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THE IMPACT OF WAR ON
NEW SOUTH WALES

Some Aspects of Social and Political History
1914-1917

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A thesis submitted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Australian National University

March 1974
ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of aspects of social and political history during 1914 to 1917 which shaped political turbulence in New South Wales, the most populous state in Australia. The writer seeks to modify the accepted view that Australians unanimously and enthusiastically accepted their involvement in the Great War. The divisions of August 1914, blurred as they were by the excitement of the time, were to become clearer during the following years. Anxieties generated by the war, in particular beliefs in the prevalence of 'profiteers', 'shirkers' and venereal diseases affected the labour, pro-conscription and temperance movements respectively. Agitation by these three groups, which politically implicated the English-born Labor Premier W.A. Holman, generated undercurrents which helped to defeat the proposal to reinforce the Australian Imperial Force with conscripted men. Divergent class experiences arising from the pressures of war shaped attitudes to the first conscription referendum in October 1916. Emotions inflamed by that conflict were exacerbated by the formation of Holman's Nationalist party and by the eruption of the great strike in August 1917. Conflicts of 'loyalty' divided people at the time: these were to shape conflicting ideas about the Australian nation.

Dan Coward
March 1974
This thesis is my own work

DAN COWARD
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AMIEU Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union
ARTSA Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association
AW Australian Worker
AWU Australian Workers' Union
DT Daily Telegraph
FEDFA Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association
FSA Farmers and Settlers' Association
IWW Industrial Workers of the World
KC King's Counsel
MHR Member of the House of Representatives
ML Mitchell Library
MLA Member of the Legislative Assembly
MLC Member of the Legislative Council
NL National Library of Australia
NSW New South Wales
NSWIG New South Wales Industrial Gazette
NSWPDC New South Wales Premier's Department Correspondence
Parl. Deb. Parliamentary Debate
Parl. Papers Parliamentary Papers
PLL Political Labor League
RWGLA Railway Workers and General Labourers' Association
SDC Strike Defence Committee
SMH Sydney Morning Herald
USL Universal Service League
WEA Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales
WCTU Women's Christian Temperance Union
ADVENT OF WAR
English-born W.A. Holman replaced J.S.T. McGowen as Premier of New South Wales on 30 June 1913, and led the Labor party to victory on 6 December. He formed the second and successive Labor government of the state. Unlike the first, his government was not dependent on a precarious majority: it held 49 of the 90 electorates. Contemporaries were impressed by the win, for Labor had lost votes at the federal poll on 31 May. On 7 July 1914 the twenty-third parliament of New South Wales met for its first major working session. Parliament would be busy. The government foreshadowed a legislative programme 'probably unprecedented in the history of the State', according to William Bagnall, the Labor MLA for St George.  

The objective, Holman told the 1915 Political Labor League conference, was the 'uplifting of the masses'. It was a revealing abbreviation of the notions of deprivation, equalisation and salvation which animated Labor political thinking. But the Labor cause also satisfied the need for self-expression. Agitation for social amelioration, while demanding recognition for the plight of the poorer, less powerful and less privileged, also enabled the aspiring

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1 F.J. Page, Independent Labor MLA for Botany voted with Holman's government, giving it an effective strength of 50.

2 At the federal general election on 13 April 1910, Labor had won 17 of the 27 NSW seats; on 31 May 1913 the party strength had fallen to 12. The party's valid vote was 51.06 and 46.91 per cent for each year respectively.

3 The first session was a one day sitting on 23 December 1913; the second lasted from 3 March to 8 April 1914.


5 Daily Telegraph (DT), 5 April 1915.
upwardly mobile people to assert their worth and abilities and to claim social recognition for themselves. This conception had its roots in British liberal meliorism. The Labor party was 'still the People's Party' wrote George Black in 1910, which 'was sworn to exterminate injustice, monopoly, and privilege, pledged to win, if may be, for every human born into the world the fullest possible development in all that is high and honorable, pure and sweet, merciful and just, good and true'. Education was seen as the engine of social mobility: it 'was playing a great part in enabling the democracy to manage the affairs of government' Holman told the 1915 Labor Conference. A former cabinet maker, he had graduated from the Sydney University law school.

Progress resulted from education: improved material conditions, Holman continued, would enable the worker 'to turn his attention to the improvement of his children, the result being the production of a better educated rising generation'. Like others in the party, Holman had confidence that not only would education diminish ignorance; it would also enable people to behave rationally. James Morrish, MLA for King, supported his party's intention to make notification of tuberculosis and venereal diseases compulsory. This would make good the deficiencies of the state's 'education system',


2 George Black, History of the New South Wales Labor Party, Sydney, 5th ed., n.d., extract from foreward, dated 1 July 1910. Bede Nairn encapsulates a part of this theme in his valuable book, Civilising Capitalism: The Labor Movement in New South Wales 1870-1900, Canberra, 1973. Of the 35 official Labor members elected in 1891, 21 had been born in the British Isles, 11 in Australia, two in USA and one in France; 21 were under forty years, six were in their twenties, see pp.62-3. Moreover the members had a variety of occupations; as Nairn observes (p.135) when J.R. Dacey was elected in 1895, the party had 'room in it for socially aware employers as well as manual workers and the "clerical and literary classes"'.

3 DT, 9 April 1915. Holman's speech followed addresses given to the 1915 Labor conference by members of the Australian Socialist Party.
which had failed to inculcate 'a love of cleanliness, healthfulness and purity of mind': these attitudes would help to diminish the incidence of the diseases despite the 'adverse social and economic conditions of many people'.

Self-education had helped to induce the view that ideas and their rational exposition were sufficiently powerful to determine the course of events; it also fostered an intellectual arrogance among many Labor men that gave them confidence in their cause. The Labor party promised rational solutions for the improvement of society; the actions of the first Labor government had established them as 'reasonable, sane, and moderate reformers' Bagnall told the Assembly.

Their measures were ameliorative for their objective was social integration, the ideal of 'the co-operative Commonwealth'. The legislation proposed for the session was 'utilitarian' and 'humanitarian' declared Thomas Brown, MLA for Lachlan; it was intended for 'the general social betterment of the whole community and not any particular section'. But their society was an aggregate of people whose attitudes were frequently subjective. Under the stresses of the Great War, the intellectual outlook towards politics was to encounter politics dominated by emotions.

The reformist tradition was also practical politics. To win the government Labor relied on a coalition of interests drawn from rural and urban areas of New South Wales. The 90 electorates of 1913 can be classified as 44 rural, 37 urban and 9 rural-urban seats. Labor held respectively 20, 24 and 5 electorates from each group. But the rural-urban alliance provoked conflicts. Rural interests, particularly the needs of the growing commercial orientation of family farms, came to

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2 Ibid., p.27, 7 July 1914.

3 Ibid.

4 Calculated from Colin A. Hughes and B.D. Graham, A Handbook of Australian Government and Politics 1890-1964, Canberra, 1968. There had been an electoral re-distribution in NSW during 1912.
be served by the Country party movement which was taking shape before and given impetus by the Great War.\footnote{See B.D. Graham, The Formation of the Australian Country Parties, Canberra, 1968, pp.55-65, 96-142. Undoubtedly Labor lost a small proportion of its rural vote with the emergence of a Country party; but the Liberal/Nationalist party faced the greater loss.} More importantly, purists within the labour movement desired a homogeneous party.\footnote{See letter to the editor from H.M. Smith, of Griffith, who urged that a trade union party be formed. Alternatively he suggested that workers join local PLL branches 'to ensure the return of candidates who will truly represent the Labor movement, and not "all classes"'. Australian Worker (AW), 24 December 1914.} Accordingly they were critical of compromise which seemed to prejudice their interests. Holman, who held the rural seat of Cootamundra, defended the political tactics pursued by the parliamentary Labor party, for they had brought some reforms rather than none. There were only 25 to 30 safe Labor seats: 'We have to work with tact and judgment if we wish to get legislation to suit labour ideals'; and legislation could only be enacted if marginal seats were won he declared. He criticised those who disagreed with his view of the realities of gaining power: 'It is the ignorant men, who have never been outside Sydney, who do not know it - men who have lived all their lives in Labour strongholds. I have always been on the outskirts, winning seats for Labour.'\footnote{Holman's speech to the 1915 PLL Conference, Sydney Morning Herald (SMH), 10 April 1915.}

Labor's electoral tactics suited the coalition of interests which constituted the party. But urbanisation created tensions over the long term, requiring each of the developing mass political parties to make adjustments for its own survival. The seaport capital of Sydney continued to grow in numbers and to attract an increasing proportion of the state's population. In 1891 the metropolitan population was 387,000; in 1914 an estimated 752,000. But Sydney's share of the population had risen from 34.2 per cent to 40.4 per cent. Taking the ten largest centres according to the 1911 census, their sizes are as follows:

\begin{center}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
\end{center}
Sydney was the centre of an expanding railway network: in the intercensal period 1901-1911 the mileage open for traffic rose from 2,846 to 3,761; the passengers carried from 29,000,000 to 61,000,000; and the goods and livestock freighted from 6,400,000 to 10,400,000 tons. The Government Railways and Tramways Department, one of the largest employers in the state, increased its employees from 16,000 to over 31,000 during the same period.

Sydney, the chief commercial centre, had in 1914-15, 73 per cent of the state's 116,500 employees engaged in manufacturing. Coal was the major industrial fuel. Newcastle, the second city, served as the port for the largest Australian coalfield nearby; smaller fields were located at Lithgow and Wollongong. In 1914 the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's steel works were under construction at Newcastle: its first steel was to be produced in the following year. Broken Hill, the third city, lay in isolation on the western edge of the state, where valuable silver lead and zinc deposits were mined. The changing proportion in the value of production of the major industries indicates the transformation of the economy:

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>1901 %</th>
<th>1911 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral, agricultural, dairying</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Size was a major geographical feature: at its maximum New South Wales stretched for over 600 miles north to south and exceeded 800 miles east to west. The state's population, an estimated 1,862,000 inhabitants in 1914, excluding the 45 per cent living in the three major cities, was scattered in rural towns, villages and farms along the coast and the adjoining tablelands. When the fifty principal urban areas are ranked as in Table 2, the preponderance of very small towns is apparent.

TABLE 2
NSW RANK AND SIZE OF URBAN AREAS 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,000 - 2,999</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000 - 3,999</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,000 - 4,999</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 - 9,999</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 - 60,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 500,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official Year Book of NSW, 1914, p. 95.

The chief farm types were sheep, wheat and dairying. In the 1913-14 season, New South Wales produced 50.3 per cent (357,985,000 lbs) and 36.8 per cent (38,020,381 bushels) of the Australian production of greasy wool and wheat respectively, while the state's proportion of Australian sheep, cattle and horses for the year 1914 was 41.8, 22.4 and 29 per cent respectively. Farm enterprises were chiefly mixed, the outstanding exception being 22.4 per cent of the 101,000 farm holdings of 1914-15 which were devoted solely to grazing.

The wheat lands were the centre for the Farmers and Settlers' Association.\(^1\) Farmers believed that their interests were being neglected by the Liberals and opposed by Labor. A.K. Trethowan, a Riverina wheat farmer and FSA leader, was

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among those who advocated the formation of a country party.\(^1\) In 1913 the FSA conference approved of the third party principle. In alliance with the Liberals, the FSA nominated 26 candidates for the general election; eleven were returned. But in the parliament they accepted the leadership of C.G. Wade, the leader of the Liberals.\(^2\)

Some feared that the development of the two party system fostered divisiveness and 'extremism'. Not only was there constant speculation that Holman would leave Labor and ally himself and like-minded colleagues with 'progressive' Liberals, but also attempts to found parties of the centre. G.S. Beeby, who had resigned from the Labor party in 1912,\(^3\) had failed to draw support for a 'moderate' party, the National Progressive, in the 1913 elections. Harry Morton, MLA for Hastings and Macleay and the sole unaligned independent returned to the twenty-third parliament, declared that 'safety lies in the middle course'.\(^4\) He was repeating his opinion of three years before: 'a proper government composed of the moderates in this House, eliminating the extreme proposals of all sections and giving to the state a sympathetic recognition of the wants of the people is something that appeals to the country elector to a greater degree than ever before'.\(^5\)

The growth of trade unions helped to develop the uneasiness about social divisions. In the period 1900 to 1914, the trade union movement grew and spread into all major industries, as shown in Table 3.\(^6\) But growth was not related

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\(^1\)Ibid., p.80.

\(^2\)Ibid., p.82.


