

FROM FACTIONS TO PARTIES IN NEW SOUTH WALES:
THE TRANSITION BEGINS, 1885 - 1892.

G. C. MOREY

Volume I

Submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the
Australian National University,
January 1974.

This thesis is my own work.

G. C. Morey,

G. C. MOREY

Abstract

The emergence in 1886-87 of the political conflict between freetrade and protection marked the beginning of a period of far-reaching change in the politics of New South Wales. The basic change that was initiated was the transition from unprincipled personal factions to modern principled political parties. Although this transition had not been completed by the end of 1891, the five years after 1886 witnessed steady progress in the gradual evolution of the characteristics of modern political parties. Sophisticated party structures were constructed; modern methods of electoral management were formulated and put into operation; and the basic elements of the 'caucus system' of party discipline were introduced into the political system. Underlying all these developments was a new concern for political philosophy and principle as the chief determinant of political action and behaviour, replacing the 'old order' standards of personal prejudice and unprincipled opportunism.

Political change, however, was neither smooth nor swift, and the residual strength and influence of 'old order' values and politicians acted to slow down the rate of change and to undermine its consolidation. Many of the changes and developments effected prior to 1892 proved insubstantial and short-lived. The most basic reason for this was the presence of deep-seated principled disunity and doctrinal dissension within each fiscal 'party'. Not until these destructive internal 'party' conflicts had been eradicated could political change proceed smoothly and be permanently consolidated. The creation of that principled cohesion basic to a true political party also depended upon the eradication of internal tension and disunity. At the end of 1891, this was still to be achieved.

CONTENTS

Volume I

Acknowledgements	vi
Abbreviations	vii
Introduction	ix
1. THE 'FLAG OF FREE TRADE' AND THE 'CREATURE CALLED PROTECTION': Parkes, Reform and the Fiscal Issue, 1878-1887.	1
2. FACTIONS AND FRICTIONS, PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMMES, 1887-1891. I. Fiscal Conflict, Liberalism and the Parliamentary Freetraders.	43
3. FACTIONS AND FRICTIONS, PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMMES, 1887-1891. II. The Parliamentary Freetraders (continued).	78
4. FACTIONS AND FRICTIONS, PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMMES, 1887-1891. III. The Parliamentary Protectionists and Some Conclusions.	108
5. MERCHANTS AND MANUFACTURERS: Extra-Parliamentary Fiscal Organisations. I. Development, 1885-1889.	142
6. CONSTANCY AND CONSCIENCE, DISCIPLINE AND DISOBEDIENCE: Parliamentary and Ministerial Independence and Discipline, 1887-1891.	179
7. ELECTIONS AND ENDORSEMENTS: Parliamentary Electoral Organisation and Discipline. I. 1889.	208
8. MERCHANTS AND MANUFACTURERS: Extra-Parliamentary Fiscal Organisations. II. Zenith and Nadir, 1889-1891.	238

9.	ELECTIONS AND ENDORSEMENTS: Parliamentary Electoral Organisation and Discipline. II. 1891.	275
----	---	-----

	CONCLUSION	306
--	------------	-----

Volume II

	Abbreviations	iii
	APPENDICES	313
	NOTES	362
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	540

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Dr J.J.Eddy, Mrs B.R.Penny, Mr J.A.Ryan, the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, and all members of the staff of the Australian Dictionary of Biography project for access to material in their possession.

A number of people listened to me patiently and sympathetically and others helped by reading carefully and critically my early drafts. I am especially grateful to Mrs M. Campbell, Professor L.F.Crisp, Dr B. de Garis, Mr J.Gibbney, Dr J.A. Merritt, Dr J.Molony, and Dr J.Ritchie.

I owe two particular debts. My supervisor, Mr N.B.Nairn, gave me access to material that I would not otherwise have been able to use, and was at all times most willing to share with me his extensive knowledge of New South Wales politics. I also wish to thank my wife, Pamela. She gave me regular encouragement and sound advice, corrected and polished an untidy draft, undertook its typing and proof-read the finished copies. In the latter task, she was assisted by Mr R.Gengos, to whom I also proffer my thanks.

Abbreviations used in Text

CM	Chamber of Manufactures of New South Wales.
DA	Democratic Alliance.
FTA	New South Wales Free Trade Association.
FTFC	Freetrade and Federation Committee, June 1891.
FTLA	Freetrade and Liberal Association of New South Wales.
FLLREC	Freetrade and Land Reform Electoral Committee, 1893-94.
FLLRL	Freetrade, Land and Reform League, 1894.
<u>Herald</u>	<u>The Sydney Morning Herald.</u>
LECI	League for the Encouragement of Colonial Industries.
LEL	Labor Electoral League of New South Wales.
LIA	Land and Industrial Alliance.
LODL	Land Owners' Defence League of New South Wales.
LPA	Liberal and Political Association of New South Wales.
M(s)LA	Member(s) of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales.
M(s)LC	Member(s) of the Legislative Council of New South Wales.
NA	National Association of New South Wales.
NPA1	National Protection Association, September-November 1886.
NPA2	National Protection Association, October-November 1887.
NPA3	National Protection Association, January-March 1889.
NPA4	National Protection Association of New South Wales, October, 1889.
NPA5	National Protection Association of New South Wales, June-November 1890.
NC	National Club.
NPPEC	National Protection Party Elections Committee, June 1891.
PPRL	Protection and Political Reform League.
PRA	Political Reform Association.
PRL	New South Wales Political Reform League.

PRU	Political Reform Union.
PU	Protection Union of New South Wales.
SCC	Sydney Chamber of Commerce.
STL	Single Tax League of New South Wales.
<u>Telegraph</u>	<u>Daily Telegraph</u> , Sydney.
TLC	Trades and Labour Council of New South Wales.
WMDA	Working Men's Defence Association.
<u>Star</u>	<u>The Australian Star</u> , Sydney.

These abbreviations are also used in the Appendices and Notes in volume II. For other abbreviations used in the Appendices, Notes and Bibliography, see the beginning of volume II.

INTRODUCTION*

The politics of New South Wales between 1887 and 1891 have been the subject of considerable debate and difference of opinion among historians and political scientists. The major participants in this debate, however, seem to agree that after 1886 the political system of New South Wales underwent basic and far-reaching change. A.W.Martin represents the politics of the late 1880s as "a kind of transitional phase" between an outmoded faction system and a new party system of which the Labor party of 1891 was the most highly developed expression.¹ For this reason, he and his co-author, P.Loveday, regard the political forms of the late 1880s as "an amalgam of the old and the new".² Similarly, N.B.Nairn concedes that during the late 1880s new political forms "were being spawned in the vast sweep of the changing colonial political tide",³ in which the old political system "was subjected to great stress".⁴

Despite this fundamental agreement about the presence of stress and change in the political system, the disputants in the debate arrive at different conclusions about the stage reached in the transition from factions to parties prior to 1891. Martin argues for the emergence prior to 1891 of "rudimentary, but coherent and organized, political parties".⁵ These, he argues, were the "prototype of the modern political party, based on a set of defined principles, and with a permanent organizational structure";⁶ "a power-struggle between

* Notes are located at the end of the Introduction.

two groups which can only be called parties of principle",⁷ resulted, thereby creating "a well-knit two party system".⁸ These changes, Loveday and Martin conclude, constituted "a revolution in terms of political conflict in the colony".⁹

N.B.Nairn, on the other hand, argues that the changes wrought prior to 1891 created "no real parties", only "slightly improved models of the factions, replete with old order leaders and methods".¹⁰ As a result, he concludes that the changes in the political system prior to 1891 were embryonic,¹¹ and that "The major changes in the parliamentary system were begun in 1891 by the Labor Party".¹²

One important aspect of this conflict concerns the nature of the two fiscal parties between 1887 and 1891. Both, argue Loveday and Martin, were true political parties with basic principled cohesion and "agreed aims",¹³ based on new policies to meet the "demands arising from a changed social and economic order" and "shaped into a coherent whole around some central principle".¹⁴ Nairn, however, maintains that the fiscal groups were not principled parties, but rather refurbished factions. He claims that they "did not have comprehensive and continuing [policy] programmes" that were directed at "fundamental political, social and economic reforms".¹⁵

One major implication of this difference of opinion relates to the existence after 1886 of a new basis of political conflict between the rival groups within the political system. Loveday and Martin argue that the existence of rival parties of principle automatically created a 'party system' in which the rival parties vied for power on the basis of "competing sets of political principles".¹⁶ B.E.Mansfield agrees that the two parties were "divided on an issue of real importance".¹⁷ The fiscal issue, according to this view, was relevant and important to the welfare of the colony and involved a conflict of principles. Those who regard fiscal politics between 1887 and 1891 as little more than refurbished factionalism, however, argue that the fiscal conflict involved neither principle nor substance. Nairn, for instance, points

to the "total unreality of the fiscal division",¹⁸ and J.A. Ryan refers to the "unnatural issue of fiscalism".¹⁹ Ryan concludes by arguing that there remained between 1887 and 1891 an "absence of any political division based on deeper social and economic issues, ...".²⁰

Other differences concern the organisation, control and activities of the fiscal parties. Although Loveday and Martin detect a "lack of discipline",²¹ they argue that party members were pledged to the party platform,²² thus creating a degree of party control and discipline; Nairn, however, detects no effective pledge and no "integrated and operative disciplinary system complete with sanctions".²³ Loveday and Martin argue for the existence of "a unified party structure", with powerful links between the parliamentary party and a central extra-parliamentary organisation, which had established local branches throughout the colony.²⁴ Nairn, however, regards these links as only loose, and "not comparable with the firm links between the Parliamentary Labor Party and the Trades and Labor Council".²⁵ On the subject of electoral organisation there are further differences. Loveday and Martin argue that the general election of 1889 was fought between "two well organized and consolidated party machines" which did their work of canvassing the electorate, selecting candidates and controlling the campaign with efficiency, zeal and effectiveness,²⁶ thus presenting a "picture of an electoral system in process of transformation".²⁷ Nairn, however, regards this electoral activity as fictional, stressing its "publicity value" rather than its real effectiveness. He claims that the fiscalists' electoral organisations were similar to other "ephemeral groups superimposed on ... the 'Faction System'",²⁸ and specifically characterises their work of selecting and endorsing candidates as "abortive".²⁹

A detailed analysis of the stresses and pressure for change to which the political system was subject after 1886 reveals, however, that a basic transformation from factions to parties had begun. But the transformation was not quickly concluded, and by 1891 it was far from complete. The dynamic process of this change indicates that, whilst strong forces demanded

and pursued change, even stronger forces prevailed to provide resistance. What changes were evident by 1891 were achieved slowly and painfully; but enough change was accomplished to support Martin's call for some revision of Labor's "messianic function as the bringer of order and meaning to faction-ridden colonial politics".³⁰ The transformation of the political system of New South Wales that had taken place by 1891 was somewhat less comprehensive than Loveday and Martin suggest, but rather more so than conceded by Nairn. By 1891, the freetrade and protectionist parties had not evolved into truly cohesive principled political parties, but they were certainly more than mere refurbished factions.

Martin has argued, however, that the transformation from the outmoded faction system towards the politics of principled parties, begun in 1886, reached its climax in 1889 and thereafter went into a decline, failing to re-appear until 1894. During the years 1889-94, he argues, there were powerful forces at work which "broke up the new political parties".³¹ He points to the apparent lack of effective fiscal electoral organisation during the general election of 1891 as evidence in support of his argument. Close analysis, however, would suggest that fiscal electoral management in 1891 was a distinct improvement upon that which was displayed during the general election of 1889, which was, in turn, well in advance of electoral organisation in 1887. This steady progress in electoral organisation throughout the period 1887 to 1891 was merely symptomatic of the steady and consistent process of fundamental change that gradually altered all aspects of the political system after 1886. The transition from unprincipled factions to principled parties, begun in 1886, progressed steadily throughout the five years to the end of 1891. Some apparent regression after 1889 was no more than a brief interregnum in which the difficulties of effecting swift and permanent change were revealed. Generally, however, the years 1890-91 were as much an integral part of the steady transition towards permanent principled political parties as the years 1887-89.

The transition, however, had not been completed by the

end of 1891, and further changes were required after 1891 to produce the first truly principled non-Labor political party - G.H.Reid's freetrade party of 1895. The process of change and development after 1891 to produce this party has been well described and analysed in the work of A.W.Martin and J.A.Ryan.³² The stage in the transition reached by the end of 1891, as analysed hereafter, marks the stage at which they take up and complete the story.

Central to any meaningful discussion of the process of political transformation should be a clear working definition of a 'political party'. With one proviso, I have adopted the definition suggested by Martin when he writes "... for one to talk legitimately of a 'political party', it has to be shown that the body concerned consisted of a parliamentary group, co-ordinated with an organisation designed to mobilise the electorate, and united by a desire to promote a political principle, or set of principles".³³ This definition requires qualification in one important aspect: the desire to promote a political principle may create a superficial unity among a group of men, but it is their common adherence to a defined principle or set of principles that acts as the most meaningful bond between the members of a political group. Concern for principle within the fiscal groupings distinguished them from the factions which "were without coherent and distinct bodies of doctrine, principle or belief ...".³⁴ But, only the collective and common allegiance of all its members to a coherent and defined body of doctrine or set of principles could guarantee a political grouping the cohesion and unity essential to its acceptance as a true political party.

It has unfortunately, although perhaps inevitably, been impossible to discuss the politics of the years 1887 to 1891 and use the word 'party' only when a political group strictly adheres to the criteria I have outlined above. Within the thesis, I use the word 'party' loosely, in conformity with the Herald's use of the term as "one of convenience rather than of accuracy".³⁵ I have, nevertheless, striven to make quite plain those occasions on which I am referring to a 'true political party'.

Notes

1. A.W.Martin, The Emergence of Political Parties in New South Wales during the 1880s, unpublished type-script, Australian National University, 1954, pp.26-27. (Hereafter:- The Emergence).
2. P.Loveday and A.W.Martin, Parliament, Factions and Parties. The First Thirty Years of Responsible Government in New South Wales, 1856-1889, Melbourne, 1966, p.153. (Hereafter:- PFP).
3. N.B.Nairn, Civilising Capitalism. The Labor Movement in New South Wales, 1870-1900, Canberra, 1973, p.24.
4. N.B.Nairn, 'The Politics of New South Wales, 1856-1889: A Note On A Reply', HS, vol.13, no.52 (April 1969), p.539. (Hereafter:- 'Note on A Reply').
5. A.W.Martin, 'William McMillan - A Merchant in Politics', JRAHS, vol.40, pt 4 (1954), p.200. (Hereafter:- 'McMillan').
6. ibid., p.207.
7. P.Loveday and A.W.Martin, PFP, p.121.
8. A.W.Martin, The Emergence, p.26.
9. P.Loveday and A.W.Martin, PFP, p.153.
10. N.B.Nairn, 'The Political Mastery of Sir Henry Parkes: New South Wales Politics, 1871-1891', JRAHS, vol.53, pt 1 (March 1967), p.39. (Hereafter:- 'The Mastery').
11. N.B.Nairn, 'Note On A Reply', pp.539-40.
12. N.B.Nairn, 'The Mastery', p.40.
13. P.Loveday and A.W.Martin, PFP, p.147.
14. ibid., pp.152-53.
15. N.B.Nairn, 'J.C.Watson in New South Wales Politics, 1890-1894', JRAHS, vol.48, pt 2 (1962), pp.82-83. (Hereafter:- 'J.C.Watson').
16. P.Loveday and A.W.Martin, PFP, p.154.
17. B.E.Mansfield, 'Party Organization in the New South Wales Elections of February, 1889', JRAHS, vol.41, pt 2 (September 1955), p.75.
18. N.B.Nairn, 'The Mastery', p.34.
19. J.A.Ryan, 'Colonial Politics in Australia: A Symposium. I. Faction Politics: A Problem in Historical Interpretation', Australian Economic History Review, vol.8, no.1 (March 1968), p.48.
20. ibid., p.45.
21. P.Loveday and A.W.Martin, PFP, p.153.

22. ibid., pp.148,153.
23. N.B.Nairn, 'The Mastery', p.39.
24. P.Loveday and A.W.Martin, PPF, pp.136,148.
25. N.B.Nairn, 'J.C.Watson', p.83.
26. P.Loveday and A.W.Martin, PPF, pp.139,145.
27. ibid., p.139.
28. N.B.Nairn, 'Note On A Reply', p.540.
29. ibid., p.543.
30. A.W.Martin, The Emergence, p.26.
31. A.W.Martin, 'McMillan', p.208.
32. See in particular:- A.W.Martin, Political Developments in New South Wales, 1894-6, M.A., University of Sydney, 1953; J.A.Ryan, B.R.Wise. An Oxford Liberal in the Freetrade Party of New South Wales, M.A., University of Sydney, 1965.
33. A.W.Martin, The Emergence, p.28.
34. P.Loveday and A.W.Martin, PPF, p.4.
35. SMH, 22 February 1889, p.4.

CHAPTER 1

THE 'FLAG OF FREE TRADE' AND THE 'CREATURE CALLED PROTECTION': Parkes, Reform and the Fiscal Issue, 1878 - 1887.

"Sir Patrick Jennings: ..., I am bound to say that if he is going to the country, he must do so on the question of free-trade or protection.

Sir Henry Parkes: Hear, hear. We shall do that, never fear!"

(NSWPD, vol. XXIV, p.45, 20 January 1887)

I

The fiscal issue had been raised several times between 1856 and 1886, and always for the same reason. During periods of economic difficulty, agitations were organised against the traditional freetrade policy of New South Wales by those hit by and fearful of unemployment. Protection in place of unrestricted importation, it was argued, would stimulate colonial manufacturing industries and would provide ample employment opportunities.¹

A relatively small number of men sincerely believed in the efficacy of a full protectionist policy for New South Wales, and in times of distress they eagerly disseminated their ideas to attract followers. In the years 1878 to 1880, a period of hardship in Sydney, a number of organisations emerged to uphold protection as a panacea for the ills of the colony. Included among these organisations were the Working Men's Defence

Association (WMDA), the Political Reform Association (PRA), the New South Wales Political Reform League (PRL), the Political Reform Union (PRU), and the League for the Encouragement of Colonial Industries (LECI). Although many protectionist advocates formed the backbone of more than one of these associations,² the numerical weakness of the associations is indicated by a report of a meeting of the largest of them, the PRL, at which it was stated that the League had "150 members on its roll, of whom 80 have paid their subscriptions".³

Despite the prominence of protectionist agitation in times of economic distress, until the 1880s the fiscal conflict had proved only spasmodically important as a political issue, both at elections and in parliament. In early 1864, the ministry, led by James Martin, attempted to increase import duties and impose 5% ad valorem duties on a range of imported goods; a small group of men, who viewed the proposed duties as protectionist in character and as "ruinous to the colony"⁴, formed the colony's first Freetrade Association (FTA).⁵ This first FTA was the only such body formed prior to 1885, and it seems to have been disbanded less than a year after its formation⁶. When the time came at the end of 1864 for an electoral test of strength between the freetraders and the so-called protectionists, the scope of the fiscal contest was very limited indeed. In its early days, the FTA announced its intention to organise a wide freetrade electoral campaign by creating a central organising executive, forming branches of the association throughout the colony, and selecting candidates for election to parliament⁷. Despite this intention, and the later assertion by a leading freetrader, Sir John Robertson, that the 1864-65 electoral battle was won "by convincing the people all over the country that free trade was right"⁸, the battle between freetrade and protection, and the activities of the FTA at the general election, were limited solely to two metropolitan electorates, East Sydney and West Sydney⁹.

During the first half of the 1880s, however, protectionist advocates made a determined effort to raise the fiscal controversy to greater political prominence. An active protectionist organisation, the Protection and Political Reform League

(PPRL), was formed in 1881 out of the rump of the PRU and the LECI¹⁰. The PPRL included a number of ardent and vociferous protectionist propagandists, chief among whom were Ninian Melville, Richard Charles Luscombe and William Richardson. Their evangelist work in the protectionist cause was substantially aided by the colony's renewed economic difficulties, due to severe droughts and declining state revenue after 1882. The resulting depression, and the presence of unemployment in Sydney¹¹ became the focal point of the protectionist agitation. B.R.Wise's comment that "Times of depression and distress dispose unthinking men to listen more kindly than they otherwise would, to quack proposals", pinpointed an important factor in the increasing popularity of protectionist ideas after 1882¹².

The depressed economic conditions in the colony after 1882 provided the background of protectionist agitation. A variety of groups became more inclined than before to listen to protectionist arguments; these groups included farmers, artisans and manufacturers, all of whom were adversely affected by the colony's plight¹³. The PPRL was quick to sense the increasing popularity of protection amongst the working classes and manufacturers¹⁴, and it worked hard to take full advantage of this¹⁵; by 1883 it was claiming that "some of the most influential gentlemen in New South Wales" favoured protection¹⁶.

It would, however, be misleading to assume that the worsening economic situation and protectionist propaganda were alone responsible for the prominence of the fiscal controversy as a political issue after 1885. Indeed, it appeared to many by the end of 1885 that the efforts of the protectionists had borne little fruit. Since 1881 two further protectionist organisations had been formed: the Democratic Alliance (DA), and the Land and Industrial Alliance (LIA)¹⁷. The LIA came into existence as an organisation that combined a demand for land law reform with the advocacy of protection. Its dominant rural membership, however, showed little interest in the doctrine of protection and the purely protectionist urban wing of the Alliance proved so uninfluential that, in 1886, the protective plank was eliminated, "so as to leave the Alliance purely a Land Law Reform Society,..."¹⁸. Despite the claims

of the PPRL and the LIA to have swung the country districts over to support of protection by the creation of a network of local country branches¹⁹, B.R.Wise's assessment of the advance made by protection in the country districts seems to have had some validity: "Whenever two or three persons meet together..., a telegram announces the formation of a 'Protection Association', although in reality there has been no change in the opinion of the district and the members who compose the 'association' are neither numerous nor influential".²⁰ The widespread lack of interest in and support for protection among the country districts in 1885 was demonstrated at the July conference of the LIA, held in Sydney. With over thirty active affiliated rural organisations²¹, the LIA was basically a land law reform society, and when, at the conference, it sponsored two resolutions in favour of a policy of protection²², some country delegates displayed their displeasure and lack of interest. One delegate claimed that in the conference invitation "no word was said about Protection", and "he believed it was unfair to those constituents who had sent him to speak on the question of the Land Bill to talk about Protection".²³ Other delegates were openly hostile to protection, one stating that "he would be wanting in respect to himself, to those who sent him, and to his native land if he did not enter his protest against the principle of Protection".²⁴ Nevertheless, the resolutions were carried²⁵ and, although the protectionists in no sense controlled the country districts, the Herald was forced to concede in November 1885 that they had "aroused a good deal of discussion, and had succeeded in forming fresh centres for protectionist activity".²⁶

It was in the electoral and parliamentary spheres, however, that the inability of the protectionists to make any real headway by the end of 1885 was most clearly revealed. In 1882, John Lucas told a protectionist meeting that "if they wished protection to become adopted here, they must make it the one great question at all future elections".²⁷ Fired with zeal, the PPRL expressed its determination to work with unremitting vigour "until a majority of protectionist members were returned

to the Assembly, [even] if it took ten years to accomplish it".²⁸ By the end of 1885, the return on their efforts barely justified their vigour. Although they were forced to admit that "neither protection nor free trade formed directly a question of open profession"²⁹, the protectionists did claim that the general election of 1882 brought about a rise in their numbers in the Assembly from three³⁰ to ten.³¹ By August 1885, protection had made such little progress that it was confidently predicted that "the forthcoming elections would not be contested upon the question of Protection or Freetrade, but upon the land question".³² Despite this opinion, the Herald was forced to admit after the election that "the [fiscal] question was invested with a greater interest than had been displayed with regard to it for several years".³³

Nevertheless, the fiscal question was not a prominent issue at the 1885 general election, and one of the successful protectionist candidates, A. Forsyth, after his election 'apologised' for his reticence on the subject,³⁴ adding that, "Although I believe in the wisdom of a Protection policy, such a policy is not sufficiently understood nor so numerously accepted as to justify anyone relying for support on that alone".³⁵ The Herald took delight in pointing out that "Those candidates who sought election simply on the merits of Protection were ignored - contemptuously ignored",³⁶ a statement that was most certainly true.³⁷ As a result of the election, the number of avowed protectionists in the Legislative Assembly rose to sixteen.³⁸ It is important here to make the distinction between those men who professed a definite adherence to protection at the time of their election in October 1885, and those who, later in the life of the same parliament, professed a support of protection. Although the number of avowed protectionists did undergo an increase in October 1885, this success was offset by two factors: a protectionist group identity was unlikely, due to the election of the sixteen protectionists largely on other grounds;³⁹ and five of the protectionists were totally new to parliament, unknown and uninfluential.⁴⁰ These factors led the most influential of the protectionists, L.F. Heydon, to forecast after the election

that "by some mischance the small band of which he was the leader might be wiped out".⁴¹ By the end of 1885, the fiscal question certainly did not seem to be increasing in political prominence to any great extent; rather, it almost seemed to be on the verge of undergoing a decline. The following year, however, saw a remarkable reversal in this trend.

During the 'boom' days of the 1870s, when income was buoyant, governments embarked on an extravagant spending spree, which was largely devoted to the expansion of the railway network. The main part of the revenue was derived from the sale of crown lands, a source which governments in the 1870s exploited to the full;⁴² it enabled them to reduce import and excise duties, and to limit overseas borrowing, while still maintaining a high level of expenditure. During the term of the Parkes-Robertson coalition ministry, however, there began a vocal campaign to end the 'wholesale alienation of the public estate', and Alexander Stuart took office in 1883 on a promise to place a strict limit on land auctions.⁴³ As a result of fulfilling its promise, Stuart's government faced the need to offset the consequent large loss of revenue, and, when parliament refused to sanction steep taxation increases, the government, still determined to expand its expenditure, turned to the London capital market to borrow funds on a huge scale.⁴⁴ This action was made all the more necessary when the revenue continued to fall as a result of severe droughts and the ending of the wool boom. The increased borrowing placed an even more serious strain on consolidated revenue, on which the interest commitment was a primary charge.⁴⁵ Still there was no inclination to curtail government expenditure. Only at the very end of 1885 was it revealed to parliament just how serious the financial position had become, when the Colonial Treasurer, George Dibbs, made a financial statement in which he stated that "we have to face a debit balance of £1,052,614".⁴⁶ By early 1886, the Consolidated Revenue Fund had slumped from a credit of £3,889,000 in 1882 to a deficit of £1,287,000.⁴⁷ By 1886, then, it had been finally placed beyond doubt that "government spending could continue at current levels only if heavy taxation increases were made".⁴⁸ Parliament, however, still showed

extreme reluctance to ratify extra taxation, and, from mid-1885 to February 1886, four separate ministries proposed new taxation measures, largely in the form of direct taxation, before losing support in the Assembly.⁴⁹

It was in this situation that recourse to the customs was again proposed as a means of raising the desperately needed revenue. On 26 February 1886, the Jennings-Dibbs coalition ministry took office, with Sir Patrick Jennings sworn in as Colonial Treasurer, and George Dibbs as Colonial Secretary. On 6 April, Jennings made a financial statement to the Assembly, in which he announced certain "additions to and alterations in the customs tariff". The existing schedule of specific or fixed duties on imports was to be altered by increasing both the range of goods to be taxed, and the duty levied. In addition, it was announced that "we propose to levy what are commonly known as ad valorem duties ... at the rate of 5 per cent.....".⁵⁰ The resulting Customs Duties Bill was not, however, finally ratified by parliament until September.⁵¹

The depressed economy and the proposed solution to the problem of revenue by imposing ad valorem duties have been regarded as providing "the immediate occasion for making protection ... a 'burning' political question".⁵² This statement is certainly true, but it is important to realise that the 'occasion' did not of itself make protection a 'burning' political question. The history of tariff changes in New South Wales after 1860 makes it clear that neither the threat nor the reality of imposing ad valorem duties automatically raised the fiscal issue, and led to a battle between freetrade and protection. Certainly such occasions provided astute politicians with an opportunity to raise the fiscal controversy, if it suited their purposes, but it is clear that such an opportunity had to be deliberately and successfully exploited, if a proposal of ad valorem duties were to erupt into a fiscal conflict. This point is most clearly demonstrated by the case of Sir John Robertson.

On a number of occasions prior to the 1880s, governments in New South Wales were faced with the problem of a

shortage of revenue, and in most cases they were finally forced to resort to the customs house to remedy the problem. One such instance was in 1864 when James Martin proposed the imposition of ad valorem duties to solve the problem. The opportunity to make political capital out of the situation was not lost upon Martin's political opponents, led by Charles Cowper and John Robertson. In conjunction with a small group of men outside parliament, who formed the FTA,⁵³ Cowper and Robertson vigorously attacked Martin's proposals as being protectionist in character. Partially on this issue, Cowper and Robertson, standing as freetraders and supported by the FTA,⁵⁴ defeated the 'protectionist' ministerialists⁵⁵ in the 1864-65 general election, and replaced Martin in office. Many years later, Sir John Robertson, relating how "the great battle of freetrade was fought and was won" in 1864, boasted that "we had trampled protection out ... until the unfortunate combination of Dibbs and Jennings came into power" in 1886.⁵⁶ The boast need not be queried, but the fact remains that the 'staunch freetraders', Cowper and Robertson, faced with the same financial problem that had faced Martin, shortly resorted to the same remedy. In 1865, they enacted measures which increased specific duties, and imposed 5% ad valorem duties.⁵⁷ In this instance, however, the imposition of ad valorem duties was not regarded as protection, and the fiscal issue lay quietly where it had been discarded by Cowper and Robertson after its usefulness had been exhausted.

A similar revenue shortage was faced in 1871 by a ministry, again including the 'freetrader' Robertson, that re-enacted measures identical to those of 1865.⁵⁸ Once again the imposition of 5% ad valorem duties was not generally regarded as a protectionist measure, the undisputed freetrade leader after 1886, Sir Henry Parkes, remarking at the time that to claim that the duties afforded protection to colonial industry was "the idlest pretence".⁵⁹ Once again a practical measure for the purpose merely of raising revenue was allowed to pass virtually unmolested.

A situation in which support of ad valorem duties could be regarded either as displaying a leaning towards protection,

or as being entirely consistent with the principles of free-trade, was bound to result in general confusion as to the actual point of difference between a freetrader and a protectionist. By the end of 1886, it was generally accepted that one could distinguish a freetrader from a protectionist on the basis of an announced support for, or opposition to, the imposition of ad valorem duties; at the time that Jennings and Dibbs came into office in February 1886, however, this criterion was not generally acknowledged. Because of the uncertainty about the relevance of ad valorem duties in determining fiscal allegiance prior to 1886, a number of men could honestly support ad valorem duties while still proclaiming their allegiance to freetrade. During 1886, such men came to be regarded as political hypocrites; B.R.Wise, for example, condemned them as "men who ... call themselves freetraders and who vote in favour of protection...".⁶⁰ If all those who had supported ad valorem duties, who yet claimed to be freetraders, had been prepared to accept the 1886 label of 'protectionist' and to drop their claim to be freetraders, then their freetrade claims prior to 1886 could perhaps be taken as mere hypocrisy and political opportunism. But this was not so. In 1886 a number of men renounced their belief in ad valorem duties in order to maintain credibility as freetraders; this would seem to confirm the general uncertainty that existed prior to 1886 as to the exact distinction between freetrade and protection.

This confusion prior to 1886 was heightened by avowed protectionists who claimed that those MsLA who supported ad valorem duties were adherents to the protectionist cause. In February 1884, Henry Copeland proposed in the Legislative Assembly the imposition of 10% ad valorem duties.⁶¹ Among those who supported Copeland's proposal were J.C.Ellis, Sydney Smith, Francis Abigail and A.J.Gould.⁶² As a result, R.C.Luscombe wrote to the Herald expressing his satisfaction with "the result of the division on Mr Copeland's amendment", and claimed that "we [now] have a force of 27 members on the protectionist side ...".⁶³ The fact was, however, that those who supported the adoption of ad valorem duties prior to 1886, despite being claimed as protectionists by committed protectionists, were not

commonly regarded as such, and did not regard themselves as such. A more realistic appraisal of true protectionist strength at the time of Copeland's amendment was given by Ninian Melville, himself a committed protectionist, when he claimed that there were only about eight protectionists in the Assembly.⁶⁴ The categorisation of men like Abigail, Smith, Ellis and Gould as protectionists was purely a propagandist device without meaning. The position of such men was explained by Abigail, who later stated that his support of ad valorem duties had simply been on the grounds of "expediency as to which was the easiest way of getting revenue, and the question of free trade or protection had not then cropped up;...".⁶⁵ When the question did 'crop up' in 1886, however, and support for ad valorem duties became positively equated with support for protection, all four men were to be found firmly among the 'anti-ad valorem' freetraders. Furthermore, three of them became members of freetrade ministries after 1886.⁶⁶

Perhaps the best illustration of the fact that ad valorem duties were not generally regarded as protection, even at the beginning of 1886, was the consideration given by that 'staunch freetrader', Sir John Robertson, to their imposition as a means of raising revenue.⁶⁷ Very early in 1886, the Herald stated that Robertson "does not say that he will propose to meet the deficit by the imposition of ad valorem duties; but this is clearly what he is thinking about".⁶⁸ Faced with a desperate financial crisis, Robertson clearly foreshadowed the return to ad valorem duties when, referring to the financial crisis of 1871, he told the Mudgee electors that his government "had to resort to ad valorem duties, as the money had then, as now, to be got ... in some fashion or other". Yet, this inevitable resort to ad valorem duties was still not generally regarded as in any way interfering with freetrade: Robertson stated that "the Government would have the money, and would not interfere with Free Trade".⁶⁹

The same uncertainty also existed prior to 1886 in regard to other proposals, which, after 1886, became commonly regarded as signifying a belief in protection. In 1878, there

appeared in the Assembly a group, known as 'the Hay and Corn Party'. This group was composed of representatives of free selector constituencies, and it was concerned with the protection of farming interests by the imposition of import duties on agricultural produce. E.W.O'Sullivan later described the group as "a body of country members who ... were anxious to impose duties on hay, corn, chaff, etc.,...". O'Sullivan was also careful to point to the claims of its members to be freetraders.⁷⁰ By 1886, the leader of the group was William Clarke, who, in April, unsuccessfully proposed that duties be imposed upon grain, beans, peas, hay and chaff.⁷¹ Clarke and C.J.Roberts, both members of Parkes's freetrade ministry in 1887, voted in favour of the motion.⁷² This, however, did not make them protectionists. In fact, Clarke claimed, with some justification it would appear, that a number of avowed protectionists voted against his motion "as he would not support a general system of protection".⁷³ Certainly Clarke did not regard himself as a protectionist, and his name is found among the members of the first council of the FTA, formed towards the end of 1885.⁷⁴ Clarke, like others, was simply a victim of the uncertainty of the criteria that governed fiscal labelling prior to 1886. There is no doubt, however, that he regarded himself as a freetrader, and, when, in 1886, his views were specifically deemed to be inconsistent with freetrade, he abandoned them.⁷⁵ Another similar case exists in respect of John Sutherland, Minister of Works in Parkes's 1887-89 freetrade ministry. For a number of years Sutherland had supported the encouragement of local industry, and this had been enough for him to be classed by Luscombe as a protectionist.⁷⁶ Sutherland, however, did not regard himself as a protectionist, declaring in 1885 that "protection was the worst misfortune that could befall any country".⁷⁷ He earned himself a tirade of abuse from his 'protectionist' colleagues for his "traitorous" conduct in voting against Clarke's motion in April 1886,⁷⁸ and against ad valorem duties in June 1886.⁷⁹ Only the strict and highly artificial definition of 'a protectionist', put forward in 1886, made Sutherland appear to have been anything but a freetrader previously.

The general uncertainty surrounding the whole question of fiscal faith was demonstrated after the 1885 general election. Luscombe claimed that those elected members who had professed support for ad valorem duties should be included among the 'protectionists', thus bringing their total to thirty-nine.⁸⁰ Of the fifteen successful candidates who had specifically favoured increased duties without having declared themselves protectionists, however, all later accepted the 1886 equation of ad valorem duties with protection, seven becoming 'anti-ad valorem' freetraders, and the remainder accepting the label of protectionist.⁸¹ The lack of certainty in 1885 about which fiscal label he should adopt was expressed by one of these men, A. Lysaght, when he said that he was "a free-trader to a great extent ... [but] would not, however, nail his colours to free trade, nor say he might not yet become a protectionist".⁸² Perhaps Joseph Creer summed up the situation most aptly when he stated that "he was not a protectionist nor a free-trader. There were no such things".⁸³

At the beginning of 1886, the fiscal issue was not only unimportant and undefined in the parliamentary context, but it was also largely irrelevant in the shaping of political allegiances and groupings, which remained dominated by the presence of personal followings or factions. The lack of a group identity among the protectionists was unfavourably commented upon in 1883 by the PPR, ⁸⁴ and, by 1886, the situation was no different. Personal allegiance far outweighed protectionist adherence when three avowed protectionists agreed to join the ministry of Sir John Robertson in December 1885.⁸⁵ One of them, L.F. Heydon, commented at the time that "his views upon the question of Protection he had subordinated for the present", a decision he justified by stating that "he had no desire to have Protection discredited by being introduced at this particular moment".⁸⁶

Thus, at the time Jennings and Dibbs came into office, the fiscal issue was an insignificant and undefined force in parliamentary politics, and their proposal to impose ad valorem duties would not have automatically had the effect of

instituting a full-scale fiscal conflict within parliament, had that conflict not been deliberately sought and engineered. In order to make Jennings' customs proposals the basis of a conflict between freetrade and protection, two points had to be established: first, it needed to be successfully demonstrated that the practical revenue-raising measure of imposing ad valorem duties was relevant to the conflict between free-trade and protection; and, secondly, opinion on the imposition of ad valorem duties needed to be clarified in terms of the fiscal conflict. The man who successfully undertook this task in 1886 was Sir Henry Parkes. What induced him to raise the fiscal issue was his earnest desire to introduce into the parliament of New South Wales an issue which would create a firm and principled two-sided polarisation of MSLA, thus providing a stability of allegiance that would replace the fluid and unstable allegiances associated with three or more personal factions. The conflict between freetrade and protection had great potential as an issue that could successfully polarise parliament into two stable, rival groups: it was not a new issue; it was an issue that aroused passion and emotion; it was, if clearly defined, a simple two-sided issue; and, it was, in theory at least, an issue which had a practical effect on the lives and fortunes of many members of the community. By 1886, all that was required was an opportunity, a motive, and a politician influential enough to take advantage of the potential. Jennings and Dibbs supplied the opportunity; Parkes had the motive, seized the opportunity, and proceeded to demonstrate his powerful influence over the politics of the colony.

Circumstances aided Parkes in his task. Despite the failure of the protectionists to make the fiscal conflict a significant electoral or parliamentary issue, outside parliament, on the fringes of politics, the potential prominence of the issue was demonstrated towards the end of 1885. Just as, in 1864, the colony's first FTA had been formed to obliterate protectionist heresies and parliamentary candidates, so, in August 1885, the freetraders of Sydney reacted to protectionist propagandist activity by forming a second FTA.⁸⁷ In the opinion of one Herald correspondent, the delay in forming the

FTA was "due to the fact that there is as yet no danger of our existing freetrade policy being interfered with",⁸⁸ and certainly one of those involved in the establishment of the FTA "questioned very much whether it was absolutely necessary for them to enter upon the matter at all".⁸⁹ It would appear that there was general criticism of the FTA as forming "the backbone of protection", which, without the notice given it by the association, "would die away".⁹⁰ The protectionists, however, loudly applauded the establishment of the FTA; for them, it could only mean increased prominence, and it did represent a step closer to the time when the battle between freetrade and protection would be the colony's dominant political issue.⁹¹

Parkes was also aided by protectionist propaganda that stressed the relevance of the proposal to impose ad valorem duties to the fiscal conflict. Despite the realistic view of Ninian Melville in 1884 that "the imposition of 5 per cent [ad valorem] duties on all goods was neither protection nor freetrade",⁹² other ardent protectionists had been all too willing to claim ad valorem duties as a first instalment of a protectionist policy. When, in 1871, 5% ad valorem duties were imposed to alleviate financial difficulties, the protectionists were "clear-sighted enough to perceive an opportunity in the country's extremity, and strong enough to seize it. The imposition of the ad valorem duties was a revenue measure ... [,but it] was hailed by some of those who supported it as the thin end of the protectionist wedge".⁹³ During the 1880s, protectionists continued to make similar claims, H.S. Bond stating in 1884 that 5% ad valorem duties should be regarded as an instalment of protection.⁹⁴

The protectionists were not the only group who had come to claim ad valorem duties as protectionist in character. The wealthy merchant and commercial class in Sydney had come to similar conclusions. Their affluence as a group had been achieved under the colony's existing freetrade policy and, as W.H. Traill explained, "it was natural that they should repulse with apprehension any proposition to alter conditions which had worked so well for them".⁹⁵ Their vested interest in preserving the fiscal status quo led to the insistence that

ad valorem duties were a first instalment of protection. When Sir John Robertson hinted in January 1886 at the possibility of imposing ad valorem duties, the reaction of the merchants was swift and antagonistic. The Herald, the mouthpiece of the commercial class, claimed that "to reintroduce ad-valorem duties ... would be to provide the foundation for a policy of Protection".⁹⁶ In February 1886, the vice-president of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce (SCC) told his fellow members that, while not wishing "to bring to life the dry bones of the free-trade and protection controversy", his "great fear" was that "we may have a system of ad valorem duties adopted, ultimately tending in the direction of protection, ...".⁹⁷

It was, however, the definite proposal of Jennings and Dibbs to introduce ad valorem duties that provided Parkes with the opportunity to introduce the fiscal conflict fully into parliamentary politics, and to recast the political system of New South Wales along more stable and recognisable lines than had hitherto existed. B.R.Wise later remarked, "The groundwork of the [fiscal] struggle was the Dibbs deficit"⁹⁸; the responsibility for the emergence of that 'struggle', however, must rest with Sir Henry Parkes. A.W.Martin has written that Parkes, in fostering the fiscal issue in parliament, was merely "using the fiscal controversy that was developing outside Parliament ...".⁹⁹ Correct as this judgment is, it tends to underestimate the importance of Parkes in raising the issue to parliamentary and electoral prominence. It was most unlikely that the arguments of rabid protectionists and vested-interest freetraders outside parliament could inspire a parliamentary conflict that would convulse the politics of New South Wales for the next twenty years. The parliamentary debate on Jennings' ad valorem proposals, up until Parkes made his move, bears this out.

When Jennings first announced to parliament on 6 April 1886 his intention of introducing ad valorem duties, he was well aware that he would be met by both vested-interest free-trade abuse, and protectionist applause. For this reason, he took great pains to stress that "our present intention and desire in our policy is to adhere to the free trade system

I say that these amendments are not made for the purpose of protection - with no desire to give the slightest tinge of a protective character to our tariff;...".¹⁰⁰ Jennings argued firmly that the proposed duties were "manifestly imposed to meet the exigencies of our present situation - to raise revenue to assist in paying off the existing deficiency".¹⁰¹ Jennings' defensiveness, in the face of his awareness that "it is very distinctly argued by some people that these duties are of a protective character,...",¹⁰² was largely unnecessary; during the long debate that followed the announcement of the ministry's intentions, the 'protective character' of the proposals was little emphasised. Of the five speeches that railed against the ministry's 'protectionist' proposals, four were delivered by merchant or commercial freetraders, all of whom were either members of the SCC or its virtual political satellite, the FTA.¹⁰³ The SCC, whose task it was "to watch over the vast commercial interests of the colony",¹⁰⁴ backed up the statements of its parliamentary representatives. At its quarterly meeting in May, attended by Lloyd, Inglis and Edward Pulsford, secretary of the FTA, resolutions that characterised the introduction of ad valorem duties as "the introduction generally of the thin edge of protection into our whole fiscal system" were passed.¹⁰⁵ Although Jennings' slight paranoia about the implications of his taxation proposal led him, on the fourth night of the debate, to repudiate "the insane report raised by certain persons who call it protection",¹⁰⁶ the fiscal issue had so far received scant attention from the majority of ministerial opponents.

The opportunity had, however, been created; Parkes seized it, and, in doing so, displayed the attributes that led an astute parliamentary observer years later to say of him: "... no politician in the Australian world could better judge of the opportune time to take over an agitation than Sir Henry Parkes. He seemed to carefully watch other men driving the coach along till it came to a certain point, then he would jump up on the box, push the driver aside, and, taking the reins in hand, 'tool' the vehicle into town".¹⁰⁷ The responsibility for raising the fiscal issue from relative insignificance

to the foremost political issue of the day was not only freely attributed to Parkes, but also claimed by him.¹⁰⁸ A.D. Nelson, a protectionist candidate at the 1887 general election, stated that "Had Sir Henry Parkes not thus boldly raised the flag of free trade, that spark of protection which had shown only a mere glimmer for years would not have blazed out as it had done at this moment".¹⁰⁹

Silent for over a month on the ministry's taxation proposals, Parkes entered the debate with vigour on 11 May, by delivering a speech introducing a set of resolutions, dissenting from the government's proposals to end the financial crisis. Parkes began by pointing to the meandering and meaningless nature of the debate so far; he referred to the "diverse" character of many speeches, and concluded that "they have, in many instances, travelled over ground ... distinctly apart from the main question to be considered".¹¹⁰ Parkes's determination to give "a more definite character" to the debate and to define "the main question to be considered" were revealed when he stated that "I move these resolutions with one primary object - that men may declare themselves whether they are in favour of free-trade, or in favour of 'sneaking in' protection".¹¹¹ Taking hold of Jennings' phrase, 'sneaking in' protection, Parkes pointed to the ministry as the initiators of the evil system of protection: "I do not know the peculiar phrase 'sneaking in' ... [,but] I think I shall be able to show that if it is a discreditable thing to 'sneak in' protection, that is exactly, and beyond all dispute, what the Government are doing".¹¹² Parkes's speech, for the first time, raised into real parliamentary prominence the question of freetrade and protection, and set the tone for all future debates on the question of ad valorem duties. The effect of his speech was almost instantaneous, and the ensuing debate confirmed C.E.Lyne's assessment of Parkes, that "no one who sat in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales was more able ... to sway it in the direction he desired".¹¹³ Despite George Reid's contention that Parkes's resolutions distinctly did "not raise the issue of free-trade and protection", and his warning to members not to be "so weak as to be led into the trap laid for them",¹¹⁴ the fiscal

issue had at last begun to make its mark really felt; on rising to speak in the debate on Parkes's resolutions, Charles Garland launched immediately into the question of freetrade and protection, adding in parenthesis, "for that is the question which I take to be involved in this debate".¹¹⁵

Parkes fervently continued his attack, declaring, on 19 May, "Let the words 'sneak in' never be forgotten. They are sneaking in protection with a vengeance".¹¹⁶ In the second reading debate on the Customs Duties Bill, Parkes introduced another catch-phrase, when he claimed that the bill would "introduce beyond doubt the thin edge of the wedge of protection...".¹¹⁷ Parkes's full development of his 'sneaking in' argument was masterly; although he admitted that "this bill has not any provision to give substantial aid in the direction in which the protectionists require it",¹¹⁸ he claimed that the protectionists constituted a sinister political force that was actually powerful enough to force full protection upon the colony. Although he stated that Jennings' bill "in itself offered no particular inducement to the votaries of Protection", he "supposed" that "the advocates of Protection espoused the Bill because it ... introduced the principle of Protection", and he claimed that "once introduced and incorporated in the laws of the country, it would be easier to put some new force on the screw or to drive the wedge farther".¹¹⁹ This was the more likely, argued Parkes, because of the ministry's embarrassing position of subservience to, and dependence upon, its protectionist supporters. Here, then, was a hint at conspiracy: a picture of an honourable, though naive, ministry being 'used' by a knot of committed protectionists to achieve the otherwise unattainable object of instituting a fiscal policy of full protection. This argument, which portrayed the ministry at the mercy of the ardent protectionists, was first expounded by Parkes on 19 May, when he made reference to a speech by J.H. Young, in which Ninian Melville, the ardent protectionist and member for Northumberland, was "twitted" for never having made a convert. On the contrary, declared Parkes, "The hon. member for Northumberland has converted her Majesty's Ministers The Government are the followers of the hon. member for

Northumberland".¹²⁰ Parkes developed this emotive argument by pointing out the Government's actual numerical dependence on the protectionists. On 8 July, he stated that "this free-trade Government is really carrying this bill by the votes of these protectionists, because they could not carry the bill without the votes of those gentlemen".¹²¹ Parkes was undoubtedly exaggerating when he estimated that "There are in this House, I think, twenty-two or twenty-four avowed protectionists",¹²² though his credibility was substantially safeguarded by some of the protectionists themselves, one of whom had stated in March that "they possessed 43 gentlemen in Parliament ... who were thorough protectionists, in favour of ad valorem duties, ...".¹²³ Parkes proceeded to elaborate his point when he stated: "The majority on the second reading of the bill was eighteen; if the protectionist votes had been withdrawn the bill would have been defeated, ...".¹²⁴ The conclusions to be drawn from this line of argument were obvious, and Parkes did not hesitate to proclaim them. He pointed out that the small group of protectionists were "really determining the fiscal policy of this country", and he accused the government of being "mere ciphers", referring to its members as "mere feathers blown about by the very breath of this little group of protectionists".¹²⁵ Parkes's attack on the feeble ministry and its protectionist 'masters', eagerly supported in the freetrade press,¹²⁶ made the strength and influence of protection in the government of the colony appear to be a force really to be reckoned with. As George Dibbs remarked in 1887, the action of Parkes and the opposition did "more to galvanise protection into life than twenty years of advocacy by the most advanced protectionists in the country".¹²⁷

The question remains, however, as to why Parkes was so insistent on raising the protectionist alarm, and raising up with fierce intensity the quiescent conflict between freetrade and protection. The issue was in itself really irrelevant to the ministry's specific proposals, as Parkes virtually admitted, and as Jennings pointed out when he snapped at Parkes that "it is all very well to get up and utter homilies and speeches

on abstract principles which might as well be delivered before a debating society for all the practical application they have to the immediate object we have in view; ...".¹²⁸ Furthermore, Parkes's substantive opposition to Jennings' financial proposals was based simply on his advocacy of a different practical approach to the solution of the colony's financial plight. Jennings proposed to solve the deficit by increasing taxation, in order to maintain government expenditure at a high level. This practical approach to a serious problem was dubbed 'protectionist' by Parkes, whilst his own practical approach - that of curtailing expenditure in order to maintain a low level of taxation - was dubbed 'freetrade'.¹²⁹ The effective dissemination of such an eminently popular pledge as 'no fresh taxation' did not, however, require the raising of the fiscal issue to publicise it. Yet, the fact remains that Parkes went to extreme lengths to brand the government's financial proposals, and the government itself, as protectionist-dominated.

It has been suggested that Parkes's intention in raising the fiscal issue was to set himself up as "the archpriest of freetrade", thereby placing himself "at the head of a new and powerful political movement".¹³⁰ George Dibbs substantially presented this view, when he stated that "the Opposition has forced this question before its time, ..., [in order] to obtain office...".¹³¹ Personal political prominence, and the ambition to regain office may have motivated Parkes to raise the fiscal issue. He certainly did place himself at the forefront of 'freetrade' reaction to ad valorem duties, and he did succeed in becoming recognised as the high-priest of freetrade.¹³² He did not, however, neglect to appeal to the electors of the colony during his campaign, declaring that "the country is now being cheated out of its privileges ... by the very men who have taken a solemn oath to administer ... affairs ... righteously".¹³³ Certainly Parkes sought a return to office, but contemporary public opinion, insofar as it can be gauged, would suggest that his popularity, and chances of electoral success depended, not so much on his stance in the fiscal conflict, as on his attractive proposition of no fresh taxation. That this is a valid distinction was amply demonstrated during late 1886,

when a popular movement in favour of Parkes, and directed against the government, swept the colony.

A large number of 'indignation meetings', to get up petitions to the Governor, asking him to dissolve parliament, were held all over the colony;¹³⁴ many ended with hoots for George Dibbs,¹³⁵ and nearly all with resounding cheers for Sir Henry Parkes.¹³⁶ The 'indignation movement' culminated on 20 November, when a deputation of citizens presented to the Governor forty-three petitions, containing an aggregate of 23,900 signatures.¹³⁷ Although some mention was made of the fiscal controversy,¹³⁸ the main area of concern of the protest movement was the practical question of alleviating the colony's financial crisis. The most common specific complaints against the government rested upon its continued extravagant expenditure, and the resulting necessity to impose fresh taxation. A familiar resolution at the meetings was "That this meeting protests against the extravagant course of administration by which the colony has been plunged into financial difficulty and distress, and that as the Government has not carried out a retrenchment policy it does not possess the confidence of the electors of the country".¹³⁹ On the basis of his practical financial proposals, Parkes came to be viewed as "the only statesman who could properly administer the affairs of the country".¹⁴⁰ It would thus appear that Parkes's popularity was more positively connected with his practical approach to the financial crisis, than with his cry to defend freetrade. Although he endeavoured to link retrenchment with 'freetrade', one astute observer claimed that the result of the 1887 general election would have been as strongly in favour of Parkes even if he had gone to the country on the ticket of "Sir Henry Parkes and Protection".¹⁴¹

If Parkes's practical proposals of retrenchment and no fresh taxation assured him of personal and electoral popularity, his great vigour in raising the fiscal issue to political prominence served another far more subtle and far-reaching purpose; by the mid-1880s, Parkes saw himself as a political reformer with a grand mission. By then, too, he recognised that the dormant, but potentially explosive, fiscal issue was the means of fulfilling his mission.

II

The term 'responsible government' has been viewed as having had two meanings to the colonists of New South Wales during the 1840s and 1850s. The "first and dominant meaning" of responsible government was self-government, "self-government being interpreted primarily as colonial responsibility for all colonial affairs".¹⁴² Out of the struggle to attain self-government emerged an appreciation of the concept of ministerial responsibility, and, hence, the second meaning of responsible government - that of a cabinet government chosen from, and relying on the support of, the majority in the popular chamber.¹⁴³ The advent of self-government in 1856 was, therefore, naturally accompanied by the idea that colonial government would involve "the collective responsibility of an administration depending for its term of office on the support of the majority of the [elected] assembly".¹⁴⁴ Founded on this law of British parliamentary practice, responsible government commenced its operation in New South Wales. There were, however, several factors, which worked within this accepted notion of responsible government, but which made the practical workings of the system rather more 'irresponsible' than its title would suggest.

Given the basic fact that ministries were required to command the support of a majority in the Legislative Assembly in order to survive, it is clear that the stability of the system depended upon consistent support being given to a ministry by individual members of parliament. Consistent support for a ministry has been, and still is, regarded as being primarily due to the presence of political parties. A.C.V. Melbourne acknowledges the dependence of a system of responsible government on 'parties', when he states that the colonists of New South Wales refrained from demanding responsible government in 1850 because of the absence of political parties in the colony.¹⁴⁵ T.H. Irving disputes this claim that the colony lacked 'parties', when he argues that the 1840s and 1850s saw "the

appearance in New South Wales of what the colonists thought of as 'parties'".¹⁴⁶ He further argues that, even if what was meant by 'parties' was "simply factions within the legislature, there is no necessity to assume that these groups could not secure ministerial responsibility".¹⁴⁷ What the faction system, which dominated politics after 1856, failed to provide, however, was the consistent and constant political allegiances necessary for the stability of a parliamentary system based on the concept of ministerial responsibility.

Unlike a true 'political party', allegiance to a faction was not based on political principles, or a set of practical objectives,¹⁴⁸ but rather solely on personalities. In 1881, William Forster summed up the situation, when he stated that "...we have had no parties in the colony; we have had nothing but personal followings....the parties have been simply personal followings".¹⁴⁹ Coinciding with this system of personal allegiance, was a traditional liberal abhorrence of a sectional, or class, approach to politics. What was insisted upon was a concern for the 'public interest' and the welfare of the whole community, not merely a part of it,¹⁵⁰ and it was this insistence that inhibited a highly-divisive and permanently polarised class approach to politics, with its consequent ideological, practical and emotional overtones. The emphasis on 'the whole community' resulted in little more than mere administrative government, and what was stressed were "Material wants, not social and political views,...".¹⁵¹ Thus, the major factors that separated leading colonial politicians were produced far less by "any radical or irreconcilable difference between their respective creeds or tendencies, than by their personal antagonism and their want of generosity, courtesy and self-control in their treatment of each other".¹⁵² In essence, the conflict between leading politicians was "not so much about what should be done as about how it should be done and who should do it".¹⁵³

Whilst factional allegiance was partly based on the shifting sands of personal prejudice, an even more important determining factor was the capricious system whereby support was given in exchange for favours, particularly paid cabinet

posts or public service appointments.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, the emphasis on administrative government accentuated a spirit of localism and competition between electorates for government favours, in the form of public works, and produced the 'roads and bridges member'; a member pledged his support in return for administrative favours in his electorate.¹⁵⁵ Although each faction leader did manage to command the loyal support of a hard core of members, many factors, such as disappointment over a 'broken promise', loss to a rival claim, tempting counter-proposals, and mere caprice, affected a large percentage of parliamentarians, and kept the state of political alignments in a constant state of flux.

Another important factor affecting political stability was the traditional liberal insistence on a consistent and untrammelled 'independence' in an MLA, for it was argued that no man who was wholly committed to a party could hope to consider any issue on its intrinsic merits. The result of this necessary independence was pointed out by the Herald, when it stated that "it is utterly impossible that honest and independent men can be expected to give any government more than steady support which may ... be withdrawn without violation of party fidelity".¹⁵⁶ This carefully guarded independence of the MLA served only to make political allegiance, already clearly precarious, even more fluid, and to make impossible firm and continuous control of the House by the ministry in office.¹⁵⁷ Thus, a system based on government by majorities, where majorities could never be assured or relied upon, inevitably produced unstable government.¹⁵⁸

Another meaning of the term 'responsibility in politics', and one which had attained general acceptance in British politics by the 1840s, invoked the concepts of duty and moral responsibility. In the same way as a headmaster is responsible for his pupils, so a government is responsible for the welfare and progress of the people it serves.¹⁵⁹ A government discharges this responsibility by assuming control and leadership of public affairs.¹⁶⁰ During the first twenty years of responsible government in New South Wales, however, the

impossibility of a ministry being able to secure a firm control of the Assembly, coupled with the lack of political principle basic to the system, reduced the role of government to that of exercising control over little but a narrow range of 'public business', usually confined to financial and administrative matters. Transitory and uncertain support, and frequent changes of government, prevented any real long-term planning of policy, and ministries avoided the construction of coherent legislative programmes. With their support so fluid and fickle, ministries also tended to regard it as too tricky and fate-tempting to touch issues that aroused great passion and controversy in the community. The dominant ethos of classlessness further inhibited the formulation of policies aimed at economic reform, and the social and political development of the colony. Since such policies could scarcely be expected to meet with the full approval of every sector of colonial society, they were regarded as partisan and offensive. The accepted role of the ministry was, therefore, more or less to 'satisfy' the whole community, rather than to lead it. At least until the late 1870s, the accepted notions basic to the faction system had all combined to make the role of the ministry ineffectual, and to clog up the wheels of the parliamentary machine. "For years past", the Herald commented in 1878, "public business has been retarded and legislation has been brought almost to a standstill by the petty divisions which have prevailed in the Assembly. There have been no lack of forces in the House, but those forces have been made powerless for good by the predominance of faction".¹⁶¹

Sir Henry Parkes, described later by B.R. Wise as having "an almost intuitive perception of constitutional propriety, according to the underlying principles of Responsible Government",¹⁶² was well aware of the degree to which the instability of the faction system had demoralised the operation of responsible government in New South Wales; during the course of his third ministry, between 1879 and 1882, he sought to eliminate the factors that had made the political system so 'irresponsible'. His chief concern was that, in a system, basic to which were the concepts of government by majority and ministerial responsibility, there existed no real basis on which a ministry

could seek, achieve and rely upon a steady and consistent support within parliament. Parkes realised the ineptitude and anarchy of a system, in which a man was often found 'supporting' a string of successive governments, irrespective of his prior affiliations.¹⁶³ Parkes hotly attacked such mindlessness and unruly independence, and at the same time indicated his projected solution to such a state of affairs: "Nothing ... could be so injurious to the honest and wholesome working of parliamentary government than for gentlemen to be elected to the Assembly who pretended to be of no colour, of no party, and who had no opinion of their own, but to support whatever turned up at that moment".¹⁶⁴ Parkes's prime mission during his tenure of office was to imbue a decaying political system with a degree of stability and consistency, that had previously been lacking. His successful efforts to effect a coalition of his own supporters with those of Sir John Robertson during late 1878¹⁶⁵ at once represented a clear attempt to create a strong and lasting government to rectify the inadequacies of the faction system, and to introduce some stability. The Parkes-Robertson coalition ministry remained in office for precisely four years and two weeks, a term much longer than any other ministry since 1856.

Parkes was also concerned with the role of the ministry in the government of the colony, and he expressed his long-held views on this subject some years later, during an important speech: "It was not particularly desirable that private members should introduce measures; the Government should introduce and pass into law all the measures to meet the present needs of the country".¹⁶⁶ During the life of the coalition, Parkes combined his desire for more stable and responsible political allegiance, with his aim to elevate the role of the ministry to one of tight control over public business and legislation. By defining the role of the ministry as one of leadership, and by assuming control for the ministry over most legislation,¹⁶⁷ Parkes aimed at achieving a firm two-way political polarisation within the legislature, in terms of 'for-or-against' the ministry.

Parkes realised that, in order to assert its leadership and provide a basis for the polarisation, the ministry would have to be prepared with a programme of measures, to which it must pledge itself, and, shortly after the ministry's formation, Parkes presented the outlines of a clear legislative programme.¹⁶⁸ Parkes could now maintain that the basis by which support should be given or withheld was "whether the general tendency of a party was in the direction of the advancement of the interest of the country", and he pleaded for "such decision and constancy of parties as would enable some body of men honestly ... to carry out great legislative objects". He could now declare that "There was sufficient difference between parties at all times for members to declare either on one side or the other".¹⁶⁹ The new role of the ministry, and its willingness to tackle important and long-delayed issues, provided "good ground for party division",¹⁷⁰ and led to an increased and more stable polarity of members' attitudes and voting patterns.¹⁷¹

By 1882, Parkes had provided evidence of "his vision of orderly politics",¹⁷² by effecting changes in the political system in the form of a new political stability, as the result of providing a sound basis for distinct and consistent political allegiance. His great mistake, as he must later have realised, was that the stable political polarisation he achieved between 1879 and 1883 depended solely on the existence of his ministry, and was therefore only transitory. Once his ministry ceased to exist, little remained to prevent a return to the flux of former years. In essence, nothing existed in the way of a permanent group commitment, forged on the basis of principle, that could overcome the effects of a change of government.

The coalition government resigned in January 1883, after a lost election, and Alexander Stuart came into office on a promise of land reform. Once this matter had been dealt with, however, the recent emphasis on sound legislative work disappeared and the government embarked on lavish administrative spending. It was, therefore, natural that, in consequence of this mindless activity, political alignments should revert to personalities, and the worst features of the system that

Parkes had so earnestly endeavoured to reform, returned. The situation, as it developed, became too much for Parkes to bear; on 3 November 1884, he resigned his seat in the Assembly, and in a letter to his constituents launched a bitter attack on the state of parliament. He claimed that "In the present Parliament political character has almost disappeared from the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, and personal objects - to put the matter in the mildest form - have to a large extent absorbed that kind of consideration which has taken the place of deliberation and legitimate debate". What had returned to the political forum, was the old practice of support in return for favours, and Parkes claimed to have "seen immense sums of public money voted away by private pressure and bargaining, ...".¹⁷³ The political instability, a consequence of the fluidity of personal, unprincipled allegiance, had also returned,¹⁷⁴ and, during the four years from the fall of the coalition government to the formation of Parkes's next ministry, four separate ministries occupied the Treasury benches, one of them lasting only a little over two months. E.A. Baker summed up the situation when he despairingly told the Assembly, in January 1887, that "They had had four Governments, and were to have two general elections in the course of 15 months. During this time they had practically done no business at all. He would like to ask hon. members how long this kind of thing was to go on. Was there to be no finality to it?".¹⁷⁵

Certainly by the mid-1880s, there was again a pressing need for reform, particularly in view of the colony's rapidly deteriorating financial position, which successive ministries proved incapable of solving due to the absence of any firm and consistent support for the measures they proposed. N.B.Nairn has argued that "there was no chance of reform being effected from within the system",¹⁷⁶ and that the 'old order' merely attempted to confuse the situation "by attempting to force a spurious division of parliament and the electorate on the basis of 'the fiscal question'", an issue with "barely a tangential relevance to the solution of the basic problem confronting the colony".¹⁷⁷ Parkes, however, did attempt reform from within the

system, his method being similar to his efforts of 1879-82, in that he utilised the fiscal issue, however irrelevant in reality, to create a firm and committed two-way polarisation of parliament, in the hope that political allegiance and behaviour would become stable enough to allow a ministry some real chance of solving the colony's problems.

In 1881, Sir Bartle Frere, until recently Governor of the Cape Colony, told the Royal Colonial Institute that a weakness in the British colonial system was "The belief that responsible government could not be perfectly carried out except by the operation of contending parties in the legislature, and he argued that party government was not essential to the success of representative institutions, ...".¹⁷⁸ As far as Parkes was concerned, however, the history of responsible government in New South Wales seemed to demand the emergence of a stable party system to ensure the successful operation of the colony's representative institution. This belief, in 1885, was not new to Parkes. In 1853, while serving on the Legislative Council's Constitutional Committee, he "had complained ... of the want of 'party' in the House",¹⁷⁹ and he later became increasingly convinced of the need for political activity, based on the presence of firmly established groupings within the legislature. As he stated in his autobiography, "Instead of the abolition of Party, we want an intelligent and conscientious adherence to Party lines, ...",¹⁸⁰ and, in another passage, "Parliamentary government can only be carried on by political parties".¹⁸¹ Parkes summed up his views in a speech during 1894, in which he said that "the fact remained that party government was the best form of government the wit of man had invented".¹⁸² Parkes correctly gauged that the backbone of parliamentary proceedings was the notion of conflict: "Every question of sufficient magnitude to enter into the policy of a Government, ..., must have two sides".¹⁸³ He realised the permanence of this contention, when he stated, in 1894, that "So long as civilised society was formed of intelligent beings there would be difference of opinion, which would display itself in opposing minds".¹⁸⁴ Parkes had endeavoured to utilise this constant factor of conflict between 1879 and 1882, by

applying it to his ministry's legislative programme in order to create two stable and consistent political groupings, on the basis of support for or opposition to the programme. The weakness of this attempt at reform was the lack of permanence involved in the basis for polarisation. A simple 'yes-no' division on the basis of proposed practical measures engendered no real continuity, or permanence of allegiance, and the possibility existed for fresh divisions of opinion as each separate measure came under review. The continuing absence of conflicts involving principle, whether real or imagined, doomed Parkes's polarising efforts to short-lived success. Conflict over practical issues could create short-term polarisation, but permanent allegiances and alignments were the products of conflicts of principle. As the Herald stated during the life of the coalition government, while "the principal measures of a session do not embody broad principles ..., it will always be difficult to make party government a reality".¹⁸⁵

Such a realisation, both during and after the life of the coalition, must have raised in Parkes the question as to what exactly constituted a 'party', that entity that could provide the permanent stability he so eagerly desired for the political system of New South Wales. Turning, as was his wont, to Britain for inspiration and guidance,¹⁸⁶ Parkes could view not only developments in English politics, but could also heed the words of Edmund Burke, who described 'a party' as "a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed".¹⁸⁷ Parkes could review the emergence, during the 1830s and 1840s, of a 'new theory' of party, based on conflicts of principle, clearly perceptible during the 1832 Reform Bill debates, and in Peel's betrayal of Conservative election pledges by repealing the Corn Laws. Such principled conflicts, when they arose, stultified the old theory of party, whose foundation was the personalised eighteenth-century faction, and became "the life-blood of the new theory".¹⁸⁸ As a result, the commonly accepted theory of 'party' changed as the nineteenth century progressed, and by the time he came to write his autobiography, Parkes was acknowledging 'party', in its "true

sense", to be based on "attachment to and promulgation of openly avowed principles, ...".¹⁸⁹ The Herald confirmed this view of 'party' as the accepted definition, when it upheld "the need ... of joining together for the support of common principles or the promotion of common purposes, ...".¹⁹⁰

When Parkes resigned from the Legislative Assembly in November 1884, he stated that he no longer possessed the strength "to assist in effecting a change for the better in this state of things",¹⁹¹ but it took him only five months, in which to muster enough strength to re-enter the parliamentary fray.¹⁹² A revived spirit and reforming zeal seems to have possessed him; he took his seat in the Assembly in September 1885 with an impertinent contempt for a degraded parliament,¹⁹³ and a determination to rise above the chaos of factional manoeuvring.¹⁹⁴ This determination was regarded, somewhat justifiably, as a belief in himself as "the only necessary man, and the only man who can do good".¹⁹⁵ In view of subsequent events, it would seem that Parkes's reforming spirit had not only revived, but had also matured to a point where he realised the need, both to polarise politics into two distinct groups, and to provide foundations that would make these groups stable and permanent. The way to achieve these objects was to introduce into New South Wales politics a conflict involving principle.¹⁹⁶ Since conflicts of principle were basic to 'the new theory' of party, in order to foster the growth of 'principled' parties, it became necessary to invent such conflicts "whenever they were not immediately apparent".¹⁹⁷ It is in this light that Parkes's full-scale introduction of the fiscal issue into New South Wales politics should be viewed. The raising of the fiscal issue, although of 'tangential relevance' to a practical solution to the colony's difficulties, was designed to make the political system sufficiently stable to be able to provide a solution, not merely propose one.

