSA and the *PSJ*. The following year, the summary restriction of many women’s career mobility and the revival of the question of superannuation mobilised Margaret Hogg and others to seek a more prominent part in the Association’s affairs. From 1912, Margaret Hogg, Edith Swain, May Matthews and Belle Golding...
were active members of the PSA Council, until a change in procedure in 1918 made it more difficult for women to gain election to the Council.

Belle Golding and May Matthews were active feminists and Labor Party members of long standing. Margaret Hogg had joined the service as a temporary typist in 1908 and had finally secured a permanent position in 1911 at the age of forty-one. Edith Swain, a compiler in the Statistician's Office, was one of the first women appointed as clerk in 1900. By 1912, when she became the first woman to be elected to the PSA Council, she had been in the service for twelve years and was just over thirty years old.

These four activists were responsible for persuading the Association to take up the female public servant's cause. They argued that women had to earn their living just as men did, that they often had similar obligations to support others, and that they should therefore enjoy equal pay and opportunity with men. ‘In this twentieth century’, wrote Margaret Hogg with characteristic rhetoric:

> when woman takes her part in the battle of life and into which economic conditions have brought her to stay, it is only a fair demand that all disabilities which prevail under the public service regulations and which hamper her progress should be eliminated and placed in the Archives of the Museum of Antiquity, where future generations may gaze and marvel that such impediments should ever have been placed in the pathway of versatile, conscientious, industrious woman.

Margaret Hogg argued that women sought equality because ‘men related to her by ties of blood to whom she looked in the past to represent her’ had failed her. But women’s equality could only be beneficial to the state and to men:

> The argument that woman will neglect her home ties for higher education and political work is no more true than that she has and does neglect it for pleasure and social functions. The wider woman’s outlook the greater her understanding of the word duty - or, again,

> That women will become unwomanly - well, leave that to nature, which has given woman instincts peculiar to herself and has guarded them for centuries. To be less frivolous, less empty-headed, is not loss of womanliness, it may be less pleasing to certain types of man - but not less womanly.

The PSA, under the presidency of J.S. D’Arcy, Dr Constance D’Arcy’s brother, responded to the appeal of its women members, and pressed their case with the PSB and the Attorney-General, D.R. Hall. Margaret Hogg was a delegate at the first interstate conference of public service associations in Sydney in December 1913, and she and D’Arcy secured a resolution from the conference advocating equality of pay and opportunity for women.

The major push of the PSA for improvement of women’s conditions proved to be too late. Their representations to Attorney-General Hall in July 1914 were made a
month before the outbreak of war, and were lost sight of in the ensuing financial anxieties of the government. Margaret Hogg was incensed by Hall’s off-hand reference to the ‘fair sex’:

The 20th century is not the epoch in which women desire to be called by such an empty title. This is the period which has brought them into the industrial world to face the serious fact of earning their living. In doing so they have discovered that they are just as capable, industrious and conscientious as men. Having come to this self-knowledge in spite of the obstacles which have been strewn in their path for the last fifty years, they ask for equal opportunities and equal remuneration.

The days when the single man supported his women-folk are past, and women of spirit are glad of it. The single man of the present day, paid on a higher scale than the single woman, more often than not uses his surplus for amusements, not for the support of kith and kin ...

I would suggest that single men and single women be remunerated on the same scale, and married men and married women on the same basis, positions being equally open to both sexes.

Aware that wartime economies posed special dangers for their cause, public service women formed their own Section of the Association the following year to add greater weight to their demands. They were still, at this stage, anxious to cooperate with their male colleagues. Margaret Hogg, who convened the meeting to form the Women’s Section, assured PSJ readers that:

There is no desire to dissociate the Women’s Section from the PSA, which, in spite of the remarks of the unenthusiastic, has done, and is doing, so far as lies in its power, all that it can do to rectify any grievances and disabilities of the officers of the service.

Those who took an active part in the Women’s Section represented a wide cross-section of rank and occupation. Edith Swain, by then editor of the Department of Labour and Industry’s Industrial Gazette, was President, and Belle Golding, who had been a factory inspector for fifteen years, was Vice-President. Both earned over £200 a year. Annie Frank and Florence Wearne, two of the original female shorthand typists appointed in 1897, and Mary Ryan, who was one of the 1900 cohort of female clerks along with Edith Swain, earned £150 and £170 a year. Caroline Byrne earned only £70 as Sister at the Coast Hospital after twelve years service. Rachel Hill, Forewoman in the Government Printing Office with thirty years experience, Louisa Sibthorpe, Sewer in the same office for twenty-nine years, and Mrs Annie Todd, Court Keeper at the Water Police Court with twenty-six years service, all earned between £52 and £100. These women ranged in age from thirty-two to fifty-three; they had started work in the service at ages ranging from seventeen to forty; they had up to thirty years service, and their salaries ranged from £52 (with quarters and fuel) to £250.

In addition to forming their own pressure group within the Association in 1915,
women also increased their representation on the Association’s Council. In July, Belle Golding joined May Matthews and Margaret Hogg on the Council and these three women, supported by the Women’s Section, tried to press the Association into greater activity on their behalf. By this time, however, the PSB and public service men were feeling the effects of the government’s economies. The Board opened clerical positions to women once more in September 1915, but on their own terms which continued to favour men - female clerks were, in effect, to form a clerical secondary labour market. Deputations and special meetings arranged by the Women’s Section in protest against these developments were obstructed by some male members of the Association, with the result that the new regulations were a fait accompli before PSA deputations to the Attorney-General and the PSB were organised in November and December.\(^5\)

The deputation that finally met the Board in December 1915 included Belle Golding, Margaret Hogg and May Matthews, as well as six male PSA Council members. Margaret Hogg was sceptical about its results, reporting that the deputation received ‘the blandest and most charming reception from the Board and assurances for the future.’ ‘We are not sure,’ she went on, ‘whether there is any analogy between the hopeful assurances and the ostrich hiding its head from the facts in the illusiveness of promises.’ In anticipation of this attitude, the public service women had already drawn the wider women’s movement into the battle. The Feminist Club made representations to the Premier and sought the assistance of the PSA to make up a joint deputation to the Board. John D’Arcy, Edith Swain, and factory inspector Grace Scobie formed a PSA committee to work with the Feminist Club.\(^6\) The Board responded negatively to the demands of a further delegation in January, stating that the employment of women as clerks was only in ‘the initiatory stage’. As Margaret Hogg exclaimed in the PSJ:

Sixteen years ago women entered the Public Service [as clerks], and the Board say that their employment is still in the Initiatory Stage.\(^7\)

With its more restrained interventions ignored, the Feminist Club stepped up its activities on behalf of public service women. Other interested organisations were invited to join the campaign,\(^8\) and in July 1916 representatives of the PSA, the Feminist Club, the Women Teachers’ Club, the Women’s Progressive Association, the Women’s Liberal League and the Technical College were received by the Board. The women put their case eloquently and logically. Miss Chandler of the Public Schools Teachers’ Association laid the Board’s spurious argument immediately: ‘As a public servant who has nearly forty years’ service’, she commented, ‘I cannot agree that we are in the initiatory stage’. Belle Golding appealed to justice and equity:

The question of equal pay for equal work is the same old question that has been agitating the public mind year in and year out. We cannot dress it up in new garments ... Equal pay for equal merit should be the battle-cry of the
Board. We, as women, should not be compelled to wait on deputations for justice, to wait on this Board, to wait on the Government of the State, or the Commonwealth, or anyone else. The Government of this State has equal pay for work of equal merit on its platform. The Government of the Commonwealth has it on their platform. The Liberal League also has it on its platform. ... we should not have to ask for that which is our right and our justice ....

Our expenses are high; the cost of living is high; it is as high to the woman as to the man. We have to pay the same rates and taxes, and we have to pay the same travelling fares ... We have to attend to our duty just the same hours as the man ... We ask you to value our work on the results, and to lose sight of the fact that we are women.40

However, this last request seemed to be impossible. At the conclusion of the meeting, Margaret Hogg observed: ‘I know Mr Taylor and Mr Hanna are shivering on the brink of great reforms, but I think Mr Wilshire is a long way off. I would like to see Mr Wilshire give in.’41 He apparently did not, however, as the decision of the Board was a concession only to men: female and male clerks were to sit for the same examination from the end of the following year; but the principle of equal pay was not accepted. The Board would only concede that the large discrepancy between men’s and women’s pay should be reduced.42

Disappointed with this outcome, Margaret Hogg attempted to capitalise on current public service discontent to have the Board reconstituted. She initiated PSA moves to obtain direct employee representation on the Board, and argued that one of these should be a woman. She and Belle Golding were members of the committee appointed to consider the question, but they did not carry the day, and the committee reported against both recommendations.43 Undeterred, the two women continued to press the PSA, the Board and the Premier for the complete acceptance of equality of pay and opportunity, pointing out that ‘the principle of equal pay is not justice to women, but a safeguard to the interests of men as well’.44 However, the whole question was shelved by the government early in 1917. With a difficult election approaching, Premier Holman announced to the delegation including Belle Golding in February 1917 that he was commissioning an inquiry into the public service.45 The question of equal pay and opportunity had to wait on the results of this inquiry. In the meantime, Margaret Hogg’s warning to her male colleagues proved timely. As soon as the election was over, the Board announced an austerity program which included the substitution of female for male clerks.46 As she pointed out in the PSJ:

One cannot emphasise too emphatically the call to all right thinking men not to emphasise, but to sink sex discrimination as the only means of attaining that Ideal State, that Democratic State for which the world upheaval is preparing the way.47