### TABLE 3

NSW DISTRIBUTION OF TRADE UNIONISTS AMONG MAJOR INDUSTRIAL GROUPS, 1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Classification</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral, agricultural</td>
<td>22,902</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22,941</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, smelting</td>
<td>26,857</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26,857</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>22,685</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22,685</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, metal working</td>
<td>19,233</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19,243</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>3,208</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>3,998</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing, boots</td>
<td>4,079</td>
<td>2,531</td>
<td>6,610</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, drink</td>
<td>16,693</td>
<td>1,551</td>
<td>18,244</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other manufacturing</td>
<td>12,981</td>
<td>1,382</td>
<td>14,363</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railways and tramways</td>
<td>47,018</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>47,018</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other land transport</td>
<td>6,365</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,365</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping and sea transport</td>
<td>19,933</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19,933</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>27,675</td>
<td>1,728</td>
<td>29,403</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Official Year Book of NSW, 1915, p.691.

To bargaining strength, for many unions were small, poor and weak; a great number collapsed after a brief life span. Moreover, unions which survived had experienced fluctuations in membership. The Australian Workers Union, one of the largest unions in the state, recorded 20,891 members in 1902 and 11,538 in 1903: it did not regain its numerical strength until 1908. The vulnerability of unions helps to explain the passion among the leading unionists for 'solidarity': it was a sentiment which many of their members lacked. In part the increase in union membership was related to the awards granted to unions by arbitration courts and wages boards. Russell suggests that this helped particularly in building up

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TABLE 4

NSW GROWTH OF TRADE UNIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>84,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>127,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>237,714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


the rural membership of what had been essentially urban-based unions.¹ The outlook was promising, declared E.J. Kavanagh, secretary of the Labor Council of New South Wales in his annual report of 1913-14: 'All the affiliated unions report an increase in membership, and by persistent organisation and agitation, assisted by the Arbitration tribunals, have succeeded in gaining many improvements in wages and working conditions.'²

Unionism had produced an expanding bureaucracy of officials and organisers who were frequently members of the Labor party and sometimes became its politicians. Officials guarded trade union interests which sometimes conflicted with the dominant integrationist social philosophy of Labor parliamentarians. Strikes created friction. The first Labor government had repealed the Industrial Disputes Act of 1908 and its amending Act of 1909, which had made striking a criminal offence, with its own Industrial Arbitration Act in 1912. But strikes were still to be viewed as anti-social actions: they were regarded as an 'extravagant expedient'.


²SMH, 17 July 1914. There were 120 unions affiliated with the Council.
Employers could no longer disregard the need for the public investigation of their employees' grievances, wrote G.S. Beeby, the Minister for Labour and Industry, in 1912. Equally, 'the worker who carefully considers the industrial history of Australia must by this time realise the futility of the strike as a general weapon for the correction of grievances'. But strikes could not be suppressed. Following a series of strikes in 1913, A.B. Piddington was appointed as Royal Commissioner to investigate the workings of the Industrial Arbitration Act. He made many recommendations to reduce delays in wage hearings. But 'prosecutions for striking should be automatic' he wrote to Premier Holman. Piddington regarded this as 'the most important suggestion...perhaps in the whole report'. He added in 'strict confidence' that the Industrial Registrar and Judge Heydon of the Industrial Arbitration Court both regarded 'ipso facto prosecution as a valuable' suggestion. In June and July of 1914, striking coal miners were prosecuted under the Act. Pressures generated during the Great War provoked strikes which helped to exacerbate conflicts between the two wings of the Labor party.

Economic pressures during the war years also sharpened the opinions of those who believed that 'industrial' unions were the more 'progressive' form of union organisation. Controversy over organisation divided the labour movement in 1914: would wage earners gain more benefits from craft unions or from larger unions organised on the basis of industries? At this time it has been estimated that unskilled labourers

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1 Introductory article written by G.S. Beeby in New South Wales Industrial Gazette (NSWIG), Vol.1, No.1, July 1912, p.6. Beeby resigned from the Labor party in December 1912.

2 Letter from A.B. Piddington to Premier Holman, 3 November 1913, New South Wales Premier's Department Correspondence, (NSWPDC), Box 7/4715, file A16/853. For Piddington's full report on NSW industrial arbitration, see NSWIG, Vol.4, November 1913, December 1913, January 1914, pp.404-48, 628-90, 848-907 respectively.

3 SMH, 24 June, 23 July 1914. See also Holman's remarks to the Assembly in which he said that the prosecuting machinery of the Attorney-General's Department was fully occupied against strikers; NSW Parl. Deb., session 1914-15, Vol.55, p.66, 8 July 1914.
probably made up one-third of the Australian workforce.\(^1\) Agitation for fewer and bigger unions came chiefly from members of self-styled industrial unions representing mainly unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Their attitudes were shaped by several influences: the need to protect the unskilled from unemployment and rising prices; syndicalists disillusioned with Labor politicians or frustrated at the smallness of the gains derived from the parliamentary system with its hostile Legislative Council; radical socialists in search of a militant working class; and egalitarian idealists seeking to remove the status barriers dividing craftsmen from unskilled labourers. Industrial unionists felt threatened when the craft-dominated Labor Council of New South Wales proposed that the Industrial Arbitration Act be amended to recognise only craft unions. Officials from nine unions,\(^2\) representing over 78,000 unionists, a third of the 1914 registered trade union membership in New South Wales, formed themselves into an Industrial Unions Committee to defend the interests of their members. 'Outside of the large cities craft unions are impotent', claimed the Committee in its circular to Labor parliamentarians, 'whereas our organisations have branches throughout the state, and are in a position to

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\(^1\)Macarthy, 'Harvester Judgment', op.cit., p.124; the estimate is derived from the 1933 Commonwealth Census as no data was available for previous years. For NSW, the occupational categories of farm, pastoral, road, wharf and builders' labourers, undefined labourers, railway and tramway construction workers form 181,641 or 21.7 per cent of the 837,539 gainfully employed males; see Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1933, part xxiii, Table 1.

\(^2\)Their names and registered membership for 1914 are as follows: Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU) 2,800; Gas Employees' Union 4,000; Australian Workers Union (AWU) 30,000; Furnishing Trades Society, 2,200; Railway Workers and General Laborers' Association (RWGLA) 17,400; Shire and Municipal Employees' Union 7,000; Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board Employees' Union 2,000; Federated Millers and Mill Employees' Union 2,500; Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association 12,400.
protect fully all members."¹ War temporarily interrupted the controversy.²

Some feared the growing power of the 'tyrannical new unionism'. The Employers' Federation of New South Wales, which had been established in 1903 to resist 'the encroachments of labour legislation upon the rights of the individual',³ deplored changing attitudes: unions were tending to become 'militant, political, rather than utilitarian'; they were adopting 'socialistic ideals which cannot be considered beneficial to the nation'. Moreover, unionists should continue to rely upon philanthropy: benefits such as 'wages boards, old-age pensions etc.' had been bestowed largely by 'Liberals of the past'. Equally, elsewhere in the world, welfare gains for the masses had been the fruits of paternalism. 'The improvement of the working class in Germany' had been due to the aristocratic Bismarck: German artisans were now 'the most patriotic and contented' in the world.⁴ Others also disliked the decline in subservient workplace relationships. A bank director, managing director of the importing firm of Arthur Cocks and Co. Ltd., and a former Lord Mayor of Sydney, A.A.C. Cocks, Liberal MLA for St Leonards, blamed the Labor government's industrial laws and its administration of them for 'bringing about absolute disloyalty among the employees in our manufactories and warehouses. They have set the employees against the employers and instead of fostering that proper feeling which should exist between employer and employee, they have done their best to foment trouble.'⁵ He

¹SMH, 15 July 1914.
²Several officials of these unions later formed the Industrial Section which dominated the 1916 PLL Conference and helped to make the party split. For two versions of the formation of the Section, see P. Adler, AW, 23 November 1916, and J. Bailey, AW, 30 November 1916.
⁴'Employers' Federation of NSW, pamphlet published in SMH, 26 June 1914.
attacked the trade union organisers who inspected the workplace conditions of their members: they were 'spies' and 'agitators' who had 'to create grievances in order to justify them in drawing their salaries'. Because of unionism, workmen no longer did an 'honest' day's work Cocks alleged. If the trend continued, Australia would never become 'what the pioneers were making it, an independent virile race ready to defend their independence as they are in Great Britain, a loyal and an aspiring race working for the day when they may return the good offices they have received from the mother country'. Edward McCray, managing director of the engineering and contracting firm Overall and McCray Ltd., told the newly-established Interstate Commission, headed by A.B. Piddington, that workmen in an American firm similar to his own, did twice as much work as his employees. 'The Sydney workman wants high wages for the smallest amount of work he can do in a day', he complained. 'Labour and labour organisers dominate matters here. The whole tendency of the unions in Australia is to decrease production.' Holman attended the annual banquet of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce on 30 July. The president, H.Y. Braddon, whom the Premier had publicly thanked for his advice during the year, warned that unless the government demanded 'a fair day's work for a fair day's pay' from its numerous employees, the 'virus' of slow working would extend through the community.

Dislike of unions was a complicated emotion. In part resentment was provoked by the nature and history of business establishments. In the case of manufacturing, for example, small businesses predominated: in 1913, establishments which employed ten people or less made up two-thirds of the total

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1 Ibid., p.115. J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, Liberal MLA for Orange, blamed union officials 'the shark' and 'the bloodsuckers', for generating the coal miners' strike. Ibid., p.209, 15 July 1914.

2 Ibid., pp.1120-1, 9 July 1914.

3 SMH, 16 July 1914.

4 DT, 31 July 1914.
business. This is shown in the table following. Many of the

### TABLE 5

**NSW SIZES OF MANUFACTURING ESTABLISHMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>2,076</td>
<td>11,095</td>
<td>3,427</td>
<td>16,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>9,155</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>13,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 50</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>13,176</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>21,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 100</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>9,529</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>16,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 100</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>23,180</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>50,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,367</td>
<td>66,135</td>
<td>5,346</td>
<td>120,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


small scale businesses in particular, were presumably founded by owner-operators. In the period 1901-1913, manufactories increased by 1,979 in number; 68 per cent were of the smallest category.¹ Trade unions, with their demands for better wages and conditions, threatened the profits and diminished the power of self-made entrepreneurs like Cocks.

Since 1908 there had been a continual rise in the 'cost of living'.² Price inflation was a little understood and disturbing experience. Businessmen blamed trade unions for the rise. They alleged that the lessening 'efficiency' of their employees, aided by interference from union officials, had decreased productivity and so pushed up prices. The labour movement, on the other hand, attributed price rises to greedy 'monopolists'. The phenomenon probably helped in the

¹The NSW Chamber of Manufactures was constituted in 1895; see *Official Year Book of NSW, 1914*, p.350. There were a number of employers' organisations, including trade groups such as the Sydney and Suburban Timber Merchants' Association; the Sydney and Suburban Shopkeepers' Association; Master Builders' Association; Master Butchers' Association; Master Bakers' Association.

²Macarthy,'Harvester Judgment', pp.164-7; see also p.88: price increases accelerated during 1913, so that 'by 1914 real wages had fallen back to the 1910 level'.
building of trade unions and the recruitment of new unionists during these years as a means of counteracting monopoly power.

The struggle to curb trusts and monopolies became a major political issue. In New South Wales the Labor government established a number of state-owned enterprises as a method for lowering prices. More state businesses were promised. 'The merchants of Sussex-street at present fix prices and reap the great bulk of the profits' to the detriment of food retailers and the people, Bagnall declared; the government would 'introduce a scientific method of state interference with the distribution of food supplies'. The federal Labor party, when in government, attempted to obtain power to control all the monopolies in the nation. In May 1913 a series of constitutional proposals, heavily defeated two years before, were almost successful.

### TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE MAJORITY VOTE AT CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDA ON THE QUESTION OF NATIONALISATION OF MONOPOLIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>26 April 1911</th>
<th>31 May 1913</th>
<th>Percentage change 1911 to 1913</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Frederick Watson, *A Brief Analysis of Public Opinion in Australia*, Sydney, 1918.

1. See *Reports on State Enterprises* for year ending 30 June 1914, in NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.5, pp.893, 897, 923. Included among the businesses were brick, lime, timber and pipe works, quarries and a clothing factory.