Parkes saw in the fiscal issue the prerequisites for a new and lasting political division - conflict and principle. In his autobiography, he posed the question, "What ground for agreement or accommodation can be discovered between freedom of commercial intercourse and restriction of commercial intercourse, ...?",¹⁹⁸

and, during 1886, he promoted to the full this emphasis on conflict. In January 1887, J.M. Toohy related how, on being alarmed at the extremism of both sides, he had proposed that "a conference between the heads of the parties would be a proper way out of the difficulty". He had, however, discovered that "there was no possibility of a conference with or conciliation of the freetrade party...".¹⁹⁹

To Parkes, political stability as the result of a permanent and 'principled' political polarisation was the chief objective. He made his reformist intentions, in raising the fiscal issue, quite clear during the course of his campaign. On one occasion he related how, "For some years past such confusion, such perplexity, such uncertainty had prevailed in the political life of this colony that it had been hardly possible to tell what any man's belief was, or what his vote would be. They at all events intended to terminate that state of things, ...".²⁰⁰ He told another audience that "The advantage ... of placing before the electors a clear issue was that it would clarify the political atmosphere, and form people into intelligent sides".²⁰¹ Parkes, in 1887, demonstrated the lessons he had learned from his 1879-82 experience. He endeavoured to overcome the problem of fluctuating support and opposition by creating a political polarisation based on fiscal principle. Such fiscal division, Parkes hoped, once formed, would remain permanent and would apply not only to purely fiscal matters, but would also determine and dictate allegiance on other issues. Therefore, what Parkes aimed at was "conscientious adherence to parties when the attachment was once formed".²⁰² This attachment had, as its foundation, the belief "in any given principle of political science - say free-trade, if you like - ...";²⁰³ it should not, however, he claimed, be confined simply to the one principle used to form the initial attachment. He advocated 'conscientious adherence to parties' on the basis of the "general principles" and "broad aims of the party",²⁰⁴ or "the whole policy of the Government".²⁰⁵

This emphasis on conscientious party allegiance was primarily designed to rid the political system of the

untrammelled independence that had contributed so greatly to the political instability of the colony. Parkes's determination to foster the acceptance of true party allegiance led to a natural hostility towards "the independent member, one who cannot be trusted by any party".²⁰⁶ Parkes was fond of quoting Lord Palmerston's remark to Queen Victoria: "Your Majesty, my experience of independent members is that they can never be depended upon".²⁰⁷ Exhorting the electors during the 1887 election to return "men who would steadily support the principles the Ministry had announced",²⁰⁸ Parkes also appealed to them "to set their faces against the chicanery and the so-called independent candidates who seek to steal into Parliament under the cover which simply hides their self-seeking or worse purposes".²⁰⁹

Perhaps the ultimate reason for Parkes's reformist efforts was his realisation of the need to make the operations of parliament efficient, meaningful and constructive. For this reason, his 1887 election campaign concentrated on the issues of "good government and commercial freedom".²¹⁰ By 'good government' was meant, not only "the urgent work of extricating the country from its present deplorable condition",²¹¹ but also the urgent need to create conditions in which a stable and secure government could operate efficiently and effectively to perform 'the urgent work'. He gave expression to this meaning of 'good government', when he wrote that "It is very desirable that the machine of Government should run on with as little friction and at the same time as much effectiveness in the discharge of its functions, as possible".²¹² Parkes summarised his views when he told B.R. Wise that "... we have to fight not only for freetrade but for something higher and better - for pure and efficient Government".²¹³

Parkes, then, was equally convinced of the need for reform in the methods of government. He told the Governor: "For the last few years Government with us has been carried on in a manner which has always appeared to me highly irregular and fraught with much mischief The proper lines of official discipline and deference have often been lost sight of. Not

only has the state of things been reduced to 'Sixes' and 'Sevens' in some cases but to a condition in others where 'Jack was as good as his Master'".²¹⁴ Parkes emphasised the need for reform, particularly to the ministry, and he stressed that a ministry must be run on the lines of "Oneness of consultation and action",²¹⁵ to remedy the "past example and practice" of Departments being run "as if they were independent bodies", and to achieve the object of "getting Government into better working order".²¹⁶ In a letter to every member of his 1887-89 ministry, Parkes made his position even more clear when he declared that "our usefulness as a Government consists in concert of action and this can only be maintained by the Head governing the Body". He went on to say: "In future I must make it a rule to be made acquainted with any new or unusual proposal before it is even submitted to the Cabinet".²¹⁷ He also related that, prior to the swearing in of the 1887 ministry, he had told his ministers that "I must in reality be the leader of the Government and that no new departure in any Department must be entered upon, no new thing done, without my knowledge and concurrence".²¹⁸

Parkes also tried to apply these standards of discipline to the entire freetrade 'party'. How successful he was in firmly establishing the concepts of party discipline, loyalty and responsibility will be analysed later, but there can be little doubt that he aimed to bring about a substantial change in the operation of the political system in New South Wales.

III

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, following the 1887 general election, George Dibbs summed up the method, motive and result of Parkes's fiscal polarisation campaign: "A cry was got up against the late Government that the imposition of the ad valorem duties was the insertion of the thin end of the wedge of protection. I said at the time that it was a

bogus cry, and a sham got up for party purposes, and the game has been well played".²¹⁹ Indeed, the game was well played, and, despite the irrelevance of the fiscal issue to all practical concerns, Parkes, by shrewdly utilising existing factional alignments and successfully capitalising on the polarising potential of the fiscal issue, was able to condition a stable two-sided political alignment.

The Jennings-Dibbs ministry, which took office in February 1886, represented a combination of the Stuart, Dibbs and Jennings factions, a combination which was formally instituted in August 1882 to oppose the Parkes-Robertson coalition,²²⁰ and which succeeded to office on the coalition's defeat. Although the combination's internal cohesion was suspect,²²¹ it was at its strongest when faced by its arch-enemy, Parkes. Thus, when Parkes raised his cry against Jennings' taxation proposals, it may be fairly claimed that many gave Jennings a vigorous support out of factional antipathy to Parkes. The motivating force of factional prejudice was amply demonstrated by strong Stuart-Dibbs-Jennings supporters who, during the 1885 election, declared themselves 'staunch freetraders', and yet retained their factional allegiance in 1886, strongly supporting ad valorem duties in the face of Parkes's equation of them with protection, and later became avowed 'converts' to protection.²²² The same overriding factional motivation was, of course, also evident in support of Parkes. Prior to, and during, 1885, a number of Parkes's factional followers had declared in favour of such fiscal measures as ad valorem duties, retaliatory grain duties against Victoria, and encouragement to local industries. During 1886, however, the advocacy of such measures was suddenly dropped, as these men rallied to Parkes in his fight against the 'protectionist' advocates of such measures.²²³ In a number of cases, factional prejudice coincided with fiscal opinion; whilst Henry Copeland, Travers Jones, J.M.Chanter, T.Ewing, and the long-standing protectionists, W.S.Targett, N.Melville, P.Hogan, R.Barbour, and W.T.Coonan could combine their antipathy to Parkes with a genuine belief in the efficacy of ad valorem duties, G.A.Lloyd, W.C.Wilkinson and W.J.Foster were able to combine their personal allegiance to Parkes and their opposition to ad valorem

duties.

But the effect of the ad valorem proposal itself, carrying as it did the fiscal label of 'protection', must not be underestimated as a determinant of political allegiance, both in and after 1886. Irrespective of other previous factional allegiance,²²⁴ a small number of long-standing protectionists came instinctively to support the imposition of ad valorem duties as a first instalment of protection.²²⁵ Yet even among ardent protectionists factional instincts remained strong, and three avowed protectionists placed their factional loyalty to Parkes and Robertson above their principled beliefs.²²⁶ Several other examples exist, however, to demonstrate that a rivalry between factional loyalty and fiscal allegiance did exist, and that this rivalry was not always resolved in favour of the former. I.E.Ives and R.W.Thompson had been associated since their entry into parliament with the Jennings-Dibbs faction, but both opposed the imposition of ad valorem duties. Two long-standing supporters of the Stuart-Dibbs-Jennings combination, W.J.Trickett and G.H.Reid,²²⁷ also felt constrained to oppose ad valorem duties. Reid later declared that "I came at last to the conclusion that I could not continue to support the Government, and made this clear on the second reading of the [Customs Duties] Bill".²²⁸

The greatest influence of the fiscal issue itself, in determining political allegiance, was its creation of a simple two-way alignment, thus eliminating factional allegiance extraneous to the conflict between 'protectionist' Jennings-Dibbs and 'freetrade' Parkes. At the beginning of the conflict, a significant extraneous force did exist, in the form of Sir John Robertson's personal following; it is testimony to Parkes's skill and influence that he was able to achieve the elimination of this force, all those who comprised it finally fitting into the neat two-way alignment. Robertson himself was in no way allied with Parkes in the latter's fiscal campaign; when Parkes moved his resolutions on 11 May, dissenting from Jennings' taxation proposals and really raising the fiscal conflict, Robertson declared his opposition to Parkes for not giving the

ministry "fair play",²²⁹ and he voted with Jennings in the resulting division.²³⁰ As far as Robertson was concerned, his personal antagonism to Parkes²³¹ overrode all else, and posed a distinct threat to the success of Parkes's fiscal polarisation campaign.

Not all Robertson's supporters, however, were prepared blindly to follow their chief. After Jennings took office, the intensity of Parkes's fiscal campaign worked slowly to eliminate feelings of personal loyalty to Robertson, and his personal followers began to divide largely on the basis of their genuine fiscal beliefs. When Parkes moved his resolutions on 11 May, James Inglis²³² declared that he intended to vote for them, "because they are in the interests of good government and sound fiscal policy", and he accused Robertson of being untrue to "his expressed opinions and principles".²³³ In the division on the resolutions, a number of Robertson's followers chose to vote against their chief in support of Parkes.²³⁴ During the debate on the resolutions, James Inglis declared that "We are told that if we vote for these resolutions we pledge ourselves to the leadership of Sir Henry Parkes",²³⁵ and, whilst Inglis denied that this was so, Robertson must have been aware of the strong pressure being applied to the loyalty of his personal followers by Parkes's persistent fiscal campaign. In recognition of "the fact that an absolute retirement ... [would] facilitate new political arrangements", Sir John Robertson announced his retirement from parliament in June 1886.²³⁶ Parkes's success in breaking down the Robertson faction to create a two-way polarisation was confirmed by the Herald, which wrote that Robertson's "unwillingness to turn the present Government out, ... [has] made Sir Henry Parkes the most formidable member of the Opposition. To all intents and purposes, he has been the real leader for weeks past; ...".²³⁷ Robertson's retirement left the way open for a formal division of his supporters between the 'freetraders' and the 'protectionists', and whilst the majority joined Parkes,²³⁸ some sided with Jennings in support of ad valorem duties,²³⁹ most of them eventually becoming 'protectionist converts'.²⁴⁰ At the time of the final passage of Jennings' Customs Duties Bill through the

Assembly, Parkes's projected two-way fiscal alignment had materialised to the extent that only six men were arrayed against the 'fiscal grouping' into which they would finally fit.²⁴¹

The degree to which the fiscal issue had permeated politics by the end of 1886 was demonstrated by the disintegration of Jennings' faction ministry and the succession of Parkes to office. The ostensible reason for Jennings' resignation in January 1887 was a serious cabinet conflict between himself and George Dibbs, although both Dibbs and W.H. Traill offer an alternative explanation. According to them, Jennings' ministry "lost all semblance of coherence"²⁴² as the Premier "allowed member after member of his Government to drift away into the hands of the protectionists ...".²⁴³ Traill maintained that Garvan, Lyne, Copeland and "some others" declared their 'conversion' to protection, while "Only two, Messrs Want and Dibbs, ventured to assert their fidelity to freetrade, while preserving their attitude of antagonism" to Parkes.²⁴⁴ Faced with the choice of re-constructing the ministry or resigning, Dibbs claimed that Jennings took the "inglorious course, and abandoned the position to the enemy" by resigning.²⁴⁵

The effect of Parkes's fiscal campaign on his personal fortunes was revealed when the Governor, Lord Carrington, sent for Parkes, "the recognised leader of the Opposition",²⁴⁶ and commissioned him to form a government, despite the fact that, as William Lyne pointed out, Parkes's position in the Assembly was nothing more than that of "the leader of a minority".²⁴⁷ Lyne's comment, though critical and partisan, was essentially true; the ministry had not been defeated in an important parliamentary division and had "a large and loyally working majority" at its back.²⁴⁸ Lyne strongly argued that "a gentleman with the same policy as that of the retiring Government" should have been commissioned to re-construct the ministry.²⁴⁹ It would appear, however, that Carrington, when he sent for Parkes, had been influenced by the popular movement that regarded Parkes as the only man who could rescue the country,²⁵⁰ and was also convinced that his new Premier was assured of a sweeping electoral victory, despite the serious minority in which he found

himself on his assumption of office.²⁵¹

Despite a number of contemporary and recent opinions to the contrary,²⁵² Parkes does not seem to have deviated from his fiscal polarisation principles in the construction of his ministry. He maintained that the ministry he would form would be "a thoroughly free trade Government" and would be restricted to the side of the Assembly which had been hostile to Jennings' ministry.²⁵³ Where misunderstanding arose was in the claim that, in choosing his ministry, Parkes adhered to the latter condition, but not to the former.²⁵⁴ This claim appears irrelevant when it is remembered that, according to the fiscal criteria laid down by Parkes in 1886, opposition to Jennings automatically represented adherence to freetrade. Although it was a slight exaggeration, Parkes was essentially correct when he stated that "I have taken my colleagues from the ranks of those with whom I have acted for the last twelve months".²⁵⁵ For this reason, it was not unnatural that there was included on his ministerial short list a mixture of men from previously diverse political groupings, since Parkes was only concerned with the group cohesion forged on the issue of Jennings' Customs Bill.²⁵⁶ From his own factional following were included W.J.Foster, J.Sutherland, W.Clarke, F.Abigail, C.J.Roberts,²⁵⁷ R.Wisdom, G.A.Lloyd, and J.C.Neild;²⁵⁸ among the ex-Robertsonians, J.F.Burns, J.Inglis, T.Garrett, C.Garland, and J.H.Young;²⁵⁹ and, finally, as a result of "the growing friendliness of the Read [sic] section of the House",²⁶⁰ and of his desire for "proceeding on the clear lines of a Free Trade policy for the country",²⁶¹ Parkes offered G.H.Reid a place in the ministry.²⁶² Operating on the premise that, by the end of 1886, only two 'sides' existed in the Assembly, Parkes's offers and final choices²⁶³ were perfectly consistent with his polarisation objectives.

Again, it should be stressed that it was the political stand taken in regard to Jennings' Customs Duties Bill that was, for Parkes, the basic determinant of a man's fiscal belief. It is in this context that the accusation that his ministry contained four protectionists²⁶⁴ should be treated. Certainly

all four had, as Loveday and Martin point out, "previously advocated the imposition of certain duties",²⁶⁵ but this did not mean that, prior to 1886, they were commonly regarded as being in favour of protection. As Abigail pointed out, his advocacy of ad valorem duties was at a time when the whole fiscal issue had "not ... cropped up", but, as soon as it "came into the arena of politics", a fact he presumably saw as being due to Parkes, "he nailed his colours to the [free-trade] mast", and spent his energy "in resisting every effort to pass the tariff proposals of the late Government, ...".²⁶⁶ William Clarke, the advocate of duties on imported farm produce, still claimed to be "an outspoken advocate of free-trade",²⁶⁷ and, when it came to the point, he gave notice of his priorities when he stated that "when he was asked if he would support the ad valorem duties ... he declined to do so, and said he would rather lose his motion to tax grain than ... involve the country in a general system of protection".²⁶⁸ Rallying to Parkes's freetrade standard,²⁶⁹ Clarke also assented, on joining the ministry, to Parkes's demand that "all notions of duties on imported produce must be given up ...".²⁷⁰ In addition, two of the doubtful four, Clarke and Sutherland, were closely associated during 1886 with at least one of the two influential extra-parliamentary bodies advocating freetrade, the FTA and the SCC.²⁷¹ The only member of the ministry whose fiscal conformity with Parkes's standards raises any doubt was C.J. Roberts, who, despite being described by Parkes as "one of the staunchest and ... most loyal members of the Opposition",²⁷² continued to admit his support of grain and ad valorem duties.²⁷³

Despite the success achieved by Parkes in polarising politics into two distinct camps and in achieving office, the acid test for his reformist ideas still remained to be faced. A two-way polarisation, built largely on factional prejudice and so far applicable to only one practical matter, was not a sufficiently strong foundation on which to build two stable 'principled' political 'parties'. What was required to make permanent the new political alignment was the confirmation and consolidation of the issue that had determined it as the fundamental basis of political conflict;²⁷⁴ and, in order to elevate

the fiscal issue to that status, what was necessary was an unmistakable commitment, on the part of all politicians, to either the principles of 'freetrade' or those of 'protection', as defined by Parkes. The obvious opportunity for achieving these goals was a general election. The general election of February 1887 provided Parkes with a stiff challenge, which he met with extraordinary vigour, but the results of which were not entirely to his satisfaction.

Parkes's first main objective in regard to the election was to narrow the field of contention down to the single issue of freetrade and protection. His campaign during 1886 had laid the foundation for success in this objective, so much so that Jennings, ignoring his prior denial of the relevance of the fiscal issue, told the Assembly in January 1887 that "the time has come when a definite issue on the question of free-trade or protection should be put before the country".²⁷⁵ Parkes's determination to have the election fought solely on the fiscal issue was amply demonstrated by his ministerial statement to the Legislative Assembly on 24 January 1887. During the course of his speech, Parkes stated that "there will be no mincing of the issue before the country. It will be for the Government or against it - free trade or protection".²⁷⁶ There was, however, an even deeper significance attached to Parkes's statement, in which he outlined the course to be pursued by the government, both during and after the election. Parkes himself described the statement as "an innovation upon the usual practice" of revealing the government's intentions only after an election,²⁷⁷ and a number of members demanded to know the meaning of this departure from standard practice.²⁷⁸ It would seem that Parkes merely desired an opportunity to suggest to all members of the House the lines on which the election should be fought, for after outlining the government's freetrade policy and highlighting the importance of the fiscal issue, he concluded: "I have stated sufficient for the guidance of hon. gentlemen".²⁷⁹ Clearly Parkes desired a clear-cut two-sided electoral contest; this he achieved by what one newspaper termed as "the adoption of a policy on which the country can take sides", the result being that "the people can then range them-

selves into free-trade and protection camps accordingly".²⁸⁰ Parkes's stated determination to "plant the flag of free trade" on "every hustings in the land"²⁸¹ was no idle threat, and he himself, apart from appearing in many metropolitan electorates, undertook six separate trips into the country to foster fiscal warfare and promote a freetrade victory.²⁸² The success of his campaign was confirmed after the election when the Herald commented that "Usually a large number of questions divide the attention of the constituencies at a general election, but on this occasion there was one issue - and one only - the issue of free trade and protection". This fact, claimed the newspaper, was in striking contrast to previous general elections, and made the 1887 election "the most remarkable that has been fought in this colony".²⁸³

Whilst Parkes was successful in achieving an electoral contest based almost exclusively on the fiscal issue, the way in which the issue was treated and defined by many parliamentary aspirants proved in no way satisfactory to the achievement of Parkes's goal of creating two defined, cohesive and 'principled fiscal parties'. Parkes's reformist scheme envisaged a polarised political situation, which was initially based largely on factional prejudice with some fiscal trappings, but which would quickly develop into permanent 'principled' fiscal groupings, due to the acceptance of his criteria of fiscal allegiance: supporters of Jennings and ad valorem duties were protectionists; supporters of Parkes and opponents of ad valorem duties were freetraders. The universal acceptance of these criteria and their associated labels was not, however, fully achieved during the general election of 1887. Only when the practical political futility of non-conformity to Parkes's criteria was revealed, did the lingering clouds of fiscal confusion disappear.

CHAPTER 2

FACTIONS AND FRICTIONS, PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMMES, 1887-1891.

I. Fiscal Conflict, Liberalism and the Parliamentary Free-traders.

"Labour has won its present position in Australia not by virtue of its organisation, but by virtue of its aims. Other parties have not failed to organise merely because they are too indolent or too proud, but because they lacked the united impulse, the common faith essential to give the method effect".

- The Times (London).

I

Between 1887 and 1891, neither parliamentary fiscal group achieved any general collective agreement on the precise economic meaning, implications and practical operation of its fiscal creed. In fact, it was not until 1889 that all members even nominally accepted the fiscal label of the group they professed to support. The 1887 general election greatly contributed to the achievement of such nominal unity, but it fell well short of total success.

Among the members of the opposition there was considerable reluctance in early 1887 to accept Parkes's dictum that their support of ad valorem duties automatically branded them as 'protectionists'. On 20 January 1887, a full meeting

of "members of the Opposition" was held, and was followed by a separate meeting of "the protectionist members of the Opposition".¹ However, at a meeting on 24 January of "between 30 and 40" opposition members, "it was determined that the challenge thrown down by Sir Henry Parkes with regard to freetrade and protection should be accepted without hesitation", and it was resolved that "The Opposition will therefore appeal unitedly to the constituencies in advocacy of a policy of moderate and judicious protection".² This decision indicated a general willingness to regard the imposition of 5% ad valorem duties and import duties on agricultural produce as 'protectionist' measures,³ and the meeting was careful to draw a distinction between "extreme or ultra-protectionist" views and "those of moderation".⁴ This decision to accept the protectionist label created no problems for those members of the opposition who were protectionists of long standing,⁵ nor for those who had been converted to an acceptance of the label during the crisis of 1886.⁶ Other members of the opposition now also willingly accepted the protectionist label, declaring their conversion during the course of the election campaign.⁷

There was, however, a considerable number of the opposition that refused to accept Parkes's fiscal criteria by undergoing immediate protectionist conversion, and many members of the opposition continued to regard themselves as staunch freetraders⁸ or, at least, stoutly refused to be termed protectionists.⁹ In addition, a number of others adopted highly ambiguous and equivocal fiscal stances,¹⁰ while some refused to adopt any fiscal label at all.¹¹ In February 1887, a recent protectionist 'convert', Harold Stephen, declared that in consequence of its collective adoption of the doctrine of protection, the opposition had "lost several gentlemen, such as Mr Dibbs, who was with them before, but, being a freetrader, he could not consistently now fall in with the protectionist policy".¹² It transpired, however, that, on the assembling of parliament after the election, the opposition had not 'lost' its fiscal non-conformists; all were firmly planted upon the opposition benches.¹³ Although the specific fiscal beliefs of

all these men conformed to Parkes's definition of a protectionist, it was a significant set-back to the consolidation of at least a nominally united 'protectionist' opposition that so many refused to accept their designated fiscal label. Furthermore, also included among the opposition ranks was R.B. Wilkinson who, although he approved of Parkes's fiscal declarations and condemned those of the opposition, decided to sit with the opposition because he approved of "its policy for the treatment of country districts".¹⁴

An equally disturbing factor for the realisation of Parkes's object of two clear-cut fiscal groups was the number of declared protectionists who stated that they would support Parkes. Ninian Melville referred to this situation when he stated, after the election, that "there are a number of hon. gentlemen following the Government whom I have myself heard advocating protection. Some of them even went the length of advocating it at their meetings, and yet during the contest they actually ... declared for the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government".¹⁵ One of the particular cases specified by Melville¹⁶ was that of Jacob Garrard who reinforced his prior advocacy of protection¹⁷ during the election campaign by declaring his opposition to the repeal of ad valorem duties and his support for "the encouragement of local industries".¹⁸ At the same time, Garrard referred to Parkes as being "head and shoulders above any other man in the colony", and the only man who could "lift them out of the slough of despond into which they had fallen".¹⁹ An even more striking example, also specified by Melville,²⁰ was that of W.F. Schey who, although stating his support for "a policy of discriminative protection", declared that "he considered it was his duty to allow his opinions to stand by for the present", on the grounds that "Sir Henry Parkes was the only man capable of dealing with their present difficulties". He concluded by "unhesitatingly" promising that "to Sir Henry Parkes he should, if elected, accord his heartiest support".²¹ It was, therefore, not surprising that on the assembling of parliament, five protectionists were found occupying the ministerial benches.²²

In addition, the ministerial ranks contained two men who had supported the imposition of ad valorem duties in 1886,²³ one at least of whom had not repented, declaring that he would not vote for their abolition.²⁴ Also there was a parliamentary newcomer, Thomas Waddell, who had declared that "in the main he was a free-trade candidate", but who declared his support for ad valorem duties.²⁵ If the 1887 general election had generally aided the consolidation of two antagonistic fiscal groups, it had also created, or at least failed to solve, a number of incongruities, which required elimination before even a nominal fiscal consensus could be achieved by both parties.

Parkes's fiscal criteria had, however, been accepted to such a degree that the not inconsiderable number of fiscal non-conformists seemed to occupy an unprofitable political no-man's land in the new two-sided division.²⁶ In March 1887, J.P. Abbott was elected leader of the opposition, although the Herald pointed out that, "as the party who have chosen Mr Abbott as their leader are protectionists, ... it is very probable that a third party will be formed in the House".²⁷ No such party ever eventuated, the fiscal non-conformists almost to a man deeming the wiser course to be a 'conversion' to fiscal conformity as defined by Parkes. Led, in July 1887, by the conversion to 'protection' of George Dibbs, both fiscal groupings began to achieve nominal fiscal unity; by 1889, with only minor exceptions, the process was complete.²⁸ Although the fiscal inconsistencies were eradicated, the true nature of the issue that was supposed both to divide the two parties, and to provide the basis of unity within each one, was soon to be demonstrated. In March 1887, men who upheld 5% ad valorem duties - the basis of Parkes's definition of a protectionist - were found among the opposition in the guise of both protectionists and freetraders, as well as among the ministerialist freetraders. Furthermore, the ease with which 'conversions' were made tends to throw doubt on both the degree of profundity involved in the fiscal conflict, and the degree of real cohesion likely to be present in either party. That the leaders of both fiscal parties had little regard for the real meaning and

economic implications of both freetrade and protection, was made manifest during the years 1887 to 1892 in the customs arrangements designed by both parties. That each party came under fire from the other for its failure to practise the doctrine it preached, certainly threw considerable doubt on its credibility. The fact, also, that the fiscal measures, passed into law between 1887 and 1892, became the subject of considerable tension and controversy within each party, destroys any illusion of real cohesion within each on the only issue on which they professed to be united. A nominal consensus there may have been, but there was certainly no cohesion about the basic fiscal principles or details. The issue, as raised by Parkes, was for the political purpose of stable polarisation. The more simplified and non-specific its expression, the more likely it was to achieve its purpose; but the more vaguely the fiscal theories were defined, and the greater the avoidance of expounding their specific economic implications, the less likely was the achievement of anything more than a purely nominal fiscal consensus within each party.

Parkes at no stage dwelt on the economic or theoretical meaning of freetrade, and the only sense in which he applied it to political reality was as a label for a purely pragmatic projected solution to the colony's financial difficulties, that of retrenchment and no further taxation. The policy of no new taxation impositions was, however, theoretically antithetical to pure freetrade principles, which "abjure all import duties", thus placing the burden on other forms of taxation for the raising of revenue.²⁹ The facts that revenue was required so urgently in the colony and that Parkes proposed no fresh taxation could only mean that the customs was still to be used as the primary source of state revenue; as Traill commented, "Where a Custom-house establishment has to be maintained, it is a cheap and handy way of getting money for the public Treasury. But it involves a violation of free-trade principles,..."³⁰ In July 1887, Parkes's Customs Duties Bill was passed;³¹ ad valorem duties were to be abolished, the number of articles to be charged specific duties was largely reduced, and a new schedule of specific duties was included at lower rates. The

new tariff, however, resulted in only a marginal difference in the revenue obtained from import duties, the amount falling from the 'protectionist' high in 1886 of £2,068,571 to the 'freetrade' low of £1,879,086 in 1890.³² Further, although the 1887 Customs Duties Bill abolished the 'protectionist' ad valorem duties, Parkes indicated the degree to which revenue considerations overshadowed any doctrinaire adherence to free-trade by continuing their operation until 1 October 1887, thus earning £227,000 for the freetrade ministry.³³ In order to offset this slight drop in revenue, Parkes had further recourse to the customs, passing in 1887 bills raising the excise duty on colonial spirits³⁴ and tobacco,³⁵ and initiating an excise duty on beer brewed in the colony.³⁶ By these measures, receipts from excise duties were greatly increased,³⁷ thus raising the total customs revenue for 1887, 1889, and 1890 above that of 1886.³⁸

Commenting on the new tariff arrangements, a regular columnist in the Herald declared "The fact is these shibboleths 'Free Trade' and 'Protection' are, after all, more or less 'will-o'-the-wisps'. The Jennings Government proclaimed that ... its tariff was imposed for revenue purposes only. The tariff of the Parkes Government is obviously imposed for revenue purposes only; but it is not a freetrade tariff. It is a simplified tariff, and its simplicity constitutes its only genuine claim to acceptance".³⁹ W.H. Traill put the issue in correct perspective when he compared protectionist Melbourne and freetrade Sydney, and concluded that "the difference in the amount collected for Customs at the two places was so slight as to be almost immaterial as bearing upon the influence of the political systems prevailing at the two places".⁴⁰ During the passage of the tariff, Parkes himself admitted that "We have never pretended to give to this tariff of ours the character of a purely free-trade tariff. We know that in their incidence some of the duties are protective", a situation which, he went on to claim, "we are prepared, as soon as we possibly can, to rectify ...".⁴¹ As long as Parkes remained Premier of New South Wales, however, nothing was ever done to alter the tariff, despite a number of embarrassing reminders,

constant pressure, and further pledges to do so. Thomas Waddell exposed the farce by declaring the Parkes ministry's "policy was neither free trade nor protection. It was absurd to say ... [there] was a distinct issue of free trade and protection before the country".⁴²

Perhaps the most embarrassing reminder of the non-freetrade nature of the 'freetrade' tariff was the campaign mounted in 1889 against the retention of 'protective' duties on butter, bacon, cheese and kerosene. T.H.Hassall referred to "the anomaly of a free-trade Ministry" taxing such commodities;⁴³ T.C.O'Mara claimed that "so far from elevating the flag of free trade", Parkes and his ministry "had betrayed the cause";⁴⁴ and J.P.Abbott maintained that "Kerosene was protected here, and so were butter, bacon, and cheese, and yet those who advocated those duties called themselves freetraders".⁴⁵ Even a freetrade correspondent was forced to admit that "the advocacy of our cause has been greatly weakened through allowing a number of protective duties to disfigure our tariff".⁴⁶ The climax of the campaign came on 2 April 1889 when, in a successful attempt to embarrass Parkes's new Colonial Treasurer, W. McMillan,⁴⁷ the leading protectionist, J.P.Abbott, moved that the government "bring in a Bill to remove the duties now imposed upon bacon, butter, cheese, and kerosene imported into the Colony".⁴⁸ As Abbott pointed out, "If we are to have free-trade at all, then let us have free-trade, pure and simple. Do the free-traders of this country imagine for one moment that they are to govern the country by taking revenue from what must be protective duties?"⁴⁹ The success of this motion put McMillan in the awkward position of being forced to pledge that the ministry would endeavour to make its tariff a free-trade one,⁵⁰ a pledge that was never honoured. The free-trade correspondent, therefore, could justifiably conclude: "We have been constantly taunted by the protectionists that we preached one doctrine and practised another, and there is no doubt we have laid ourselves open to this reproach, ...".⁵¹

The basic lack of doctrinaire concern among many protectionists was amply demonstrated by the fact that the man who

declared in April 1887 that "I shall not be a free-trader today, and a protectionist to-morrow",⁵² was, five months later, elected leader of the protectionist party.⁵³ On the strength of his 1886 advocacy of ad valorem duties as a means of raising revenue, Dibbs was deemed fit to represent the views of the majority of the protectionists. The majority view of 'protection' as an increased customs tariff to raise revenue⁵⁴ hardly coincided with the doctrinaire view of protection as "import duties which either exclude foreign commodities of particular kinds, or so raise their selling price as to give an advantage to local producers of like articles".⁵⁵ This fact was recognised by Dibbs's 1891 Colonial Treasurer, John See, when he stated: "a truly protective measure would not give us revenue. We know that perfectly well." See went on to equate his ministry's revenue-raising policy with "the principle of protection", only "because our friends opposite have called it by that name".⁵⁶ He thus reaffirmed Parkes's hollow criteria of 1886 as the basis of 'protectionist' belief among the majority of his colleagues.

That the consideration of revenue formed the basis of protectionist belief among most protectionist MsLA, was clearly revealed by an altercation among the protectionists in the Assembly during October 1890. Outlining his fiscal views, O.O. Dangar stated that, since "it was imperative that revenue should be obtained, ... I would use the Customs-house as a financial channel for collecting further revenue, ...". By way of explaining his retirement from the protectionist party, Dangar claimed that his 'theory' was "not one to which the protectionist party are prepared to nail their colours", whereupon Henry Copeland irritably retorted, "It is exactly what the protectionist party are advocating!".⁵⁷ In confirmation of Copeland's retort, Dibbs's revised tariff of 1892⁵⁸ bore limited resemblance to protectionist theory, but increased the incidence of indirect taxation through the customs, in order to reap revenue to wipe off a deficit and sustain a high level of expenditure. The new tariff, effective from December 1891, greatly increased the number of articles subject to specific duties, and imposed ad valorem duties of 10% on common articles

and 15% on a range of luxuries. Successful in raising the total customs revenue to almost £3 million in 1892,⁵⁹ the tariff soon after lost its effectiveness to the point where only £2,400,000 was collected in 1893, and £2,344,000 in 1894.⁶⁰ The practical difference, therefore, between freetrade and protection, as applied in New South Wales between 1887 and 1894, was slight; both were designed to raise revenue.⁶¹ The term that more accurately described them both was "revenue tariffism".⁶²

The Maitland Mercury neatly exposed the depths of the fiscal controversy after 1886 when it stated that "Electors should ... remember that the issue to be raised is not between freetrade and protection as rival theories. It is between free trade and protection as a present means of replenishing the revenue chest".⁶³ In purely fiscal and economic terms, Parkes never intended the issue to have any greater significance than this. But if Parkes was not motivated by principle, neither was George Dibbs. As P.N.Lamb points out: "To political observers throughout Dibbs's turbulent political life, there was never any question of his accepting the doctrine of protection. Like Parkes, he was an opportunist highly skilled in exploiting doctrines for political ends".⁶⁴ Dibbs's political ends in 1887 were no more idealistic than a simple desire for power.

Dibbs realised that Parkes's unmistakable leadership of the freetrade party destroyed his own chances of achieving power and influence as a freetrader.⁶⁵ He further recognised that, unless closely identified with, or preferably in charge of, the opposition, his way to power was barred. This awareness was reinforced by two episodes in Dibbs's political career shortly before his 'conversion' to protection. In March 1887, Dibbs contested the Speakership of the Assembly against J.H.Young, and was defeated 63/49.⁶⁶ As J.H.Young himself later commented: "... he [Dibbs] had great hopes that he would be included in a freetrade Government, and when he was put up to oppose him (Mr Young) for the Speakership and was defeated he knew that he had no hopes of office from the freetraders ...".⁶⁷

During 1889, B.R. Wise related how "five weeks before Mr Dibbs turned protectionist he asked every new member of the Assembly if he would join him in forming a free-trade party to turn Parkes out of office", and it was only when "every member of the House refused" that he turned protectionist. As Wise concluded, "If some of the members had hastened to Mr Dibbs's blandishments and sacrificed themselves he would have been a freetrader at this moment".⁶⁸ Leadership of the protectionist opposition was the only way to political power for Dibbs. George Reid shrewdly observed that "the front Opposition bench" was a "highly attractive place for ambitious politicians, ... [but] they could only get there by becoming converted".⁶⁹ As a result, fiscal conversion became "a symptom peculiar to the times".⁷⁰ Dibbs's blatant exploitation of, and complete lack of doctrinaire concern for, protection was amply revealed in February 1889. In order to prolong the life of his minority ministry, Dibbs expressed his willingness to abandon "the proposal to change the fiscal policy" so as "to receive support from members generally ...".⁷¹

As far as Parkes and Dibbs were concerned, then, the fiscal struggle simply represented the 'old game' of power-based faction politics in a new, but more stable, form. Parkes's intention in raising the fiscal issue was not to destroy, but rather to rejuvenate and stabilise, a political system, which had as its basis an unqualified and unprincipled quest for power. Explaining his reasons for refusing to contest the election of 1889, S.W. Moore described the election as "a battle ostensibly between two great rival policies, though in reality between two political parties ... the real issue is 'which party shall rule'; whether Dibbs and Co. or whether Parkes and Co. shall be entrusted with the reins of Government It is party first, and whatever you like next".⁷² Writing in 1890, Sir Charles Dilke assented to Moore's description of the unprincipled factional power struggle when he approvingly referred to the Bulletin's efforts "to get rid of what it calls the 'rival syndicates', which it continually asserts are 'played out' - the syndicates being Sir Henry Parkes and his friends, and Mr Dibbs and his friends".⁷³

To Parkes, Dibbs and many of the survivors of the faction system, the fiscal issue was seen as little more than the basis of a re-orientation and rejuvenation of a system of personalised, power politics.⁷⁴ To them, the fiscal issue represented little more than a means of resuscitating a political system, to which they were accustomed and committed, and which had appeared, at the end of 1885, to be in the process of disintegration. The fiscal issue as a controversy involving political philosophy, principled debate and specific social and economic overtones had little relevance for them; they therefore envisaged little real change in the substance of politics. Other men attracted to politics in 1887, however, saw the matter in a different light. The raising of the fiscal issue in 1886 to supreme political importance enticed new men to enter the political arena, men whose concern for fiscal doctrine per se was very real. In general, such men either had economic interests that would be seriously threatened or vastly enhanced by a policy of freetrade or protection, or were men of real political principle to whom freetrade or protection was an integral component of an overall political philosophy, which they now viewed as capable of practical achievement. It was these men who were responsible for the substantive changes that took place in politics after 1886.

Despite the lack of reality of the fiscal issue as a principled source of party division, there was in both parties a significant number of men who did regard the fiscal issue as more than simply a means of providing political stability or achieving power. Such men were genuinely concerned either about the economic implications or the theoretical basis of the practical application of their chosen fiscal doctrine. Within the freetrade party, these genuine fiscal concerns became evident, but their presence in no sense created a consensus about the principles of freetrade. Rather, what resulted was a deep conflict within the party over the specific meaning and application of the doctrine.

Traditional freetrade policy in New South Wales was

based on a customs tariff, which favoured the merchant and commercial classes. The absence of protection to colonial industries meant that the infant colony depended on the import trade. On many necessary items of import, however, there were imposed customs duties of an incidence low enough not to afford protection, but high enough to form the basis of state taxation, by providing vast sums of revenue, contributed equally by all colonial consumers, rich or poor. Under this system, as W.H. Traill pointed out, the "magnate of the mercantile class" and the "great capitalist" had achieved their affluence, and "it was natural that they should repulse with apprehension any proposition to alter conditions which had worked so well for them".⁷⁵ It was for this reason that a number of Sydney's prominent merchants decided to enter political life early in 1887.⁷⁶ In reply to J.P. Abbott's taunt that "he never sought a seat in Parliament until the business he was engaged in was affected by taxation",⁷⁷ William McMillan, prominent Sydney merchant,⁷⁸ ex-president of the SCC and member of the FTA,⁷⁹ was forced to "confess honestly" that "one of the principal reasons which led me to come forward at the last general election was that an attempt was being made to alter the whole commercial and fiscal system of the colony, and because I believed that upon the free-trade system, which had been in vogue more or less up to that time, depended the future prosperity of the colony".⁸⁰ McMillan was here referring to his fear of protection; during the next five years, however, he and his merchant colleagues were given an even greater cause for apprehension by the desire on the part of some members of his own party to alter the colony's 'fiscal system'.

The freetrade policy enacted by Parkes during 1887 served well the interests of Sydney's wealthy merchant class. Opposed to the fettering of trade by prohibitive import duties (a fact which ad valorem duties seemed to introduce), they nevertheless regarded freetrade as compatible with the imposition of some import duties, particularly on common or necessary items, in order to raise substantial revenue, and to do away with the necessity for imposing fresh taxation, namely

direct income and property taxation.⁸¹ One such imported commodity, whose customs taxation met with general merchant approval, was tea. In 1889, McMillan described the duty on tea as "a freetrade duty", and defended it on the grounds that it "may very reasonably be used as a tax on the working man for his protection ...".⁸² The merchants quite openly expressed their support of 'revenue tariffism'. Just prior to his election to parliament in 1887, McMillan defended the traditional freetrade tariff, by explaining that it was "not scientifically a free-trade tariff", because "things which were considered best for raising revenue were put upon the list". In altering the tariff, he concluded, "it would not be a question of anything but simply revenue with him".⁸³ William Clarke, who had large commercial interests, also supported the system of taxation through the customs. He represented popular commercial and merchant opinion when he told his constituents that "whatever duties were imposed would be imposed for revenue purposes only. Their policy was distinctly free trade".⁸⁴

The members of the colony's wealthy commercial class, which included a significant number of freetrade MSLA between 1887 and 1892,⁸⁵ both benefited from and staunchly upheld this traditional freetrade policy of indirect customs taxation. As a result, they fiercely resisted any proposals to alter it. In particular, they emphatically repudiated the elimination of indirect customs taxation and its replacement by a system of direct taxation on land, property or income,⁸⁶ a substitution that scientific freetrade doctrine envisaged. Not really pushed to state its true opinions about direct taxation until its imminent imposition in 1894, Sydney's merchant community then expressed its preference for 'revenue tariffism' in no uncertain terms. This preference was so deep-seated, in fact, that many 'free-trade' merchants expressed a preference for Dibbs's 'protectionist' revenue tariff rather than for direct taxation: "Hence it comes to pass that the repeal of even an oppressive and iniquitous tariff may be regarded with misgivings by a commercial community whose sympathies are mainly with free-trade".⁸⁷ This attitude was even more clearly expressed in 1895

when another survey of merchant opinion concluded that, "As to the question of the land and income taxes, there are many in commercial circles who do not thoroughly approve of the proposals as they stand at present.... The idea of having an income tax receives but very little support from the majority of the merchants. They would prefer the reimposition of the duty on tea,⁸⁸ from which, ..., a sum could be derived much in excess of the amount that the income tax was expected to yield".⁸⁹

Parkes's own traditional freetrade views were in accordance with the vested-interest 'revenue tariffism' of the merchants; revenue from the customs, or indirect taxation, formed the basis of his freetrade beliefs.⁹⁰ Income taxation was anathema to Parkes,⁹¹ and he showed equal reticence about the introduction of a land tax.⁹² Parkes's revised 1887 tariff gave clear evidence of the revenue considerations that were basic to his view of freetrade. Furthermore, the reactions to the tariff by members of the freetrade party clearly revealed the fundamental division of opinion about freetrade within the party. The revised 1887 tariff reduced the number of items to be taxed, by abolishing the duty on the import of, amongst other things, galvanised iron manufactures, a number of timber manufactures, biscuits, varnish and oil paints. High specific import duties, however, were retained on the raw materials used in the manufacture of all these articles. This was obviously a measure designed to appeal to merchants and importers, rather than colonial manufacturers. The merchants and traders, however, whilst undoubtedly delighted at the trading prospects of such a tariff, expressed concern at the amount of revenue that the tariff would yield. In a letter to Parkes in May 1887, the FTA, dominated by merchants,⁹³ pointed out the inevitable decrease in the revenue that would be collected from the customs by allowing manufactured articles in free. In the knowledge that the volume of their trading business could scarcely be affected, the FTA merchants suggested that, in addition to taxing raw materials, the government also impose "equivalent duties" on manufactured items "until the time arrives when the revenue will ... permit of the abolition of the more important duties named." Signed by the

secretary of the FTA and prominent member of the SCC, Edward Pulsford, the letter purported to have received "the approval of the president and council of this association".⁹⁴

Parkes's 1887 tariff, however, gave no joy whatever to the group of doctrinaire freetraders within the party; they were strongly of the opinion that 'freetrade' meant the admission of all articles of import into the colony without duty, and that 'revenue tariffism' was simply incompatible with freedom of trade. While the merchant freetraders advocated indirect taxation, as in the duty on tea, in preference to direct taxation, the doctrinaire freetraders held the opposite opinion. Their most consistent spokesman, B.R. Wise, expressed this view when he urged Parkes to grant "a concession ... to the general taxpayer by reducing the tax on some general article of consumption, like tea", and by "calling upon all classes to pay some form of direct tax".⁹⁵ Clearly, then, Parkes's 1887 revenue tariff was, to men like Wise, totally incompatible with free-trade. Wise, in fact, stated that many of its items were "direct hindrances to trade, and unjustifiable upon any fiscal principle".⁹⁶ Elaborating on the inequitable nature of the tariff in taxing the import of raw materials and not manufactured goods, Wise disagreed with most of his colleagues in the FTA by maintaining that the "true remedy" was not to tax manufactured goods as well, but rather "to admit raw materials free from duty".⁹⁷

The view that, by taxing the import of raw materials, the freetrade tariff was inconsistent and contained 'anomalies' was strongly held by a small, but vocal, group of freetrade MsLA.⁹⁸ Their determination to remove the tariff's 'anomalies'⁹⁹ was demonstrated on 9 April 1889 when James Tonkin, an advanced freetrader, moved for the abolition of the duties on the import of timber. Although the motion was decisively defeated 60/6, several freetraders displayed their disillusionment with Parkes's tariff by supporting it.¹⁰⁰ At the FTLA conference in August 1889, a resolution calling for "the admission of raw material free of duty" and "the removal of all other [tariff] anomalies" was unanimously carried.¹⁰¹ Despite these expressions of

dissatisfaction, Parkes and the merchants remained unmoved. As B.R.Wise stated some years later, "...the freetrade party, which came into power in 1887, never introduced a really free-trade tariff, ... the Colonial Treasurer never moved for the abolition of the anomalies which then existed".¹⁰²

Despite Loveday and Martin's criticism of Edmund Burke's definition of a 'party',¹⁰³ Martin has elsewhere confirmed the necessity for unity within a parliamentary group before that group can be justifiably termed 'a party'; the parliamentary group must be "united by a desire to promote a political principle, or set of principles".¹⁰⁴ Certainly all the members of the parliamentary freetrade group after 1886 were united by a desire to promote the principle of freetrade, but it was in the attempt to elucidate what was meant by 'the principle of freetrade' that fundamental differences and disunity arose. Furthermore, the conflict over the meaning and application of freetrade was simply one aspect of a more profound and fundamental conflict among the members of the free-trade group. If the motive of the wealthy commercial free-traders in upholding 'revenue tariffism' was the retention of what, for them, was an advantageous economic system, that of the doctrinaire free-traders in opposing the 'anomalous' duties was expressed by P.H.Morton when he claimed that "Most of these duties bore heavily upon the class least able to bear them - the working class".¹⁰⁵ What formed the real basis for conflict within the freetrade party was not freetrade doctrine per se, but a developing social and political conflict between labour and capital, between radical and conservative. Until the appearance of sophisticated socialist theory and militant political labour organisations to challenge assumed traditions and champion the rights of 'the common man', the conflict between labour and capital was largely waged within the intellectual and philosophical bounds of nineteenth-century British liberalism. In Britain, the conflict erupted within the Liberal party in the early 1880s, and the antipathy between advanced or radical liberals and conservative laissez-faire liberals within the freetrade party in New South Wales between 1887 and 1894 represents the colonial version of the same

conflict. It was this conflict, which, at least until 1894, kept the freetrade party deeply divided on a wide range of social, economic and political issues, prevented the formulation of a relevant and constructive 'party' policy, and inhibited the achievement of even basic principled unity so essential in a true political party.

II

Writing in 1900, Alfred Deakin maintained that "With us [in N.S.W.] the British tradition that a Liberal is necessarily a Free Trader still obtains, ...".¹⁰⁶ Certainly Parkes constantly referred to the indissoluble tie between freetrade and liberalism,¹⁰⁷ and the link was further emphasised early in 1889 when B.R. Wise "first adopted the distinctive epithet 'Liberal' for the Freetrade party".¹⁰⁸ Although his idea was met with ridicule¹⁰⁹ and a certain amount of opposition from within the freetrade party,¹¹⁰ 'Liberal' came to share with 'Freetrade' a prominent place in the title of the party and its organisations.

The chief factor which led Wise to adopt the title 'Liberal' for the freetrade party was his concern for other issues outside the bounds of the purely fiscal theory of free-trade, issues which he felt were being neglected and ignored by most politicians. Wise expressed his frustration with the existing situation when he complained to Parkes in August 1888 about the continued obsession, to the exclusion of all else, with the narrow "tin-kettle controversy between Protection & Free Trade".¹¹¹ In a speech less than a month later, he was rather more explicit when he claimed that "while this wretched controversy between Protection and Free Trade occupies public attention, the difficulty is to obtain consideration for any measure of reform".¹¹² His stated aim was to involve the freetrade party in "other important questions

besides those relating to commerce",¹¹³ and his desire to alter the party's name to 'the Liberal party' was one way of achieving that aim. The significance attached by Wise to the party's title was expressed by another prominent freetrader, Bruce Smith, when he stated that "a political party-title ... should, before all things, signify, with some degree of clearness, the certain fixed principles, however general they may be, by which those who embrace that faith intend to be guided in pronouncing judgment upon any public question".¹¹⁴ The party's change of title to 'the Liberal party' would not only automatically broaden the scope of the party's political concerns, but would express the basic principles determining the free-trade party's "action ... upon other important questions"¹¹⁵ and its "judgment upon any public question".¹¹⁶

As a doctrinaire liberal himself, Smith gave his opinion that Wise's "determination to couple with the subject of Free Trade ... the much broader one of Liberalism" was "an undeniably wise course".¹¹⁷ It was, however, in the very agreement of Wise and Smith that the freetrade party should openly espouse the broader principles of liberalism, that fundamental conflict emerged; for between the two men there existed an irreconcilable division of opinion over just what those principles of liberalism were. After 1887, this conflict slowly engulfed the entire freetrade party and kept it divided on almost every major political issue at least until 1894. Nowhere is the basis of this fundamental conflict more clearly expounded than in the copious writings and speeches of the two major protagonists, B.R. Wise and Arthur Bruce Smith.

The conflict was not of colonial origin. Its origins were clearly in the developments within the British Liberal Party in the years after December 1868, when Gladstone formed his first ministry. The London Times outlined the conflict when it declared that, long after Gladstone entered parliament, "one of the chief notes of instructed Liberalism was the dogma that the best government is that which interferes least with social affairs. The grandeur of the principle, that the free play of individual character is the surest guarantee for

the well-being of the nation, was then unquestioned, Now, it is hardly too much to say that every liberal measure, of any consequence, involves, directly or indirectly, a negation of that principle".¹¹⁸ The chief spokesman for the new trend in British liberalism was the Birmingham manufacturer, Joseph Chamberlain, who believed that "It belongs to the authority and duty of the State ... to protect the weak, and to provide for the poor; to redress the inequalities of our social condition, [and] to alleviate the harsh conditions of the struggle for existence, ...".¹¹⁹

To Bruce Smith, such views were the work of dangerous radicals.¹²⁰ In so claiming, however, Smith paid particular attention to the long tradition of radical thought within the Liberal party, drawing a sharp distinction between the 'old Radicalism' of the laissez-faire Manchester school of Richard Cobden and John Bright, and the "New Radicalism" of the Birmingham school.¹²¹ Whilst Smith contended that there was "little difference" between the 'old Radicals' and true liberals,¹²² he maintained that the new school of radical thought "can have little in common with true Liberalism".¹²³ What Smith particularly regarded with horror was best expressed in the words of Chamberlain's Radical Programme, which advocated "the intervention of the State on behalf of the weak against the strong, in the interests of labour against capital, of want and suffering against luxury and ease".¹²⁴ To Smith, such views were "synonymous with socialism"¹²⁵ and despotism.¹²⁶

Smith regarded the individual as the cornerstone of society,¹²⁷ and he viewed with abhorrence any interference with the free play of the individual in social, political and economic matters. The basic task of Smith's liberalism was the removal of all man-made obstacles, which prevent all men having equal opportunities,¹²⁸ though he was quick to point out that such a task did not imply making all men equal, for the bestowal of equal opportunities was not synonymous with "uniformity of wealth, or an equality in social conditions;...".¹²⁹ Smith held that "Men will always be unequal in wealth, [and] in

social position, ..., so long as they are born with different abilities, among different surroundings, and with different constitutions and susceptibilities".¹³⁰ Given such social realities, all liberalism could do, he maintained, was "to secure to every man 'equal opportunities' for the exercise of whatever faculties he may possess", allowing the spoils to go to the ablest and the fittest.¹³¹ Any attempt to create "a more extended equality, such as equality of wealth, or of social conditions, would involve a departure from true Liberalism, inasmuch as it would at once have the effect of rendering the opportunities unequal".¹³² To Smith, the Liberal doctrine was one which "encourages individual man, inasmuch as it offers an incentive to self-help, and discountenances all forms of compulsory aid, calculated to perpetuate the unfittest at the expense of the fittest".¹³³ Attempts to redress social injustices "must flow from humanitarian springs, and not from the iron hand of an act of parliament", since the latter simply amounts to "legislative encroachments upon the incentives to progress in the more fortunate of our fellow citizens, ...".¹³⁴

Although Smith claimed that his individualist laissez-faire views represented true Liberalism, there were those who disagreed. Writing in 1900, Alfred Deakin claimed that "A Colonial Liberal is one who favours State interference with liberty and industry at the pleasure and in the interest of the majority, while those who stand for the free play of individual choice and energy are classed as Conservatives".¹³⁵ B.R. Wise was one of those who challenged the view that liberty is best served by a minimum of state interference. Basing his view of liberalism on the ideas of such thinkers as T.H. Green and Arnold Toynbee,¹³⁶ Wise denied the view that the state had no authority or obligations in the spheres of economic, political and social life. In fact, Wise actively favoured "the right of the state to interfere to create better conditions of social justice and economic equality within the capitalist system".¹³⁷ To Wise, the existing social and economic inequalities were largely the result of the Industrial Revolution, during which the labourer lost his liberty, being "seldom, if ever, in

a position to make terms as to the price at which he shall sell his labour",¹³⁸ and thereby compelled to accept whatever terms were offered in order to avoid starvation.¹³⁹ To correct this injustice, Wise favoured the intervention of the state "to place the competitors in the industrial strife more nearly on a footing of equality",¹⁴⁰ and "to establish a real state of freedom, in which the stronger party to the bargain could not take advantage of the other's weakness".¹⁴¹ He was, therefore, also an ardent advocate of trade unionism and a severe critic of the principle of 'freedom of contract', so venerated by the individualist liberals.¹⁴²

Wise believed that the major goal of liberalism was the creation of conditions of social, economic and political equality throughout the community, and he saw legislative action as an important means in the achievement of this goal. As a result, he urged the passage by parliament of a long list of liberal social reforms.¹⁴³ These included measures such as payment of MsLA, equality in the electoral system and an elective Legislative Council, all of which were designed to secure direct working class participation in politics. In addition, he advocated measures to define and safeguard the rights and welfare of labour, such as a compulsory eight-hour working day, unemployment relief, factory legislation and a minimum wage,¹⁴⁴ and measures designed to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth.

It was measures such as these which Bruce Smith called on liberals to resist "in defence of 'individual liberty' and 'freedom from restraint'",¹⁴⁵ and it was this conflict which split the freetrade party, almost from its inception, into two irreconcilable camps. Many freetraders agreed with Smith that the measures advocated by Wise violated the sacrosanct philosophy of laissez-faire liberalism. J.F. Burns expressed his agreement with the philosophy of laissez-faire in his view that "the greatest good for the largest number would at all times be best accomplished by leaving every individual unfettered by State restrictions ...".¹⁴⁶ William McMillan gave practical

point to this view in his advocacy of the principle that "no government has a right to do anything which can be done by the people themselves".¹⁴⁷ To men like McMillan, the doctrine of freedom of trade was indissolubly tied to the philosophy of unfettered individual freedom and "the principle of non-restriction by government".¹⁴⁸ When, therefore, the freetrade Minister of Mines, Sydney Smith, in 1891 included a compulsory eight-hour working day clause in a proposed coal mines bill, McMillan was led to protest: "What right has any one to legislate to tell me, or any other man in the country that I shall work for eight hours a day and no more?"¹⁴⁹ The conflict, engendered by Smith's action and aggravated by the Labor Party, was directly responsible for the resignation of the ministry less than a week later on 19 October 1891.¹⁵⁰

Although the conflict within the freetrade party had as its basis the debate over the philosophical principles of liberalism, it really amounted to a conflict between a radical and a conservative view of politics. William McMillan aptly defined his standpoint when he confessed to "a conservative instinct", in the sense of being "distrustful of innovations".¹⁵¹ Men like McMillan and Bruce Smith had virtually become defenders of the status quo, because, to them, "In many respects the condition of things towards which a Liberal policy is always approximating ... [had] been already reached".¹⁵² They were, therefore, distrustful of the "reformers", who are "ever eager for something new, and who do not wait to consider that any change may prove to be for the worse instead of the better; that it may, in fact, be a reform but not an improvement".¹⁵³ W.H. Traill aptly described their political outlook when he stated: "They could be nothing else than Conservative, since to them change meant risk".¹⁵⁴ On a wide range of social, economic and political issues, then, the freetrade party was split into what were basically radical and conservative 'caves'. Some of the more prominent of the conservatives or conservative liberals were, apart from Bruce Smith and McMillan, J.F. Burns, J.F. Cullen, J.H. Young, T. Garrett and A.J. Gould. Among the radicals or advanced liberals, the more prominent were, in addition to Wise, A. Allen, F. Farnell, J.C. Seaver, Charles Garland, J.H. Carruthers and Sydney Smith.¹⁵⁵

During 1887 and 1888, the radical and conservative groups within the freetrade party gradually crystallised and took shape; the conflict between them first erupted at the end of 1888, and was thereafter an ever-present threat to the party's paper-thin nominal fiscal cohesion. Until October 1891, however, the result of the clashes that took place was always the same: a successful conservative resistance to increasingly outspoken radical pressure for social reform. The man primarily responsible for inhibiting the progress of the radicals within the party, and for maintaining the illusion of party unity was the freetrade leader, Sir Henry Parkes. Before examining Parkes's role in successfully resisting radical pressure within the freetrade party prior to 1891, however, it is important to understand the nature and urgency of conservatism's defensive role, both in the colony in general, and in the freetrade party in particular, after 1887.

In 1871, the TLC was founded as a central organisation to further the industrial aims of the colony's trade unions.¹⁵⁶ After an unfortunate early experience in the political arena,¹⁵⁷ the TLC concentrated solely "on the consolidation of the industrial base of the labour movement".¹⁵⁸ It assumed a leading role in the advocacy of such industrial reforms as an eight-hour day,¹⁵⁹ workers' compensation, and reform of the conditions for work in factories and workshops.¹⁶⁰ Although concerned directly with solely industrial matters, the policies and activities of the TLC had far wider implications. The TLC's advocacy of radical reform had the effect of awakening public awareness of the need for changes in the colony's social and economic system, and of increasing the pressure on parliament to effect those changes. In particular, the advocacy of industrial reforms was undermining the hallowed doctrine of laissez-faire and upholding the advanced liberal conception of the powers and duties of the state.¹⁶¹ Although the practical political aims of B.R.Wise and the TLC were basically identical, Wise believed that the Council's political philosophy lacked one basic ingredient: a commitment to the doctrine of freetrade. Wise's belief that a nation's resources and wealth should be so controlled by the state that all its citizens have the best conditions, and sufficient

material support for a secure life was complemented by his belief that a nation could achieve the highest accumulation of wealth for this purpose by a policy of freetrade.¹⁶² It was on the basis of this view that, in 1885, Wise had attempted to win the support of organised labour for freetrade, and its developing political organisation. In August 1885, he delivered a lecture to the TLC on the benefits of trade unionism,¹⁶³ for which he was proffered thanks by the Council.¹⁶⁴ Wise followed up this initial success by suggesting that two TLC delegates should assist in the impending formation of the FTA,¹⁶⁵ but this suggestion was firmly rejected.¹⁶⁶ Wise, however, did not give up, and, in September, he again wrote to the TLC asking it to name "two or more working men" willing to become members of the FTA.¹⁶⁷ Although his second overture again achieved no immediate results,¹⁶⁸ it appears that the support of several individual TLC delegates was forthcoming during 1886, and during that year successful efforts were made to increase TLC representation on the FTA council.¹⁶⁹

This success, it must be emphasised, was very limited, and the TLC delegates who joined the FTA in no way reflected the general opinion of the TLC.¹⁷⁰ The real significance of Wise's overtures to the TLC was the way in which they demonstrated his perception of the opportunity created by the political prominence of the fiscal issue for the forces of radical change to enter forcibly into politics; and, even if organised labour ignored the lead given them by Wise, other men of similar radical persuasion did not. They, like Wise, linked the economic doctrine of freetrade with a positive, radical approach to the social, political and economic problems of the colony, and were attracted to fiscal politics by the apparent promise of radical reform. That such radicals and advanced liberals were, in fact, inspired by the fiscal issue to enter politics was demonstrated by their ever-increasing representation in the Legislative Assembly after 1886.¹⁷¹ To the conservative laissez-faire liberals, however, this trend spelt danger. The social and economic system, which their own interests and instincts led them to uphold, seemed to be threatened with demolition. They, therefore, saw their role

as defending that which they revered.

Ironically enough, if the elevation of the fiscal issue into supreme political prominence helped to accentuate the pressure for social change, it also provided the means whereby the conservatives were successfully able to resist that change. It is at this point that attention must again be focussed on Parkes, for during the five years to the end of 1891 it was he, as leader of the parliamentary freetrade party and Premier of the colony, who posed the major obstacle to the achievement of radical liberal reform. Despite his reformist concern for the instability of the political system, Parkes, as a man of principle, belonged well and truly to the 'old school' of conservative Gladstonian liberalism. As a reviewer of his autobiography wrote in 1893, "Sir Henry Parkes, like Mr Gladstone, is clearly a Conservative by birth. His first impulse is to resist change, and refuse to consider it".¹⁷² George Reid wrote that Parkes "had evolved from Radicalism of the Chartist type to Liberalism of a broad but rather conservative type",¹⁷³ a statement which Parkes himself qualified by denying that he had ever had any connection with Chartism.¹⁷⁴ Parkes defined a liberal as "a man who seeks to leave the subject free to do the best he can for himself, free to work out his own individual destiny, free from all fetters, free from all regulatory laws",¹⁷⁵ and on this individualist basis he opposed such measures as payment of MsLA,¹⁷⁶ unemployment relief¹⁷⁷ and a compulsory eight-hour working day.¹⁷⁸ Parkes, too, like the other freetraders of similar liberal convictions, abhorred any partisan 'class' approach to politics; he would have agreed with McMillan, who described the proposal for a compulsory eight-hour day as "the thin edge of the wedge of a class of legislation leading directly to communism and socialism".¹⁷⁹

It is with Parkes's political conservatism in mind that the composition of his two ministries after 1886 should be considered. Formed prior to the 1887 general election, and therefore prior to the development of any ideological tension within the party, Parkes's first ministry reflected, above all else, the process of factional amalgamation and Parkes's desire

for fiscal conformity and ministerial stability.¹⁸⁰ For this reason, the ministry appeared very much a faction ministry, full of seasoned campaigners and with a rather confused doctrinal appearance, ranging from the laissez-faire views of J.F. Burns to the progressive views of Francis Abigail.¹⁸¹ At the same time, however, the ministry did appear fundamentally conservative, largely because of the presence within it of four men with definite merchant and commercial associations. In accordance with his insistence on fiscal conformity, Parkes naturally turned to the freetrade bodies outside parliament, and, together, the FTA and the SCC provided him with four of his ministerial colleagues.¹⁸² Nevertheless, actual doctrinal considerations played a minimal role at this stage, both in Parkes's practical objectives and in the creation of his ministry. The basic qualities which Parkes sought, demanded¹⁸³ and achieved, were those of personal loyalty, and subservience to his own directions and opinions.¹⁸⁴

The first vacancy in the ministry occurred in May 1887 when, as the result of a personal feud with Parkes over a vacant judgeship, W.J. Foster resigned as Attorney-General.¹⁸⁵ The fact that Parkes appointed the radical, B.R. Wise, to replace him can be explained by the need to fill the post with "a man of principle ... with a good legal mind",¹⁸⁶ Wise's undoubted attachment to freetrade,¹⁸⁷ and the close personal relationship between the two men.¹⁸⁸ Wise remained in the ministry, however, for less than a year,¹⁸⁹ and was replaced as Attorney-General by an inexperienced member of the Legislative Council, G.B. Simpson. Simpson's appointment suggests that it may have been the dearth of 'good legal minds' amongst the ministerial freetraders in the Assembly that led Parkes to appoint a man with so little experience, and of such radical views, as B.R. Wise to the ministry. The only other addition to Parkes's first freetrade ministry was J.N. Bruncker, who was appointed Secretary for Lands in August 1888. A man of moderate political views,¹⁹⁰ Bruncker was a politician of the 'old school'. A devoted Parkes supporter since the early 1860s,¹⁹¹ Bruncker owed his success in the cut-and-thrust of faction politics to his rather uncritical personal loyalty and unimpeachable character,

qualities which were sufficient to earn him a place in the ministry. Parkes later described Brunker as "a man who by his personal conduct and general bearing through a long life, had secured the respect and confidence of all classes, ...".¹⁹²

It was during the events that led to the fall of Parkes's 1887-89 ministry that the first real eruption of the developing ideological conflict within the freetrade party occurred. The result was the resignation of the 1887-89 ministry, and the creation of a situation in which Parkes, the traditional conservative, saw the need to strengthen the party's parliamentary leadership with men of a rather more doctrinaire conservatism, in order to defend an increasingly threatened view of government and political philosophy. The events of January and February 1889 also revealed that, contrary to other opinions,¹⁹³ Parkes was in no sense losing his influence over the majority of the freetrade party, but was in fact indispensable to the continued success of the party's conservative majority in resisting radical pressure for change.

In January 1889, B.R. Wise directly referred to the internal party conflict, which brought about the fall of Parkes's ministry, when he pointed to the "differences such as those, for instance, which have divided the party on two occasions lately - ...".¹⁹⁴ The first of these occasions was in December 1888 and concerned Parkes's proposal to transfer the administration of Sydney's tramways from the government to private enterprise.¹⁹⁵ The division on the proposals resulted in their defeat,¹⁹⁶ twenty-two freetraders crossing the floor to vote with the opposition. This was the first of two occasions in which the ministry was "defeated by its own party",¹⁹⁷ and, although it had been distinctly intimated that the tramway proposals would not be treated as a "party question",¹⁹⁸ close analysis shows that the division was used to demonstrate a hardening of radical opinion against Parkes and the ministry. Of the eighteen recognisable radicals within the party at the time,¹⁹⁹ twelve took part in the division, with nine voting against the government.²⁰⁰ On 9 January 1889, a fresh attack was launched

against Parkes. Led by his factional freetrade opponent, J.H.Want, a motion of adjournment was moved in order to raise the matter of the government's appointment of a new Commissioner for Railways.²⁰¹ The division on the motion again resulted in defeat for the government.²⁰² Although the House was sadly depleted, the division list again provides evidence of a radical rebellion.²⁰³ Although only eight radicals took part in the division, six of them voted with the opposition.²⁰⁴ Of the eleven freetraders who voted against the government,²⁰⁵ six were radicals and three were factional opponents of Parkes, two of whom shortly afterwards experienced protectionist 'conversions'.²⁰⁶

In consequence of this defeat, the ministry resigned.²⁰⁷ William McMillan later described the defeat of 9 January as a vote against Parkes, rather than against "the broad policy of the Government".²⁰⁸ From the point of view of the rebellious radicals, the vote was most certainly directed at Parkes himself, but in being so, it was also a vote in direct criticism of the government's policy. Whilst Jonathan Seaver accused Parkes of betraying the cause of freetrade,²⁰⁹ S.W.Moore plainly stated that his vote was intended to force the ministry from office. He expressed general radical disillusionment with the government when he stated: "I could not support the Government - for there are other things to consider besides free-trade and protection - ...".²¹⁰ Moore felt so strongly that he declined to contest the general election later that month, refusing "to help to bring back into power the party that ... [he had] helped to turn out". His objections certainly went beyond a mere personal criticism of Parkes when he declared, "Freetrade, forsooth! Free-broken-promises, ..., free-shirking-of-the-financial-difficulty, ... free-staving-off-of-useful-legislation, free-failure".²¹¹ Implicit in the radicals' rebellion was a refusal to be tied hand and foot to the directions and expectations of Parkes. John Haynes, for instance, disagreed with the observation that "the House meant Parkes and a number of ciphers", and claimed it may shortly be discovered that "the ciphers are the masters of him and his party".²¹² It is important to note, however, that

not all the freetrade radicals adopted this antagonistic attitude towards Parkes, and a number of them voted with the ministry in both divisions.²¹³

Although it was the radical free traders who led the rebellion against Parkes, conservative free traders outside the ministry, and in particular their doctrinaire spokesman, William McMillan, staunchly supported him.²¹⁴ The close ties that existed between Parkes and the conservatives were shortly to be revealed even more clearly. After Parkes tendered his resignation on 10 January, George Dibbs was commissioned by the Governor to form a ministry. On 16 January, the outgoing Treasurer, J.F. Burns, moved on behalf of the defeated ministry the customary bill granting supply to the new ministry to cover the period of ministerial elections.²¹⁵ William McMillan then rose to move an amendment opposing the granting of supply and recommending that the Governor be informed of the "dangers to the public interest" arising from the exercise of authority by a ministry commanding only minority support in the Assembly.²¹⁶ With Parkes and his ministry opposing it, and the majority of free traders supporting it, the amendment was narrowly carried.²¹⁷ Loveday and Martin have represented this vote as a test between principle and personality, concluding that it "gave notice that principle, and not attachment to a leader, was the real cement of the freetrade party".²¹⁸ In the sense that many free traders were not prepared blindly and uncritically to follow Parkes in a course of action that he felt constitutionally bound to follow, the assessment is undoubtedly true; but to conclude that the vote demonstrated that the party, and particularly the conservative bloc within it, had discarded Parkes as its leader²¹⁹ is less convincing. Despite Parkes's expressions of irritation and wounded pride at the lack of total personal trust and attachment,²²⁰ he knew, as McMillan pointed out, that the vote was not a personal censure.²²¹ The freetrade opposition to Parkes on 16 January was in no way analagous to the opposition to him as expressed in the votes of 13 December and 9 January.