The revised regulations of August 1917 confirmed the continued use of female clerks as
cheap labour, making only the minor concession of granting women the same starting salary as men. However, their automatic annual increments remained £5 less than men’s; their increment range was £45 less; and women with Leaving Certificate qualifications did not get the £15 increase in starting salary enjoyed by men.48

In October 1917 Margaret Hogg gave evidence on behalf of the Women’s Section before the Royal Commission.49 This was her last official service for public service women. The PSA was reorganised along divisional rather than departmental lines, and she lost her place on the Council in February 1918.50 In the middle of 1918 she married, and even though she continued in the service and expressed ‘no desire to relinquish my advocacy of any principle or movement for the improvement of the status of women,’ she no longer played an active part in the affairs of the Association or the Women’s Section.51 At the same time, Belle Golding retired at the end of 1917, and the women’s champion on the PSA, John D’Arcy, died.52

THE EFFECT OF THE ARBITRATION COURT
Deteriorating Salaries and Conditions

A new phase began for the public service in 1919. The members of the PSB resigned in March in response to allegations of incompetence by the Mason Allard Royal Commission. In the same month the government announced the proposed application of the Industrial Arbitration Act to the public service.53 Women public servants joined with their male colleagues in agitating for immediate relief from the greatly increased cost of living. A mass meeting resolved in August to ask the government for a £50 increase for the whole of the public service, male and female. Their request was supported by the new PSB, but refused by the government. A further mass meeting in November and an appeal to all members of the Legislative Assembly resulted in the government’s decision to allow public servants to benefit immediately from the living wage declaration of the Board of Trade.54

The Board of Trade had not yet made a declaration of the living wage for women. The PSB decided, therefore, that female employees should receive three-quarters of the male increase, despite the request of the public meeting in November for equal treatment of the sexes, a petition signed by 860 female public servants, and the statement of the Royal Commission that ‘for absolutely equal work there should be no question about equal pay for women’. To make matters worse, even this small increase was not given to the poorly-paid women in the Government Printing Office who did not receive the adult minimum wage after as much as twenty years service. Nor did it apply to junior officers, who earned as little as £60 a year.55

In response to this setback, and in anticipation of arbitration proceedings, public
service women organised once more. By now, however, they were divided over tactics. Florence Wearne proposed the reformation of the women's branch of the PSA, which had lapsed with the reorganisation of the PSA in 1918. Belle Golding, on the other hand, argued for a Women's Association having no connection with the PSA. Yet another group, which prevailed at first, opposed both proposals, considering that it was 'inadvisable to make any mention of sex in connection with our claims before the Arbitration Court'. Subsequently, however, the PSA was asked to admit three women to the log committee to represent women's interest. Florence Wearne also went ahead with her plan to establish a women's branch of the Association, although her attempt to place two of its representatives on the PSA Council proved unsuccessful.56

The female clerical case was heard separately from the male case in the Industrial Court from 30 May to 7 June 1921. By that time there were about four hundred female clerical workers in the service, making up about 15 per cent of the Clerical Division.57 Florence Wearne was the opening witness, her presentation was well-prepared and eloquently argued when she was given a chance to speak, and her evidence was followed by that of a number of other women. Despite the evidence they presented on the range and value of their work, the scales awarded by the Court were a bitter disappointment. An appeal was lodged, but this was dismissed by the Full Court comprising Mr Justice Edmunds and Judges Rolin and Beeby.58

In fixing the wage scale for women clerks, Judge Curlewis refused to take seriously the Association's claim for equal pay, asserting that he had no power under the Act to consider such a claim.59 He was bound, he asserted, to base his decision on the living wage declaration of the Board of Trade. This was £4 5s for males and £2 3s for females. In the male clerical case, he had fixed the maximum salary at £421 after twenty years service. In fixing the maximum for women clerks the judge retained the Board of Trade margin of £2 2s between men's and women's salaries, and derived a maximum for female clerks of £312. At the base of the scale, for age twenty-one, a weekly allowance of 17s was made for the fact that female clerks had greater expenses for education and dress than female industrial workers. The salary was therefore fixed at £156. With a starting salary of £156 per year, compared with £221 for men, women were to receive £12 increments each year, while men received £20.

Female shorthand typists fared even worse. Their salaries were fixed on a scale from £154 at age twenty-one to £224 after ten years service or six years adult service. This meant that they only received £10 for each additional year of service, and ended up with a salary of little more than that of a 21-year-old male clerk. The low ceiling of £224 was based on the assumption that women did not make careers of secretarial work, and was copied from an award previously made in the Water and Sewerage Board case,
where there were no shorthand typists of more than six years experience. In the public service case, however, the Judge had heard evidence from witnesses with up to twenty-five years service.

In a further denial of the career aspirations and realities of shorthand typists, Judge Curlewis refused to recognise the general principle that had obtained before 1912 that shorthand typists gained training just as valuable as junior clerks, and that they should be allowed to proceed into the senior clerical ranks. In the face of evidence from Florence Wearne, Alice Thompson and others with long service and large responsibilities, he treated these ‘girls’, as he persisted in calling then, as special cases who could be dealt with by the Board on an individual basis. Otherwise the principle was confirmed that shorthand typing was no longer the beginning of a career; instead it was treated as a temporary occupation for ‘girls’ who would quickly marry. With a salary ceiling equal to that of a young male clerk, this was a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The Family Wage and Women’s ‘Needs’

The Female Clerical Award marked the beginning of a rapid deterioration of the conditions of women’s work in the public service. The family wage principle on which the living wage declaration of the Board of Trade was based was the crucial element in this process of deterioration. This principle had evolved out of attempts of earlier arbitration court judges to establish guidelines for their decisions. Judges such as Mr Justice Heydon of the New South Wales court and Mr Justice Higgins of the Commonwealth court brought to their positions the amateurism and biases that many participants in the debate on the Trades Disputes Bill of 1892 had feared from a judicial president of the court. With closer identification with ‘the classes’ than with ‘the masses’, they knew little of working class life, even though they were sympathetic with male workers’ aspiration for a decent standard of living.

Charles Heydon was the son of a printer and publisher and had been in practice since 1875. He became president of the Arbitration Court in 1905 and was retired in 1918 at the age of seventy-three. As a Catholic familiar with the 1891 papal encyclical on the conditions of labour, which urged that remuneration should be enough to keep a man, his wife and his children in ‘reasonable and frugal comfort’, he was receptive to similar claims from the male unionists and labour lawyers such as Beeby and Holman who appeared before him. Early in his jurisdiction he formulated the rough principle that there should be a living wage below which wages should not fall. This living wage should allow every worker, however humble, to receive enough ‘to lead a human life, to marry and bring up a family and maintain them and himself with, at any rate, some small degree of comfort.’ Neither Heydon nor Higgins, in his famous judgement of
1907 in the Commonwealth court, calculated this amount with any degree of accuracy, if indeed this was possible. In practice, they accepted one of the ruling rates paid by reputable employers as their baseline.65

When Commonwealth Statistician G.N. Knibbs began publishing cost of living figures regularly in 1912, the courts came under pressure to calculate the living wage more accurately and objectively. Heydon undertook an extensive investigation in 1913-14 to determine the size of the average family and its actual expenditure. Accordingly he based his decisions from that time on the needs of a family of two adults and two children, assessed at 8s a day in 1914.66 The whole question of the accuracy of the calculation of the living wage became a matter of major political concern during the war years, as Heydon deliberately lagged increases in wages behind cost of living rises. By the end of the war, a considerable sense of injustice had built up amongst workers, fuelled by inconsistencies between Commonwealth and state awards. Holman’s attempt to defuse this unrest by establishing a ‘neutral’ authority, the Board of Trade, to calculate the cost of living, almost destroyed the arbitration system. The first living wage based on the calculations of the Board of Trade statistician, D.T. Sawkins, in 1919 was 28 per cent higher than that of 1918, a spectacular rise of 17s per week.

The wage explosion for male workers caused by the ‘scientific’ calculation of a family wage was, in Sawkins’s words, ‘viewed with apparent consternation by employers’.67 It caused no less consternation to the conservative Nationalist government. In a period of intense controversy, all interested parties focussed attention on the implications of such a formal adoption of the family wage principle.

The ‘scientific’ calculation of a family wage posed a major threat to the male wage-earner unless he could maintain his right to control all elements in the total wage. The statisticians broke the wage into components, with set amounts allocated to the expense of a wife and a specified number of children. Previously, the worker had won a wage by the process of bargaining, and once gained, it was his to dispose of as he wished. Now the wage was, in theory, allocated by a tribunal for specific purposes. Accordingly, employers could argue that men without dependents should not be paid that proportion of the wage meant for family maintenance. Women could argue that portion of it should be paid directly to the mother. They could also argue that single men and women should be paid equally, where each had no dependents. Whatever the argument, it implied less money in the pocket of the male wage-earner.