3. See Conrad Joyner, *The Commonwealth and Monopolies*, Melbourne, 1963. See p.45 for the Labor party's manifesto in 1913, which declared that the three 'Great Questions' were industrial unrest, the operations of trusts and combines, and the increased cost of living.
Even non-Labor parties were concerned about monopolies: the Interstate Commission began its investigations into the rising cost of living on the instructions of the Liberal Minister for Trade and Customs in the federal government during September 1913. In July 1914, at the public hearings in Sydney, Piddington quizzed the representative of the Portland Cement Company for its alleged 60 per cent profit acquired during the previous year. The Commission, declared Captain Toombs, Labor MLA for Hurstville, had discovered that trusts and combines were 'rampant' in Australia: 'the profits of some of them are over 100 per cent'. The findings of the Melbourne University economist, H.L. Wilkinson, bolstered the agitation. His book appeared shortly before the outbreak of war. Although the monopolies had increased the 'economies of production and distribution', he wrote, the owners and controllers had taken 'far greater profits...than would have been the case if there had been no restraint of competition'. Similarly, the innovations of the Commonwealth Statistician sharpened anxieties over price increases. In 1913 the first of a regular series of bulletins published by the Labour and Industrial Branch of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics appeared. The Bureau's statistics showed the trends in prices and related economic phenomena calculated

1 Commonwealth Parl. Papers, session 1913, Vol.2, p.1245. The Commissioners were ordered to investigate the operations of the Tariff Acts, which included the use of tariffs in 'The lessening...of the cost of the ordinary necessities of life'.

2 Argus, 24 July 1914.


4 See H.L. Wilkinson, The Trust Movement in Australia, Melbourne, 1914. Wilkinson investigated monopolies in sugar, tobacco, coal, jam, brewing, nails and barbed wire, manure, flour and bread, timber, bricks, printing, dried fruits, fish, fresh fruit and milk, meat and gas, and the operations of retail grocers, shipping and tramway companies.

5 Ibid., p.12; see also p.152.
back as far as 1901. Regular published statistics had a political impact: they put into a readily understood form price changes which were only vaguely perceived at the time in which they had occurred. During the Great War the 'monopolists' became the 'profiteers'.

More than economic relations were threatened by the political successes of the labour movement: some feared that their social status was being undermined. Opportunities for upward social mobility, the drive for the recognition of self, had shaped the ambitions and attitudes of many in Australia. Egalitarianism and sometimes republicanism, had been used by aspirants as a levelling ideology both for the purpose of diminishing those of superior status and for justifying their own positions. But upward social mobility had been the reward for individual effort; the range of social inequalities which resulted thus represented the gradations of individual abilities. 'If all men were cast in the same mould and possessed the same traits of character and were not animated by the selfishness which is an element of human nature', then perhaps some of the Labor government's proposed legislation would work, declared J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, Liberal MIA for Orange. He had begun his working life as an apprentice.

---

1 Prices, Price Indexes and Cost of Living in Australia, Commonwealth Labour and Industrial Branch Report No.1, Melbourne, 1912. In the Introduction to this bulletin, dated December 1912, the Statistician G.H. Knibbs, wrote that the rise in the cost of living was a world-wide phenomenon which had provoked riots, strikes and 'socialistic agitation' in many countries. Further that the blame for rising prices had been given to 'all sorts of persons and conditions': increased wages, shorter hours; the growth of trade unions; the armament race; excessive public works investment; the cost of social and economic reforms; and 'the operations of trusts, combines, and trade agreements'. See also article in the Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, No.5, 1912, pp.1167-84, entitled 'Inquiry into the Cost of Living in Australia', which describes the results of a small survey into the income and expenditure of families which had been conducted by the Bureau.

composer, subsequently became a newspaper reporter, and later a proprietor of two rural newspapers.\(^1\)

Competitiveness fostered upward mobility; it also shaped individualist attitudes to work. Several Liberal members transposed their own attitudes into their opinion that the mass movement of trade unionism was changing the behaviour of individuals. 'Is it part of a trade-union to repress and suppress the individuality of its members?' asked Daniel Levy, Liberal MLA for Darlinghurst.\(^2\) His was an ambivalent attitude, reflecting unease at the political success of the Labor party, for he admitted the necessity for trade unions to work 'honestly' for the improvement of the conditions of their members.\(^3\) Liberals were also uneasy at Labor's proposals to extend the role of the state. Interference would diminish the individual's need to compete. Industrial legislation, declared English-born Lt-Colonel G.F. Braund, Liberal MLA for Armidale, was 'steadily and surely sapping the very foundations of our prosperity': it was lessening the efficiency of the workers, 'destroying their independence', and reducing them 'to a dead level of mediocrity'.\(^4\) State interference, he believed, conflicted with the fundamentals of human nature which had been reproduced in the economic behaviour that regulated the market place. State-owned enterprises were thus being 'faithless to the true principles

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\(^1\) Details from file in the Australian Dictionary of Biography. Fitzpatrick was born at Moama, NSW, in 1862. In 1885 he became a reporter for the Goulburn Daily Southern Argus; in 1898 he established the Windsor and Richmond Gazette, in 1904 the Molong Argus. He was MLA for Rylstone 1895-1904; and elected member for Orange in 1907.


\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Ibid., p.295, 21 July 1914. Braund was to command the 2nd Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force; he was killed in action 4 May 1915; see The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol.1, C.E.W. Bean, The Story of Anzac, 9th ed., Sydney, 1939, pp.52-3; 52 note.
of economics, having regard to the position in which we find our social structure to-day'.

Opportunities for upward social mobility significantly influenced social behaviour, and hence class structure, in New South Wales. The developing society, despite its economic set-backs, held out possibilities for those wishing to improve their income and status in the long term: this worked against the establishment of rigid social classes. The relative openness of the social classes fed egalitarianism. 'The Australian worker is as firm in his belief that the social millenium is easy of accomplishment as in his belief in his own worth and in his right to the economic benefits enjoyed by the more fortunate or more able of his fellow-citizens', wrote Englishman Meredith Atkinson in 1920.

Wealth was an important attribute of class in New South Wales. It helped to develop exclusiveness between the classes and shaped political activity. As Atkinson put it: 'Everybody's material interests are so obviously involved with those of everybody else; we live too close together.' James Morrish told the Assembly: 'There may not be poverty...but there is an enormous gulf between the classes in this community as there is in other communities - not so marked, so widespread, not so far-reaching, but it exists nevertheless.'

The Commonwealth War Census of 1915 was to reveal how income was distributed; this is shown in the table following. The

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2 Meredith Atkinson, ed., Australia: Economic and Political Studies, Melbourne, 1920, pp.1-56. Atkinson arrived in New South Wales a few months before the outbreak of war to take up the Sydney University position of Director of Tutorial Classes. He became president of the Workers Educational Association of NSW, which organisation co-operated with the Department of Tutorial Classes.

3 Ibid., p.34.

TABLE 7  
NSW DISTRIBUTION OF NET ANNUAL INCOMES,  
YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 1915

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Group</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deficit and nil</td>
<td>17,940</td>
<td>78,038</td>
<td>95,978</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 49</td>
<td>46,239</td>
<td>97,215</td>
<td>143,454</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 99</td>
<td>121,505</td>
<td>57,738</td>
<td>179,243</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 149</td>
<td>179,483</td>
<td>20,016</td>
<td>199,499</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 - 155</td>
<td>19,377</td>
<td>1,506</td>
<td>20,883</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156 - 199</td>
<td>63,797</td>
<td>4,868</td>
<td>68,665</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 - 299</td>
<td>42,337</td>
<td>4,347</td>
<td>46,684</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 - 499</td>
<td>20,005</td>
<td>2,531</td>
<td>22,536</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 749</td>
<td>6,576</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>7,609</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750 - 999</td>
<td>2,541</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>3,028</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 - 1,499</td>
<td>1,989</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>2,369</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500 - 1,999</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000 - 2,999</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000 - 3,999</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,000 - 4,999</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 5,000</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>524,047</td>
<td>268,509</td>
<td>792,556</td>
<td>99.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Statistics are imperfect for two main reasons. An estimated 252,000 people, 23,141 males and 252,036 females over 21 years, did not submit returns. As 84 per cent of females were shown as dependants in the 1911 census, presumably most of the number missing from the 1915 war census did not receive an income. Secondly, as individuals were allowed deductions for rent and interest paid out, rates and taxes, insurance policies, contributions to pension and superannuation funds, there was an incentive to over-value deductions. Despite these drawbacks, the range of net incomes remains important.

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1G.H. Knibbs, The Private Wealth of Australia and Its Growth, Melbourne [1918]. For details of the census schedule of 1915, see pp.8-11.
for its revelation of inequality. The striking feature is the relative closeness of the distribution in the lower income categories: 78 per cent of the respondents claimed their net annual incomes to be less than £149; over three-fifths of this group had net incomes exceeding £50. Some idea of the relationship of net to gross annual income can be drawn from a consideration of the salaries paid for various occupations within the New South Wales public service: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Salary Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>junior clerk</td>
<td>£60-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forewoman cleaner</td>
<td>£70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nurse</td>
<td>£75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typist</td>
<td>£110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surveyor's field assistant</td>
<td>£110-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clerks</td>
<td>£130-300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seaman</td>
<td>£132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laboratory assistant</td>
<td>£150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labourer</td>
<td>£156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compositors</td>
<td>£169-220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bookbinder</td>
<td>£180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>draftsman</td>
<td>£180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fitter and turner</td>
<td>£182-208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>£190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joiner</td>
<td>£208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assistant schoolmasters</td>
<td>£200-300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers College lecturer</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surveyors</td>
<td>£300-450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matron</td>
<td>£300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accountant</td>
<td>£350-750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>designing engineer</td>
<td>£350-500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>architect</td>
<td>£450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>headmaster, Sydney High School for Boys</td>
<td>£600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hospital superintendant</td>
<td>£700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-Secretary Premier's Dept.</td>
<td>£750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stipendiary magistrate</td>
<td>£825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director-General of Public Works</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wage and salary earners outnumbered employers and self-employed in the 1911 census, the proportions being as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employers, self-employed, unpaid assistants</td>
<td>167,802</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage and salary earners, unemployed</td>
<td>521,104</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependants</td>
<td>959,542</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,648,448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the British-born were significant numbers who had experienced substantial rises in income, status and authority, all of which were more difficult to achieve within the more rigid social hierarchy in Britain. According to the 1911 census, 74.5 per cent of the people in New South Wales were born in the state; 10.5 elsewhere in Australasia; about 12.5 in the British Isles; leaving less than 3 per cent born outside the British Empire. But the British-born were an aging group: in 1911 roughly 64 per cent of those born in England, Scotland and Wales and 81 per cent who had been born in Ireland were 40 years old or more; only 16.7 per cent of the Australian born were in the same age group. During the

### TABLE 8

**NSW BIRTHPLACE OF THE POPULATION, 1911**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total over 40 years</th>
<th>% of total over 40 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>122,096</td>
<td>77,324</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>31,260</td>
<td>20,011</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>4,382</td>
<td>2,833</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>46,656</td>
<td>37,876</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1,377,219</td>
<td>230,155</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Calculated from 1911 census.

Great War the differing age structure assumed importance: those over 44 years were above the military age. But the British-born carried an influence beyond their mere numbers among the élite in politics, law, medicine, the university, churches and other professions. As leading citizens they conceived it their duty to take the lead in patriotic endeavours: leadership was to include the advocacy of conscription.

1 Unfortunately the 1911 census does not contain statistics which correlate birthplace with occupation. However evidence will be presented in following chapters which will indicate the importance of the British-born in New South Wales. The proportion of the British-born in the state population was as follows: 34.1, 27.3, 23.5, 16.3 and 12.4 per cent for each of the census years 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911.
Price inflation fostered class tensions which were partly reflected in politics. To over simplify, the phenomenon created divergent experiences and hostile attitudes soon to be exacerbated by the pressures of the Great War. Middle class people tended to blame unions for their eroding status; the working classes perceived the rising cost of living as capitalist exploitation. It is perhaps no accident that the re-emergence of militant socialists, who eschewed political action and the parliamentary methods of the Labor party, coincided roughly with the appearance of price inflation in 1908. Of the various numerically small socialist sects, the most notorious was to be the 'Chicago' faction of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which advocated the doctrines of sabotage and direct industrial action. Socialist agitators provided ready explanations for the evils of capitalism. Their propaganda, which was sufficiently close to the working classes' experience of industrialisation and urbanisation, helped to spread notions of class conflict.

Macarthy makes two main conclusions about the economic experience of wage earners during the period 1891 to 1914. First, owing to changes in retail prices and house rents, together with prolonged periods of unemployment, 'wage earners as a socio-economic group had made little material progress overall'. Secondly, that in the 1898-1908 decade of recovery from the economic depression of the early 'nineties, the relative position of the wage earners had worsened when compared to that of other income groups. In particular, he writes, the wages for unskilled labourers during the 1900s fell 20 per cent from the level of the 1880s: this group did not fully recover their position until 1921.