The point at issue on 16 January was simply whether traditional constitutional courtesy was more demanding of party

support than logical, common-sense political action. B.R. Wise pointed out the constitutional obligations incumbent upon the ministry, declaring that "it would have been impossible ... for the Ministry to have acted otherwise", for the "simple constitutional reason" that they had "resigned their trusts" to the new protectionist ministry.²²² On the other hand, the political reality of the situation was expressed by McMillan's determination that "a government representing a minority in this country will not be allowed to carry on in the face of a majority ...".²²³ A vote supporting this view was not necessarily a vote aimed at Parkes, but was a vote that simply upheld the basic concept of responsible parliamentary government. As a result, McMillan could fairly claim that "the position which the free-trade party occupies to-night is that of a compact and integral party",²²⁴ for any freetrader, radical, conservative or otherwise, not bound by traditional constitutional propriety, was unlikely to have voted his majority party immediately into opposition without a fight.

To conclude that the vote of 16 January demonstrated that "no faction in the old sense now survived at Parkes' back"²²⁵ is reasonable; it would not be reasonable, however, to maintain that the party had now no further need of its leader. Rather than severing the party from Parkes, the vote, which virtually ensured the freetraders a speedy return to power, served only to tighten the bond between him and the majority of freetraders. Ironically, the basic reason for the strengthened ties was the very fact that, for a large proportion of freetraders, personal loyalty was no longer the most powerful force dictating political allegiance. This fact no doubt aided the success of McMillan's amendment, but it had also created a situation in which the freetrade party, rather than being 'strong and united',²²⁶ was in reality splintered and divided. The one factor that could operate to paper over the cracks was the continued leadership of Parkes. After February 1889, it was Parkes's experience and influence as leader that provided the only bond between the splintered sections of the freetrade party; most of the diverse groups within the party either respected, or needed, Parkes's charisma and

influence to such an extent that his continued presence as leader served to maintain at least nominal unity.²²⁷ Although the rebellious radicals of December and January felt little love for, or need of, Parkes, their opposition was offset by the loyalty of other radicals, like Wise and Carruthers, whose regard for Parkes led Wise to express the hope that he would continue to lead the freetrade party.²²⁸ Within the party, there was also a group of men still personally devoted to Parkes, and their opinion was expressed by James Inglis when he told Parkes that "The country and the party still look to you as leader - and I am now as ever your leal henchman".²²⁹ It was, however, by the conservatives of the party that Parkes was most needed. His command of support and his strong leadership combined with his basic conservatism to provide the electoral and parliamentary basis for a freetrade government, and the continuation of a conservative approach to the tasks of government. Parkes's indispensibility to the party in general, and the majority conservatives in particular, was demonstrated shortly after the general election of February 1889.

On 19 February, Parkes informed William McMillan of his decision "not to seek nor accept the position of Leadership in the new Parliament".²³⁰ On the same day, McMillan, spokesman of the doctrinaire conservatives, replied, stating that he had taken it for granted that Parkes would continue as leader, and "most earnestly" asking him to re-consider his decision.²³¹ Parkes, however, replied on 21 February that he had not changed his mind.²³² In his first letter, Parkes spoke of the necessity of "acquainting our political friends" with his decision,²³³ and, when McMillan declared that "I must consider your communication as private",²³⁴ Parkes again urged him to inform their colleagues.²³⁵ In June 1891, Parkes stated that his decision had not been revealed by McMillan.²³⁶ It would thus appear that, when the meeting of fifty freetrade MsLA,²³⁷ under the chairmanship of McMillan,²³⁸ got under way on 22 February at 2.30 pm,²³⁹ only McMillan was aware of the decision which could have led to Parkes's political retirement. The first business raised, presumably by the chairman, was the

question of party leadership.²⁴⁰ Parkes did not attend the early part of the meeting during which, he must have assumed, the leadership discussion would take place, but when he arrived at "about 4 pm",²⁴¹ he found that he had been unanimously re-elected leader.²⁴² It is, then, not unreasonable to assume that Parkes's decision to retire as leader was at no stage revealed by McMillan to the meeting, for the simple reason that Parkes may have been taken at his word. There would then have followed the election of a new leader, less able than Parkes to provide security to conservative interests, and less able to maintain enough party unity to preserve freetrade as the governing party. In November 1891, Parkes's decision to resign the leadership of the party was made public and he was replaced; in February 1889, McMillan probably let it be assumed that Parkes would continue as leader, thereby averting the possibility of any leadership challenge and leadership change.

Whatever the reasons for Parkes's stated intention to retire as leader, the fact remains that most freetraders, particularly McMillan and the conservatives, saw the need for him to remain at the helm, and it is difficult to agree that "Parkes came back on the party's and not his own terms".²⁴³ Parkes's indispensability was again emphasised after the defeat of the Dibbs ministry in the new parliament. Asked on 6 March by the Governor to form a new ministry, Parkes postponed his assent, and that evening spoke to McMillan, suggesting that the Governor be advised "to send either for him or some other member of the Free Trade party". McMillan, however, again "urged that there was no one who could take my place", and consequently Parkes accepted the commission.²⁴⁴

Apart from Parkes, the figure that loomed largest in the affairs of the freetrade party between January and March 1889 was William McMillan. Although McMillan was undoubtedly more devoted to the principles of conservative liberalism than to the person of Parkes, he also realised that the successful defence of his principles depended heavily on the continuance of Parkes as the colony's dominant and most influential political figure. The affinity that existed between the political

philosophies of the two men was evident, and this resulted in the development of a close relationship between them.²⁴⁵ All that upset their rapport was Parkes's decision to grant Dibbs supply, a decision that obviously struck McMillan as an unnecessary sacrifice of a freetrade government for the sake of mere constitutional propriety. It was for this reason that McMillan led forty freetraders in their rejection of Parkes's motion to grant Dibbs the necessary supply.²⁴⁶ In order to secure the continuance of freetrade government, McMillan led the party to declare its independence of Parkes.²⁴⁷ Aware that the consequences of his action may have led to a commission to form a freetrade ministry, McMillan, in the absence of Parkes, realised he must be prepared to shoulder the responsibility. Edmund Barton later revealed that he had been told the actual composition of McMillan's projected ministry,²⁴⁸ should the latter have been commissioned by the Governor; as it turned out, however, he was not.

Although McMillan's action has been seen as that of a power-seeker,²⁴⁹ it is as likely that he was simply acting in accordance with principle at a time when he maintained that Parkes had deserted it.²⁵⁰ McMillan's action, however, was in no way specifically aimed at displacing or overthrowing Parkes. To McMillan, a freetrade ministry not headed by Parkes was less desirable than one that was, and once the crisis was resolved, not by the commission of a freetrade ministry but by the dissolution of parliament, McMillan swiftly sought to re-establish Parkes as party leader. To McMillan and the conservatives, Parkes was too valuable an asset to lose in their defensive fight against aggressive radicalism; to any perceptive political realist, Parkes's great influence in the maintenance of nominal party unity was undeniable. Accordingly, McMillan tendered his 'apologies' to Parkes,²⁵¹ and it was probably McMillan who was responsible for Parkes's active participation in the party's organising efforts during the general election that was the consequence of the crisis. Requested by McMillan to aid the party's electoral activities,²⁵² Parkes became an active member of the parliamentary party's election executive under McMillan's chairmanship,²⁵³ and he also publicly supported

McMillan's personal campaign in East Sydney.²⁵⁴

The election over, it seems to have been McMillan who engineered Parkes's smooth and speedy return to party leadership, and in doing so showed himself to be a loyal and trustworthy ally of the veteran leader. Parkes's offer on 6 March to McMillan of the commission to form a freetrade government was probably a final test of his loyalty and ambition. McMillan, however, had too much to lose from Parkes's retirement to accept; but his obvious influence in the party, his conservative liberalism, and his doctrinaire approach to politics made him the ideal candidate for Parkes's deputy at a time when principled and doctrinal concerns in politics were becoming increasingly conspicuous. For this reason it was not surprising that Parkes appointed him as his Colonial Treasurer.²⁵⁵

The composition of his second freetrade ministry would suggest that five basic factors determined Parkes's choices: the extent to which members of his previous ministry had been discredited by involvement in public scandals;²⁵⁶ the degree to which 'old time' faction loyalty was being replaced within the party as the basis of allegiance by a concern for political principle; the increasing pressure being brought to bear by progressive radicals on a traditional conservative liberal view of government; the degree to which the majority conservatives looked to him to defend conservative liberalism; and, finally, the need for the ministry to provide a basis for at least formal unity between the rival groups within the party. The task was, therefore, difficult, but Parkes's final choices conformed well to the determining factors. First, he discarded all his previous discredited ministerial colleagues, with the exception of J.N. Brunner whose untainted reputation fitted him to remain in the ministry as the representative of Parkes's faction supporters. The claims of the radicals for ministerial representation were taken seriously by Parkes in view of their increasingly vociferous and numerical presence, and the need to foster party unity. He, therefore, appointed three of their number, two of whom, however, had loyally supported him during the radical rebellion

which led to the fall of his first freetrade ministry.²⁵⁷

For the remainder of the ministry, he turned to the freetrade conservatives. In addition to himself, the conservative representation included A.J.Gould, William McMillan, Bruce Smith, and, when a vacancy occurred in 1891, J.H.Young. Of particular importance was Parkes's inclusion of the younger men, McMillan and Bruce Smith, both doctrinaire spokesmen of conservative liberalism. Smith's mammoth treatise in defence of laissez-faire liberalism, Liberty and Liberalism, had been published in 1887 during a break in his parliamentary career, but immediately on his return to the Assembly in February 1889, he was pushed straight into the cabinet for his first experience of ministerial life. By the appointment of a majority of conservatives and personal supporters, Parkes demonstrated his sympathy for a conservative liberal philosophy of government, and prepared the ground for its continued defence and justification against radical pressure.

CHAPTER 3

FACTIONS AND FRICTIONS, PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMMES, 1887-1891.

II The Parliamentary Freetraders (continued).

"To promise, pause, prepare, postpone,
And end by leaving things alone:
In short, to draw the people's pay
By doing nothing day by day".

- B.R.Wise.
(SMH, 16 January 1894, p.6).

The traditional conservative liberalism of Parkes and many of his followers and ministerial colleagues largely dictated the limits of the freetrade governments' legislative actions, and the nature of the freetrade party's policies and programmes after 1886. The manner in which Parkes's philosophical ideals determined his practical approach to politics was clearly revealed in his view of the role and function of government in society. Not only did Parkes adhere to a laissez-faire abhorrence of state interference, but also to the traditional liberal concern for 'the welfare of the whole community', as opposed to class or sectional interests.¹ This led to a view of government which emphasised non-interference and mere administrative duties, and which was well described by Parkes when he stated that "the government that exists is best doing its duty when it is confined as much as practicable to sustaining

the administration of justice, preserving peace, carrying out necessary public work, ...; and the less it does outside these confines the better, not only for the freedom and independence, but also for the true national happiness of the people".² This reluctance to become involved in matters outside the orbit of mere administration precluded the formulation and exposition of a detailed freetrade party policy, which came to terms with, and sought to solve, the pressing social and economic problems facing colonial society in general, and its underprivileged sections in particular. In addition, the nature of Parkes's practical reformist objectives in 1886 - the creation of two permanent, stable and cohesive parliamentary groups - also led him to exclude from political consideration all major issues that could inhibit or prevent the achievement of his reformist ambitions.

Parkes was not only compared by others to the great British Liberal leader, William Gladstone,³ but he also made the comparison himself,⁴ and in putting into operation his scheme of practical political reform in 1886-87, he adhered closely to the political tactics previously used by Gladstone to polarise English politics and create cohesion in his own Liberal party. In his electoral campaigns, Gladstone manipulated 'the new theory' of principled politics by 'inventing', when none were readily to hand, principled conflicts on which to achieve both a clear political polarisation and electoral popularity.⁵ In so doing, he has been described as "the first to create 'issues' for electioneering debate", and he himself came to regard his "capacity for providing them" as "a gift from Providence", although it has also been characterised as cynical opportunism.⁶ Employing the same approach in 1886-87, Parkes 'invented' the fiscal issue, raised it to the utmost political prominence, and rode to a sweeping electoral victory on the back of liberal freetrade; in the process he also created a political polarisation that endured until after 1900.

Such an approach, while providing liberal electoral success, did not, however, provide or constitute a liberal policy or programme. In fact, Gladstone, as a traditional

conservative liberal, shunned the notion of a full-scale party platform that would dictate the future course and direction of liberal policy. In 1885, he argued that a profession of opinion "in the Liberal sense" on just one or two issues supplied "a ground broad enough to start a Government, ...".⁷ He was also aware of the danger of Liberal party disunity that might result from raising "questions on which its members might not be agreed",⁸ and he therefore excluded such issues from his electoral programme. In moulding together his own freetrade parliamentary party, Parkes emulated Gladstone's approach.

In addition to his own conservative dislike of programmes, Parkes realised that he must not jeopardise freetrade unity by raising questions outside the fiscal issue, on which his freetrade supporters were sure to have divergent opinions. J.A.Ryan has pointed out that the 1887 election affords an excellent example of "Parkes' mastery of the game of politics", in dictating that the election would be fought "almost solely on the emotion deriving from the fiscal issue".⁹ He successfully submerged such pertinent issues as assisted immigration, the eight-hour working day, and payment of members,¹⁰ and the 'extraneous subjects' he did mention were left singularly vague and undefined. The Herald pointed to the fact that "the land question, the local government question, and others of almost equal importance" were "not very definitely treated by the Premier, either in his printed address or in his platform utterances, ...".¹¹ The paper also declared that the same could be said of the financial question, the most pressing problem facing the colony.¹² Although eloquent on the blessings of freetrade and the promised repeal of ad valorem duties, Parkes gave no details about his practical proposals for raising revenue and reducing the deficit. He still referred to revenue from the customs,¹³ claimed that "we shall seek ... to get the largest amount of revenue from the land that we can justly obtain,"¹⁴ and stated that, "if resort must be had to any new form of taxation, ... we shall seek to devise a comprehensive¹⁵ and equitably-arranged system of property taxation ..."; beyond such equivocal statements he would not go. He expressly told one audience that "Any explanation of the principles upon

which they would try to deal with ... [the] great [financial] problem, he could not then give", adding that "the first full exposition of their plan" would be given to parliament.¹⁶ Parkes's treatment of the property tax was particularly irritating; one candidate declared that "it was put forward in an exceedingly vague way",¹⁷ and another, a strong freetrader, stated that, "the exact nature of that tax not having been disclosed, it was not competent for any candidate to speak very clearly upon that issue".¹⁸ Parkes's approach to policy enunciation, then, was one that equivocated, avoided, or was impossibly vague about, those issues which offended the traditional laissez-faire view of government, or which threatened freetrade party unity.

Parkes's emulation of Gladstone's political tactics and the identical nature of their conservative liberal outlook were largely responsible for the remarkable similarity that existed between the internal history of Gladstone's Liberal party between 1880 and 1885, and that of Parkes's freetrade party between 1887 and 1891. In the same way as Gladstone's very limited 1880 election programme pleased the conservatives in his party, Parkes's identical approach in 1887 admirably suited those freetrade conservative liberals who saw their task as resisting change and defending a laissez-faire status quo. Such men were forthright in their support of Parkes's view that fiscal cohesion should not be jeopardised by the intrusion of other issues, and they fought for the exclusion from political consideration of questions that threatened the success of their conservative defence. William McMillan told his constituents in 1889 that the parliament elected in 1887 "was sent in entirely to review the fiscal policy of the country", and "consequently, when this great fiscal question was under discussion, any man who attempted to split up his party, or set up side issues, would be recreant to the interests of the country".¹⁹

Shortly after taking office in 1880, the Gladstone government's conservatism and lack of a specific policy became obvious,²⁰ and there developed within the party a conflict between

the conservatives and the radicals; the latter had a definite policy and wanted it implemented.²¹ Within the governing free-trade party, the same lack of policy was gradually revealed after 1887, and, in their desire for social change, the doctrinaire freetrade radicals were frustrated at every turn by the continued dominance of the fiscal issue. As long as the fiscal issue remained in the forefront of politics, other matters of vital importance to radical reformers could simply be ignored. It was in this sense that B.R.Wise saw the fiscal controversy as a barrier to the consideration of "any measure of reform", and he neatly summarised the conservatives' tactics when he stated that "I have often thought that one reason why the opponents of reform lend their support to this controversy is that they have adopted a device, ...of diverting public attention from pressing evils by raising a false cry".²² It was against this resistance to the promotion of a positive policy and detailed party programme that came to terms with the economic, social and political development of the colony, that the freetrade radicals directed their attack; what naturally resulted was conflict. During 1887 and 1888, radical tactics ranged from the hostile antagonism and rebelliousness of Jonathan Seaver and Alfred Allen, to the reasonable and rational attempts of B.R.Wise to convert the conservative opposition. During 1889, the radicals changed their tactics, but always the result was the same, and always for the same reason. Wise summed up the unchanging situation when he told J.H.Carruthers: "Unfortunately I fear that the Tory element on our own side has got the ear of the party at present; ...".²³

The conflict within the party between advanced liberalism and defensive conservatism, and the inevitable conservative victory are clearly revealed in the history and fate of the radical demand for the imposition of direct taxation in place of burdensome indirect taxation. Direct taxation, especially land and income taxation, was the kernel of Wise's radical liberalism, and he viewed it as a basic social reform which would tax the accumulation of wealth, and free the poor from the unfair burden of indirect taxation, which they shared equally with the rich under the system of customs duties.²⁴ In 1895, Wise recalled

that he had advocated a land tax since 1884,²⁵ and he went on to claim that "no small part of the advance in favour of Land Tax doctrines is due to my exertions . . . , in the face of much opposition, to make the Land Tax an essential portion of a Free-trade policy".²⁶ Certainly Wise viewed his task within the party as "connecting Freetrade indissolubly with a democratic policy",²⁷ and, in striving to do so, he did meet with much opposition; but, as he himself remarked, "the land tax provided just the battle ground that was required to separate the democrats and the reactionaries".²⁸

Most of Wise's radical colleagues have left evidence of their strong support for direct land taxation, support which, in several cases, even extended to a belief in Henry George's radical notion of 'the single tax', a system by which all public revenue would be raised by a single tax upon the value of land.²⁹ R.W. Thompson expounded the more usual radical opinion on taxation when, calling himself "a democratic radical", he claimed that land taxation was "one of three taxes which should be imposed in every democratic country", the other two being "a property-tax and an income-tax".³⁰ Charles Garland outlined the basis of the radicals' demand for a land tax when he stated that "those who grab the land, and who lock it up while it increases in value by public expenditure, should be made to pay something towards the cost of government".³¹ Most freetrade radicals spoke out in support of land taxation as an integral part of a wider system of direct taxation,³² and a number also expressed their support by an active membership of, or association with, organisations devoted to the cause of land taxation.³³

The advocacy of direct taxation necessarily supposed hostility to indirect taxation, and it is therefore not surprising to find a number of the radical land taxers among those previously noted as objecting to the 'anomalies' in Parkes's 1887 freetrade tariff.³⁴ Similarly, those noted earlier as upholders of 'revenue tariffism',³⁵ certainly disliked the prospect of direct taxation. They feared the replacement of a system of taxation in which all classes equally shared

the tax burden regardless of ability to do so, with one that placed the tax burden on each class according to its means and ability to bear it. It was a vision of the government "putting its hand into the pockets of one class to help another class" that aroused fear.³⁶ Among the freetraders, it was naturally the wealthy commercial and mercantile class that had most to lose from the imposition of direct taxation, and that, consequently, gave its support to indirect taxation. By and large, it was these same men, as representatives of capital rather than labour, and employer rather than employee, who also opposed the radicals' urgings for active state interference in social and industrial relations. In the same way as they invoked the tenets of classical laissez-faire liberalism to substantiate their objections to the state regulation of labour conditions, one of their number, J.F. Burns, claimed that it was quite outside the province of government to impose direct taxation unless it was absolutely necessary.³⁷ The relationship between economic self-interest and political philosophy was close in most of the conservative freetraders and, although men like Bruce Smith and McMillan displayed a high-minded concern for liberal doctrine, A.W. Martin has pointed to the fact that "men are long moulded by their circumstances", and the degree to which "economic interest reinforced political principle".³⁸

To appeal to a predominantly working-class and increasingly politically-aware electorate on a definite plank of continued indirect taxation through the customs was to court electoral disaster. It was for this reason alone that, although Parkes and at least three other members of his 1887 ministry opposed direct taxation and looked to revenue tariffism to solve the financial crisis,³⁹ the bait of direct property tax was offered.⁴⁰ Speaking in April 1889, Jonathan Seaver claimed that "Direct taxation is what every free-trade government has advocated on the hustings; but as soon as they got back into the House some influence has been brought to bear on them which has prevented them" from carrying out their pledge.⁴¹ As far as Parkes's freetrade ministries were concerned, very little pressure not to impose direct taxation was required; their intention was clearly to remove the necessity for direct

taxation by ensuring a high enough revenue return from indirect taxation.⁴² On 30 March 1887, Burns outlined the ministry's proposed new tariff, the sole purpose of which was to collect enough revenue to render direct taxation unnecessary.⁴³ The reality of this purpose was indicated two years later, when J. Seaver referred to those freetraders who "tell us that we do not want direct taxation, because there is sufficient revenue provided by the present tariff".⁴⁴

The 1887 tariff reflected not only the fact of conservative freetrade opposition to direct taxation, but also the economic interests of that opposition. As previously pointed out, the tariff greatly favoured the interests of the colony's importers and merchants,⁴⁵ and the opposition was not slow in discerning merchant influence on the government. Thomas Walker pointed to the presence of merchant defenders "on the Government benches",⁴⁶ whilst George Dibbs extended the argument and claimed that "this country at this moment is being governed by a highly respectable class of merchants, known as the 'Soft goods party'".⁴⁷ Ninian Melville described the tariff as one "concocted in some merchant's parlour on a Sunday afternoon, or in the Chamber of Commerce" by merchants who, "finding that they had a government whom they can squeeze to their heart's content, drew up a tariff containing proposals to suit themselves".⁴⁸ It was, however, the failure to impose direct taxation that earned Parkes the most criticism, not only because wealthy interests were favoured by the continuation of indirect taxation, but also because of the failure to honour his 'pledge' at the 1887 election.⁴⁹ In answering this charge, Parkes revealed the conservative tactics of vagueness, postponement, avoidance and hypocrisy that were to characterise his ministries' attitude to direct taxation for the following four and a half years; the continued success of resistance to direct taxation clearly demonstrates the unbroken dominance of conservative elements within the party in general, and the ministries in particular, until the end of 1891. Parkes began by denying that he had made any pledge to introduce direct taxation, and he reminded the Assembly of the exact words he had used: "If resort must be had to any new form of taxation, ...".⁵⁰

Furthermore, he continued, "it is rather too much to expect us to devise ... a well considered scheme of taxation" in the short span of the ministry's existence and "amidst all the other arduous and difficult duties thrown upon us"; nevertheless, he concluded, "if our life is prolonged we shall do it".⁵¹

Despite obvious disappointment, the freetrade radicals accepted Parkes's explanation. B.R.Wise accepted the fact that the machinery for direct taxation could not be erected quickly, but expressed the hope that "when the next budget is introduced a property-tax will be introduced".⁵² Even Jonathan Seaver, accepting Parkes's explanation and pledge for the future, remained loyal to the ministry.⁵³

The failure of the ministry's measures to deal effectively with the financial crisis was revealed in Burns's financial statement in December 1887. His expected surplus had not materialised, and the deficit remained untouched;⁵⁴ clearly a 'new form of taxation' was required. To maintain its radical support and its general credibility, the time had come for the ministry to propose the introduction of direct taxation. During the course of his financial statement, therefore, Burns announced the ministry's intention of introducing Land and Property Taxation Bills during the remainder of the session.⁵⁵ The government's decision was probably influenced by Wise's presence in the ministry at the time, and it would appear that he played a significant role in the preparation of the legislation.⁵⁶ Between May and July 1888, the ministry presented the two bills to parliament; their fate, however, leaves little doubt that it had no intention of turning the legislation into law.⁵⁷ That the two bills were no more than a token gesture on the part of an unwilling conservative ministry to impose direct taxation was clearly revealed by the ministry's tactics in presenting them to parliament, and by the ease with which it allowed the legislation to pass into oblivion.

The first point to be noted is that the parliamentary session of 1887-88 was set for prorogation on 24 July 1888, and it is in view of this fact that the comment of George Dibbs

on 6 June is of significance. In reference to the Land-tax Bill, Dibbs described the action of the ministry as "erratic", and went on to "doubt ... whether the Government are in earnest in proceeding with it. If the Government had been sincerely desirous of passing a land-tax, surely this would have been one of the first measures which they would have submitted".⁵⁸ Despite the foreshadowing of direct taxation in December 1887, its first appearance was on 3 May, when Burns asked the assent of the Committee of Ways and Means to the introduction of a Land-tax Bill.⁵⁹ Although assent was granted and the bill was read a first time on 3 May,⁶⁰ it was over a month before the second reading debate and division took place.⁶¹ A further five weeks then elapsed before the bill was read a third time on 12 July,⁶² only six sitting days before the prorogation. The ministry's procedure with the Property-tax Bill was even more sluggish. First raised in the Committee of Ways and Means on 7 June,⁶³ the Committee's assent was delayed until 3 July.⁶⁴ Read a second time on 5 July,⁶⁵ the bill proceeded on 12 July to the Committee stage where its further consideration was postponed,⁶⁶ and it became a victim of the timely prorogation. Clearly the ministry viewed the effluxion of time as a potent weapon in disposing of a bill they had introduced only as a sham measure to save face.

Further conservative opposition, both inside and outside the ministry, seems to have been instrumental in ensuring the failure of the bills. The second reading division on the Property-tax Bill separated the genuine direct taxers from the rest. General conservative dissatisfaction with the bill⁶⁷ led to many abstentions from participation in the division, in which only twenty-seven freetraders cast their vote, eight of those being the radicals Wise, Allen, Garland, Garrard, Haynes, Nobbs, Neild, and Woodward.⁶⁸ Under consideration in Committee, objections were made to several clauses, as a result of which Burns readily agreed to postpone consideration of the bill, and it was never heard of again.⁶⁹ Some years later, B.R. Wise pointed to the successful and devious conservative tactic of "pretending to favour democratic measures in the Assembly, and at the same time securing a most active opposition

to them in the Council, ... by sending them to that Chamber at such a period of the session that their fair consideration is impossible".⁷⁰ Although Dibbs had declared that the two bills "will be ignominiously rejected by the other House",⁷¹ the ministry took no chances, and the only bill to reach the Legislative Council was sent there with only six sitting days remaining in the session. The ministry's shrewd timing and the Council's conservatism combined to send the Land-tax Bill into oblivion.⁷²

The ministry appears to have been more than content to accept the Legislative Council's action. Jonathan Seaver again exposed the fraudulent nature of the ministry's espousal of the legislation: the government, he claimed, "say that they brought forward a land-tax bill, but that it was defeated in the Council, and that they could do no more". But, as Seaver continued, "They can do more", and he concluded that "If the Government, failing to get a land-tax bill through the Council, do not appeal to the country on the question they are not worthy of the name of free-traders".⁷³ No appeal to the country, however, was made; no confrontation with the Council took place; and no taxation bills appeared again in the Assembly during the following session. In fact, during that following session, the Treasurer reverted to his original argument that "there was no need for any further taxation".⁷⁴ The 'effort' had been made; the result was never in doubt; and the ministry was 'vindicated'.

The division of the freetrade party into those who genuinely upheld the imposition of direct taxation and those who opposed it presents few problems. Traditional conservatism and economic self-interest generally combined to produce rejection of such a radical proposal, and those who favoured a system of direct taxation were usually advanced liberals or champions of labour, who also advocated such philosophically related measures as a compulsory eight-hour working day, the payment of MSLA, and the rights of trade unions. One major exception to this straightforward division was William McMillan. As a man who embraced the traditional laissez-faire liberal

philosophy⁷⁵ and who used "the word 'freedom' in its broadest and most comprehensive sense",⁷⁶ McMillan opposed the eight-hour working day legislation,⁷⁷ payment of MsLA, an elective Legislative Council,⁷⁸ undue activity by the government,⁷⁹ and upheld 'freedom of contract' in opposition to the demands of trade unionism.⁸⁰ As a man with wealthy commercial interests and associations, he resisted the rising influence of trade unionism,⁸¹ upheld continuing taxation of common consumer articles through the customs,⁸² and recognised that "there is nobody in the House who suffers more materially than I do" from the imposition of direct taxation.⁸³ At the same time, however, he claimed that "I am a staunch free-trader right to the core. I do not allow my own interests to conflict with my free-trade principles".⁸⁴

As a principled freetrader, McMillan recognised that direct taxation was an integral part of pure freetrade doctrine, and, as such, he advocated its imposition. In April 1887, he declared his wholehearted support for a scheme of direct taxation;⁸⁵ in June 1888, referring to himself as "a radical", he upheld "the doing away altogether ... with indirect taxation", and stated that "I would go for direct taxation" as its replacement.⁸⁶ In November 1888, he called on the ministry to introduce and pass into law a measure of direct taxation, stating his own preference for an income tax.⁸⁷

The apparent ambiguity in McMillan's attitude towards direct taxation was not confined to his public utterances. Between March 1889 and July 1891, McMillan was Colonial Treasurer in Parkes's second freetrade ministry. Despite his stated desire for the imposition of direct taxation and the removal of indirect taxation, and his pledge to make the tariff a 'pure and scientific freetrade' tariff,⁸⁸ nothing was done during the life of the ministry either to simplify the tariff or to impose direct taxation. If Loveday and Martin are correct in stating that "the core group in the new cabinet had been critics of the 1887-9 financial policies (especially on taxation and the tariff)",⁸⁹ and that Parkes "was fumbling to maintain his position

among its new men",⁹⁰ the introduction of a system of direct taxation should have been a foregone conclusion. If, however, Parkes retained a tight control over policy in the face of demands by his ministerial colleagues to introduce direct taxation, internal cabinet dissension over policy would probably have resulted. This, however, does not appear to have eventuated; of those ministers whose correspondence with Parkes has survived, only J.H.Carruthers urged Parkes to "put a tax upon the unimproved value of land ...".⁹¹

It would seem, therefore, that, when it came to the point, the majority of the ministry did not favour direct taxation. Later, in justifying the failure of the ministry to institute direct taxation, McMillan employed the same explanation, which his predecessor, J.F.Burns, had used in 1888 to justify the shelving of direct taxation, and of which McMillan had, at the time, been highly critical. In November 1888, McMillan had rebuked Burns for stating that "under the present flourishing state of the finances there was no need for any further taxation";⁹² yet, McMillan himself later explained that between 1889 and 1891 there had been no necessity to impose direct taxation because the government had been assured of "a very fair and elastic revenue",⁹³ revenue provided, of course, by the 'freetrade' tariff. This argument, as Seaver revealed, was the classic conservative justification for shelving direct taxation. "Hon. gentlemen," he related, "... tell us that we do not want direct taxation, because there is sufficient revenue provided by the present tariff. I say we do not want the revenue provided by this tariff". Its duties, he went on, "lean on the lower classes more heavily than any other classes", and he reiterated the radical desire "to substitute for them direct taxation like a land-tax".⁹⁴ During the last six months of the 1889-91 ministry's life, land and income tax bills were drafted, but they were never presented to parliament, and they were intended only as emergency measures when "certain indications were seen that a time of depression was likely to come upon this country".⁹⁵

Fundamentally, then, McMillan's attitude to direct

taxation seems to have been one of ambivalence. Despite his public utterances in support of taxation reform, he became apprehensive and unwilling when it actually came to the point of instituting such reform. In 1888, he expressed his dislike of the ministry's property taxation legislation;⁹⁶ between 1889 and 1891, he did nothing to further the cause of direct taxation; and, when Reid presented his Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill to the Assembly in 1894, he again backed down, urging caution and postponement of the measure.⁹⁷ There are two possible explanations for McMillan's ambivalence. First, he genuinely recognised the consistency of direct taxation with free-trade, but was also aware that it was men like himself who would most suffer from its introduction. When it came to the point, this conflict between principle and economic interest was resolved in favour of the latter. In 1894, he described Reid's taxation proposals as an "improper and ungenerous enactment against people who are trading in this country".⁹⁸

The second explanation sees McMillan as the committed conservative, but also as a shrewd politician who was aware of the electoral implications of repudiating direct taxation. Aware that "the large majority" of the votes that returned him to parliament were cast by "the working population of the country", he publicly espoused direct taxation in 1887;⁹⁹ he again emphasised his 'radicalism' a little over a year later.¹⁰⁰ In November 1888, he was clearly concerned about "the contingencies of future elections" when he called on the ministry to introduce direct taxation, a system, he claimed, "which will make the freetrade cause in the country secure".¹⁰¹ J.P. Garvan was quick to discern electoral motives in the speech of "one so strongly imbued with a desire to keep the Government in their place, ...".¹⁰² Perhaps B.R. Wise came close to the truth about McMillan's motives when he wrote, some years later, that "the most Conservative of politicians can achieve an easy reputation as a Radical by ... [supporting] democratic measures in the happy confidence that he can get his colleagues in the Legislative Council to procure their summary rejection",¹⁰³ or in the confidence that such measures would not even reach the Legislative Council.

The ministry's 1888 sham taxation legislation and scarcely concealed efforts to ensure its failure did not deceive the freetrade radicals, and this time they were not so easily fobbed off. It was, in fact, from about this time that radical opinion began to harden against the ministry, and that freetrade radicals came increasingly to express their frustration with the failure of the ministry to live up to radical expectations and to fulfil its 'pledges'. Referring to the promises and pledges given by Burns in his December 1887 financial statement, J.C. Neild declared the impossibility of finding that "any statement, promise or hope has been fulfilled".¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Seaver revealed the radicals' decline from a belief that the coming of a freetrade government heralded real social reform and progress to bitter disenchantment when he stated: "I entered the House as a supporter of what I believed to be a thoroughly free-trade ministry - a ministry who would obtain most of their revenue from direct taxation....; but I am sorry to say that I begin to doubt the intention of the Government to carry out the measures to which they pledged themselves".¹⁰⁵ In particular, the radicals resented the conservative inactivity of the government. F.J. Smith described the existing parliament as "a barren one so far as legislation is concerned",¹⁰⁶ and he condemned the ministry for its "neglect ... to use the opportunities at their command" to enact "beneficial legislation".¹⁰⁷

This radical reaction against the ministry's conservatism came to a head in December 1888 during the consideration of a ministerial proposal to lease Sydney's tramways from the government to private enterprise.¹⁰⁸ This was clearly a proposal that involved a negation of the radicals' view of the responsibility of the government in society, and was a practical example of laissez-faire at work. In November 1888, McMillan had argued that "the tremendous ægis of the state overlooking and overshadowing everything in this country" created a "danger to the future liberties of this country".¹⁰⁹ By way of a remedy, he had argued that the leasing of the tramway to private syndicates would "take off this load from the central government of the country, which means corruption and danger to our

future liberties, ...".¹¹⁰ It was this view that the radicals strongly resisted,¹¹¹ and, as previously discussed, their rebellion against the ministry on the proposal was largely responsible for the fall of Parkes's first freetrade government.¹¹²

Not all the freetrade radicals, however, resorted to open rebellion to achieve their goals. B.R. Wise was one who adopted a different approach. Although he remained a defender of the government,¹¹³ Wise continued to urge direct taxation as being "absolutely necessary".¹¹⁴ Shortly after the prorogation had sealed the fate of the direct taxation legislation, Wise wrote to Parkes confidentially in yet another attempt to convert the old conservative to the radical point of view. Wise wrote of the "great importance to re-awaken the enthusiasm of the party which supports the Government, by a vigorous [sic] and comprehensive policy of financial reform". Anxious to "put an end for ever to the tin-kettle controversy between Protection and Free Trade", the one issue on which Parkes's vision of political stability depended, and which caused such comfort to the defensive conservatives and such frustration to the progressive radicals, Wise urged that in the next session the ministry should bring forward "A Land Tax, an Income Tax, a Local Govt [sic] Bill ... and a bold alteration of the tariff".¹¹⁵ No such moves, however, were made. By the time Parkes's second freetrade ministry had settled comfortably into the Treasury benches, the freetrade radicals had faced the undeniable truth. Seaver bitterly recounted the failure of the previous ministry to impose direct taxation, and he cynically predicted that "the present Ministry, notwithstanding ... [their] promises and pledges ..., have no intention of bringing in a scheme of that kind either".¹¹⁶ He was right.

Implicit in Wise's letter to Parkes was his desire that the individual measures he suggested should all form part of a comprehensive and positive party platform. After discussing the individual proposals, Wise stated that, as a matter of "even greater importance ..., I would like to see the unity of these proposals plainly declared".¹¹⁷ His realisation by the

end of 1888 of the extent to which the fiscal issue had been used by Parkes and the conservatives as a barrier, both to the consideration of more pressing and real issues and the formulation of a comprehensive party programme, led him and some of his radical colleagues to adopt a new tactic to convert and commit the party to a specific party programme.¹¹⁸ On 18 January 1889, a meeting of the freetrade parliamentary party, at which thirty-two members were present,¹¹⁹ was held to prepare for the forthcoming general election. At this meeting, "a strong executive or working committee of nine" was formed to manage the party's electoral organisation.¹²⁰ Comprising "several of the prominent freetrade members",¹²¹ the executive was not specifically named; it seems, however, to have certainly contained McMillan as chairman,¹²² Sydney Smith and S. Burdekin as secretaries,¹²³ Wise¹²⁴ and Parkes;¹²⁵ its probable members were G.H. Reid,¹²⁶ J.N. Brunner¹²⁷ and W. Clarke,¹²⁸ and three other possibilities were J.H. Carruthers, F.J. Smith and F. Abigail.¹²⁹ One of the allotted tasks of the executive was "to consider matters of policy in view of the general election",¹³⁰ and to frame "a platform upon which the election will be contested".¹³¹ It was probably due to Parkes's strong influence and the ever-present possibility of creating division that nothing was done during the course of the campaign in this regard, and the election was fought on the same lines as the 1887 general election. As the Maitland Mercury pointed out, "The freetraders have not pledged themselves in any way, except to maintain the principle of free trade in the fiscal policy of the country".¹³²

After the election, on 18 February, however, it was decided by the executive to extend freetrade organisation by the creation of a parliamentary executive or organising committee that would form the basis of a "new association" to represent the party and manage its affairs.¹³³ The new committee's function was not just to be confined to management. The basis of Wise's desire for a comprehensive party programme was expressed in the election executive's declaration that "It is not intended ... to confine the operations of the committee to free trade and protection, but to prepare a broad, comprehensive, liberal platform - in fact, it is expected that this will be the first step

towards cementing party government upon definite lines in the colony".¹³⁴ At the time this decision was made, with the elections over, Parkes had probably retired from the executive,¹³⁵ and in his absence such a decision was not surprising. Within the executive's ranks were the freetrade radicals Wise, F.J. Smith, Sydney Smith and Carruthers, all seeking a progressive party programme. In addition, there was Francis Abigail who, though a factional supporter of Parkes, was a man of progressive views,¹³⁶ and McMillan, whose philosophical concerns and sham radicalism may also have contributed to the decision.

The promoters of the "new association" were, therefore, "a number of the freetrade members of Parliament, who thought the time had come for an active organisation embracing a complete political platform",¹³⁷ and, on 1 March, a "largely-attended" meeting of "free trade members of the Assembly, free trade members of the last Parliament, and defeated free trade candidates" was held "for the purpose of forming a strong association",¹³⁸ later to be named "The Liberal and Political Association of New South Wales" (LPA).¹³⁹ The convenor of this meeting and the basis of the new association was an organising committee of seven MsLA appointed, in accordance with the parliamentary executive's decision of 18 February,¹⁴⁰ by a meeting of fifty freetrade MsLA on about 25 February; its allotted task was "to organise the adherents of the Party and to prepare a plan of action for the future".¹⁴¹ The notable absentee from the seven-man executive, which comprised McMillan, Brunner, F.J. Smith, Burdekin, Sydney Smith, Abigail and Carruthers,¹⁴² was B.R. Wise, who was still licking his wounds after a double electoral defeat during the general election,¹⁴³ and who did not take any part in the activities of the LPA.

It was probably Wise's unfortunate absence that led to an immediate weakening of radical influence in the business of the LPA, and, in particular, in the formulation of 'a broad, comprehensive liberal platform'. Shortly after the LPA's formation, the executive appointed a sub-committee, comprising McMillan, Brunner, Abigail, Lee, Carruthers and Garrett, to prepare a draft party platform.¹⁴⁴ The sub-committee's composition reflects waning radical influence. Three of its members had belonged to Parkes's factional 1887-89 ministry,¹⁴⁵ and, of these, Abigail's

progressive views were offset by Garrett's conservatism.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, when it came to the point, as it soon did, the conservatism of Lee¹⁴⁷ and McMillan outweighed the radicalism of Carruthers. It would seem that the forces of conservatism had again successfully sabotaged a radical plan of action - and not for the last time. The process of formulating and adopting a platform again clearly demonstrated the presence of conflict within freetrade ranks, and the undoubted dominance of conservative elements. The neglect of questions of pressing social and political importance; the refusal to consider in detail issues of principle which were the source of friction within the party; and, finally, the replacement in the platform of issues of principle with uncontroversial administrative matters,¹⁴⁸ were all conservative devices to frustrate and prevent the formulation of a specific and progressive party platform.

On 5 March, the platform sub-committee met and drew up a proposed platform, which, with one notable exception, was an example of freetrade conservatism.¹⁴⁹ The proposed platform had two major characteristics. First, it was overwhelmingly vague, the plank of 'direct taxation' being even more obscure than Parkes's 1887 election utterances. No clue was given as to whether "freedom of trade" meant the existing 'revenue tariffism' that posed as freetrade, or the radical policy to remove the 'anomalies' in the tariff; only under later radical pressure was this plank made explicit. As pointed out later, the elucidation of "Land Policy" was hopelessly vague, to the point of being meaningless. The same could also be said of the planks advocating "Retrenchment of Expenditure", and the "Establishment of Local & Divisional Government ... by means of a liberal & comprehensive law". The second major characteristic was the avoidance of many pressing social problems that demanded a solution. Industrial relations and the conditions of labour were, for example, totally ignored. In their place, emphasis was placed on such minor uncontroversial administrative proposals as the creation of agricultural schools and model farms, the improvement of internal communications, water conservation and irrigation, mining regulations, and technical

education. The one exception to both chief characteristics was the section on "Electoral Reform", in which was specified the radical advocacy of 'an Elective Upper House'.

Submitted on 6 March "for the consideration of the Organising Committee",¹⁵⁰ the proposed platform underwent amendments, which, again with one exception, only served to reinforce the basic nature of the draft platform.¹⁵¹ Although the platform was re-structured, none of its vagueness was removed, and its similarity to a programme of public works was accentuated by the addition of planks advocating the creation of mining colleges and the enactment of "forestry laws to regulate the use, preservation, and growth of timber". Furthermore, the one specific radical proposal contained in the draft platform - an elective Legislative Council - was deleted. The one concession made to radical opinion was the amplification of the vague plank advocating 'direct taxation', by the addition of the words, "including a tax on the unimproved value of the freehold in land, with reasonable exemption"; even this last hint of radicalism was shortly to be removed from the platform.

On 26 March, a meeting of the LPA, convened by circular and attended by "nearly 100 gentlemen ", was held, at which printed copies of the platform as amended by the organising committee were "freely circulated".¹⁵² The meeting was then adjourned until 1 April,¹⁵³ when "the consideration of the platform ... was resumed".¹⁵⁴ At these two meetings there gathered all those interested in the formulation of freetrade policy, from both within and without parliament. From the existing limited lists of those present, it is clear that the stage was set for a test of strength between the forces of freetrade conservatism and radicalism. Among the dominant conservative host were the MsLA Bruce Smith,¹⁵⁵ William McMillan,¹⁵⁶ J.F. Burns, A.J. Gould, Sydney Burdekin, J. Wheeler, J.F. Cullen and J.R. Street,¹ and the non-parliamentarians Sir John Robertson,¹⁵⁸ G.N. Griffiths, Richard Teece and Captain F.H. Trouton.¹⁵⁹ Ranged against them were the radical MsLA Sydney Smith, D.O'Connor,¹⁶⁰ J.H. Carruthers¹ and Jonathan Seaver,¹⁶² plus the radical outsiders E.W. Foxall, T. Halloran, A.H. Sampson, F. Walsh, W.E. Johnson and Frank Cotton.¹⁶³

The ensuing debate clearly revealed the conflict that existed within freetrade ranks; it also demonstrated the undoubted dominance of the party's conservatives. By avoidance, evasion and postponement, they ensured that the party 'platform' became little more than a vague and meaningless list of 'public works'.

The opening of the debate on the proposed platform¹⁶⁴ set the tone for all that followed: during the consideration of the 'direct taxation' plank, J.F.Burns successfully moved "the omission of all the words after 'taxation', considering that it was unnecessary to specify any details of the direct taxation proposed". Later in the debate, three separate amendments, all specifying the imposition of a land tax, were moved to various planks of the proposed platform; all were lost. Although the proposer of the first land tax amendment, F.Walsh, pointed to the "large and growing party in the country who believed in the taxation of land", it was stated during the discussion that the matter should be "left open for the present", and that "they had not met for the purpose of going into ... details". As E.W.Foxall claimed, however, the land tax amendment was a matter of principle, not one of detail, and as such deserved proper consideration. Jonathan Seaver was more explicit when he said that he "would not be satisfied unless it was stated that ... direct taxation would include land taxation". J.F.Burns pointed to the presence of "controversy", and stated that "unless they wanted to bring about a division in their ranks, they ought to leave this question alone". The presence of friction was again revealed in the discussion of an unsuccessful specific amendment to the vague plank concerning the regulation of pastoral settlement. Supporting the amendment, F.Walsh "pointed out that the people of the colony did not want mere headlines to be placed before them, but that the details should be shown". In reply, the chairman McMillan, stated that any attempt to do so would "have the party rending themselves into a dozen factions".¹⁶⁵ The one exception to total and meaningless abstraction was the successful amendment defining 'freedom of trade' as "the abolition of all existing duties on raw material".

The overwhelmingly conservative nature of the platform, however, was highlighted by two incidents towards the end of the debate. E.W. Foxall sought to clarify the empty plank of 'electoral and parliamentary reform' by specifying "An elective Upper House, one man one vote, and payment of members". After Sir John Robertson had staunchly declared his opposition, and McMillan had emphatically told the meeting "not to touch anything that was so radical", the amendment was lost. The real character of the platform was revealed at the end of the meeting when an amendment, adding to the platform an eighth plank, "Sanitary Reform", was carried without dissension.

The final platform was understandably met with criticism. One freetrader referred to "its vague and non-committal character",¹⁶⁶ and a critical protectionist correspondent described the Association's broad platform as "sufficiently broad to place its boundaries and outlines beyond the mental vision of any person". Referring to the total rejection of "a number of liberal amendments", the same correspondent concluded that, "disguise it as they may, the leaders of the free-trade party are the Conservatives of New South Wales, and as such will oppose all liberal reforms".¹⁶⁷

What is more, despite the 'party' platform and the presence in the ministry of a number of those instrumental in its formulation, nothing was ever done to implement its more principled planks. This applied particularly to the area of fiscal policy. Undoubtedly the LPA platform supposedly bound the ministry to simplify the tariff by removing "all existing duties on raw material",¹⁶⁸ and the success of J.P. Abbott's embarrassing tariff reform motion in the Assembly early in April¹⁶⁹ put early pressure on Parkes's second freetrade ministry to reform the 'freetrade' tariff. The new Colonial Treasurer, McMillan, in fact, pledged to do so.¹⁷⁰ By July, however, nothing had been done, and the matter was again raised at the annual meeting of the FTLA, the organisation created in May 1889 by an amalgamation of the LPA and FTA. At the meeting, the radical, W.E. Johnson, moved that the

government be urged to carry out its pledges as "the anomalies existing in the tariff are inconsistent with freetrade principles".¹⁷¹ This motion again led to conflict, the Association's conservative secretary and SCC member, Edward Pulsford,¹⁷² defending the government's inaction. John Beveridge, another merchant freetrader and SCC member,¹⁷³ defended the existing revenue duties on the ground that their removal would have to result in "placing a tax on something else".¹⁷⁴ Johnson stated that his motive for bringing "pressure to bear upon the Government" was to show the people that their "parliamentary representatives ... were not traitors to the cause of free-trade".¹⁷⁵ The fact that no freetrade reform of the tariff was carried out until 1894 seemed to reveal, however, that they were.

The conflict over, and avoidance of, direct taxation also continued. At the first annual conference of the FTLA in August 1889, the debate on direct taxation was resumed, and this time resulted in a victory for the radicals. In response to a radical proposal that "a form of taxation upon the unimproved value of land should be imposed ...",¹⁷⁶ the old conservative tactics of avoidance and vagueness were again employed. One freetrade MLA "was afraid that the passing of this resolution now might alienate some of the freetrade supporters",¹⁷⁷ and G.H.Reid both maintained that "Freetraders should sink their extreme views",¹⁷⁸ and moved the rather equivocal amendment that "a form of taxation on the unimproved value of land is adopted by this association as one of the legitimate forms of taxation".¹⁷⁹ The radicals, however, were this time not to be denied. E.W.Foxall maintained that "they were not going to be humbugged or hoodwinked by resolutions that meant nothing.... They did not want to affirm that it was 'desirable' [that] something should be done", but that something must be done to implement direct taxation in the form of land taxation.¹⁸⁰ Frank Cotton, agreeing that "Mr Reid's motion was hardly definite enough", successfully moved the amendment that "a form of taxation on land values, ..., should be imposed for the purpose of raising revenue".¹⁸¹ The radical victory was, however, all to no

avail. At no stage during the life of the 1889-91 freetrade ministry, as B.R.Wise pointed out, was any attempt made "to carry out the declared policy of the freetrade party" as expressed in the FTLA conference resolution. Wise concluded by stating that during the life of the ministry "neither the cause of freetrade nor democratic progress was greatly advanced", for "nothing was done ... either to lighten the tariff or to tax the rich".¹⁸² W.H.Traill summed the situation up when he wrote: "So long as Sir Henry [Parkes] guided the policy of the freetrade party, the attitude of reluctance to have recourse to direct taxation was maintained, and the propertied classes thus kept loyal to the freetrade interest".¹⁸³

The FTLA conference failed to rectify the absence of any specific and meaningful party platform. Concerning itself largely with matters of electoral organisation, the conference added very little, apart from the land tax resolution, to the LPA platform that had been adopted in toto by the FTLA on its inception.¹⁸⁴ What little was done only reinforced the platform's vague, conservative and non-political character. The subject of local government was removed from the realm of political principle, being described as "no longer a party question"¹⁸⁵ and a matter "of a national character";¹⁸⁶ even so, the chairman, in response to a detailed motion on the subject, stated that "as to the details of the bill the conference was not in a position to lay down any strong lines for the guidance of any Government".¹⁸⁷ A motion that municipal taxation should be placed on land values¹⁸⁸ was summarily dismissed,¹⁸⁹ and the remainder of the time devoted to policy was spent in a discussion about railway rates¹⁹⁰ and the establishment of a Department of Agriculture and a School of Mines.¹⁹¹

The year 1889, then, did not see the formulation of a specific and comprehensive freetrade party platform; the efforts to block every move towards that end were almost completely successful. In April 1889, the Herald complained that parliament "persistently neglects affairs upon which the welfare of the community depends", and it looked to the LPA "to cure this great defect" by binding the freetrade party to a specific

political programme.¹⁹² The policy formulations of the LPA-FTLA, however, in no sense provided a cure: matters of real social and political reform were shelved; issues involving principles gave way to matters of mere administration; and the detailed consideration of almost any question was avoided. What finally emerged was a vague, non-political 'party programme'. The conservatives of the party clearly dominated the formulation of party policy, and, in that the final programme revealed their refusal to come to terms with the necessity of, and pressure for, social reform, it could be termed a true enunciation of conservative principle - negative and distrustful of change.¹⁹³ But, no conservative commitment on vital issues of principle was actually specified in the platform, a fact that was of some significance. Such specific conservative commitment, had it been forced into the platform, could only have destroyed what little nominal fiscal unity existed to hold the party together. To preserve this precarious unity, controversial issues had to be avoided, not faced. Successful avoidance demonstrated conservative dominance, but it was a dominance created by force of numbers rather than total unanimity, and the one 'party' remained fundamentally two. It was this internal party conflict that was most responsible for the nature of the platform - vague, non-political and unprincipled. The avoidance of issues of principle and demands for reform served conservative ends, but was simply a successful political tactic rather than an enunciation of principle. Only the resolution of internal party conflict and the creation of real cohesion could result in the formulation of a constructive principled platform that would come to terms with relevant and pressing political issues.

Successful conservative resistance to the formulation of a comprehensive programme, stating specific party policy on a wide range of social and political issues, was again evidenced during the general election of 1891. Prior to the election, Parkes claimed that the ministry "intended to go to the country" on freetrade, federation, the perennial promise of local government, an Electoral Bill, amendments to the Licensing Act, and "bills to provide for irrigation and the conservation of water".¹⁹ Although it was claimed that the ministry had prepared bills

to cover a number of these subjects,¹⁹⁵ very few details were provided, and the subject of freetrade and direct taxation was almost entirely submerged.¹⁹⁶ In the absence of a comprehensive and precise party platform,¹⁹⁷ individual candidates, especially the radicals, who sought policy guidelines were forced to turn elsewhere. With nothing else offering, the radical freetrade candidate for Albury, Luke Gulson,¹⁹⁸ and one of the freetrade candidates for Hawkesbury, A. Matheson, announced themselves "prepared to accept the platform laid down by the South Sydney Freetrade Association, ...".¹⁹⁹ Formed in March 1887,²⁰⁰ the South Sydney branch of the FTA,²⁰¹ unlike its parent body and many of its fellow branches, remained in active existence right through to the end of 1891.²⁰² The active participation in its activities of men like B.R. Wise,²⁰³ John Haynes,²⁰⁴ J.H. Carruthers,²⁰⁵ and S.T. Whiddon²⁰⁶ ensured a strong radical influence within the Association.

This influence was most amply demonstrated in May 1891 when the Association's leading radicals, Wise and C.J. Danahey,²⁰⁷ formulated a specific sixteen-point platform²⁰⁸ and had it ratified as the platform of the Association.²⁰⁹ The programme both represented an attempt to fill the void created by the absence of any such platform for the freetrade party as a whole, and, although radical in content, exposed the irrelevance of the platform originally drawn up by the LPA; unlike its predecessor, it was specific and it came to grips with matters of pressing social concern.²¹⁰ C.J. Danahey pointed particularly to the efforts they were making "to ameliorate the condition of the masses".²¹¹ Unable to prevail upon the party as a whole to adopt such a specific and progressive programme, Wise had been forced to act independently through the one freetrade organisation in which his views held sway. The radicals had begun to retaliate.²¹²

By June 1891, the efforts of men like Wise to commit the freetrade party to an active policy of reform "to ameliorate the condition of the masses" had been stifled from within the party for over four years. In fact, the reactionary attitude of Parkes's two ministries on questions concerning the rights

and conditions of labour was quite clearly revealed during 1890. The year 1890 was one of widespread industrial disturbance that culminated in August and September in the maritime strike.²¹³ In attempting to deal with the strikers, William McMillan²¹⁴ demonstrated the basic conservatism, protecting economic self-interest, that had dominated the freetrade party, both in and out of parliament, since 1886. Early in September, McMillan's instinct to use force against the strikers led him to apply unsuccessfully to Parkes for authority to use "the military and police".²¹⁵

On 19 September, a skirmish occurred at Circular Quay between the strikers and non-union labourers.²¹⁶ The outcome of this incident fully revealed the neuroses of the conservatives, for, "within an hour of its outbreak",²¹⁷ a deputation from the SCC was in consultation with its past president and champion, McMillan, who assured his commercial colleagues that "they could go away feeling sure that the Government would now protect them".²¹⁸ He maintained that, in the face of an attempt to set up "a temporary semi-revolutionary Government", the situation could not continue "without absolute anarchy and disorder ensuing". He added that "I speak for the whole Government in the unfortunate absence of my chief".²¹⁹ He did not, however, speak for Parkes, whose rejection of his subordinate's assumption of authority and implied threat to use force was not slow in forthcoming.²²⁰ In repudiating McMillan's stand, Parkes detached himself from McMillan's obvious economic and class interests; his own far more objective brand of traditional conservative liberalism was revealed in his determined defence of non-partisan neutrality. He told a Herald reporter that the government "cannot defend the interests of any one class to the neglect of another...the duty and obligation thrown upon it must be performed, as far as possible, on the lines of non-partisanship".²²¹

McMillan's response to the maritime strike was evidence of his emotional conservative class prejudice; his own and many of his colleagues' laissez-faire beliefs were also revealed during the strike and its aftermath. And again the

deep conflict between two irreconcilable liberal philosophies that kept the freetraders splintered and disunited came to the fore. Trade union demands and strike action symbolised to the laissez-faire freetrade liberal the tyranny of unionism in repudiating the sacred individualist right of 'freedom of contract', the right of employers freely to engage suitable labour, whether unionist or not.²²² The individualist liberal view was expressed by the Herald which stated that 'freedom of contract' is "on the same broad basis as freedom of action and freedom of speech, ...".²²³ To this argument, B.R. Wise retorted that, in existing circumstances, the individual labourer lost his freedom by being forced to accept the employer's terms of contract, and that trade unionism and the right to strike helped to rectify the imbalance between the power of capital and that of labour.²²⁴ He unequivocally stated that 'freedom of contract' was "a social and industrial evil of the first magnitude",²²⁵ and elsewhere maintained that "I cannot see how the demand of trade unionists that labour shall be employed through the union, and not by individual bargaining, can be logically resisted".²²⁶ Wise clearly revealed the division within the party when, in declining nomination by the FTLA in a by-election for East Sydney,²²⁷ he told the council of the Association that "I feel unable to deny that the labour party is more right in its principal contentions than the capitalist party which is now opposing them".²²⁸ Wise's remained, however, the minority view, and the conservative view of 'the capitalist party' remained dominant in successful resistance of unionist demands. Given such a situation, it was, therefore, only natural that the democrats, unionists and labouring classes outside parliament should seek a new political advocate; in July 1891, that new advocate first appeared in parliament in the form of the Labor party.

The Labor party began its parliamentary career by giving the freetrade ministry a loose support on the basis of 'support in return for concessions'.²²⁹ It was not surprising, therefore, that the radical elements in the freetrade party found a basis for an informal alliance with their kindred Labor spirits. It was this union of spirits that was responsible

for the loosening of the conservative domination of the free-trade party towards the end of 1891; the presence of the Labor party in the Assembly had the effect of bolstering radical confidence and resolution. The confidence it gave one free-trade radical to fly in the face of his conservative colleagues severely shook conservative dominion and sent the free-trade party into opposition.

The radical freetrader who caused all the trouble was Sydney Smith, Parkes's Secretary for Mines and Agriculture, and the only rebellious radical included in the ministry.²³⁰ In August 1891, Smith took it upon himself²³¹ to present to parliament a Coal Mines Regulation Bill, clause 17 of which provided a compulsory eight-hour working day for miners between the ages of fourteen and seventeen.²³² The eight-hour day had long been basic to the political demands of radicals and organised labour, but had been staunchly resisted by the laissez-faire conservatives. In moving the second reading of the bill, Smith realised that "some hon. members will object to the bill" on the grounds of its eight-hours clause,²³³ but this did not deter him. When the clause came up for consideration in a poorly attended Committee, Smith was prepared to go even further; he assented to the Labor MLA, Joseph Cook's amendment that gave the eight-hour day to all miners, Monday to Friday, and the amendment was agreed to without division.²³⁴ Smith also assented to radical amendments of clause 21 which provided for the ventilation of the mines.²³⁵

The dissension in the freetrade ranks, caused by Smith's action, became evident on 15 October, when he moved the third reading of the bill.²³⁶ Alarmed at the prospect of the compulsory limitation of working hours and the other radical amendments passed in Committee, Smith's former ministerial colleague, William McMillan, moved an amendment that the bill be re-committed for the further consideration of clauses 17 and 21.²³⁷ Supporting McMillan in the "angry debate" that followed²³⁸ were Smith's ministerial colleagues, Parkes and Bruce Smith.²³⁹ Just when it appeared that McMillan's amendment

was doomed, there sprung to the conservative free-traders' defence the conservative protectionist, Edmund Barton, who moved that the debate be adjourned.²⁴⁰ Smith himself accepted the motion, for it gave him time to consult with his disgruntled colleagues, and he appealed to "his [Labor] friends" to add their consent, promising to proceed with the bill within two days.²⁴¹ Most, however, refused, and joined the protectionists to defeat the ministry.²⁴² They realised that, in the face of powerful conservative reaction, Smith was not strong enough to get the amended bill through; his radical stand, however, was responsible for the ministry's resignation.

And so it was that discontented and disillusioned free-trade radicals had largely brought about the fall of the two free-trade ministries between 1887 and 1891. Not strong enough to control, or even force compromises on, free-trade policy and ministerial action, the free-trade radicals were strong enough to prevent free-trade cohesion and unseat free-trade ministries. This conflict among the free-traders, however, had the effect of forcing all matters of principle and issues of vital concern to the colony's welfare and development into the background, all in the cause of maintaining nominal unity and preventing friction from dismembering a ruling majority. The 'party', therefore, remained a group with power, but without policy; the principled policy vacuum of the faction system still remained to be filled. Efforts to fill the vacuum, however, had begun, and it was the unremitting endeavours of the new men of principle that made the free-trade group more than a faction, but still less than a cohesive, principled political party. Furthermore, the history of the parliamentary protectionist party between 1887 and 1891 bore a remarkable similarity to that of the free-trade party, and it is on the protectionists that attention should now be focussed, for it was they who were called on to succeed Parkes's deposed ministry.

CHAPTER 4

FACTIONS AND FRICTIONS, PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMMES, 1887-1891.

III The Parliamentary Protectionists and Some Conclusions.

"The protectionists have never formulated a special policy. We have had moderate protectionists, discriminating protectionists - (laughter) - and a whole catalogue from 5 per cent ad valorem down to prohibition....But the question comes, what is this protection going to be?"

- William McMillan.
(DT, 17 October 1889, p.5).

"...., there have been two struggling parties in this empire, under the names of Tramecksan, and Slam-ecksan, from the high and low heels on their shoes, by which they distinguish themselves".

- Gulliver's Travels

I

Like the freetraders, the protectionists were irreconcilably divided over the specific meaning of their professed fiscal doctrine; as Thomas Waddell pointed out, "Protection with different men had different meanings".¹ The basic point

at issue was "how far protection should go",² and the two basic alternatives, both represented in the protection party, were, in William McMillan's words, "moderate protection" and "practical prohibition".³ The fundamental difference between the two alternatives concerned the degree to which a policy of protection should be a means of raising state revenue. 'Discriminating', 'judicious' or 'moderate protection', described by one protectionist MLA as the imposition of "10 or 15 per cent ad valorem duties",⁴ had as its chief objective, not the hindrance or restriction of imports, but rather the accumulation of large amounts of revenue. 'Practical prohibition', on the other hand, adequately characterises the views of more doctrinaire protectionists who favoured "only import duties, which either exclude foreign commodities of particular kinds, or so raise their selling price as to give an advantage to local producers of like articles".⁵ To achieve this purpose, the incidence of ad valorem duties was seen in terms of about 25%,⁶ and such a policy could scarcely be regarded as a means of raising revenue.

Undoubtedly the majority of protectionist MSLA regarded protection as a means of raising revenue, since most of them had only accepted the label of 'protectionist' when Parkes's description of Jennings' revenue-raising 5% ad valorem duty as a 'protectionist measure' became generally accepted. Such prominent protectionists as George Dibbs, J.P. Abbott, J. See, J.P. Garvan, William Lyne and Henry Copeland, all 'converts' from freetrade during late 1886 or 1887, regarded protection as little or nothing more than "a system of fiscalism [that] involved a wholesale recourse to the Custom-house for revenue".⁷ While such doctrinaire, prohibitive protectionists as N. Melville, E.W. O'Sullivan, J.M. Toohy, T. Rose, and W.H. Traill⁸ recognised such a policy as "a cheap and handy way of getting money for the public Treasury", they regarded it as "a most compromising resource for protectionists".⁹ In fact, its advocates were at times referred to by real protectionists, not as protectionists at all, but as "freetraders".¹⁰ There was, therefore, a real conflict between the views of the revenue-raising moderate protectionist and "the extreme views of the ultra-protectionist party".¹¹

Throughout the period 1887 to 1892 the formulation of the fiscal policy of the protectionist party was dominated by revenue-oriented, 'moderate' protectionists. In its initial agreement to conform to Parkes's fiscal criteria by professing its protectionist proclivities in January 1887, the parliamentary opposition stated that its adherence to protection was based "not upon extreme or ultra-protectionist grounds, but upon those of moderation".¹² Its continued moderation was reflected not only in those who led the party, J.P. Abbott,¹³ W.J. Lyne¹⁴ and G.R. Dibbs,¹⁵ all lapsed freetraders, but also in the composition of the two protectionist ministries formed during the period. Called upon to form a ministry in January 1889 after Parkes's resignation, Dibbs excluded "all the staunch men of the protectionist party",¹⁶ and included only those with moderate protectionist views, almost all of whom were lapsed freetraders.¹⁷ The freetrade Herald congratulated Dibbs, "not only as to the men he has chosen, but also on the omissions which their choice implies".¹⁸ Dibbs's treasurer, J.P. Garvan, made clear the basis of the ministry's belief in protection when he stated that, in view of the continued deficit, "he thought no remedy remained, save raising the revenue through the Custom-house".¹⁹ Dibbs was in complete agreement.²⁰ The rejection of the doctrinaire protectionists was just as evident in the formation of Dibbs's next ministry in October 1891. Once again he chose his colleagues from the "moderate portion of his party",²¹ and this was almost immediately reflected in the revised customs arrangements, introduced by the ministry in December 1891.

Once again the problem was the financial deficit,²² and once again the proposed solution was "common sense, rational, moderate protection";²³ a revenue-raising tariff. The doctrinaire protectionists were harsh in their criticism of the measure, W.H. Traill describing what he termed "the trumpety tariff" as "really a revenue tariff, [which] ... if the freetraders came into power to-morrow they would only slightly modify".²⁴ George Reid revealed the basic division when he pointed out that the tariff was not a "true protectionist one. They would never get the genuine article from a lot of turncoats; if they had had Mr Melville as first Minister, they would have some sort of

tariff which the original protectionists would recognise,..."²⁵

Another important source of conflict within protectionist ranks was the hostility that existed between certain economic interests that adhered to protection, and the degree to which these rival interests emphasised different aspects of the doctrine. At the LIA conference of 1885, it was proposed that "the farmers, manufacturers, miners, and industrial classes should combine in political union" in a common adherence to the policy of protection;²⁶ such a proposal implied a basic union of the economic interests of city and country favourable to protection. The main country interests to be served by protection were those of the small free-selector farmer. The interest of this class in protection increased greatly during the 1880s as more and more settlers in country districts turned from grazing to agriculture, and as agricultural production began to outstrip the demands of local markets.²⁷ This problem was made worse by the free entry into New South Wales of the produce of other colonies, particularly wheat from Victoria, and the customs barriers against the entry of New South Wales produce into other colonies. Such a situation turned the thoughts of farmers to the idea of imposing retaliatory duties on agricultural produce entering New South Wales, especially duties on the import of Victorian grain.²⁸ In their efforts to increase their numbers and broaden their base, ardent protectionists claimed that the adherents of retaliatory duties were also protectionists, and a resolution at the LIA conference proposing reciprocity of trade for farm produce²⁹ was the signal for several prominent protectionists to deliver eulogies of their chosen fiscal doctrine.³⁰ Despite some hostile reaction to this mention of protection,³¹ the equation of reciprocity or retaliation with protection soon became generally accepted by the farmers, one declaring that "the farmers must have some kind of Protection, and he considered the form of Reciprocity a most suitable way of protecting our people".³²

The protectionism of retaliationists was crystallised during 1886 by Parkes's insistence that they, like the supporters of ad valorem duties, must be regarded as protectionists;

and, in accepting Parkes's criteria, the parliamentary opposition included "import duties on agricultural produce - in other words, grain duties" in its policy of moderate protection prior to the 1887 general election.³³ Retaliatory sentiments were particularly strong in the agricultural regions of southern New South Wales near the Victorian border, particularly the Southern Tablelands, Riverina and South-west Slopes,³⁴ and also in the wheat growing belt around Orange and Dubbo. Parliamentary aspirants greatly enhanced their chances of election if they came out in support of retaliation; in fact, an intending freetrade candidate for Queanbeyan in 1887 told Parkes that "no person need offer their services ... with the slightest chance of success unless he goes in for a duty on imported grain, ...".³⁵ As a result, many country MsLA were retaliationist 'protectionists', although the imposition of retaliatory duties was for many the limit of their belief in protection. Like the intending candidate for Queanbeyan, a number of men in southwestern rural constituencies presented themselves for election in 1887 professing their belief in both freetrade and "reciprocity or retaliation";³⁶ their later 'conversion' to protection³⁷ was based simply on the artificial criterion that adherence to retaliatory duties constituted adherence to protection. The imposition of import duties on any type of imported agricultural produce also came to be regarded as 'protection' for those farmers of New South Wales who produced the taxed produce. Henry Clarke, member for the far south coast electorate of Eden, thought the farmers of his electorate had a "right to be protected", and he therefore advocated "a produce duty on cheese, butter, and bacon" as being "highly beneficial to the coast districts".³⁸ A considerable number of protectionist MsLA, therefore, entered parliament as distinct representatives of small farmer and free selector interests.³⁹

The urban and industrial interests served by protection were those of "manufacturers, miners, and industrial classes",⁴⁰ or industrial labourers and "town artisans".⁴¹ Protection would serve their interests by the encouragement it would give to colonial industry and manufacturing through the imposition of high or restrictive tariffs on the import of manufactured goods.