When the size of the living wage based on the Board of Trade’s calculations was revealed to the Holman government, it attempted to take advantage of the theoretical structure of the family wage to reduce the cost of the wage rise to its employer constituency. The government proposed that the living wage should be calculated on
the basis of a man and wife only, and that mothers should be paid directly for the maintenance of children from a tax on employers. As 35 per cent of adult males were bachelors, and the average family had one dependent child rather than two, this proposal would cut the wages bill considerably.68

The Maintenance of Children Bill, which embodied these proposals, was opposed by unionists and employers alike, and was rejected by the Legislative Council. Unionists objected to what amounted to a major cut in male wages. Employers were suspicious that the endowment tax would escalate and involve them in unknown future expenses. The full wage, calculated to cover the needs of a man, his wife and two children, was therefore gained by all male workers, irrespective of their marital status or family needs. This large increase in the living wage engendered a spiral in prices and unemployment which led the Board of Trade to grant less than the full cost of living increase in 1920. Over the next few years the living wage was reduced, but the effective level of average wages remained higher than that of 1907 until at least 1926.69

It was in this atmosphere of uncertainty and confrontation that women public servants were trying to maintain their struggle for equal pay and opportunity. The first declaration of a living wage for women in 1918 based on the ‘needs’ criteria awarded women half the male wage. The decision was justified on the grounds that women had no family responsibilities. This justification of women’s poor pay had built up gradually as the concomitant of the family wage concept for men. Heydon himself was not in favour of women going out to work - it might interfere with women’s desire to marry and it might keep men out of work. He also thought that most women worked from choice rather than necessity.70 Employers’ advocates such as Tom Rolin (who was on the Full Court which dismissed the female clerks’ appeal) argued that most women did not have to keep themselves fully, and that they could therefore be paid less than a living wage. Labour lawyers such as Beeby at least convinced Heydon that single women did need to pay for their own keep, and that their contributions were an essential part of family income.71 None, however, argued as the women public servants did, that single men often had no responsibilities and single women often maintained other family members.

By 1918 it had become an entrenched industrial court attitude that women were worth no more than ‘two-thirds of a man’.72 This evaluation was based, like that of the male living wage until 1919, on current rates of pay, rather than factual judgements about women’s productivity or needs, despite rhetoric to the contrary. As the living wage was the basis of all other wages determined by the court, the weakness of the bargaining strength of the unskilled female worker was imported into the fixation of female public service wages. The poor standard of comfort provided to unskilled women
by the low wages they could command became institutionalised as the 'needs' of all women. In effect, the small gains won so painfully by the militant organisation of women clerical workers were wiped out completely by tying public service wages to the arbitration system.

The Construction of the ‘Temporary’ Female Worker

The adoption of the living wage declarations as the basis of public service salaries had an immediate impact on the gap between the wages of male and female clerical workers. This was confirmed and intensified by the Clerical Award, which dealt a death blow to hopes of equal pay and opportunity for women in the service. The Clerical Award provided a basis for the rapid intensification of a dual labour market in the Clerical Division. The reconstituted Public Service Board used the discrepancy between the salaries of male and female clerks to extricate themselves from their difficulties. Charged with the duty of running an economical public service, they had no control over the major cost factor, salaries. With male salaries skyrocketing, the Board resorted to employing more women at cheaper rates in order to cut costs.

The determination of the Fuller government of 1922 to 1925 to reduce the expenses of the public service encouraged this trend. From 1922 no further entrance exams for female clerks were held. The PSB reported in 1923 that:

Girls are being employed wherever possible on minor office work, such as typing, which is not appropriate for boys qualified by examination for permanent employment. This is found to be both convenient and economical, as, in most cases, the girls do not enter the Clerical Division of the Public Service with the object of making it their life's career, as educated boys do.

In 1923 a new classification of Temporary Office Assistant (Female) was introduced for girls between the ages of 16 and 19. As the Board explained in 1924.

By a careful sorting out of the work and by the employment of female office assistants on the least valuable type of clerical work ... the Board has been able to manage with a greatly reduced number of qualified junior clerks.

With a commencing rate of £65 and a maximum salary of £117 at age 21, this was cheap, disposable labour compared with male clerks who had in 1921 been awarded a starting salary of £92, a minimum of £222 at 21 and an increment range up to £421. Women’s lack of rights and prospects meant that there was a high turnover which kept the wages bill low.

The Board justified their policies by asserting that 'It is not expected ... that as a rule female officers will make their employment in the Public Service a career.' Public service women objected to this characterisation, stating in the PSJ that:

Exception was ... taken to the Public Service Board's report which stated that women of the Service do not desire to do anything but the easy and mechanical work of the Service.
In June 1924 over 30 per cent of the 700 women clerks and shorthand typists in the service were temporary employees. By 1929 the Board was able to boast that:

The whole of the increase in the Clerical Division was in the number of females employed on clerical work as typists, office assistants, etc., with comparatively low rates of pay ... The number of male employees in the Clerical Division decreased during the eight years by 69.\textsuperscript{82}

By 1930 so-called ‘temporary’ employees made up 56 per cent of the 1,300 women in the Clerical Division. By 1944, such ‘temporary’ employment was the norm for women clerks, with 86 per cent of the 3,327 female clerical employees working without rights to security of tenure, upward career mobility or wage justice.\textsuperscript{83}

**The Separation of Male and Female Industrial Interests**

The Clerical Award and the PSB’s policy of separating women into a secondary labour market drove a wedge between the interests of male and female clerical workers. The support of male unionists for equal pay and opportunity had always been equivocal because PSB and government policies towards women were never unambiguous, and the danger had always been present that women would be used to replace men. This uneasiness had developed into outright hostility from some PSA members during the difficult war years. The Clerical Award gave male unionists more freedom to express opposition to women’s equality and to press for the exclusion of women. At the Inter-State Conference held in December 1923, A.J. Trollope, the new President of the PSA, voted against the usual motion endorsing equal pay, arguing that it was not in the interests of the race to have women in jobs while the family breadwinner could not find work.\textsuperscript{84} The Association tolerated the employment of women as cheap labour, however, because temporary office assistants were in a separate designation and thus removed from competition with men for the better Clerical Division jobs. As the Association’s General Secretary reported to its executive in 1924 after discussions with the Board:

> The object of employing these girls is to relieve junior clerks of work of the most elementary character, such as typing. The number employed is limited and there is no intention on the part of the Board to extend the system.

> Seeing that only 45 boys are available this year for appointment as junior clerks, the Board is anxious to so arrange the work as to avoid the necessity of putting educated juniors out to work that can be performed by these female assistants. I was assured that the employment of these girls is not to be regarded as a menace but rather should be looked upon with favour as a means of freeing educated officers from merely routine work ....

> The result of the discussion ... satisfies me that the Association had nothing to fear in this regard.\textsuperscript{85}

Women public servants had little support from the Association, therefore, when the Fuller government revoked public servants’ access to the Arbitration Court and authorised the PSB to make agreements with public service unions on pay and
conditions. The women's cause was further weakened by the fact that the reorganisation of the Association along divisional lines made it more difficult for them to be elected to Council. Attempts to gain representation for the Women's Section were unsuccessful, and the status of the Section remained unclear during the 1920s.

There continued to be some support in the Association for equal pay and opportunity, however. When access to the Arbitration Court was restored in 1925 with Labor's defeat of the conservative Fuller government, the PSA did support the Women's Section's request that a clause be inserted in the new Industrial Arbitration Bill authorising the Court to deal with the question of equal pay.86

By 1929 there was open division in the PSA over the question of equal pay and opportunity for women. It was the subject of an editorial in Red Tape, the successor of the PSJ, in February of that year, and of a paper presented by F.C. Wills at the Conference of the Australian Public Service Federation in Perth in October.87 At the conference the usual motion in favour of equal pay and opportunity was opposed by the President of the New South Wales PSA, W.A. Flynn, whose unflattering remarks about women drew the wrath of feminist writers and women public servants.88 Other members of the PSA Council dissociated themselves from the President's remarks, but he continued his campaign to sever the links between the interests of the men and women of the service by setting up a completely separate Women's Section of the Association.89 Although he was initially unsuccessful in this, by the end of April 1930 a Women's Auxiliary had been established as a means of 'affording the (almost) 1,000 women members an opportunity of managing their own concerns within the Association, and so to obviate intervention by outside organisations in the affairs of women members of the public service'. Explaining his attitude towards women in the service, he repudiated all the work women activists had done from within the union by exhorting them to organise separately if they wanted any improvements in their conditions of employment. 'Women aspire to the wage level which men attained only after long years of intensive organisation', he complained. 'Be it said to them, in all sincerity, "Go thou and do likewise".'90

CONCLUSION

By 1930, therefore, women clerical workers were set apart as a separate category by employer and union alike. After thirty years of struggle, a dual labour market had been established in the Clerical Division which placed women in a powerless position in the workplace and the industrial arena. The small gains made by the first PSB had been wiped out almost completely by changes in political, economic and social conditions which resulted in weak Labor governments willing and able to protect only male
workers, weak Boards who used their large statutory powers to the detriment of women workers, and an industrial arbitration system run by lawyers which used women as sacrificial lambs to maintain their credibility as peacemakers between capital and labour. The net effect of the struggles and alliances between the new middle class, labour and capital from 1880 to 1930 was to reinforce the stereotypes of male and female workers which were beginning to break down at the end of the nineteenth century, to identify male workers as breadwinners and female workers as current or potential dependents working for 'pin-money' only, and to create circumstances which forced men and women into those roles.
Notes


3. For Wise’s dependence on British experience see B.R. Wise, *The Labour Question; or, Social Revolt and its Causes* (Sydney: c.1890); and ‘What Parliament Can Do For Labour’, *Sydney Quarterly Magazine* 8 September 1891, p.221. For Holman see Evatt (n.1 above); Radi, Spearritt and Hinton; Serle; for his socialist ideas see Verity Burgmann, *In Our Time*: *Socialism and the Rise of Labor, 1885-1905* (North Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), pp.55, 58-62.

4. Evatt (n.1 above), pp.81-9, 118-23.

5. *PD* 1900, p.2232, 23 August 1900, quoted by Rickard (n.1 above), p.278.


10. *GG* 18 September 1903, pp.6958-9. As usual at this time, conditions governing typists and shorthand writers specifically were not spelled out in the Regulations. Information on these comes from a letter to the editor, *PSJ* September 1903, p.8.