4 Ibid., p.98.

5 Ibid., p.114.
Housing costs took a major share of the working man's budget. T.A. Coghlan wrote in 1901 that generally a labourer spent 25 per cent of his income on rent, which, he said 'must be regarded as excessive'.1 Mr Justice Heydon during his inquiry into the minimum living wage for the needs of the average-sized family of two parents and two dependant children, found that the same proportion of income was required for rent in 1913-14.2 The 1911 census provides statistics on the number of private dwellings divided into three categories of owner, tenant occupancy, and rent purchaser.3 Taking the state as a whole, half the private dwellings were occupied by tenants. In the Sydney metropolitan area the proportion of tenants was much higher, being two-thirds of the total occupied dwellings, as shown in table following. If we add the categories of rent purchaser

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total State</th>
<th>Sydney and suburbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. Dwellings</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>129,423</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rent purchasers</td>
<td>11,322</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>160,314</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>18,707</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>319,766</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and tenant, then 71 per cent of the metropolitan housing was being rented. The rent paid for private dwellings, together with the size of houses classified on the basis of the number of rooms, are summarised in Tables 10 and 11.

1 The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales, 1900-01, p.782.
3 No definition is provided for 'rent purchaser' in the Census Act, 1911 census schedule nor in the Statistician's Report in 1911. Presumably a rent purchaser was one who was paying off a house on terms.
TABLE 10
NSW RENTAL VALUE* OF PRIVATE DWELLINGS, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total NSW Rented dwellings</th>
<th>Sydney and suburbs Rented dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 4/11</td>
<td>17,672</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/- - 9/11</td>
<td>54,128</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/- -14/11</td>
<td>48,800</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/- -19/11</td>
<td>17,587</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over £1</td>
<td>15,936</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unspecified</td>
<td>17,513</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>171,636</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*tenants and rent purchasers. Source: Calculated from 1911 census.

TABLE 11
NSW - NUMBER OF ROOMS PER PRIVATE DWELLING, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of rooms</th>
<th>Total NSW dwellings</th>
<th>Sydney and suburbs dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20,321</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>38,884</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>145,304</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>81,362</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 8</td>
<td>32,555</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unspecified</td>
<td>1,340</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>319,766</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from 1911 census.

Growth in the metropolitan area put a continual demand for housing, ensuring both overcrowding and a pressure which kept rents relatively high. The growth of industries in residential areas may have pushed up rates, thus forcing landlords to demand rents in keeping with their expenses. Professor R.F. Irvine, who reported on the condition of working class housing in 1913, was appalled at what he saw during a series of inspections of the older parts of Sydney.
'Rooms are small, badly lighted, badly ventilated; staircases ...are extremely narrow....Whole streets of smaller houses have no conveniences - no bathroom, no laundry', he wrote; 'yet in many places the rental for two small rooms and a kitchen is 10s[hillings] and upwards a week. A large proportion of the dwellings are in a bad state of repair.' Irvine was impressed by instances of exploitation of low income earners who lived in squalid conditions in 'lodging houses', which were frequently let room by room. One narrow, three-storey building in Surry Hills was occupied by seven families: 'Several of these had only one room, in which they cooked, ate, and slept. It was stated that the very smallest room fetched 5s[hillings] a week, large rooms fetched from 10s[hillings] to 15s[hillings] a week. Owing to the high rentals, families living in smaller dwellings are compelled to take in lodgers.' Unable to pay the rents or to find cheap housing, about thirty families from Surry Hills and Waterloo squatted on the hills of Long Bay, where they had built shacks of 'galvanised iron, kerosene tins, packing-cases and sacking'. They named their settlement 'Eucalyptus Town'.

Irvine's impressions of overcrowded living had been borne out by the 1911 census. The fifteen inner municipalities of the Sydney metropolitan area, in which many working class people lived, occupied 11.6 per cent of the land space and held 58 per cent of the metropolitan population. In comparison to the outer ring of municipalities, the inner fifteen had the highest ratios of persons and occupied dwellings per acre.

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2 Commission of Inquiry into the Question of the Housing of Workmen, op.cit., p.32.

3 Ibid.
The population densities of the fifteen are given in Table 12.

**TABLE 12**

**POPULATION DENSITY OF INNER SYDNEY MUNICIPALITIES, 1911**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Area (acres)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Persons per acre</th>
<th>Occupied dwellings per acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darlington</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3,816</td>
<td>86.73</td>
<td>16.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddington</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>24,317</td>
<td>60.34</td>
<td>11.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>26,498</td>
<td>59.95</td>
<td>12.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>24,427</td>
<td>56.15</td>
<td>10.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erskineville</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>7,299</td>
<td>43.97</td>
<td>9.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>21,943</td>
<td>42.12</td>
<td>8.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balmain</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>32,038</td>
<td>34.38</td>
<td>6.936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney (City)</td>
<td>3,327</td>
<td>112,921</td>
<td>33.94</td>
<td>5.549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annandale</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>11,240</td>
<td>31.22</td>
<td>6.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>24,254</td>
<td>20.73</td>
<td>4.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petersham</td>
<td>1,254</td>
<td>21,712</td>
<td>17.31</td>
<td>3.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>2,016</td>
<td>30,653</td>
<td>15.20</td>
<td>3.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>10,072</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>2.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>1,024</td>
<td>10,123</td>
<td>9.89</td>
<td>2.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peters</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>8,410</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>1.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,796</strong></td>
<td><strong>369,523</strong></td>
<td><strong>MEAN: 35.58</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.997</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1911 census.

But the statistics probably understate the degree of overcrowding. When the proportion of land devoted to other urban uses, such as parks, factories, warehouses, shops, commercial buildings, railway yards and so on is accounted for, the amount of residential land is diminished and the ratio of people per acre correspondingly increased. 'One block in Redfern', records Irvine, 'comprising three-quarters of an acre, has 37 houses - an average of nearly 50 per acre.'

1Ibid., p.27. See p.28 for a description of common allotment sizes and their characteristics.
Demolition and delays in building cheap accommodation to replace the destroyed housing, had probably helped to create overcrowding. The outbreak of bubonic plague in Sydney during January to August 1900, and subsequent minor outbreaks in 1902 and 1903,1 'caused a terrible scare throughout the community'.2 The Sydney City Council demolished some areas of housing which had been infested by plague rats; the result 'had been rather to increase the congestion in neighbouring localities'.3 Archdeacon F.B. Boyce took up the cause of slum eradication following his appearance before the 1908 Royal Commission on the Improvement of Sydney. He alleged that by 1914, three-quarters of the 'slum areas' within Sydney had disappeared. But his concern was chiefly to eliminate conditions under which 'drunkenness and immorality' could flourish. He believed that the displaced occupants of slum housing had the means to afford better accommodation elsewhere: 'After the reform the occupants of the resumed areas went to other suburbs, and there, under healthier conditions, they were able to lead normal, healthy lives.'4

Boyce emphasised his leadership in the agitation, but the fear of disease undoubtedly was the significant force which mobilised the agitators. The threat from diseases posed a continuing major problem affecting public health. In 1913 smallpox broke out in Sydney: 1,073 people were infected in that year, but only one died. A drastic quarantine was imposed within 15 miles of the Sydney GPO. It lasted from 4 July to 26 November, thus restricting 95 per cent of the

1See 'Outbreak of Plague at Sydney, 1900', Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, session 1900, Vol.2, pp.1235-316; 'Report of the Board of Health on a Third Outbreak of Plague', NSW Parl. Papers, session 1904, Vol.2, pp.283-304. In 1900 there were 303 cases of bubonic plague, 103 of these people died; in 1903 there were two cases of the plague.

2F.B. Boyce, Fourscore Years and Seven, Sydney, 1934, p.90.

3Ibid.

smallpox cases to the metropolitan area. The disease affected particularly the face, limbs, upper torso, and the 'male and female genital organs (the penis and the vulva) were very frequently invaded'.

Despite the contemporary resistance to inoculation an estimated half million people, well over one-quarter of the population of the state, rushed to be vaccinated during the last half of 1913: over 225,000 of these were treated free at public depots. On 22 April 1914 a Department of Public Health was established in its own right: Frederick Flowers MLC, became its first minister. In his policy, among other things, he proposed to legislate to control tuberculosis sufferers and to set up 'more efficient methods for dealing with possible outbreaks of plague, smallpox and cholera'. Further, he wished to establish night clinics to treat people infected with venereal diseases: these little-understood diseases, which hitherto, as James Morrish put it, 'most so-called polite people have closed their eyes to and pretended did not exist', were to sharpen public agitation during the Great War.


2 'Outbreak of Mild Smallpox', op.cit., p.105.

3 Ibid., p.111; in the 10 years prior to 31 December 1912, only 1,126 vaccinations for smallpox were recorded in the whole of NSW, even though the Department of Public Health paid medical practitioners 2/6 per head for all successful vaccinations. See pp.111-3 for arguments seeking to establish the effectiveness of vaccination. See also A.G. Butler, Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services, Vol.1, Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea, pp.525-6. Cases diagnosed as 'typhoid' among the Australian troops were cited by opponents of inoculation as evidence that the practice did not work. See pp.26-7: the outbreak of smallpox which continued through to 1914, apparently helped Defence authorities to make inoculation compulsory for all soldiers, although a concession weakened in part this decision.

4 'Outbreak of Mild Smallpox', op.cit., p.111.

5 NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1914-15, Vol.55, p.108, 9 July 1914. Morrish alleged that their action to control venereal diseases would probably create an 'uproar'.

9 Julv 1914. Morrish alleged that their action to control venereal diseases would probably create an 'uproar'.
Controversy over the Irish Home Rule question disturbed New South Wales politics once more during 1914. It was largely an imported battle: the chief protagonists were those mainly of British birth. In late March Holman had cabled John Redmond, the Irish Nationalist leader in the House of Commons: 'Australian opinion wholly condemns any disappointment or delay of hopes of Irish people to make Ireland a united Ireland.' Angered by Holman's accusations of disloyalty, Irish-born David Storey, Liberal MLA for Randwick, attacked the Premier in the Assembly: 'We Ulstermen of New South Wales are loyal subjects of the King.' He recalled that Holman in 1899 had wished that the Boers would defeat the British army: 'Seeing that that would have meant the break-up of the British Empire how dare he now prate about loyalty! A fig for his loyalty! There is no loyalty about him.' English-born Thomas Henley, Liberal MLA for Burwood, was equally furious with Holman. He urged that the Assembly vote on the cable 'so that the country may know who are the traitors to the Empire.'

Agitation grew fiercer during July. Over one hundred Anglican clergymen in the archdiocese of Sydney, including the two senior British-born clerics, Archbishop J.C. Wright and Dean A.E. Talbot, signed a manifesto declaring their 'solemn protest against the proposed coercion of Ulster', whose people 'of all Protestant denominations, believe and assert that the proposed measure of Home Rule imperils their civil and religious liberties'. A third signatory was the controversial Rev. E. Digges La Touche, a recent emigrant from Ireland. As the Bulletin later remarked after his death in August 1915 while serving as an infantry officer at Gallipoli:

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1 Quoted from SMH, 30 March 1914, by David Storey, Liberal MLA for Randwick, NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1914, Vol.54, pp.640-1, 30 March 1914.
3 Ibid., p.675.
4 DT, 3 July 1914.
'unfortunately, in his luggage came the sectarian hatreds of his birth-place'. 1 Arthur Griffith, an Irish-born protestant and Labor Minister for Public Works, attacked the stand taken by the Anglican church in support of the 'political attitude of the Tory party in the British Parliament and their dupes in Belfast'. 2

In part the stand taken by Holman and Griffith in support of self-government accorded with their political philosophy. But their sympathy for the Home Rule cause also aided their building of electoral support for the Labor party. 3 The growth of the Labor vote has been charted in the table following. Catholics, who made up one-quarter of the New South Wales population in 1911, were of largely Irish descent. While several Labor men advocated Home Rule, some of their

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General election</th>
<th>% of valid vote</th>
<th>seats contested</th>
<th>seats won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901*</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There were 125 seats in 1901 and 90 at subsequent elections. Source: Compiled from Hughes and Graham, *Australian Government and Politics*, op.cit.

1*Bulletin*, 26 August 1915. See also *Bean, The Story of Anzac*, op.cit., p.44.

2Letter to the editor from Arthur Griffith, *DT*, 4 July 1914. See also letters to the editor in reply from Archbishop Wright, Dean Talbot and Digges La Touche, *DT*, 6 July 1914; and further correspondence, *DT*, 7, 8, 9, 15, 29 July 1914.

political opponents spoke for the cause of Ulster.¹ The Catholic Irish-Australians, being dominantly working class people, found that Labor represented their interests: thus the Home Rule controversy served more as an indicator of political sentiment than as a catalyst in aligning electoral support to each of the major parties. In 1914 Catholics were clearly identified with Labor. Control of the parliamentary Labor party by caucus majority was 'hatched in the hearts of Jesuits' declared Grand Master James Robinson at the Loyal Orange Lodge celebrations in July. Thus, he alleged, 24 Labor members 'favourable to the claims of Rome' had controlled the remaining 22 in caucus, thereby making possible the pro-Home Rule vote in the previous parliament.²

The threat of civil war in Ireland dominated the newspaper headlines during July. On 27 July rumours of war in central Europe competed with the Irish crisis for the place as the major news story. The day following, the first shot had been fired between Austria and Serbia. On 29 July it was announced that the two countries had declared war.³ The Great War began. Strains arising from urbanisation and developing economic interests had been reflected and perhaps successfully absorbed within the evolving political system in New South Wales: the pressures of war were to exacerbate conflicts and to recast political attitudes.