As a consequence, the manufacturers or employers would see the scope of their enterprises expand, and a rise in their profits; the artisans or employees could expect both a rise in their wages and an end to unemployment. Protection, therefore, would serve urban interests, employer and employee alike, and country farmer interests, and this supposed common fiscal adherence was the basis of the idyllic union agreed upon at the 1885 LIA conference. Even there, however, the differences that existed between the city and country approaches to protection were revealed, and the basis of conflict laid bare. It was indisputable that prohibitive duties on imported manufactured goods for the purpose of fostering colonial industries would raise the prices of manufactured items throughout the colony, almost entirely to the benefit of local manufacturers. Import duties of sufficiently high incidence to raise the prices of imported manufactures to a point where similar items of colonial manufacture could compete would also have a similar effect. This would particularly affect rural areas with their dependence on imported farm implements and machinery. Despite E.W.O'Sullivan's reassurance to the farmers that the disadvantage of having to pay "a little more for their implements" would be offset by having "markets near to them for their grain and stock",⁴² the farmers would not accept duties on imported farm produce hand in hand with duties on imported manufactured goods.⁴³

On the other hand, the urban manufacturers had their own reservations about the imposition of retaliatory duties on agricultural produce. The free entry of Victorian grain into New South Wales combined with a system of cheap sea freight rates and low railway rates on imported produce to create a situation that, as James Gormly pointed out, "shut [the farmers of New South Wales] out of their legitimate markets".⁴⁴ Concurrently, a system of high colonial railway rates denied them "cheap transit to the seaboard"⁴⁵ and "taxed [them] severely",⁴⁶ thus raising the price of their produce to uncompetitive levels. Such a system was justifiably viewed as "Protection for the Sydney merchants",⁴⁷ but retaliation against farm produce imported from Victoria could mean increased food prices in Sydney.

Furthermore, although the 'protection' of colonial agriculture and that of colonial manufacturing were often mentioned in the same breath,⁴⁸ practical economic considerations virtually dictated that only one of the two should receive the benefit of 'protective' duties, thus exacerbating conflict. As O.O.Dangar realistically pointed out: "... upon articles that we produced or were manufacturing, we should place such a duty as would enable us to give either the manufacturer or the producer an advantage over the importer".⁴⁹ It was little wonder, then, that the protectionists at no stage drew up a fully articulated tariff to form part of their policy. O.O.Dangar regretted in 1890 that "the protectionist party have never had the manliness to frame a tariff"; in reply to J.M.Toohy's retort that "They never had a chance!", Dangar pointedly asked, "What were their conferences for?".⁵⁰ Between 1887 and 1890 three important protectionist conferences were held - a PU conference in August 1888, a PPRL conference in May 1889, and the NPA4 conference with two hundred and fifty-nine delegates⁵¹ in October 1889 - but at none were any tariff details considered. In accordance with the PU's stated intention "to frame a skeleton tariff of protective duties",⁵² it was proposed at the 1888 PU conference, attended by ten protectionist MsLA,⁵³ that "this conference ... frame a skeleton tariff suitable for the several classes of colonial industries, as a basis for united advocacy at the next general election".⁵⁴ The proposer was the prominent rope manufacturer, Archibald Forsyth, but MLA, E.W.O'Sullivan, all too aware of conflicting interests and ulterior motives, led the opposition and succeeded in defeating the motion.⁵⁵

Which of the two rival interests - industrial or agricultural - would predominate within the parliamentary protectionist party was largely determined by yet a further basic division within protectionist ranks. In country agricultural areas, protectionists advocating retaliation and claiming to represent the interests of small land-holders were consistently elected by the struggling farmers; in urban electorates, candidates in the manufacturing interest did not fare so well. Within the protectionist movement, the manufacturers, who stood to gain from protection, were regarded by protectionists, who claimed to represent

working-class interests, as persona non grata.⁵⁶ The president of the radical PPRL expressed this antagonism when he stated that "We have no desire to place the hands of manufacturers into the pockets of the consumers".⁵⁷ This antagonism, combined with freetrade propaganda persuading urban labourers that, whatever duties were imposed, they would have to pay higher prices, had the effect of keeping the parliamentary representation of the urban manufacturing interest at a bare minimum.⁵⁸ The fact that the urban labouring classes saw little to benefit themselves in protection was revealed by their almost solid allegiance to freetrade until 1891, when the Labor party gained their considerable support. As a result, the parliamentary protectionist party had a basically 'country' character,⁵⁹ and after the 1889 general election only five of its sixty-six members represented Sydney metropolitan electorates.⁶⁰ Their lack of representation in the parliamentary ranks led the manufacturers to use their wealth and influence in a number of attempts to influence the party from outside parliament. It would appear that they assumed complete control of the major protectionist extra-parliamentary organisation, the PU, during 1886,⁶¹ and sought to build up the parliamentary party's indebtedness to them by controlling and liberally financing the protectionist electoral campaigns of 1887 and 1889.⁶² When, however, the parliamentary party sought in October 1887 to break the manufacturers stranglehold on the PU,⁶³ the conflict between the majority of the parliamentary party and its small manufacturer element was fully revealed; the brewer, J.M. Toohey, announced his repudiation of the party leader, Dibbs, took to the cross-benches in the Assembly,⁶⁴ and gathered about him a small "push" of sympathisers, who were still refusing to communicate with the majority of the party at the end of 1888.⁶⁵

Largely because of its basic 'country' character, the parliamentary party paid only lip service to the notion of 'protecting' and fostering native manufacturing industries; the dominant country interests within the party, as well as the overriding concern for revenue, clearly determined the character of the 1891 tariff. Increased specific duties on a range of agricultural produce, including grain, were scarcely matched by

increased duties in aid of an almost non-existent iron industry and local producers of paper, rope, candles and soap. As A.W.Martin points out, an analysis of the tariff clearly reveals that "by far the greatest vested interest in protection ... was represented by the agriculturalists of the colony. Despite frequent protestations that their object was to build up manufacturing industries, the protectionists had extended aid to a very limited set of producers in this field, ...".⁶⁶

It is of fundamental importance, however, to realise that even these new or increased duties on both agricultural produce and a few manufactured items were scarcely protective in their incidence. Imposed ostensibly "to protect local interests",⁶⁷ the duties in no sense restricted imports, giving little in the way of real encouragement to the local producer; they did, however, give joy to one important class in colonial society, the wealthy, for they proceeded to reap considerable revenue.⁶⁸ It was this central characteristic of the tariff - its capacity to raise large amounts of state revenue - that was the source of the most deep-seated conflict within the protection party. This conflict went far deeper than differing definitions of 'protection'; it had its roots in the immediate economic implications and the wider social implications that governed the choice every protectionist made between protection to raise revenue and protection to prohibit. This conflict split the party into two hostile groups, somewhat similar to the free-traders, one defensive and conservative, the other aggressively radical. Furthermore, in its wider context, the conflict assumed more than a hint of a class struggle between labour and capital.

The immediate economic implication of the practical implementation of protection concerned the colony's system of taxation. Revenue-raising 'moderate protection', like revenue-raising freetrade, ensured the continuation of the system of indirect taxation, which spread the tax burden evenly over the colony's entire population, regardless of the taxpayer's ability to contribute. Prohibitive protection, like pure freetrade, would eliminate or drastically reduce customs revenue, forcing

recourse to direct taxation on land, property or income on a scale commensurate with the taxpayer's financial means and ability to pay. Thus, basic to the majority view of protection as a means of raising revenue, was the use of "the tariff as a taxing medium in order to stop the imposition of either land or income taxes".⁶⁹ Vested-interest wealth clung to the advantages of indirect taxation, while the party's democrats sought its removal and the imposition of an equitable form of direct taxation. Only when the protectionists came into office in October 1891 for a prolonged period, was this conflict fully revealed, especially during the passage of the 1891 tariff; the seeds of the conflict, however, were firmly sown well before 1891, and between 1887 and 1891 the nature of, and the issues involved in, the conflict crystallised and expanded, constantly keeping the protectionists divided and unable to present a united front or policy on almost any pressing issue of social concern.

If the freetrade party was largely representative of the colony's wealthy commercial and merchant classes which sought to protect their economic interests and prevent direct taxation, the same was true of the protectionist party, albeit on a smaller scale.⁷⁰ Such men, almost all of whom were avowed freetraders prior to 1887, reasoned that their commercial and business interests could not be harmed by a fiscal system that was generally regarded as involving nothing more than the collection of large sums of customs revenue from the import of essential items. Their 'conversion' to protection, therefore, involved no substantive alteration of their basic fiscal beliefs, for, as has been seen, revenue tariffism was certainly not regarded as incompatible with freetrade by Sydney's commercial classes. Among the colony's wealthy business and commercial community, the differences between those who adhered to freetrade and those who adhered to protection appeared slender and were, in fact, practically negligible.⁷¹ Their mutual aim was the collection of substantial customs revenue. To achieve this, the commercial freetraders employed specific import duties, distrusting ad valorem duties on the grounds that they could be employed to restrict trade if their incidence was high enough; the commercial protectionists, on the other hand, had no such fears.

They supported the use of ad valorem duties to raise their revenue in the certain knowledge that their incidence would not be restrictive, for if such were the case their revenue-raising purpose would be defeated. Hence, men of commercial wealth could, and did, fit comfortably into the protectionist party in the certainty that their party would not threaten their prosperity by introducing direct taxation. Their certainty was based on the knowledge that they, with other conservative allies, exercised full control over protectionist policy.

Prominent among these allies was a considerable number of representatives from the colony's prosperous professional class,⁷² most of whom were also lapsed freetraders. The chief factor that had prompted such men of commercial and professional wealth to undergo fiscal conversion was their factional antipathy towards Parkes; Parkes's monopoly of freetrade sentiment naturally inclined them to adopt the rival fiscal label, particularly if they had ambitions for political power and influence. Another important factor seems to have related to the fact that the country districts of New South Wales became the stronghold of protection,⁷³ and men of commercial or professional prosperity, who already held country seats⁷⁴ or whose influence and connections were largely country-based,⁷⁵ reasoned that their chances of defending their interests in parliament were far better if they promoted the dominant 'protectionist' sentiments of their country electorates, rather than fight a possibly futile battle in the name of freetrade. Whatever their reasons for fiscal conversion, however, all these men of wealth were linked by a universal adherence to 'moderate' or 'discriminating' protection, the basis of which was an aversion to direct taxation. Dibbs expressed the common opinion when he admitted that, although "there was necessity for fresh taxation in some shape or other" to remedy the colony's financial deficit, "they must find [this] taxation through the Custom-house", thereby avoiding the need for direct taxation,⁷⁶ or what Henry Clarke described as "the objectionable income and property tax".⁷⁷ William McMillan exposed this line of argument when he referred to those "men who ... prefer moderated protection, as it is called, who ... prefer to have a 10 per cent ad valorem duty, although they hold

free-trade principles, in order to avoid direct taxation, ...".⁷⁸ The accuracy of McMillan's comment was revealed in 1888 when, in response to the Parkes ministry's sham proposal to introduce direct taxation, John See expressed the common protectionist reaction by stating, "with a view to show that the proposed land-tax was unnecessary", that the imposition of 10 per cent ad valorem would be the preferable way of obtaining revenue, and concluding that "this is not an opportune time for an alteration in the taxation of the country".⁷⁹

This emphasis on indirect taxation had a particular appeal to the colony's wealthy class, another section of which became closely identified with the protectionists between 1887 and 1891. The economic principles of protection had little to offer to the colony's wealthy pastoralists,⁸⁰ but since the early 1880s many had been politically associated with the factional opponents of Parkes,⁸¹ and had therefore made the natural conversion to 'protection' in 1887.⁸² In addition, others, like R.B. Wilkinson, who distinctly denied being a protectionist, probably based their support of the protectionists on their "policy for the treatment of country districts, ...".⁸³ The threat of a land tax in 1888, however, prompted a further increase of squatter support for the protectionists.⁸⁴ E.W.O'Sullivan had warned that "a land-tax will drive every man of property and wealth over to the side of protection",⁸⁵ and the 1889 general election proved him correct, for protection swept the "pastoral inland districts",⁸⁶ forcing the Herald to remark on the degree to which "the squatting constituencies" had favoured protectionist candidates.⁸⁷ The election therefore produced an increase in the number of squatters returned to the Assembly as members of the protectionist party.⁸⁸

E.W.O'Sullivan also perceived the motive for this increase in squatter support for the protectionists when he declared that it was "Not because they love us, or altogether approve of our principles, but they will save pounds, shillings, and pence".⁸⁹ The Herald was forced to agree: "Mr Dibbs had declared that if protective duties are established there will be

no need for a land tax; and it is pretty clear that the hope of avoiding a land tax has influenced the pastoralists in favour of protection".⁹⁰ The pastoralists, moreover, did not deny it. Most outspoken was T.H.Hassall, who declared: "I shall never advocate a system of direct taxation. I believe the proper way to derive revenue is through the Custom-house".⁹¹ W.H. Traill's comment that "the protectionist party was held in detestation by the propertied class"⁹² seems, therefore, less accurate than Dilke's observation in 1890 that "rich people generally ... supported the protectionists to avoid a land-tax or a property-tax which would fall mainly upon them. Customs duties, the rich rightly think, will bear more heavily upon other classes".⁹³

Among the prosperous protectionist manufacturers there was, however, a division of opinion concerning direct taxation. On the one hand, there were doctrinaire protectionists, like J.M.Toohy, who favoured virtual prohibition⁹⁴ and the consequent recourse to direct taxation⁹⁵ as giving the greatest benefits to manufacturers; on the other hand, there were those who preferred a semi-protective policy "to raise revenue from imported luxuries and goods suitable for home production",⁹⁶ with the aim of creating some expansion of domestic production, as well as retaining the benefits of indirect taxation. As a result, a number of manufacturers, including the MLA, W.J.Allen, opposed direct taxation.⁹⁷

There were, however, a number of protectionists who universally condemned indirect taxation for the very reason that it did "press with unequal force upon different classes of the community", and who strongly felt that "The wisest course is consequently for protectionists to have recourse to direct taxation",⁹⁸ on the grounds "that taxation should be imposed according to the ability of people to bear it".⁹⁹ Such men were the party's democrats, but not all came from the ranks of the colony's less fortunate. Some, notably the two pastoralists Thomas Waddell and Alexander Ryrrie, favoured direct land taxation;¹⁰⁰ Ryrrie admitted the justice of a tax that would tend to break up the large pastoral estates, despite the fact that he was a

considerable land holder himself.¹⁰¹ For the most part, however, those who advocated direct taxation were the special representatives of the poorer members of colonial society, particularly the small farmer and the urban labourer. The advocacy of direct taxation amongst the representatives of these sectional interests was not, however, entirely unanimous. Furthermore, certain sectional differences existed amongst them to prevent them forming a thoroughly united democratic phalanx, and certain fiscal ambiguities were also present to create a degree of confusion and division amongst them over the actual timing of the imposition of direct taxation.

Not all those who regarded themselves, or were commonly regarded, as representatives of the small farmer and free selector¹⁰² were advocates of direct taxation. One notable example was W.J. Lyne who represented Hume in the interests of the free selectors,¹⁰³ and who stated that the object of a protective policy was that "duties ... imposed upon various articles ... should bring a revenue which ... would prevent taxation in other directions ...".¹⁰⁴ Even those small farmer representatives who did favour direct taxation had certain reservations, particularly about a land tax, and differences of emphasis arose amongst them. A considerable number favoured a land tax to 'burst up the big estates', but nearly all demanded a considerable exemption figure or a progressive tax to prevent the tax burden falling on the small farmer. Instead of exemption from tax for holdings up to the value of £500, as proposed by the Parkes ministry's land tax bill,¹⁰⁵ James Gormly claimed that "the exemption ought to apply to properties of the value of £2,000",¹⁰⁶ and E.W.O'Sullivan put the figure as high as £5,000.¹⁰⁷ Austin Chapman strongly pressed for a progressive land tax.¹⁰⁸ Others argued against a land tax in any form. Both J.M. Chanter and E.W.O'Sullivan agreed that "the principle of a land-tax is good",¹⁰⁹ but Chanter objected to a policy that placed "additional burdens" on those whom he represented, particularly in circumstances in which the farmers were given no encouragement "to get their produce to the markets of their own colony".¹¹⁰ O'Sullivan maintained that it was "grossly unfair to attempt to make the landowner, selector, and farmer bear the brunt of the taxation of the

country".¹¹¹ Men with such views felt that "there would be far greater justification for an income tax" on the grounds that "there would be a more general distribution of taxation",¹¹² forcing not only landowners, but also "rich lawyers, and doctors, and other professional gentlemen ... to contribute a fair amount of taxation".¹¹³

Other democratic protectionists who did not directly represent the interests of the small farmer were less concerned with the specific details of a land tax than with the simple goal of lifting the burden of indirect taxation from the working class "by requiring property and prosperity to contribute to the expenses of Government in some approach to the proportion of their redundancies of means".¹¹⁴ Thus, men like W.H. Traill, N.Melville and T.Walker advocated direct taxation without reservation,¹¹⁵ whilst W.C.Wall and R.Stevenson were able to vote for the freetraders' direct taxation proposals,¹¹⁶ on the grounds that what was provided was of greater importance than what was withheld.

Of even greater significance in producing ambiguities in the advocacy of direct taxation by democratic protectionists was their concern for protection. Many of the democrats, like Melville, O'Sullivan, Traill and Rose, were doctrinaire prohibitive protectionists, who realised that "... if you have a true protective policy, you must have direct taxation".¹¹⁷ Yet, whilst they recognised that "in the matter of direct taxation there is scarcely a shade of difference between [true] protectionists and freetraders",¹¹⁸ they could not support the freetraders' proposals for direct taxation. Their first priority was the creation of a protective tariff, and many agreed with O'Sullivan when he stated that "no form of direct taxation will suit me until we get a protective tariff".¹¹⁹ They regarded freetrade proposals to introduce direct taxation as inimical to the creation of a true protective tariff:¹²⁰ the closer the approach to true freetrade, the greater the distance from true protection. Highlighting the ambiguity of his stance, O'Sullivan proclaimed that "Men, by their environment, are often obliged to oppose measures of which they approve".¹²¹

They were, moreover, obliged to support measures of which they disapproved, and such was the protectionist democrats' dilemma in relation to Dibbs's 1891 tariff, for in no sense was it a truly protective tariff and it merely perpetuated the undemocratic system of indirect taxation. The protectionists had just achieved power, and the democrats among them felt that they could not kill the bill and bring down the ministry,¹²² but they were not slow to describe the measure as "a mongrel sort of tariff",¹²³ and to declare that "it was not satisfactory to the supporters of the protectionist party".¹²⁴ In particular, the radical protectionists complained that the tariff was not 'real' protection, but simply a "bastard system of custom-house taxation", designed "to shield the rich and to tax the poor".¹²⁵ W.H. Traill later gave point to the latent conflict within the protectionist party when he described those who advocate "a sweeping tariff for revenue purposes, spiced with just sufficient flavour of protection to deceive and cajole the protectionist electors" as "Tories", and among them he singled out Lyne and See.¹²⁶ Shortly after the introduction of the Dibbs tariff in December 1891, a number of the democratic protectionists, including T. Rose, E.W. O'Sullivan, H. McKinnon and G.T. Miller, expressed their dissatisfaction by creating "a political organisation, to be called the Democratic Party", one of whose objectives was "a more equitable adjustment of taxation".¹²⁷

Direct taxation was, however, only one aspect of the democrats' range of concerns. W.H. Traill, who described himself as "a democrat and a protectionist", expressed the broader context of democracy when he "described democracy as a policy of feeling for others less fortunate than themselves in the present organisation of society, and the extension of the benefits of life through the widest possible area".¹²⁸ Democrats particularly supported "The interests of labour",¹²⁹ and there was within the protectionist party a number of men who espoused the cause of the labouring classes by openly supporting trade unionism and advocating such measures as the eight-hour day and factories and workshops legislation. Some had long been associated with the cause of the labouring classes. For

instance, H.C. Hoyle had been "an active trades unionist" since the late 1860s, and was "a prominent figure in the ironworkers' strikes in 1873 and 1882";¹³⁰ Ninian Melville was a prominent leader of the WMDA in the late 1870s;¹³¹ and E.W. O'Sullivan was the representative of the Typographical Association on the TLC in 1882,¹³² and became the Council's president in 1883.¹³³

During the 1880s, moreover, these protectionist radicals had worked hard to tie the fortunes of organised labour to the cause of protection.¹³⁴ Unlike the radical freetrader, B.R. Wise, men like O'Sullivan had considerable success in this venture, but even they were doomed to ultimate failure. In May 1885, the PPRL invited the TLC to send its president and secretary to a protectionist conference,¹³⁵ and the invitation was accepted after a "lengthy and acrimonious discussion" and a close vote, in which O'Sullivan recorded his assent.¹³⁶ At the second session of the conference, the TLC delegates committed themselves to the protectionist cause, and a resolution was passed calling on every trade to "pledge itself to support none other than protectionist candidates at the forthcoming general election".¹³⁷ This commitment was reinforced in September 1886 at the inaugural meeting of the National Protection Association (NPAL) when the president of the TLC, J.V. Wiley, strongly supported the association and its protectionist objectives.¹³⁸ The NPAL was soon after remodelled and renamed the Protection Union of New South Wales (PU).¹³⁹ Initially under the strong influence of the radicals, O'Sullivan and Rose,¹⁴⁰ the NPAL-PU continued to press the TLC to become closely involved in protectionist organisation. In October 1886, the new TLC president, W. Westman, was appointed to the executive committee which refashioned the NPAL into the PU, and TLC secretary, Symons, ex-president, Wiley, future president, Talbot, and Westman were members of a committee to organise "a mass demonstration of protectionists".¹⁴¹ The TLC delegation at the demonstration on 13 November was completed by the vice-president, J. West,¹⁴² and he later told the TLC that "from 20 to 25 Trades were represented" at the meeting.¹⁴³ The PU followed up this success by inviting the TLC president and secretary to become permanent members of its council,¹⁴⁴ but it was at this point that the formal

relationship faltered. TLC delegates had already expressed their concern that "danger may arise from the Council taking a too prominent part in Political matters",¹⁴⁵ and it was thought that the PU's latest proposal "should not be entertained".¹⁴⁶ The invitation was, therefore, courteously rejected as being "outside the objects of the Trades Labour Council".¹⁴⁷ Although this decision did not deter some prominent TLC members from maintaining their protectionist associations,¹⁴⁸ the possibility of a permanent formal union had disappeared, and the TLC reasserted its position as "a non-political body", able to "take no part in party politics".¹⁴⁹

Despite this setback, the number of parliamentary protectionists with democratic instincts and sympathy for the cause of labour grew, particularly after 1887. During 1886, O'Sullivan launched a campaign in parliament in support of labour reform,¹⁵⁰ and, in the fight for labour, he and others like Melville, J.Creer, R.M.Vaughn and J.A.Mackinnon were joined in the Assembly by such other democratic protectionists as T.Walker in 1887, J.P.Howe in 1888,¹⁵¹ W.N.Willis, W.P.Crick, W.Grahame,¹⁵² W.H.Traill, A.Hutchison, W.F.Schey and J.G.Gough in 1889, and H.C.Hoyle and Thomas Rose in 1891. In addition, some of those elected as representatives of the colony's small farmers, notably R.Barbour, G.T.Miller, H.McKinnon and A.Chapman, joined those already mentioned in advocating the cause of labour. The democratic sentiments of some of these protectionist MsLA were demonstrated in 1891 when five were chosen by the LEL to run as Labor candidates. On 9 June 1891, the Redfern LEL chose W.F.Schey and J.P.Howe, after both had pledged themselves to the Labor platform;¹⁵³ in Young, J.A.Mackinnon and J.G.Gough pledged themselves to the LEL platform,¹⁵⁴ and both were selected to represent the cause of Labor;¹⁵⁵ finally, R.M.Vaughn, "a declared supporter of the whole labour platform",¹⁵⁶ was chosen by the Grenfell LEL as its candidate.¹⁵⁷ In addition, the Labor League of Bourke, which was not officially recognised by the central LEL,¹⁵⁸ chose W.N.Willis¹⁵⁹ and J.P.Howe, after the latter's defeat for Redfern,¹⁶⁰ as its candidates. As a result, Gough, Mackinnon and Vaughn re-entered the Assembly in July 1891 as

official members of the Labor party.¹⁶¹

Within the protectionist party, the democrats came to form a solid core, pressing for labour reform and opposing the basic conservatism of the party. In December 1891, men like O'Sullivan, Rose, H.McKinnon and G.T.Miller formed a democratic parliamentary protectionist 'cave', the Democratic Party, whose major object was the passing of "democratic and labour legislation",¹⁶² including regulations for factories, workshops and coal mines, amendment of the Masters and Servants Act, and the restriction of alien and pauper labour.¹⁶³ After lapsing into inactivity, the party was revived during 1893,¹⁶⁴ and its numbers expanded to include such other democrats as W.H.Traill, A.Hutchison, R.Barbour and A.Chapman.¹⁶⁵ The radical cause was further advanced by the formation in February 1892 of the "retrenchment party",¹⁶⁶ with a membership of over thirty, and led by O'Sullivan as president, and Rose as secretary.¹⁶⁷ Dedicated to curtailing unnecessary expenditure, reducing the salaries of officials, resisting salary increases, and pruning military expenditure,¹⁶⁸ the retrenchment party was seen by O'Sullivan as "a pathfinder of democratic politics",¹⁶⁹ and was supported by such democrats as W.H.Traill, who claimed that, while the colony suffered a depression and its working class struggled to survive, it was unjust that officials should receive high salaries.¹⁷⁰ Such a development among the democratic protectionists during the life of a protectionist ministry was seen by the Herald as "nothing less than flat rebellion".¹⁷¹ A further act of rebellion took place in September 1892 when four radicals, O'Sullivan, Melville, Walker and Willis, supported a Labor move to censure the Dibbs ministry for its handling of the 1892 Broken Hill strike.¹⁷² Dibbs had apparently ordered the arrest of the strikers' leaders,¹⁷³ and his radical 'supporters' did not approve; within the protectionist party, there was a basic conflict between those who upheld the force of capital and those who supported the cause of labour.

This conflict had always been present among the protectionists, and had erupted on a number of occasions before 1892, particularly when strikes and trade unions were involved.

In October 1888, the Parkes ministry despatched troops to Newcastle to quell a series of labour disturbances. This action led to a number of altercations among the parliamentary protectionists. Ninian Melville castigated the ministry for "the soldiers being used to help the wealthy mine-owners to crush the poor miners", but J.P. Abbott "found himself compelled to uphold the Government in this matter".¹⁷⁴ George Dibbs went even further, declaring that "he himself would have despatched the detachment of troops some weeks sooner", thus demonstrating, as the Herald put it, his support for the anti-unionist and pro-capitalist doctrine of 'freedom of contract'.¹⁷⁵ Even prior to the expression of this conservative hard-line, it had been reported that Dibbs "was universally distrusted by the working classes on the leading questions of the day" and that he was "looked upon ... as an enemy".¹⁷⁶ The same conflict was evident within the protectionist party during the labour disturbances of 1890 and 1891. While O'Sullivan, Melville, Traill, Creer, Walker and Schey championed the cause of the trade unionists during the Maritime Strike of 1890,¹⁷⁷ the wealthy mine-owner, James Fletcher, demonstrated his vested-interest opposition to trade unionism.¹⁷⁸

The protectionist party also contained others who had similar reasons for repudiating the claims and rights of labour. The shipowner, John See, for instance, participated in a conference in 1886 in support of a proposal by the Steamship-owners' Association to reduce the wages of seamen in view of trade union interference in the management of the industry.¹⁷⁹ In addition, the coastal shipping firms of both See and B.B. Nicoll were members of the Steamship-owners' Association,¹⁸⁰ whose rejection of the marine officers' wage claims in July 1890 precipitated the maritime strike.¹⁸¹ The squatters, W. Alison and W.E. Abbott, were prominent members of the Pastoralists' Union of New South Wales,¹⁸² formed in July 1890¹⁸³ to resist the demand of the Amalgamated Shearers' Union that pastoralists employ only union members as shearers. In fact, it was W.E. Abbott, "an intrepid opponent" of the Shearers' Union,¹⁸⁴ who came to assume the leadership in the pastoralists' refusal to recognise the Union and its relentless fight for the individualist

principle of 'freedom of contract'.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the manufacturer element within the party was commonly designated as "selfish [and] undemocratic" and "the object of the Trades Unionists' deepest detestation".¹⁸⁶ It was claimed that they "want no Eight-hours Bill, no Factories and Workshop Acts, . . . , no stringent Employers' Liability Bill - in short, nothing that would ameliorate the lot of labor, and reduce the profits of monopolists".¹⁸⁷

Opposition to trade unionism and the cause of labour in the protectionist party was also reflected in the continuing adherence to the traditional Manchester liberal emphasis on the evil of class legislation and on the non-intervention and neutrality of the state in social and industrial matters.¹⁸⁸ This non-partisan conservative liberalism was expressed during the maritime strike by Henry Copeland,¹⁸⁹ who claimed that "The duty of Parliament is to make laws, and not to interfere with what, after all, may be regarded as a private quarrel between two sections of the community".¹⁹⁰ The dominance of vested-interest conservatism and traditional conservative liberalism in the protectionist party was reflected clearly in the leadership of George Dibbs, and in the men he chose to serve in his two protectionist ministries. With the possible exceptions of J.M. Chanter and the vacillating Copeland, no men with progressive or radical views were included in either ministry. Dibbs set the seal on his conservatism when he announced, in 1893, that at the next general election "he would make the abolition of payment of members the cry of the Government", a proposal that, according to W.H. Traill, "would mean death to democracy".¹⁹¹ Dibbs's decision brought to a head the internal conflict within the party, for it prompted Traill to declare that "he could not, and would not any longer support Sir George Dibbs It was impossible for him to hold as a leader any man who made it a Government cry, the abolition of the most essential of democratic legislation - payment of members".¹⁹²

Prior to the protectionists' assumption of power in 1891, the internal party conflict between the democrats and the conservatives at no point reached the stage of an open breach

such as that declared by Traill in 1893. This was largely because the protectionists, without the burden of having to govern or legislate, could and did avoid specific policy pronouncements on issues likely to cause internal party controversy. The conservative domination of the party was demonstrated by the fact that, despite the constant efforts of the protectionist radicals to bind the party to a specific programme of social and political reform, no such programme was ever adopted. The conservatives successfully resisted all radical attempts to come to terms with the colony's pressing issues, and even on the few occasions when such issues as direct taxation and overdue social and labour reform were raised, discussion was vague, details were avoided and the matter was quickly dropped. The risk of fully exposing the obvious rifts within the party, and the impossibility of satisfying all the interests represented in it prevented the formulation of a specific principled party platform. Furthermore, the longer the conservatives could avoid the detailed consideration and adoption of proposals for social change, the longer the status quo that was to their advantage would be preserved. Under their guidance, therefore, what emerged from policy discussions, in place of a specific party platform adjusted to the colony's urgent social and economic problems, was little more than a vague and rather irrelevant list of administrative generalities.

Like the conservative freetraders, the protectionist leaders also conveniently prolonged the life of the fiscal issue as the primary source of political conflict, in order to avoid having to face and commit themselves on more pressing issues. Not that there was any more basic consensus on the details of protection than on any other issue, but vague fiscal platitudes sufficed to create the illusion of party unity, and all other issues could either be ignored or left to individual opinion. In 1891, Archibald Forsyth correctly pointed out that the protectionist appeal to the electors in 1887 and 1889 was based solely on "the beam" of protection.¹⁹³ In 1887, "in view of the determination to make the fight one of freetrade v. protection", the parliamentary opposition resolved that "All other questions",

including direct taxation and payment of members, be "regarded as secondary" and "left to the individual discretion of the members of the Opposition".¹⁹⁴ Even at this early stage the conservatives' dominance was made clear. On the subject of a direct property tax, it was reported that "opinion was not unanimous", and, because "the suggestion does not on the whole appear to have met with approval", it was cast aside.¹⁹⁵

All subsequent deliberations on the formulation of a party platform or programme took place within the protectionists' extra-parliamentary organisations. These, however, were also under conservative control¹⁹⁶ and, consequently, all the efforts of the radicals to bind the party to a specific programme of social reform were dashed; all that emerged were undefined platitudes to prevent the exposure of fundamental conflicts, and a conservative emphasis on non-political questions, all major issues being either ignored or considered in meaningless generalities. In July 1888 the radicals, Melville and O'Sullivan, attended a conference of local protectionist organisations in Yass, and there outlined the programme of a new democratic protectionist federation, the Australian National League. Included in the programme was a long list of social and political reforms.¹⁹⁷ The following month a wider conference of the manufacturer-dominated PU¹⁹⁸ was held in Sydney, at which it was moved that the platform of the League, including such democratic reforms as an elective Upper House, payment of members, legalisation of the eight-hour system and a Workshops and Factories Act, be endorsed by the conference. The proposal, however, was rejected out of hand.¹⁹⁹ B.R. Wise pointed out the successful conservative tactic of "diverting public attention from pressing evils" by hiding behind the fiscal issue;²⁰⁰ this tactic was employed by the conservatives in both fiscal movements. Aware that the adoption of the new radical platform would be proposed at the conference, PU vice-president and conservative manufacturer, Archibald Forsyth, "better known among the working men of Sydney as 'Anti-eight-hour Archy'",²⁰¹ demonstrated his opposition. The PU, he claimed, was formed for the sole purpose of achieving "a change in the fiscal policy of this country", and it was "undesirable and ... extremely injudicious to change

the position taken up by the Protection Union from its formation" by the consideration and espousal of other issues.²⁰²

Aware of the dangers to party unity by raising contentious issues, and conscious of the dominant conservatism of the party, George Dibbs appealed to the electorate in 1889 on such non-political issues as water conservation, the establishment of agricultural colleges and model farms, sanitary reform, the development of mineral resources, railway construction and law reform.²⁰³ The same approach to protectionist party policy was also adopted at the NPA⁴ conference in October 1889, held partly to undertake "the formation of the general platform of the party".²⁰⁴ Despite an awareness of the poor relations "existing between capital and labor",²⁰⁵ the announced list of subjects which, "when considered, would form the basis of the future policy" of the party,²⁰⁶ was extremely limited, and was dominated by such topics as railway construction, mining laws, differential railway rates, water conservation, encouragement of the fisheries and the establishment of a department of agriculture.²⁰⁷ The conference chairman, Edmund Barton, recognised the limited and largely irrelevant nature of the policy issues to be discussed when he stated that "if liberal conclusions were come to, only on the matters named on the list of subjects, they would by dealing with them alone do good work ...".²⁰⁸ Such topics, however, were nothing more than "practical matters, which concern administration rather than principle",²⁰⁹ and, as such, the leading protectionist, Archibald Forsyth, recognised that they "cannot be considered political party questions" and "could not usefully form part of a platform".²¹⁰

The protectionists obviously realised the risks of including issues involving large principles, and they included, at the most, two on their agenda. As in the deliberations of the freetraders, the discussion of such issues revealed latent conflict, yet the dominance of the conservatives was made plain in the refusal to discuss details, the vagueness of the decisions arrived at, and the deliberate avoidance of certain issues. One of the few subjects that involved political principles was the question of electoral reform, including the proposals for

single-member electorates and 'one man one vote'.²¹¹ It was un-
 animously resolved that "plural voting be abolished, and the
 principle of one man one vote be substituted",²¹² but on the
 question of single-member electorates, there was considerable
 division of opinion. In general, conservative opinion opposed
 the proposal on the grounds that it "destroyed the power of min-
 orities being represented",²¹³ whilst progressive opinion was
 strongly favourable.²¹⁴ The final resolution was the meaning-
 less compromise that "the system of single electorates be ad-
 opted where practicable".²¹⁵ A further subject under the heading
 of electoral reform revealed more clearly the basic conflict be-
 tween the conservatives and the progressive democrats. A res-
 olution that "all elections should take place on the same day
 throughout the colony",²¹⁶ although finally agreed to,²¹⁷ evoked
 prolonged discussion and considerable differences of opinion.
 The cautious, conservative approach was expressed by a delegate
 from Bathurst, who pointed out that "they would have to be care-
 ful not to do anything rash. There was a possibility of going
 too far, and it might be that they had done so already".²¹⁸ The
 conservatives, Barton and Archibald Forsyth, rallied to this
 point of view, Barton declaring that "there were large, grave
 public dangers to be feared from having all the elections on
 one day".²¹⁹ The radical MsLA and future MsLA at the conference,
 however, vigorously supported the resolution. E.W.O'Sullivan
 declared that "It was a true democratic principle", and that
 "it was better to lose the services of one or two good men,
 and have the reflex of the voice of the people".²²⁰

The conservatives showed their strength when a move
 was made to discuss the question of an elective Upper House;²²¹
 not only was the suggestion immediately ignored, but the ques-
 tion was not raised again during the conference. The conserv-
 atives also demonstrated their successful tactics of avoidance
 over the issue of direct taxation. One of the subjects set
 down for discussion was the question of local government. In
 itself, it was scarcely an issue involving basic principles,
 and it was generally recognised as being "no longer a party
 question".²²² In his introductory speech, however, Barton stated
 that, during the discussion of the subject, "he hoped they would

discuss taxation on land values".²²³ The initial discussion on the question, however, deliberately avoided any mention of direct taxation, the principal resolution simply affirming that "this conference recognises the necessity of a Local Government Bill, and recommends its early introduction".²²⁴ The question of direct taxation was not raised until the introduction of an amendment, which sought to confer the powers of taxation on local government authorities.²²⁵ General protectionist reticence about direct taxation was revealed by one delegate, who stated that "He would prefer to see [a] Free-trade government introduce the bill, because there was a number of people who did not wish to be taxed, ...".²²⁶ When the radical protectionist, S.A. Byrne, supported the amendment, he was cut short by the usual conservative objection that "it was not competent for the conference to enter into the details of the bill".²²⁷ The conference generally steered well clear of the taxation question, and the general feeling was that "the amendment appeared ... to go too far",²²⁸ and that "it would be wasting time to go into details".²²⁹ As a result, the question was shelved, the amendment was lost and the vague and rather meaningless original resolution "was carried by a very large majority".²³⁰

Although no other questions involving political principles were broached, Edmund Barton told the audience at the final public meeting of the conference that the protectionists "had been engaged in ... deliberation on ... the policy which they would announce as their platform to the public in any contest they might have in the future",²³¹ and he called upon the meeting to endorse what he referred to as "the future legislative policy of the party".²³² Vague and hollow, rather than specific and meaningful, and based largely on matters of practical administration rather than questions of principle, the party's 'platform' gave little satisfaction to the protectionist radicals. It was hardly surprising, then, that under the leadership of O'Sullivan, J.P. Howe and the future MLA, R.A. Price, there was held in October 1890 a meeting of "protectionists favourable to the adoption of a more democratic platform".²³³ The meeting decided to form a new organisation, to be named the National Democratic Association, and it adopted a sixteen-point platform

that included such democratic measures as reform of the Upper House, legalisation of the eight-hour system, and a Factory and Workshops Act with inspection.²³⁴

Not only was the radicals' specific platform totally ignored by the party's parliamentary leaders, but what little the NPA⁴ had provided by way of a party platform was also disregarded by George Dibbs during the general election of 1891. Immediately prior to the election, it was reported of the protectionists that "No policy has been decided upon, and Mr Dibbs explains that it is not the function of the Opposition to formulate one at the present stage".²³⁵ Several days later it was revealed that "one thing only will be required of candidates opposed to the Government - allegiance to Mr Dibbs on the fiscal policy. On other questions of the day candidates are to be allowed freedom of opinion and speech".²³⁶ Archibald Forsyth testified to the lack of any party policy when he expressed his "regret that the platform of the party has not been laid before the electors at this crucial juncture", and he highlighted the party's general refusal to formulate a specific and relevant party policy when he stated that "It has been determined to carry on this campaign on the same lines" as those employed during the 1887 general election.²³⁷ Once again the undefined and emotionally charged fiscal issue masked the reality of an unprincipled electoral contest on old factional lines, and it again served to submerge issues of great social and political importance beneath the political surface. By 1891, however, the success of this tactic was beginning to evaporate. At the previous elections in 1887 and 1889 the uncomplicated, but unprincipled, "freetrade v. protection"²³⁸ approach had been unchallenged; no other political party existed to expose its hollowness, and the radicals in both parties presented no alternative policy in contrast to the official party approach, as projected by Parkes and Dibbs, except in their individual speeches. This, however, was not the case in 1891.

In 1891 the freetrade radicals disassociated themselves from the 'old' approach and used a radical-dominated extra-parliamentary body to present their specific programme of reform;²³⁹

the protectionist radicals did the same. In May 1891, there was formed in Newcastle a new organisation, the Newcastle Labour and Protectionist Parliamentary League.²⁴⁰ Under the leadership of local protectionist radicals, the League adopted a radical platform, which included the eight-hour day, an elective Legislative Council, direct taxation and "the advocacy of any measure calculated to elevate and improve the working classes".²⁴¹ As a result, it was not long before the radical MsLA, O'Sullivan, Gough and Grahame, were using the League as a mouthpiece for their opinions.²⁴² A similar development took place in the electorate of Argyle, where the radical protectionist, Thomas Rose, contested the election in advocacy of a progressive platform drawn up by the Goulburn Protection Union and including direct taxation, factory legislation and eight-hour legislation.²⁴³ These developments within both parties clearly demonstrated that by 1891 the radicals were no longer prepared to submit quietly to conservative dominance; by mid-1891 they were prepared to take a stand independent of their party's conservative leadership.²⁴⁴ In terms of the progressive cause, this decision paid dividends, and a number of freetrade and protectionist radicals were returned to the Assembly for the first time.²⁴⁵ After three defeats,²⁴⁶ Thomas Rose was at last successful in Argyle.

If these developments made a dent in the conservatives' armour, the entry of the Labor party into the Assembly did more to loosen the conservatives' dominance of both fiscal parties. At the 1891 election, there existed for the first time a viable alternative to the hollowness of fiscal politics, a new party with a specific sixteen-point programme²⁴⁷ that came to terms with "large and urgent problems" and tapped "a vast reservoir of protest and will to reform".²⁴⁸ At the election the Labor party won thirty-five seats in the Assembly,²⁴⁹ to hold the balance of power between the two fiscal parties.²⁵⁰ Its powerful parliamentary presence urged the fiscal radicals on to further acts of independence in defiance of dominant conservative opinion,²⁵¹ and some Labor members actively joined with the protectionist radicals in exerting radical pressure on Dibbs after 1891.²⁵² Yet, despite these developments, all of which made 1891

a very significant year in the transition from factions to cohesive, principled non-labor parties, the protectionists remained by the end of the year a party without a clearly defined, principled policy. Although clearly in the ascendancy, the conservatives had deemed the wiser course to be to ignore and avoid facing up to the major social problems that beset the colony and begged solution, rather than commit themselves, however conservatively, on the large principles involved. Perhaps their traditional liberal notions of classlessness and state non-interference facilitated this avoidance, but there were also other important factors. To ignore successfully the colony's pressing social problems and need for reform was effectively to postpone change and preserve the status quo; in addition, the policy of avoidance had the great advantage of suppressing and delaying the exposure of the fundamental conflicts of principle that lay just beneath the surface of both parties.

II

Some Conclusions

In the years between 1887 and 1891, the differences that divided the two fiscal parties, conservative-controlled as they both were, were negligible. After the large 'policy-making' conferences held by both parties in 1889, at which almost all major issues of principle were avoided or treated with scant respect, the opinion was expressed that "after all there is practical unanimity between the two fiscal parties upon everything but the great main issue".²⁵³ And even on the fiscal issue, there was, in reality, very little to separate them.²⁵⁴ The general nature of the conflict between the two fiscal parties, as shaped by the men who led them, was that of two 'rival syndicates', motivated by the quest for political power and little else.²⁵⁵

Fiscal politics simply perpetuated the old factional "battles between the 'ins' and the 'outs'".²⁵⁶ But that was the way Parkes planned it, for the one major objective of his scheme of reform, so astutely conceived and executed in 1886, was political stability,²⁵⁷ and his obvious success in achieving that much-needed quality provided in itself a basic change from previously inchoate factionalism.²⁵⁸ The creation of two political parties any more than superficially united in nominal adherence to an undefined fiscal doctrine was neither considered nor attempted, and in the years to 1891 did not eventuate.

Parkes's employment of the traditional conflict between freetrade and protection, however, sowed the seeds for the eventual emergence prior to 1900 of at least one true political non-labor party: a body of MsLA united in principle, political philosophy and legislative vision. Unintentionally, Parkes had laid the foundations for further changes that would dramatically alter the nature of politics in New South Wales. The transition from the stable, but unprincipled, fiscal syndicates, sired by Parkes, to principled and cohesive political parties was, however, slow and tortuous.

The wide-ranging practical, principled and philosophical implications of both freetrade and protection, initially ignored by Parkes in his quest for political polarisation, attracted a large number of new men to politics in 1887 and thereafter, and it was their genuine concern for principle and doctrine that injected a new element into the colony's political life. Between these men of principle, however, there existed fundamental differences over the specific economic meaning and the social implications of their respective fiscal creeds, and there developed within each party a deep-seated conflict between what was basically a conservative political outlook and a view that regarded either freetrade or protection as a means to eliminate class privilege and achieve a just social order. This new principled or doctrinaire approach to politics began to impinge not only upon the nature of party policies, but also on such aspects of political life as parliamentary behaviour and discipline²⁵⁹ and electoral organisation,²⁶⁰ and it began to effect changes in the

political system well beyond those envisaged and wrought by Parkes.

In view of the rising tide of doctrinaire concerns, the older pragmatic faction politicians were virtually forced to declare themselves either conservatives or progressives. Being older traditionalists, nearly all, including Parkes and Dibbs, sided in principle with the conservatives. As a result, doctrinaire conservative liberals, vested-interest defenders of the status quo and the older factional traditionalists combined in both parties to control their party's fortunes, and to stave off the challenges of the radicals to assumed traditions and an outmoded social order. Political stability and party unity had still to be maintained, however, and by submerging explosive and divisive issues beneath "the tin-kettle [fiscal] controversy"²⁶¹ radical change was avoided and the conflicts within both parties were papered over and hidden from view. Policies adjusted to the colony's social and economic problems were sacrificed to the maintenance of political stability and superficial party unity.

The issues upon which both parties appealed to the electorate were, then, largely undefined and irrelevant, and almost identical. The gulf that separated them was negligible; the real political conflict lay within them both. Both parties "assumed a vertical division in the colony",²⁶² containing representatives, both conservative and radical, of all social classes.²⁶³ W.H. Traill elaborated on this fact when he stated that "Had the separation of classes been complete - had all the Conservatives and no others been on the side of freetrade, and all the democracy on the side of protection - the result would not have been as many months in doubt as it now has been years. But the fact was otherwise, the democracy was divided between both".²⁶⁴

The 'principled policy' vacuum in both fiscal parties and the failure of both to formulate constructive solutions to the colony's social and economic problems slowed the transition towards principled politics that began after 1886. In addition, meaningful inter-party conflict, with one party providing a viable alternative to the governing principles and policies of

the other, was conspicuously absent prior to 1891. But change had begun, and it was the men of principle in both parties who provided the force behind that change. The traditional conservative liberals, themselves men of earnest convictions, were happy enough to acquiesce in the continuing policy stagnation of remodelled factionalism; and it was the progressive radicals who applied the pressure for change in the area of principled party policies. The consequent conservative-radical conflict was also evident in other spheres of politics subject to change, notably party allegiance and discipline.²⁶⁵ Only in the field of electoral organisation were the new men of principle able to achieve some degree of harmony; their co-operation in this field constituted a basic change in the political system. Before a political party, united in principle, policy and practice, could emerge, however, it was necessary that the basic conflict within each fiscal group be resolved.

Between 1887 and 1891, the conflicts within each party simmered, but the tension gradually mounted as, especially on matters of principle and policy, the radicals in both parties were repeatedly frustrated. To a large extent, it was in 1891 that the conservatives' dominance of both fiscal parties was loosened. Not only did the radicals themselves in that year act more positively and independently, but their cause was given great impetus by the entry into politics of the Labor party, a body which came into being largely because of the intransigent conservatism of the fiscal parties during the previous four years. Its presence instilled new vigour and determination into the fiscal radicals' challenge to the dominant forces resisting change.

In the face of this rekindled vigour, conservative control began to evaporate and the decks were cleared for an undisguised ideological war to be waged within both parties. In October 1891, the freetrade radical, Sydney Smith, aided substantially in forcing the resignation of the ministry of which he was a member, and in the same month Parkes was replaced by G.H.Reid as freetrade leader.²⁶⁶ In the new atmosphere, the

radical challenge assumed a more direct form, and a new radical freetrade organisation, the FTLREC,²⁶⁷ under the leadership of B.R.Wise,²⁶⁸ fought an unremitting battle to bind the freetrade party to a policy of direct taxation and social reform.²⁶⁹ Reid, a genuine reforming moderate liberal²⁷⁰ and an astute politician, sensed the dynamic of this movement and he pledged the freetrade party to a policy of genuine "liberal progress and reform", adjusted to the needs of the colony.²⁷¹ In doing so, he forced recalcitrant conservatives either onto the fringes, or out of the party. By the end of 1895, after struggles with Parkes, other conservatives and the relentless Wise, Reid had moulded together a political party that was united in principle and policy, and that was prepared to come to grips with the problems facing the colony.

The evolutionary process among the protectionists was much slower. Forced to bear the stigma of conservatism on account of Reid's progressive policy, shackled until 1895 by the unprincipled, outmoded leadership of George Dibbs, and hampered by the need to retain sufficient cohesion between 1891 and 1894 to keep the party in power, the protectionists made little headway in the resolution of their conflicts. Despite their trenchant criticism of Dibbs and his ministry, the radicals had to support him to prevent the return of the freetraders to power. In 1892, E.W.O'Sullivan expressed his desire "for a new and clear line of cleavage between the political parties; the conservatives would drift to one side, the democrats to the other, ...".²⁷² In a sense this happened, but not in a way that gave joy to the radical protectionists. The fact that in 1895 a number of old freetrade conservatives, under the leadership of Parkes, 'drifted' over to the protectionists and into coalition with Dibbs²⁷³ did not make the radicals' task any easier. Austin Chapman recognised the trend when he stated in April 1897 that it was "apparent to the observant that of the recent converts to protection not an insignificant quota must be credited to the revolt of those who ... are made aware that even an approach to real freetrade must impose upon them an unwelcome burden of new [direct] taxation";²⁷⁴ and W.H.Traill referred in 1898 to a

conservative "conspiracy" which sought to capture full power in the protectionist party, to bind it to a determination "to abolish direct taxation", and "to sell [it] ... into Tory bondage".²⁷⁵ By 1897, the conservative-radical conflict among the protectionists still remained unresolved.²⁷⁶

The ultimate resolution of the fundamental conflicts of principle that existed within both fiscal parties is well beyond the scope of this thesis, but their conclusion cannot be divorced from their origins. It was during the late months of 1886 and the early months of 1887 that a fundamental transition in New South Wales politics was begun; by 1891 it was, however, far from concluded.

CHAPTER 5

MERCHANTS AND MANUFACTURERS: Extra-Parliamentary Fiscal Organisations.

I. Development, 1885-1889

"There were ... a large number of manufacturers and others who had a direct interest in protection There were [also] a large number of merchants who had a direct interest in freetrade. There was no doubt about that; ...".

- G.H.Reid, 1887
(DT, 27 September 1887,p.5).

I

After 1885 a number of extra-parliamentary fiscal organisations were active in the colony's political life; by 1891, however, all were virtually extinct, victims of the principled conflicts and power struggles in an era of political change and transition. Both had been torn apart by the same ideological conflict that threatened to dismember their related parliamentary parties.

The structure of a true political party depends upon

a fundamental and permanent co-ordination between the parliamentary group and the extra-parliamentary body, a bond based on the presence of frequent and consistent connections.¹ By the beginning of 1889, however, regular co-ordination between the two parliamentary fiscal parties and their related extra-parliamentary organisations had not been established. This was for two basic reasons. In each parliamentary fiscal party there was represented a wealthy and predominantly conservative interest group: Sydney's merchant class was significantly represented in the freetrade party, and the colony's manufacturing interest was present, though in a very limited way in the protectionist party. The development of the major extra-parliamentary fiscal organisations, at least until March 1889, should be seen in terms of their domination by these economic interest groups. The wealth and resources of the freetrade merchants and protectionist manufacturers enabled them to maintain an organisation and direct its activities. Their leadership, however, became a power monopoly, discouraging or preventing the participation of those with conflicting interests. As a result, the major protectionist and freetrade extra-parliamentary bodies were narrow in composition and unrepresentative of the more broadly based parliamentary parties. Consequently, the relations that existed between the parliamentary fiscal parties and the extra-parliamentary organisations until 1889 were either very limited, or, in the case of the protectionists, antagonistic. The second basic reason for the absence of permanent co-ordination between the two wings of each fiscal movement was the development of a basic power struggle, in which each sought to exercise ultimate control over the other.

By the beginning of 1885 there existed in the colony three separate organisations that advocated protection. Of these, the first to have been established was the Protection and Political Reform League (PPRL), which came into being in July 1881.² As the leader of the infant protectionist movement in the colony, the League immediately attracted to its ranks members of Sydney's equally infant manufacturing class,³ and by early 1883 "some of the most influential gentlemen" in the colony were its active supporters.⁴ The leaders of the PPRL,

however, sought a far wider and more representative base of support, and it was their basic democratic instincts which gave the League its real and lasting character. Led by radicals like Ninian Melville,⁵ William Richardson⁶ and R.C. Luscombe,⁷ an ardent admirer of the Victorian radical leader, Graham Berry,⁸ the PPRL also espoused the cause of the colony's working classes by agitating in their interests. As early as December 1881 the PPRL had been in contact with the TLC, seeking to arrange a joint public demonstration to celebrate the passage of legislation restricting the entry of Chinese into the colony.⁹ In March 1883, Luscombe again corresponded with the TLC on the subject of their joint opposition to assisted immigration,¹⁰ and in 1885, the PPRL consolidated its ties with organised labour by securing TLC representation at a conference on protection.¹¹ By 1883, then, it was authoritatively reported that the PPRL was supported by both manufacturers and working men.¹²

The League strove to cement this alliance by presenting protection as the panacea for the grievances of both groups; in fact, it aimed to weld all the struggling forces of production - labourers, manufacturers and farmers - into a cohesive army, bound together by a common adherence to protection as their only means of self-preservation.¹³ To achieve this, the League formulated a platform based on protection for industry and agriculture and backed it up with the advocacy of such other measures as land law reform, an absentee tax and payment of members.¹⁴ On the strength of its appeal to the 'discontented', the PPRL grew from an initial membership of twelve¹⁵ to 100 in 1884,¹⁶ and to over 200 by the beginning of 1887.¹⁷ The League also mounted a vigorous campaign to establish local branches throughout the colony. By the time its vice-president set out in July 1883 on a tour of country areas to initiate branches,¹⁸ at least eight local leagues had already been established.¹⁹ By the end of 1885, at least a further five local leagues had been opened,²⁰ and from the ranks of one of these, the Canterbury Reform and Protection Alliance,²¹ there first emerged into public life a young twenty-nine year old radical, Thomas Rose.²² In May 1889, it was claimed, probably not without

exaggeration, that since its inception the PPRL had established over sixty branch associations.²³

The PPRL's populist ambitions to unite the forces of discontent behind protection²⁴ were shared by another emerging radical protectionist, E.W.O'Sullivan, and it was he who was responsible for the creation of the other two protectionist organisations in existence at the beginning of 1885. At a public meeting in January 1884 to protest against assisted immigration, O'Sullivan delivered an address "on political matters, such as protection, and he proposed that a democratic alliance should be formed to meet ... and discuss matters affecting the welfare of the working people".²⁵ On 5 February 1884, the Democratic Alliance (DA) was formally inaugurated "to secure as far as possible a due and proper representation of the working classes" in parliament.²⁶ O'Sullivan outlined an extensive programme of radical reforms, including legalisation of the eight-hour system, abolition of the Legislative Council, an absentee tax, payment of members ("the keystone of the democratic arch"), and, of course, protection.²⁷ O'Sullivan's founding efforts attracted to the DA such prominent urban radicals as G.F.Garton, W.P.Crick, Alfred Miller, A.J.Kelly, S.A.Byrne and F.Flowers.²⁸ Having galvanized the urban labourers into political action, O'Sullivan now tried to attract the forces of rural discontent to the Alliance. In July 1884, he changed the name of the DA to the National Reform Association, and invited the participation of sugar growers, farmers and miners.²⁹ To the farmers, the subject of land reform was paramount, and O'Sullivan proposed that the Association hold a convention in January 1885 to discuss the two issues of land reform and fiscal protection.³⁰

Events intervened, however, to prompt O'Sullivan to drop his scheme that envisaged the DA as the basis of a broad-based reform league, and to explore other avenues to gain the support of rural interests for protection and democracy. The passage of the 1884 land bill, providing security of tenure to the squatters, aroused great agitation among the farmers and free selectors. This agitation presented O'Sullivan with

an immediate opportunity to influence the rural community. As he himself later commented, he "kept moving with the times", abandoning the National Reform Association or DA, as it again became known, and "going as a delegate to a Farmers' Conference"³¹ held in August 1884 under the auspices of the Land Law Reform Alliance.³² This was now to be the organisation through which he would attempt to create his national reform organisation.

Although the subject of protection was not raised at the 1884 conference, O'Sullivan initiated his plan when, in the final resolution, he succeeded in having the name of the organisation changed from the Land Law Reform Alliance to the Land and Industrial Alliance (LIA), and L.F. Heydon was elected president of the new body.³³ O'Sullivan later recalled his efforts in founding the LIA, "which was intended to combine the farmers with the workers in the city and towns as a democratic movement".³⁴ Thereafter, however, O'Sullivan's account of the LIA becomes off-handed and inaccurate; he fails to mention the presence of Heydon, who remained president at least until the end of 1885,³⁵ and he limits the total membership of the Alliance to three men, himself as president, and the two radicals, W.P. Crick and S.A. Byrne, as vice-president and secretary respectively.³⁶ In fact, O'Sullivan was the LIA secretary³⁷ and Crick was prominent,³⁸ but Byrne's importance in the Alliance is doubtful.³⁹ Rather than treating the LIA as "a leg-pull",⁴⁰ O'Sullivan was probably irked by the fact that the Alliance, in which he had placed so much faith, failed him as the means of realising his vision of a united reform movement; its dominant rural membership proved rather too sectional and lukewarm on protection. Further, O'Sullivan's refusal to acknowledge Heydon is probably explained by the fact that it was the conservative Heydon who first proclaimed the view that the manufacturers were the rightful leaders of any protectionist organisation, and who later led the betrayal of O'Sullivan's populist scheme in the cause of manufacturer domination.

In direct contrast to O'Sullivan's account, the LIA by November 1884 had expanded considerably since its inception.

As the result of a vigorous campaign to gain the official support of the rural community,⁴¹ the LIA comprised, by the end of 1884, twenty-three branches and affiliated farmers' unions and free selectors' associations.⁴² Throughout 1884, however, the three protectionist and reform organisations remained separate entities, the relations between them being at times distinctly unfriendly. Rivalry, rather than co-operation, dominated their relations. In February 1884, the newly-formed DA requested that the PPRL withdraw its candidate, secretary R.C. Luscombe, from the field for a by-election in East Sydney, but the request was flatly refused.⁴³ This rivalry between the two city-based organisations was heightened in July, when DA leader, O'Sullivan, described PPRL president, Richardson, as "a mad teetotaller", and secretary Luscombe as "a narrow minded fanatic".⁴⁴

By mid-1885, however, the time for the attempted integration of all three bodies into one broadly-based protectionist reform organisation had come, and the LIA, O'Sullivan's chosen vehicle, undertook the task. The Alliance planned a conference "of all the industrial classes of the Colony" to be held in July 1885, for the purpose "of combining them for their common good, and deciding upon a united policy".⁴⁵ The LIA, therefore, summoned its sixty-four branches and affiliated rural organisations to attend the conference,⁴⁶ and also invited a number of trade unions, miners' organisations and "several leading manufacturers" to attend.⁴⁷ In addition, both the PPRL and the DA were invited to attend, and both accepted.⁴⁸ From the very start of the conference, the need for unity between "the selectors and farmers who people our soil, the artisans who throng our cities", and the "toiling" miners was stressed,⁴⁹ and the conference concluded with the unanimous adoption of a resolution that "the farmers, manufacturers, miners, and industrial classes should combine in political union, ...".⁵⁰

No formal motion consolidating this statement of desirable union was moved or adopted, however, and no new organisation, amalgamating all the interests represented at the conference, was inaugurated. Despite the fact that the PPRL and the LIA co-operated in campaigning during the 1885 general election,⁵¹

the LIA conference had clearly demonstrated the strength of the sectional differences that were to prevent the creation of a fully integrated protectionist organisation. These differences were most forcefully revealed during the discussion on the question of protection itself. Although the urban interests present were committed to the advocacy of protection, O'Sullivan had not previously attempted to bind the dominant rural elements in the LIA to the doctrine, and its introduction as a subject for discussion at the conference clearly surprised and angered a number of rural delegates.⁵² Even those from rural areas who favoured protection displayed their sectional concerns by opposing a resolution that made no distinction between protection for farmers and protection for manufacturers, and they were successful in forcing the conference to treat them as two separate questions.⁵³

A further disquieting feature of the conference was the strong claim made by Sydney's manufacturers to the outright leadership of any integrated protectionist organisation. Almost until the conference began, the ranks of the manufacturers were scattered and disorganised, and in any united protectionist body they faced the prospect of being dominated by the populist radicals who had set the wheels of integration in motion. In response to this unpalatable prospect, however, the manufacturers set about consolidating their forces, and creating an organisation that would rival the radical-dominated LIA as the basis of an integrated protectionist organisation. The LIA conference formally met and was opened on the evening of 30 July 1885 in the Sydney Town Hall;⁵⁴ that same afternoon in the same place, a number of prominent manufacturers had met, under the chairmanship of Archibald Forsyth, "to consider the advisability of establishing a Chamber of Manufacturers".⁵⁵ In the circular inviting them to attend, Forsyth had commended the formation of the Chamber to the manufacturers for their "mutual benefit and protection of their interests", and had concluded by envisaging the Chamber as a body that would take steps "to join the various existing organisations for tariff reform, . . . , in forming a powerful, and general association on a fair trade basis, which might be appropriately named the Fair-trade and

Protection League of New South Wales".⁵⁶ The meeting approved the proposal, and a committee was appointed to bring the Chamber into active operation.⁵⁷ It was in the light of this activity that the manufacturers' friend and ally, L.F. Heydon, that same night told the LIA conference that the leadership of any integrated organisation should naturally fall to the manufacturers. Because the "farmers and working men cannot maintain an expensive and complete and long continued organization", the manufacturers, Heydon claimed, were "the natural officers" of the movement. Only they, he maintained, could "find money for elections", support a newspaper and paid officials, pay lecturers, "and generally keep on the sustained campaign necessary for success...".⁵⁸ Heydon had perceived the potential for manufacturer-domination of the protection movement, and he was later to be instrumental in aiding the manufacturers realise that potential; he, more than anyone else, was responsible for the lack of truth in his own statement that "the rank and file of the Liberal army, the farmers and artisans, can trust them absolutely".⁵⁹

Rather than promoting unity, the LIA conference clearly revealed the difficulties that confronted men with populist visions, like O'Sullivan. Rural concerns were obviously not the concerns of the urban dweller, and rural interest in protection was lukewarm.⁶⁰ Moreover, among the urban interests, the manufacturers were clearly not prepared to accept the leadership of working-class radicals. The LIA conference had demonstrated that the ideal of a grand rural, artisan and manufacturer alliance was feasible only in theory; the closer it came to realisation, the stronger were the reservations, and the more conspicuous were the narrow sectional interests and rivalries which acted to keep the forces of protection divided. The populists were thus forced to start again, this time on a narrower front and with modified ambitions. Their efforts now became solely concentrated on the consolidation and amalgamation of the forces of urban discontent in support of protection. Probably revitalised by Parkes's mounting fiscal crusade in the Assembly, the process of integration seems to have been resumed first among the urban radicals, for, in July 1886, the "joint secretarys [sic]" of the PPRL and the DA secured the participation

of the TLC in a demonstration in favour of protection.⁶¹ Clearly the PPRL and the DA had overcome their rivalry; although they never officially amalgamated,⁶² they were now obviously working in close harmony, and several prominent members of the DA, including G.F.Garton, now became prominent members of the PPRL.⁶³

This encouraging development seems to have infused new life into those radicals who strove to integrate all who favoured protection into one central body, and on 17 September 1886 the inaugural meeting of a new organisation, the National Protection Association (NPA), was held in Sydney.⁶⁴ Attended by representatives of the PPRL,⁶⁵ the TLC, the radical urban wing of the LIA, the Chamber of Manufactures (CM), and almost certainly the DA,⁶⁶ the conference unanimously supported a resolution that, "in view of the fact that there are several protectionist associations in existence, this meeting considers it advisable for each of them to send two or more delegates to a conference, for the purpose of establishing a central council to govern the whole body".⁶⁷ Although confined to the integration of urban protectionists, the NPA was clearly the brainchild of protectionist radicals whose populist visions had been previously frustrated by the sectionalism of rural interests. The radical, Thomas Rose, was president of the new organisation, and O'Sullivan, in seconding the above resolution, expressed his great pleasure in seeing "the various protectionist bodies drawing closer together, ...".⁶⁸ In the euphoria of unity, however, a major problem remained hidden from view: the threat to unity posed by the presence in the new organisation of two fundamentally opposed urban interests. The presence of both spokesmen for the industrial labouring class and representatives of the colony's manufacturers brought the basic conflict between labour and capital into the affairs of the NPA, and, in the consideration of how power would be distributed within the 'united' movement, the conflict soon became apparent.

The voice of the manufacturers was scarcely heard at the NPA's inaugural meeting; at the conference of "about 50 representatives" of the various protectionist organisations, held in October to discuss the details of the new integrated

organisation, their influence, however, was clearly present. Not only was the conference chaired by their friend and ally, L.F. Heydon,⁶⁹ but the manufacturers also secured equal representation with the radicals on a committee, appointed to give effect to a resolution that "a supreme council, consisting of delegates from the various manufacturing associations, protectionist bodies, trades organisations, and others, be formed for the purpose of promoting and directing" the protectionist movement.⁷⁰ The specific task of "the Supreme Council Committee" was "to draw up a constitution for a union of existing associations in favour of protection", and to make recommendations on the actual formation and composition of the Supreme Council.⁷¹ Its report and recommendations, therefore, would ultimately determine the nature of the united organisation, and, despite their subsidiary role in initiating the integrated body, the manufacturers were not to be denied a strong influence in its creation. A second committee appointed by the conference to make arrangements for "a mass demonstration of protectionists"⁷² was of much less importance, and it was of little consequence that the manufacturers secured only three of its twelve places.⁷³

On 10 November, the two committees reported back to the conference. The council committee had drawn up a constitution for "The Protection Union of New South Wales" (PU), and this became the official name of the organisation, formed "to unite ... the various associations formed for and now advocating the introduction of a protective policy ... into an active political organisation".⁷⁴ The report was adopted, and the conference proceeded to appoint "a preliminary committee of 21 ... to fully initiate the union".⁷⁵ The composition of this preliminary committee, elsewhere referred to as the "provisional executive committee of the Protection Union",⁷⁶ and what was, in fact, the basis of the Supreme Council of the PU, was of vital importance. The integration of protectionist forces, evident in the decision to establish the PU, was clearly the work of those radicals whose populist visions had been demonstrated since the early 1880s; should they lose control of the organisation, the PU ran the risk of being swamped and dominated by sectional interests, narrow in vision and self-seeking in aim. This, in fact, is

what happened. Although there were nine prominent radicals on the provisional executive, control of the committee belonged to the CM and its allies;⁷⁷ how they would utilise their control remained to be seen.