12. Burgmann (n.3 above), pp.51-2. May Hickman was appointed typist in the Department of Mines in June 1900 at the age of 25. She was promoted to shorthand typist in 1905 and resigned in 1913.

13. October 1906, p.1

14. Rydon and Spann (n.6 above), p.86.


18. *Ibid.*, June 1911, pp.22-3; September 1911, p.7; October 1911, p.3; November 1911, p.4; December 1911, pp.4, 25.


22. PSB *Report* 1914 (V & P 1915-16, vol. V), p.4; women's starting salary was 50 and automatic increments took them to 155.


24. *PSJ* September 1911, pp.3, 7; October 1911, p.3.

25. Annie Golding had long fought for superannuation justice for women. See *Transmitter* 13 April 1895, p.2, which noted that 'perhaps the most attentive hearing to
any speaker [at a public meeting on superannuation in November 1894] was secured by Miss Golding, a public school teacher'. For current activity see *PSJ* June 1912, p.4; April 1913, p.3; for activity of Margaret Hogg, Edith Swain and factory inspector, Annie Duncan, see *PSJ* August 1912, p.23.


27. For election of Edith Swain see *PSJ* August 1912, p.8. Margaret Hogg stood unsuccessfully for election in 1912, but succeeded in April 1913. Photographs of both appear in *PSJ* December 1913, p.13.

28. Ibid., October 1913, p.25.

29. Ibid., December 1913, p.29.

30. Ibid., January 1911, p.1; November 1911, p.4; December 1911, pp.4, 25; April 1912, p.12; July 1914, p.7; August 1914, pp.2, 22-6; September 1914, p.11.

31. Ibid., January 1914, pp.23-4.

32. Ibid., August 1914, pp.22-6.

33. Ibid., September 1914, p.11.

34. Ibid., July 1915, p.16. See also May 1915, pp.2-5; June 1915, pp.3-5; July 1915, pp.2, 6, 9, 16, 28; September 1915, p.12; October 1915, p.13; November 1915, p.7.

35. Ibid., September 1915, p.3; October 1915, p.4; November 1915, pp.6-7; December 1915, pp.4, 7, 18-22; *GG* 20 October 1915, p.6075.


37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., p.10.

39. Ibid., April 1916, p.5; May 1916, pp.3, 6, 14.

40. Ibid., August 1916, pp.4-20, esp. 18.

41. Ibid., p.20.

42. PSB *Report* 1915 (V & P 1916, vol. IV), pp.5-8, presented 21 September 1916. For response of PSA see *PSJ* November 1916, p.7; December 1916, pp.6, 11; for women's comments see p.27.

43. Ibid., November 1916, p.7; December 1916, p.6.

44. Ibid., March 1917, p.32.

45. Ibid., pp.12-19, esp. 16.
46. Ibid., May 1917, p.39, referring to Sun 24 April 1917.

47. Ibid.

48. GG 10 August 1917, p.4520; PSJ September 1917, p.5.


50. PSJ August 1917, p.5.

51. Ibid., May 1918, p.6; July 1918, p.9.

52. Ibid., October 1917, p.8; December 1917, p.41.

53. The Public Service Amendment Act of 22 December 1919 confirmed the changes in the Board’s administration. The Industrial Arbitration Act of 23 December placed public servants under the arbitration system. Hanna and Wilshire resigned in March, but Taylor fought his virtual dismissal and remained until 31 December. See Barbara Page, The Mason Allard Inquiry into the Administration of the New South Wales Public Service 1917-1918, M.Ec. thesis, University of Sydney, 1980; PSJ January 1919, p.5; April 1919, pp.3-4; November 1919, pp.36-7, 50.

54. Ibid., September 1919, pp.17-21; December 1919, p.40.

55. Ibid., January 1920, pp.3, 9, 12, 21, 23, 36; February 1920, pp.36-7; RCPS (n.43 above), pp.lxi, lxiv; for petition see V & P 1919, vol. III, p.1201; for junior officers see PSJ March 1920, pp.11-15; May 1920, p.23. For detailed account of cost of living and public service salaries see PSB Report 1918-19 (V & P 1920, 2nd sess., vol. IV), pp.7-12.

56. PSJ January 1920, pp.9, 12; March 1920, pp.5, 27; May 1920, p.34; September 1920, p.23; October 1920, p.10.

57. Evid. of Wearne, PSJ July 1921, p.43.


59. For judgement see NSW Industrial Reports 1921, pp.189-97, esp. 196-7 for women; for abridged transcript see PSJ July 1921, pp.33, 41-7.

60. Ibid., September 1921, pp.25-34.


63. For detailed discussion of cases concerning women involving Heydon, Holman and Beeby see Ryan (n.6 above).


65. Factual information on the development of the living wage in this and the following paragraph from Sawkins.

66. *NSW Industrial Gazette* September 1913, pp.3-6; October 1913, pp.197-8; March 1914, pp.100-149.

67. N.62 above, p.23.


70. Ryan (n.6 above), pp.162, 173.


74. For a review of these difficulties which does not acknowledge the strategy of deskilling women see PSB *Report* 1923-4 (V & P 1924, vol. I), p.6.


77. PSB *Report* 1922-3 (n.75 above), p.3.

78. *GG* 1 July 1923, p.3764:


80. PSB *Report* 1922-3 (n.75 above), p.3; 1924-5 (n.76 above), p.10.


83. Arnot (n.76 above), p.373.
84. *PSJ* January 1924, p.166.


86. *Ibid.*, November 1925, pp.3-4, 11-15. Ironically, the clause the public service women caused to be inserted in the Bill was worded so badly that it actually *excluded* them. See *Red Tape* February 1929, pp.26-7.


89. February 1930, p.31.

CHAPTER 10
DOCTORS, THE INFANT WELFARE MOVEMENT AND THE DOMINATION OF WOMEN

Look, woman, in the West, there wilt thou see
An amber cradle near the sun's decline:
Within it, featured even in death divine,
Is lying a dead infant, slain by thee.\(^1\)

The stereotypes of women workers as naturally subordinate which were encouraged by the rhetoric and practice of lawyers in the state Arbitration Courts were reinforced by a number of campaigns carried out by the medical profession during this period to extend their labour market opportunities. In programs to supervise the health of school children, pregnant and parturient women, and infants, doctors used the position they had established in the state to create new jobs in the public health system and, at the same time, to give added legitimacy to their claims to superior competency in the new fields of paediatrics, obstetrics and pre-natal care. In the process, they made widespread claims about women's incompetency as mothers which had repercussions for the image of all women.

DOCTORS AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The medical profession, like the legal profession, was in a strong position to extend and consolidate its influence in the first thirty years of the twentieth century. As part of the new middle class professionalising project of the 1880s and 1890s the medical profession had won state-guaranteed monopoly and the right to discipline its own members by 1900, and its defeat of the Friendly Societies by 1914 confirmed its right to determine the terms and conditions under which it provided medical services. In addition, it had, in cooperation with civil service reformers, established a well-organised public health system which lent legitimacy to the profession's claims to superior competency. This Public Health Department became one of the most important avenues of social reform for Labor governments from 1911 to 1916. Unable to pass much of their promised industrial legislation, and unwilling to stack the Legislative Council with Labor appointees, Labor turned increasingly to administrative reforms in education and health.\(^2\) In the case of health, such innovations were made easier by the fact that
government intervention was already accepted and the basic machinery of public health administration was already in place.

The Labor government had a strong brief from the labour movement for government intervention in the delivery of health services. Early in 1911 Fred Flowers, the government’s representative in the Legislative Council and assistant to the ailing Colonial Secretary, Donald Macdonnell, drew up a scheme which included universal free hospital care, maternity homes, district care, infant hospitals and baby homes, the eradication of consumption and the treatment of industrial diseases. Flowers was closely in touch with the needs of the working class. He was the son of an English gardener, and had come to New South Wales in 1882 at the age of eighteen. A painter and plasterer by trade, he had been active in the TLC in the 1880s and 1890s, and a prominent organiser and leader of the Labor Party in the 1890s. He was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1900 by the Lyne government. Flowers had been one of the originators of Labor health policy in 1897 when the party had adopted a policy of health nationalisation. His 1911 recommendations were based on those of the Platform Committee of the Political Labor League of 1908 and a deputation from the annual conference of the Labor Party in February 1911.3

As Brian Dickey points out, those reforms that could be carried out administratively received vigorous and successful treatment; those requiring legislation or major funding were more intractable.4 Flowers and his successors, George Black and J.D. Fitzgerald, were forced to cooperate with existing health care organisations and a powerful medical profession, and to rely on the resources of the public health administration which was already in place. Flowers’ ambitious schemes resulted, therefore, in the further strengthening of the medical profession and the public health bureaucracy, and helped to break down incipient hostility between the two branches of the profession.

The extension of public health services by Labor governments from 1911 to 1916 did not replace the fee-for-service system established by the profession in its battle against the clubs. Instead, hospitals were improved and given better subsidies, and new jobs for the expanding medical profession were provided by the specialist hospitals, convalescent homes, infant welfare services, maternity grants, and school health services set up by the government.5

Accompanying these fairly conservative extensions of state intervention into health care was a reorganisation and upgrading of the Department of Health. Flowers took the opportunity of Thompson’s retirement early in 1913 to combine the administration of public health and charities. Dr Robert Paton, the former head of the Charities Department, was appointed to the new position of Director-General of Health at a salary
of 1,200 a year. The following year the department was given ministerial status, with Flowers the first Minister of Health. At the same time, William Armstrong was moved from his position as City Health Officer to become Senior Medical Officer and Chief of Staff.  