²DT, 14 July 1914.

³See DT, SMH, 20-29 July 1914.
Scottish-born Australian Labor leader Andrew Fisher declared on 31 July 1914: 'Australians will stand beside our own to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling.' His words made an impact at the time; they have continued to echo in the history books. As employed by historians it suggests that the vast majority of Australians reacted to the British declaration of war with the same eagerness as their politicians: unanimously and enthusiastically. In short, 'public opinion' willingly supported the decision. Evidence of two kinds has been relied upon to substantiate this. First, the lavish affirmations of loyalty to Britain volunteered by a variety of organisations and individuals, and secondly the near absence of protest or disapproval. These indicators of opinion are supposedly corroborated by the deluge of volunteers from all social classes enlisting in the army at such a rate that troop quotas for each military district became soon filled. As will be shown a significant

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1 *Argus*, 1 August 1914.

proportion of volunteers in New South Wales during August 1914 were unemployed.¹

Can we be sure that almost all Australians responded with equal enthusiasm to the war? The relative absence of protest is not necessarily evidence of majority willingness to engage in war. Critics may have been inhibited for several reasons: caution in the face of intimidating behaviour from the champions of the war; the prohibitions put on criticism and enforced by the War Precautions Act and regulations; censorship imposed on newspaper reports of criticisms of the war; ignorance of European affairs and the rapidity with which the news of war burst upon unsuspecting Australians. Even Premier Holman, usually well-informed on international affairs, seemed convinced that war was improbable. At a businessmen's banquet in late July he declared that he held a 'deep-rooted, confidence in the sound sense of Western Europe'.² Two days later he announced:

> It is really impossible to see what anyone is fighting about. No one knows what is the actual matter in dispute between Austria and Russia, and it is doubly difficult to realise the motive of Germany's precipitate actions.³

Yet at the same time he conceded that Britain would most likely be entangled in the quarrel. He added later that if peace policies failed and war came, 'the only thing to do is to prosecute it as vigorously as you would in every public policy'.⁴

¹The six military districts coincided approximately with each of the state boundaries. Many probably joined the army out of a sense of adventure. Their excitement was readily interpreted at the time as a part of the 'wave of patriotism'. The lack of an analysis of birthplaces of the volunteers leaves a tantalising gap in our history. W.R. Young in a footnote says that in Canada at an early stage in the war, 62 per cent of the Canadian volunteers were British born. See W.R. Young, 'Conscription, Rural Depopulation, and the Farmers of Ontario, 1917-19', Canadian Historical Review, Vol.LIII, 1972, p.299 note.

²DT, 31 July 1914.

³Ibid., 3 August 1914.

⁴Ibid., 5 August 1914.
The reactions of politicians to the war might have helped to distort our impressions about the way in which the rest of the population reacted. The warmth of political rhetoric in turn was evoked in part because politicians were engrossed in an election campaign. Both major political parties hoped for a clear victory at the federal poll set for 5 September. It promised to be a critical point in the evolution of federal politics after almost a decade and a half of uncertain see-saws in power. During the months preceding August 1914 competition grew fiercer. On 30 July Federal Parliament was formally dissolved. Simultaneously war threatened. It took everyone by surprise.

Political momentum failed, tactics were discarded because of the extraordinary circumstances. On 31 July both Liberal and Labor leaders declared their nation's support for Britain should that state go to war. Fisher committed Australians to their 'last man' and their 'last shilling': presumably he did not expect the war to last long enough for these sacrifices to be met. The federal Attorney-General, Sir William Irvine declared at a Liberal rally in North Sydney: 'what I say is that when England is at war, we are at war. There is no half-way house'. As both political parties agreed, an

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1 For the results of federal elections see Colin A. Hughes and B.D. Graham, Handbook of Australian Government and Politics, 1890-1964, Canberra, 1968, pp.285-315. The May 1913 federal elections had left both of the major political parties finely balanced in the House of Representatives but a Labor Opposition majority in the Senate. See Argus, 31 October, 5 November, 18 December 1913 for developments in the Liberal government's double dissolution strategy, wherein all members of both houses were to be forced to face the electors.

2 The possibility of British involvement was first published on 28 July. See DT, 28 July 1914, leader. See also SMH, 30 July 1914 article: 'If War Came. Position of Australia'; and leading news report stating that Austria had formally declared war on 'Servia'; and that French and German armies were being mobilised. See also the reaction of J.W. Dafoe, editor of the Manitoba Free Press in Ramsay Cook, 'Dafoe, Laurier, and the Formation of the Union Government', Canadian Historical Review, Vol.XLII, 1961, pp.186-7.

3 Scott, op.cit., p.22.

4 SMH, 3 August 1914. See also AW, 6 August 1914: 'War has been conditionally declared by Great Britain. This means that Australia, too, is on the eve of war.'
important decision was not questioned. There was almost no public political criticism of the war reported in the Sydney metropolitan press.\textsuperscript{1} Voters were offered no choice between war policies: to them it was a matter of choosing a government for its domestic policies.

The politicians jostled for electoral advantage. Both parties endeavoured to use the war in order to depict themselves in the best light. A public wrangle occurred over questions of administrative competency and the relative responsibility of each party for defence innovations.\textsuperscript{2} 'National unity' was also exploited. W.M. Hughes, Labor member for West Sydney, offered on behalf of the party to postpone the elections. As a gesture of good faith, von Hagen, the Labor candidate opposing the Liberal Prime Minister Joseph Cook for the seat of Parramatta, withdrew from the contest.\textsuperscript{3} As the elections could not be done away with constitutionally, the Liberals rejected these overtures. But Labor scored tactically: the question of holding an election became a matter for argument. Liberal politicians had to defend their decision not to abandon the poll at a time of national 'crisis'.\textsuperscript{4} There is evidence to suggest that their attitude caused some unpopularity among their own supporters. Bishop Long, speaking at a Bathurst meeting about the causes

\textsuperscript{1}W.A. Holman's sceptical commentaries as to its possibility were made before 4 August. See his reflections on the war, DT, 31 July, 3 and 5 August 1914.

\textsuperscript{2}For example, see DT, 24 August 1914: Andrew Fisher's manifesto to the electors of the Commonwealth; W.M. Hughes' replies to W.H. Kelly and Joseph Cook, SMH, 26, 28 August 1914.

\textsuperscript{3}DT, 6 August 1914. This decision was made after consultation with the State Political Labor League Executive. The gesture was trifling: Parramatta was a safe Liberal seat. At the general elections on 31 May 1913 Joseph Cook won 20,727 votes (68.34 per cent of the total valid vote) to his Labor opponent's 9,603 votes. See Commonwealth Parl. Papers, session 1913, Vol.2, p.141.

\textsuperscript{4}See Wade, James, Garland, DT, 10 August 1914; W.A. Watt, Senator E.D. Millen SMH, 19 August 1914.
of the war, declared: 'I hope this meeting will send out a note to Australia to tell our politicians to get together and give up the elections.' He was loudly applauded.¹

J.H. Catts, the Labor campaign director in New South Wales, fostered this sentiment. Writing in a leaflet entitled The Call to Duty, he suggested that Liberal pettiness injured national unity:

The Cook-Irvine Fusion refused to postpone the elections. Friendly Labor overtures were treated with ridicule and contempt....The Fusion is raking up and distorting old graveyard tarradiddles to besmirch Labor's loyalty. Labor's record and Fusion's disgusting administrative misconduct — proved by the 'Liberal' press — is Labor's answer.²

Holman was implicated in the Liberal 'tarradiddles'. In October 1899 he had earned notoriety for his outburst in the Legislative Assembly when he had wished victory for the Boers over the British forces in South Africa.³ Further, his comments about the European war in the days preceding 4 August, enabled the Liberals to attack the Labor party. Holman had argued that Australians had 'won the right of self-government' and so could not be 'plunged' into a general European war 'merely at the bidding of some irresponsible ruler'.⁴ Liberals pounced on his words. The next evening at a North Sydney rally, Irvine quoted Holman's remarks and declared there was no 'half-way house'.⁵ His platform companion, Colonel Ryrie, referring to Holman's pro-Boer past, asserted:

¹DT, 8 August 1914. See also DT, 15 August 1914: the Yass Farmers and Settlers' Association refused to provide funds for the Liberal campaign, as it was much more important to 'help the British Empire'.

²J.H. Catts papers, NL, MS.658.

³NSW Parl. Deb., series 1, third session 1899, Vol.C, p.1466, 18 October 1899: '...as I believe from the bottom of my heart that this is the most iniquitous, most immoral war ever waged with any race, I hope that England may be defeated.'

⁴SMH, 1 August 1914.

⁵Ibid., 3 August 1914.
At such a time as this we, as a nation, need men at the head of affairs who have some sentiments of Imperialism. I say at this juncture we need a party in power that will ring true on a question like this.\(^1\)

This sniping continued throughout the campaign. Sir Joseph Carruthers, speaking in support of Liberal W.H. Kelly, urged electors to take 'special care not to elect any man whose loyalty in the past had been open to the slightest question'.\(^2\) The writer of the *Sydney Morning Herald*’s column on the election campaign noted that whilst the Liberal party is 'absolutely sound on the subject of loyalty to the British Empire and its king', the Labor party had a number of men 'whose attitude is not such as to inspire confidence'.\(^3\) A Liberal propaganda leaflet impugning Labor was circulated among the electors of Nepean. On it was written 'Disloyalty', 'Traitors in the Ranks', 'Haul Down the Union Jack' and 'German Preferable to British Rule'.\(^4\) A.W. Jose, the Sydney-based correspondent for the *London Times*, judged that the Liberals lost office, among other reasons, for using the war for 'purely partizan purposes', particularly in their attacks on Labor men.\(^5\) The efforts exerted to brand Labor as

\(^1\)Ibid., 3 August 1914. See also *AW*, 3 September 1914. Ryrie speaking at the Cootamundra Town Hall, which was coincidentally in Holman’s state electorate, referred to ‘certain’ politicians 'who were disloyalists, and who openly scoffed and sneered at the Union Jack'.

\(^2\)*DT*, 15 August 1914.

\(^3\)*SMH*, 29 August 1914.

\(^4\)V. Molesworth papers, ML uncat. MS.243. It is unclear whether these titles belonged to one leaflet or several. Molesworth, the unsuccessful Labor candidate for Nepean, wrote a few letters in September-October 1914 enclosing evidence to be used in the libel case Fisher versus Parkhill. The *Bulletin* of 10 September 1914 reported that Fisher claimed £10,000 damages from Liberal campaign organiser Archdale Parkhill, 'who had made allegations of disloyalty against the Labor leader'. See also *AW*, 10 September 1914.

\(^5\)A.W. Jose papers, ML, uncat MS.266, *Times* despatch, 8 September 1914. See also *The Times History of the War*, Vol.2, London, 1915, p.257: the Liberals attempted 'to represent the General Election as a contest between patriotic Conservatives and a disloyal, anti-war and anti-British Labourite Party'. Not that Labor did not seek to profit from the war. Hughes, writing to Catts on 14 August, hoped to

Footnote continued on next page....
'disloyal' provides a first glimpse of an attitude which was to flourish in New South Wales during the later war years.

It was expected that Australian troops would miss the fight. Australia lay far from the prospective battlefields of Europe. Assumptions about military technology and strategy induced a belief that the war would be a relatively short affair like the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, or that a smashing blow inflicted on the German by the British fleet would end the war by naval means. Rumours were fed by these notions. 'It looks as if the German warship Goeben was specially built for the good of the newspapers', noted the Worker. 'During the past fortnight scarcely a day has passed without her having been sunk, blown up, or captured.' At first the war was a 'crisis', suggesting a short-lived event. The troops for the Australian military contingent were hastily enlisted into an 'expeditionary' force. Some men were so anxious to be included in the New South Wales quota before the war was won that they duplicated their application forms. The secretary of the Corowa Political Labor League volunteered twice. Receiving no reply and 'afraid of being too late' he wrote to Holman asking for help. The Telegraph of 25 August reported that 10,780 men had enlisted, excluding 1,700 duplicate applications from anxious volunteers. As Australian troops probably could not be trained and despatched in time, Arthur Rickard, president of the Sydney Millions Club,

Footnote continued from previous page:

orchestrate a large rally for Fisher in the Sydney Town Hall with news of victory. 'By the middle of next week', he scribbled, 'we should have heard news of the great impending battle & this - if allies are successful - will settle people's minds wonderfully. The meeting then would be the utmost value.' J.H. Catts papers, NL, MS.658, series 1.