Meanwhile, jubilation at the novelty of apparent integration, and the vigorous activity usually associated with a new organisation, held sway. On 17 November, it was reported that Thomas Rose "had been elected the paid secretary of the union", and that the PU would set up a permanent office in the city "for protection work".⁷⁸ It was hardly coincidental that the PU offices were located in the rooms occupied by the CM in Bathurst Street.⁷⁹ Affiliation of the various protectionist bodies with the integrated Union also began. On 16 November, the PPRL decided to hand over all its "heavy correspondence" to be "attended to by the union secretary",⁸⁰ and it agreed to forward "the sum of two pounds ... as officiating fee".⁸¹ Other bodies must have followed suit, for it was reported during December that the Union's finances were "in a flourishing state".⁸²

The three major objects of the PU were the spreading of the protectionist gospel, the establishment of "branches of the union throughout the colony", and the provision of assistance to protectionist candidates in electoral contests.⁸³ From the moment of its inception, the Union embarked with vigour on its propagandist task. The arrangements for a mass demonstration of protectionists at the Sydney Domain were energetically proceeded with,⁸⁴ and the gala occasion was duly staged on 13 November.⁸⁵ That, however, was just the beginning; by mid-January 1887, the PU had arranged lecture tours of country areas by some of its prominent members,⁸⁶ arranged and held a further "open-air mass meeting" of protectionists,⁸⁷ and appointed a literary committee to examine the "desirability of at once publishing protection literature".⁸⁸

The establishment of a network of local branches depended initially on the willingness of the branches of bodies like the PPRL and LIA to become affiliated with the PU. The PPRL seems to have encouraged its branches to affiliate with the PU, and

the branches themselves responded by sending in the affiliation fee for their representation in the Union.⁸⁹ The LIA, now under the central direction of Crick and O'Sullivan, also played its part. The reticence of a number of LIA branches and affiliated rural associations to commit themselves to an advocacy of protection, and the consequent difficulty of affiliating the entire LIA organisation to the PU was recognised by the LIA central committee. In December, it overcame the difficulty by eliminating the advocacy of protection from the LIA platform, "so as to leave the Alliance purely a Land Law Reform Society", and also by granting "leave to such of its various branches, as so desired, to affiliate with the Protection Union, thus consolidating the protective parties all over the country".⁹⁰ The PU itself also prepared to take an active part in the initiation of branches by drawing up "A code of rules for the formation and governance of country branches ...".⁹¹ The activities of the PU in establishing its branch network, however, were interrupted towards the end of January 1887 by the need to attend to the third of its major duties, electoral organisation.

It has been claimed that the protectionists' organisation during the general election of 1887 "may be fairly described as the first full-scale 'party' organization in New South Wales". This claim is based not only on the fact that the PU appeared to have integrated all professing protectionists into a central protectionist organisation, but also on the fact that the protectionists' electoral campaign was "directed by a central executive composed of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary elements".⁹² Duverger has stressed this parliamentary-extra-parliamentary relationship as basic to a political party: "Once these mother-cells, parliamentary groups and electoral committees, have come into being, it is enough that some permanent co-ordination be established between them and that regular connections unite them, for us to find ourselves faced with a true political party".⁹³ Despite the appearance of 'co-ordination' between the PU and the parliamentary opposition in January 1887, the development of the PU, both before and after the general election, demonstrated that this co-ordination was neither 'permanent' nor harmonious. From its inception, in fact, the PU successfully

resisted the creation of permanent links with the parliamentary wing of the movement; instead, there developed a condition of permanent estrangement between the Union and the parliamentary party, and the two wings engaged in a long-lasting struggle for control of the protectionist movement throughout the colony. The reason for this estrangement seems clear. Shortly after its inauguration, the PU, through its council, came under the domination of the CM and its allies, to the virtual exclusion of all other interests and opinions. Manufacturer representation in the parliamentary party, however, was quite the opposite; farming, pastoral, commercial, professional and radical elements held sway in the parliamentary party, to the almost total exclusion of the manufacturers, who, after 1886, were able to win no more than two seats in the Assembly.⁹⁴ In view of this, and determined to retain their strong influence in the movement, the manufacturers forcibly resisted all attempts by the parliamentary protectionists to make the extra-parliamentary body more representative and to bring it under the control of the parliamentary party. This resistance was the cause of much friction.

The process by which the CM assumed its monopolistic control of the PU was begun early in December 1886. The constitution of the Union empowered the council to add to its numbers, and, using their slender majority on the original council, the manufacturers, on 4 December, elected five new council members, all of whom were manufacturers and four of whom were prominent members of the CM.⁹⁵ This take-over process received added impetus on 21 December, when six new additions were made to the council. These included two members of the CM, and two prominent allies of the manufacturers, L.F. Heydon and S.H. Hyam.⁹⁶ The domination of the CM was fully revealed in the formal election of the officers of the PU. Heydon's services were recognised by his election as president of the Union, and Hyam was accorded the honour of sharing the vice-presidency with CM president, A. Forsyth. The office of treasurer and the places on the small five-man executive committee were then filled almost exclusively with members of the CM.⁹⁷ The influx into the PU council of manufacturers and their wealthy allies continued unabated throughout

the early months of 1887,⁹⁸ and the point was eventually reached where the PU was regarded as "nothing more nor less than a little party of manufacturers, who have been posing as a national protectionist organisation, whereas they were merely the nominees of the Chamber of Manufactures, which means, of course, themselves".⁹⁹ It is in this context that the relations of the PU with the parliamentary protectionists should be examined.

It was in connection with the mass protectionist demonstration of November 1886 that the PU first made real contact with the developing protectionist force in the Assembly. Only three MsLA had been actively engaged in the creation of the PU,¹⁰⁰ but the demonstration seemed to initiate and herald a close tie between the PU and the parliamentary wing of the movement. The PU demonstration committee announced on 10 November that the prominent MLA and potential protectionist convert, J.P. Abbott, would preside over the demonstration,¹⁰¹ and at least eight other MsLA attended the November demonstration and the one held at the end of December.¹⁰² Any closer or more formal association than this was not, however, desired by the PU council for fear of diluting manufacturer domination, and this was subsequently made quite clear. Of the two MsLA on the original PU council,¹⁰³ one was a radical and the other a prominent manufacturer; thus the anticipated equal representation of diverse interests in the integrated organisation was achieved. Despite the support given to the PU by protectionist MsLA, by the time of the 1887 general election, the council had added only three further MsLA to its ranks, and all three were either members of the CM, or sympathetic to it in its successful bid to monopolise the Union.¹⁰⁴ Clearly the council was neither prepared to admit anyone who did not share its limited outlook, nor was it prepared to run the risk of being dictated to by the parliamentary wing of the movement.

Thus, when the PU council met "the protectionist members of Parliament" (as distinct from the parliamentary opposition) at the offices of the CM on 25 January 1887 to arrange the organisation of the protectionists' general election campaign, "an animated discussion extending over nearly three hours" took place before any decisions were arrived at.¹⁰⁵ The 'animation'

probably arose from an argument as to which wing should assume the ultimate control over electoral organisation, and it would appear that it was the PU that carried the day. Although the meeting appointed "a joint committee of protectionist members of Parliament and gentlemen selected from the council ... [to] prepare a list of suitable candidates", the list had first to receive the approval of the full PU council before being released for publication.¹⁰⁶ Further, although joint finance and literary committees were also appointed at the meeting,¹⁰⁷ the control of these matters clearly rested with the PU. As was pointed out by Heydon in 1885,¹⁰⁸ and as was again the case during the 1889 general election,¹⁰⁹ it was the manufacturers' financial resources that finally determined the PU's organisational leadership. It was accurately pointed out that "Political warfare cannot be successfully conducted ... without funds",¹¹⁰ and the fact that the protectionists had "plenty of money"¹¹¹ and spent "ten pounds for every one" disbursed by the free-traders¹¹² was due to the indispensable involvement of the PU. Only with PU financial involvement, later estimated by the Union itself as close to £1,500,¹¹³ could the protectionists employ "lecturers and agents",¹¹⁴ print "protectionist bills and pamphlets by the hundred thousand",¹¹⁵ and subsidise candidates.¹¹⁶

The PU duly issued a list of candidates whom it "decided to support", and the list was first published on 29 January.¹¹⁷ It contained selections for fifty-two electorates, to which those for three further electorates were later added.¹¹⁸ The final number of electorates for which candidates selected by the PU were announced rose to fifty-seven out of a possible seventy-two due to the movement of some selected candidates from one electorate to another.¹¹⁹ At first sight, this organisation seems impressive, particularly in view of the necessary haste in preparing the list and the fact that in only one electorate did a local protectionist league contribute to the selection of a protectionist candidate.¹²⁰ Furthermore, the PU also undertook the task of providing protectionist candidates where none had offered themselves, and in several electorates the protectionist candidates appear to have been positively sent out by the PU.¹²¹ Thomas Rose, for instance, in contesting Argyle, stated that he

"had been sent out by the Protection Union, so that the free-traders might not have a walk over",¹²² and W.S. Targett was sent by the Union to contest the Hastings and Manning electorate.¹²³ Such activity was, however, far from comprehensive, and twelve electorates remained uncontested by any protectionist candidate.¹²⁴

Because of inexperience and over-anxiety, the most damaging weakness of PU organisation was the fact that a large number of candidates supported by the Union seem to have been chosen without their knowledge and consent. This created a situation in which many candidates denied their candidature and repudiated their PU selection, thus creating gaps that were never filled in many electorates, and generally casting doubt on the credibility of the PU's electoral organisation. In response to requests from local protectionists in Inverell and Orange to provide a protectionist candidate,¹²⁵ the PU selected a candidate for each electorate and included them in its original published list.¹²⁶ Both candidates, however, denied their candidature,¹²⁷ one claiming that he had "never given any authority" for his selection.¹²⁸ A number of other candidates selected by the PU also publicly denied their candidature and selection.¹²⁹ In fact, out of the fifty-seven electorates for which the PU made selections, its original arrangements were upset, in one way or another, in no fewer than twenty-seven. Some of these changes were caused by selected PU candidates changing electorates to fill gaps,¹³⁰ but the majority were simply due to the failure of PU candidates to enter the contest at all.¹³¹ Apart from a minor reshuffling of its candidates, the PU replaced none of these non-starters, and, as a result, no PU candidate was nominated in twelve of the electorates for which selections had been made¹³² and, in terms of its original arrangements, the PU was under-represented in a further eleven electorates.¹³³ Another factor that further reduced the effectiveness of PU organisation was some candidates' repudiation of any ties, particularly financial, with the Union on the grounds that such links threatened their independence, the greatest of political virtues.¹³⁴

Yet, what was most revealing about both the embryonic state of electoral organisation and the far from settled nature

of fiscal allegiances was the fact that the PU gave its support to a number of declared freetraders.¹³⁵ This led to vehement denials of any connections with the protectionists and sharp repudiations of PU selection,¹³⁶ and gave point to B.R.Wise's observation that "Certain newspapers were giving an imaginary list of protection candidates, but the next morning they found many of the gentlemen named indignantly denying the fact, and saying they were freetraders".¹³⁷

A further aim of the PU was to ensure that "candidates running in the interest of protection ... [would] not clash",¹³⁸ but events in two electorates clearly demonstrate the overall failure of the Union to deploy its forces efficiently and to prevent disastrous vote-splitting. On 29 January, it was announced that the PU would support W.P.Crick for both East and West Macquarie, and J.Hughes for East Macquarie.¹³⁹ This conformed correctly to the number of seats available, but to simplify matters, Crick retired from West Macquarie and Hughes left East Macquarie to take his place.¹⁴⁰ When, however, Crick was defeated in East Macquarie, he re-announced himself for the single-seat West Macquarie, thus duplicating PU representation and causing a split in the vote that cost the protectionists the seat.¹⁴¹ In Hartley, the president of the PPRL, William Richardson, was announced as the selected PU candidate,¹⁴² but this in no way inclined two local protectionists, B.Doyle and R.J.Inch, to retire.¹⁴³ In desperation, two days before nomination, the PU recalled Richardson, replaced him with the less strident John Young of the CM,¹⁴⁴ and again appealed to at least one of the recalcitrant local men to retire.¹⁴⁵ The Union's efforts, however, were to no avail, and the presence of three candidates in a single-seat electorate cost the protectionists another victory.¹⁴⁶

The PU must have been aware of the inadequacy of its organisational efforts, for immediately after the election it prepared "an electoral circular setting forth the desirableness of organisation, and calling upon protectionists throughout the colony to form associations in their various electorates".¹⁴⁷ Throughout the remainder of 1887, the PU was principally

occupied in fostering the establishment of a widespread network of local branches,¹⁴⁸ and in April 1888, the Union's annual report stated that fifty-six branches had been formed.¹⁴⁹

The character of the PU during 1887, however, became no more representative; in fact, the dominance of the manufacturers became even more pronounced. As a result of the 1887 election, the representation of MsLA on the Union council declined from five to two,¹⁵⁰ and no others seem to have been elected to replace those who had lost their seats in the Assembly. Some measure of the PU's reticence to admit MsLA to its ranks was shown in its refusal ever to elect to the council the longest-standing and most consistent protectionist in the Assembly, Ninian Melville. Melville's rejection was also evidence of the Union's thinly disguised rejection of the protectionist radicals. After January 1887, however, the latent antipathy between the capitalistic manufacturers and the pro-labour radicals became more evident. As the manufacturers assumed full control of the PU, the radical elements in the council were gradually forced out or voluntarily resigned in protest, thus further accentuating the manufacturers' dominance. In January, the PU was represented to the TLC as "hirelings of the Chamber of Manufacturers",¹⁵¹ and the Council severed what formal links it had established with the Union.¹⁵² In the same month, the Union's radical secretary, Thomas Rose, resigned his post to contest the electorate of Argyle at the behest of the council,¹⁵³ but following his defeat, the council failed to re-appoint him as secretary.¹⁵⁴ Finally, E.W.O'Sullivan, the one radical MLA on the PU council, had by the end of 1887 resigned from and publicly repudiated the Union.¹⁵⁵

The ever-widening gulf between the PU and the radicals inevitably produced open and hostile clashes between the two sections of the movement. During the 1887 general election, the president of the radical DA and candidate for South Sydney, Alfred Miller, characterised those connected with the PU as "paid hireling[s] of the manufacturers",¹⁵⁶ and in May, during the ministerial election in South Sydney, PU president, Heydon, indulged in a reciprocal public vilification of Miller.¹⁵⁷ This

action, it was later claimed, aroused "the hostility ... [of] the working classes" towards the PU, and was responsible for the narrow defeat of the protectionist candidate.¹⁵⁸ As a consequence, it was further claimed, "a movement for radically re-organising the protectionist party" was begun,¹⁵⁹ and this movement came to a head in October 1887.

The demand for re-organisation came from two main sections of the movement: "the parliamentary section of the protectionists" criticised the PU as "worse than useless" and unrepresentative in character,¹⁶⁰ and the protectionist radicals claimed that the Union was neglectful of, and, in many cases, openly hostile to, the cause of labour.¹⁶¹ They pointed to an instance in December 1886 when three members of the CM, all of whom were also members of the PU council,¹⁶² came out in opposition to certain provisions of a proposed Workshops and Factories Bill. In particular, they objected to the introduction of the eight-hours system and to a general shortening of working hours per week, to the payment of employees during holidays, and to the inspection of factories.¹⁶³ Towards the end of 1887, the protectionist MsLA and radicals combined to initiate a re-organisation of protectionist forces, and on 7 October, they convened a conference, to which the PU was not invited¹⁶⁴ and at which they expressed their dissatisfaction with the Union.¹⁶⁵ Among the MsLA present were the radicals E.W.O'Sullivan, N.Melville, T.Walker and J.Creer, as well as the new party leader, G.R.Dibbs, together with J.Fletcher and J.P.Garvan. Among the extra-parliamentary radicals present were W.H.Traill and Thomas Rose, as well as John Norton, J.R.Talbot, T.Symons, J.E.West, J.Mennie and C.Johnson of the TLC,¹⁶⁶ and W.Richardson and R.C.Luscombe of the PPRL, which had also split from the PU and had expressed its "readiness to merge their own organisation in any new one which would unite all sections of the party".¹⁶⁷ Dibbs expressed the concern of the MsLA when he called for an amalgamation of all sections of the protectionist movement to be directed by a new "supreme central executive", presumably containing a significant number of MsLA. The radicals gave vent to their grievances by claiming that "the interests of the working-classes had not been studied with sufficient care ...

in the past", and the PU's neglect of "matters of ... political reform" gave rise to "some very severe strictures".¹⁶⁸

The conference decided to form a new organisation "with a view of concentrating the whole forces of the party under one central executive". The new body was named the National Protection Association (NPA2),¹⁶⁹ a resuscitation of the name used by the radicals in their sabotaged attempt to form a truly integrated protectionist organisation almost exactly twelve months previously. The conference also appointed a radical-dominated sub-committee "to draw up the manifesto, programme, and rules of the new organisation".¹⁷⁰ These decisions amounted to a direct challenge to the primacy and authority of the PU, particularly when the sub-committee resolved "to complete the amalgamation of the whole of the metropolitan and provincial organisations under the executive" of the NPA2.¹⁷¹ Armed with these intimidatory resolutions, a deputation from the NPA several weeks later approached the PU "with a view to securing the co-operation of that organisation". The mission, however, failed, the PU refusing to co-operate on the grounds that "the steps taken to reorganise the party involve the extinction of their body".¹⁷² Nevertheless, several PU members and its president, Heydon, attended the conference on 31 October, convened to hear the report and recommendations of the NPA sub-committee. What they heard gave them little joy. The new association was characterised as "more a combination for political purposes, and less an organisation for furthering the interests of the manufacturer", and the interim governing body of the organisation, appointed at the conference, was purely parliamentary in composition - fifteen MsLA and seven MsLC, with George Dibbs as chairman.¹⁷³ It was envisaged that the twenty-two parliamentary protectionists would later merge with radicals and manufacturers' representatives to form an integrated and representative NPA council. Although "ripe for putting into execution",¹⁷⁴ the scheme was upset by the PU's continued refusal to co-operate. At the conference, the PU "objected to being merged into the new association",¹⁷⁵ and, despite a further conference in an attempt to achieve unanimity,¹⁷⁶ Heydon later stated that the PU council had been "unable to fall in with the proposals made".¹⁷⁷ As a result,

and to the continuing frustration of the radicals, the NPA2 never got off the ground,¹⁷⁸ and the PU maintained its separate and defiant existence. Yet another attempt at integration had failed.

A final attempt at integration was made during July-August 1888, and again the radicals were in the vanguard. This time, it would seem, the radicals directed their attention to the local branches of the PU. It was hoped that the branches would threaten to cut their ties with the central PU council unless it adopted a more liberal outlook and became more representative of the entire protectionist movement. At a conference of the Ginninderra, Cootamundra and Yass branches of the Union, attended by O'Sullivan, Melville and Rose as representatives of the "metropolitan unions", and held at Yass in July 1888, a new democratic protectionist platform was adopted.¹⁷⁹ The Cootamundra branch informed the PU council that it would maintain its allegiance to the PU only if the central body also adopted the platform.¹⁸⁰ The showdown came at a general conference of PU branches, under the presidency of Heydon and held in Sydney the following month.¹⁸¹ The delegate from Cootamundra moved the general adoption by the PU of the radical platform, but the motion was rejected.¹⁸² O'Sullivan then proposed that the "central and controlling body" of the PU be made more representative by the inclusion of "members of the party in Parliament and delegates from all protective bodies", and he gave his motion substance by naming and proposing the appointment of a fully integrated central committee.¹⁸³ His motion, however, was not even seconded.

One lasting result of the October 1887 're-organisation' was, however, the establishment of "the protection members of Parliament at the head of the protection organisation".¹⁸⁴ Their newly achieved authority was demonstrated early in 1888 in the organisation of two by-elections, thereby depriving the PU of its organisational monopoly.¹⁸⁵ Recognising the threat to its primacy, the PU then attempted to stifle the parliamentary challenge by belatedly offering representation on its executive and council to the parliamentary party. Ostensibly "to secure

greater concentrated effort and singleness of action", the PU offered Dibbs a seat on the executive committee, and places to eight MsLA on the council.¹⁸⁶ This, however, was no more than a token gesture, for, had the protectionist MsLA merged with the PU in the manner proposed, real authority would have returned to the PU manufacturers.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, the PU's offer was extended only to selected conservative MsLA;¹⁸⁸ radical, doctrinaire MsLA, like Melville and O'Sullivan, were deliberately excluded from the offer. As was pointed out, "singleness of action" without any radical representation was a preposterous notion, and, had the invited MsLA accepted the offer, they would have run the risk of further "splitting up the party both within and without Parliament".¹⁸⁹ For these weighty reasons, and with their own influence established, the MsLA rejected the offer.

Thus, by the end of 1888, the protectionist forces outside parliament were still splintered. Radicals, conservative manufacturers, and power-seeking MsLA were involved in a tangle of rivalry for control and authority; integration had proved impossible; and still no 'permanent co-ordination' had been established between the extra-parliamentary and parliamentary wings of the movement. During 1888, the parliamentary party had gradually asserted its authority, but the events of January 1889 would shortly give the manufacturers the opportunity to win back the influence of which they had been deprived.¹⁹⁰

II

Just as the 'protectionists' most influential extra-parliamentary organisation fell under the exclusive control of wealthy conservative manufacturers, the one and only freetrade extra-parliamentary body also came to be dominated by wealthy conservative interests - Sydney's merchant, mercantile and commercial class. It was largely in reaction to the protectionist activity of mid-1885, especially the preparations for the LIA conference, that the formation of a freetrade league was first proposed. In July 1885, a correspondent to the Herald contended

that "it is the duty of those who [support] ... a free-trade policy to form an association for the propagation of sound views ... to defeat the protectionist agitation".¹⁹¹ Shortly after, B.R. Wise agreed that "the time has arrived for taking systematic measures to correct protectionist misstatements", and he announced that "it is proposed to form a Free Trade League in New South Wales".¹⁹² The first attempt, however, was a failure; only eight persons bothered to respond to an anonymous advertisement inviting attendance at a meeting on 10 August to consider "the desirableness of forming a free-trade league".¹⁹³ A further meeting a week later was more successful, and a resolution that "an association be now formed for the purpose of promulgating and advocating the principles of free trade in this colony, such association to be styled the 'New South Wales Free Trade Association'" (FTA) was unanimously carried.¹⁹⁴

Prominent in the formation of the FTA was the radical, future MLA, B.R. Wise, whose literary ability and thorough understanding of the fiscal conflict placed him in the forefront of freetrade advocacy and made him indispensable to the cause.¹⁹⁵ Appointed to the original fourteen-member executive council of the FTA,¹⁹⁶ Wise began a concerted campaign to win for freetrade the support of organised labour by inviting the representation of the TLC on the FTA.¹⁹⁷ Despite Wise's efforts, the FTA was at its inception, and remained thereafter, basically an organisation formed by, and in the interests of, Sydney's mercantile and commercial class - those, as Wise commented, who "stood to gain most from the continuance of Freetrade, ...".¹⁹⁸ Of the original fourteen-member executive, at least five members had definite connections with the mercantile and importing community, and six were members of the SCC.¹⁹⁹ Of the eleven men added to the council at the end of August, four were members of the SCC, two were prominent in shipping circles, two were merchants, and three were active in the business world.²⁰⁰ The TLC's rejection of Wise's overtures did nothing to alter this trend, and by the beginning of 1887, out of a total of fifty-three FTA council members, seventeen belonged to the SCC and at least twenty-nine were members of the mercantile and commercial community. This commercial control of the FTA was reflected in the Association's

office-bearers, the majority of whom throughout the life of the FTA were members of the SCC.²⁰¹

The wealth of the SCC was, therefore, powerfully represented in the FTA. In fact, the Association was at times spoken of as the virtual political wing of the SCC. William McMillan, SCC president and FTA council member, hinted at this when he stated that the FTA "was doing work which could not be done by the Chamber of Commerce", for the simple reason that the Chamber "could not be actually considered to be a political association, [even though] ... it must be known as a free-trade association".²⁰² Close links, then, were forged between the two bodies. In April 1886, they jointly expressed their condemnation of ad valorem duties, and conferred together on a proposal to send a joint deputation to the Colonial Treasurer in opposition to the imposition of ad valorem duties.²⁰³ During 1887, the Chamber bore the expense of sending to all its members a copy of a freetrade pamphlet written by FTA secretary, Edward Pulsford.²⁰⁴ Immediately prior to the 1887 general election, McMillan told the SCC that all its members "should feel an interest" in the FTA, and he called on them to render the Association "substantial personal aid". He then remarked on the FTA's need of "the monetary support of the people connected with trade", and stated that "he would like to see members of the chamber give from their abundance some contribution to the Free-trade Association". As an added incentive he appealed to their "selfish interests", and reminded them that their support "would pay them very well".²⁰⁵ In response to McMillan's appeal, it would appear that Chamber members contributed upwards of £300 towards the FTA's election expenses.²⁰⁶ In addition, B.R. Wise later recalled how two "leading men in the softgoods trade", both FTA and SCC members, had paid his election expenses and provided him with secretarial assistance from their warehouses.²⁰⁷

Shortly after the formation of the FTA, the Telegraph hinted that it appeared to be "too much an association of the mercantile element", and pointed to the possibility that it might become "a mere organisation of ... the conservative party ..., opposed to everything in social and political matters which

the working-classes hoped to attain".²⁰⁸ The predominance of the wealthy merchant class in the FTA did give the Association a decidedly conservative aura, and this was reflected especially in the issue of direct taxation. When B.R. Wise spoke at an FTA public meeting in favour of taxes upon land and income, he was careful to state that his personal views were not those of the FTA council.²⁰⁹ In fact, a significant number of Wise's FTA council colleagues later became associated with the conservative anti-direct taxation National Association.²¹⁰ In complete contrast to merchant representation on the council, the presence of freetrade radicals, at least until after 1888, was very limited. Apart from Wise, only John Haynes, John Nobbs, S.T. Whiddon, N.B. Downing and four TLC representatives gave the FTA council a hint of radicalism prior to late 1888.²¹¹ More typical were the conservative views of FTA treasurer, George Pile, who looked upon the proposed introduction of payment of members with horror,²¹² and those of insurance broker and avowed conservative, C. McKay Smith, who did not disguise his "strong repugnance to property taxation", which he believed to be "morally iniquitous".²¹³

Included in the ranks of the FTA council during 1885 and 1886 were a number of men with commercial connections, who were also members of parliament, or who were shortly to be activated by the protectionist challenge to obtain a seat in the Assembly. Among those on the council who were MsLA at the end of 1886 were J.H. Young, A. Kethel, William Clarke and James Inglis.²¹⁴ To them could be added J.F. Burns who, although not a member of the council until 1889, claimed to have been "about the third member enrolled on the association".²¹⁵ Those on the council who became MsLA after 1886 were W. McMillan, J.T. Wilshire and W.H. Vivian.²¹⁶

Shortly after its formation, the FTA stated that it was "in no way connected with any political party",²¹⁷ but during 1886 the Association obviously provided Parkes with a vehicle for arousing fiscal fever outside parliament, and he made good use of it. In January 1886, he was chairman of an FTA public meeting,²¹⁸ and in July, he attended and addressed the Association's first annual public meeting.²¹⁹ The success of the

protectionists in disrupting this meeting, and the subsequent pledge by one of those present that any future freetrade meetings would be broken up by force,²²⁰ assisted Parkes in his rousing fiscal campaign: such threats, he claimed, furnished "proof that if the protectionists had the power they would not allow men to raise their voices in the cause of freedom".²²¹ Parkes also aided the FTA's efforts in spreading the freetrade gospel by donating six cases of Cobden Club books for general distribution.²²² Given Parkes's association with the FTA during 1886, and his sympathy with the views and interests it basically represented, it was scarcely surprising that, when called upon to form a freetrade ministry prior to the 1887 general election, he chose several MsLA who were prominent in the Association, namely James Inglis, J.F. Burns and William Clarke.²²³ To another, J.H. Young, Parkes apologised for his omission from the ministry, and concluded that "I hope you and I shall yet be colleagues".²²⁴ Young, in fact, was Parkes's nominee for the Speakership of the Assembly, and defeated Dibbs for the position in March 1887. In 1891, Young did become a ministerial colleague of Parkes when he entered the ministry to fill a vacancy.

In addition to stating its independence of any political party, the FTA, on its formation, also clearly defined the limits and scope of its activities. These were to be confined to purely propagandist work, both to "advocate freedom of trade" and "to refute the sophistries and expose the frequent misrepresentations of protectionists".²²⁵ Association president, R. Teece, reaffirmed in 1889 that the FTA had been formed more "for the purpose of acting as an educational medium" than anything else,²²⁶ and during the first year of its existence the FTA confined itself to "disseminating information" and "arguing the [fiscal] question in the public ear".²²⁷ The month after its inauguration, the FTA began its active propagandist work,²²⁸ and during the general election in October 1885, the Association spent nearly £300 on the publication and distribution of almost 250,000 books, pamphlets, papers and leaflets.²²⁹ The FTA also encouraged the formation of local branches²³⁰ and, although Wise exaggerated when he boasted in November 1886 that the FTA "has now branches in many ... electoral districts of the colony",²³¹

at least four electorates contained branches by early 1887.²³²

It was Parkes's fiscal campaign of 1886 and the resulting dominance of the fiscal issue in politics that was responsible for the change in the role of the FTA as a political organisation. The first mention of the FTA in any other than a propagandist capacity was in November 1886, when B.R. Wise stated that "It is of the utmost importance that when a general election comes the association should be sufficiently strong financially and numerically to fight an effective battle", and he particularly alluded to the task of exercising "energy and ... proper care in the selection of candidates, ...".²³³ This expression of opinion by its president, and the imminence of a general election forced the Association to reappraise its role in politics, and, at a council meeting early in January 1887, a "lengthened discussion took place on the general work of the association, ...".²³⁴ In view of the approaching election, propagandist activity was stepped up,²³⁵ but the real change came on 28 January, two days after the dissolution of parliament, when the FTA council, under Wise's direction, decided to "form itself into a central committee for furthering the election of free trade candidates, and to prevent as far as possible the division of the free trade vote, the committee to sit daily".²³⁶ That this decision initiated a basic change in the role of the FTA was confirmed in the association's second annual report. The report prefaced its review of the Association's work during the general election by stating that "During the year the association has considerably extended the sphere of its operations".²³⁷ The decision to enter the field of political and electoral organisation, however, was not taken without certain misgivings. FTA president, Richard Teece, told the Association's fourth annual general meeting that although "they had endeavoured to refrain from interference with politics", they "had found [that] to be exceedingly difficult", and had, as a consequence, "found themselves undertaking tasks which they believed to be foreign to the purposes for which they were established".²³⁸

The pressure to extend its activities was probably exerted on the FTA council by its parliamentary members and by

those political activists in its ranks, like Wise and McMillan, who clearly associated themselves with Parkes and his developing freetrade parliamentary party.²³⁹ For this reason, and especially in view of FTA representation in the ministry, it is difficult to detect any distrust or division of purpose between the FTA and Parkes over the organisation of the freetrade election campaign;²⁴⁰ rather, Parkes and the FTA seem to have worked in complete harmony throughout the campaign. Certainly Parkes himself, as in previous elections, remained a central figure in electoral activity. He continued to make use of his personal network of electoral agents throughout the electorates,²⁴¹ and was the recipient of numerous communications from candidates informing him of their progress and chances of success,²⁴² requesting his aid and support,²⁴³ and arranging the details of his supporting visits.²⁴⁴ In addition, he received a number of letters from men announcing their intentions to become candidates,²⁴⁵ and numerous requests from various electorates for him to supply suitable free-trade candidates.²⁴⁶ It would appear, however, that some of this information and several of these requests formed the basis of much of the FTA's electoral work.

In fact, Parkes seems to have been actively involved in the FTA's task of providing and arranging for freetrade candidates to contest the election. On 1 February, the report of the FTA's work included the announcement that J.T.Lingen would be sent to contest the electorate of Braidwood.²⁴⁷ It was clearly Parkes, however, who arranged Lingen's candidature. Asked by Parkes to become a freetrade candidate, Lingen informed Parkes of his agreement on 26 January.²⁴⁸ The FTA was probably responsible for the choice of electorate, for Lingen told Parkes on 31 January that "I start this morning to contest Braidwood".²⁴⁹ Here, then, was apparent co-operation; Parkes supplied the manpower, the Association supplied the electorate. In other instances, it would seem that the roles were reversed. During the first week of February, Parkes received urgent appeals from the electorates of Monaro and Yass Plains to send freetrade candidates.²⁵⁰ These, it would seem, he passed on to the FTA, for on 8 February the Association announced that it had arranged candidates for both electorates.²⁵¹ It seems also that the FTA made use of Parkes's influence in persuading freetraders to offer

themselves as candidates. On 31 January, FTA vice-president, George Munro, wrote to Parkes: "I got Mr McMillan to call upon Mr Street, and say that you would like to see him".²⁵² It seems that Munro wished Parkes to persuade J.R. Street to offer himself as a candidate for East Sydney. Parkes performed his task well, for Street was soon after announced as a candidate.²⁵³ Parkes clearly retained influence not possessed by the FTA, and this alone made him indispensable to the Association in its direction of the campaign. Despite Wise's statement that his candidature for South Sydney was at the request of the FTA,²⁵⁴ he elsewhere admitted that his appearance was due to the fact that he had been "asked by Sir Henry Parkes to contest the borough of South Sydney".²⁵⁵

Parkes also showed himself more than willing to give the FTA's chosen candidates the benefit of his support in their various electorates. When the Association requested and arranged for council member, N.B. Downing, to contest Northumberland,²⁵⁶ Parkes promised that he would visit the electorate to support him,²⁵⁷ and he did so.²⁵⁸ Parkes's co-operation with the FTA was no better demonstrated than in his compliance with "an earnest request" by the Association to visit Yass in support of the FTA candidate.²⁵⁹ In doing so, it would appear that he went to the trouble of adding to his already tight personal tour itinerary.²⁶⁰ The FTA also approached other freetrade MsLA and successfully arranged that they "speak in various country electorates on behalf of the freetrade candidates".²⁶¹ The first MsLA approached by the Association were naturally those who already had formal connections with it, and McMillan, Wise, J.H. Young and Clarke were active in touring the colony on the Association's behalf.²⁶² Other MsLA, including F. Abigail and G.H. Reid, also gave their services to the FTA.²⁶³

In addition to the electoral work done in co-operation with Parkes and the freetrade MsLA, the FTA worked independently with great energy in organising the freetrade campaign. Its previous electoral role of distributing freetrade propaganda was resumed and greatly expanded,²⁶⁴ but it was the Association's new role of providing freetrade candidates to contest various

electorates that demanded most attention. As the only formal freetrade body in charge of electoral organisation,²⁶⁵ the FTA received numerous requests from the electorates for candidates,²⁶⁶ and it worked hard to fulfil them. On 31 January, the FTA received four telegrams from Carcoar "pressing for a second freetrade candidate" to run with C.L.Garland,²⁶⁷ and on 3 February it announced that steamship company proprietor, C.E.Jeanneret, was on his way to the electorate.²⁶⁸ In response to "the earnest request of several members of the Free Trade Association", N.B. Downing undertook to contest Northumberland,²⁶⁹ and in its announcement the FTA stated that W.S.Lloyd would probably join Downing as the second freetrade candidate,²⁷⁰ and this was confirmed the following day.²⁷¹ The Association clearly went to great trouble to provide candidates where they were required. In the three-member electorate of Mudgee, the FTA undertook the provision of two more freetrade candidates to contest the electorate in conjunction with A.G.Taylor. Although its initial attempts to persuade a freetrader to contest the electorate failed,²⁷² the Association persevered, and within a week had secured the two required candidates.²⁷³ Further, where existing arrangements or its own electoral arrangements were upset, the FTA acted quickly to repair the damage. On receipt of the information that the sitting freetrade MLA for Glen Innes would not re-contest his electorate, the Association immediately placed itself "in communication with a likely candidate for the seat",²⁷⁴ and two days later announced that he had agreed to fill the vacancy, and had already left for the electorate.²⁷⁵ The Association began its search for a candidate to contest Wellington on 4 February,²⁷⁶ but when its announced candidate, J.Leeds,²⁷⁷ failed to appear, it took less than a day for the Association to replace him.²⁷⁸

Unlike the PU, the FTA did not issue a full list of all those candidates it supported. Only the candidates it actually provided were specifically mentioned; in addition to the five electorates already mentioned, the Association provided candidates in a further eleven electorates,²⁷⁹ thus making a total of sixteen. Thus, at first sight, the FTA would appear to have been much less active than the PU. In reality, however,

the FTA seems to have been far more energetic, taking more care in its selection of candidates and acting promptly to fill any gaps created in its arrangements. For instance, unlike the PU, which supported a number of avowed freetraders, the FTA took care to check the fiscal credentials of its candidates. When it was rumoured that the Association's candidate in Murrumbidgee, R.H.Reynolds, favoured the imposition of duties on grain, the Association immediately "sent a telegram to Wagga Wagga to inquire as to the correctness of the report".²⁸⁰ Further, when the Association learned that the sitting member for Macleay, R.B. Smith, supported ad valorem, timber and grain duties, it immediately initiated steps "to find a suitable man to oppose" him.²⁸¹

Like the PU, the FTA also aimed to prevent vote-splitting - "to prevent as far as possible the division of the free trade vote".²⁸² In this endeavour, only moderate success was achieved. Certainly S.B.Bailey complied with the FTA's suggestion that he retire from Shoalhaven to avoid splitting the vote with W.F. Martin,²⁸³ and, at Forbes, H.Montagu also "yielded to the suggestion of the Free-trade Association to retire", thereby preventing a division of the vote.²⁸⁴ Elsewhere, however, the FTA was clearly unable to prevent vote-splitting; in fact, probably aware of its lack of influence, the FTA made very little effort to rectify threatening situations, thus exposing its basic weakness at the crucial time. In the four-member electorate of Paddington, six freetraders offered themselves as candidates. Apart from an FTA communication to the six candidates "expressing an earnest hope that steps will be taken" to reduce the number of candidates to four,²⁸⁵ the Herald correctly observed that "nothing appears to have been done", and it attributed the probable loss of a seat to "disunion" and "want of management".²⁸⁶ An even more potentially disastrous situation existed in Canterbury, where nine freetraders vied with one protectionist for the four available seats. The FTA's reaction to this situation constituted a firm decision that "the Association should not interfere in the matter, but should leave it entirely to be settled between the electors and candidates themselves".²⁸⁷ In view of this decision, the Herald candidly observed that "party discipline has failed",²⁸⁸ and its

observation equally applied to the situation in West Sydney, where the Association again refused to intervene to prevent vote-splitting.²⁸⁹ Although the Association appears to have taken more positive steps to induce a necessary retirement in Central Cumberland,²⁹⁰ the effort failed. The FTA's lack of effort and influence meant that, of the electorates contested by both free-trade and protectionist candidates, the freetrade vote was split in seven.²⁹¹

A further problem for the central FTA was created by the attempts at local organisation present within some electorates. Although local branches of the FTA were few by February 1887, local organisation was more in evidence among the freetraders than the protectionists. What work was done by its local branches in 1887 provided the FTA with a taste of both the satisfaction, and the displeasure, with local organisation felt more widely by both central fiscal organisations during the following two general elections. The Bathurst branch of the FTA was particularly active during the election, and it selected and organised candidates for the Bathurst, East Macquarie and West Macquarie electorates with admirable efficiency.²⁹² The FTA paid tribute to the branch in its second annual report when it singled it out as showing "the great value of well organised and energetically conducted branches", and attributed to its "enthusiasm and activity" the defeat of protection in all three electorates with which it was connected.²⁹³ In two other electorates, however, two problems of local organisation, so common in 1889 and 1891, were first revealed: the lack of co-ordination, sometimes resulting in conflict, between a local branch and the central organisation; and the problem of inefficiency and lack of energy at the local level. On 4 February, the FTA was requested to provide a candidate for the electorate of Young,²⁹⁴ and it immediately set about its task of securing a suitable man.²⁹⁵ It obviously experienced some difficulty, however, and when no candidate had been announced by 8 February, the local freetraders took matters into their own hands, formed a branch of the FTA,²⁹⁶ and chose a local pastoralist, James Gordon, as its candidate.²⁹⁷ Meanwhile, the central FTA continued its search, and finally persuaded council member, G.N.Griffith

to contest the electorate. On arrival in Young, however, Griffiths was confronted by an antagonistic local FTA, and the difficulty was only overcome by his retirement.²⁹⁸ The FTA received a similar request for a candidate from Gwydir,²⁹⁹ but when it was announced that the local FTA in the electorate was "bringing forth" a local candidate,³⁰⁰ the central Association probably relaxed its efforts. The local branch, however, did not persevere with its candidate, and the seat was consequently won by the protectionist candidate unopposed.

After the election, FTA president, B.R. Wise, freely admitted that "we have made mistakes", and he rightly attributed these to inexperience, lack of proper organisation, and a lack of funds.³⁰¹ Wise regarded the Association's lack of funds as chiefly responsible for what was probably the greatest weakness in the FTA's organisation: "Had we more money we could contest, ..., almost every country constituency; as it is we are compelled to decline many pressing requests for candidates, owing to our want of funds".³⁰² Although Wise also stated that the Association in no instance "paid ... any part of the expenses of any candidate",³⁰³ he later admitted that the FTA had "expended funds on behalf of freetrade candidates",³⁰⁴ and one candidate who received pecuniary assistance was N.B. Downing in Northumberland.³⁰⁵ The FTA's total campaign expenditure was, however, no more than £700,³⁰⁶ and, consequently, many FTA candidates received no financial assistance.³⁰⁷ It was, therefore, difficult for the Association both to induce candidates into the field, particularly in distant country electorates, and to prevent their retirement from contests that did not promise to be successful. As a result, seven electorates, all in the country, remained uncontested by any freetrader,³⁰⁸ and FTA-arranged candidates retired from the contest in seven electorates,³⁰⁹ but left victory assured to the protectionists in only two.³¹⁰

Despite the FTA's mistakes and inadequacies, Wise was aware of the innovative nature of the electoral work performed in 1887: "It would, indeed, have been almost impossible for us, following a course without precedent in New South Wales, ..., to

have avoided mistakes".³¹¹ Clearly the 1887 general election presented a "picture of an electoral system in process of transformation";³¹² the evolution towards the modern, centralised electoral party machine had begun. But a great deal of further change was required before such a transformation could be said to have been completed. During the election, for instance, the fiscal issue and organisations were often ignored and continued emphasis given to purely local issues,³¹³ and the organising role of the electoral organisation at times offended, and was openly condemned by, traditional individualists.³¹⁴ In general, then, influence, control, experience and assurance were largely missing from the fiscal electoral organisations in 1887, and these factors were necessary before electoral organisation could bridge the gap between stated aims and intentions, and actual performance and results. Many more mistakes remained to be made, and many more problems to be encountered, however, before the gap was bridged. Not the least of these problems were the difficulties created by the slowly expanding role of local branch organisations in electoral management.

Local organisation had been minimal in 1887, and, after the election, the FTA, like the PU, turned its attention to the extension of its network of branches. The election itself had prompted the formation of a number of branches,³¹⁵ and, in response to Wise's call "to organise the country districts",³¹⁶ N.B. Downing was appointed the Association's "electoral agent", with the task of touring the colony for the purpose of "forming branches".³¹⁷ The most difficult task, however, was not forming local branches, but keeping them active between elections, and the FTA was probably experiencing this difficulty when, in August 1888, it adopted a number of proposals "intended to increase the efficiency of the branches, and to bring them into closer union with the central association".³¹⁸ The failure of all measures to prevent branches becoming moribund was, however, demonstrated at the time of the unexpected general elections of 1889 and 1891.³¹⁹

An FTA banquet, first mooted on 7 January,³²⁰ agreed to on 21 January,³²¹ and arranged during the course of the election,³²²

was held on 14 March 1887.³²³ Its significance lay chiefly in its demonstration of the harmony and goodwill that existed between the Association and a considerable section of the parliamentary freetraders; of the twenty MsLA in attendance, most had distinct merchant or commercial connections, thus making them identifiable with the dominant interests represented in the FTA. In addition to six MsLA who had close formal links with the Association, and of whom five were men of commerce,³²⁴ five other commercial freetrade MsLA, four of whom were members of the SCC, were present, and one of these was later elected a member of the FTA council.³²⁵ Of the remaining nine MsLA present, two had worked with the Association during the election, and three subsequently attended further FTA functions, but none established formal connections with the Association.³²⁶

Parkes's absence from the banquet again raises the question of his relationship with the FTA. Asked to state his "views and wishes" concerning the arrangements for the occasion,³²⁷ he seems to have become actively involved in the preparations. On 19 February, he wrote to FTA secretary, E. Pulsford, expressing reservations about the proposed date of 4 March. In reply, Pulsford admitted that Parkes's objection was "a strong one", and he stated that he had "therefore taken steps to have the matter further considered";³²⁸ the result was that the date was altered to 14 March. Parkes, then, was obviously involved in the banquet arrangements, and the explanation that his absence was due to illness³²⁹ was probably genuine. In view of his interest in the Association, Parkes was invited to attend and address the second annual general meeting of the FTA, to be held in September 1887;³³⁰ again, however, he was absent. His absence was compensated for, however, by the continued interest and involvement in the affairs of the Association by a significant number of other freetrade MsLA, twelve of whom attended the general meeting. Of these, two were members of the FTA council, two were later elected to the council, and a further four had also attended the March banquet. Significantly, at least six of the twelve were active in the world of commerce.³³¹

Prior to 1889, the freetraders came much closer than

the protectionists to fulfilling Duverger's criterion of a true political party:³³² the connections between the parliamentary freetraders and the FTA were certainly more in evidence and more regular than those between the parliamentary protectionists and the PU. The relations that existed between the parliamentary freetraders and the FTA must, however, be qualified by two important factors, one of which precluded Duverger's essential aspect of "permanent co-ordination" between the two wings, and the other which exposed the basic sectionalism of the FTA and its parliamentary allies, thus making the formal alliance unrepresentative of the freetrade movement as a whole. Despite the interest shown in the affairs of the FTA by a considerable number of freetrade MsLA, including Parkes, by the beginning of 1889, only ten MsLA had established formal relations with the Association.³³³ This apparent discrepancy was partially explained in 1887 by G.H.Reid, when he stated that "he was not a member of the Freetrade Association His own feeling - though it might be an absurd one - was, and as a member of Parliament had always been, this - he liked to steer clear of all associations, whatever they might be ... because he thought that members of Parliament were never more independent - and they ought to be independent if they were to serve their constituents faithfully - than when they took that course".³³⁴ This view was probably shared by Parkes, whose involvement with the FTA was also tempered by a care not to become too publicly involved with a body that was basically representative of only wealthy commercial interests.

Furthermore, as leader of the parliamentary party, Parkes was concerned to defend the authority of the parliamentary wing in matters of organisation, and to prevent it from coming under the dictation of any extra-parliamentary body. When Parkes asked Wise in 1894, "Why cannot members of Parliament be a little more content with the organisation that lies to their hands in Parliament itself?",³³⁵ he simply expressed an apprehension of powerful outside organisations that was likely to be felt by any parliamentary leader. And, like Dibbs, Parkes endeavoured to ensure that the parliamentary party retained ultimate authority. In September 1888, Parkes and Wise conferred

over the formation of a parliamentary-controlled freetrade league with branches throughout the colony,³³⁶ but nothing more was heard of the plan during 1888. The creation in January 1889, however, of a parliamentary executive, including Parkes, as an organising body, established parliamentary authority in the sphere of electoral organisation.³³⁷ All this did not mean that Parkes was antagonistic towards the FTA; during the 1889 election, he again co-operated with it.³³⁸ All he desired was some equitable balance of influence between the two wings of the movement. The desire of the parliamentary election executive to perpetuate its influence in the organisation of the freetrade movement led to the creation of the LPA in March 1889;³³⁹ its later amalgamation with the FTA to form the FTLA³⁴⁰ provided the missing 'permanent co-ordination' between the two wings, and Parkes was far from inactive in the activities of the integrated body. By then, however, both the parliamentary and the extra-parliamentary wings of the movement were split by internal conflicts, which destroyed the possibility of that principled unity, also essential in a true political party.

It was the emergence of the freetrade radicals as a distinct and powerful force within the parliamentary party during 1888 that most clearly revealed the inadequacy of the FTA as a representative party organisation. Basically an organisation of the commercial class, there were few radicals who were influential in the FTA prior to late 1888, and, of the MsLA on the council, only three were progressive in outlook.³⁴¹ The FTA, then, was scarcely representative of the movement as a whole, and the relationship that existed between the Association and most of its parliamentary allies was little more than an alliance of common economic interests. As radical opinion crystallised and hardened within the parliamentary party, the exclusive character of the FTA was fully recognised, and radical pressure was exerted on the Association to become more representative. During the latter part of 1888 and early 1889, radical representation on the FTA council was substantially increased,³⁴² but an equitable balance of opinion was not fully achieved until mid-1889. And then the tantalising question arose: could the radicals and conservatives co-exist in harmony, or would the FTLA be destroyed by their interminable conflicts?

CHAPTER 6

CONSTANCY AND CONSCIENCE, DISCIPLINE
AND DISOBEDIENCE: Parliamentary and
Ministerial Independence and Discip-
line, 1887-1891.

"I always voted at my party's call,
And I never thought of thinking for
myself at all"

- Sir Joseph Porter in
Gilbert and Sullivan's
H.M.S. Pinafore

"I must follow my own judg-
ment and conscience, and
not the voice of any party
leader".

- John Bright, 1888.

Both fiscal groups failed to formulate a specific party policy - conservative or otherwise - on practically every major political issue, including their own fiscal doctrines. This was largely due to the impossibility of doing so without exacerbating the latent divisions within both groups and shattering the precarious cohesion that depended solely on the emotive force of fiscal conflict. The only force that maintained group cohesion and allegiance was a purely nominal commitment to one of the rival fiscal doctrines. Party allegiance was not felt to be binding in regard

to issues on which there was no specific party policy, and on these issues men were left free to exercise their own independent judgment. The vagueness of Parkes's policy utterances during the 1887 general election led the Herald to comment that he "may count upon the new Assembly for support in maintaining free-trade principles, but as regards the finances and other questions of great moment, the Assembly will be free to act according to its judgment".¹ The continued insistence on vagueness, shrouded with non-committal platitudes, in the exposition of party policy after 1887 neither eradicated the basis of this justification of independent action, nor acted to foster solid party allegiance. Instead, the fiscal groups emerged as 'one-issue parties' only.

That the fiscal controversy was the only issue on which party allegiance was binding, was hinted at during the 1887 election, and expressed more forcibly during the 1889 election. For instance, the freetrade MLA, Alexander Bowman, expressed "his adherence to freetrade principles" and opposition to "any tampering with the fiscal question", but stated his willingness to "support any good measures" of the new Dibbs ministry.² The most obvious example, however, was Andrew Ross, who declared his support for "a policy of protection" and for Dibbs "if he introduced good measures", but who declared that "otherwise he would oppose his party".³ A well-known admirer of Parkes, Ross, it was believed, would "vote with the protection party on the fiscal question, but on other questions his old allegiance would probably be continued".⁴ W.C. Proctor expressed the same view as Ross when he told the electors of New England: "He had been a supporter of Sir Henry Parkes, and would feel disposed to help him again, except on the free-trade policy, to which he was totally opposed".⁵ It was the fiscal parties' failure to consolidate fiscal polarisation and allegiance with specific and comprehensive party platforms that was largely responsible for this continued emphasis on factional loyalty as a basis of political allegiance. This continuing emphasis tended both to confuse political alignments and to undermine the achievement of permanent 'party' allegiance. It was the freetraders' failure to provide a principled basis for party solidarity that led the Herald to comment in February 1889 that "We are in the habit of speaking of the

'Free-trade party', but the phrase is one of convenience rather than of accuracy".⁶ In the formation of the LPA, with its promise of 'a broad, comprehensive, liberal platform', the Herald saw "the first step towards cementing party government upon definite lines in the colony",⁷ and it predicted "a new thing in our politics", the "creation of a distinctive Free-trade party for political action".⁸

As has been seen, however, the LPA platform effected no meaningful change, and MsLA continued to feel bound to their fiscal 'party' only on the fiscal issue. Henry Copeland told the Assembly in October 1890 that he did not think that "because a member of this House belongs to the protectionist party he should necessarily vote as the Opposition vote on all occasions With the exception of the one question upon which we have been sent here - the question of protection - I think the greatest latitude should be allowed to hon. members in the exercise of their individual judgment".⁹ Sir Charles Dilke accurately summarised the state of fiscal allegiance when he wrote: "There are not in the colonies clearly marked party lines, and there is support and opposition to each measure under discussion as it comes up, but little permanence in party".¹⁰ This narrow concept of party allegiance was evidenced in December 1888 when a freetrader, F. Jago Smith, told Parkes that the government's Tramway Resolutions were "expressly removed from the sphere of party politics", and that "Under those circumstances I shall always assert my right of individual judgement; ...".¹¹ And, again in September 1889, Parkes was informed by another freetrader that, as "Freetrade and nothing else" had been the basis of his entry into parliament he had assumed a position of independence on other matters, and "As an example I have opposed the land bill, ...".¹²

It was this attitude that posed a central problem to Parkes's concept of political reform. Parkes viewed the eradication of such independence as basic to the creation of a strong party;¹³ his view was accurately summarised as "The more individual independence the weaker the party".¹⁴ What Parkes desired was a permanent party allegiance, having as its ideal basis

the aims, principles and policies of a true political party.¹⁵ In the reality of achieving a clear two-way polarisation and basic fiscal group unity, however, extraneous, non-fiscal matters that were likely to dilute fiscal cohesion were better avoided. As a result, Parkes was forced to emphasise other grounds as the basis of his desired permanent party allegiance. He strove to maintain party allegiance on matters not related to the fiscal issue and told one freetrader that "in attaching yourself to any new Party on one or two questions of public policy, it will hardly be wise to assist their enemies on other and minor questions in so damaging their character that they will not have the moral strength to carry out the policy in which you profess to believe".¹⁶ The other means Parkes saw of achieving constant allegiance to a party without a comprehensive policy was to utilise the enduring factional concept of personal loyalty and obedience to the party leader.¹⁷ In a speech to the Assembly on the principles of party politics, Parkes exhorted members to give "steady support to their leaders", and argued that members need not, and should not, oppose their party "If they can trust these leaders of theirs".¹⁸ By "trusting to party to govern the country", members must trust and support their leaders in all things, including "the intricacies of administration, or the affairs of the country will soon come to error".¹⁹

From the concept that allegiance to a 'cause' should be given in the form of total allegiance to a 'person',²⁰ it was a natural extension to claim that the 'person' or leader had a right to supervise that allegiance by controlling all the actions of his followers. Parkes demonstrated his belief in this concept of control when he told William McMillan: "I venture to lay it down as a principle of combined action that the Leader of a Party cannot be led by those who profess to follow".²¹ That Parkes attempted to exercise such total authority over the freetraders was confirmed by the "most respectful protest" by one freetrader against his "plainly expressed claim to control the votes of all ... [his] supporters upon all matters submitted to Parliament by ... [his] Government".²² Parkes's concept of party solidarity demanded not only total party allegiance and obedience, but also the sacrifice of individual

interests for the collective benefit of the party. One expression of this collective spirit was the obligation, imposed by Parkes on all freetrade MsLA, to attend the sittings of parliament "day by day, even though it be at some personal inconvenience".²³

The degree to which Parkes's concepts of party duty - total personal allegiance and the sacrifice of individuality - were accepted, was revealed by Parkes himself during late 1888 and early 1889. Graciously thanking those "who have supported the Government ... for the general and consistent support they have given me",²⁴ Parkes nevertheless complained that he "felt frequently very much disappointed and very much pained at the want of confidence with which I seemed to be regarded by some members of our party".²⁵ In November 1888, he had questioned William McMillan's "frequent (sometimes boastful) allusions to the 'steady and compact majority' which is ready to carry the Government safely through the performance of miracles" by pointing to the fact that, on the previous night, the government suffered a defeat due to the action of "7 of the 'steady and compact' [who] voted dead against us".²⁶ After the resignation of his ministry in January 1889, Parkes told McMillan that "the Ministerial majority in the late Parliament disclosed aspects of political conduct which I do not care to meet again There was no coherence, no compact union amongst those to whom the Ministry were entitled to look for support".²⁷ The failure of members to accept the obligation of constant attendance was also subject to critical comment by Parkes. In the same letter to McMillan in which he exposed the fallacy of the 'steady and compact majority', Parkes remarked that, on the night in question, in a House of 124 members, "89 members were absent from their places". He concluded by stating: "This is Parliamentary Government with a vengeance. It would be very much better to put us out of office".²⁸ When, soon after, his ministry was put out of office, Parkes reiterated his complaint to McMillan, stating that "If members had ... made the necessary sacrifice of being in their places throughout the sittings, ... large measures might have been carried into law".²⁹ As a correspondent to the Herald remarked after the Ministry's defeat: "Sir H. Parkes had a large majority on paper", but it "had become lax, devoid of discipline".³⁰

Certainly the large freetrade majority in the Assembly had undergone a change prior to January 1889 to become 'lax', and the reasons for this change will shortly be discussed.

Between 1887 and 1891, Parkes's advocacy of total party allegiance won no more than a handful of consistent adherents. In addition to the few men who at the 1889 election declared themselves 'constant', 'staunch' or 'strong' supporters of the new Dibbs ministry,³¹ were those whose total allegiance was expressed, not in reformist terms, but in accordance with the factional principle of undying personal loyalty. Such factional loyalty, although at times a positive hindrance to the creation of distinct party lines, was, for all practical purposes, acceptable to Parkes as a means of achieving his goal of total allegiance. The politicians prepared to make such pledges of undying personal support were, however, mainly pre-1887 MsLA, and by 1889 their numbers were on the decline. Hugh Taylor told the electors of Parramatta in 1889 that "He had remained firm to Sir Henry Parkes since 1870", and he "hoped that he would long remain by the side of the greatest statesman in the Australian colonies".³² Jacob Garrard told his constituents that he had given "his faithful and consistent support to the Premier, in accordance with his promise to them two years since",³³ and John Hurley justified his "fealty to Sir Henry Parkes on the grounds of the latter's ability and wise statesmanship".³⁴ Those, however, who justified their constant allegiance in terms of any political or philosophical principles, or moral obligation to their party were scarce. One freetrader explained his consistent allegiance to the ministry on the grounds that "he was one of their pledged supporters",³⁵ and another stated that "Nothing would compel him to relinquish his allegiance to the free-trade party, because he believed that free-trade meant liberty in its truest and greatest sense, ...".³⁶ Perhaps, however, the most philosophical of those who supported Parkes's reformist view was the freetrader, Nicholas Hawken, who was later described as being "singularly fond of taking excursions into regions of abstract thought".³⁷ Hawken admitted the "loyal support" he had given the Parkes ministry, and claimed that "In government by party a representative must in a measure sink his individuality,

or progressive legislation would be impossible".³⁸ He concluded his campaign by stating that he would be elected "If fidelity to party ... was appreciated!"³⁹

Although he was elected, Hawken's brand of 'fidelity to party' was little appreciated. By his protectionist opponent he was criticised for having given "a slavish and servile support to the Government";⁴⁰ that such a comment could form a line of attack reveals the latent hostility to, and rejection of, total allegiance. Other constant party supporters were subject to the same line of attack. John Hurley, it was claimed, "had merely acted the part of a voting machine" for the ministry,⁴¹ "voting subserviently at their bidding at all times".⁴² Joseph Creer probably gave the most vivid pejorative description of the faithful when he referred to them as "blind subservient machines, who voted for the late Premier servilely, and were willing to descend to anything at his bidding".⁴³ But the faithful party adherent was not only condemned by his political opponents.⁴⁴ During December 1889 and January 1890, a conflict raged within the protectionist party over "the duty of the ordinary members of a political party".⁴⁵ Alexander Hutchison argued that it was his and every man's duty "at all times to be true to principle, party, and the recognised leader". His conclusion that any man who was "not prepared to act on these lines" had "no claim to be a member of the National party"⁴⁶ gave rise to an indignant defence of independence. W.E. Abbott vehemently denied that "the whole duty of the ordinary member of Parliament is 'to do what he is told'",⁴⁷ and Henry Copeland condemned men like Hutchison as "mere 'voting machines'".⁴⁸ Amongst the freetraders the same conflict was present. Bruce Smith, for instance, claimed that "party government" reduced men like Hawken "to mere puppets or automata",⁴⁹ and the freetrade press upheld the virtue of independence by referring to faithful freetraders as members of "a 'dumb-driven' majority", and representing them as "a curse to the country".⁵⁰

There is little doubt that most politicians regarded the concept of total allegiance as intrinsically wrong. In September 1889, the freetrade MLA, E.W. Turner, told Parkes that

he did "not now consider it right to support any government at all hazards", and that his actions would be based on "what is right instead of what is merely seemingly expedient, ...".⁵¹ What was seen as being offensive about the obligation of total allegiance was its implied rejection of the principles of classical liberalism: individual liberty and independence, personal freedom of opinion and action.⁵² Replying to an 'attack' on his independence by George Dibbs in October 1890, O.O.Dangar claimed that the purpose of the attack "was to prevent me and other hon. members ... from exercising their freedom of opinion".⁵³ The Herald reflected the continued dominance of individualist liberalism by stating that "men who are worth anything in public life" enter "a general agreement to abide by party decisions ... [only] on the basis of a fundamental reservation of personal rights and individual freedom".⁵⁴

Due to the strength of individualist principles, it was generally held that the exercise of an individual's independence and conscience was perfectly compatible with a firm allegiance to his party. The Herald stated that "a member of a party has his individual rights, and may exercise them without forfeiting his position as a party man",⁵⁵ and the Telegraph forthrightly claimed that "the more individual independence the stronger the party".⁵⁶ Naturally enough, independent action was vindicated by the doctrinaire laissez-faire liberals,⁵⁷ but the real strength of the notion was demonstrated by the fact that it was also upheld by a number of anti-laissez-faire radicals. B.R.Wise, for example, stated that "it is surely a sign of ... [a party's] strength, to leave a certain freedom of thought and action to its Parliamentary representatives".⁵⁸ Stating that "conscience [was] his highest standard",⁵⁹ Alfred Allen pledged that he "would stick to his party as long as he could give a conscientious vote".⁶⁰

It was further maintained that should aspirants for places in parliament pledge themselves to total party subservience, they would be rejected out of hand. The Coonamble Times appears to have been correct in its claim that "Sir Henry Parkes may desire mere machines as supporters; but the constituencies

desire independent members, ...".⁶¹ Again with reference to Parkes's concept of total allegiance, the Telegraph maintained that "the people would not consent to be represented by persons who agreed with that conception of Parliamentary duty".⁶² During the 1889 general election, in fact, the candidate who did not make reference to his "untrammelled and unfettered" independence,⁶³ his "individuality",⁶⁴ or his "judgment and conscience",⁶⁵ was definitely the exception rather than the rule.⁶⁶

In sharp contrast to the tone of the 1889 general election campaign, however, was that of 1887, during which candidates demonstrated a much greater willingness to declare themselves "staunch",⁶⁷ "firm",⁶⁸ "thick and thin"⁶⁹ and "out-and-out"⁷⁰ supporters of Parkes and the ministry.⁷¹ Although M.J. Conlon's statement that each freetrader elected in 1887 "was pledged to support Sir Henry Parkes at all hazards"⁷² was an exaggeration, the incidence of declared independence among successful freetrade candidates in 1887 was definitely low.⁷³ This marked contrast would indicate that Parkes's concept of a clear fiscal polarisation creating two permanent and solid political parties, successfully executed in its initial stages in 1886 and 1887, was by 1889 showing signs of disintegration. Between 1887 and 1889 the plan had gone awry, and it is not difficult to discover why.

Parkes's fiscal campaign of 1886 represented a radical departure from the prevailing inchoate state of politics, and, in the initial wave of enthusiasm for the new political direction and certainty, the normal declarations of independence were replaced by a willingness on the part of both 'old' and 'new' politicians to make a definite commitment either for or against Parkes, his ministry and, in particular, his 'policy' and 'programme'.⁷⁴ But, as has been seen, Parkes's 'programme' was almost entirely based on the emotion of fiscal conflict, most other issues being deliberately left vague, or ignored, in order to avoid possible dissension. Bruce Smith pointed to the danger of this approach in 1889 when he stated that "...the subject of Free Trade, alone, is not sufficiently comprehensive to enlist, for any length of time, and for purposes of sustained intellectual attention, any large number" of persons.⁷⁵ Although

Parkes correctly believed that a commitment on one issue only was certain to create at least a nominal group unity, it was unrealistic to believe that this could be maintained on such a narrow basis, or on the basis of the equation of a commitment to freetrade with total personal allegiance to himself. The commitment in 1887 of many men to Parkes and freetrade was in terms of a 'programme' that seemed to foreshadow action on issues other than freetrade. Although the 'programme' was described at the time as vague,⁷⁶ it was generally thought it would be elaborated and implemented through legislation. Parkes's failure to do either served to dilute group solidarity to the extent that MsLA felt bound to the party on the fiscal issue only, and free to act independently on others. In addition, a commitment to freetrade or protection on the part of many men in 1887 necessarily implied a much broader commitment, their chosen fiscal doctrine representing only one important element in an overall political philosophy whose implementation they envisaged. The varying political philosophies represented in both parties reacted rather differently to the diffidence to venture beyond the narrow bounds of the fiscal issue: such inaction suited the defensive laissez-faire conservatives, but not the radicals, and it was the latter's unsuccessful attempts to force both parties to grapple with issues both implied by, and outside the realms of, the fiscal issue that resulted in internecine conflict, disunity and rebellion.

Within the freetrade party, harmony and unity prevailed for most of 1887 and 1888. The overwhelming commitment to Parkes and freetrade in January 1887 demonstrated the hopes and expectations of principled freetraders, and for most of the following two years they awaited the fulfilment of these hopes. Despite the doctrinaire argument over the meaning of freetrade that arose during 1887 and 1888, little upset the united front presented by the party: the conservatives enjoyed the ministry's inaction, and the radicals waited, trusted and tried to persuade Parkes to overcome his inaction. It was this uneasy peace that led McMillan to refer to the 'steady and compact majority'. But during these two years doctrinaire concerns and principled conflicts became increasingly prominent, and radical tolerance gave

way to criticism and discontent. Finally, towards the end of 1888, the radicals and other frustrated freetraders rebelled and the ministry teetered towards its resignation in January 1889. It was in this rebellious situation that Parkes, both in public and private statements, forcefully reiterated his views on permanent party allegiance and personal loyalty.⁷⁷ In the circumstances of early 1889, however, after two years during which the importance of political principle had been increasingly stressed, many freetraders were disinclined to acquiesce in Parkes's renewed demand of blind factional subservience. It is in this context that the freetrade vote of 16 January rejecting Parkes's desire to grant supply to the minority Dibbs ministry should be viewed. It is also in this context that Loveday and Martin perceive that principle had superseded "attachment to a leader" as the basic force determining political allegiance.⁷⁸

The grounds on which various men of principle within the freetrade party rejected the concepts of total party allegiance and factional subservience differed. Traditional individualist liberals objected on the grounds that such a demand threatened the sacred right of independent action; radical liberals, basically more sympathetic to the concept of party solidarity,⁷⁹ felt the need to preserve their freedom to dissent from majority party opinions that conflicted with their own. Whilst some radicals retained vestiges of traditional individualism,⁸⁰ others who upheld party solidarity were still moved from time to time to exhibit their dissatisfaction and frustration with the party's basic conservatism. John Haynes was one of these. In December 1889, Haynes wrote to Parkes: "I am always for Party - that is I resolutely oppose what I believe would damage my party".⁸¹ In May 1891, however, Haynes deserted the freetrade ministry in the division on a motion of censure⁸² on the grounds that "there has been a complete desertion of the principles on which the Government came into power".⁸³ A week later, however, he told Parkes that "It is almost unnecessary for me to say I am still with the party",⁸⁴ and he denied to his constituents that "he was what had been described as an independent candidate".

In forming his second freetrade ministry in 1889, Parkes, the faction 'boss', was forced to recognise the rising tide of doctrinaire conflict and principled concerns within the party. Although the composition of the ministry reflected his attempt to maintain superficial party unity by including both radicals and conservatives, its overall majority revealed his own traditionally conservative outlook.⁸⁶ But, if Parkes was to experience difficulty with the radical members of his ministry, he was also to find cause for complaint with his conservative liberal colleagues. His traditional liberal outlook did not dilute the demands he made as a faction 'boss'; classical individualist theory, however, largely dictated the reactions of his doctrinaire conservative colleagues to such demands.

Parkes's insistence on total control and obedience to himself was no better demonstrated than in the demands he made upon his cabinet colleagues. During the early days of his 1887 ministry he repeatedly emphasised his own role as absolute leader, stifling independent action and demanding full knowledge of, and the right to veto, every proposed ministerial scheme.⁸⁷ As previously pointed out, Parkes's first freetrade ministry, composed as it was of loyal and devoted factional admirers, gave him little cause for complaint.⁸⁸ What ructions that did occur were not the result of conflicts over principles, defiant acts of independence or a lack of subservience to Parkes, but were due rather to such non-political private matters as W.J. Foster's 'promise of the judgeship' feud with Parkes⁸⁹ and the probable alcoholism of the Secretary for Lands, Thomas Garrett.⁹⁰ The correspondence between Parkes and Garrett during 1888 over this matter clearly demonstrates Parkes's authority and control. In reply to a blunt stricture from Parkes in which he was told that "the grave trouble" he was causing the government "cannot be allowed to continue",⁹¹ Garrett told Parkes that he left his ministerial future "to be settled by yourself".⁹² Several weeks later, Parkes again wrote to Garrett, stating that "I am sure you will see that there is only one course open for you, which is to place in my hands your resignation";⁹³ on 19 July 1888, Garrett resigned from the ministry. Parkes's successful achievement of ministerial subservience between 1887 and early 1889 was pointed

to by the Coonamble Times which referred to the existence of "one-horse Government, ... with the redoubtable Sir Henry as coachman".⁹⁴

On the formation of his second freetrade ministry in March 1889, Parkes virtually laid down the same conditions of ministerial subservience.⁹⁵ The radically altered and doctrinaire composition of the new ministry, however, presaged a response in marked contrast to the uncritical servility of the old. Some years later Parkes outlined the three main causes of his dissatisfaction with his 1889-1891 ministry:⁹⁶ a "want of dignity and true conception of duty", a "want of harmony in collective action",⁹⁷ and "positive disloyalty towards myself as leader".