Retrenchment of government expenditure during the war years gave little scope for further extensions of government health services. However, as Dickey has pointed out, the government had legitimated public intervention in universal health care, taking it out of the context of charity and placing it in the context of community rights. At the same time, it had ensured continuing attention to the issue of government health services by the creation of a powerful health department. When more favourable economic conditions after the war allowed the issue to be raised once more, the weakness of successive governments left health policy to be decided mainly by public health administrators working in tandem with the medical profession. The compromise reached by these two branches of the profession was encapsulated in the report of the Commonwealth Royal Commission on Health in 1926. As Claudia Thame has said of this ‘masterly holding action’ in her recent study of the history of state provision of health care:

... the Commission enabled the profession to shift responsibility onto the state for the care of those diseases and those groups of people which were the cause of growing public concern but were merely an inconvenience to private practitioners, whilst keeping firmly within its own ambit the more lucrative personal medical care services.

With the danger of nationalisation over, the medical profession was able to use the government health services as a useful extension of its own labour market, and to dictate, to a large degree, the sort of services the government provided.

MOTHERS, DOCTORS AND THE STATE

The strong position of the medical profession in the state bureaucracy after 1910 provided its members with a valuable forum through which to extend and consolidate their labour market. The state provided both the resources and authority for the promotion of ‘the scientific way’, the public acceptance of which was essential to the professional project. At this time, doctors were still worried about over-crowding in the profession, so they had the motivation, as well as the power, to expand both their influence and the market for their services into new areas such as infant and child care, previously the domain of individual families, particularly mothers. In order to do this successfully, doctors had to persuade the public, and mothers in particular, that their knowledge was superior and that its carefully supervised application would result in more efficient childrearing.
The infant welfare program started by public health officials in 1901 and extended by the Labor government from 1911 to 1915 illustrates this process well. This program was one of several which gave the medical profession the backing of the state in their attempt to extend their influence over families and mothers. Responding to their constituency's demands for better health services, but without adequate funds to carry out their ambitious plans, the government supported an infant welfare 'education' program designed by doctors which strongly questioned the competence and knowledge of mothers. This program had important consequences for all women, serving by its rhetoric and practice to reinforce the definitions of women as dependents offered by Coghlan in the 1891 census and made real by public personnel policies and Arbitration Court decisions.

The infant welfare program was begun in 1903 by Dr W.G. Armstrong, one of the young public health administrators recruited by the new public health authority in the late 1890s. Armstrong had been appointed Medical Officer of Health for the Sydney Metropolitan Combined Sanitary Districts in 1898 and became City Health Officer in 1900. A former teacher at Sydney Grammar School, he had graduated in medicine from Sydney University and from 1894 to 1895 studied in England for the Cambridge Diploma of Public Health. He was particularly interested in the early attempts of British public health officials to control infant mortality and visited the *consultations de nourrissons* conducted by Pierre Budin in Paris and the more advanced *gouttes de lait* movement begun by Dr Leon Dufour in the French provinces. Armstrong began to apply some of these ideas in Sydney in 1903, when he issued a pamphlet of 'advice to mothers' to every home from which a birth had been registered. The following year he added a trained health visitor to his staff 'to visit personally and instruct the mothers of all newly born babies in the city who were not under direct medical care.'

Government economy prevented the extension of the infant welfare scheme for a number of years. In 1909, however, probably in response to pressure from the labour and women's movements, he was allowed to extend his activities to some of the industrial suburbs. His work fitted well with the health policies of the Labor government which gained office a year later. It became one of most successful enterprises, in terms of the size and influence, that emerged from the expanding public health administration over the next twenty years.

Armstrong's infant welfare project was facilitated by widespread anxiety about the decline in Australia's population growth at the turn of the century. This diminution in the rate of growth was the result of a fall in both natural increase and immigration. However, immigration was unpopular with the working class, and the fall in the birth rate and infant mortality were given prominence by powerful opinion leaders such as
Coghlan. Coghlan commented extensively on these matters in *Wealth and Progress*, viewing them as important measures in the country's prosperity,  and he used the greater relative decline of Victoria's population and birth rate in the propaganda war between the two colonies. Interest in the population question was brought to a high pitch amongst some sections of the government and the media in 1903 by the publication of Coghlan's second study of the birth rate, and a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the problem.

In this atmosphere of anxiety about population size, the preservation of child life became a matter of government concern. Commentators began to speak of children as having a calculable economic value, and of child bearing and rearing as a duty rendered to the state for which mothers should possibly be paid. The endowment of motherhood by the state became an important question in Australia over the next thirty years, becoming entangled in the debate over the family wage in 1919 and culminating in the Commonwealth Royal Commission on Child Endowment in 1929. The idea that women were performing an important economic service for the nation in bearing and rearing children, and the concern that this task be carried out efficiently gave rise to a number of measures designed to coerce, instruct, encourage or subsidise women in this work. A range of factors which affected the rearing of healthy children were canvassed - poor housing conditions, too many children, poor nutrition, insanitary garbage, sewerage and water systems, impure milk and food supplies, the industrial work of women, and the ignorance and indifference of mothers were all suggested as contributing to infant mortality and poor child and adult physique, and a variety of remedial measures were instituted. Some continued the philanthropic tradition of support for needy cases; others combined philanthropy with a class interest in ensuring that working-class women did their jobs adequately; some recognised the economic difficulties that prevented women from bearing and rearing healthy children, and sought to improve specific conditions, such as the provision of fresh milk, or general conditions such as wages and housing, or advocated family or maternity allowances to help subsidise the work of bringing up children; others concentrated on the 'education' of mothers and potential mothers by experts such as the medical profession and social workers.

A range of attitudes towards women were embedded in these measures. The labour program emphasised the economic basis of high infant mortality, and at its most idealistic it was concerned 'to work out an entire new system of relations between men and women, that will be free from servitude, aggression, provocation, or parasitism. The policies of Labor governments, therefore, in their early years of parliamentary power, included the provision of maternity and child allowances and medical services for childbirth and sick babies. The New South Wales Labour League included the provision
of maternity allowances in its platform in 1909, and a Bill to bring this into effect was unsuccessfully introduced that year. In 1912 the Federal Labor government successfully introduced such an allowance. Both proposals involved granting the allowance to mothers to spend at their discretion, on the assumption that women would do the best for their children provided they had the means to do so.

At the other end of the political spectrum, philanthropists and some leading paediatricians elsewhere in Australia acknowledged the economic basis of infant mortality and responded with elaborate schemes for the provision of fresh milk and ice-chests to mothers. Although the aims of these schemes were educational as well as charitable, the reports of their activities show a strong awareness of the difficulties under which the mothers laboured, and an admiration for the way they managed under adverse circumstances.

However, the remedy that captured most state support and which influenced attitudes towards women most profoundly was the managerial one, which was developed most fully in New South Wales. There Dr Armstrong, backed by the tradition of a strong and confident public service, was able to turn to the medical profession's benefit the Labor Party's scheme for the provision of state medical services.

During the fallow years between the introduction of his scheme in 1903 and its extension by the Labor government, Armstrong undertook to publicise and win popular support for his methods. At the Australasian Medical Congress in 1905, in his Presidential Address to the Section of Public Health and also in a public address at the Town Hall, he argued strongly that infant welfare was the most important current public health issue, and made a strong appeal for an Australia-wide campaign against infant mortality. In 1908 he was helped in his work by the National Council of Women, which established the Alice Rawson School for Mothers, a government-subsidised project which provided clinics in Darlinghurst, Newtown and Alexandria to which mothers could come for advice. Unlike Armstrong's managerial approach, which pressed its advice on families whether requested or not, their nurses only visited babies in their homes on request.

Fred Flowers, the Labor Minister in charge of health, took up Armstrong's work with enthusiasm. The Labor Party's state health scheme included the provision of free, compulsory medical and nursing treatment for childbirth. Announcing the government's plans for a maternity endowment scheme in September 1912 Flowers stated that:

The State's concern ... lies in seeing that children born into the world have the best chance of thriving, and the State Government ... has its eye on the 25s a head payment, which the Commonwealth yearly makes to the State per capita on the population basis.
‘Since the State will undertake the responsibility for paying for such skilled attendance,’ Flowers argued, ‘the obligation will soon be upon heads of families to avail themselves of it, under penalty.’ This scheme came to nothing, however, and continued to be discussed with the medical profession for some years. Armstrong’s infant welfare work was easier to extend. Influenced by the New Zealand system of baby clinics developed and publicised by the entrepreneurial Dr Truby King, Flowers combined the work of the Alice Rawson School and Armstrong’s home visiting work in a new system of baby clinics in 1914.

These moves prompted the medical profession as a whole to take an interest in the infant welfare movement. Doctors had never disagreed with the idea that mothers should be educated to their tasks, but general practitioners were worried that clinics would capture this role. Specialists in the area of paediatrics, however, perceived that the clinics could be useful in inculcating the ‘medical habit’ as long as they were properly controlled. In any case, the popularity of the clinics in England and New Zealand demonstrated that cooperation rather than resistance would be the better policy.

Flowers needed the support of the medical profession for his wider schemes, so political expediency dictated that the administration of the new system of baby clinics be shared between public health officials, paediatricians and voluntary association leaders. The control of the profession was increased in 1919 with the establishment of the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies (RSWMB). The administration of the clinics was then handed over entirely to the voluntary associations (in which leading paediatricians were active). The influence of public health officials was not restored until 1925, when the administration of the clinics was returned to the Department of Public Health following the accommodation between the profession and public health officials that was marked by the Commonwealth Royal Commission on Health.