1AW, 20 August 1914. For comments on the prevalence of rumours, see also Bulletin, 27 August 1914.


3Martin Gavin to W.A. Holman, 26 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4693, file 14/5130.

4DT, 25 August 1914.
suggested that the first priority be the export of Australian-grown foodstuffs to the mother country. Rickard's firm, a leading real estate agency, advertised in mid-August:

War will be over in one month!...Get a home of your own now! so that you'll participate in the great wave of prosperity that is coming to Australia.

Gus Gray from Collarenebri wrote to George Black, MLA for Namoi: 'I wonder how long the war will last? Not very long I think.' Many agreed. 'All round us people are saying Germany is going to be mopped off the map', said Mary Lloyd on 6 August. A former prime minister held a similar view. During August J.C. Watson prophesied to H.E. Boote, the Worker's editor, that the Germans would be defeated by the next June. In September three Royal Commissioners, including Alfred Deakin, who were inquiring into the impact of the war on food supplies, trade and industry, cautiously stated that 'if, as is quite possible the war will be prolonged for a year or more,' then an increased planting of food crops would be necessary.

The hope of a short war persisted well into 1915, despite the growth of contrary fears, as expressed by Professor M.W. MacCallum in December 1914, that the war would be 'a very long

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1 *SMH*, 7 August 1914. The Millions Club was a business and professional men's group interested in immigration and defence. See *DT*, 18, 19 June 1914. It claimed a membership of 1,300, see *DT*, 5 August 1914.


3 Gus Gray to George Black, 14 August 1914, George Black papers, ML, uncat. MS.256, Box 2. See also *SMH*, 5 August 1916: Holman told the British Empire League that no-one had thought at the outbreak of war that it 'could possibly last more than a few months'.

4 M[ary] E. L[loyd], *Sidelights on Two Referendums 1916-1917*, Sydney, 1952, p.26. See also *AW*, 6 August 1914. It 'is unlikely that Australia will actually feel the shock of armed warfare'.


and a very severe one'. In March 1915 the Herald printed a Japanese prediction entitled 'Peace in Six Months'. In April a Sydney surgeon who had helped to set up an Australian voluntary hospital in France returned home claiming that the war would soon be over. He had been assured by two British staff officers, he said, that the Germans would be defeated by August or September 1915 at the latest. Geography aided incomprehensibility. The Bulletin referred to 'a war which is half the globe away'. A.W. Jose wrote in December 1914:

we are too far away, too safe, too undisturbed by the realities of war, to feel that the fight is ours, for our lives and our ideals and our hopes of future progress... Following from the doubts raised above, is it possible to tackle the problem of appraising how people reacted to the war in another way? As the question is one concerning public opinion it seems worthwhile making some observations about it. 'Public opinion' is frequently used as a shorthand way of indicating an aspect of social cohesion. Used in this manner it readily suggests that the society considered is a unified organism in which all individuals tend to think as one on certain questions. Yet many studies have shown that social cohesion is an intricate phenomenon: industrial societies are composed of conflicting groups with discordant values. Such intricacy is represented in the results of contemporary opinion polls, which characteristically reveal a range of opinions on a given issue. It follows that people do not all have the same perceptions of events, including wars. Moreover, opinions also change - often rapidly - in direction and emphasis under the pressure of events. To provide some order

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1 SMH, 26 December 1914. See also views of Sir William Cullen, SMH, 12 December 1914; A.H. Prince, letter to editor, SMH, 22 December 1914.

2 Ibid., 13 March 1915.

3 DT, 7 April 1915. See also SMH, 19 July 1915, which carried two stories: the first cited an authority in the United States who predicted the end of the war in October; the second quoted some British politicians who put the date either as January 1916 or June 1916.

4 Bulletin, 27 August 1914.

5 A.W. Jose papers, MI, uncat. MS.266, despatch to Times, 1 December 1914.
in the jungle of public opinion, one important assumption associated with the concept is that attitudes can be epitomized by groups (although these may be further qualified by other variables such as age, sex, religion, race, income, occupation etc.). Accordingly it would seem fruitful to assume the existence of groups in the Australian society of 1914, that these groups each had distinctive values, and that these values affected their reactions to the war. We might then discover reactions to be less homogeneous than hitherto believed. It should be noted that on many issues the number of informed people is frequently very small, although people do hold opinions on matters about which they have little knowledge.

Accepting the hypothesis that a range of opinion is probable on any issue, how would public opinion in New South Wales during August 1914 be distributed on the question of support or opposition to the war? There is no information that enables us to quantify a distribution, but by classifying the population in this case into three arbitrary categories representing degrees of opinion, it might be possible to modify the accepted view that 'most' Australians were enthusiastic supporters of the war. The three categories are as follows

1. support
2. acquiescence
3. opposition

It is probable that those who opposed the war in August 1914 were in a minority; publicly-voiced opposition to the war was scant. Equally it is probable, judging from the evidence, that an unknown number responded readily, even enthusiastically, in their support of the war. However we cannot be sure that enthusiasm or willingness was spread uniformly among the large part of the population which did not publicly venture an opinion on the war, bearing in mind that the predominance of pro-war idealists among community leaders might have distorted impressions of the make up of public opinion during August 1914. To allow for this it seems prudent to envisage a category of unknown (but probably significant) size, which has been called 'acquiescent'. Opinions, even uninformed ones, can take time to evolve, so the virtue of the notion of an
acquiescent category is that it takes into account the possibility that opinions on any issue can fluctuate over time. The acquiescent category as implied by its name, contains those with the least strong opinions about the war. Accordingly the people delimited by this hypothetical category are open to influences which might propel them towards either stronger or weaker positions of support for the war. It may be that those who led the intensive recruiting campaigns or urged greater efforts from Australians during 1915 and 1916 first confronted 'acquiescent' behaviour when they discovered or alleged that groups of people were much less committed to the war, according to their own relative standpoint, than they had given themselves to believe.

Having stated a case for theoretical variations among people in their reactions to the Great War, can this be vindicated by the evidence? As there were no contemporary opinion polls to sort out categories of opinion, it is only possible to test the hypothesis by making an assumption: namely, that in the New South Wales society there existed two fundamental cohesive groups, the working classes and the middle classes. An investigation of class reactions might then reveal differences in outlook and degree of involvement in the war.

How did the working classes, as represented by individuals and institutions respond to the war? Ideological condemnations from left wing groups were few in comparison to the volume of pro-war acclaim. On Sunday 2 August apparently under the banner of the Sydney IWW Club, George Waite, Secretary of the Club and of the United Labourers' Protective Society, together with fellow unionists, addressed an estimated crowd of one thousand. The meeting recorded its 'opposition to militarism' and that it declined 'to be stampeded into the ranks of the misguided who are eager to slaughter the sons of
working men on the continent of Europe....1 Later in August the Sydney branch of the Socialist Labor Party of Australia expressed its 'unqualified condemnation of the present war' which was being waged in the interests of 'international capitalism'. Further, the war would cause 'carnage and devastation without precedent in the world's history'.2 H.E. Boote, who had succeeded Lamond in the editorship of the Australian Worker, the organ of the Australian Workers' Union, in May 1914, had similar thoughts. He agreed that the war had been 'precipitated by the Capitalists of Europe':

That is one of the penalties of the Imperial connection. It implicates us in the international policy of the British ruling class - that class whose greed has brought one-third of the British people to the lowest depths of degradation and suffering.3

Elsewhere he stated that 'this is not a war for which a single extenuating reason can be given on either side', and hoped that 'no wave of jingo madness' would 'sweep over the land'.4 Labor politicians took an opposing view. W.A. Holman declared that the war was 'a fight between liberty and tyranny'. Praising the French for opposing the 'Jack Boot regime' of Germany, he then asserted: 'The failure of the cause of the Allies would not only mean the breaking down of the Empire, but the fabric of liberty upon which the Empire stood.'5 E.R. Larkin, a former policeman, who held the marginal North

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1SMH, 3 August 1914. Judging from his few personal papers, Waite was a tireless campaigner against 'injustice', particularly that afflicting the working classes. He was a member of the Australian Freedom League, the strike Release Committee at Lithgow 1912; the Anti-Conscription League; the Australian Union for Democratic Control; and the Rationalist Association of NSW. See George Waite papers, ML, uncat. MS.208. See also DT, 14 January 1914: Waite was secretary of the Anti-Coercion and Political Freedom League.

2DT, 20 August 1914.

3AW, 6 August 1914.

4Ibid., 6 August 1914. See also commentary by W.D. Heher and T.D. Mutch printed in the same edition. Mutch was elected Labor MLA for Botany in 1917.

5SMH, 24 August 1914. Similar patriotic speeches were delivered at the many political rallies held throughout August. For instance, see J.C. Watson SMH, 4 August 1914; W.M. Hughes SMH, 26 August 1914.
Sydney seat of Willoughby for Labor, was among the first to volunteer for the expeditionary force. 'I consider this a critical time for our Empire', he explained, 'and I deem it the duty of those holding public positions to point the way.'

The repugnance displayed by Boote and the eagerness of Holman show the extremes of opinion within the labour movement. It is probable that their views were not representative of the bulk of the working classes. The only union body which publicly expressed sentiments akin to those of Holman was the Western District Labor Council at Lithgow, which announced its loyalty to the 'Mother Country' and promised to do all in its power to maintain the 'prestige' of Empire.\(^2\) Patriotic resolutions were signals of consensus, and could only serve this purpose if made public. Thus it can be assumed that the dearth of union resolutions, judging from a thorough canvass of a section of the press and the limited union records available, indicates an outlook different from that of the host of middle class institutions which publicly affirmed their patriotism.\(^3\)

Unionists were troubled by sudden burdens. The outbreak of war jeopardised the livelihood of many, causing considerable distress among the working classes. Concerned with the immediate cares of getting a living, many people were unable to take as close an interest in the war as those busy proclaiming their patriotism. Many lost their jobs or were put on short-time and half-pay. Some of these joined the army. About 200 tin miners at Emaville lost their jobs. A large number left the field: 'most of the younger men are

\(^1\)DT, 17 August 1914. See also SMH, 18 August 1914. Larkin was secretary of the NSW Football League, SMH, 1914. At the NSW general election of December 1913 he had won Willoughby on the second ballot by a margin of 307 votes. The valid vote was 4,908 to 4,601. He was killed at Gallipoli. See Bulletin, 24 June 1915.

\(^2\)DT, 13 August 1914. The Lithgow branch of one of the two Societies of Engineers passed a similar motion. See SMH, 8 August 1914. The Commonwealth Small Arms Factory was located at Lithgow. Production of rifles had just commenced when the war began. See Scott, op.cit., p.261.

\(^3\)As the press was keen to collect as many affirmations of imperial patriotism as possible it can be taken that it represented the publicly expressed views at this time.
making towards Sydney with a view to enlisting'. The Herald of 21 August reported that a 'number' of volunteers were miners thrown out of work by the war; the Telegraph, almost three weeks later said that a 'good number' of soldiers were former sailors, waterside workers and others whose trades had been curtailed by the war. Official estimates indicate that of the approximate 5,500 Sydney men alone thrown out of work during August, half had adopted 'military work'.

We can only guess at the number of unemployed. John Estell, Minister for Labour and Industry, using what information could be pieced together by his departmental staff, estimated that about 12,000 men were unemployed on 6 August. This total included a 'residuum' of 1,500 regularly unemployed persons; 4,000 to 5,000 others from unidentified localities or jobs thrown out of work; 2,000 more from Broken Hill; 300 miners at Cobar; 700 miners and others in the Newcastle district; 1,000 at the Broken Hill Proprietory Company's steel construction works at Newcastle and several hundreds formerly employed in the tanning, wool-working and brick-making trades. Jabez Wright, MLA for Willyama (which included part of Broken Hill), disagreed with Estell's statistics relating to his district, and stated that 8,000 men there were unemployed. As no recording agency existed, accurate unemployment figures are not available. However Estell's department compiled statistics to give them a rough guide to the level of unemployment caused by the war. These are as follows:

NSW: ESTIMATES OF UNEMPLOYMENT, AUGUST 1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sydney</th>
<th>Newcastle</th>
<th>Broken Hill</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 August</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>3,300</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 August</td>
<td>4,600</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>17,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 August</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>5,736</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>20,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 August</td>
<td>14,490</td>
<td>4,604</td>
<td>7,245</td>
<td>2,974</td>
<td>29,313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NSWIG, Vol.6, September 1914, p.643.