Parkes made clear what he meant by a 'true conception of duty' on the formation of the ministry,⁹⁸ and in August 1890, he reiterated his definition when he told McMillan: "when gentlemen join in the formation of a Ministry they virtually pledge themselves to do their best, ... by regular attendance in Parliament and at Executive and Cabinet Councils, ...".⁹⁹ Prior to this letter, he had already had cause to complain of attendance at cabinet meetings,¹⁰⁰ and he now did so again by charging Daniel O'Connor with "neglect [of] these very grave obligations". Parkes pointed to O'Connor's "lax attendance in Parliament", and his frequent "absences from Executive and Cabinet Councils", and he concluded that O'Connor "ought to terminate this state of things by giving that attention to his public duties which is obligatory upon him".¹⁰¹

The lack of collective harmony mentioned by Parkes was almost certainly due to the divergence of principled and doctrinaire opinion within the ministry. Such disagreements were occasionally revealed, as in the cases of a bitter dispute between the conservative McMillan and the progressive Carruthers,¹⁰² and the obvious dissension caused by Sydney Smith's radical proposals in the Coal Mines Regulation Bill in 1891.¹⁰³

But Parkes's most serious complaint about the ministry

was what he described as 'disloyalty to myself as leader', by which he meant both the lack of personal subservience to, and dependence upon, himself, and the incidence of independent action on the part of some ministers. Such complaints, elsewhere more emotionally described by Parkes as "the flouts I received" and "the personal disrespect I had to submit to",¹⁰⁴ should not, however, be regarded as an indication of any rebellion against Parkes. His position and ultimate control as leader remained unchallenged; he did, however, experience some difficulty in achieving among his doctrinaire cabinet colleagues an unquestioning endorsement of the rigidly authoritarian, and at times pedantic, way in which he exercised his control. As a factional autocrat, Parkes insisted that he know and control every opinion and activity of every minister, and demanded that they sacrifice any individual initiative and depend upon his guidance and blessing to a degree that bordered on sycophancy. Among his previous factional cabinet colleagues, like James Inglis, such servility prevailed,¹⁰⁵ and it continued to prevail, it would appear, in the case of J.N. Bruncker, the sole survivor of his previous ministry.¹⁰⁶ But to expect such total personal dependence from men whose allegiance was to principle rather than personality was unrealistic.

In particular, Parkes could scarcely expect blind subservience from those of his colleagues whose views on government policy were not only determined by the tenets of political philosophy, but were also in marked contrast to the traditional conservatism that was the basis of the 'guidance' offered by Parkes. It was not surprising, therefore, that he should have found grounds for dissatisfaction with two of his more progressive ministerial colleagues. He found fault with them, however, not on the grounds of disobedience, but on those of lack of communication and personal estrangement. While Parkes complained to McMillan that "Mr O'Connor does not come near me",¹⁰⁷ it was the case involving J.H. Carruthers that was most revealing. In April 1891, Parkes told Carruthers: "I am driven to the conclusion that you prefer anything to seeing me with whom you ought to consult before any other person whatever on all public matters".¹⁰⁸ Carruthers, as if to emphasise his own capacity to

formulate views and opinions, told Parkes in reply that "I am writing now before the Cabinet meeting today in order that you may know my views as to our course of business next Session and my reasons for such views".¹⁰⁹ He then proceeded to outline a positive programme of government legislation, involving such radical measures as a land tax and a Workshops and Factories Bill.¹¹⁰ Independent and radical in opinion, Carruthers instinctively rejected the cautious conservatism of Parkes. Long after the ministry had ceased to exist, Carruthers, his ardour somewhat moderated, seemed to admit his earlier lack of brief for Parkes's ideological guidance when he told his former chief that "As I am growing older in years and experience I recognise more and more the wisdom of many things which you have advised upon ...".¹¹¹ Despite this lack of principled rapport between the two men, Carruthers was at no stage an unruly or rebellious element within the ministry, and he remained obedient to the control imposed by Parkes. In April 1890, he told Parkes that, in the light of the latter's objections, he would "not persist" in bringing a proposed education bill before the Cabinet and he then asked whether he was "at liberty" to proceed with the drafting of other bills "preparatory to submitting them to Cabinet".¹¹² Daniel O'Connor summed up the stand taken by the progressive free-traders when he told Parkes that "In all things where discipline or organisation is at stake I give my loyal adhesion - when independent opinion is affected I must preserve my independence".¹¹³

If the progressives' independence of mind caused Parkes to complain, it was a tendency towards independence of action in some other ministers that aroused his greatest anger. This tendency was particularly noticeable in his conservative 'individualist liberal' colleagues, Bruce Smith and William McMillan, with their emphasis on conscience-motivated action and their condemnation of "unqualified party obsequiousness".¹¹⁴ Personal servitude was not part of their principled code of political behaviour, and they acted in response to the dictates of their own principles and judgment without necessarily first obtaining the approval of their 'master'. Of all Parkes's cabinet colleagues, undoubtedly the most troublesome was Bruce Smith,¹¹⁵ also the most doctrinaire of the traditional liberals. Prior to his election to

parliament in 1889, Smith gave notice of his non-factional, principled code of action when he told his constituents that "he would go into Parliament, certainly fettered as regarded [sic] the opinions he expressed, but quite unfettered as to the men he supported ...".¹¹⁶ On much the same basis Smith entered the ministry. Set as he was in his principled beliefs, it was not surprising that he found some grounds for disagreement with Parkes. After the ministry's resignation in 1891, Smith made reference to the "various differences of opinion that now and then divided us".¹¹⁷ Parkes himself also commented on his disagreements with Smith, particularly over the subject of federation; in October 1889, he irritably told the Governor of Smith's "'divergent' opinions on the question".¹¹⁸ At least on one occasion, Parkes demonstrated his annoyance at such "signs of dissent"¹¹⁹ from his own personal views and opinions. Referring to a difference of opinion between himself and his colleagues, Smith and McMillan, over a proposed city railway scheme, Parkes mentioned to the Governor the possibility of his retirement from the ministry, and its reconstruction "by someone else now in office say Mr McMillan or Mr Brunker".¹²⁰

In general, however, the political principles of Parkes and Smith were basically similar, and Smith recounted that "neither in your case nor in mine were ... [our] differences ever allowed to interfere with the recognition of the common object which we had in view".¹²¹ Parkes, too, admitted that Smith "never once objected to my conduct of affairs, ...".¹²² As far as differences of opinion over policy were concerned, Parkes's reaction to Smith was similar to his reaction to Carruthers: he always found difficulty in adapting to a situation in which the opinions of his colleagues were determined by "principles which ... [they] believed to be sound, calculated for good, and worthy of being pushed to testing point",¹²³ rather than by an uncritical acceptance of his own. Just as he complained of Carruthers' self-reliance, he referred to his relations with Smith as "distant" stating that "he never consults me about anything".¹²⁴

Smith, however, did not share his progressive colleague's

adherence to the principles of solidarity and obedience; he held to the classical belief that a man's actions should be as independent and free from restraint as his thoughts. It was Smith's application of this principle that led to Parkes's more vehement denunciations and charges of disloyalty. It is in this context that the assessment that "Parkes 'controlled' his ministers with difficulty"¹²⁵ is valid, although it should again be emphasised that difficulty arose only in terms of Parkes's own personal concept of control - the concept of a factional "dictator and autocrat"¹²⁶ that was becoming increasingly unrealistic in the changing circumstances of politics. In terms of his own view of ministerial loyalty, Parkes continually regarded Smith's independence and individual initiative as a denial of his leadership, and, as a man who "brooked no rivals near his throne",¹²⁷ he reacted accordingly. In October 1889, he told Lord Carrington that Smith "obviously accepted office from me without accepting my leadership", and he stated that "he may have to leave the Ministry, for I am not disposed to put up with much more of his thinly disguised offensiveness".¹²⁸

Motivated by a doctrinaire belief in individual initiative and a strong attachment to principle, Smith's independence was certainly not rebellious in intent; Parkes, however, somewhat neurotically insisted on viewing it as both a denial of, and a challenge to, his own leadership. His sensitivity to such occurrences was not lessened by the great strain he was suffering as a result of family matters,¹²⁹ and by the broken leg which he sustained in May 1890 and which confined him for some months to bed at his home in Balmain, away from the centre of political activity.¹³⁰ Parkes himself later wrote of the "disorganising effects" of his accident,¹³¹ and claimed that as a consequence he "lost command of the ship and thereafter all were Captains".¹³² His outright repudiation of McMillan's independent assumption of authority during the maritime strike in September 1890,¹³³ however, left no doubt that he still possessed ultimate control; it was McMillan, not Parkes, who was humiliated to the point of tendering his resignation.¹³⁴ The type of action that, in Parkes's terms, amounted to a repudiation of his authority was demonstrated several times during 1891 by

Bruce Smith; each instance, however, brought forth from Parkes a reassertion of his "imperious command",¹³⁵ again revealing that not yet had he lost command of his ship.

In February 1891, in reply to Smith's request "to give an instance of certain conduct of which ... [he] complained", Parkes referred to an advertisement in the press that described a forthcoming speech by Smith as the "first strictly Ministerial public utterance since the prorogation of Parliament".¹³⁶ Parkes had presumably jumped to the hasty conclusion that Smith had, of his own accord, assumed the role of ministerial spokesman, and he bluntly told Smith that "you cannot at your meeting tonight say one word on the policy of my Government. The Government is mine - not Mr Bruce Smith's; and I am primarily responsible for its whole conduct".¹³⁷ This incident clearly revealed both Parkes's insistence on misconstruing any independent action as rebellion, and the difficulty of measuring up to his totalitarian standards. He told both Smith and McMillan that he should have been consulted about the meeting,¹³⁸ and he complained to McMillan that Smith's "mind is so crammed with notions about himself that apparently it has no room for the consideration of the claims and relations of others".¹³⁹ Smith himself exposed Parkes's hasty over-reaction by pointing out to him that "all your observations are based upon an unfounded assumption - viz. that I inspired the paragraph" that appeared in the press, and he concluded that "You need not fear my doing anything indiscreet".¹⁴⁰ In August 1891, Smith again caused Parkes to remind him that "there cannot be a second Leader of the Government, or a second Prime Minister", when, as Treasurer, he claimed the right to deal directly and independently with the Agent General in London. Parkes then insisted that "the financial business of the Colony should without impairing the independent judgment of the Treasurer be settled in consultation with the Head of the Government".¹⁴¹

Although Parkes's overbearing insistence on ministerial servility inevitably produced some friction between himself and his doctrinaire ministers, his colleagues "submitted more or less to his domination",¹⁴² and basically continued to rely on

Parkes to supply the direction and firmness so essential for ministerial unity and survival. William McMillan, for example, described by Deakin as "independent though deferential to his exacting and sometimes inconsiderate chief",¹⁴³ told Parkes in May 1891 that "We are coming into times in which we will need all your guidance to prevent the slightest blunder in our administration; ...".¹⁴⁴

The essential preservation of ministerial unity and solidarity in the face of its obvious diversity was Parkes's great achievement between 1889 and 1891. His success in keeping the constant threat of serious doctrinaire dissension and divisive independence in check was recognised by Bruce Smith who recalled in October 1891 that "amid all ... [the] action and reaction of different and differing views and sentiments we always presented an united front to the outside world ...".¹⁴⁵ Only in October 1891 was Parkes's firm hold over his colleagues broken; Sydney Smith's independent action, in the cause of radical reform, released the forces of dissension that had been threatening the unity of the ministry for nearly three years, and forthwith the ministry resigned.¹⁴⁶

Parkes's insistence upon the concept of total party allegiance was clearly unacceptable to a large number of colonial politicians, particularly after late-1888 when principle was invoked to rival the claims of uncritical personal loyalty as the basis of party faith. Those wedded to the cause of advanced liberalism and radical reform, despite their principled sympathy with the solidarity concept, exercised their right of dissent as a means of attempting to bind their parties to progressive policy; those who held to the theory of individualist liberalism insisted on their rights to act according to their conscience.¹⁴⁷ It was in the light of these reactions that Parkes was branded as "the greatest dictator and autocrat in New South Wales".¹⁴⁸ By 1889, however, it was clear that, in order to mould and maintain effective party solidarity, a party needed to possess an accepted and effective disciplinary system. The Herald rather uncharacteristically confirmed this conclusion when it stated that party members "must see the need for drill and

discipline, and cordially accept the conditions".¹⁴⁹ It was in the attempt after 1889 to construct a system of party discipline, especially among the protectionists, that the dynamic processes of political change were again revealed. The attempt in itself provided evidence of the gradual evolution towards the regimented nature of the modern political party; the strong forces of resistance, however, further demonstrated the difficulty of achieving rapid and radical change.

By 1889, neither fiscal party possessed a formal system of discipline; discipline, as such, was vested almost entirely in the person of the 'party' leader. In the face of rebellious parliamentary behaviour, Parkes employed the only form of discipline available to him: the personal weapons of chastisement and rejection. In December 1888, the freetrade MLA, F. Jago Smith protested to Parkes about "the language you saw fit to use ... to those of your supporters who had expressed their intention of voting against the Tramway Resolutions".¹⁵⁰ In the light of Smith's own 'treachery', Parkes demonstrated his method of rejection when he told the rebel freetrader that "you are of course perfectly free to take whatever course you deem best, but you must not complain if I exercise a similar freedom. I have erred in hitherto considering you a political friend. I can only now apologise for my error".¹⁵¹ Of the rebel, Alfred Allen, Parkes told the Assembly that "I want to have no conversation with him; ... I will have nothing to do with him".¹⁵² Deflating as they may have been, vituperation and invective imposed no concrete sanction, and as such could effectively be disregarded. In terms of party unity, such disciplinary frailty was even more damaging in the atmosphere of indignant doctrinaire independence that was aroused during, and maintained after, January 1889. This heightened emphasis on independence had the effect of making the control exercised by the faction 'bosses' even more vulnerable.

The leaders of the protectionist party at no stage exercised total control over their followers. The "dictatorial methods" of the first leader, J.P. Abbott, "alienated" many protectionists and led to a "revolt against his rule". As a result

of his "failure to lead the wild elements of the Opposition in the ways of Parliamentary order, decorum and decency", Abbott resigned from the leadership.¹⁵³ The temporary resignation of Dibbs from the leadership in May 1888 was also attributed to his failure to control the forces he was "supposed to lead".¹⁵⁴ The view of the majority of protectionists was expressed in December 1889 by Henry Copeland, when he stated that "The leader of a political party does not, and should not, occupy the position of the Grand Turk, whose word is law, which the slaves, his followers are expected without question to obey".¹⁵⁵ During the same month, a number of protectionist MSLA demonstrated their agreement with Copeland's sentiments.

On 26 November 1889, the first day of a new session of parliament, a "caucus meeting of the Opposition" was held, at which it was proposed by Dibbs that a vote of censure be moved against the government.¹⁵⁶ Objections to Dibbs's proposed course of action were expressed,¹⁵⁷ and one protectionist shortly afterwards expressed the opinion to Daniel O'Connor that, were Dibbs to move the censure motion, the party "would sit on him".¹⁵⁸ Despite the objections, Dibbs was successfully 'urged' by other protectionists to move the censure, whereupon he was directly warned by one objector that "if such a course were taken the party would not probably [sic] vote together ...".¹⁵⁹ In pursuing his desired course, Dibbs put his personal control and authority to the test, and the objectors were dared to vote against the motion or to refrain from voting at all in the division.¹⁶⁰ To emphasise his authority, Dibbs apparently issued what was described as a "'toe the mark' circular",¹⁶¹ but, although this must have had a general effect in tightening the ranks, when the division on the censure motion took place on 12 December, "no less than nine Protectionists ... [failed to] record their votes".¹⁶² The abstention of at least five of these men, henceforth referred to by the *Star* as the 'Cocktail Party', was quite deliberate,¹⁶³ and one of them, W.E. Abbott, supplied as his reason the fact that "members were coerced into supporting a course which they did not approve".¹⁶⁴ The incident, therefore, directly raised the question of the degree of control possessed by a party leader, and two diametrically opposed points of view were

expressed. While W.E. Abbott denied the right of a leader to issue instructions, and the obligation of a party member "to to what he is told",¹⁶⁵ others maintained that "when a party elects one of their number to be their leader their duty is to give him loyal support on party questions".¹⁶⁶

What, however, was most significant about the whole episode was the degree to which the new and increasingly doctrinaire tone of politics had created both confusion and dissension over the issue of party solidarity and discipline. What could basically be termed traditional and radical opinions on the issue were voiced during the crisis. Adopting an individualist approach, Henry Copeland argued that if "individual members are to be allowed even the smallest modicum of independent judgment you must allow them to exercise that judgment in their votes, for it is useless to allow a man to think which is the wiser course if you compel him to go the opposite way".¹⁶⁷ The radical view, expressed most forcefully by Alexander Hutchison, praised those who "sacrificed their own interests, and through a sense of duty ... stood true to their 'guns', their 'leader' and the cause, which they had pledged themselves at all hazards not only to maintain, but advance".¹⁶⁸

Hutchison's statement revealed the rock on which his concept of solidarity was based in the developing doctrinaire environment of politics: the idea of the pledge. In a situation where faction-type personal authority and leadership still prevailed, Hutchison's radical reasoning is clear: commitment to protection amounted to a pledge to the cause, which in turn amounted to a pledge to follow and obey the highest human embodiment of the cause, the party leader. Employing a similarly non-factional argument, Copeland claimed, however, that the simple fact that members had pledged themselves to a cause rather than a man meant that "they were not pledged to support any particular person as leader of the party; ...".¹⁶⁹ Their pledge "intelligently [to] support the cause", moreover, did not impair the exercise of their individual judgment.¹⁷⁰ Despite these references to 'the pledge', the concept was at no stage institutionalised nor made formally binding on MsLA by

either fiscal party.¹⁷¹ The vague and non-political nature of both parties' platforms, and the parliamentary parties' blatant disregard of their contents meant that MsLA could not be held to be pledged to specific party policy on virtually any political issue. All that could be done was to extract a pledge to one of the two rival fiscal doctrines, but even this seems to have been ineffective. The fundamental differences within both parties over the specific meaning of their fiscal creed, and the doctrinaire divisions over the implications of the pledge throw doubt on Miller's view that the two fiscal parties "had been able to apply it successfully", if only to the one issue on which they were nominally united.¹⁷²

But, even had a meaningful and formal pledge existed, there still remained the problem of enforcing it. Towards the end of 1889, a number of protectionist MsLA, particularly the protectionist radicals, began to agitate for the need to overcome the lack of an operative system of formal party discipline. Regarding the 'pledge' as a commitment to party solidarity, radicals like Hutchison viewed rebellious behaviour, like that of the 'Cocktail Party', as a major breach of faith, for which the offenders ought to be repudiated and ignored.¹⁷³ In party terms this repudiation would take the form of expulsion from the councils of the parliamentary party, the protectionist caucus. The Star trusted "that none of those gentlemen ... will take any future part in the Opposition councils. If their own sense of decency does not suggest the necessity of their remaining away from caucus meetings in future it is to be hoped that a distinct intimation from the Protectionist leaders will do so in a manner which cannot be mistaken".¹⁷⁴

The usage of the English political term 'caucus',¹⁷⁵ to denote meetings of the members of parliamentary groups and parties, and the notion of discipline by expulsion from the parliamentary 'caucus' seem to have been peculiarly Australian prior to 1900. The more common British and European usage of 'caucus' referred specifically to permanent local extra-parliamentary organisations, designed to manage and organise local election campaigns on behalf of a parliamentary party.¹⁷⁶ In Britain after

1867, the number of these local caucuses grew, particularly among the Liberals with the formation of local Liberal Associations.¹⁷⁷ But the modern connotations of the term 'caucus' did not emerge until 1876. Then, under the leadership of the radical Joseph Chamberlain and his Birmingham Liberal Association, nicknamed the 'Birmingham Caucus',¹⁷⁸ and 'Joe's Caucus',¹⁷⁹ an attempt was made to alter the power structure of the Liberal party in the cause of democratisation.¹⁸⁰ The local caucuses, established prior to 1876, had been firmly under the control of the parliamentary party,¹⁸¹ but in 1877 Chamberlain promoted a scheme to create "control by the constituency parties [caucuses] of their elected representatives",¹⁸² and to make parliamentary party leaders and members subject to strict discipline¹⁸³ and accountable to the rank-and-file of the party outside parliament. The first move in this direction was Chamberlain's creation of a central organisation for the local associations, the National Liberal Federation.¹⁸⁴ The caucus now attempted to wield control by demanding that MPs "submit to its decisions",¹⁸⁵ thus forcing them to vote "blindly and obediently";¹⁸⁶ by assuming the power of nominating and adopting candidates for election¹⁸⁷ and refusing to renominate MPs if they did not conform to caucus discipline;¹⁸⁸ and by exerting its influence over the formulation of party policy.¹⁸⁹ Founded on the radical concept of democratic rank-and-file influence and control, the caucus was hostile to the traditional liberal notions of individualism and independence,¹⁹⁰ and it strove to impose its radical opinions on the Liberal party. Prior to the formation of the British Labour party, this exercise of 'caucus control' achieved its greatest success in Britain during the 1880s.¹⁹¹

Although the term 'caucus' acquired the same disciplinary connotations in Australia, it was probably the absence prior to the 1890s of powerful and permanent extra-parliamentary organisations representing parliamentary groups that led the parliamentary groups themselves to assume both the functions and the title of the British 'caucus'. In its original Australian usage, 'caucus' referred to no more than a meeting of the members of a parliamentary group, and in New South Wales the term was used in this context as early as 1877.¹⁹² Held irregularly

and infrequently,¹⁹³ the purpose of such meetings was generally to decide upon a course of collective action during a ministerial crisis,¹⁹⁴ or to consider parliamentary tactics.¹⁹⁵ The radical connotations of discipline and control did not intrude until after 1880, and then first in Victoria.¹⁹⁶ These radical overtones, however, only really emerged in New South Wales during the period of fiscal politics after 1888 as one aspect of emerging radical pressure for change within both fiscal parties.

The movement away from the politics of personalities toward politics of principle, unintentionally initiated by Parkes in 1886, had taken the colony by surprise. What, in particular, was absent from the political system were the firmly established and influential radical organisations and associations that, in Britain, had played such an important role in the gradual emergence of principled politics, and the development of the concept of party discipline. The extra-parliamentary fiscal organisations were not only dominated by forces anxious to inhibit radical change, but the party functions they performed were confined to the organisation of elections and the formulation of party policy; at no stage prior to 1891 did they attempt to force MsLA to submit to standards of parliamentary conduct and a system of discipline that were devised and imposed by themselves. This lack of radical-dominated extra-parliamentary 'caucuses' therefore forced the radicals to promote the idea that the parliamentary parties should exert 'caucus control' over their members. The disciplinary measures envisaged would be used against party rebels during elections,¹⁹⁷ and would also operate within the parliamentary party itself. The surviving faction 'bosses', Parkes and Dibbs, although basically conservative in their political philosophy, were also desirous of party solidarity, and found ground for agreement with the radicals on the subject of discipline and control.

In endeavouring to promote the concept of 'caucus control' at the end of 1889, however, the radical protectionists met with powerful opposition from traditional individualist liberals. Replying to the radical appeals of Hutchison and the Star for disciplinary action against the 'Cocktail Party' rebels, Henry

Copeland reiterated the sanctity of the "independent judgment of men" and concluded that "a silken cord will bind a party stronger than a hempen rope".¹⁹⁸ The whole concept of the caucus and its disciplinary implications grossly offended the individualists, and their most doctrinaire spokesman, Bruce Smith, was merciless in his condemnation. Writing in 1887, Smith slated the British Liberal party for its "intolerance for independence of political thought", and agreed with the view that the "arbitrary power" of the caucus was "contrary to all the instincts and the very faith of the Liberal party".¹⁹⁹ Finally, he declared that the effect of "that terrible engine of despotism - the caucus, is to reduce parliamentary representatives to mere puppets or automata, ...".²⁰⁰ In the face of such implicit and explicit arguments, Dibbs resisted radical pressure to discipline the 'Cocktail Party', probably on the grounds that such action could well provoke an even more serious party rebellion. Instead he capitulated, and publicly forgave at least two of the rebels.²⁰¹ Such leniency, however, only emphasised the vulnerability of his authority and further encouraged rebellious independence. Finally, Dibbs was forced to act. Less than a year after the appearance of the 'Cocktail Party', Dibbs submitted to radical pressure.

On 15 October 1890, George Dibbs informed the Assembly that, "in view of the desire to have party lines more closely drawn", a meeting of the opposition had been held that day to deal with "certain members of the Opposition party, who persistently sit on the Opposition and vote for the Government, ...".²⁰ At the meeting, therefore, a resolution was moved and passed expelling one such offending protectionist, O.O.Dangar, from the opposition.²⁰³ A further meeting of "the caucus of the Opposition" was held two days later at which a further expulsion, that of W.S.Dowel, was unanimously decided upon.²⁰⁴ Although it was reported that the caucus "did not hesitate to take emphatic action",²⁰⁵ there is little doubt that Dibbs had long been hesitant in consenting to its use as a means of party discipline. Despite the treachery of the 'Cocktail Party' in December 1889 and subsequent rebellious activity,²⁰⁶ it was not until O.O.Dangar became its "first victim"²⁰⁷ that the caucus was put to work as

a disciplinary weapon. Dangar pointed to the previous apprehension to resort to formal discipline in the face of unruly independence; this hesitancy, he suggested, was largely due to the probability that any resort to 'caucus' discipline would result in a full-scale party rebellion.²⁰⁸ That those who administered the expulsions belonged almost exclusively to the radical minority in the party and were not supported by a large proportion of its members was evidenced during the parliamentary debate on Dangar's expulsion.

The Herald noted that, at the caucus meeting which expelled Dowel, "there was not a large attendance of the members who sit to the left of Mr Speaker",²⁰⁹ and the implication that the 'disciplinarians' of the party were in a minority was reinforced by Dangar's analysis of those responsible for his own expulsion. Whilst Dangar's uncontested statement named twenty-eight protectionists who did not attend the caucus meeting,²¹⁰ statement and admission could produce the names of only ten protectionists, six of whom were pronounced radicals, who either attended the meeting or upheld its decision.²¹¹ In view of the lack of unanimity about the use of disciplinary measures, the effect of their employment in creating party solidarity was negligible; in fact, they had the reverse effect of tending to split the protectionists in two. Although Dangar did announce his intention of conforming with the caucus decision by quitting protectionist ranks and in future sitting "on the Government side of the Assembly",²¹² Dowel simply moved to the opposition cross-benches²¹³ and joined those who already made up an active rebel 'cave'.²¹⁴ It would appear, moreover, that the sympathies of the majority of the party rested with the rebels rather than the disciplinarians; traditional attitudes died hard. This had several significant consequences. In such a situation, the victims of caucus discipline could treat their expulsion with scorn, and it was reported that, upon being informed of his expulsion, Dowel did "not appear to attach much importance to the action of his former confreres".²¹⁵ Furthermore, majority rejection of party discipline virtually forced the abandonment of the caucus. By June 1891, Dowel must have had his expulsion

cancelled, for in that month he was made a member of the party's central electoral executive, which also included a number of those who only eight months earlier had been responsible for his expulsion from the party.²¹⁶

A further means of trying to ensure party solidarity and impose a degree of party obligation was the use of party 'whips'. It was their task to muster party support on important divisions, round up 'stray' party members and bring influence to bear on members "to make them vote 'straight'".²¹⁷ It was significant, although scarcely surprising, that by 1891 the whips of both parties and their assistants were all fiscal radicals: Alfred Allen²¹⁸ and Frank Farnell²¹⁹ for the freetraders; J.P. Howe and his assistants, E.W. O'Sullivan and W.N. Willis, for the protectionists.²²⁰ The activities of the whips were given particular attention in May 1891, when the freetrade ministry faced a vote of censure, and survived it only on the casting vote of the speaker.²²¹ Prior to the division, Howe and his assistants canvassed protectionist support for the censure, and "argued with those who were inclined to go over to the Government".²²² Their lack of real influence, however, was demonstrated by the fact that, although only two protectionists "declared straight out" that they would vote with the ministry²²³ five, in fact, did so and saved the government.²²⁴ The same fate befell the government whip, Farnell,²²⁵ and Parkes afterwards alluded to the "unreliable" state of parties in the Assembly and regretted "the state of things when the Government cannot rely upon what men say, ...".²²⁶ Parkes indicated his desire for party solidarity in expressing the view that "it is very desirable that we should be able to rely upon our friends as well as know our opponents".²²⁷ Howe's radical belief in solidarity and discipline was more forcibly expressed in his "opinion that party men should have voted for their parties ...; and that those who did not vote could hardly expect confidence to be reposed in them for the future".²²⁸

Thus, it would appear that, in spite of their efforts "to have party lines more closely drawn", the fiscal radicals made but little effective headway by 1891. By 1891, the views

expressed by O.O.Dangar were still generally upheld: "It ... [is] of little importance to me whether parties are offended or not, as long as I feel that I have done my duty to my constituency,²²⁹ to my own conscience, and to the country".²³⁰ Even so, the years between 1887 and 1891 did offer a challenge to the dominance of traditional individualism and, although the results were unspectacular, individualism was certainly on the defensive. It was the very existence of a strong challenge that aroused the sleeping advocates of individualism to a most indignant defence of their principles, and this stout defence of an entrenched tradition meant that the conflict continued well on into the 1890s. It was this conflict that was doubtless responsible for the continuing failure of the non-Labor parties to construct effective and integrated disciplinary systems. Only in the 1891 Labor party, with its trade union tradition of majority rule and discipline, did the necessary unanimity exist to create such a system. Even with its complementary tradition, the Labor party experienced problems in achieving solidarity; it was so much more difficult for its rivals. But the challenges to individualism between 1887 and 1891 again demonstrated the degree to which those years were a period of transition, largely the work of progressive radical elements challenging assumed traditions.

CHAPTER 7

ELECTIONS AND ENDORSEMENTS: Parliamentary Electoral Organisation and Discipline.

I. 1889.

"Between free trade [and]
protectionist ... rings we are
being rapidly provided with
political conscience-keepers,
self-elected and autocratic".

(SMH, 26 January 1889, p.7).

The fiscal parties' activities during the general election of 1889 constituted an important aspect of the process of political change after 1885: both the changing nature of colonial politics and the difficulties encountered in transforming the political system were clearly revealed.

It was at election times that the two fiscal parties temporarily shelved their disruptive internal conflicts and put on their most convincing display of collective harmony. Real principled intra-party conflict gave way to a demonstration of artificial and emotion-charged unity as both parties strove to entice the electorate to vote them into power on

the strength of the emotion generated by the fiscal issue. In the efforts of both parties to win political power by organising their forces to the best advantage within the electorate, the more conspicuous aspects of the evolution of modern political forms were revealed. In 1889, however, there was a great contrast between the freetraders and the protectionists in the employment of modern methods of electoral organisation and management. This contrast was, in itself, an index of the changes taking place. The freetraders, comfortably ensconced in power since 1887, had done little to develop their methods and means of electoral organisation, their 1889 organisation remaining as embryonic and insubstantial as that of 1887. The protectionists, on the other hand, had made considerable progress, and in 1889 they displayed some of the attributes of the efficient modern electoral machine. Residual antipathy to party regimentation, dictation and management, still, however, acted as a check to such innovations. Problems engendered by inexperience and the lack of an effective and co-ordinated organisational network further inhibited success. These, however, were problems that only time, experience and further effort could eliminate. It was the difficulty of achieving total and rapid change that made the period of fiscal politics one of evolution, rather than revolution.

It is in this context that the claim that the fiscal parties "achieved their highest state of organization in the election of 1889"¹ deserves consideration. The implications of this statement are that fiscal electoral organisation suffered a decline after 1889, and that, during the election of 1891, it was less obvious and effective than in 1889. A.W. Martin argues that in 1891 "the Freetrade campaign ... appears to have been less organized than that even of 1887".² Close analysis, however, would suggest that fiscal electoral organisation in 1891 was superior to that in both preceding general elections. Certainly organisation in 1889 appeared more complete; extra-parliamentary organisations in union with the parliamentary parties organised the campaign, and the use of electoral discipline received much publicity. By 1891, the

extra-parliamentary bodies had disappeared; but, despite a number of inhibiting factors, the fiscal parties, especially the freetraders, did more and achieved more in 1891 than they had in 1889.³ The process of change and evolution continued after 1889.

One means of gauging the increased effectiveness of electoral organisation from 1889 to 1891 is offered by an analysis of the results achieved by both parties' use of official endorsement as a weapon of both electoral management and discipline. The concept of party endorsement, hinted at by the PU's abortive list of 'supported' candidates in 1887, was first developed by the protectionists in 1889, and emulated by the freetraders in 1891. The use of official party endorsement was another aspect of the attempt, initiated in the main by fiscal radicals, to apply the concept of 'caucus control' to the politics of New South Wales. Furthermore, many prominent fiscal MsLA found the use of 'caucus' methods less offensive during elections than in parliament: during elections they could aid in the achievement of optimum electoral results, while in parliament, such methods appeared only to inhibit the members' own freedom of action. As a result, the use of new 'caucus' methods was greater in electoral politics than in parliamentary politics.

Party endorsement in 1889 served the sole purpose of electoral management and discipline. The basic task of electoral management was to ensure that the number of party candidates in each electorate did not exceed the number of available seats. If a party could eliminate the incidence of vote-splitting, its chances of electoral success would be materially improved.⁴ In the process of eliminating vote-splitting, the selection and endorsement of candidates played an important role by making clear the party's choice, and by putting pressure on unendorsed candidates to retire from the contest. If unendorsed candidates persisted in pressing their claims, the central electoral organisations could intervene directly to secure their retirement either by persuasion or by threat of disciplinary action. As such, the whole procedure was regarded

as being basic to "the 'caucus' system", since it operated "to curtail the free choice of free electors", and to subject "the individual to its own particular 'discipline'".⁵ The use of party endorsement was, in 1891, extended into the sphere of parliamentary discipline. In the absence of effective parliamentary discipline, party disciplinarians in 1891 first utilised party endorsement as a means of punishing party rebels; by denying rebel MsLA the party's stamp of approval, they hoped to induce the colony's electors to reject such unworthy party members.⁶

* * * * *

As soon as it had been made clear on 16 January 1889 that a general election was necessary to resolve the political crisis,⁷ the parliamentary protectionists lost no time in preparing for the contest. Again it was the radicals who were in the vanguard, and on 17 January Ninian Melville and E.W.O'Sullivan were appointed secretaries of the parliamentary party for the election campaign.⁸ Special offices were obtained by the parliamentarians,⁹ and they set about fostering links with the extra-parliamentary protectionist organisations by inviting delegates from suburban leagues to attend their deliberations.¹⁰ The response was instantaneous, and the meeting on 18 January, attended by "about 100 gentlemen" representing a mixture of parliamentarians and non-parliamentarians, "was organised into a central committee", uniting both wings of the party.¹¹

This integration, however, was far from harmonious; it was, in fact, integration only created out of necessity and the demands imposed by a general election, and it involved more rivalry and suspicion than goodwill. The 1889 general election provided the opportunity for wealthy extra-

parliamentary interests, mainly manufacturers, to renew their struggle with the protectionist MsLA for control of the organisation of the protection movement, particularly in the area of electoral organisation.¹² The manufacturers were indispensable during general elections because of their financial resources,¹³ and it was the dependence of the entire movement upon their resources that made them such powerful adversaries in any struggle within the movement for power or control. The indispensability of the manufacturers at the 1889 general election was later described by a delegate at the NPA4 conference: "They had stepped into the field, and occupied it at a time when they were greatly wanted. They came forward when such affluent gentlemen were needed, and they [the party] would not have met with such success if it had not been for them".¹⁴ Indeed, once the manufacturers had 'stepped into the field', they lost no time in fully occupying it. As soon as Melville and O'Sullivan had called upon the extra-parliamentary forces for assistance, rope manufacturer, Archibald Forsyth, hastily reconvened the fading forces of the PU, and prepared them for the takeover.¹⁵

As the size of the integrated central electoral committee grew,¹⁶ the need was felt for a smaller working executive; this was formed on 21 January, again comprising representatives from both wings of the party.¹⁷ But as the size of the central committee increased, so too did the influence of its extra-parliamentary members to the exclusion of the parliamentarians, and the committee soon came under the dominating influence of Forsyth and his CM and PU colleagues, L.F. Heydon, J.P. Wright and A.W. Gilles.¹⁸ Forsyth also assumed the chairmanship of the executive committee.¹⁹ The transfer of influence from the parliamentary to the extra-parliamentary ranks was further demonstrated by the changes in the title given to the protectionist electoral 'machine': from the obviously parliamentary-dominated "meeting of the Parliamentary Protectionist Party"²⁰ and "central committee of the protectionist party"²¹ to the non-parliamentary-sounding "central committee of the Protectionist Association",²² and "National Protection Association" (NPA3),²³ the new name initiated by Forsyth, probably in an attempt to dispel the hostility and suspicion aroused by the mention of the

'Protection Union',²⁴ and the title which came to be generally applied to the electoral organisation. The takeover was completed by the appointment of three extra-parliamentary delegates as committee secretaries "in consequence of Messrs Melville and O'Sullivan having to leave for their electorates, ...".²⁵

Despite the extra-parliamentary takeover, the radical parliamentarians and the conservative manufacturers both agreed on the need for energetic organisation, and the NPA³ displayed no lack of zeal in performing the tasks first conceived by the parliamentary committee. The parliamentary party had laid the foundation for central organisation by requesting all local protectionist leagues to forward "at once" to the party the names of desirable candidates and by asking all "intending candidates" to register their names with the party.²⁶ Forsyth described the specific function of the central organisation as aiding electorates without any local organisation to find "suitable candidates", and as "select[ing] the best" when too many had offered themselves.²⁷ At first, it was the selection of candidates that occupied most of the NPA's attention, and it issued a set of rules governing candidate selection.²⁸ The rules emphasised the selection work of local associations, and stated that the choices of the local leagues would "be accepted as the Candidates of the party".²⁹

In practice, however, it soon became obvious that the NPA executive was forced to bear the brunt of selection and endorsement, mainly because of the tardiness of most local associations in selecting their candidates. On 18 January, the local leagues had been asked to communicate with the central organisation "at once";³⁰ a week later it was obvious that the executive was being seriously hampered in its work by the failure of the local leagues to co-operate, it being reported that "the views of the local leagues remain ...still to be obtained",³¹ and that the executive's work was incomplete "owing to the negotiations with local leagues being still unconcluded in many cases".³² Under pressure from the central committee to get on

with its task of selection and endorsement,³³ the executive had, on 22 January, issued its first list of endorsed candidates; in possession of the selections of local leagues in, at most, only eight electorates,³⁴ the executive had announced endorsements for a total of thirty-one electorates.³⁵ All the local selections to hand were officially endorsed by the executive; the rest appear to have been endorsements made solely on the initiative of the executive.

The consequence of the NPA executive's hasty intrusion into the affairs of the electorates, uninvited and before the completion of all local league activity, was a challenge to its authority. Despite its professed emphasis on local selection activity, the NPA now was virtually asking local organisations to set aside their rights of selection and abide by the executive's decisions. In a number of cases, however, local leagues chose to ignore this implied request. Even in two of the electorates where candidates had been selected locally prior to central endorsement, difficulties arose. The cause was either a communications breakdown or, more probably, intense local rivalry. The problem was the existence in a number of country electorates of more than one local protection league. The executive had received on or before 22 January the selection of one league, and had endorsed it; another local league in the same electorate then selected a different candidate. In Namoi, W.F. Buchanan had been selected by the Narrabri and Walgett Protection Leagues,³⁶ and their choice was confirmed by the executive;³⁷ on 26 January, however, it was announced that the Coonamble Protection League was supporting T. Hungerford, and was seeking NPA support for its candidate.³⁸ On 21 January, the protection league in Cootamundra chose J.F. Barnes as its candidate for the single-seat electorate of Gundagai,³⁹ and the NPA duly endorsed its choice.⁴⁰ The local league in Gundagai had, however, not yet met to make its choice, and, when, on 24 January, it did so, its members clearly preferred J.W. Benson to Barnes as their chosen candidate.⁴¹ Furthermore, when it was proposed by some party loyalists that a conference of the various local leagues be held to decide finally between the two rivals, Benson stated that "after the vote that night, he did

not feel disposed to submit to a decision by the conference".⁴²

A more straightforward assertion of local autonomy was evident in other electorates where the executive had made endorsements prior to any local advice. Included in the executive's original list of endorsees were two protectionist candidates for Bourke,⁴³ the sitting member, Thomas Waddell, and a local pastoralist, W.N. Willis.⁴⁴ Prior to this announcement, the local league, rather grandly named the Central Australian Protection Union,⁴⁵ was making preparations to select its candidates,⁴⁶ and the executive's intrusion did nothing to deter it. The local Bourke league's original two selections, announced on 29 January, included Willis, and added the town's mayor and league vice-president,⁴⁷ W.H. Daniell, to the exclusion of Waddell.⁴⁸ To make matters worse, the league some time later added a third selection, another local man, O'Grady.⁴⁹ In spite of, and possibly unaware of, the problems being created, the NPA blithely pushed ahead with its central endorsement lists.⁵⁰ The final list was published on 9 February, by which time the executive had given its blessing to protectionist candidates in up to sixty-three out of the seventy-four electorates.⁵¹

In proceeding so diligently with its endorsement programme, however, the NPA both encountered and created further problems. Those of its own making were again largely due to its impatience with the local protection leagues, and the leagues' insistence on their selection rights. On 23 January, while the NPA was approving the candidature of R.C. Luscombe for one of the two seats at Carcoar,⁵² the electorate's local protection league was in the process of selecting A.R. Fremlin and D.C. Donnelly as its candidates.⁵³ On 1 February it was announced that a Newcastle solicitor, George Wallace, had been chosen by the NPA to contest West Maitland,⁵⁴ and the executive sent a special communication to a meeting of local protectionists that same evening "recommending ... Wallace as a suitable candidate".⁵⁵ At the meeting, however, Wallace was narrowly defeated for local selection by James Pritchard, the chairman of the local protection union.⁵⁶ In the two-member electorate of Glen Innes, Alexander Hutchison was selected as the candidate

of the local league despite the candidature of the two NPA endorsees, F.A.Wright and W.J.Fergusson.⁵⁷

In Young, three factors - rather hasty NPA involvement, insistence on local autonomy, and a large measure of local rivalry - combined to create a complex problem that defied resolution. The immediate response in the electorate to the executive's call for local league activity was an immediate communication from the local league in the town of Young to "the leading protectionists in different parts of the electorate, impressing upon them the necessity of organising their forces ...".⁵⁸ The communication had the desired effect, and other local protectionist bodies sprang to life throughout the electorate: at Temora,⁵⁹ Harden,⁶⁰ Marengo,⁶¹ Murrumburrah⁶² and Cootamundra.⁶³ By 25 January, it would appear that the NPA executive was in possession of the selections of the local leagues at Young and Harden, and on that basis they made their endorsements for the two-member electorate. The league at Young had decided to support the town's ironmonger, J.G.Gough,⁶⁴ and the sitting MLA, J.A.Mackinnon, to the exclusion of a third contender, J.J.Miller, an auctioneer from Cootamundra,⁶⁵ at the other end of the electorate.⁶⁶ The league at Harden, however, made only one selection: Miller.⁶⁷ The NPA executive resolved the conflict by granting its endorsement to one nominee of each league; Gough and Miller were announced as its chosen candidates.⁶⁸ The executive's initial decision did not, however, prevent the other local leagues from proceeding with their own selections, and those at Marengo, Murrumburrah and Cootamundra sprang to the defence of the excluded sitting member, Mackinnon, all three selecting him in association with Gough.⁶⁹ The Temora league only added to the confusion by endorsing the executive's choice of Miller and Gough,⁷⁰ and by sending a deputation to Mackinnon asking him to retire in favour of Miller, a request that was refused by Mackinnon on the grounds that he had been "elected to stand by the Young Protection League".⁷¹ The hasty action of the NPA and the "dissension ... [between] the various protection unions" had clearly created an undesirable situation as a result of which the protection "vote ... [would] be much cut up".⁷²

In addition to the problems of central-local selection conflicts, the NPA encountered further difficulties as the result of an endorsement system that tended to place speed before care; sometimes a candidate would be endorsed prior to his consent being received. In endorsing R. Rouse for Mudgee and J.C. McLachlan for Orange,⁷³ the executive was undoubtedly endorsing the selections of each electorate's local league,⁷⁴ despite the fact that neither had apparently made their selections prior to obtaining the necessary consent from the candidates.⁷⁵ Less than a day after the announcement of their central endorsement, both men declined to contest the electorates for which they had been chosen;⁷⁶ neither vacancy was filled by the central executive.

Occasionally the executive's chosen candidate was an outsider, unknown to, and unfamiliar with, the electorate for which he was selected; further, he often seems to have been chosen without any consultation between the executive and local protectionists as to his acceptability or chances of success. The candidate's subsequent discovery of such information was often very discouraging, and led to his retirement. In such cases, however, a more suitable candidate with increased chances of success was usually offering, and the gap was quickly plugged. For Wilcannia, the NPA imported F.S. Bloxham from Bourke, and on 26 January endorsed him as the official party candidate.⁷⁷ On learning of the endorsement, a local protectionist telegraphed the executive that Bloxham stood no chance against a local protectionist, E.B.L. Dickens,⁷⁸ whereupon Bloxham retired and the NPA altered its endorsement to Dickens.⁷⁹ In West Maitland, the NPA's imported endorsee, George Wallace, did not pursue his candidature after the lukewarm local response he received.⁸⁰ The executive replaced him with another outsider, Wilfred Blacket, a Sydney barrister⁸¹ and defeated protectionist candidate in the suburban electorate of Canterbury.⁸² Blacket positively confirmed his candidature,⁸³ but when he arrived in West Maitland on 7 February he was confronted by a well-known local candidate, T. Hungerford, and "gave way to ... [him] as having more local influence".⁸⁴ The executive again altered its endorsement.⁸⁵ The same procedure took place in Wollombi, where the original endorsee, Hutchins, retired early in the campaign because "he

was not acceptable to the local men",⁸⁶ and was replaced by A.Love.⁸⁷ On 29 January, it was announced that the popular sitting member, Richard Stevenson, had undergone conversion to protection,⁸⁸ whereupon Love retired and the NPA again readjusted its endorsement.⁸⁹ The NPA's hasty action and lack of control, and the absence of co-ordinated organisation, although largely confined to country electorates,⁹⁰ did not augur well for the success of the executive's task of inducing all unendorsed protectionist candidates to retire.

The task was outlined by the Herald when it pointed to the number of electorates "for which the aspirants for political honours are far too numerous. To equalise these matters will be the task of the central organisations for some days to come".⁹¹ In some electorates, the NPA executive was not required to intervene at all in the cause of 'equalising these matters'. In a number of electorates where central endorsement had created no conflict with local leagues and where there was no local antagonism toward the endorsee, the endorsement's implied obligation on unendorsed candidates to retire was accepted and complied with.⁹² Even in several electorates where premature NPA involvement had caused local-central endorsement conflicts, a willingness to compromise and co-operate was demonstrated. In Namoi,⁹³ for instance, the candidate selected by the local league at Coonamble in opposition to the executive's endorsee withdrew and contested another electorate.

In another three electorates where the executive intervened to induce retirement, or to secure the settlement of rival claims prior to retirement, intervention bore fruit. In Durham, the NPA made no official endorsement, being unable to choose between T.Donnelly and J.Wade, but it appears to have urged that one candidate retire in the interests of the party. Donnelly told the executive that "the question of the retirement of himself or Mr Wade ... [would] be decided by a mutual political friend",⁹⁴ and on 11 February Donnelly gave way to Wade. In support of its nominee for Braidwood, the NPA asked "other protectionist candidates ... to withdraw in his favour",⁹⁵

a request that was immediately complied with.⁹⁶ Of the two unendorsed protectionists announced for Hartley, one acceded to the executive's request to withdraw from the contest.⁹⁷ Such actions led the Herald to comment some time later that the protectionists' election campaign was marked by a willingness to sacrifice "personal feeling ... to the general interests of the party".⁹⁸

Elsewhere, however, and particularly where the executive had helped create conflicts and difficulties, further NPA intervention was not so successful, breeding not a willingness to compromise, but resentment and intransigence. In two cases, it even jeopardised its own credibility as a controlling and organising body by performing several volte-face of doubtful distinction. Upon learning of the clash between its own endorsees for Bourke, Willis and Waddell, and the selections of the local league in the electorate, Willis, Daniell and O'Grady,⁹⁹ the executive decided to alter its endorsement in an attempt to effect a compromise. On 31 January, it became known in Bourke that Waddell had been discarded, and that the NPA was now supporting Willis and Daniell.¹⁰⁰ The move had no practical effect: Waddell, as sitting member, was most unlikely to retire, and all four contending protectionists, as well as a recent addition, W.W.Davis, were nominated to contest the three available seats.¹⁰¹ This being so, the executive made a further change. In Machiavellian fashion, it now discarded Daniell, and endorsed the three candidates it thought had the best chances of election, reinstating Waddell, retaining Willis and adding the newcomer, Davis. At the same time, it requested Daniell and O'Grady to retire.¹⁰² Not surprisingly, neither agreed to withdraw, Daniell "stoutly" refusing to do so, especially, as he pointed out, "after having been nominated by the Bourke union, and their action having been endorsed by the Sydney people".¹⁰³

The executive's methods for attempting to solve the impasse reached in Young¹⁰⁴ were equally questionable. Its original endorsement had excluded the sitting protectionist member, J.A.Mackinnon, in favour of J.Gough and J.Miller. On becoming aware of Mackinnon's local popularity, however, it decided on

30 January to discard Miller and replace him with Mackinnon as the party's second candidate, and to "advise" Miller to retire in his favour.¹⁰⁵ Within the electorate, the executive's action was viewed "with disgust",¹⁰⁶ characterised as displaying "want of discretion"¹⁰⁷ and "emphatically condemned".¹⁰⁸ Despite "a mass of telegrams" from the central body¹⁰⁹ and offers to pay all his expenses if he retired,¹¹⁰ Miller stoutly refused to do so.¹¹¹

In Gundagai¹¹² and Glen Innes,¹¹³ the other two electorates where NPA endorsement had created conflict with local protectionists, further executive interference also proved futile. After local attempts at conciliation¹¹⁴ and direct NPA intervention to secure a retirement,¹¹⁵ the unendorsed protectionist in Gundagai, J.W. Benson, did withdraw. His action, however, did not solve, but exacerbated, the conflict, for he retired not in favour of the endorsed Barnes, but in order to nominate in his own stead a prominent Sydney protectionist, J. McLaughlin, specially imported by "several local gentlemen", presumably in the interests of securing the defeat of Barnes.¹¹⁶ Although members of the protectionist ministry had apparently attempted to dissuade McLaughlin from going to Gundagai,¹¹⁷ once he had done so, the executive gave up in frustration and "resolved not to interfere, as both Mr McLaughlin and Mr Barnes have declared in favour of protection",¹¹⁸ and fortunately no opposition free-trade candidate was nominated to take advantage of the conflict. Although George Dibbs intervened personally in Glen Innes "with a view to adjusting matters",¹¹⁹ he had no success. The executive, however, did not confine its operations to electorates where it had contributed to the difficulties, and during late January and early February, the NPA intervened directly in the electorates of New England,¹²⁰ Albury,¹²¹ Morpeth,¹²² Wellington¹²³ and Hartley¹²⁴ in attempts to secure protectionist retirements; in all cases it was singularly unsuccessful.¹²⁵

Despite the obvious shortcomings in its operations, some of which positively prohibited success, the entire system of central endorsements and executive intervention was clearly an attempt to impose the 'caucus system' on the conduct of a

general election. As one critic expressed it, "no one is to be regarded as a fit and proper person to ... become a candidate for a constituency who does not bear the hall-mark of an association; and further, that constituencies are to be limited in their choice of candidates to those whom the association may see fit to select for them".¹²⁶ It was, however, this task of limiting the electors' choice of candidates that proved most difficult; but the executive did not give up. In view of the failure of request and persuasion to induce retirements, the NPA in early February began to adopt a harder line and to insist "upon subjecting the individual to its own particular 'discipline'".¹²⁷ The movement towards the use of discipline was first revealed in Gundagai, where the executive, trying to resolve the conflict between Barnes and Benson, sent a sharply worded letter to both candidates telling them that, if a settlement was not reached, they would be "boycotted by this union".¹²⁸ Compliance with such disciplinary dictates depended, as in the parliamentary context, on both the existence of a general consensus on the need for, and desirability of, discipline, and the presence of an effective sanction to compel compliance; both were absent.

The threat of being 'boycotted' by the NPA was hollow, since unendorsed candidates had already been shunned and, further, since the material benefits that accompanied party endorsement appear to have been negligible.¹²⁹ Searching for a more effective penalty, the executive came up with two new ideas, announced in the press on 7 February. Where a "candidate has refused to accede to the request of the committee, ... a black list [will] be started to contain the names of such mutineers, who shall be rendered ineligible as candidates for any seat in future". Further, and more significantly, "it shall be published ... that such refractory candidate is a rebel against discipline, and is not to be supported by protectionists; ...".¹³⁰

In addition to its threats of disciplinary action, the executive's approach to superfluous candidates now became more authoritarian. It was reported that "the Central Protection

League ... ordered" and "called upon" the unwilling W.Wiley to withdraw from the contest for Illawarra.¹³¹ By this time, a number of parliamentary protectionists had returned to Sydney and had become involved in the NPA's electoral campaign.¹³² George Dibbs, already seen as anxious to construct a formal system of order and discipline, became particularly associated with the executive's disciplinarian approach to its organising task, and in Sturt he personally intervened, "urging" the recalcitrant protectionist to retire in favour of the endorsed candidate.¹³³

The reaction to this new approach was one of horror and resentment. Reference was made to "the unblushing effrontery ... of some clique of wirepullers",¹³⁴ whose "autocratic" tendencies were likened to those of Bismarck and "such places as Russia".¹³⁵ What, in particular, was condemned was once again the implied attack on the freedom of any individual to become a parliamentary candidate, and "the rights of ... electors ... to vote for any candidate ... [they] may prefer, without taking orders" from any organisation.¹³⁶ The reaction in the electorates seems to have been similar, the executive's dictatorial interference being "strongly resented" in Illawarra,¹³⁷ and the endorsed protectionist in Sturt specifically denying any affiliation with Dibbs and the executive in order to avoid any adverse electoral reaction.¹³⁸ The important point was, however, that the threatened penalties for disobedience were not immediate, and only the final election results would tell whether protectionist electors had heeded the executive's call to ignore and repudiate the 'rebels' who went to the poll. As a result, the threats put little pressure on the rebels to retire, and none did so. As a consequence, there went to the poll too many protectionist candidates for the available seats in eleven electorates that were also contested by freetraders,¹³⁹ and in six electorates uncontested by freetraders.¹⁴⁰ After the election, the chairman of the NPA executive, Archibald Forsyth, pointed to the detrimental effects of such vote-splitting when he claimed that in five electorates, "in all of which the protectionists had a majority of votes, six seats were lost through the number of protectionist candidates exceeding the

number of seats".¹⁴¹

Although the NPA3 and its endorsement had only marginal success in reducing the number of protectionist candidates, the supreme test of endorsement was its success in influencing the election of its recipients, and in preventing that of those who ignored it. The importance of this result for the future use of endorsement as a disciplinary weapon with which to punish parliamentary protectionist rebels, and as an effective means of eliminating vote-splitting, was obvious to the executive, and it specifically implored protectionists to "use the full power of [their] ... vote by voting for all selected candidates" and "not to endanger the success of the election by voting for unrecognised candidates".¹⁴² In this respect the NPA3 and its endorsement achieved a significant measure of success; in all electorates where endorsed and unendorsed protectionists went to the poll in competition with one another, the endorsed candidates achieved noticeably better results, both in terms of the number of seats won and the average number of votes per candidate. Even after deducting the number of sitting MsLA who were seeking re-election and whose chances of success were high whether endorsed or not, the apparent advantage of endorsement remained considerable.¹⁴³

Just as they were shortly to do in the parliamentary arena, a number of protectionists had, in early 1889, recognised the need for, and desirability of, organisation and discipline, and they had proceeded to act upon their perceptions with vigour. But, as in the parliamentary context, the achievement of total and immediate success was impeded by mistakes caused by haste and inexperience, a widespread refusal to accept the values of the 'caucus system', the continuing addiction to the principles of individualism, and the lack of effective disciplinary sanctions, as well as the additional factors of local rivalry and an insistence on local autonomy. Despite the problems and failures, however, progress had been made, and what the election of 1889 emphasised was that changes were taking place. New forms and methods of electoral

organisation were evolving to replace the old, but the transition was neither painless nor swift. Only the next general election would tell whether lessons had been learned, and successes consolidated and capitalised upon; only that election would tell, in fact, whether the political transition had retained its momentum.

In comparison with protectionist energy, freetrade organisation during the 1889 general election was weak and ineffectual. The Herald acutely highlighted the contrast when it stated that "the protectionist battle was planned with more judgment, and fought with more singleness and directness of purpose".¹⁴⁴ Although the NPA's takeover of the protectionists' electoral machine had probably not been envisaged, the integration of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forces in one central body of direction was planned, and the judgment evident in this decision paid dividends. No such integration of forces was either contemplated or attempted by the freetraders, and the two bodies charged with directing their campaign lumbered into separate existence, and maintained their separate identities throughout the campaign. The first to act was the extra-parliamentary FTA, the council of which demonstrated its political acumen in anticipating a general election by appointing at an early date its own election committee,¹⁴⁵ and by calling on the parliamentary party "to take active steps to prepare for such contest".¹⁴⁶ The FTA's election committee sprang quickly into action, first meeting on 16 January,¹⁴⁷ enlarging its numbers on 18 January,¹⁴⁸ arranging to meet twice daily at 11 am and 8 pm from 21 January¹⁴⁹ and setting itself up in the FTA's central offices in Moore Street.¹⁵⁰

Despite the FTA's call for early action, the parliamentary freetraders did not meet until 18 January to form their electoral organising body.¹⁵¹ The thirty-two freetrade MsLA present¹⁵² were all formed into "a general committee", from which "a strong executive" of either seven¹⁵³ or nine¹⁵⁴ "prominent freetrade members" was constituted.¹⁵⁵ The executive then decided to secure its own central offices,¹⁵⁶ resolved to appoint a paid secretary,¹⁵⁷ and arranged to meet daily at 10 am.¹⁵⁸

Clearly, then, both freetrade bodies maintained a distinct and separate identity, formal integration being non-existent. In view of this duality, the direction and co-ordination of electoral activity posed an immediate problem. On 21 January, it was announced that, unlike two years previously, "On this occasion the Parliamentary party will assume the chief direction of affairs",¹⁵⁹ although it was also stated that "arrangements have been made" and "steps ... taken" to ensure "concerted action", "complete harmony" and the prevention of friction between the two bodies.¹⁶⁰ What, however, constituted the 'affairs' to be directed, and the 'action' to be concerted still remained unclear. Unlike the radical protectionist MsLA, Melville and O'Sullivan, who had obviously planned in advance their approach to their organising task, the freetraders seemed at first to lack any real sense of purpose and any specific ideas as to how to go about their tasks.

It seems that the two freetrade bodies saw their initial task as being the provision of assistance to "city and country constituencies to secure suitable men", the overall aim being "to provide well-established men holding freetrade views for all the constituencies".¹⁶¹ But the allocation and co-ordination of specific tasks between the two bodies remained somewhat vague. In view of its supposed network of local branches and the commencement it had already made on its organising activities,¹⁶² it seems to have been decided that the FTA should largely carry on from 1887 by supervising and arranging the actual provision of candidates to various electorates.¹⁶³ Initially, therefore, the parliamentary executive was seen as merely "doing much to strengthen the hands of the parent association";¹⁶⁴ as to its own specific role, there existed much uncertainty and confusion. The reports of its meetings emphasise this. There was fairly constant reference to "initial duties"¹⁶⁵ and "purely preparatory work",¹⁶⁶ emphasis on the fact that "nothing definite was decided upon",¹⁶⁷ and, as if to conceal their confusion, "the nature of the proceedings [at one meeting] were not allowed to transpire".¹⁶⁸ Finally, it seems that, in addition to sharing with the FTA the task of providing candidates when asked to do so,¹⁶⁹ the parliamentary executive assumed the previously untried

role, possibly in emulation of the protectionists, of granting official approval or endorsement to selected candidates.¹⁷⁰ In general, it would appear that the FTA, when requested to provide a candidate, would make a selection "out of a profusion of applications" and would then submit their choice to the parliamentary executive for approval.¹⁷¹

In order to make the FTA's task of providing candidates to empty electorates appear realistic and capable of completion, it was essential that an active local organisation should exist in a large number of electorates, in order to lighten the FTA's burden by selecting candidates and recommending their official endorsement. On 23 January it was reported that the central bodies "appear to be well backed up by the branch associations in the suburbs and country, ...".¹⁷² In regard to the twelve city and suburban electorates, there was some truth in the report, for by 25 January branches of the FTA in five of those electorates had met and selected their candidates,¹⁷³ and the branch in one further electorate was shortly to follow suit.¹⁷⁴ But, despite this activity, the lack of a permanent branch network and positive local organisation was still obvious. Action in Parramatta and Central Cumberland was solely due to the concerted action of local freetraders in "reorganising" their forces,¹⁷⁵ and in planning and achieving the formation of a local FTA specially to "consider and plan for the elections".¹⁷⁶ John Sutherland revealed the inadequate situation in Redfern when he stated that "there was no organisation at all on the side of the freetraders";¹⁷⁷ despite exhortations to form "a strong organisation",¹⁷⁸ nothing at all was done. A freetrader in Paddington also wrote to the Herald urging a concerted local effort to select candidates,¹⁷⁹ but again no heed was paid.

In comparison to the country electorates, however, local freetrade organisation in Sydney appeared complete. By 25 January, the selection of candidates by local freetrade leagues had taken place in just four out of sixty-two country electorates,¹⁸⁰ and only one other was to be added after that date.¹⁸¹ Sometimes the lack of formal local branches was compensated for by active personal organisation. In Goulburn, for instance, the private

committee of the sitting freetrader, William Teece, not only managed the campaign of its candidate, but also that of the freetraders in the surrounding electorate of Argyle. The committee distributed circulars throughout Argyle urging freetrade electors to use their vote, and arranged for Parkes and McMillan to visit Goulburn in support of the freetrade candidates;¹⁸² its vigour was such that not only were the freetrade candidates for Goulburn and Argyle all returned, but the freetraders were also stimulated to form a local Goulburn branch of the FTA after the election.¹⁸³ Even such active personal organisation, however, seems to have been lacking in most country electorates. In Kiama, the suggestion that a local committee be appointed "to select or recommend a candidate" was rejected out of hand.¹⁸⁴ The general consequence of such local inactivity seems undoubtedly to have been the loss of freetrade seats. The freetraders in Young did nothing at all,¹⁸⁵ apart from making the extraordinary move of trying to induce a freetrade candidate to retire in favour of a protectionist,¹⁸⁶ and a seat was lost; a freetrade candidate for Camden later maintained that "one seat in the electorate was lost owing to the lack of organisation among the freetraders".¹⁸⁷

It was this vast organisational vacuum that the FTA was expected to fill by the speedy provision and despatch of candidates. By 25 January, the central FTA had taken definite and positive action in seven country electorates, and had possibly done the same in a further six.¹⁸⁸ The freetraders in Tumut requested the FTA to send a candidate,¹⁸⁹ and it seems certain that W.H.Vivian, who had offered his services to the party¹⁹⁰ and who appeared on the FTA's list "as a probable candidate for a country constituency",¹⁹¹ was despatched by the Association to Tumut. Having selected the sitting freetrader, W.Clarke, as one of its candidates, the local freetrade association in Orange asked the FTA to provide "an able man to contest the second seat",¹⁹² and it appears that its request was granted.¹⁹³ In other electorates the FTA did not wait to be requested to arrange freetrade candidates. The Association specifically requested prominent local freetraders in Bathurst¹⁹⁴ and Bogan¹⁹⁵ to come forward as freetrade candidates, and in both cases their consent was

forthcoming.¹⁹⁶ In Murrumbidgee, favourable reports "indicative of a development of the strength of their party"¹⁹⁷ induced the FTA to send two strong freetraders from outside the electorate as candidates.¹⁹⁸ Likewise, the Association sent the radically-minded Alexander Riddell of North Sydney¹⁹⁹ as its candidate to Inverell, and its own council member and electoral organiser, N.B. Downing, to Eden.²⁰⁰

It was at this point that the parliamentary executive intruded into the organisational limelight by publishing, on 25 January, its first list of officially endorsed freetrade candidates.²⁰¹ Compared to the protectionists' initial list, it was not only two days behind, but was also almost exactly half the size, for it contained approvals for only sixteen electorates, thirteen of which were country constituencies. To a large degree, the list was based, naturally enough, on the 'provision' work of the FTA, since the endorsees in five of the country electorates were candidates definitely arranged by the FTA.²⁰² Of the remaining eight country electorates, it is possible that the FTA had been involved in six, although there is no conclusive evidence to confirm this.²⁰³ The executive also gave official approval to the selections of three out of the nine local leagues which had, by the time of publication, met to choose their candidates,²⁰⁴ having previously given its blessing to the selected candidates of a further branch.²⁰⁵

The executive's 'approval' list was in itself a reflection of both the size of the task that faced the central freetrade bodies, and the minimal progress they had made in tackling it. In an attempt to save some face, it was announced the following day that "the list of candidates approved of by the executive committee of the Parliamentary freetrade party, in conjunction with the Freetrade Association" would be completed within four days.²⁰⁶ Such a list, however, was never forthcoming. It would appear that the formidable task of trying to fill an organisational vacuum by undertaking the basic work of finding willing candidates to contest country electorates provided sufficient reason for the executive to abandon the

sophisticated exercise of formally endorsing or 'approving' them; their mere presence, regardless of quality or quantity, became the chief objective. In only two further country electorates was there anything that even resembled an endorsement provided, and, in Camden, this was provided by the FTA only after a specific request for it to do so.²⁰⁷

The executive, still in conjunction with the FTA, now confined its endorsement activities to the Sydney suburban electorates. In its original list, the executive had included four Sydney electorates, confirming the selections of local leagues in two, and independently granting endorsements in another two.²⁰⁸ As they appeared in the Telegraph, the endorsements in both these latter two electorates were incomplete,²⁰⁹ but it was not long before the executive had taken effective steps to overcome the shortages.²¹⁰ The executive also arranged and endorsed four freetraders for Paddington,²¹¹ and, in conjunction with the FTA, did the same for Central Cumberland²¹² and Parramatta,²¹³ finally issuing on 1 February a comprehensive list of endorsements for nine out of the twelve suburban electorates.²¹⁴ This final list, however, reveals the purposeless freetrade approach to the process of endorsement, particularly when compared to that of the protectionists. The protectionists undoubtedly regarded the process of official endorsement as a vital element in their scheme of electoral management, and it was probably for this reason that they tended to make the mistake of granting it too hastily. They clearly regarded official party endorsement as a means of applying pressure on rejected candidates to retire, and they strove to make it an important factor in a candidate's chances of electoral success,²¹⁵ thereby first fostering what has since become a formidable weapon of electoral control and party discipline. It was largely in response to this approach that one correspondent remarked that "this is a system of government, not by the people through their chosen representatives, but by a political organisation through its nominees".²¹⁶ No such claim, however, could justifiably be made about the freetraders. Their lack of purpose in the use of endorsements was revealed by the fact that the one reasonably comprehensive list of endorsees for the Sydney electorates was published only

after the nomination of candidates in all the electorates listed, thus too late to induce any necessary retirements, and only one day in advance of election day for all listed electorates, scarcely adequate time to influence the decision of many electors.

Meanwhile, the FTA continued its efforts to cope with the problem of the country electorates. It despatched candidates to Northumberland²¹⁷ and Albury,²¹⁸ upon requests to do so;²¹⁹ it announced that a second freetrade candidate would be nominated in Murray;²²⁰ it made arrangements to run the sitting freetrade MLA for Bourke, A. Wilson, in Wilcannia;²²¹ and was probably responsible for one of its most prominent members sallying forth to contest Bourke.²²² Even the FTA's efforts in those few electorates it was able to attend to were, however, often futile. The state of local freetrade organisation in a number of electorates to which FTA candidates had been despatched was so poor that electoral success was virtually out of the question. The candidate sent to contest Albury withdrew almost as soon as he arrived in the electorate, explaining that "the freetraders [there] ... not being an organised body, it was impossible ... to properly canvass the electorate with the hope of any success, ...".²²³ In Inverell, the local freetraders were described as being at "sixes and sevens",²²⁴ and it was later reported that they were even unable "to form a working committee" to aid the FTA candidate;²²⁵ Riddell was not deterred, but was badly defeated.

In other electorates, what the Bathurst Times described as "dilatatoriness in sending the candidate into the field"²²⁶ had disastrous results. The FTA candidate for Albury arrived just three days prior to nomination day, the two for Murrumbidgee no more than two days prior, and one of the Association's two candidates for Murray was announced just two days prior to nomination; as a result, only one bothered to submit to the inevitability of a heavy electoral defeat. Furthermore, there seems to have been in some electorates a good deal of local antagonism towards FTA interference, and especially the Association's importation into electorates of outside candidates.