From the late teens the infant welfare program gradually became a mass movement controlled by doctors. By 1927 there were 61 clinics in New South Wales. Despite continuing concern about the role and efficacy of the clinics, leading members of the profession consistently supported them. Successive official inquiries in the various states and the Commonwealth recommended their expansion, as long as it was under medical supervision, and urged their support by the profession. The imprimateur of the Royal Commission on Health and its endorsement by the Medical Journal of Australia (MJA) indicated that the profession was willing to grant this domain to public health officials, whom they could trust to run the clinics in the interest of the profession as a whole. At the same time, the establishment of clinics in more affluent areas and the intensive publicity campaign for the movement which began with the
efforts of the RSWMB and was extended by the publicity officers of state Departments of Health, exposed women of all classes to its ideas. Eventually almost every mother participated in the movement, and this participation has continued long after the concern about population size and high infant welfare rates disappeared.

MANAGING MOTHERS

The strategy of the infant welfare program was overwhelmingly managerial. Although public health officials acknowledged the effect of poverty, overcrowding, defective sanitation and unhygienic milk supply on infant mortality, they focussed their campaign on the ‘ignorance and carelessness’ of parents - especially the mother. In his studies in England and France, Armstrong had been particularly impressed with the consultations with mothers which were an integral part of the French system because, as he said, they provided ‘a real school for mothers’. On the other hand, he was critical of the early English attempts to reduce infant mortality by providing fresh milk without such supervision. When he began his infant welfare program in 1903 he applied what he saw as the most important elements of Budin’s methods, the instruction and supervision of mothers, to the topical problem of infant mortality, strongly influenced in this direction by the latest British trends.

Armstrong’s educational campaign assumed that mothers had little or no knowledge of mothercraft and that the medical profession, and their agents, the health visitor, were the repositories of such knowledge. The health visitor called at each home in which a birth had been registered, 'interviewed the mother, talked to her confidentially on the management of the child, and advised her as to the methods she ought to follow'. Mothers were instructed in the importance of breast-feeding, and the use of properly modified boiled or scalded cow’s milk if breast-feeding was impossible, and warnings were given against the use of the long-tube bottle, the dummy and soothing syrups. The general cleanliness and sanitary condition of the home was noted. Mothers were given a pamphlet of instructions on child care, and advised to seek medical treatment if a child was ailing.

The infant welfare movement which developed from these beginnings can be characterised as ‘a plan for the exercise of a control over the home conditions’ in order to ‘help mothers to rear their infants that they might become - first, healthy children, and later, worthy citizens of the State’. Mothers were advised not to rely on their own judgements and the advice of ‘ignorant neighbours’. Efforts were made to ‘make women realise the need for cleanliness in the house’, and ‘instructions were always given to the housewife with regard to the proper care of the garbage tin, and the menace of an ill-kept one; and also for the necessity of protecting all food from flies’.
The managerial direction of the infant welfare movement was undoubtedly influenced by the labour market situation of the medical profession in this period, as well as by the career considerations of the second wave of public health officials who pioneered the movement. The first wave of public health officials, such as D.A. Gresswell in Victoria and John Ashburton Thompson in New South Wales, had established themselves through vigorous campaigns of metropolitan sanitation which contributed to the significant decrease in infant mortality in the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century. The national preoccupation with population size, together with the recent growth of medical knowledge about the causes of infant diarrhoea, gave health officials following in the wake of the early reformers an opportunity to extend their area of influence. The provision of advice and education to mothers was an obvious strategy. It disturbed no politically powerful group, as did an attack on the economic conditions which allowed slums and inadequate incomes; it stirred up no moral outrage, as did the advocacy of family limitation; it required little time, money or organisation, as did the provision of pure milk to artificially fed babies; and it could build on the concern of all sections of the population for a healthier and more efficient population and one important aspect of the feminists' campaign - to raise the status of the 'woman's sphere'.

In order to persuade the public, and women, of the superiority of their medical knowledge, doctors drew on the rhetoric and strategies of efficiency. The efficiency movement was led by bureaucrats, managers and professionals in Britain, the United States and Australia in the early twentieth century. Its basic tenet was that social problems could be systematically eradicated by the organised application of science and expertise, especially through the state bureaucracy. As such it was a manifestation of the increasing legitimacy of science in this period, a legitimacy which facilitated the rise to dominance of scientific medicine. In the United States, government scientists were the standard-bearers of the movement which sought 'a political system guided by the ideal of efficiency and dominated by the technicians who could best determine how to achieve it'. In Britain, public health officials in particular supported the movement led by Beatrice and Sidney Webb which aimed to create 'an efficient bureaucracy, directed from above by an “intelligence department” of “experts” - social investigators, economists, scientists and statisticians'. The aims and methods of the movement were close to that of New South Wales state socialists such as Fitzgerald, Holman and Beeby.

The efficiency movement presented a confusing mixture of altruism, benevolence and self-seeking on the part of its adherents. Drawing on scientifically validated knowledge, couched in the rhetoric of the national good, and in terms of education rather than supervision, the movement was in part a genuine attempt to apply what was
seen as new and reliable knowledge for the public welfare. As such, it had a strong appeal for a wide range of socially concerned persons. But its practice quickly slid into coercion, regimentation and self-interest. This was because it was, at base, a movement by a rising social group to enlarge and make more secure their labour market opportunities. Sincere as their impulses to social reform may have been, their choice of means was often dictated by the need to encourage the adoption of measures which depended on their particular marketable skills. In the process, they often denigrated the skills of the persons they purported to help in order to make their own services seem essential. In addition, they could not afford to genuinely educate their clients, as their continued prosperity depended on the establishment of a power relationship in which they were the dominant and indispensable party and women the dependent clients.

The efficiency movement's most famous proponent, and possibly its most influential, was the inventor of scientific management, Frederick Winslow Taylor. Taylorism provides the starkest example of the self-interested motive at the heart of the efficiency movement. Though couched in the usual rhetoric of scientific rationality, the general good and the education of the worker, Taylorism was a systematic attempt to deprive the craft worker of knowledge of his craft and control over his work process in order to make a place for a new breed of professional manager. Taylorism and the infant welfare movement had in common an appeal to scientific rationality and a strong managerial component. Like scientific management, the infant welfare movement justified the intervention of technical experts into the field of motherhood by an appeal to science and efficiency. Like Taylor, the infant welfare movement taught that there was 'one best method' which could be discovered by the technical expert rather than the practitioner, the mother, and that it was the proper role of the expert to help mothers do their job better according to scientific principles. As one Australian public health official pointed out, 'the whole question of infant life is a highly technical one, involving very skilled supervision and closely disciplined execution'. In order to overcome the problem of the 'vast ignorance' and 'prejudice' of mothers, who brought only 'fondness and an uninstructed intelligence' to their task, infant welfare officials advocated the issuing of simple instructions to mothers which they should follow unquestioningly, in a manner reminiscent of the instruction cards of Taylorism. Maternity was, according to this ideology, no longer a matter of instinct supplemented by common sense, but an unskilled trade which should and must subordinate itself to the dictates and authority of an army of medical and para-medical experts.

THE INFANT WELFARE MOVEMENT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INCOMPETENT WOMAN

It is unlikely that the infant welfare movement actually deskilled women as
mothers, despite their mass patronage of the clinic system. The mother’s craft could never be destroyed to the degree that Taylorism could strip a worker of his skills, because mothers had ultimately to carry out their day-to-day work unsupervised by the medical profession except by the weight of their moral authority. It is very likely that for many women the attraction of the clinics was that they provided, among other things, a weekly outing and a chance to meet other mothers. The fact that the clinics were actually run by nurses also meant that mothers were better able to manipulate the clinic system to meet their own needs rather than those considered important by male doctors.\(^5^9\) Evidence that mothers continued to use their own judgement about the best way to keep their children healthy is found in their continued limitation of their families, despite societal and medical disapproval. This factor probably contributed as much as any other to more efficient mothering and the decrease in infant mortality.

It is probable, however, that deskilling took another form, affecting women’s opportunities to develop skills in the workplace. In promoting the superior efficiency of the ‘scientific way’, the infant welfare movement had to denigrate the knowledge and efficiency of mothers. The image of women conveyed by this enormously successful movement was of ignorance, inefficiency and lack of responsibility. Such a characterisation was a necessary initial strategy when the need for medical supervision of mothers had to be established. It was kept alive, however, by the struggles between paediatricians, voluntary associations and public health officials for control of the burgeoning movement, and the necessity of asserting the primacy of the medical remedy over alternative solutions such as the economic one championed by the labour movement. The campaign of the medical profession against the Commonwealth maternity allowance, for instance, kept the rhetoric of the irresponsible woman alive well into the 1920s.\(^6^0\) In 1927, mothers were still being spoken of as ‘indifferent and apathetic to their responsibilities’, and a strong campaign of popular education was being advocated to alter the viewpoints of those ‘refractory’ mothers who did not avail themselves of the services of the baby clinics. By this time, moreover, any hint of the link between poverty, large families and infant mortality was gone, and it was assumed that all mothers needed advice, because ‘the maternal instinct alone is not sufficient equipment for the proper feeding and rearing of babies’ and ‘mothers in every grade of life ... may need mothercraft instructions and guidance’.\(^6^1\)

This condescending aspect of the infant welfare movement - the constant denigration of women’s skills - contributed to a stereotype of women as incompetent and capable of working only under supervision. This demeaning stereotype undoubtedly affected women’s employment opportunities outside the family adversely. It insisted that motherhood was a full-time and demanding occupation, exclusive, therefore, of any other
occupation and commitment; and its insistence that women were basically slightly silly, unskilled creatures, reinforced the perception of female wage-earners as ‘secondary’ and marginal.52

In their anxiety that women become ‘efficient’ mothers, publicists of the infant welfare movement took a coercive stance towards women’s education and workforce participation. Like Taylorism, the infant welfare movement advocated specialisation of function and training, and attempted to coerce women into what was considered their proper role. The considerable discussion in the Australasian Medical Gazette surrounding the Piddington Royal Commission into the Hours, etc., of Females and Juveniles in 1911-1263 revealed this at its starkest. An editorial emphasised that it was the duty of the medical profession to ensure that ‘the mother shall be fully equipped for her responsible position’. It argued that, ‘Biologically speaking, a woman’s whole life is centred round that one function - childbearing ...’.64 For this reason, they argued:

... the present conditions of the female labour market are in many ways injurious to the growth and healthy development of the race [because] women are employed in a large number of factories at work ... which is absolutely useless in fitting them for a future life of wifehood and motherhood.