1 SMH, 11 August 1914.
2 Ibid., 21 August 1914; DT, 9 September 1914.
3 New South Wales Industrial Gazette (NSWIG), Vol.6, September 1914, p.642.
4 NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1914-15, Vol.55, p.595, 6 August 1914; SMH, 5, 7, 8, 11 August 1914; DT, 5, 6, 7, 12, 19 August 1914.
The figures for 31 August are further sub-divided into unemployed and partially employed, these being 13,539 and 15,774 respectively for New South Wales as a whole. A critique of these statistics is given in a following chapter; all that need be said here is that the numbers of wage-earners who lost or partially lost their jobs continued to rise during August 1914 and subsequent months.

The war touched most occupations, particularly in mining, shipping, clothing, furniture making, metal trades, building and labouring. For example, by the end of August 1,012 navvies, 1,500 wharf labourers, 1,200 metal tradesmen, 3,460 miners were unemployed. The unusual level of unemployment aroused apprehension in union circles. There was no knowing if the crisis would worsen. Accordingly resolutions related to the war were prompted more by the need to preserve jobs than as an expression of patriotic fervour. The Labor Council Executive, meeting on 4 August, regretted 'the existence of the present war' and trusted that it would 'Shortly end'. It circulated the following motion to the affiliated unions:

1See Chapter 7, p.269, text and notes.

2NSWIG, Vol.6, September 1914, pp.806-8.

3It is difficult to discover which unions were particularly affected by unemployment during August 1914, as union titles were frequently omitted from press reports. However it appears that the following unions in New South Wales had large numbers of their members either unemployed or on part-time work: Amalgamated Miners' Association (Barrier branch) Coal Lumpers' Union; Federated Storemen and Packers' Union of Australia; United Labourers' Protective Society Sawmill Employees' Union; Sleeper Cutters' Union; NSW Typographical Association; Federated Ironworkers' Assistants' Union; Factory Employees' Union; Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Union; Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union; Wharf Labourers' Union; Federated Furnishing Trades Society of NSW; Shop Assistants and Warehouse Employees' Federation and the several unions connected with clothing and textiles and the building trades. Evidence from NSW, DT, AW for August 1914; NSWIG, Vol.6, September 1914, pp.641-3, 806-9, 842-5; Report on the Working of the Factories and Shops Act for 1914, NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.4, pp.1-63; Labor Council of NSW, Executive Minutes and General Meeting Minutes, August 1914.
Recognising the position that Great Britain is at the present time in owing at war, and the possibility of Australia being seriously involved Council requests all Unions to, as far as possible pursue industrial peace during the existence of the war.¹

Few unions responded to the motion. Economic conditions did not favour strike action, which made the request gratuitous. The Executive's proposal was further complicated by antagonism between the Labor Government and the trade unions over the question of strikes. In the Labor Government's Industrial Arbitration Act of 1912, the strike was conceived as 'an extravagant expedient', which replaced the former notion of the strike as a criminal offence under the previous Act of the Liberal Government. In the months preceding the war, Holman's government had attempted to enforce the penalties required for the breach of its legislation.² Further complications arose because of the brawling between craft and industrial unions within and without the Labor Council over amendments to the same Act.³ Among the few craft unions which indicated that they would try to preserve 'industrial peace' were the Australasian Society of Engineers, the Operative Stonemasons' Society and the Sheet Metal Workers' Society.⁴

Some unions showed themselves ready to cooperate in other ways. The Boilermakers' Union reportedly offered to suspend its overtime awards to enable 'necessary repairs' to be carried out on warships. The Amalgamated Society of

¹ Labor Council of NSW Executive Minutes, 4 August 1914. My italics. The six members present at this meeting were C. Fox (Bricklayers), J.J. Talbot (Postal Employees), M.J. Reddy (Pressers), C. Bennett (Cigar Factory Employees), A. Wylie (Stonemasons), H. Connell (Ironmoulders).

² See SMH, 24 June 1914: over 800 summonses were issued against striking coalminers on the instructions of the Minister for Labour and Industry. On 22 July 519 coalminers were fined £4 each, see SMH, 23 July 1914.

³ Nine of the largest mass unions, representing a total over 78,000 unionists, formed a defensive organisation known as the Industrial Unions Committee on 31 July 1914. See SMH, 1 August 1914, also SMH, 10, 15, 17 July 1914; DT, 10, 13 July, 1 August 1914; AW, 30 July 1914.

⁴ DT, 8 August 1914; Operative Stonemasons' Society of Australia (NSW), Minutes, 17 August 1914, ANU Archives, T46/2/5; NSW Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers' Society, Minutes, 20 August 1914, ANU Archives, T23/1/11.
Engineers and the Sheet Metal Workers' Society decided to work overtime to help prepare the fleet. The Federated Millers' and Mill Employees' Union decided to do all in its power to keep up the output of flour. All these actions assured employment for their members. To relieve distress among out-of-work unionists, the Furnishing Trades Society proposed that the State Government contribute money equal to the amount levied by each union. On 25 August, delegates from the Labor Council Executive met with representatives from the New South Wales Employers' Federation. Not much could be done. The employers promised to urge their members to 'distribute work available among their employees on an equitable bases' (sic).

Increases in food prices added further anxieties. Despite the equivocal assurances of the wholesale produce section of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce 'to do all in their power to maintain normal value for all foodstuff, consistent with the laws of supply and demand', prices rose during August. D.R. Hall, the Attorney-General, when introducing a bill to establish the Necessary Commodities Control Commission on 18 August, stated that Cabinet had 'waited until we had sufficient evidence to justify' the measure. He asserted that there had been 'large increases in price' since 1 August. The Commissioners, headed by Mr Justice Edmunds, confirmed these claims in their first report of 15 September:

The evidence shows that almost immediately after the declaration of war, the wholesale grocers of the State raised the prices of imported commodities by amounts ranging generally from 7½ to 20 per cent.

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1 DT, 6 August 1914; NSW Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers' Society, Minutes, 6 August 1914. ANU Archives, T23/1/11.

2 DT, 14 August 1914.

3 Federated Furnishing Trade Society of NSW, Executive Minutes, 17 August 1914, ANU Archives, T11/1/2; Labor Council of NSW, General Meeting Minutes, 20 August 1914.

4 Labor Council of NSW, Executive Minutes, 25 August 1914.

5 DT, 7 August 1914.

They added that this state of affairs lasted only 'a few days', after which most of the price increases 'were, if not abandoned altogether, considerably reduced'.¹ 'Few days' and subsequent reductions notwithstanding, unexpected price rises proved provocative at such a time. Discontent was expressed throughout August. G.S. O'Halloran of Singleton denounced the Associated Softgoods Warehousemen for voting to increase their prices by 10 to 15 per cent.

No doubt, these gentlemen are quite in accord with the idea of suspending wages board awards till the crisis is over. But evidently when it comes to their own profits, which for some years have been enormous, their patriotism oozes out.²

In mid-August the New South Wales Retail Grocers' Association protested against 'the unreasonable and unpatriotic action' of the wholesale grocers.³ Politicians branded as 'traitors' those who chose 'a time like this' to raise their profits.⁴ George Lewis, secretary of the Federated Millers' and Mill Employees' Union reported to the Labor Council in late August that flour and oatmeal prices had gone up £1.10 and £1 per ton respectively since the war had been declared.⁵ Price increases were apparently state-wide judging from the letters Holman received during the three weeks following 4 August. Apart from individuals, these protests came from the Randwick, West Maitland, Goulburn, Inverell and Eden Political Labor Leagues, the Newcastle Labor Council, the Cessnock Shire Council and the retail grocers at West Maitland.⁶ One writer alleged that Quirindi storekeepers had increased prices of

²Letter to the editor, SMH, 10 August 1914.
³DT, 13 August 1914.
⁵DT, 28 August 1914.
⁶NSWPDC, Box 7/4693, file 14/5130.
'all commoditys [sic] 25 to 50 per cent'. At Bingara prices rose 10 per cent in local grocers' shops.

Anxieties about rents sustained the agitation over rising prices. It is probable that rent increases occurred indiscriminately, and consequently lacked the general impact of food price rises. Nonetheless resentment towards landlords seems to have been widely disseminated, particularly as many work people were put on short-time or sacked from their jobs, or else feared this fate. We can expect that the bulk of the working classes in the metropolitan area paid rents, as over 70 per cent of private dwellings in Sydney were rented.

Further, according to the New South Wales living wage judgment of February 1914, rental payments absorbed one-quarter of the wages paid to the 'humblest worker'. Consequently a large proportion of working class people were in a vulnerable position when economic conditions slumped. Although there are no estimates of those afflicted by increased rents, one correspondent who lived in Paddington claimed that he was 'one of the many who have been the Target for the Patriotic Landlords'. His rent was to be raised from 15/- to 22/6 per week. Another declared that his rent had risen from 15/- to £1 per week, a third 17/6 to 21/- per week. There are indications that a few landlords enforced higher charges as a means of dislodging out-of-work tenants who had been unable to meet the rent falling due.

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1 D.H. Achurch to W.A. Holman, 8 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4693, file 14/5130.
2 DT, 12 August 1914.
3 Calculated from 1911 census. See Chapter 1, pp.24-5.
4 For Mr Justice Heydon's judgment see NSWIG, Vol.4, March 1914, pp.100-49.
5 F.E. Wagner to J.P. Osborne MLA, 7 September 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4693, file 14/5972.
6 P. Confoy to John Estell MLA, 2 September 1914, NSWPDC Box 7/4693, file 14/5856; W. Bates to W.A. Holman, 14 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4693, file 14/5130.
It would seem that the economic depression in August created hardships which hit hardest at the working classes. Further, the disruption to working class lives aroused distrust towards those actively favouring the war. Patriotic speeches and profit-making, it was suspected, were both activities dominated by the 'privileged' classes. Mrs Garnam, a working class woman from central Sydney, betrays this suspicion.

Mr Holman

Dear Sir, Pardon the liberty I take in addressing you this note & beg that its contents will help to bring home to your mind the pressing need of the working community of Sydney.

The subject I wish to discuss is Rents. Is it Just or even Democracy that the Land lords should still continue to reap their Golden harvest with the country in its Present state.

You are well aware dear sir how hard pressed the working man is to meet his rent each week under the ordinary run of things, then how much harder it is to meet, with the husband working half time and the sons out in camp. Why not let the Land lord, show his Patriotism, if he possesses such a feeling by taking half rents.

You know quite well that they are sucking the very life blood out of us by their ever increasing rents. Now I ask why in God's name are they given such freedom. The Grocer is forbidden to raise the price of food so our poor Lads are taken away from employment and put on 4/- per day to help protect the rich man's property. It is not fair Mr Holman you profess to be a Socialist, now is the time to prove it.

Patriotism is one thing, debt and Want another. We can sing God Save the King twice as loud on a full stomach.¹

To Mrs Garnam the impact of the war was far more serious than the war itself. She acquiesced to its inevitability. Restricted to an immediate, limited world by the powerlessness of her social and economic situation, additional deprivation amplified her sense of inequality and exclusion from the middle class conception of society: the national community. We see this in her denunciation of a familiar source of economic power, the landlord. Similar grievances were

¹Mrs M.J. Garnam to W.A. Holman, 19 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4693, file 14/5130.
expressed by others. P.J. Kelly, secretary of the Inverell Political Labor League, angered by the country storekeepers who had raised their flour and meat prices asserted:

If the workers are forced to go on half pay so should they be made to reduce there [sic] profit. And not be allowed to plunder the homes of the 'Sons of Australia' who are fighting for their country.¹

Is there evidence of a pervasive sense of exploitation among the working classes at this time? It would seem so, judging from the experience of inflation in the six years preceding the war. Big business was blamed by Labor for causing the continual rise in prices. 'Monopoly', 'trust', 'cartel' all acquired pejorative overtones in the political vocabulary. The animus against monopolies had almost produced radical changes to the Commonwealth constitution in May 1913.² Seventy-seven women from almost every suburb of Sydney, 'troubled with the high cost of living' and who had to 'live on what they earn from week to week' complained to Prime Minister Cook in mid-July 1914. 'It is a constant struggle to make ends meet. Dear food and clothes and high rents make a lot of trouble for us. We want a change.' They added: 'If the cost of living is to stay high, what does it matter if we vote Liberal or Labour? We want a party that will reduce the cost of living.'³ Labor politicians, sensing the general uneasiness over prices, devoted much of their energies in reviling the rapacity of 'monopolists' during the federal political tussle of 1913-14. Andrew Fisher, giving his policy speech one month before Australians encountered the Great War, denounced the trusts and monopolies as 'the real assassins of the public good in the Commonwealth'.⁴ W.M. Hughes assailed the Beef Trust and the 'great monopolists' as the root cause of the high cost of living.⁵

¹P.J. Kelly to W.A. Holman, 19 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4693, file 14/5130.
²See Chapter 1.
³Letter published as a news item SMH, 16 July 1914.
⁴AW, 9 July 1914.
⁵Argus, 23, 25, 27 July 1914.
declared in a leader of 6 August 1914, that the Commonwealth Statistician's latest figures proved that since 1911 the 'Trusts' had been 'ROBBING EVERY AVERAGE FAMILY IN AUSTRALIA OF EIGHT SHILLINGS PER WEEK'.