The Kiama Independent advised the FTA to "leave us to our free choice", while the Newcastle Evening Call hoped that "no attempt will be made to get candidates from outside", declaring that such candidates "would be offensive to the general feeling in the locality".²²⁷ Faced with general hostility and popular local candidates,²²⁸ several candidates denied their affiliation with the Association,²²⁹ while a number of imported FTA candidates simply retired from the contest,²³⁰ sometimes in favour of the local man,²³¹ even if no freetrader remained in the field.²³²

In yet other electorates in which the FTA attempted to make satisfactory freetrade arrangements, it either failed²³³ or made serious blunders. Apparently unaware that the well-known local freetrader, G.H. Greene, had announced himself as a candidate for Grenfell, the FTA despatched its own candidate, E.B. Woodhouse, to Grenfell to contest the one available seat.²³⁴ Subsequently asked to retire "in order not to endanger the prospects of the cause",²³⁵ Woodhouse, it was reported, was "disinclined" to do so.²³⁶ Early in the campaign, the FTA seems to have approved of its prominent council member, N.B. Downing, announcing himself as a candidate for West Macquarie.²³⁷ Several days later, however, with the nominations for the protectionist stronghold of Eden shortly due and no freetrade candidate yet in the field, the Association requested Downing to withdraw from West Macquarie and head south to contest Eden.²³⁸ Downing obediently complied,²³⁹ but in doing so gave himself less than a week, compared to the three weeks at his disposal in West Macquarie, in which to mount his campaign, and as a result he suffered a crushing defeat. Presumably assuming that they had plenty of time to fill the vacancy in West Macquarie,²⁴⁰ the FTA let the electorate slip from its attention.

Obviously there was a considerable number of electorates in which the FTA took no action at all, despite, in some cases, its stated intention of doing so.²⁴¹ As a result, twenty protectionists in fifteen electorates were elected to the new parliament unopposed by a freetrader.²⁴² The FTA was strongly

criticised and held responsible for this disastrous result, and freetraders in a number of the uncontested electorates expressed their dissatisfaction with the Association's inaction.²⁴³ The obvious consequence was that the freetraders in these electorates were "disfranchised",²⁴⁴ and in Gundagai they were forced into the position of supporting a protectionist, with the extraordinary aim of bringing about "a coalition of the two parties, ...".²⁴⁵ It was little wonder, then, that at the end of January a member of the parliamentary executive wrote to its chairman that "the lack of interest which appears to have been shown by our party with regard to country electorates causes me some concern".²⁴⁶

It was only early in February that the FTA and the parliamentary executive, particularly the now active Parkes, seem to have joined forces effectively in a last minute attempt to provide solutions to those failures and mistakes of the FTA still capable of solution. These activities also reveal the reticence of the freetraders to make use of discipline in their electoral arrangements, and throw further light on the nature of freetrade organisation in 1889, demonstrating the continued reliance on Parkes's own personal electoral network in the absence of an efficient and widespread formal network of local associations.

The freetraders' approach to the use of electoral discipline, both to induce the retirement of superfluous candidates and to punish party rebels, was one of leniency; as was explained by the parliamentary executive, "the idea ... [was] not to act in any dictatorial manner".²⁴⁷ A case in point was that of the sitting freetrade MLA for Gundagai, J.H. Want, a consistent personal opponent of Parkes, and one of the men largely responsible for the ministry's resignation on 10 January 1889.²⁴⁸ Despite Want's own refusal to recognise or consult with the executive about his electoral intentions,²⁴⁹ he was still included as one of the executive's four endorsees for Paddington.²⁵⁰ Of the eleven radical freetrade rebels who helped bring about the fall of Parkes's ministry in January,²⁵¹ four defended their suburban seats in 1889,²⁵² and were thereby subject to the executive's possible refusal to grant them endorsement. Despite a veiled

threat by Parkes to repudiate them at the election²⁵³ and a call by one freetrade correspondent to punish "such renegades",²⁵⁴ the executive blithely granted all but one its endorsement. The one exception was J.C. Neild, to whom the FTA, and therefore the executive, specifically denied its support, not on the grounds of his rebellious parliamentary actions, but because of his heretical utterances during the campaign.²⁵⁵

The same 'non-dictatorial' approach was adopted by the freetrade bodies in their attempts to prevent vote-splitting. Rather than making disciplinary threats to induce retirements, the freetraders employed what almost amounted to a system of reward or compensation to secure withdrawals; it was a case of the freetrade 'carrot' as opposed to the protectionist 'stick'. In the four-member electorate of Central Cumberland, five freetraders were announced as candidates, the unendorsed David Dale "emphatically declaring that he would not retire".²⁵⁶ On 29 January, however, a meeting took place between the recalcitrant Dale, three members of the local FTA branch and three members of the parliamentary executive,²⁵⁷ and Dale was finally induced to retire "on the understanding that he would be supported for the first eligible vacancy".²⁵⁸ A similar approach was employed in Glebe, where two unendorsed freetraders, J. Meeks and F. Walsh, both refused to retire in favour of the executive's endorsees,²⁵⁹ one even flatly rejecting the executive's first timid suggestion of conciliation on 29 January.²⁶⁰ Despite their intransigence, it was quite suddenly announced on 31 January that both "had magnanimously retired".²⁶¹ Events subsequent to their retirement, however, strongly suggest that their compliance had only been obtained by an assurance to provide them both with alternative electorates to contest in the freetrade interest, particularly as it was openly reported that the executive had "strongly urged" Meeks to contest another constituency.²⁶² The FTA probably used a similar method in Grenfell to induce the retirement of E.B. Woodhouse,²⁶³ whom it had mistakenly sent to that electorate and who was at first reluctant to withdraw.²⁶⁴ As evidenced in Gloucester, however, executive persuasion to retire without compensation was flatly rejected.²⁶⁵ Despite their success in 1889,²⁶⁶ when the freetraders were finally forced to face the realities of

electoral discipline, the precedents set during the election did nothing to encourage later acceptance of, or compliance with, a true system of discipline.

Whatever the disadvantages of the 'compensation scheme', the FTA and the executive now had a small reserve supply of candidates to use in solving their provision problems, and, in response to a request from Wollombi,²⁶⁷ they probably despatched one of the Glebe duo, F. Walsh, to contest the seat against the lapsed freetrader, Richard Stevenson.²⁶⁸ A major problem facing the freetrade bodies, however, was a serious shortage of contacts in country areas, due to the dearth of local branches; it was in this respect that Parkes was able to provide a partial solution. On 26 January, it was reported that the freetraders in Glen Innes "are anxious that the Sydney association should nominate two strong men";²⁶⁹ nearly a week later still nothing had been done.²⁷⁰ In the meantime Parkes again²⁷¹ contacted his electoral agent in Tenterfield and enquired about the situation in Glen Innes, apparently asking for the name of a local freetrader "to communicate with".²⁷² Upon receipt of this information,²⁷³ communications with Glen Innes were presumably begun, and it would appear that the executive and the FTA combined to honour their obligation to the 'magnanimous' Meeks from Glebe and to give the defeated FTA candidate in Tumut, W.H. Vivian, a second chance; both men were soon after announced as freetrade candidates for Glen Innes.²⁷⁴ Parkes also seems to have helped create another opportunity for freetrade involvement, this time in Macleay. In receipt of a request "to send forward a free-trade candidate for this district",²⁷⁵ Parkes probably handed the matter over to his executive colleagues and the FTA; within two days it was announced that the unwanted FTA nominee for Grenfell, Woodhouse, and a sitting freetrade MLA, C.E. Jeanneret,²⁷⁶ would contest the electorate,²⁷⁷ and the executive issued a letter to the electors of Macleay eulogising the candidates and seeking support for them.²⁷⁸ In the 'forgotten' electorate of West Macquarie,²⁷⁹ Parkes alone was largely responsible for the presence of any freetrade candidate at all.²⁸⁰ Despite these efforts, none of the solutions was satisfactory: all the arrangements were effected far too late to have brought the desired results,²⁸¹

and Meeks, in Glen Innes, this time voluntarily retired from the election, "recognising ... that as the free-trade candidates were so late in the field there might be some difficulty in electing both representatives ...".²⁸²

Despite some outlandish protectionist statements to the contrary,²⁸³ it would appear that FTA financial assistance to its arranged candidates was negligible. Although the Association's candidate in Northumberland was consistently charged with having received £25 from the FTA in payment of his expenses,²⁸⁴ W.H.Vivian was probably more accurate when he later described the personal "expense and trouble" he had suffered in his travels from Tumut to Glen Innes, and he explained that the FTA had "no fund to pay these expenses".²⁸⁵ In support of the overall freetrade cause, however, the FTA did mount another extensive propaganda campaign. Early in the campaign it was decided "to issue a million leaflets on the advantages of free trade as against protection", and additional office accommodation was secured "to arrange for the distribution of the literature".²⁸⁶ Despatch of the leaflets to various constituencies for distribution at public meetings was begun on 24 January²⁸⁷ at the rate of between 100,000²⁸⁸ and 200,000²⁸⁹ per day, and within a week "about half a million leaflets" had been issued.²⁹⁰ The FTA and parliamentary executive both seem to have also tried to offset their organisational failures by providing freetrade candidates in country electorates with large amounts of moral, if not financial, support. The FTA appears to have paid particular attention to the candidates specially provided for country electorates, sending its official "lecturer" to Wollombi in support of F.Walsh,²⁹¹ and arranging further country forays by "freetrade speakers".²⁹² The executive appears to have concentrated on the provision of support for its sitting country MsLA.²⁹³ In receipt of a request for support from the freetrade member for Durham, H.H.Brown, the executive's secretary told Parkes that Daniel O'Connor was being sent to his aid and that "we hope Bruncker and Gillies are with him now ...".²⁹⁴ Parkes also obligingly used his own personal influence to aid his parliamentary colleagues. In response to a request from his close friend, James Inglis, for "help ... by letter or otherwise",²⁹⁵ Parkes duly wrote a

letter stating that Inglis "still retained his fullest confidence", and this was read by Inglis at one of his public meetings in New England.²⁹⁶

In the final analysis, however, freetrade electoral organisation during the 1889 general election was both incomplete and irresolute, and it was generally felt that the decline in the freetraders' parliamentary majority from thirty-six to five seats²⁹⁷ was the obvious consequence. One freetrade correspondent succinctly expressed this view when he wrote that "it is an undeniable fact that had the freetraders been better organised the result would have been a far stronger majority in the present Parliament".²⁹⁸ The basic criticism was that the freetraders were "not ... energetic enough",²⁹⁹ particularly in the country districts.³⁰⁰ In this respect Parkes himself pointed out that "we are labouring most in the safest fields", and that "We ought to direct special attention" to protectionist country strongholds.³⁰¹ Significantly, however, in terms of the transition taking place in politics, freetrade organisation was seen as weak and lethargic, largely by way of contrast with the vigorous efforts of the protectionists. The freetraders' losses were often accounted for by the fact that "they were not so well organised as a party as the protectionists were",³⁰² this itself being explained by the freetraders' "want of perception"³⁰³ and apathy in keeping pace with the trend-setting protectionists: "The men in possession were always apathetic, and while the freetraders had been sleeping the protectionists had been working".³⁰⁴

Specific criticisms focussed upon the inadequacies of the ad hoc and unintegrated nature of the central organisational structure. J.N. Bruncker told McMillan that "Our arrangements were based on the exigencies of the moment and I agree with you ought not to apply to our position in the future".³⁰⁵ The FTA was also singled out for special criticism, being described as "inadequate ... to work an efficient electioneering campaign".³⁰⁶ The president of the Association later admitted its inadequacies, declaring that the FTA had originally been formed "as an educational medium rather than as a political organisation",³⁰⁷ and that

it had been forced to undertake tasks that were "foreign to the purposes for which ... [it had been] established".³⁰⁸ Even more particularly, however, it was the absence of a permanent and widespread network of local freetrade organisations that was seen as most damaging. One freetrade correspondent pointed out the dearth of local freetrade associations throughout the colony, and declared that "In every electorate there should be an association affiliated to the central body in Sydney"; he concluded by stating that "there must be better organisation", and he urged the FTA to "organise on the lines I have laid down".³⁰⁹

In view of the awareness of the weakness of freetrade organisation in 1889, there emerged, then, a general recognition of the absolute necessity for the freetraders to "thoroughly re-organise their forces".³¹⁰ Not only were the freetraders urged to take action, but they were also determined to do so. Parkes undertook to guarantee that "The freetraders would organise with ten-fold more effect at the next election",³¹¹ and J.H. Carruthers prophesied that freetrade "organisation and discipline" would destroy protection at the following election.³¹² Parkes himself pointed the way when he wrote that "Success depends upon sound knowledge of local feeling and conditions, and upon continuous and well-informed preparation".³¹³

Important for the protectionists as an initial test of new methods and techniques of electoral organisation, the 1889 general election was equally important for the freetraders as a painful demonstration that they could no longer ignore the changes in electoral management produced by radical ideas and vigorous activity; no longer could electoral success be left to chance. Adjustment, careful planning and purposeful enterprise was clearly the task confronting the freetraders. How well that task was performed could only really be judged at the following general election. Parkes was fully aware that "Everything ... depends on the next Election".³¹⁴

CHAPTER 8

MERCHANTS AND MANUFACTURERS: Extra-Parliamentary Fiscal Organisations.

II Zenith and Nadir, 1889-1891.

I

The damaging electoral result of February 1889, largely a result of their apathy in matters of electoral organisation, stung the freetraders into determined post-election activity in an attempt to narrow the gap that existed between their level of organisation and that of the protectionists. The almost total absence of local freetrade organisation during the election was the most obvious matter that demanded attention, and the FTA was soon at work in an effort to repair the damage its inactivity had caused. The degree to which local FTA branches had fallen into disrepair was demonstrated by the situation at Bathurst. Commended by the central FTA for its efficient organisation during the 1887 general election and held up as a model of well organised, energetically conducted branches,¹

the Bathurst FTA had become moribund by 1889 and had made no contribution to the organisation of the 1889 election. Not surprisingly, however, it was one of the first to be resuscitated as part of the FTA's campaign to revive and extend its local branch network. On 21 February, it was reported that a meeting had been held in Bathurst the previous day for the purpose of "reorganising ... the Freetrade Association here".² By the end of February, other branches had been revived,³ several had been formed,⁴ and it was reported that a considerable number were in the process of "being formed".⁵ As part of its vigorous campaign the FTA also "decided to print a special set of rules for the use and guidance of branches", and it instructed its secretary, Pulsford, "to draw up a paper containing suggestions for the forming and working of branch associations".⁶ Both pamphlets were published soon after, and were widely circulated.⁷

Early in March, the FTA was joined by a new freetrade organisation in the work of revitalising the movement throughout the colony. As the Herald was to point out, the 1889 election had revealed just "how inadequate was the free-trade association to work an efficient electioneering campaign",⁸ and, despite the excuse that such work was "foreign to the purposes" for which the Association was formed,⁹ secretary Pulsford was forced to admit "with regret that the work that ... [was] done ... [was] far below either the merits of our great cause or the actual requirements of the time, ...".¹⁰ It was largely for this reason that the freetrade MsLA, aware that "the time had come for an active organisation",¹¹ entered the organisational field in a concerted effort to create it.

It was the parliamentary freetrade election executive that gave the impetus to this move by the freetrade MsLA; as a result of its planning and guidance, a new freetrade organisation, the LPA, was founded.¹² Although the parliamentary freetraders were responsible for the LPA's creation, the Association was formally inaugurated on 1 March at a large meeting of both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary freetraders.¹³ The LPA assumed two basic tasks: the management and organisation of the

freetrade party; and the formulation of a party platform. While the task of devising the rules, organisational details and platform of the new body was performed exclusively by the Association's small executive or organising committee of seven MsLA,¹⁴ the task of extending freetrade organisation throughout the colony was entrusted to the assembly of both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary freetraders that inaugurated the LPA. As a result, the meeting on 1 March discussed "the best means to adopt for organisation purposes", and it finally appointed a committee of "Between 20 and 30 members of the Assembly, representing different parts of the colony, ... to[gether] with a similar number who will be appointed as representatives of local centres". The committee's immediate task was "as soon as possible to form branch associations in different parts of the country".¹⁵

The decision of the parliamentary freetraders to undertake the work of establishing local freetrade branches was undoubtedly based on their perception of the value of sound organisation, as displayed by the protectionists during the 1889 election, and their awareness of the weakness of existing freetrade organisation. The thinking of the MsLA was well summarised by one of their most active organisers, William McMillan, who stated that, once it was realised that "nothing but organisation" would restore freetrade supremacy in parliament, "a determination was made to found branches of security in every populated centre".¹⁶ As a result, the earliest plan for the formation of the LPA insisted that "Branch Associations be formed immediately ... wherever possible in the Colony",¹⁷ and attention to local organisation was also stressed in the Association's official rules, ratified on 26 March.¹⁸

Despite the declaration that the LPA would "work in harmony with the Free Trade Association",¹⁹ the potential for rivalry between the two bodies was clearly present. No such conflict, however, seems to have eventuated, and from early March, the two organisations seem to have co-operated closely in fostering the extension of freetrade organisation. The added impetus and influence given to the work of organisation

by the active involvement of a substantial number of freetrade MsLA soon, however, became apparent. It was reported that in the fortnight after the formation of the LPA "nearly fifty new branches" were established,²⁰ and in early April it was estimated that "Since the close of the elections about 100 branches have been formed".²¹ Formed throughout the readily accessible suburban districts of Sydney,²² branches were also established in such country centres as Gundaroo,²³ Wollongong²⁴ and St Marys,²⁵ and even as far afield as Cobar,²⁶ Nyngan²⁷ and Kempsey.²⁸ Although most new branches were formed as branches of the FTA, the name assumed by some new branches demonstrated the effective co-operation between the FTA and the LPA in the work of fostering freetrade organisation. Three new branches in the electorate of Canterbury, for instance, adopted the title, 'Liberal and Free Trade Association',²⁹ and another in the same electorate was formed as "a branch of the Free Trade and Liberal Association".³⁰

The demise between 1887 and 1889 of the FTA's most active branch, that at Bathurst, made the freetraders realise that the simple creation of branches was not enough in itself to ensure the permanency of their new organisational network. To ensure permanency they emphasised the need for unremitting activity and unflagging effort. On behalf of the FTA, B.R. Wise had sent his congratulations to the freetraders of Cobar upon the formation of a local branch, but had also apparently warned them of the dangers of complacency; in reply, a leading member of the branch assured Wise that "we have no intention of letting matters flag".³¹ The LPA insisted that its branches meet at least four times a year, and it took the precaution of granting itself the power to effect "the resuscitation of any branch associations which may be inactive from want of support or proper interest".³²

The most significant feature of all this freetrade activity in February-April 1889, however, remained the active involvement and participation of the bulk of the freetrade parliamentary party. At least forty-five freetrade MsLA were involved, to some degree at least, in the creation and organisation of the LPA and in the process of establishing local freetrade branches. Many MsLA actively co-operated with the FTA-LPA in the extension

of local organisation, especially in their own or neighbouring electorates³³ but also further afield.³⁴ Up to twenty-one MsLA seem to have been involved in the management of the LPA,³⁵ and a further thirteen revealed their interest in the Association and its work by attending its meetings.³⁶ Not the least active participant in this revitalised freetrade activity was Parkes himself. Although he does not seem to have been involved in the formation of the LPA, he was kept well informed of its proceedings,³⁷ and it would appear that he became a member of the twenty-six-man LPA Organising Committee when it was expanded from the original seven-member organising executive.³⁸ Certainly Parkes was aware of the need for organisation and "continuous and well-informed preparation",³⁹ and he seems to have taken an active part in the extension of local freetrade organisation. On 13 March, his apologies were read to a meeting at Newtown which was held to inaugurate a branch of the FTA, and which he "had fully intended" to attend.⁴⁰ Invited on the following day to attend and address the inaugural meeting of the Manly FTA,⁴¹ Parkes accepted. In his address to the meeting, he further expressed his opinion that "they had to organise", and he reiterated his belief in the need for "strict and binding discipline".⁴² The old faction 'boss' was not floundering in the wake of political change, but had shrewdly sensed the advantages of the new developments and, like Dibbs,⁴³ sought to utilise them in the cause of party solidarity and discipline.

Although the organising efforts of the parliamentary freetraders, mainly through the LPA, harmonised with the activity of the revitalised FTA, no formal union existed between the two bodies, and there was still a "fear that [the] two associations might clash with each other".⁴⁴ This fear was finally removed early in May by the amalgamation of the LPA and the FTA to form "the Freetrade and Liberal Association of New South Wales" (FTLA).⁴⁵ The question of amalgamation was first raised in early April, and on 5 April the FTA Council appointed a deputation of seven of its members to attend "a conference with an equal number of representatives of the Liberal Political Association on the subject of the future working of the two associations".⁴⁶ The conference was held on 10 April, and the fourteen

delegates⁴⁷ all agreed that a "fusion would be of benefit", and they "undertook to convey the expression of opinion to their respective councils".⁴⁸ Further progress was made on 24 April when a general meeting of the FTA resolved that amalgamation was "desirable", and it instructed the Council "to take steps with a view to such amalgamation".⁴⁹ A further conference between the two associations took place on 30 April, and it was reported that "arrangements were almost finally completed for the amalgamation ...".⁵⁰ The initial stage in the creation of the FTLA was the fusion of the FTA Council "of about 60 members" and the LPA Organising Committee "numbering about 26".⁵¹ Further, "For the government of the new association the constitution and rules of the Free Trade Association have been adopted, ..., [along with] the platform arranged by the Liberal Association".⁵²

The creation of the FTLA represented the final stage in the achievement of the "permanent co-ordination" and "regular connections" between the parliamentary party and the extra-parliamentary organisation, an integration basic to the existence of "a true political party".⁵³ The fusion of the exclusively parliamentary LPA Organising Committee and the FTA Council, itself containing a sprinkling of MsLA, to form the FTLA Council created that 'permanent co-ordination', and resulted in "a unified party structure".⁵⁴ This co-ordination was further formalised at the FTLA's annual general meeting in July 1889 when a new Council was elected.⁵⁵ Of the seventy-five Council members elected at that meeting, twenty-two, or almost one-third, were freetrade MsLA at some time between 1887 and 1891; of the twenty-two, eighteen were MsLA at the time of their election to the Council, and only eight had been members of the old FTA Council.⁵⁶ The following general meeting in July 1890⁵⁷ further increased the number of MsLA on the Council to twenty-six, twenty-one of whom were MsLA at the time of their election.⁵⁸

Whether or not Parkes regarded the Association as a threat to his dominance of the party, he certainly became an active participant in its activities. As a member of the interim Council between May and July 1889, he took a prominent part

in the Association's organisation of a by-election in Central Cumberland in June.⁵⁹ Elected to the new Councils in July 1889 and 1890,⁶⁰ he continued his involvement in the work of the FTLA, taking part in the Association's conference in August 1889⁶¹ and aiding in the establishment of further local branches of the Association.⁶² It is probably fair to conclude that Parkes was neither the initiator nor the master of the political changes represented by the creation of the FTLA, but he was not their slave. Although he was, to a degree, carried along by the momentum of change, he was still too powerful and influential to be disregarded and discarded, and too shrewd to be unable to adjust to the new situation. Had the FTLA become a permanent and unified party nucleus attending to party management and policy, Parkes's days as the leader whose charisma and influence held the party together may well have been numbered; but the FTLA did not become a permanent centre of party activity, and its rapid demise after 1889 only accentuated Parkes's importance and indispensability as party leader in a climate of bitter internal party conflict.

Not only was the new Association "of a more comprehensive character" than the old FTA, but it was also seen as being "more potent for good". For the first time a freetrade association was seen as being unfettered by "certain embarrassments" in the task of managing elections and "securing the return to Parliament of men who were considered capable of carrying out the principles" held by the Association. No longer did the freetrade organisation feel obliged "to refrain from interference with politics".⁶³ It was largely for the purpose of improving electoral management and securing "the better organisation of the party" that the idea of "a conference of delegates from every [freetrade] association" was first mooted in March 1889.⁶⁴ The forward-looking LPA responded to the idea, and included in its rules a clause stating that a conference of delegates from each branch association would be held annually in November to discuss "the best means of furthering the objects of the association".⁶⁵ In July, the FTLA announced that it had proceeded with the idea, and that such a conference would be held the following month.⁶⁶ Each local branch was invited to send two of its members as delegates, or to

appoint its local MsLA or two members of the central Association to represent it. In addition, the central FTLA would appoint two of its own delegates,⁶⁷ and on 16 August, B.R. Wise and R. Teece were elected "as the delegates of the parent association".⁶⁸ During July, a Conference Committee was appointed,⁶⁹ and by the end of the month it had drawn up a programme of conference proceedings and associated public meetings.⁷⁰

As a member of the FTLA Council, Parkes was involved in the conference arrangements, the proposed programme being submitted to him for his "consideration".⁷¹ His agreement with and participation in the conference seems to have been taken so much for granted that, instead of a formal invitation, the secretary of the Conference Committee told him that "we have taken the liberty of putting your name down for an address, on the evening of Friday, August 30th, on 'True Liberalism'";⁷² their assumption of Parkes's co-operation was not ill-founded, and he addressed "the greatest meeting of the week" on the appointed night on the nominated subject.⁷³

The day before the conference began, the Herald remarked that "There is no doubt ... that the organisation is [now] more extensive and stronger than at any previous period";⁷⁴ the conference bore this out. In all, seventy-eight local freetrade branches, from forty electorates, were represented at the conference. Of the seventy-eight, twenty-six were suburban branches, representing ten electorates, and the remaining fifty-two were from country districts, representing thirty electorates.⁷⁵ One indication of the genuine interest and participation of the country branches was that, in response to Pulsford's desire that "even the most distant branches ... send ... their own members as delegates rather than appoint delegates from the Sydney district",⁷⁶ the delegates of only seventeen of the fifty-two branches lived in Sydney. A further ten branches sent one of their own members, and appointed someone in Sydney, often one of their own MsLA, as their second delegate, but the delegates of the remaining twenty-five were all from the country district they represented.⁷⁷ In addition, thirty current freetrade MsLA, and a further four past or future MsLA, actively participated in the

conference; some were actively involved in the organisation and conduct of the conference,⁷⁸ a considerable number took part in the public meetings of the conference,⁷⁹ and at least one-third of the parliamentary party participated in the conference deliberations as official delegates.⁸⁰

One of the major items for discussion at the conference was that of electoral organisation and management. Still smarting under the "reverse [that] had been met with",⁸¹ freetraders thought it desirable that the conference should lay down formal lines of procedure "as to what ought to be done for the purposes of organisation",⁸² and the whole of the first day was devoted to doing so. What emerged were a number of separate resolutions which, when integrated, constituted a reasonably comprehensive blueprint for effective electoral management. It was initially decided that "every electorate should have at least one branch of the Association",⁸³ and the FTLA Council was instructed "to take steps to establish branches and organize previous to the next election" in "any electorate where branches are not yet established, ...".⁸⁴ That decided, the question of candidate selection prior to a general election was then discussed. The suggestion that "the local branch or branches in every ... electorate confer with the parent Association prior to the selection of ... candidates"⁸⁵ was immediately rejected, and the desirability that "the local parties should have the selection of candidates in their own hands"⁸⁶ was unanimously affirmed. The generally agreed process of local selection was that "in electorates where there are two or more branches ..., they should arrange for working together",⁸⁷ and that, before announcing themselves, all intending candidates in any electorate "should submit their names ... for selection by the delegates of the whole of the branches therein".⁸⁸

Particularly in view of the resolution that "every protectionist seat be contested",⁸⁹ it was felt that not every electorate might be able to supply its own candidates, and that resort to the central body might be necessary. In such a situation, FTLA secretary, Pulsford, declared "the Association should try to bring out a candidate", and it was resolved that,

"when requested", the Association would provide the candidate "at as early a date as possible".⁹⁰ The most controversial aspect of the arrangements was the appointment of "a board of appeal to determine any difficulty submitted by the local ... branches, ... which threatens the unity of the party, especially in connection with elections".⁹¹ In a situation that threatened vote-splitting, it was envisaged that the board's role would be to "determine which candidate had to retire".⁹² Although described as "a final resort - something to turn to when all local effort had failed",⁹³ the appeal executive aroused hostility.

This hostility, especially prevalent among the 'liberal' freetraders, represented the residual and traditional antipathy to any proposal that seemed to introduce the 'caucus system' and interfere with the rights of the individual. One delegate pointed to the offence that would be given should "the executive committee ... [appear to] dictate to the different electorates";⁹⁴ another claimed that they "had no power to give the committee the powers it was proposed to clothe them with";⁹⁵ the delegate from Wollongong maintained that "It was a very delicate matter to interfere [sic] with the electors in their choice", and objected to the word 'determine' on the grounds that "great offence might be given" to the electors;⁹⁶ and even the FTLA president "admitted that the word 'determine' had rather an ugly look, ...".⁹⁷ It was the slow death of attitudes such as these, powerful in parliament⁹⁸ and still very evident during the 1891 election, that effectively slowed the transition towards the modern regimented political party.

Soon after the conference, the FTLA, in accordance with the conference resolutions, again devoted its attention to the consolidation and further establishment of local branches.⁹⁹ In addition to the formation of several new branches,¹⁰⁰ one of which was in the protectionist stronghold of Queanbeyan and was officially inaugurated by Parkes,¹⁰¹ the Association appointed a special sub-committee to examine and report on the best means of consolidating the branch network.¹⁰² On the basis of its report, the Council appointed a permanent Branches Committee whose duties were "to correspond regularly" with all branches, to present regular reports to the Council on "the position of the

branches", and to "endeavour to open further branches in electorates ... where none at present exist".¹⁰³ By the end of 1889, therefore, all seemed to augur well for an effective and efficient freetrade campaign during the next general election. The freetraders had made much progress during 1889.

During 1890 and 1891, however, the FTLA disintegrated; the promise of an efficient, integrated party 'machine' faded. The basic cause of the Association's demise represented perhaps the most potent single factor preventing the emergence of a 'true' and permanent freetrade political 'party' prior to 1894-95: the absence of basic principled cohesion among the forces advocating freetrade. The parliamentary party, FTA, LPA and FTLA all suffered from internal disharmony that prevented cohesion and threatened their destruction. But the FTLA differed from the rest in one vital respect. Within the parliamentary party, FTA and LPA, the forces of conservatism were dominant; as a result, issues of principle likely to arouse conflict and controversy could be avoided, radical pressure for change could be contained, and any full-scale and destructive ideological conflict could be averted. Despite the absence of internal cohesion, all three bodies were able to maintain a precarious, but steady, existence. The situation within the FTLA was different; not only was the integration of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary elements finally achieved within the FTLA, but the contending forces of free-trade conservatism and radicalism were, for the first time, represented almost equally in a freetrade organisation. In fact, the radicals were able to assert a slender control over the Association. In such a situation, vital matters of principle could no longer be shelved, and the stage was set for an unremitting ideological conflict.

The internal struggle within the FTLA between 1889 and 1891 was, in fact, a prelude to the full-scale conflict that engulfed the parliamentary party after 1891. The basis of that conflict was the same as that within the FTLA, but prior to the end of 1891 its overt eruption had been averted within the parliamentary party; the radical victory within the FTLA helped to foster its undisguised emergence amongst the freetrade parliamentarians. Although, in terms of the evolution of a true

political party, the events of 1890-91 seemed to produce a setback with the demise of the FTLA, in another sense they marked continued progress. What was highlighted in the destruction of the Association was the continued absence of principled freetrade cohesion, a factor without which all other progress and change could not be consolidated. Such disunity required eradication, and the open friction that brought down the FTLA represented the first stage in the struggle to eradicate the weakness caused by the absence of principled unity. At the end of 1891, the parliamentary party took up the still unresolved struggle; clearly either the radicals or the conservatives had to leave the party, but it was only in 1894-95 that the result was finalised.

The conflict within the FTLA was one of principle, basic fiscal principle. Within the parliamentary party a basic conflict between conservative 'revenue tariffists' who opposed direct taxation and progressive or radical 'pure freetraders' who regarded direct taxation as a matter of vital social reform. This basic conflict was even more sharply drawn within the FTLA; the conservatives in the Association were basically the vested-interest merchants of the old FTA and the radical forces were dominantly radical 'single taxers', who were more aggressive than their kindred radical spirits within the parliamentary party.

In January 1890, it was stated in the annual report of the Single Tax League (STL) that "A new and very important departure has been taken by ... the League during the past year, and that was to enter the political arena as supporters, and enthusiastic supporters, of Free-trade ...".¹⁰⁴ This 'entrance' took the form of a marked infiltration by the single taxers of the existing extra-parliamentary freetrade organisations, and by January 1890, the League could fairly claim that both the FTLA's "central Council and country branches are largely permeated with the spirit of the new reform".¹⁰⁵ This infiltration process first became noticeable in the substantial addition of single taxers and other radical land taxers to the dominantly conservative FTA Council in March and April 1889,¹⁰⁶ and their presence was

also evident at the meetings of the LPA in April.¹⁰⁷ In June, the leading single taxer and proprietor of the single tax organ, The Australian Standard, John Farrell,¹⁰⁸ told Parkes that the FTLA had "a strong element in it favouring us, and there is in every Free-trade body in the Colony some of our party - in several of them a majority".¹⁰⁹

Farrell's observations were nothing short of the truth; of the non-parliamentary members of the FTLA Council elected in July, land and single taxers seem to have been at least close to a majority and, when added to their progressive parliamentary allies on the Council, they had probably obtained a narrow majority.¹¹⁰ Farrell seems also to have accurately reported the situation in the local branches. The future free-trade MLA, William Affleck, later recalled that the branch of the FTA he had formed early in 1889 at Gundaroo, soon after "adopted the principle of the Single Tax League and we worked under the banner of the two combined, for really land value taxation means free trade".¹¹¹ Furthermore, at least eleven of the local branches represented at the FTLA conference in August 1889 sent delegates who were well-known non-parliamentary land taxers.¹¹²

The permeation process continued during 1890, and was, in fact, transformed under the influence of Henry George from a wish to influence free-trade policy to "a desire to dominate the side of free-trade";¹¹³ in the words of one critic, "The single-tax section, or tail, claimed to wag the body of the big free-trade dog".¹¹⁴ Certainly single tax influence within the FTLA was not lessened during 1890.¹¹⁵

In explaining "why the league has thrown in its adherence with the existing Free Trade and Liberal Association",¹¹⁶ the single taxers quoted their hero, Henry George. In Protection or Free Trade, George had written that it was the duty of single taxers to support the free-traders, "and to urge them on, no matter how soon they propose to stop; and the free-traders themselves, when once started and borne on by the impulse of controversy, will go further than they now dreamed of".¹¹⁷ Clearly, then, the generation of conflict and controversy over

the nature of freetrade policy was very much part of the single taxers' plan of operation, and the ground for such conflict was clearly present in the FTA-LPA-FTLA. As one observer pointed out, the "pure and simple" freetraders had become involved with "revenue tariffists, the object of ... [their] strongest denunciation".¹¹⁸ Conflict was inevitable.

The 'controversy' injected into the proceedings of the freetrade organisations was first revealed during the debate on 1 April 1889 over the proposed LPA platform. The proposed platform, as amended by the LPA Organising Committee and first made public on 26 March prior to ratification,¹¹⁹ contained a clause specifying "direct tax, including a tax on the unimproved value of the freehold in land, ...".¹²⁰ At a meeting of the STL committee two days later, the proposed platform was discussed and "an opinion was expressed in favour of the general tenor of its provisions".¹²¹ When, however, at the full meeting of the LPA to ratify the platform, the conservative MLA, J.F. Burns, successfully proposed the elimination of the words specifying a land tax, the vociferous land and single tax section vehemently expressed its disapproval; already disruptive conflict had become evident.¹²² The conservative tactic of avoiding debate on specific fiscal principles was successful within the LPA for the basic reason that the conservatives had control of the Association. The lesson to the radicals was obvious, and by vigorous permeation into the FTLA, their minority representation had been rectified by the end of July. The time to test their newly-won influence in the Association came in August during the FTLA conference.

Immediately after the LPA debate, one perceptive free-trade correspondent to the Herald ruminated on the potential result of the conflict between the conservative refusal to deal specifically with matters of principle and the radical insistence on doing so. "It is", he commented, "essential that the basis of the various [proposed] reforms should be made clear, otherwise internal dissensions may hereafter arise which will lead to dismemberment".¹²³ Certainly the conservatives' refusal to specify issues such as 'direct taxation' raised doubts as to

whether they desired such 'reforms' at all. By August 1889, however, with their newly-won power, the radicals were determined that no longer were they "going to be humbugged or hoodwinked by resolutions that meant nothing",¹²⁴ and, in the face of further conservative equivocation, they used their conference majority to specify that "a form of taxation on land values, irrespective of improvements, should be imposed ...".¹²⁵ This now became, in the words of B.R. Wise, "the declared policy of the freetrade party".¹²⁶ Such specification certainly represented some progress for the adherents of direct taxation, but it did little to eliminate conflict and tension within the FTLA. It was, in fact, the very specification of a land tax as party policy, rather than continued vagueness and avoidance of the subject, that led directly to the 'dismemberment' of the FTLA.

It is in this context that Parkes's Federation moves of 1889 deserve some attention, for they contributed in no small measure to the extinction of the FTLA. Parkes's motives for initiating in June 1889¹²⁷ a movement for the federation of the colonies have been variously interpreted as: the satisfaction of his ego and the desire for a crowning climax to his political career;¹²⁸ the exploitation of an auspicious moment to create a popular movement for federation;¹²⁹ an attempt to stave off a threatened freetrade defeat at the hands of the advancing forces of protection through "'the confusion of his opponents by a new issue";¹³⁰ and the attempt to prevent the rival colony, Victoria, from establishing undisputed leadership of the federal movement in a year that provided grounds for further progress in the cause.¹³¹

A.W. Martin presents a further interpretation that demands closer attention. Martin argues that the political changes represented in the formation of the LPA and FTLA - the reorganisation of the party "under the direction of younger men", like McMillan¹³² - left Parkes out in the cold, "fumbling to maintain his position among ... [the] new men and methods".¹³³ Parkes, maintains Martin, "remained aloof" from the new freetrade organisation,¹³⁴ and was distinctly threatened by it. It is in this context that he views Parkes's Federation moves: "he

launched his Federation Movement just when the new politicians were reorganising the party",¹³⁵ the chief purpose being to effect its disintegration by causing "division within its ranks",¹³⁶ thereby re-establishing his leadership "on new political foundations".¹³⁷ For several reasons, however, this does not appear an entirely adequate interpretation. Parkes did not remain aloof from the new freetrade organisation but actively participated in the LPA and FTLA and his leadership, in fact, does not seem to have been challenged by the party. Further, he does not seem to have been at odds with McMillan; the two appear to have had much in common, and Parkes was of considerable importance to the continued success of McMillan and his fellow conservatives in dominating the affairs of the party. Martin's implication that the Federal issue was designed to cause internal party dissension also seems questionable since conflict already existed within freetrade ranks.

If Parkes's Federation moves were dictated at all by domestic politics, H.V. Evatt appears to present a more likely interpretation when he states that Parkes "was using the new cry to resist the widespread demand for immediate social reform".¹³⁸ As far as internal freetrade politics were concerned, "the great federation pother of 1889-91"¹³⁹ seems to have been, and was certainly regarded by the FTLA radicals as, a conservative conspiracy to present a viable excuse for failure to implement the party's 'declared policy' of direct land taxation. Radical pressure from within the parliamentary party for a 'pure' freetrade tariff and the imposition of direct taxation had forced Parkes and the 1887-89 ministry to introduce their sham taxation proposals of 1888,¹⁴⁰ but the radicals were not deceived.¹⁴¹ Until 1889 radical freetrade pressure from outside parliament scarcely existed. Being largely composed of wealthy merchants, the FTA sought no change in the traditional policy of 'revenue tariffism', nor did the creation of the still conservative-dominated LPA impose any real pressure on the new ministry to alter its fiscal arrangements. From April 1889, however, the pressure on the ministry to substitute direct taxation for indirect taxation gradually mounted.

Although, in April, Treasurer McMillan was forced by

the protectionists to pledge the removal of the anomalies in the tariff,¹⁴² it was the increasing clamourings of the FTLA radicals that posed the greatest threat to continued conservative inaction. In July, radical FTLA urgings that the ministry carry out its pledges of tariff simplification were strongly voiced,¹⁴³ and were reiterated at the FTLA conference in August.¹⁴⁴ It was, however, the declaration of land taxation as party policy that put the conservative-dominated ministry in a very awkward situation. More sham taxation proposals were clearly out of the question, but a plausible excuse to postpone the unpalatable prospect of direct taxation was needed: Federation provided that excuse.

If Parkes, shrewd and perceptive, sensed the need for a 'delaying issue' as early as June (and as a member of the FTLA Council there is no reason why he would not have done so), he made his concerted move in October¹⁴⁵ - as Martin points out, his "timing is surely of significance".¹⁴⁶ In November, Parkes told Edmund Barton that "The fiscal contention must be left for settlement on a Federal basis hereafter",¹⁴⁷ and "from the first, in all places and at all times" he publicly expressed the same opinion.¹⁴⁸ In fact, Parkes became "a federalist first and a freetrader second",¹⁴⁹ being more than content to be able to shelve the fiscal issue, thereby precluding any interference with existing fiscal arrangements. Rather than opposing this convenient escape route from the obligation to implement 'pure freetrade',¹⁵⁰ William McMillan declared his support for a "breathing time" for the fiscal issue, "so that the people might be afforded an opportunity of reviewing the whole matter from a national instead of a local standpoint", and he declared that "He would go with Sir Henry Parkes that ... they must trust the federal dominion Parliament with the adjustment of this matter of tariffs, ...".¹⁵¹

The question of Federation and its fiscal implications, however, brought into the open the fundamental and destructive conflict that split the FTLA in two. The Association's consideration of "the question of free trade in its relation to Australian federation"¹⁵² extended over four nights during February

1890; the debate on the subject clearly revealed a definite cleavage between the pro-Federation conservatives, anxious to forestall fiscal change, and the anti-Federation or 'freetrade first' radicals. The traditional conservative liberal and president of the FTLA, Andrew Garran, opened the debate by delivering a long address in which was exposed the conservative support for Federation as an escape route from freetrade obligations. Basing his argument on the philosophical contention that provincialism was not consistent with true liberalism, Garran concluded that, as liberals, free traders must agree that federation was "of more importance to the general interests of Australia" than freetrade; as such, freetrade must be sacrificed to the cause of national unity. He then went on to specify that "we can be no parties to foreclosing any question of taxation, on which it would be the duty of the Dominion Parliament to pronounce". And if that was an insufficient revelation of his basic attitude to 'pure freetrade', his view that "a moderate free-trade tariff" would provide the federal government with "all, and more than all", the revenue it required, was a distinct intimation of his preference for 'revenue tariffism'.¹⁵³ To Garran, at least, it seems that Federation was a means of preserving his preferred system of taxation in New South Wales.

The same could probably have been said of Parkes, and, in their angry response to Garran's address, the FTLA radicals certainly implied it. The single taxer and Council member, J.A.Dobbie, stated his belief that "Sir Henry Parkes's scheme had all the appearance of a dazzling political job".¹⁵⁴ By now, however, the radicals would not be fobbed off, and J.C.Neild's motion that the FTLA Council "deprecates any form of Australian federation calculated to imperil the free trade policy of New South Wales"¹⁵⁵ was carried 20/10.¹⁵⁶ In supporting the motion, N.B.Downing spoke for all his radical colleagues when he stated that they must "accept the challenge thrown out in the president's address",¹⁵⁷ and he urged the Association to continue its "war against all taxation", save land taxation.¹⁵⁸ Among the other radicals who agreed with Downing were Frank Cotton,¹⁵⁹ W.E.Johnson¹⁶⁰ and E.W.Foxall. Foxall concluded that Garran's

address "was characterised by statements which no true free-trader could possibly endorse", and he too exhorted the Association "to spare no effort" to secure the implementation of 'true freetrade'.¹⁶¹

In reply to this radical onslaught, the FTLA's conservatives, G.N.Griffiths, Edward Pulsford, Sydney Burdekin and Richard Teece, fought a defensive rearguard. Teece taunted Downing that "he was only putting in a word for the single-tax party", and stated that the introduction of the subject of taxation was "improper".¹⁶² Both Teece and Griffiths tried to win the support of the Council for amendments that the FTLA give its blessing and support to the Federation movement.¹⁶³ Teece also tried to preserve the illusion of unity by denying "that there was any disaffection amongst the party";¹⁶⁴ by now, however, the radicals had gained control, and they did not shirk or avoid conflict.

Towards the end of 1890 conflict again erupted within the FTLA over the ministry's continued refusal to carry out the party's 'declared policy'. At a special meeting of the STL executive council on 14 October, it was stated that the "Single Tax party ... have allied their forces with those of the Free-trade and Liberal party, in the expectation that the Government would be guided in their financial proposals by the resolutions passed at the [FTLA] conference", and it was resolved to convey to the government the view of the STL that "the repeated delays in bringing forward the promised scheme for the readjustment of the tariff have aroused suspicion ... as to the sincerity of the Government's intentions".¹⁶⁵ At a meeting of the FTLA Council some weeks later, the fiery and outspoken single taxer, Alexander Riddell, moved what the Herald described as "practically a censure on the Government".¹⁶⁶ Riddell moved that the Council "deprecates the postponement of the financial proposals by the Government, and urges the Ministry to fulfil its pledges, to introduce a freetrade policy".¹⁶⁷ The rather more tactful radical, E.W.Foxall, immediately moved an amendment which took "the edge off the original resolution" and bore "the marks of a compromise",¹⁶⁸ but which nevertheless stated that the Council's

"duty" was to ensure the implementation of the party's policy, and which "urged" the ministry "to submit such a policy to the House at the earliest possible moment".¹⁶⁹ The adoption of this still critical, but rather more diplomatic, amendment still led the Herald to remark on "the strength of the single-tax party in the Council".¹⁷⁰

Clearly, however, opinion within the FTLA was far from unanimous, and Riddell referred disparagingly to the "more conservative section of the association".¹⁷¹ The culmination of this internecine conflict came in January 1891, when, ostensibly on the grounds that the fiscal controversy was "practically ended", the Association's long-serving secretary, Edward Pulsford, announced his resignation.¹⁷² That radical pressure and antagonism also probably contributed to Pulsford's decision was suggested soon after by yet another outburst by the outspoken Riddell. Riddell publicly described Pulsford as a 'revenue tariffist' and an opponent of land taxation, and stated that, like the secretary of the protectionists' old extra-parliamentary organisation, H.T. Donaldson, he was "in favour of intercolonial free trade and protection against the world" by the imposition of a high revenue tariff. Riddell concluded by caustically suggesting that, if the FTLA wanted to replace Pulsford with another anti-direct taxation conservative, it should appoint Donaldson.¹⁷³

At a special meeting of the FTLA, called to consider Pulsford's resignation, further conflict arose. At a meeting of the single tax-dominated Paddington branch of the FTLA in November 1890, a resolution was passed condemning the possible imposition of a property tax, instead of a land tax as specified by the FTLA conference.¹⁷⁴ In February 1891, this resolution came before the central FTLA Council for consideration. Before debate on the resolution had even begun, however, the Association's president, J.H. Goodlet, revived the old conservative tactic of avoiding and delaying consideration of the question, declaring that "it was inexpedient for them to take up those questions, as if they did so their action in that respect would have the effect of dividing the association".¹⁷⁵ The conservative MLA and Council member, J.F. Cullen,¹⁷⁶ supported the president, and

contended that should they attempt "to give any final deliverance" on the matter, "they would disintegrate their forces".¹⁷⁶ Thereupon the meeting terminated, as did the FTLA; the Council was never reconvened, and nobody was appointed to replace Pulsford. In June it was reported that "For some months the association has been moribund, ...".¹⁷⁷ The FTLA's final epitaph appeared in the Herald at the end of 1891: "The freetraders have been weakened by division of opinion as to single-tax, through which their association partially collapsed, ...".¹⁷⁸

The consistent refusal of the majority conservatives within the freetrade party, both in and out of parliament, ever to specify or implement a policy of real freetrade naturally caused internal party tension. Even on the one issue on which the party was based, there was no agreement. It was this internal party conflict that undermined every other development towards a permanent, integrated and disciplined freetrade party; only its solution could ensure irreversible progress.

II

The development of protectionist organisation prior to 1889 had been largely determined by a three-sided struggle for control between the movement's non-parliamentary conservative manufacturers, non-parliamentary radicals and parliamentary party. Despite radical urgings for unity and integration, at no stage had this been achieved. For most of 1887, protectionist organisation had been dominated by the conservative manufacturers who controlled the PU;¹⁷⁹ in October of that year, however, their authority had been broken by the combined attack of the extra-parliamentary radicals and protectionist MSLA, as a

result of which the parliamentarians had established their supremacy over the direction of the movement.¹⁸⁰ The 1889 general election, however, had provided an opportunity for the wealthy conservative manufacturers to stage a come-back. Their indispensability during costly election campaigns had been exploited by ex-PU vice president and CM president, Archibald Forsyth, to revitalise the old forces of the PU into a 'new' organisation, the NPA³, and to take over the protectionist electoral organisation created by the MsLA.¹⁸¹ It was this power-play and contention between three distinct forces for control over, or equal representation in, the direction of the protection movement that, after February 1889, continued to characterise the development of protectionist organisation, and to inhibit the creation of a fully integrated and unified party structure. It was not until mid-1890 that all three contending parties were prepared to join forces on a basis of relative equality to create an integrated party organisation.

This basic three-way rivalry and struggle for control was, however, complicated after 1887 by the fact that no one rival party was powerful, representative or influential enough to assert permanent and total dominion over the organisation of the movement. Until the end of 1887 the indispensable wealth of the manufacturers had enabled them to dominate, but then the MsLA and radicals had united to break that dominance. For two reasons, however, the alliance between the radicals and the parliamentarians was shaky: most MsLA were conservative by instinct, and protectionist electoral success still relied heavily on the resources of the manufacturers. Thus, by the time of the 1889 general election, the parliamentary party again needed the manufacturers' affluence, and the latter utilised this dependence to regain their influence. Having done so, they were shrewd enough to realise that, should they fail to consolidate their regained control, conservative dominion would be short-lived once the elections were over. To prevent a repetition of their humiliation in October 1887, the manufacturers came to two major conclusions. First, they realised that to shun the parliamentary party, and deny it any influence in the organisation of the movement outside parliament, only courted disaster;

hence, they saw the necessity of forming a lasting alliance with the protectionist MsLA. But, in order to ensure that the MsLA remained a contributing, rather than a dominating influence, it was also realised that the forces of non-parliamentary conservatism needed strengthening by the inclusion of other conservative interests beyond those merely of the CM; hence, a scheme was hatched to create a new and enlarged extra-parliamentary organisation to represent the conservative interests of not just the manufacturers, but those also of conservative pastoralist, professional and commercial protectionists.

While organising and managing the protectionists' 1889 electoral campaign, Forsyth and his NPA3 colleagues undertook the creation of a comprehensive conservative association into which the NPA3 would merge at the conclusion of the elections. On 21 January 1889, a private circular was sent to well over 200 protectionists throughout the colony inviting their attendance at a meeting to be held a week later "for the purpose of considering the advisability of forming a Political and Social Club, comprised of those believing in the necessity for Fiscal Reform based upon Protective Principles ...".¹⁸² The stated intention was to make the "proposed organisation ... one of real and permanent power", and to achieve this it was emphasised that "a large body of supporters is of necessity required, ...".¹⁸³ That the new organisation was planned and initiated by the manufacturer-led NPA3 was borne out by the fact that, of the three "Hon. Secs" in whose names the invitation was issued, one, C.B.Lowe, was a secretary of the NPA3 electoral committee,¹⁸⁴ and another, W.H.Armstrong, was a member of the CM,¹⁸⁵ was probably also involved in the NPA3, and had certainly been a member of the PU Council in 1886-87.¹⁸⁶

The proposed meeting was duly held on the appointed day, and, under the chairmanship of the wealthy and influential pastoralist, William Macleay,¹⁸⁷ it brought into existence a club, based "on purely Protectionist principles" and christened the 'National Club' (NC).¹⁸⁸ Of the 103 "gentlemen who joined the 'National Club' on the occasion of the first meeting",¹⁸⁹ the well-known names clearly reveal the character of the organisation:

manufacturer-inspired, but a comprehensive expression of conservative protectionist opinion. The CM was powerfully represented,¹⁹⁰ as was the NPA's executive¹⁹¹ and extinct PU Council.¹⁹² The list also included such wealthy pastoralists as W.Lamb, W.E.Abbott, F.B.Suttor, W.Alison and H.C.White;¹⁹³ numerous men of commerce, including B.E.Nicoll, M.McRae, G.S. Arthur and J.de V. Lamb;¹⁹⁴ and the conservative protectionist barrister, Edmund Barton. Not one identifiable protectionist radical was included in the Club's initial membership. By October 1889, the Club's membership had risen to 229, the overwhelming majority of whom were either manufacturers or pastoralists, or were engaged in trade, commerce or the professions.¹⁹⁵ The invitation to the inaugural meeting stated that the "Entrance Fee and Annual Subscription will be arranged at the Meeting"¹⁹⁶ and, as one angry radical later pointed out, the fact that it was decided to accept as members only those who were "prepared to plonk down £5 as entrance fee, and pay the same amount as subscription" further revealed that the Club was "established on purely conservative principles".¹⁹⁷

On 23 February, the NC's formation was widely advertised, and it was reported that a "strong committee" had been appointed, with William Macleay as president, and the pastoralists, J.P.Abbott, W.Lamb and H.C.White, and Edmund Barton as vice presidents.¹⁹⁸ Into the NC there now merged the NPA's; on 27 March, NPA executive chairman, Archibald Forsyth, moved that the NPA's, "having concluded its duties re general election, surrender its trust and hand over all books, documents, and effects" to the NC.¹⁹⁹ Forsyth also urged the Club to adopt the title of NPA,²⁰⁰ but this suggestion was rejected; thus, the life of yet another NPA had expired. By the end of March, the NC had also made contact with, and secured the co-operation of, the parliamentary party. The first formal contact seems to have occurred in mid-March when "members of the new National Club" aided the "Parliamentary section of the National Party" to resume the work of "organising", the abandonment of which had been forced on the MsLA by the necessity to return to their electorates during the general election.²⁰¹

The 'aid' offered by the NC was surely a sign of the

conservatives' desire to forge a working alliance with the parliamentarians, mainly for the purpose of securing their own position at the head of the movement. Such an alliance was formalised on 19 March when a meeting of the NC appointed a Political Committee of fifteen members, five of whom were MsLA "representing the Parliamentary party", the remaining ten "representing the Club generally".²⁰² Some weeks later a sixteenth member, H. Tennent Donaldson, was added to the Committee as a permanent secretary.²⁰³ It was this sixteen-man executive that was seen by the NC as "the body which is in future to take charge of the organisation of the Protectionist forces".²⁰⁴ The active participation of the leading protectionist MsLA seemed to justify such a confident prediction.

The creation of the Political Committee seemed finally to have bridged the gulf between the parliamentary party and the protectionists' operative extra-parliamentary organisation, and to have fulfilled Duverger's conditions for "a true political party": the establishment of "some permanent co-ordination" between the two wings.²⁰⁵ Despite this development, however, the protectionist forces remained splintered, and deeply divided over their attitude to the new self-appointed leader of the movement. The reason seems clear. Although Duverger's formal conditions had been fulfilled, the fact remained that the protectionist movement was composed of a number of different and rival interests and opinions, and the new organisation and its executive, unlike the freetraders' FTLA, was anything but representative of the movement it claimed to control. In fact, the NC's Political Committee was little more than a thoroughly conservative clique; of its ten non-parliamentary members, four had been members of the old exclusive PU Council, four at least had been members of the manufacturer-dominated NPA's executive, and five were members of the CM,²⁰⁶ and the wealthy and conservative Macleay, Barton and Lamb filled the remaining positions. The Club's ten members of the executive were certainly an accurate reflection of 'the Club generally', but certainly not of the entire protectionist movement. As one radical protectionist aptly pointed out, the Club's executive "may represent the one or two hundred members, but not the

great body of the people, ...".²⁰⁷

Furthermore, the participation of the parliamentary party in the NC was also limited by the nature and outlook of the Club. The MsLA were restricted to five of the fifteen positions on the Political Committee, and none of those appointed directly represented the views of the party's significant radical wing. Lyne, Dibbs and J.P. Abbott were anything but progressive in outlook and, although Edmunds and Chanter were not entirely illiberal, they were certainly not convinced radicals. In the same way as the Club's exclusive character precluded the involvement of non-parliamentary radicals, it also acted to restrict the involvement of the more liberal members of the parliamentary party. Of the NC's 229 members in October 1889, only twenty-eight were MsLA, of whom only three held firmly progressive views.²⁰⁸ Integration, then, was more imaginary than real. The parliamentary party was clearly intended to play a subsidiary role, and only its conservative members were made welcome.

In the final analysis, it seems that the new and supreme protectionist executive was little more than a perpetuation of the conservative, exclusive and unpopular PU, bolstered by the participation of other sympathetic conservative interests and given some assurance of permanency and influence by the involvement of the leaders of the parliamentary party. It was, however, scarcely to be expected that the radical elements of the movement, both in and out of parliament, would willingly submit to the dictates of such a body. And, further, just how long the parliamentary party would tolerate its minor role in the 'integrated' organisation tended also to cast some doubt on the permanency of the arrangements arrived at by the end of March 1889.

Antagonism between the extra-parliamentary radicals and the NC first arose soon after the Club's formal inauguration. From the very start, negotiations between the radical PPRL and the NC to create a fully integrated party structure were doomed; while the radicals demanded an equal representation in the united organisation, the conservatives by 1889 were

able to negotiate from a position of strength, and they continually refused to concede equal representation. In March, the NC declared its desire to enter "into alliance with all Protection organisations", thereby acting "to unite all in one compact body, prepared to act in unison, and by this means put an end to the antagonistic actions and views" that had previously kept the movement divided.²⁰⁹ It was particularly hoped that the PPRL would "see the wisdom of dissolving or entering into alliance with the National Political Committee of the National Club",²¹⁰ and at a conference of the PPRL in May such a course was specifically proposed. Referring to the disunity caused by the existence of "two organisations, each claiming supremacy", the delegate from Bathurst, P.V.Ryan, "considered that the interests of protection were not well served by having divided authority in the cause", and he argued that "There should be one responsible head to be recognised by all leagues".²¹¹

Ryan's reference to the local leagues was occasioned by a struggle that had arisen between the PPRL and the NC for control of the branch network. As early as mid-March the PPRL had begun planning for their "conference of delegates of branch protection leagues from all parts of the colony",²¹² but these plans were upset by the intervention of the NC. Early in April, the Club requested all local leagues "to at once place themselves in communication" with the Political Committee,²¹³ and soon after the Committee began to despatch "circulars to the various leagues in the country, requesting them to affiliate",²¹⁴ and apparently seeking to discredit the PPRL.²¹⁵ It was in this situation of open conflict that Ryan sought to persuade the PPRL to "affiliate with the 'National Protection Committee', ... [to] which the greater influence was attached".²¹⁶ Under the circumstances, however, the PPRL would not hear of it. Past PPRL president, William Richardson, stoutly refused to countenance the suggestion, declaring that the League "had laboured unceasingly for nine years, and now a fresh party came into the field to sweep them away, and take the credit of all they had done in the cause".²¹⁷

By early June, however, the PPRL had somewhat modified

its attitude, and it discussed a proposal to "communicate with the club to arrange for a basis for united action, in order that protection interests may be justly conserved".²¹⁸ After further consideration, the League appointed a sub-committee to open serious negotiations with the Political Committee.²¹⁹ The League's condition for amalgamation, however, was clearly defined; it positively refused to "accept a subordinate or co-ordinate position ..., unless it is intended that all existing protection organisations shall have an equal voice in drawing up rules and appointing executive officers" in any combined organisation.²²⁰ Although the Political Committee reported that the League's overtures would be considered,²²¹ one of its members, Forsyth, had already made the Club's position quite clear. On the grounds that "the club was in a position that the league could not occupy", because of its ability "to command funds", Forsyth denied that the PPRL was able to "direct the cause of Protection", and he suggested that the PPRL agree that the NC "take the lead ..., with the league participating in the council".²²² Equal representation was clearly not envisaged for the PPRL, nor was it granted; the bodies remained at odds, and maintained their separate identities. Integration had yet again proved impossible.

Despite its battle with the PPRL, the Political Committee pressed on with its work of re-organising the protectionists' local branch network, displaying considerable energy and achieving considerable success. The NC's campaign to place all branches under its aegis, despite the claims of the PPRL, seems to have been particularly successful. This was made clear as early as May. Despite the PPRL's claim to control a network of sixty branches, only eleven sent delegates to its conference, and the NC was represented as "the reason ... [for] the small attendance".²²³ Furthermore, one of the PPRL's branches represented at the conference declared that it was "not prepared to be subject to it any longer", clearly stating its intention to transfer its allegiance to the NC.²²⁴ The affiliation of local branches proceeded rapidly, and at each of the Political Committee's weekly meetings correspondence was consistently tabled from a large number of affiliated branches.²²⁵ Finally, in August, it was reported that "... all the Protection associations in the metropolitan district had now become affiliated with the political

committee".²²⁶

In addition to securing the affiliation of existing branches, the Committee also undertook the extension of its branch network through the formation of new branches. In this regard it also acted with vigour, it being reported during July that "during the week associations had been established at Canowindra, Cudgegong, Goolagong, Mount McDonald, Walli, and Woodstock".²²⁷ Finally, in October, a composite list of 204 local protection associations "in affiliation with the Political Protection Committee of the National Club" was published;²²⁸ as the Committee's secretary pointed out, the impressive number of branches certainly testified to "The growth that the Party has made since the last general election ..., especially when it is remembered that they have nearly all been brought into existence since the establishment of the National Club ...".²²⁹ Like the freetraders, the protectionists also held a conference of delegates from their various local branches during 1889. Held in October, the NPA⁴ conference,²³⁰ like the earlier FTLA conference, provided concrete evidence of the organising activity of 1889. In all, 106 local protectionist branches were represented at the conference, and of these, seventy-six were country branches and the rest metropolitan leagues.²³¹ All seemed to augur well for an efficient and comprehensive protectionist campaign during the next general election.

With the next general election in mind, the conference gave its attention to the specification of a formal system of electoral organisation and management. Along the same lines as those agreed upon by the FTLA conference, the protectionists' proposals were formally set out in a list of eight "rules and conditions" submitted by the Political Committee. The basis of the system was the selection work of the local associations, and in electorates "having more than one association such associations shall jointly agree on the selection of candidates". It was stated that the candidates selected by the local branches "shall be accepted as the candidates of the party", but, mindful of the mistakes of 1889, it was emphasised that "to secure the recognition", or official endorsement, of selected candidates,

the branches should "promptly notify" the central executive of their choices. Naturally enough the Political Committee was specified as the supreme executive body, and, in addition to its power to endorse candidates, it undertook to "select ... candidates if requested", and assumed the right to recommend and nominate candidates in electorates where local organisation was either missing or "unable to find a suitable candidate or candidates, ...".²³² Strangely enough, however, in view of the protectionists' methods during the 1889 election, no consideration was given to any prescribed techniques of eliminating vote-splitting or disciplining refractory and intransigent candidates. The protectionists, however, did pay special attention to the financial aspect of electoral management, particularly the dispensation of "pecuniary assistance" to certain candidates;²³³ in this respect, they provide further evidence of the progress being made towards the creation of a sophisticated 'machine' for the management and control of electoral activity.

Basic to any effective system of electoral management, however, was the presence of a permanent and respected central electoral executive to co-ordinate party activity, to control, endorse and despatch candidates, and to act as the final arbiter in any disputes. While the rules submitted to the conference assumed that the Political Committee of the NC would constitute such an executive body at any future elections, a significant proportion of those in attendance did not. The presence at the conference of the parliamentary party's significant radical wing,²³⁴ at least seven members of the PPRL²³⁵ and two TLC protectionists,²³⁶ led to a resumption of the assault on the NC's conservative and exclusive character, and to renewed efforts to make the party's central organisation, especially its executive committee, more representative of the movement as a whole.

It seems, however, that the conservative Political Committee, and in particular its most active 'wirepuller', Archibald Forsyth, had shrewdly anticipated radical moves to force the Committee to broaden its base. Forsyth came to the conference armed with a number of prepared resolutions, designed to give the appearance of the Committee's willingness to become

more representative, but in reality postponing any basic change and retaining firm conservative control of the executive. In projecting his proposals to counter radical moves, Forsyth waged a clever tactical campaign, and again convincingly 'dished' his radical adversaries.

On the third day of the conference, a country delegate innocently raised the subject of the "Organisation of the National Party", by moving that "it is necessary to impress on the delegates the necessity for reorganisation in their districts ...".²³⁷ Before any discussion took place, however, Forsyth intervened and moved his series of prepared resolutions as an amendment to the original motion.²³⁸ At once, he had severely limited the scope of any radical assault on the NC, an assault that was bound to be launched during the discussion on organisation. Forsyth first proposed that, in the interests of uniformity, the NC change its name to "the National Protection Association of New South Wales" (NPA4),²³⁹ to conform to the title adopted by the local branches.²⁴⁰ This proposal aroused no objections, and was duly carried without dissent.²⁴¹

Forsyth's second proposal, concerning the composition of "the Executive Committee of such National Association",²⁴² however, was the cause of animated debate. Representing his proposal as "a recommendation to the political committee to widen its basis",²⁴³ Forsyth moved that the NPA4 executive comprise "the Political Committee of the National Club, ..., together with not less than eight, nor more than ten, representatives, to be nominated by such of the chief metropolitan and suburban associations as may be called upon for the purpose by the Political Committee, ...".²⁴⁴ The specification that the executive's additional members were to be drawn from only those branches nominated by the Political Committee clearly meant that the executive's composition would remain firmly under the control of the conservative Committee. Needless to say, the radicals were anything but enthusiastic about such a proposal and, led by PPRL stalwart, William Richardson, they undertook to change it in an attempt to break conservative dominion. It was the Political Committee's virtual power to dictate the appointment of the

executive's additional members that Richardson found objectionable; the power of appointment, he maintained, "should not come from the Club, but from the Conference".²⁴⁵

Stating that "his chief object was to assert the principle ... that all appointments in connection with the association should be made by election", Richardson finally moved as an amendment that the Political Committee, "together with fifteen gentlemen to be now elected by ballot, do constitute the executive committee of such National Association".²⁴⁶ This would clearly open the way for radical representation on the executive, and the amendment "excited considerable discussion, the representatives of the Political Protection and Reform League supporting it while members of the National Club ... opposed it".²⁴⁷ The conservatives certainly did oppose the amendment: one delegate described it as "offensive to the National Club";²⁴⁸ Edmund Barton stated that if it "was agreed to he, for one, would decline to sit on the committee";²⁴⁹ and Forsyth assured the conference that "those who were opposing the National Club on the ground that it was not sufficiently representative were doing it wrongfully". A committee of thirty, he maintained, would be "altogether unworkable", and he appealed to the delegates to reject the amendment.²⁵⁰ Again he had his way;²⁵¹ again the conservatives had met the radical challenge, and emerged victorious. The next challenge, however, was not so easily disposed of.

That Forsyth's proposals to make the NC "more representative in a practical manner"²⁵² were merely designed to win the sympathy of the conference to counter an anticipated radical attack seems to be revealed by the fact that the NPA⁴ and its 'enlarged' executive failed to materialise after the conference. Yet another NPA faded into oblivion. Having weathered the conference storm, the NC and its Political Committee began its second year of existence,²⁵³ still completely unrepresentative and far from willing to become so. In March 1890, however, a new and more formidable challenge was issued to the cliquish dominance of the conservatives. To men like Forsyth, the participation of the protectionist MsLA in the Political Committee was

only important in order to prevent their powerful antagonism; it had never been envisaged that they would play more than a subsidiary role in the affairs of the Committee, and the proposed NPA4 executive would have even further reduced their influence. By March 1890, however, the parliamentary party was no longer prepared to tolerate its minor role in the management of the forces of protection; nor, it seems, was it any longer prepared to see the whole movement governed by a conservative and exclusive clique.

On 21 March, therefore, a "vigilance committee of the Parliamentary Opposition",²⁵⁴ comprising fourteen MsLA, was appointed "to specially safeguard the interests of the party"²⁵⁵ and to provide "protectionist members of Parliament ... with a habitat outside the walls of the National Club".²⁵⁶ The broader object of this move was revealed later in the month when a meeting of the 'vigilance committee' resolved that "the political committee of the National Club should be invited to meet the vigilance committee ... for the purpose of associating more closely these bodies with the various protectionist organisations, ...".²⁵⁷ Two such meetings took place, and at both "Matters affecting the organisation of the protectionist party were discussed at considerable length".²⁵⁸ It was finally arranged to hold a conference of all existing protectionist associations for the purpose of, yet again, undertaking the reorganisation of the party.

If Forsyth and the NC had manipulated the October 1889 conference, the MsLA and non-parliamentary radicals did no less an effective job of dominating the conference held at the end of April 1890. Fifty-three local protectionist associations were represented by forty-nine delegates, among whom were six MsLA, PPRL president, R.Scott Ross, the TLC radicals, John Norton and J.R.Talbot, and the future or past radical MsLA, H.C. Hoyle, R.A.Price, H.McKinnon and R.M.Vaughn.²⁵⁹ The PPRL was itself forcefully represented by its fearless past president, William Richardson, and outspoken secretary, R.C.Luscombe. A further ten MsLA were in attendance, seven as representatives of the parliamentary party²⁶⁰ and three as members of the NC's

Political Committee.²⁶¹ Of the sixteen MsLA in attendance, six were convinced radicals.²⁶² Only four non-parliamentary members of the Political Committee bothered to be present;²⁶³ their days of unshared dominance were clearly numbered.