They went on to argue that girls would be better in domestic service where ‘a girl is trained and better fitted in every way for childbearing and rearing’ and where they could indirectly boost the birth rate by providing domestic help to women of the wealthier classes. They recommended therefore that:

... the employment of female labour in any trades or factories except those which can only be carried out by women should be prohibited by law, and every girl should be compelled to serve a training in domestic economy, just as young men are compelled to train for military service.65

The coercive aspect of the infant welfare movement was further demonstrated by a resolution moved at the Australasian Medical Congress in 1914 by Dr Truby King, the New Zealand doctor whose name is synonymous with the infant welfare movement. Truby King urged the state to provide an education for girls which ensured ‘complete fitness for maternity and the practical care of the home’, and asserted that:

even where marriage does not take place, the education which gives the girl the best all-round equipment in body, mind, morals, and inclination for home life and potential motherhood, also gives her the soundest and surest foundations for future health and happiness, and for a sustained power of earning an independent living ....66

Women were, therefore, to devote their whole lives to ‘that one function - childbearing’ in the interests of ‘the breeding of a stronger and sturdier race’.67 If they did this, they would, despite King’s assurances, find themselves untrained for participation in anything but the secondary labour market. In her survey of the 1920s, Heather Radi remarks of women’s participation in public affairs that ‘Against an almost solid wall of disapproval ... they seemed to give up’.68 The coercive and condescending aspects of the infant
welfare program which grew out of the managerial strategy of the efficiency movement was one of the forces which helped to build this 'solid wall of disapproval'. By stressing women's duties as mothers, the program strengthened the ideology of women's place in the home; by stressing their need for supervision, it built up an image of women as lacking in responsibility and resourcefulness. To the degree that these ideas were accepted by women, or imposed on them through restrictive practices and legislation, the movement discouraged labour force participation and ambition, and encouraged trained incapacity for primary labour market work. To the degree that its ideas were accepted by others, the program strengthened prejudices against women's participation in the workforce and in positions of responsibility, and encouraged policies of exclusion from such work.
Notes


4. Dickey, p.64.

5. For details of schemes see Dickey (n.3 above), pp.66-70.


15. E.g. 1898-9, pp.589, 614.


18. Dr J.B. Barrett, IMJA 20 February 1898, pp.94-6; 20 January 1901, p.26 (Presidential Address to Medical Society of Victoria); Dr A. Jeffreys Wood, ibid., 20 March 1908, pp.128-34.


20. I refer deliberately to ‘women’ and ‘mothers’, as references to ‘parents’ disappear rapidly in the first ten years of the twentieth century; there is then an almost exclusive focus on the mother as parent.


24. Maternity Allowances Act; see CPP 1912, pp.6, 3286-616 passim for debate.


28. SMH 16 September 1912, quoted in AMJ 12 September 1912, pp.702-3.

29. MJA 24 April 1915, p.384.


33. Brian Dickey (n.3 above), pp.60-73.

34. The Board of the baby clinics comprised Dr C.B.P. Clubbe (Chairman), Dr R.T. Paton, Director-General of Public Health, N. Mayman, President of the Benevolent Society, Miss Alice Friend and Mrs Jessie Dickie. A new Board was constituted in 1915 with George Black, the new Minister of Public Health as President, Flowers as Chairman, and the Under Secretary, G.H.S. King, Drs Armstrong and Ludowici, Mrs Dickie, Miss Friend, and the Minister’s wife, Rosalind Black, as members. See Armstrong, ‘Infant Welfare Movement’ (n.6 above), p.645. Drs Clubbe and Ludowici were paediatricians.

35. Armstrong, ibid., p.646. The Honourable S.R. Innes Noad, MLC, was President. Drs Clubbe, W.F. Litchfield and Margaret Harper joined the former Baby Clinics Board members to form a management committee. See MJA 2 May 1964, pp.695-6 for Harper, Clubbe and Litchfield.

36. DGPH, Report 1925, p.2. Dr E. Stanley Morris was appointed Director of Maternal and Baby Welfare.


38. DGPH, Report 1927, p.46.


42. 13 February 1926, pp.191-2; 27 August 1927, pp.295-6.


44. MOH, *Report* 1903, p.15.


47. *MJA* 25 November 1916, p.45.


50. DGPH, *Report* 1915-16, p.44.


52. *IMJA* 20 May 1908, pp.249-52.


57. See Frederick Winslow Taylor, *Scientific Management* (NY and London:


61. DGPH, Report 1927, pp.6, 46.


64. 15 March 1913, p.235.

65. 6 January 1912, pp.13-14.

66. AMG 28 February 1914, p.189.

67. AMG 2 March 1912, p.219.

CHAPTER 11
THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS, THE STATE AND THE NATURALISATION OF DEPENDENCE

By 1930 an integrated set of ideas and practices had developed in New South Wales which made dependence the natural status for women. This dependent status was by no means settled before the turn of the century. Throughout the nineteenth century, labour market practices with regard to women in New South Wales were diverse. In at least the country and suburban offices of the post and telegraph services, women's right to paid work, to equal pay, to access to well-remunerated and responsible positions, regardless of marital and maternal status, was not questioned until the 1890s. During the 1890s, although the right of married women to these sources of economic independence came increasingly under attack, attempts to extend the independence of single women had widespread support, and were part of the state's policy towards its own clerical workers.

The early twentieth century saw, however, a swift closing off of these slender opportunities for the economic independence of women on the same terms as men, regardless of women's marital status or responsibility for dependents. By 1930 the prescription for women was uniformly based on their definition as dependents and potential dependents. This definition made them, at best, marginal and temporary workers, and at worst, illegitimate usurpers of jobs rightfully belonging to others. Women had the right to paid work only after men's need for such work was satisfied. They should not compete with men for work, especially if it was well-paid and had prospects for career advancement. As temporary workers, women did not require career structures. As potential dependents, they had no right to high wages or equal pay. Women had higher and exclusive duties as wives and mothers, so they should not work if they were married, and definitely should not do so if they had children. But even in what was termed their separate sphere women were not independent. Instead they were subject to the authority of the expert in the very work it was supposedly 'natural' for them to fill.

The prescription for women's dependence was not only ideological, but coercive as well. It was embodied in the family-wage decisions of the state Industrial Court and in the regulations and practices of the state public personnel system, and was disseminated
through state resources such as the infant welfare program and the reports of the census. In short, the ideological and coercive resources of the state were deployed to construct and uphold this particular view of women's place in the family and the labour market.

Many of the ideas that went into the prescription for women's dependence, and the strength and consistency of its application, owed much to the new middle class, working through their members in the state bureaucracy and the industrial relations system. This thesis has examined some major examples of this process. T.A. Coghlan, as Government Statistician and member of the Public Service Board, consistently worked to remove married women from the workforce by redefining many such women as non-workers in his census reports, and by excluding them from the public service workforce by legislation and administrative practice. He also did much to popularise an emphasis on the exclusive duties of women as mothers in his publications on the birthrate. In addition, he instituted a discretionary state personnel system for women whereby the employment of single women by the state was regulated separately from that of men, opening the way for massive discrimination against women which was contrary to the intentions of the legislators who passed the Public Service Act in 1895. Coghlan's successors at the Public Service Board, and lawyers, working through the state industrial relations system, institutionalised low pay, poor career prospects and segregation as conditions of all female employment, irrespective of actual needs, educational qualifications and skills. Doctors, working through the state infant welfare program, gave wide legitimacy to the idea that women were irresponsible, naturally dependent, and specialised in function.

Not only did the new middle class play an active part in the construction of ideas and practices which contributed to women's dependence in the early twentieth century, but, possibly more importantly, they laid the basis for the use of state resources for their implementation and dissemination. Without the strong and relatively independent administrative base established with Public Service Board leadership in the mid-1890s, and the relationship built up between the public service and the labour movement on the one hand and the feminist movement on the other, it is unlikely that powerful ideological and coercive institutions such as the state Industrial Court and the infant welfare program would have been so firmly established.

The motivation for new middle class intervention into women's family and working lives and their determination to gain autonomy and security in their own working lives were intimately related. Both stemmed from their labour market and family experiences in a particular period of history, and drew on ideas current in their particular cultural milieu. Persistent threats to public servants' security and standard of living during the 1880s and early 1890s generated protective labour market strategies
which culminated in T.A. Coghlan’s Public Service Bill of 1895, with its provisions for appointment and promotion by measurable qualifications, a form of public service self-government, the exclusion of married women, and the regulation of the employment of single women. The contradictory character of the Bill’s advocacy of a universalistic merit principle on the one hand, and the exclusion of some workers on ascriptive grounds on the other, demonstrated an accommodation of the labour market ideas of craft unionism, with which many of the reforming public servants had grown up, the requirements of dismantling political patronage, and the economic realities of new middle class families, where sisters and daughters had to, and wished to, support themselves.

Members of the medical and legal professions were also threatened by over-crowding and diminished autonomy in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Lawyers were strongly motivated, therefore, to promote state institutions for the regulation of industrial relations in which lawyers played an active part, and to support labour market policies towards women which placated major political groups and helped preserve the state industrial system. Doctors were anxious to extend their labour market opportunities through state programs, and educational campaigns directed at women’s mothering role successfully tapped increasing anxieties about women in the workforce, the declining birthrate and the high rate of infant mortality.

New middle class men had not only the motivation to manipulate the labour market in their favour, but also the power to do so from the mid-1890s. The size of the public service, the experience of its personnel in organisational management, the newly-found unity between rank-and-file and leaders, and the well-developed theoretical stances of those leaders, all contributed to new middle class strength within the state bureaucracy in the early 1890s. The vacuum of power caused by the breakdown of the faction system of politics, and the slow development of a viable party system between 1882 and 1904, made the new middle class a powerful voting bloc, and gave public service leaders considerable personal influence, a combination which allowed the latter to insist on a high degree of autonomy for the state bureaucracy. This autonomy, combined with the political importance of the new middle class at that time, its close links with the labour movement, and its influence through the press, helped consolidate the position of the public service as an important medium of social reform. The strong organisational base and political alliances established in this period enabled parts of the new middle class to extend their intervention into economic and family life even after new middle class class power in general had declined.

The new middle class labour market project of the 1890s and early twentieth century were primarily projects by men for men. This reflected both the anxieties about
their labour market situation experienced by male workers in the period and the relative powerlessness of women workers at that time. Women were not sufficiently integrated into the influential clerical and professional areas of the workforce to be considered reliable allies of male workers in the face of deteriorating conditions. On the other hand, a number of factors prevented women’s organisation as a powerful and militant separate group, and left them unprepared to counter the surge of discriminatory practices which overwhelmed them in the early years of the twentieth century. In the first place, New South Wales female clerical workers were disarmed by the long tradition of relatively equal treatment in the country and suburban post offices, a tradition that was apparently being extended into other areas of work by the reforming public service leaders of the 1890s. Secondly, the close working relationship between feminist leaders and public service leaders, and the absorption of some feminist activists into the public service on apparently favourable terms, built up a relationship of trust between men and women of the new middle class. Finally, the scattered nature of women’s clerical employment throughout the countryside and the suburbs, and the relatively small numbers involved, meant that there was little organisational basis for militancy amongst female clerical workers, even if there was the motivation.

The situation of female clerical workers in the New South Wales public service contrasts with that of women in the Victorian public service. In Victoria, the gross discrimination suffered by female post and telegraph workers, and their employment in large numbers in the central post and telegraph office, provided the incentive and the opportunity for militant organisation in the 1890s which won them important concessions and the legislated right to equal pay in the Commonwealth Public Service Act of 1902.\(^1\) The rights won by the Victorian women were subsequently lost as the set of discriminatory ideas and practices described in this thesis became entrenched throughout Australian society.\(^2\) However, the contrast between Victoria and New South Wales does help explain why the labour market campaigns of the 1890s were left largely in the hands of men, giving them the power, as circumstances dictated, to pursue the interests of male workers at the expense of women.

The power of new middle class men was, of course, modified by other social groups even at its height, and, after 1904, it was severely circumscribed by the conflict between capital and labour. Throughout the period from the 1890s to the 1930s, the new middle class depended, to a large degree, on an alliance with the labour movement, and the form that its projects took was always constrained, to some extent, by labour’s demands and priorities. The fact that the public service reformers of the 1890s made any attempt at all to integrate women into the clerical workforce as a whole probably had much to do with pressure from the feminist movement, whose leaders were useful allies in some of
their social reform projects. More seriously for new middle class power, the polarisation of political conflict around capital and labour after 1904 broke up that class's fragile unity, and made contradictory demands for economical government, on the one hand, and government-led reforms on the other, which further fragmented the new middle class and forced its members to compromise on such questions as equality for single women. However, even when the power of the new middle class as a whole had declined, the institutionalisation of government intervention into a wide area of civil society remained, enabling some professional groups to extend their influence despite these constraints.

The ideas and practices of new middle class men from the 1890s to the 1930s concerning women as workers, and their power to transform them into accepted conventions of thought and behaviour, were the product of a particular time and place, and cannot be attributed to some essential quality of either men or the state. This study has found a wide variety of attitudes towards women workers amongst public service men in different periods and circumstances. It has also demonstrated extensive variations in the extent and type of power enjoyed by public servants, and varying degrees of willingness on the part of the state to intervene overtly in the question of women's labour market participation.

There is considerable contrast, for instance, between the attitude towards the employment of women in the country regions prior to the 1890s and that displayed after that time. In the earlier period, wherever local autonomy was high, the system of family patronage gave men and women virtually identical interests in the labour market. Economic security depended on the family, and it was in the interests of men to pass jobs on to other family members rather than to other men outside the family. In the later period, when control of public personnel policy was centralised, men's labour market interests lay in collective solidarity with other male workers.

There is a further contrast between the motivation of male public servants in different periods to exclude and regulate women workers. In the period between 1856 and the mid-1880s, the possibilities for collective action by public servants were present once large segments of the public service were centralised. However, there was little motivation for organisation and militancy while the labour market position of most public servants was secure. Even in the early 1870s, when public servants began to feel the effect of the government's current economic problems, these insecurities had not gone on long enough to stimulate the formation of public service unions or the formulation of labour market strategies directed against women, and any possibility of greater militancy was forestalled by the sudden improvement in government prosperity in the mid-1870s. It was only when the labour market position of the new middle class
was seriously and consistently threatened in the mid-1880s and early 1890s that the state began to intervene overtly to regulate women’s labour market participation.

Even when members of the new middle class were strongly motivated to promote state intervention into women’s working lives, the type and scope of intervention varied according to the relative strength of the new middle class or its various sections. For a short period between 1896 and 1900, it seemed possible for the Public Service Board to introduce a labour market policy towards single women that would prevent the development of a separate and cheaper clerical workforce amongst women, thus avoiding the dangers of undercutting of male wages and fragmentation of class unity. This proved impossible, however, after 1900, as the demands of capitalists, on the one hand, for lower taxes and wages, and organised male labour, on the other hand, for the maintenance of their standard of living, forced the Public Service Board and the Industrial Court to sacrifice the rights of all women to independence.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has described an active and changing new middle class during the period from 1830 to 1930, which finally played, in the last twenty-five years of the period, a crucial part in the naturalisation of women’s dependence through the resources of the state. The role of the new middle class in this process is not adequately accounted for in the theories of the state reviewed at the beginning of the thesis. The state is not, on the evidence of this study, monolithic and unchanging. Its policies are not a faithful reflection of ruling class or patriarchal interests, and its personnel do not necessarily mirror the power structure of civil society. Nor is it, however, divorced from the society in which it operates. Instead, it is a unique institution with its own sources of power, and with its own personnel who have their own class concerns which, in varying degrees and circumstances, they are able to incorporate into the construction of the state’s institutions and policies.
Notes


### APPENDIX

Women Reported as Engaged in Nondomestic Work in Victoria and New South Wales 1861-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>124,833</td>
<td>86,200</td>
<td>38,702</td>
<td>53,902</td>
<td>7,118</td>
<td>6,986</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>177,200</td>
<td>124,862</td>
<td>49,455</td>
<td>64,929</td>
<td>3,618</td>
<td>2,027</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>245,520</td>
<td>192,816</td>
<td>104,789</td>
<td>119,527</td>
<td>42,332</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>346,586</td>
<td>302,793</td>
<td>100,984</td>
<td>119,778</td>
<td>10,842</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>394,770</td>
<td>404,245</td>
<td>142,553</td>
<td>126,840</td>
<td>24,950</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes to Appendix A

a Figures for workforce for all ages because pre-1891 censuses did not give consistent breakdowns of occupational statistics by age. 'Farming' includes grazing, agriculture and dairying.

b My calculations based on published figures made as consistent as possible with post-1966 census figures and post-1911 figures given by Leonard Broom and F. Lancaster Jones at pp.121-32 of *Opportunity and Attainment in Australia* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1976) by removal of retired persons, pensioners and persons living on capital and inclusion of the unemployed and all but contemplative religious orders. Retired persons, etc., can be identified in New South Wales from 1891 by the category 'Grade Not Applicable'. Victoria did not use this category, so its numbers are probably inflated by comparison. The large 'Not Stated' category is usually added to the workforce as references in the census texts indicate this usually comprised adults and often contained numbers of unemployed; New South Wales in 1861 was an important exception. New South Wales 2 for 1871 and 1881 are based on Coghlan's revised figures for 1891.

c My calculations based on Hayter's revised figures of 1881.

d Published figures based on Coghlan's 1891 system. New South Wales figures for 1871 and 1881 were revised in 1891. Coghlan regularly omitted the 'Not Stated' category from the workforce and included retired persons, etc. His 1861 figures are the same as mine because we treat the 'Not Stated' category similarly that year; see note (b). The Victorians in 1891 and 1901 gave a 'Not Stated' figure but indicated that it comprised mainly breadwinners, so it has been included in my workforce figure.

e There was an increase of only 6,000 in the total female workforce, although 7,000 were added to the female farming figures, because 1,000 women were removed from the commercial category. For differences between my figures and Coghlan's see notes (b) and (d). The discrepancy between the increase in the female workforce and the total male and female workforce in New South Wales 1 and 3 is caused by minor differences between different sources of published figures.

f Coghlan also moved 2,811 males from other workforce categories to the farming workforce.
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