During 1889, one frustrated radical had called on "the liberal members of the party ... [to] step forward and assist in connecting the disunited ranks" of the movement;²⁶⁴ now, almost twelve months later and under the leadership of the parliamentary party, that task was being tackled. It is clear from the proceedings of the conference²⁶⁵ that the 'vigilance committee' had forced the Political Committee to agree to broaden the base of the organisation it had so effectively monopolised and, as the result of this compliance, E.W.O'Sullivan moved that "an executive committee be appointed for the control of the National Party consisting of 45 members, viz., 15 from the political committee of the National Club, 15 members to be elected by the Opposition, and 15 members to be elected at this meeting". Dibbs, as leader of the parliamentary party, was nominated as chairman of the executive.²⁶⁶ Ninian Melville, however, moved an even more liberal amendment that, in addition to the thirty MsLA and members of the NC, the executive also contain "one representative from each electorate in New South Wales".²⁶⁷ After a lengthy discussion, Melville's amendment was carried.

As the Telegraph remarked, "The meeting was neither enthusiastic nor united in tone, and the discussion at times was heated in the extreme".²⁶⁸ Clearly, however, the NC was outnumbered, and the futility of resistance to the integration movement was revealed by the almost pathetic remark of one of the Political Committee's original members that "he had always advocated a larger representation on the National Party Committee".²⁶⁹ In many respects the April 1890 conference was a repetition of the conservatives' humiliation in October 1887;²⁷⁰ once again the parliamentary party and the non-parliamentary radicals had combined to break the sectional dominance of the conservatives over the organisation of the movement. The way was now clear for the emergence of a unified and representative party structure.

Finally, after four years of frustration, there emerged an integrated and unified protectionist party structure in which was represented all the diverse elements that went to make up the protectionist movement - parliamentary and non-parliamentary, radical and conservative, city and country. It was only fitting that the new organisation should be named "the National Protection Association of New South Wales" (NPA5) and, after an interim period during which the new executive was styled the National Protection Council,²⁷¹ the well-worn title was adopted.²⁷² On 13 May, the parliamentary party elected its fifteen representatives to sit on the executive,²⁷³ and less than a week later the Political Committee of the NC was actively attending "to the appointment of representatives from electorates to the executive committee, ...".²⁷⁴ On 23 June, the new NPA5 executive held its first meeting; the draft rules of the new Association were drawn up, various sub-committees were appointed, and "other matters of an initial character were dealt with".²⁷⁵ In August, H. Tennent Donaldson was appointed secretary to the Association²⁷⁶ and, in September, detailed recommendations for the thorough organisation of the new Association were received.²⁷⁷

The one sour note in the emergence of the new body was the continued refusal of the PPRL to co-operate. Previously the League had kept alive the movement of radical dissatisfaction with the cliquish NC; but now, in the face of the party's liberal reorganisation, its continued objection that "the principle of equal representation is denied"²⁷⁸ seemed selfish peevishness. The new NPA5 executive was, in fact, thoroughly representative. It contained twenty parliamentary representatives,²⁷⁹ five of whom were confirmed radicals.²⁸⁰ Of the fifteen non-parliamentary members who attended the executive's early meetings, four were members of the old Political Committee²⁸¹ and eleven were the first of the representatives from the electorates, among whom were four recognisable radicals.²⁸²

At the very moment, however, that the "machinery of the party" was in sight of being "as complete as possible",²⁸³ it faltered and faded into oblivion. In September, the executive decided that its regular monthly meetings would in future be

held on the last Monday of each month;²⁸⁴ the first and last of these 'regular' meetings was held in November.²⁸⁵ Unlike the explosive disintegration of the FTLA, the NPA⁵ quietly "passed out of sight and hearing".²⁸⁶ Although the reasons for the rapid demise of the NPA⁵ are not obvious, the shreds of available evidence would suggest that the effective and harmonious integration of interests and opinions so diverse as those within the protectionist movement proved impossible. Integration had not been achieved in an atmosphere of harmony and enthusiasm; the PPRL remained aloof and the NC, it seems, after a year of exclusive dominion, was virtually forced to surrender its power monopoly. As a result, it would have been surprising had tension and resentment not been present within the NPA. The presence of such tension, it would appear, accounted for the collapse of the NPA⁵.

On 15 September, the executive received the report of its "sub-committee for organisation", but its recommendations were not ratified; rather "it was resolved that they should be considered at a meeting specially convened for that purpose".²⁸⁷ Such a decision would seem to suggest that the executive itself was deeply divided over the subject. Although the 'special meeting' was never held, it is probably not unreasonable to suggest that the sub-committee's recommendations were unpalatable to the conservatives on the executive, for on 26 November it was reported that two of the executive's prominent conservative members, MLA, T.H.Hassall, and manufacturer and original member of the NC's Political Committee, Alexander Martin, had resigned.²⁸⁸ If their resignations constituted the beginning of a conservative exodus from the executive, the NPA's effective days were clearly numbered. The conservatives' refusal to cooperate with the MsLA and radicals in October 1887 deprived the protectionists' organisational machinery of unity, funds, energy and experience; it would have done the same in November 1890. After October 1887, the parliamentarians were forced to carry the burden of organisation alone; they were probably obliged to do likewise after November 1890. The 1891 general election, however, loomed as the acid test of their ability to apply the principles of electoral management formulated during the less

troubled days of the protectionist party.

* * * * *

The experience of both fiscal parties during 1889 and 1890 demonstrated that the creation of an integrated and representative party 'machine', although difficult enough in itself, was simple in contrast to the task of maintaining it as a permanent and efficient director of party affairs. The achievements of both parties after the 1889 general election provided incontrovertible evidence of a political system in the process of transformation: the creation of widespread organizational networks, the attention to the modern techniques, sophistications and formalities of electoral management, and the promotion of unified party structures were all trends in the evolution of modern political forms and methods. But, as within the parliamentary parties, one basic factor continually operated to prevent the permanent consolidation of these achievements: the variety of interests and opinions within both fiscal movements bred sectionalism and dissension that positively precluded the principled unity and collective harmony so essential to the completion of an evolution that had as its goal the emergence of two integrated, principled and permanent political parties.

CHAPTER 9

ELECTIONS AND ENDORSEMENTS: Parliamentary Electoral Organisation and Discipline.

II 1891

"It is doubtful if a general election has been so satisfactorily managed previously; certainly there is a great contrast observable between the proceedings on the last occasion and those at the present election".

(DT, 12 June 1891, p.5).

The general election of 1891 was precipitated by the action of George Dibbs, leader of the protectionist opposition, on 28 May. On that day, Dibbs moved in the Legislative Assembly that the "Government no longer possesses the confidence of this House or of the country".¹ The censure was lost, but only on the casting vote of the Speaker who, himself a protectionist, explained his vote by reference to the precedent which stated that it was not the Speaker's "'duty to throw his weight into the scale in such a way as to manifest party predilection, or to precipitate the result aimed at.'"² Clearly, however, the position of the Parkes ministry was untenable, and, on 1 June, Parkes

requested and was granted a dissolution of parliament³ to allow for a general election in which "the country ... [would be] asked to declare which it would prefer - government by the Ministry now in charge of its affairs, or government by a Ministry constructed by the leaders of the late Opposition".⁴

The hasty preparations of both parties for the unexpected election clearly revealed the disrepair into which their sophisticated party structures of 1889-90 had fallen. The formal relationship between both parliamentary parties and their respective extra-parliamentary bodies had simply disappeared, and the task of re-constructing party 'machinery' able to manage and organise the election devolved entirely upon the parliamentarians of both parties. On 3 June, a meeting of the protectionist parliamentary party appointed an "organising committee" or executive of nine MsLA⁵ "with full power to make all arrangements for a general election".⁶

While the MsLA were taking positive steps to create an organising executive, efforts were being made to revive the disintegrated protectionist forces outside parliament. On 1 June, it was reported that "A meeting of manufacturers and others interested in protection will shortly be held to form a committee to work the elections",⁷ and, on 3 June, it was again stated that "A meeting of manufacturers is to be held in a few days, the object being to form a league in the interests of protection".⁸ Certainly the regular occurrence of general elections provided the non-parliamentary manufacturers with regular opportunities to regain the influence over the protection movement that they invariably lost in the interval between elections; the dependence of the entire party upon them for funds on such important occasions automatically re-opened the door to power and influence. During the 1889 general election, the manufacturers, under the leadership of Forsyth, had re-asserted their diminished influence through the NPA³, and had laid the foundations for their control of the movement throughout 1889 by creating the NC. The creation of the NPA⁵ shook this control, and the Association's collapse⁹ in early 1891 completely eliminated what remained of the manufacturers' influence.

The advent of a general election, however, revitalised the manufacturers, and they immediately played their trump card. On 3 June, it was reported that "Subscriptions have already been received from manufacturers in aid of the coming fight",¹⁰ and the parliamentarians were again obliged to invite the representation of wealthy non-parliamentary interests on the election executive. The manufacturers, it would appear, successfully resuscitated, if only temporarily, the extinct political executive of the NC, for, on 9 June, it was reported that the parliamentary executive had been enlarged to include representatives from "the political committee of the National Club".¹¹ Unlike the electoral arrangements of 1889, however, it would appear that in 1891 the parliamentary party retained firm control of the executive; in contrast to its representation of eleven MsLA, the number of non-parliamentary protectionists on the executive, or the "National Protection Party Elections Committee" (NPPEC)¹² as it became known, at no stage exceeded four.¹³ Of the four, Alexander Martin, Archibald Forsyth and J.T. Toohy, all manufacturers and members of the CM,¹⁴ had been foundation members of the NC's Political Committee,¹⁵ and its permanent secretary, H. Tennent Donaldson,¹⁶ was appointed secretary to the NPPEC.¹⁷ The chairmanship of the executive, however, was firmly retained by the parliamentary leader, George Dibbs,¹⁸ and, despite the fact that a number of its parliamentary members were forced to leave Sydney to defend their seats,¹⁹ the NPPEC at no stage became the exclusive preserve of the manufacturers. Ad hoc and dominated by MsLA, the NPPEC provided little evidence of the sophisticated and integrated party structure of 1890.

The weakness of extra-parliamentary organisation and the disappearance of the integrated party structures by mid-1891 were even more apparent among the freetraders. The complete lack of any established freetrade organisation by June 1891 was revealed in the Herald's comment that "The lines upon which the campaign is to be conducted, and the body which will be charged with executive ... duties, have yet to be determined".²⁰ Although the FTLA had been "moribund" for some months,²¹ efforts were made in early June "to infuse new life into the association" in an attempt to fill the organisational vacuum.²² Meetings of

the re-convened FTLA council were held on 3 and 8 June to discuss the resuscitation of the Association,²³ and at the latter meeting, a resolution was carried pledging the members of the council "to use all their efforts during the coming campaign in support of the Government".²⁴ It was finally reported, however, that the "endeavour to resuscitate" the FTLA was a failure, and that the Association was "obliged from weakness to withdraw from active participation in the contest".²⁵

The freetrade parliamentary party was, therefore, obliged to undertake the creation of an ad hoc body to manage the party's electoral campaign. On 3 June, a caucus meeting of fifty-one members of the parliamentary party²⁶ was held for the purpose of formulating "plans with a view to getting the electioneering machinery into operation".²⁷ In reply to a suggestion that "it would be a good thing to appoint a Committee",²⁸ it was announced that the members of the ministry had "constituted themselves a central organization",²⁹ and one of its members, Bruce Smith, suggested to the party's "private members" that they "appoint six of ... [their] number to co-operate with us as part of a Central Committee".³⁰ Taking heed of Smith's sensible comment that "it would be wise to select gentlemen who are likely to be in Sydney",³¹ the meeting appointed a committee of seven MsLA³² which joined the ministerial committee to form the central "Freetrade and Federation Committee" (FTFC)³³ to "undertake the organising which the conflict entails".³⁴ Under the chairmanship of J.H. Carruthers,³⁵ the FTFC prepared to embark on its task of securing a freetrade electoral victory by obtaining offices for its headquarters³⁶ and by appointing J.M. Conroy as its paid secretary.³⁷

The extinction of the central unified party structures of 1889-90 did not, however, mean that all the plans and ideas for the efficient management of a general election, formulated during those fruitful years,³⁸ had been forgotten. In fact, many of the lessons painfully learned during the election of 1889, much of the work done during 1889 to remedy previous shortcomings, and many of the ideas for successful electoral

management expounded during 1889, were applied and bore fruit during the general election of 1891. This continued progress was well demonstrated in the most fundamental aspect of successful electoral management, the scope and nature of local organisation.

With the decline of the parent body, many local branches of the FTLA also became extinct³⁹ to such an extent that, on its formation, the FTFC saw the need to begin afresh and it resolved to appoint its own local branch committees "in all the important country districts"⁴⁰ for the purpose of local organisation and candidate selection. The NPPEC was similarly pessimistic about what remained of the protectionists' efforts to establish a widespread network of local branches in 1889.⁴¹ It, too, was obliged to state that the work of candidate selection "will, as far as possible, be left to the local committees which are to be appointed, ..."⁴² Both executives, however, adhered to the decisions of their 1889 conferences in maintaining that "as far as possible the selection of candidates in the city and country should be left to the local committees".⁴³ On the basis of such a resolution, therefore, it must have gratified both executives to witness the rapid resuscitation of a number of previously moribund branches. The revival of the "inactive" Mudgee Protectionist League⁴⁴ was shortly followed by the resuscitation of the Taree Protection League,⁴⁵ the "non-existent" Balmain Protectionist Association,⁴⁶ and the "defunct" Orange FTA.⁴⁷

In addition to this rapid resuscitation of branches, other local ad hoc committees, including a branch of the FTFC at Queanbeyan,⁴⁸ were hurriedly created to undertake the work of local organisation.⁴⁹ When the suburban electorates in which still-active local branches existed were added to the electorates in which the work of resuscitating old branches and creating new local committees was being pursued, the potential for effective local organisation was certainly greater than it had been in 1889.⁵⁰ In contrast to their total of only eleven electorates in 1889, the freetraders in 1891 possessed local organisations capable of selection work in nineteen electorates;⁵¹

and the protectionists in 1891 possessed local branches in the same number of electorates as had contained active protectionist branches in 1889.⁵²

It was, however, the way in which the tasks of local organisation and selection were tackled that provided the clearest evidence of the continuing progress being made in the evolution of modern electoral techniques. A number of local branches that did not become moribund after 1889 displayed in 1890 and 1891 foresight and judgment in preparing for an unexpected general election by selecting their candidates well in advance of such an eventuality. During April 1890, for instance, the Redfern FTA held a series of meetings at which four candidates "for the Redfern electorate at the next elections" were chosen.⁵³ Early in May 1891, the local protectionist league at Cootamundra also met and chose its candidates to contest the electorates of Gundagai and Young in the event of an election.⁵⁴

Even more important than the timing of candidate selection was the method of that selection within electorates having more than one local association. The previous general election had afforded examples of intense rivalry and conflict between branches in the one electorate,⁵⁵ as a result of which, effective electoral management was made virtually impossible. In an attempt to eliminate such undesirable occurrences, both the FTLA and NPA4 conferences had declared in 1889 that, where there was more than one branch in any electorate, those branches "should arrange for working together in the matter of elections"⁵⁶ and should "jointly agree on the selection of candidates".⁵⁷ The general election of 1891 provided the first examples during the period of fiscal politics of such co-ordinated electoral activity on the local level. Perhaps the outstanding example took place in the two-member electorate of Argyle, where the local protectionists combined the virtue of action well in advance of the unexpected election with the efficiency of complete co-ordination.

On 15 April, well prior to the election, a meeting of the Crookwell Protectionist Association decided "to take steps

to select a candidate to contest Argyle with T. Rose". The meeting decided "to invite persons willing to contest the election to send in their names by 21 May".⁵⁸ Both local protectionist bodies in the Argyle electorate, the Crookwell branch and the Goulburn PU, worked in close harmony, and it was jointly decided that a conference be held in Goulburn to make the final selection. On 11 May, the Crookwell body chose its delegates,⁵⁹ and the Goulburn Union did likewise on 13 May.⁶⁰ The joint conference of "Argyle protectionist delegates" was held on 8 June, thirty being present. Seven names were submitted, and "the final ballot was between Messrs Graham and Briner, the former being chosen by a majority of ten".⁶¹ The protectionists of Argyle, then, were well prepared to cope with the unexpected election of June 1891. Such efficient local organisation was of great benefit to the protectionists' overall organisational efforts, and it certainly made the task of the central executive much easier: the process of central endorsement was an uncomplicated formality, and, in such a situation of certainty, no further protectionist candidates entered the field to threaten to split the protectionist vote. A similar lack of complications was also evident in two further electorates - Hastings and Manning, and Balmain - where the protectionist branches met in conference and decided jointly upon their candidates.⁶²

Prompt co-ordinated action between the local leagues in an electorate, in fact, provided no opportunity for superfluous candidates to justify their refusal to retire; the popular arguments of intransigent superfluous candidates that they were either 'first in the field' or the nominees of one of two rival leagues became untenable. The effect of efficient co-ordinated local organisation in reducing the incidence of vote-splitting was demonstrated in several electorates. The Armidale branch of the New England Protectionist League met on 2 June, and arranged to hold a meeting of delegates from the other branches in the electorate on 8 June "to arrange a plan of campaign".⁶³ At this meeting of delegates, "it was agreed to take a general protection ballot" on 11 June to decide the three protectionist candidates to contest the electorate. The

report of the conference went on to state that all the candidates "agreed to abide by this ballot, being the only way to avoid having too many candidates".⁶⁴ The ballot resulted in the selection of H. Copeland, W. Proctor and C. Wilson, and the two unsuccessful nominees retired as promised.⁶⁵

Protectionist organisation in the electorate of Paddington got under way when the executive committee of the Paddington Protection Association,⁶⁶ comprising delegates from the Woollahra, Randwick, Paddington and Waverley branches, met on 5 June to consider the selection of candidates.⁶⁷ At the final selection meeting of the committee on 11 June, it was decided to run only three candidates,⁶⁸ and a decision had therefore to be made from the four names submitted.⁶⁹ When the decision was finally made, the unsuccessful candidate declared "his satisfaction with the result", retired graciously and stated that "he would assist the successful candidates through the campaign".⁷⁰

The fact, however, that such sophisticated and effective methods of electoral organisation were still in the evolutionary stage was also demonstrated during the general election of 1891. A number of unsuccessful attempts at efficient and co-ordinated local organisation revealed the formidable obstacles to success created by inexperience, incompetence and apathy; these obstacles could only be removed by perseverance and experience. Early in 1890, delegates from the numerous local freetrade branches in Canterbury met and formed a representative and co-ordinated executive body, the Canterbury Elective Council, to which was given the responsibility of guarding "the security of the freetrade cause during elections"⁷¹ and "the duty of selecting candidates".⁷² By June 1891, however, the Council had fallen into disrepair, and was replaced by a hurriedly appointed local committee⁷³ which selected four candidates and recommended their endorsement to the FTFC.⁷⁴ This informal procedure, however, forced on the freetraders by lack of effort in sustaining the Elective Council, gave one unsuccessful nominee for selection the opportunity of justifying his refusal to retire on the grounds that the selection by an ad hoc committee was invalid since it violated the constitution of the

Elective Council.⁷⁵

The ease with which attempts at co-ordination came to grief was demonstrated by local freetrade organisation in the two-member electorate of Illawarra. On 10 June, a meeting of the Bulli FTA was held for the purpose of selecting two candidates. These plans, however, were set aside when several delegates from the Wollongong branch of the Association proposed that the two branches avoid conflict by co-ordinating their selection work: the Wollongong delegates stated that their branch would support a Bulli nominee, if the Bulli branch reciprocated. After some discussion, this plan was agreed to, and the meeting of the Bulli branch to select its candidate was arranged for 13 June.⁷⁶ This meeting took place as planned, and the Bulli FTA chose as its candidate a local man, T. Bissett.⁷⁷ The Wollongong branch, however, was not so prompt or efficient, and it was reported on 19 June that the Bulli branch was "much hampered by Wollongong not yet having chosen a nominee to run with the local man", Bissett.⁷⁸ The Bulli branch, thereupon, took matters into its own hands, and sent a deputation to the sitting free-trade MLA, F. Woodward, urging him to re-consider his decision not to re-contest the electorate, and finally securing his agreement to become its second nominee.⁷⁹ It also made efforts to induce two superfluous freetrade candidates, A. Campbell and F. Franklin, to retire in order to avoid vote-splitting.⁸⁰ At its next meeting on 19 June, however, the confusion reached a climax when delegates from the Wollongong FTA announced that the 'superfluous' F. Franklin had been chosen as its nominee, thus embarrassing the Bulli branch, which was then forced to accept Woodward's resignation from the contest. The report of this meeting concluded that "Freetraders generally ... are by no means united in the official choice [of Franklin and Bissett], and therefore it is feared the success of staunch freetrade candidates will be considerably jeopardised".⁸¹ Their fears were completely justified; the ineptitude of local organisation did nothing to induce the retirement of Campbell, and, with the vote split, the freetraders lost both the seats they had won in 1889.

The considerable progress in the development of electoral organisation, represented even by these unsuccessful and inept attempts at co-ordinated local electoral management, was off-set by the damaging effects of unabated local rivalry and conflict, apathy and inaction, and the residual influence of attitudes that positively prohibited the success of local organisation in preventing vote-splitting. The instances of conflict between branches in the one electorate remained not uncommon, and such conflict negated the effectiveness of local organisation. In April 1890, the Waverley and Woollahra branches of the FTLA held a joint meeting to choose their candidates to contest the four-member electorate of Paddington in the event of an unexpected general election.⁸² Although such action displayed admirable foresight, it became the source of apparent conflict in June 1891. One of the chosen candidates in April 1890 was, not unnaturally, the president of the participating Woollahra branch, J.C. Neild.⁸³ When, however, the anticipated election became a reality in mid-1891, branches of the Association in Paddington again met to consider the selection of candidates, but this time the Woollahra branch was excluded from the conference,⁸⁴ and J.C. Neild was excluded from the list of selected candidates, being replaced by C. Helmrich.⁸⁵ Presumably the Woollahra branch entered a strong protest, for it was reported some days later that "it was considered advisable to call another meeting ... to reconsider the matter",⁸⁶ and at the re-convened meeting, it was decided to "invite" Helmrich to retire from the contest in favour of Neild.⁸⁷ This was a case of inept co-ordination causing conflict which in turn resulted in vacillation and irresolution; Helmrich could be little blamed for his refusal to accept the 'invitation' to retire, and hence the vote was split. Similar vote-splitting occurred in Central Cumberland where the two local freetrade associations staunchly refused to compromise on a selection disagreement,⁸⁸ seven free-traders going to the poll to contest the four available seats.

In other electorates, it was a blatant refusal on the part of unsuccessful nominees to accept the decision of the local branch that completely undermined the potential effectiveness of local organisation, and left the local branch powerless to

control the party's campaign. On 6 June, it was announced that a meeting of the Goulburn FTLA for the purpose of taking "a progressive Ballot for a Candidate to represent Goulburn" would be held on 9 June, and "Candidates willing to abide by the result of the ballot" were requested to submit their names to the secretary.⁸⁹ At the meeting it was announced that eleven candidates had sent their names forward,⁹⁰ but "it was understood from the beginning" that Dr Hollis, Mr Walker and Captain Rossi "would not hold themselves bound by the decision".⁹¹ When it had been decided that F. Furner, L. Hollis and Howard should go to the final ballot, "Mr Furner announced that as Mr Hollis had not declared himself willing to abide by the decision, he himself would go to the poll".⁹² No ballot was taken, "and the meeting broke up in some confusion".⁹³ All that the local branch could then do was make an arbitrary decision as to its nominee, and this it did on 10 June, choosing Furner.⁹⁴ This decision, which "caused intense dissatisfaction",⁹⁵ simply revealed the inability of branches to counter intransigence, obliged nobody to retire, and left the solution of the dispute as to who should go to the poll up to the individuals concerned or to the intervention of the central executive in Sydney. The individual contestants had made a mockery of the organisation, and they now attempted to resolve the conflict themselves. On 11 June, Captain F.R. Rossi wrote to Parkes, enclosing a copy of a letter he had sent to Dr Hollis and Mr Furner. This letter stated: "I address you in the hope that you will acquiesce with me that the three candidates should unitedly concur in some plan which will obviate the impending danger. This might be arrived at by casting or drawing lots or by other convenient process. Upon this the two unsuccessful competitors would retire in favour of the successful one".⁹⁶ Rossi's suggestion did not seem to meet with a favourable response, and most of his letter to Parkes was spent providing information "in verification of the healthiness of my position in the constituency".⁹⁷ Not until the central executive intervened was there anything approaching order in the freetraders' electoral organisation in Goulburn.

The most serious problems, however, remained apathy and the widespread failure to put the new techniques of local party

organisation to the test. It was reported on 6 June that in Argyle "No movement has been made locally on the part of the freetraders, who appear careless about matters",⁹⁸ and the protectionists in Camden were similarly lethargic, "allowing matters to take their own course, no committees having been formed, and each candidate running on his own merits".⁹⁹ Even in electorates containing local party branches, their activities were characterised by indecision, irresolution and lethargy. Despite a meeting of the Wollongong PU at which it was decided "to take steps for organising the national party",¹⁰⁰ nothing further was ever done. Protectionist laxity in Bogan was revealed at the one and only meeting of the local league; the report of the meeting stated that "nothing particular was done, but a lot of useless talk indulged in. Not one candidate was even spoken of, ...".¹⁰¹

The freetraders in Murrumbidgee displayed even greater apathy and irresolution. At a meeting of the Wagga FTA early in June it was decided that the choice of candidates would be left to the Association's committee of twelve.¹⁰² Nothing was done, however, until 19 June when a telegram was sent to Daniel O'Connor, already defeated at West Sydney, urging him to contest Murrumbidgee.¹⁰³ O'Connor, however, refused and went to Monaro. Next a telegram was sent to J.F. Burns, defeated at St. Leonards, asking him to contest the electorate, but he too declined.¹⁰⁴ Nothing in the way of local selection was attempted, and what was done was left far too late to be of any value. Showing a marked lack of joint effort, the Narrandera FTA met on 11 June "to discuss the situation in the Murrumbidgee electorate",¹⁰⁵ and decided "to write to the Wagga branch asking it to bring out a freetrade candidate".¹⁰⁶ The sluggishness of both bodies resulted in no local selection being made at all for the electorate, and the freetrade candidate who contested the election, stood unendorsed by either the local or central bodies.

Although there was some improvement on 1889, the final total of only twenty-eight electorates in which local branches made selections of candidates - freetrade branches in fifteen¹⁰⁷ and protectionist branches in twenty-one electorates -¹⁰⁸

demonstrated the continuing inadequacy of party electoral organisation. As in 1889, the weakness of local organisation placed a great strain on the energy and resources of each party's central executive.

The basic object of both central party executives was to "exercise control over the hosts of candidates" in the interests of securing electoral victory.¹⁰⁹ In their attempts to exercise this control, the FTFC and NPPEC undertook three specific tasks: the selection and endorsement of party candidates; the provision of candidates to uncontested electorates; and the prevention of vote-splitting by ensuring that the number of candidates in each electorate did not exceed the number of available seats.

A major objective of party endorsement was "to make the strongest candidates in every electorate the first favourites in the coming fight",¹¹⁰ and each executive's decisions were revealed by the publication of a "list of candidates whom it will support",¹¹¹ or who were said to have received "the sanction of the party".¹¹² The means employed to select "the best from so many suitable men"¹¹³ was "a weeding-out process", in which the "Local associations and party organisations" played an important role.¹¹⁴ Efficient local organisation was, in fact, regarded as the very basis of the process of central endorsement. It was specified at both the FTLA and NPA4 conferences in 1889 that "the candidates selected by the association or majority of associations in an electorate shall be accepted as the candidates of the party",¹¹⁵ and it was envisaged that central endorsement would be little more than a formal confirmation of the local branches' choices.¹¹⁶ This central confirmation, or official recognition of selected candidates, was, however, an essential part of the proposed system of electoral management, and branches were required to "promptly notify" the central executive of their selections.¹¹⁷

The protectionists had groped towards this potentially efficient system of electoral management during the general election of 1889, but the hasty and impetuous endorsement of

candidates by the central NPA³ executive had given the local associations no time to complete their selection deliberations, and had caused collisions and confusions.¹¹⁸ The protectionists, however, had been well in advance of the freetraders, whose electoral organisation had been in such chaos that any thought of central endorsements had had to be abandoned.¹¹⁹ A blueprint for efficient electoral management had, however, been formulated at both conferences during 1889, and, despite the extinction of the 'permanent' organisational 'machinery' of both parties, the ad hoc parliamentary executives seem to have made a real effort to put it into operation during the 1891 election. Shortly after the dissolution, the NPPEC sent to all local protectionist leagues "a communication ..., instructing ... [them] to select candidates and forward their names to Sydney" for ratification;¹²⁰ "organisation between the Opposition headquarters and the country branches" formed the basis of the NPPEC's endorsement work.¹²¹ Contact between the FTFC and "the country branches" was also made,¹²² and the freetrade executive also emphasised to the local branches "the necessity to keep in telegraphic ... touch with headquarters".¹²³ Furthermore, and probably in recognition of the mistakes of 1889, both executives delayed the publication of their first comprehensive lists of endorsed candidates until 12 June, almost a fortnight after the announcement of a general election and only three days before the first nominations took place.¹²⁴ In marked contrast to 1889, this delay gave local branches ample time to complete selection work and submit choices to their respective executives for confirmation.

As far as was possible, therefore, the endorsement lists of the two central executives were based on the selection work of local branches. The NPPEC's initial list contained endorsements for forty-four electorates, in thirteen of which local branches had selected candidates; the subsequent addition of endorsees for a further seventeen electorates included candidates locally selected in five electorates. In ten of the forty-five electorates on the FTFC's initial list, local selections had been made, as they had been in two of the nine electorates subsequently added to the list. That the proportion was not higher was due entirely to the failure of over 60% of the

seventy-four electorates to provide locally selected candidates. The inability of both fiscal parties to sustain widespread networks of active local branches between elections retarded the progress they had made in so many other aspects of electoral management.

The efficiency of the electoral management system depended, however, not just on the quantity of local organisation, but also on its quality. Where the tasks of local selection were efficiently, equitably and promptly performed, the system operated smoothly and central endorsement was, in fact, merely a confirmation of the work done by the local leagues.¹²⁵ The fact, however, that there was a large number of variations between the endorsements of the central executives and the selections of the local organisations testifies to a break-down in the system of electoral management, formulated in 1889 and first applied in 1891. One of these deviations was due to circumstances beyond the control of either the local league involved or the NPPEC,¹²⁶ but the responsibility for almost all of the others must be borne by the weakness and inefficiency of party organisation on the local or 'grass roots' level. In several cases, simple ineptness was responsible for the deviations between the local bodies and the central executives. In the four-member electorate of Central Cumberland, the local protectionist league selected only one candidate to represent the cause,¹²⁷ and the NPPEC was obliged to add a second protectionist to its list to secure adequate representation in the contest.¹²⁸ The local freetrade leagues in Newtown and West Sydney and the local protectionist branch in Newtown, all had their initial selections confirmed by their respective central executives;¹²⁹ all, however, had initially selected fewer candidates than the number of seats to be contested, and they only bestirred themselves to choose additional candidates when it was too late to obtain central executive endorsement of their choices.¹³⁰

In three other instances, it would appear that local rivalry dictated the selections of local leagues and led to conflict with the central executives. In the formulation of the

principles of electoral management during 1889, it was understandably specified that sitting MsLA "have a prior claim over new candidates to be recognised as the candidates of the ... party",¹³¹ and this was reiterated during the early days of the campaign.¹³² Several local leagues, however, ignored their sitting MsLA and, for reasons of local dissension, selected rival candidates: the Liverpool FTA insisted on selecting its president, T.W.Taylor, as one of the four freetrade candidates for Central Cumberland at the expense of the sitting MLA, D.Dale;¹³³ the Cootamundra Protectionist Union chose its vice-president, J.J.Miller, to the exclusion of one of the sitting MsLA for Young;¹³⁴ and the Braidwood Protection League blatantly ignored the sitting protectionist MLA, A.Ryrie, preferring the local man, A.Chapman.¹³⁵ In all three cases, the central executives endorsed the excluded MsLA,¹³⁶ and in two of the three electorates the party vote was split.¹³⁷ Conflict within the local protectionist league seems to have been responsible for the friction between the NPPEC and its branch in Balranald. Called upon to choose its candidates, the local protectionist association in two-member Balranald held a ballot in which sitting MLA, A.Lake-man, and local carrier, J.Newton, defeated A.L.Cameron and J.Shropshire.¹³⁸ Soon after, however, "a split" between the candidates and within the association developed,¹³⁹ probably as a result of Newton's declaration that he regarded himself as a labor candidate.¹⁴⁰ To the disgust of the local association's secretary,¹⁴¹ the NPPEC refused to endorse Newton,¹⁴² and it even sent Newton a telegram "strongly recommending him to withdraw" in favour of the unsuccessful A.L.Cameron.¹⁴³

In only one instance does the central executive appear to have been unquestionably responsible for the conflict between its endorsement and the choice of a local league. On 3 June, the local FTA pledged itself to support the candidature of C. Boyd for West Macquarie,¹⁴⁴ and on 12 June, Boyd seems to have been encouraged by the FTFC to persevere in his intention to contest the electorate.¹⁴⁵ A day later, however, the FTFC announced that it had endorsed a rival freetrader, A.F.Twine, to contest the single seat in West Macquarie,¹⁴⁶ a decision that evoked surprise and annoyance among the local freetraders.¹⁴⁷

Boyd understandably refused to retire, and only Twine's voluntary withdrawal prevented the splitting of the freetrade vote.

Six electorates in which local branches selected candidates were ignored altogether by the central executives in the compilation of their endorsement lists; the reasons for the omission of four of these emphasises the impossibility of achieving effective electoral management without efficient and responsible local organisation. The local protectionist leagues in Balmain and the local FTA in Molong took so long over their selections that these were only finalised when it was too late to obtain central executive confirmation;¹⁴⁸ the local protectionist league in Hawkesbury for some obscure reason selected a freetrader as its candidate;¹⁴⁹ and the caprice and irresolution of the freetraders in Paddington¹⁵⁰ left the FTFC no choice but to declare that it "could not see ... [its] way clear to 'bunch' candidates for the Paddington electorate".¹⁵¹ Despite the local freetraders' selections for the electorate of Illawarra,¹⁵² the FTFC clearly was dissatisfied with the chosen candidates, considering them to be far from the strongest of those who had offered themselves for selection,¹⁵³ and it therefore refused endorsement. Only in Carcoar, where the NPPEC failed to endorse the selections of the local league, was there a hint of executive incompetence.

The real achievement of both central executives in 1891 was that, despite the inadequacy of local organisation, they persevered with their work of endorsing candidates, and their final lists represented a marked advance on the endorsement efforts of 1889. In contrast with their abandonment of endorsement in 1889, the freetraders' FTFC endorsed ninety candidates for fifty-four out of the seventy-four electorates in 1891.¹⁵⁴ In 1889, the NPA³ positively listed endorsements for only forty-eight electorates, although endorsements were implied in a further fifteen;¹⁵⁵ in 1891, the NPPEC dispelled all uncertainty by positively announcing the endorsement of ninety-five protectionist candidates in sixty-one electorates. It was this "close attention and systematic scrutiny of names" that led the Telegraph to conclude that "It is doubtful if a general election has been

so satisfactorily managed previously".¹⁵⁷

For the most part, however, both executives were forced to undertake the work of endorsements without the benefit of sound local organisation, and it was in these circumstances that the active participation of Parkes in the deliberations of the FTFC was of particular benefit to the freetraders' organisation. Rather than shying away from the new methods of electoral management, Parkes seems to have been genuinely interested and actively involved in the advancement of freetrade electoral organisation during 1889 and 1890.¹⁵⁸ During these two years, he and J.H.Carruthers seem to have been the two MsLA most actively involved in the freetrade organisation of by-elections,¹⁵⁹ and their pre-eminence in freetrade electoral management continued into 1891. In March 1891, Carruthers went on a tour of country electorates and, on his return, gave Parkes a general assessment of freetrade electoral prospects in the event of an election and made detailed suggestions about certain steps that should be taken to win such electorates as Gundagai, Gunnedah and Namoi.¹⁶⁰ Further, as soon as it became clear at the end of May that a general election was inevitable, Parkes sent McMillan, with instructions to "Consult Carruthers", a list of "the seats where, . . . , we must carry the war".¹⁶¹ It was not surprising, then, that Carruthers, as chairman,¹⁶² and Parkes formed the active nucleus of the FTFC.

Carruthers soon demonstrated his influence in the decisions of the FTFC; with reference to the seat of Gundagai, he had told Parkes that "A decent fellow sent by us would win that seat",¹⁶³ and the executive lost no time in despatching H.M.Deakin of Sydney to the electorate, suggesting his local selection,¹⁶⁴ granting him endorsement¹⁶⁵ and promising to send several prominent MsLA to support him.¹⁶⁶ In the absence of efficient and widespread local organisation, however, it was on Parkes that the success of the FTFC's efforts most depended. With his vast knowledge and experience of electoral manipulation, his personal network of electoral agents,¹⁶⁷ and his undiminished influence still attracting the pleas, complaints and reports of numerous candidates,¹⁶⁸ Parkes provided much of the information on which

the executive based its decisions. The executive's dependence on Parkes was revealed in its efforts to endorse a suitable freetrader for Albury. On 9 June, Bruce Smith was "deputed" by "the Election Committee" to ask Parkes "two or three questions:

1. Whether you have rec'd [sic] an answer from Mr Davies re Bourke election.

2. Whether you had any word from Pain or Chapman re Braidwood.

3. Whether you had any word from Gulston [sic] re Albury".¹⁶⁹ As it happened, Parkes had an electoral agent, James McLean, working in the Riverina, and that same day McLean wrote to Parkes stating that he was "much impressed with Mr Gulson's ... sound honesty of purpose on each of your leading planks".¹⁷⁰ Probably on the basis of this information, Gulson was included in the FTFC's initial list of endorsements.¹⁷¹ Parkes also, it would appear, used his influence to try to woo prominent freetraders into the field for various electorates;¹⁷² this he would almost certainly have done on behalf of the FTFC.

Without efficient networks of local branches, however, both executives were vulnerable to the errors and problems that were bound to arise without a comprehensive first-hand knowledge of the situation in each electorate. Further, many of their endorsements were necessarily 'blind' endorsements, their endorsees often being unknown to them and not necessarily being the strongest or most popular candidate. As a result, problems arose and mistakes were made. The situation that unfolded in Wollombi illustrated the difficulties encountered by the executives in seeking to 'place matters upon a sound footing' in electorates with no local organisation to inform and advise them. In the single-member electorate, the FTFC was faced with the choice of one endorsee from three intending freetrade candidates, G.Watt, H.Mahon and J.Gorrick. The executive finally decided in favour of Mahon,¹⁷³ but its decision was greeted with indignation and contempt. Watt complained to Parkes that "the Election Committee to whom I wired on Monday and again yesterday for information about what had been done" had deliberately ignored his overtures in favour of "a rabid protectionist", and he asked Parkes "if anything can be done" to alter the situation.¹⁷⁴ Whatever Parkes

wrote in reply, Watt was loyal enough to retire. Not so the other freetrader, Gorrick; despite motions "deprecating"¹⁷⁵ and viewing his candidature "with great disfavour",¹⁷⁶ he staunchly refused to retire. From the executive's point of view, this led to the unfortunate situation in which its own endorsee, Mahon, was forced to withdraw in order to prevent a split vote,¹⁷⁷ and FTFC chairman, Carruthers, expressed his appreciation of Mahon's "open, candid and honorable" conduct¹⁷⁸ in the face of Gorrick's intransigence.

Endorsing candidates 'on trust' and in virtual ignorance of their views also created the possibility of endorsing a clearly unsuitable man, and this appears to have occurred in Hume. The initial FTFC endorsement for Hume was published on 12 June, and was accompanied by the statement: "another to be chosen".¹⁷⁹ The second endorsee, added to the list the following day,¹⁸⁰ had, however, been a delegate to the NPA3 conference in October 1889¹⁸¹ and a member of the NC,¹⁸² and had made no apparent conversion to freetrade in the meantime. Far from declaring his conversion to freetrade, Sydney Lindeman plainly declared his adherence to protection and stated that he would "reserve the right to vote as a protectionist against any Administration on the fiscal question".¹⁸³ The 'blind' endorsement of candidates without, apparently, first procuring their consent made the endorsement vulnerable to rejection, and seven 'blind' FTFC or NPPEC endorsees refused to be nominated,¹⁸⁴ although two of them voluntarily withdrew from the contest in the face of the refusal of unendorsed candidates to do so.¹⁸⁵ These denials of endorsement and candidature, however, allowed two protectionists and one Labor candidate to be elected unopposed.¹⁸⁶

At both the FTLA and NPA4 conferences in 1889, it was generally agreed that no electorate should be left uncontested at any future election,¹⁸⁷ and it was resolved that "should any electorate be unable to find a suitable candidate", the central organisation would either "recommend" one or would "select a candidate ... if requested".¹⁸⁸ The ambitious sentiments to contest every electorate were reiterated by both executives at the outset of the 1891 campaign.¹⁸⁹ It is in the light of these

statements that both executives' achievements in the provision of candidates to uncontested electorates must be viewed. The FTFC resolved "to ensure that every electorate has a suitable freetrade candidate",¹⁹⁰ and Parkes was even more outspoken on the subject: "'We shall oppose the member for Clarence and the member for Grafton. Not a single man will have a walk over'".¹⁹¹

Despite Parkes's claims, however, no freetrader was provided or endorsed to contest Clarence, the FTFC endorsee for Grafton did not go to the poll, and the protectionists in both these electorates were allowed into parliament unopposed by a freetrader; a further ten protectionists in another seven electorates were accorded the same luxury.¹⁹² In one of these, the three-member electorate of Richmond, however, it would appear that the freetraders' oversight was deliberate. The three MsLA, T.Ewing, J.S.Perry and B.B.Nicoll, were all protectionist 'rebels'; two were members of the rebel 'Cocktail Party',¹⁹³ and all three had voted with Parkes in the division on Dibbs's censure in May.¹⁹⁴ In March 1891, Carruthers had advised that the freetraders "conciliate those inclined to change their sides and ... strongly support those who have stood by us in the past including men like Ewing, ..., Perry etc."¹⁹⁵ Further, Parkes included only Nicoll on his list of MsLA to be opposed, and either McMillan or Carruthers objected to his inclusion, commenting that he was "all right".¹⁹⁶ It would seem reasonable to assume, therefore, that the FTFC's failure to provide candidates in Richmond was a gesture of support to its protectionist 'allies'; the number of protectionists returned unopposed on account of FTFC weakness may thus be reduced to nine in eight electorates. Although this did not conform to their stated intentions, the freetraders had materially improved upon the disaster in 1889 when they allowed twenty protectionists to be elected unopposed.¹⁹⁷

The NPPEC in 1891 did neither better nor worse than the NPA3 had done in the matter of preventing 'walk overs'; on both occasions, only two electorates were left unopposed by a protectionist.¹⁹⁸ The NPPEC did, however, at least in one case, positively and efficiently undertake the provision of an officially endorsed candidate to an electorate where a local protectionist could not

be obtained. On 10 June, in the electorate of Patrick's Plains, a meeting of protectionists was held at which it was announced that communications had been established "with the electoral committee during the past three days with the view of running a suitable candidate ... The party is anxiously awaiting the news of the central committee".¹⁹⁹ On 11 June, it was reported that "a strong candidate will, ..., be announced to-day. He will be a Sydney man".²⁰⁰ On 12 June, the Protectionist executive officially endorsed W. Blackburn to contest Patrick's Plains,²⁰¹ but his withdrawal the next day necessitated a further selection, which was duly made, endorsement being given to Alfred de Lissa, a Sydney solicitor.²⁰² In almost every phase of electoral management and organisation, the freetraders made great, and the protectionists gradual, advances on their respective achievements in 1889.

The granting of financial assistance to selected candidates seems to have been no exception to this general pattern of progress, at least as far as the freetraders were concerned. The freetraders' use of finance during the previous two general elections remains relatively obscure, but it seems that on neither occasion did the amount spent exceed £700²⁰³ and that almost all the money was devoted to the publication and distribution of propaganda rather than to the provision of assistance to candidates.²⁰⁴ In 1891, although unable to call upon the financial reserves of the FTA, the FTFC paid more attention to the use of finance "to help some impecunious candidates in their contest", leaving "little ... available for advertising and propagandist work".²⁰⁵ The question of a freetrade electoral fund was first raised by FTFC chairman, Carruthers, at a caucus meeting of the parliamentary party on 3 June. Referring to the operation of the freetrade "central machinery", Carruthers stated that "we want our supporters to give us their assistance and provide some funds".²⁰⁶ The final total of the FTFC fund came to £580, almost all of which was subscribed by freetrade MsLA and a small amount of which represented the last reserves of the defunct FTLA.²⁰⁷ FTFC secretary, Conroy, later commented that the amount available to the executive showed "how little interest the commercial community took in public affairs";²⁰⁸ in contrast to its willingness

to contribute in 1887, the SCC seems to have made no contribution at all towards the fund.

Well over half the money in the fund, it would appear, was used to defray candidates' expenses. Details of the expenditure of £242 have survived, and of this amount, £136 was spent in payment of candidates' expenses. Of this money, over £60 was channelled into the electorate of South Sydney as "part contribution towards the expenses of Mr Wise's Election"; £25 was despatched to Hume to aid FTFC endorsee, W.A. Harper; £40 was advanced to pay the nomination fee of James Curley in Newcastle; and R.W. Thompson received £12 to aid his campaign in West Maitland. The method of distribution was through either the candidate's committee secretary or Parkes's electoral agent in the electorate concerned. Parkes's agent in the Riverina, James McLean, acted as electoral manager for W.A. Harper in Hume;²⁰⁹ it would appear that he paid any necessary expenses out of his pocket, and was later reimbursed by the FTFC.²¹⁰

The protectionists' use of finance in aid of their endorsed candidates in 1891 remains as obscure as at previous general elections, although their payment of the occasional candidate's nomination fee seems to have continued.²¹¹ According to J.N. Brunker, his protectionist opponent in East Maitland had been told by the NPPEC that "his expenses and deposit would be paid".²¹² Apart, however, from the occasional reference to NPPEC meetings that dealt "chiefly with ... candidates and finances",²¹³ no further details of the NPPEC's financial arrangements appear to have survived.

The one major aspect of electoral management in which both central executives encountered great difficulty in achieving success was the task of reducing the number of candidates in order to prevent the splitting of votes. Early in the campaign it was reported that "Anything like splitting of votes will be discountenanced by both sides",²¹⁴ and the NPPEC was reported to have devised "plans for limiting the number of protectionist candidates offering in each of the electorates".²¹⁵ The difficulty of achieving the retirement of unendorsed candidates was,

however, pointed out by the Herald; "human nature is only human nature", it remarked, "and many a candidate declines to offer himself up as a sacrifice to his party".²¹⁶ The task in 1891, however, was even more difficult than it had been previously, for it was "the first general election since the Payment of Members Bill came into force", and intending candidates had no longer to be "certain that they would be able to stand the expense incident on the honourable position of member of Parliament".²¹⁷ As a result, the Herald concluded, "there is an unusual plethora of candidates for the coming contest",²¹⁸ one early estimate putting the number at 420 for the 141 available seats.²¹⁹ It was to the task of reducing this figure that the executives were obliged to attend, and the Herald again laconically commented that "it would appear that full occupation will be provided for the central executive bodies".²²⁰

Not the least effective weapon possessed by the executives to induce retirement was their endorsement. Simple exclusion from the list of endorsed candidates imposed an indirect obligation to retire, and it was stated that candidates "who find themselves unsupported by the party to which they belong may shortly be expected to retire".²²¹ Reports soon began to appear in the press praising the "considerable amount of self-sacrifice" shown by various candidates, and "the general tendency ... to waive personal feelings in favour of party welfare".²²² William Affleck later recalled that he had travelled to Albury to contest the seat, but finding an endorsed freetrader already in the field, "without further delay I retired, as I said I would be no party to splitting the freetrade vote".²²³ In the electorate of Tumut, as soon as E.G. Brown received official FTFC endorsement, the other intending freetrade candidate withdrew in his favour,²²⁴ stating that he would assist Brown's candidature.²²⁵ In the two-member electorate of Monaro, J.W. Johnston withdrew in favour of Parkes's Post-Master-General, Daniel O'Connor, who had already been defeated in West Sydney and who came to Monaro presumably still carrying his official endorsement. Johnston stated that he retired because "he was convinced that the free-traders of Monaro were not strong enough to return two candidates, and ... he had come to the conclusion that, as a strong

supporter of the Government, it was his duty to retire".²²⁶
 The Herald graciously commented that "he deserves the thanks of the party".²²⁷

Not all unendorsed candidates, however, responded so magnanimously. Numerous candidates, like the freetrader, E.M. Clark, in St Leonards, "failed to comprehend why ... [they] should be elbowed out of the contest",²²⁸ and other unendorsed candidates resorted to such arguments as being "first in the field" to justify their refusal to retire.²²⁹ In the face of refusals to retire voluntarily, the executives resorted to direct intervention and disciplinary threats in an effort to induce retirements. Executive threats to 'boycott' intransigent candidates and to call on the electors to repudiate such 'rebels' had been employed by the protectionists in 1889,²³⁰ and they were again used in 1891, rather less vehemently, by the executives of both parties. Further, direct executive intervention in any electorate had been sanctioned at the FTLA conference in 1889 as "a last resort" when "all local effort had failed to bring about the desired unity".²³¹

By mid-June, such a situation had developed in Goulburn.²³² The Telegraph outlined the problem: "... there are several free-traders, and rival claims for preference cannot be adjusted readily while no one candidate seems to be prepared to withdraw".²³³ To clear up the confusion, the FTFC decided to intervene, and on 12 June, the three rival freetraders, Furner, Hollis and Rossi, each received a telegram from the executive stating "that after consultation with the Premier it has been decided to invite the candidates to submit their claims" to the central body for impartial consideration.²³⁴ It was further stated that "if any candidate refuses to do this, no support will be accorded him, but the freetrade leaders will call upon the electors to support the candidates who are most reasonable".²³⁵ Dr Hollis, the official Labor candidate, refused to be a party to this ultimatum, but Captain Rossi and Mr Furner travelled to Sydney to meet with the executive. As a result, an advertisement was published on 15 June stating that Captain Rossi had retired in favour of Furner,²³⁶ "who telegraphs that he is now the accepted candidate

of the party".²³⁷ Intervention had been successful, and the vote was not split. The NPPEC used a similar approach, and also met with some success. On 23 June, the executive despatched to the election committee of its two endorsees and sitting MsLA for Young a telegram which stated: "My committee strongly urges the Protectionists of Young Electorate to VOTE STRAIGHT for Gough and Mackinnon, and not to jeopardise the seat through voting for Miller. Advertise this in all local papers. (Signed) H. Tennent Donaldson, Secretary Protection Election Committee, Sydney".²³⁸ Though a little late, the telegram had the desired effect when J.J. Miller, the intransigent protectionist candidate, retired from the election at the Nominations on 24 June.²³⁹

In many cases, however, direct executive intervention was not successful, and the party's vote was accordingly split, often with disastrous results. The NPPEC, it was reported on 16 June, was experiencing "much trouble ... in the case of some candidates, who send point blank refusals to stand out in favor of other protectionists whom the committee believe are more likely to poll well", and the executive was said to be spending "A good deal of money ... in telegrams, but often to little purpose".²⁴⁰ A case in point was in the two-member electorate of Orange, where three protectionists, two of whom were the sitting MsLA and party endorsees, declared their intentions of contesting the election. A split protectionist vote was thus threatened, and in an effort to prevent this it was reported that "Mr Dibbs has written to Mr Burke [the unendorsed protectionist] saying that it would be wise if he would retire, and that Messrs Dalton and Torpy [the two sitting MsLA] had always given the Opposition firm support".²⁴¹ Burke, however, refused to retire, and the split protectionist vote resulted in the return of the freetrade-Labor candidate, H.W. Newman. Had Burke retired and all his votes been divided equally between Dalton and Torpy, both protectionists would have been returned.²⁴²

In the single-member electorate of Hunter, two protectionists announced that they would both contest the election against the one freetrader and sitting MLA, R. Scobie. Although one of the protectionists, J. Pritchard, received official NPPEC

endorsement, the other protectionist, J. Connolly, told the electors that "they might rely upon him going to the poll".²⁴³ On 15 June, Connolly "received a letter from the Protection League in Sydney [i.e. the NPPEC] suggesting his withdrawal from the contest", but the report concluded that "Both men are determined to go to the poll".²⁴⁴ Once again, had the protectionist vote not been split, the freetrader would have been beaten.²⁴⁵ Despite a gradual decline in the number of candidates,²⁴⁶ the 'unusual plethora of candidates' and continued resistance to executive intervention combined in 1891 to produce a considerable number of instances of vote-splitting. Either the freetrade or protectionist vote was split in twenty-seven electorates, and in a further three electorates the vote of both parties was split.²⁴⁷

What was regarded as most offensive about the intervention of the executives to induce retirements was, as in 1889,²⁴⁸ their supposed authoritarianism and denial of free and individual choice. Again the by-now familiar phrases were produced to denounce them: L. Hollis in Goulburn condemned "the influence brought to bear in Sydney, and denounced wire-pulling emanating from anywhere",²⁴⁹ and T.W. Taylor told the electors of Central Cumberland that they "should set their foot against any clique setting up those who should be returned".²⁵⁰ But despite a continuing emphasis on the traditional liberal concepts of freedom and independence, the possession of official endorsement seems to have had a considerable bearing on a candidate's chances of success. Although several unendorsed candidates were returned, in almost every electorate in which officially endorsed candidates and 'rebellious' unendorsed candidates confronted one another, the endorsed candidates, as they had in 1889,²⁵¹ achieved noticeably better results.²⁵²

Perhaps the most significant advance made by both parties since 1889 was, however, their willingness in 1891 to employ the principles and techniques of electoral management to discipline rebellious MsLA. The protectionists first seem to have considered the use of electoral discipline to rid themselves of party renegades at the end of 1889 when the rebel 'Cocktail Party' made its first appearance.²⁵³ When, in October 1890,

O.O.Dangar was expelled from the protectionist caucus,²⁵⁴ references to electoral discipline were again made. Although no overt threat was made, it was confidently predicted that Dangar would "find that there are many of his constituents in the country who will indorse the action of the Opposition",²⁵⁵ and that he would "find out to his cost at the next election" the "serious blunder" he had made in deserting his party.²⁵⁶

The mutinous behaviour of the 'Cocktail Party' continued in spite of these implied threats, and culminated on 28 May 1891 when three of its members, T.Ewing, J.S.Perry and W.W.Davis,²⁵⁷ the 'expelled' O.O.Dangar and a new rebel, B.B. Nicoll, all deserted the protectionists to help Parkes barely survive Dibbs's censure which brought about the 1891 election.²⁵⁸ A further member of the rebel party, W.E.Abbott,²⁵⁹ was not present for the division, but the ministerial whip later declared that, had he been in attendance, "I have good authority for stating that he would have voted for the Government".²⁶⁰ One further protectionist MLA had also become liable to disciplinary action. Throughout 1890, Thomas Waddell had "incurred the odium" of the protectionist leaders,²⁶¹ and, just over a week prior to the crucial censure motion, he had openly repudiated the concept of party solidarity in a speech in the Assembly. "As far as parties are concerned", he had declared, "they can go to Hongkong or elsewhere. I may as well be candid with honourable members, and tell them that I do not intend to stick to any party".²⁶² Following this speech, Waddell was deemed to have placed himself among the ranks of the 'Cocktail Party'.²⁶³

Interviewed shortly after the censure vote, George Dibbs reiterated the view that the electors of the colony would teach such rebels "a lesson that will be a warning to all others who may be inclined to go and do likewise".²⁶⁴ The means by which the renegades were to be disciplined by the NPPEC and the electors invited to repudiate them were outlined soon after: "All the members of the late Parliament who voted 'straight' with the Opposition will have their candidature sanctioned and endorsed by the committee, but other members of the Opposition who voted against their party will be either ignored or opposed".²⁶⁵

For this reason, Waddell, who had voted with Dibbs on 28 May, was granted official NPPEC endorsement, at least initially.²⁶⁶ The other six rebels were all denied official endorsement. Waddell, however, soon joined his rejected fellow rebels. Granted without either his "knowledge or solicitation",²⁶⁷ the party's official endorsement was scorned by Waddell, and the NPPEC consequently cancelled its support for him.²⁶⁸

Although the NPPEC's refusal to grant endorsement to the members of the 'Cocktail Party' was a definite and deliberate attempt to discipline the disloyal members of the party, only two of the repudiated MsLA were actually opposed by NPPEC-endorsed protectionists. In Bourke, the executive endorsed the protectionist-labor candidate, H.Langwell, to oppose W.W.Davis, and officially approved the candidature of J.P.Howe to oppose Waddell.²⁶⁹ The executive's ultimate lack of disciplinary resolution was revealed in its attitude to the three rebel members for Richmond, Ewing, Perry and Nicoll. Although it deprived them of endorsement, it was accurately reported that "it is questionable if anything will be done in opposition to the present members",²⁷⁰ and it was left to the militant PPRL to send its president, R.C.Luscombe, to tackle the renegades.²⁷¹ It was, however, on the provision of officially endorsed candidates to oppose the rebels that the success of the NPPEC's disciplinary intentions ultimately depended. Confronted with endorsed opponents, both Waddell and Davis were defeated;²⁷² the other five rebels, without serious opposition, were all returned. Further progress had been made, and a further lesson learned.

The freetrade party showed a similar resolve in 1891 to impose disciplinary sanctions on its rebel and non-conformist MsLA. In the division on Dibbs's censure motion, four freetraders, G.H.Reid, J.Haynes, J.C.Seaver and J.H.Want, had voted with the opposition,²⁷³ and it was later reported that the FTFC "has determined to contest the seat of every member who voted with Mr Dibbs".²⁷⁴ In fact, in his list of seats to which "we must carry the war", Parkes specified those of Haynes, Reid and Seaver.²⁷⁵ Although the FTFC denied all four rebels its endorsement, it did not succeed in supplying a strong and

officially endorsed opponent for any of them, despite an apparent attempt to do so. For the four-member electorate of East Sydney, Parkes had suggested the official endorsement of "a bunch of 4" freetrade candidates to oppose Reid.²⁷⁶ Only two candidates, however, were endorsed by the FTFC for the electorate,²⁷⁷ and one of them, Varney Parkes, apparently rejected out of hand the idea of being 'bunched'.²⁷⁸ Although Reid expressed his indignation at being repudiated by the executive,²⁷⁹ his re-election was not prevented. It would, in fact, have been surprising had he not been elected; in the staunchest of all freetrade electorates, Reid was one of four freetrade candidates vying for four seats. Jonathan Seaver did the executive's work for it by abandoning his old electorate of Gloucester and moving to the three-member constituency of St Leonards to tackle three endorsed freetrade MsLA, one of whom was Parkes. Seaver's resounding defeat was hardly attributable to the disciplinary zeal of the FTFC. Although Want and Haynes were denied endorsement by the FTFC, so was any other freetrade candidate in their respective electorates of Paddington and Mudgee, and both were convincingly returned. The FTFC's disciplinary attempts were far less convincing than those of the NPPEC; nevertheless, what little it did represent another stage in the evolution of sophisticated and modern electoral management.

The general election of 1891, in fact, clearly demonstrated how much progress had been made in the formulation and application of the principles and techniques of modern electoral management since 1887. In 1891, the work of both central executives was characterised by the existence of formal and coherent organisational guidelines, a clear conception of the possibilities and objectives of electoral management, and the use of a comprehensive range of organisational and disciplinary devices, including official party endorsement and financial aid to candidates; all three characteristics had been barely perceptible in 1887. Despite this progress, mistakes had been made and shortcomings still remained. What particularly required rectification was the continued failure of both parties to construct a permanent and widespread network of local party organisations. That shortcomings still remained, was best revealed by the fact

that as the 1891 election ended, the perennial cries of "the necessity for organisation" and the need for "strong branch associations" began.²⁸⁰

CONCLUSION

The emergence, after 1885, of the fiscal issue as the dominant issue in the politics of New South Wales was largely due to the desire of Sir Henry Parkes to resuscitate a political system that was based on personalised unprincipled factions and was in the process of disintegration and decay. Until raised by Parkes, the fiscal issue had played a minor role in the politics of the 1880s, and it would not of itself have become any more prominent. The issue, however, did possess a potential for two-sided emotional conflict and political polarisation that could be used by an astute politician anxious "to prop up an outmoded system".¹ Such a politician was Parkes, and it was he who was chiefly responsible for the immense political and parliamentary prominence of the fiscal issue after 1885. He invoked the fiscal issue for its emotive and polarising potential, rather than for its potential as an issue of political principle. He envisaged the perpetuation of 'old order' factionalism, albeit refurbished, based on personality rather than principle.

The emergence during 1886 of the fiscal issue as the dominant political issue of the day did not represent in itself any fundamental change in the political system of the colony. In fact, had the politics of New South Wales after 1886 remained wholly dominated by surviving arch-factionalists like Parkes and Dibbs, the only real change in the system would have been its increased stability. As it was, the conflict between the two fiscal parties appeared to be little more than a struggle for power between the rival 'syndicates' of Parkes and Dibbs. To the 'old order' factionalists, the fiscal issue represented

nothing more than a means of giving the faction system a new lease of life, and enough factionalists survived after 1887 to inhibit the swift transition from politics of personalities to politics of principle. Prior to 1892, the conflict between the two parties scarcely transcended the unprincipled concerns of power pragmatism; it was within both parties that the transition to principled politics took place.

Parkes's manipulation of an issue of principle for a distinctly unprincipled purpose, had the effect of attracting to politics in 1887 men to whom the principled implications of the fiscal issue were of basic importance. These men were responsible for the basic changes in the political system that took place after 1886. Their ever-increasing representation in both fiscal parties after 1886 was responsible for the one basic and permanent change in the colony's political system during the period of fiscal politics prior to 1892: the replacement of personal prejudice and preference by genuine concern for principle as the dominating determinant of political allegiance and behaviour. The degree to which 'principle' had replaced 'personality' was constantly revealed after 1888, and it forced the surviving factionalists to adapt to the new political climate.

Such a fundamental change in the political system could have been expected to produce radical and lasting changes. In particular, the new concern for principle should have resulted in the creation of cohesive principled parties, and lasting and fully integrated party structures with powerful extra-parliamentary organisations, the formulation of clear and relevant party platforms and the formalisation of operative systems of party and electoral discipline. Certainly considerable progress was made in these specific aspects of the transition towards modern political parties, but much of the progress that had been made by the end of 1891 was neither comprehensive nor permanent.

The most basic reason for the relatively slow and unsteady pace of change in the new era of principled politics was the lack of real principled cohesion within both the parliament-

ary and extra-parliamentary wings of each fiscal party. Although adherence to 'principle' largely replaced adherence to 'personality', neither party had a defined and specified set of principles to which all its members collectively adhered. The emphasis on the fiscal issue as an emotional polarising issue, rather than an issue of defined and principled relevance, was initially responsible for this lack of principled cohesion. Within both fiscal parties, men were deeply divided over the specific meaning and economic implications of their chosen fiscal doctrine. Within each party, the basic division was between 'pure' fiscalists, and 'moderate' or 'compromising' fiscalists. This division went beyond a mere difference of fiscal opinion; it had social, economic and philosophical implications that kept both parties permanently splintered until well after 1891.

The 'compromising' fiscalists were those who basically wished to preserve a system of indirect taxation based on customs revenue. This desire was usually based on one of three factors: the preservation of economic privilege, a basic conservative tendency, or a lack of any real principled interest in the economic meaning and implications of fiscal doctrine. The 'pure' fiscalists were those who desired to alter the taxation system by replacing indirect taxation with direct taxation, thereby taxing each citizen according to his ability to pay. The economic motive of eliminating the privileges of the wealthy and easing the tax burdens of the poor was basic to this desire. In social terms, this conflict within each fiscal party represented an embryonic class conflict between capital and labour.

In philosophical terms, it was a conflict between defensive conservatism and aggressive radicalism; between the defenders of a hierarchical and privileged status quo and the spokesmen of the rights of the common man to equality and to protection against exploitation. This conflict was philosophically expressed in the varying meanings given to the nineteenth-century British doctrine of Liberalism. Classical laissez-faire liberalism emphasised individualism, independence, the neutrality and non-interference of the state in social and

economic affairs, and non-partisanship in politics. This creed, which did not inhibit the creation and maintenance of social and economic privilege, was, by the mid-1880s, the creed of colonial conservatives. Advanced or radical liberalism stressed the need for the active participation of the state to eradicate inequalities and to create a just social order; it was the creed of the radicals and the champions of labour. This conflict of philosophies and principles profoundly affected the nature and scope of the changes in the political system of New South Wales during the period of fiscal politics between 1887 and 1891.

Each fiscal party after 1886 was composed of three distinct elements: (1) surviving factional politicians, (2) classical or conservative liberals, and (3) radical or advanced liberals. It was in this new atmosphere of principled politics that the 'old order' unprincipled factionalists were virtually forced to make a 'principled' commitment to one or other of the two rival principled groups within each party. These 'old order' politicians were not, however, entirely submerged by the rising tide of doctrinaire politics. They remained powerful and influential; they retained the leadership of both parties; and they were sufficiently numerous to hold a peculiar balance of power between the classical liberals and radical liberals. The rival principled groups within each party needed the support and alliance of the 'old order' factionalists to secure the supremacy of their 'principled' concerns. The scope, nature and speed of political change in the new era of principled politics was largely determined by the interactions and alliances formed within each fiscal party between its three distinct elements. It was this process that either resulted in, or prevented, basic change in various aspects of political life.

The most likely alliance was that between the surviving factionalists and the classical liberals. Although not holding to the personalised loyalties of factionalism, the classical liberals shared the basic traditional conservative instincts of most of the surviving 'old order' factionalists. On matters of

policy, therefore, these liberals combined with the factionalists in both parties to stave off the radical challenge for progressive, principled party policy and reform. They were happy to acquiesce in the factionalists' unprincipled refusal to come to terms with pressure for social and economic change and reform; in the face of radical demands, such important issues as industrial relations, direct taxation and electoral reform were shelved and ignored. The mere presence of party platforms was evidence of radical pressure, but their substance was proof of the factionalist-classical liberal domination of both parties; the absence of specific party policy and the avoidance of the pressing social and economic issues of such concern to the radicals demonstrated the successful resistance to change. As a result, both parties adopted virtually the same vague and irrelevant party platforms, thus accentuating the "absence of any political division [between the two parties] based on deeper social and economic issues, ...".²

On the subject of party discipline, however, a different combination of forces within the two fiscal parties emerged. This new arrangement of forces acted not to restrict change, but to promote it. Implicit in radical liberalism was a belief in party discipline and the caucus system; basic to classical liberalism was the sanctity of independence and individualism. In their desire for party unity and political order, the pragmatic factional leaders actively united with the radicals in an attempt to construct an effective system of party discipline. Resistance was strong and success doubtful, but the attempt constituted a fundamental change to the political system and marked clear progress to the creation of ordered and disciplined political parties.

Only in the area of electoral organisation and management did the three distinct and rival groups in both fiscal parties work in harmony. With the prospect of winning power, the members of both parties discarded the traditional contempt for formal organisation, and devised and employed comprehensive schemes of electoral management. Under the leadership of their radical elements, both parties after 1887 steadily developed and

improved their methods and techniques of organising a general election until, by 1891, fiscal electoral management displayed many of the characteristics of the modern electoral 'machine'. The steady growth of local 'grass roots' party organisation, the use of official party endorsement and the attempts at electoral discipline were the most sophisticated of these characteristics. It was in the rapid development of modern methods of electoral organisation that the arrival of the new era of principled politics was most dramatically revealed. The swift and lasting progress made in the evolution of modern electoral management also demonstrated the progress that could be made when internal party unity and harmony prevailed.

Even when basic changes to the political system were wrought and promoted, however, their consolidation was slow and their acceptance far from automatic. One basic factor inhibiting the easy transition to modern, formal and regimented political methods was the continuing emphasis on the classical liberal tenets of individualism and independence. These residual attitudes prevented the immediate acceptance and success of such modern or 'radical' concepts as 'the caucus system', and made their consolidation as permanent features of the political system slow and tortuous.

The serious internal conflicts within both fiscal parties were, however, chiefly responsible for the failure to consolidate basic changes that took place. For instance, as long as the fiscalists' extra-parliamentary organisations remained dominated by one sectional or economic interest, they were stable and potentially long-lasting entities. When, however, they were transformed into fully integrated party organisations, in which were represented the main rival interests and political philosophies within each fiscal movement, conflict and dissension became apparent and quickly resulted in their disintegration.

The political system of New South Wales between 1887 and the end of 1891 was not an unprincipled, personalised faction system. The transition from politics based on personal prejudice to politics based on political principle had been accomplished

by 1889. The lack of principled cohesion and unity within each fiscal movement, however, prevented the clear emergence of cohesive, principled political parties, and continually thwarted and retarded the efforts of the 'new' men of principle to transform the political system into one based on modern and sophisticated foundations - integrated party structures, the 'caucus system', specific party policies and platforms, formal party discipline and organisation. In the final analysis, the fiscal issue itself must be held responsible for the disunity in principle and confusion in doctrine that retarded the growth of political change. Fiscalism was basically irrelevant to the needs and demands of colonial society; it was artificially and emotionally invoked for unprincipled ends and, as such, it fostered no fundamental division of political principle or philosophy between the two rival parties. The vital divisions of principle were present only within both fiscal parties, and this presence prevented the cohesion essential to a true political party. Only the eradication of such principled disunity could finally produce cohesive and principled political parties. The transition from personalised factions to principled parties, begun after 1886, was far from complete by the end of 1891.