'War conditions' warned Boote, would 'give the exploiters of the community UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITIES OF PLUNDER'. The working classes would be further oppressed. The upward surge in prices of commodities and of rents even if only temporary, bore out the harpings of Labor polemicists and platform orators. Fears of unemployment added further anxieties. In mid-August 1914, the Australian Gas Light Company increased the price of gas. It had a monopoly in the Sydney district: company directors simultaneously distributed half-yearly dividends from a profit of £77,845. The Worker, joined by the Bulletin, denounced the 'splendid patriotism' of the company, which included among its shareholders the wealthy Fairfax and Cohen families. Other businesses, similarly directed by prominent members of New South Wales' society, were also attacked. R.J. Cassidy censured the Colonial Sugar Refining Company for its excessive profits. With its monopoly, it refined sugar for £16 per ton, sold it at £22.10, so profiting by £6.10 on each ton. The 'Beef Trust' and the

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1 AW, 6 August 1914.
2 Ibid., 20 August 1914.
3 Australasian Insurance and Banking Record, 21 August 1914, p.707. The price was increased from 3/6 to 3/10 per 1,000 cubic feet.
4 AW, 13 August 1914; Bulletin, 20 August 1914. See also NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, Vol.55, p.604, 11 August 1914. G.J. Cohen was Chairman of the company, see NSW VPLA, session 1912, Vol.3, p.741; and P.T. Taylor Vice-Chairman, see DT, 15 August 1916. A list of the twelve Fairfax, including Sir James Fairfax, and the ten Cohen shareholders was read into Hansard during the 1912 debate on the Gas Bill, see NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1912, Vol.46, p.1126. No information can be found on the number of gas consumers in the 1911 census, year books or statistical registers. Presumably gas was a major domestic power source at this time, so it is likely that large numbers of people were affected by the projected price increase.
5 AW, 20 August 1914.
'Coal Vend' were also accused of 'waxing rich on the war'. Agitation over prices seemed effectual, as it put employers on the defensive. At the annual general meeting of the New South Wales Employers' Federation, the president E.H. Buchanan, criticised the 'ill-considered conclusions, often expressed by employees and the public generally, as to the immense profits made by employers'. He pointed to the 'multitude of contingencies' arising from 'the cost of production'. He then urged the necessity for 'the suspension of industrial laws and wages board awards' so that 'the wheels of industry' could keep moving during 'the crisis' of war.

Working class deprivation, it seemed, went largely unnoticed among the middle classes. English-born Dr Richard Arthur, Liberal MLA for Middle Harbour (North Sydney) felt the plight of the working classes in Britain to be more urgent than hardships close at hand. He urged Australians to care for the destitute children in South London and to give 'to the little ones in the homeland, to which we owe our national existence and security'. Such oversight could have arisen from ignorance, as the unemployed were not concentrated in noticeable numbers, except in remote Broken Hill. Secondly, there was a presumption that those out of work could find alternative employment in the army. Thirdly as will be illustrated below, the middle classes in particular were arrested by a spectacular event: the impact of the local economic depression secured less consideration than 'the greatest' crisis in 'the world's history'.

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1 Ibid., 13 August 1914.
2 SMH, 25 September 1914.
3 Letter to the editor, DT, 15 August 1914. See also Arthur's letter to editor, SMH, 29 August 1914, exhorting that a shipload of nutritious molasses be despatched to the 'starving' children in East London; and NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1914-15, Vol.56, p.991, 4 November 1914; and Professor Findlay at the Millions Club, SMH, 7 August 1914.
4 SMH, 11, 21 August 1914; DT, 9 September 1914; NSWIG, Vol.6, September 1914, p.642. This view was put more forcefully in later months. See opinion of Arthur Griffith, Minister for Public Works, DT. 20 November 1914.
5 See views of Sir Joseph Carruthers, DT, 15 August 1914. See also Daily Telegraph Guide to the War, 20 August 1914, 16pp.
Indeed, local businessmen congratulated themselves on their strong financial position. Moreover, a common middle class view was that the war imposed the duty of sacrifice on all citizens: the businessman relinquished some of his profits, the workman part of his wages. The President of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, H.Y. Braddon, told his cheering members:

If sacrifices have to be made, and we have to suffer, as, no doubt all classes have already begun to suffer in the United Kingdom, we must be prepared to accept cheerfully those sacrifices as our share of the burdens of Empire.

All the 'nation' must 'suffer'. In turn this shared privation fostered national cohesion. 'The spirit for a national crisis', wrote the Herald leader writer, was as Macaulay had put it:

None was for a party, but all were for the State, the rich man helped the poor man, and the poor man loved the great, for Romans were like brothers in the brave days of old.

As the Worker saw it, sacrifice was a relative thing. It was a 'pious fiction' that 'all sections of society endure the pains and penalties of war', for 'privileged citizens' kept up a similar standard of living and, counted themselves 'self-sacrificing patriots' by reducing their 'nine-course dinners to seven'. Pointing to Holman's proposal that unskilled labourers be reduced to half-time employment, the Worker declared: 'It is the workers who will have to bear the brunt of the evils that war produces, even at this distance.'

These differences in outlook are illustrated in two suggestions put forward to cope with unemployment.

1 **DT**, 5 August 1914; **SMH**, 10 August 1914.

2 On the question of wage cuts, see Labor Council of NSW; Executive Minutes, 25 August 1914, **DT**, 29 August 1914; **SMH**, 5 August 1914 leader; W.A. Holman's announcement 'to suspend industrial regulations', **SMH**, 6 August 1914; E.H. Buchanan, president of NSW Employers' Federation, **SMH**, 25 September 1914.

3 **SMH**, 10 August 1914. See also Sir Gerald Strickland, **DT**, 6 August 1914.

4 **SMH**, 6 August 1914.

5 **AW**, 13 August 1914.
Directors of the London *Times*, and appointed as editor of the *Daily Telegraph* shortly before the war, advised Holman that unemployed men be enrolled in a 'State Volunteer Corps' and paid a small living wage, 'and what is almost equally important kept under discipline'. He added that 'millionaire squatters' sons' could help in organising such a force.  

Thomas Keegan, Labor MLA for Glebe, proposed another solution. He asked in parliament if the government had considered

the question of making an appeal to the wealthy classes, whose devotion to the Empire is so manifest and who desire to assist it in every way to subscribe to a fund for use in finding employment for those out of work.  

Businessmen were prominent workers for the various patriotic funds which had sprung up within days of the outbreak of war. For example, those present at a meeting called to consider how to coordinate and administer the several funds included Sir James Fairfax, proprietor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*; Sir Charles Mackellar, president of the Bank of New South Wales and a director of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company; T.A. Dibbs, general manager of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney; J. Russell French, general manager of the Bank of New South Wales; Samuel Hordern, director of a large department store; A.W. Meeks MLC, a company director; H.E. Kater MLC, chairman of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co.; Thomas Hughes MLC, company director of several firms including the brewery Toohey's Ltd.; H.Y. Braddon, manager of Dalgety and Co. Ltd.; F.E. Winchcombe of the large woolbroking firm Winchcombe, Carson and Co.; finally, Dugald Thomson and Sir William McMillan, both businessmen and former politicians. Also at this meeting were two former Prime Ministers, Sir Edmund Barton and J.C. Watson; the State Governor Sir Gerald Strickland and his private secretary

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1 D.D. Braham to W.A. Holman, 6 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4693, file 14/5130.

By 14 August, the Lord Mayor's Fund, which had been set up to provide relief for dependants of soldiers, had been promised £4,000: £2,000 of this had come from members of the Sydney Stock Exchange. At the same time philanthropic company director Hugh Dixson had donated £5,000 of the total £6,000 given to the Sydney Chamber of Commerce's War Food Fund, which had been established for the purpose of sending Australian products to soldiers of the Empire. Near the end of August the New South Wales funds had reached the following totals:

**PATRIOTIC FUNDS: TOTAL TO 26 AUGUST 1914**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord Mayor</td>
<td>47,741</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>15,539</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Cross</td>
<td>6,185</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian Relief</td>
<td>4,836</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countess of Dudley</td>
<td>2,693</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoralists Union</td>
<td>1,413</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regimental Comforts</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor and Allied Trades</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Victuallers</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DT, 27 August 1914.

Each fund received great publicity in the press and the tallies of donors and details of organisation were printed daily. The Lord Mayor's Fund attracted the greatest flow of cash. Over the three days of 19, 20 and 22 August the following amounts were subscribed:

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1 DT, 21 August 1914; Fred Johns's Annual 1914, Who's Who in Australia, 1922. See also DT, 18 August 1914. The company history of the Herald notes that the work done during the war by James Oswald Fairfax for the Red Cross Society 'helped to win for him the honour of knighthood'. See John Fairfax and Sons Limited, A Century of Journalism: The Sydney Morning and its Record of Australian Life 1831-1931, Sydney, 1931, p.443.

2 DT, 12 August 1914.

3 T.A. Dibbs when informed that the Lord Mayor's Fund had reached £13,000, said 'It should have reached £113,000 by now'. SMH, 18 August 1914. See also Ethel Turner, wife of lawyer H.R. Curlewis: 'These war funds of ours should be piling their thousands up, faster, much faster.' SMH, 29 August 1914.
DONATIONS TO LORD MAYOR'S PATRIOTIC FUND:
19, 20, 22 AUGUST 1914.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Groups</th>
<th>Business Companies2</th>
<th>Individuals Clubs and Schools</th>
<th>Total Raised Each Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 August</td>
<td>27. 6. 0</td>
<td>1507.15. 0</td>
<td>2902.14. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 August</td>
<td>79. 9. 0</td>
<td>1717.15. 0</td>
<td>3110. 7. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 August</td>
<td>96.19. 4</td>
<td>3559. 7. 0</td>
<td>2010.16. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>203.14. 4</td>
<td>6784.17. 0</td>
<td>8023.18. 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Includes £30 contributed by three doctors on the Railway Medical Staff.
2. The 'business' total may be a little larger than indicated owing to difficulties in classification.

Source: SMH, 19, 20, 22 August 1914.

As can be seen from the table employee groups gave least. Business company donations ranged from a few pounds to the £2,500 given by the Sydney and Suburban Timber Merchants' Association. The law firms of Pigott and Stinson gave £25, and Minter, Simpson and Co. £100. The Perpetual Trustee Co. Ltd. donated £100; the Commonwealth Portland Cement Co. Ltd. £525. The big department store firms Hordern Bros. gave £200, and Mark Foy Ltd. £250. W.C. Penfold and Co. Ltd. gave £50; four members of the Dunlop family gave £475 altogether and their firm Edwards, Dunlop and Co. provided a further £200. The Tattersall's Club donated £500, the Hawkesbury Race Club £300, the New South Wales Cricket Association £25. Of the six schools, the Sydney Church of England Grammar School gave £50, the Fort Street Kindergarten £1.8. Among the identifiable individuals (who formed the largest group), twelve doctors gave amounts varying from £1.1 to £50 each; four judges gave either £25 or £50; Alderman Gilpin gave £2.2, Alderman J. English £5.5 and Alderman R.C. Hagen £50; Edmund Fosbery MLC donated £25 and Thomas Hughes MLC and Colonel James Burns MLC £100 each. T.A. Dibbs gave £200, Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart, Professor J.B. Peden, and Professor R.D. Watt £5.5 apiece. Police Sub-Inspector Willis donated £1.1, Canon Beck £5, and Richard Teece, General manager of the Australian Mutual Provident Society £50. The size of donation ranged from
two shillings to £2,500. The frequency table below shows that the most common donation fell in the £2.1 to £5.5 range.¹

**LORD MAYOR'S PATRIOTIC FUND:**
**FREQUENCY OF DONATIONS 19, 20, 22 AUGUST 1914.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Donation</th>
<th>19 August</th>
<th>20 August</th>
<th>22 August</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/- or less</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/- - 10/-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/- - £1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1.1 - £2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£2.1 - £5.5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5.5 - £10.10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10.11 - £25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£26 - £50</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£51 - £100</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over £101</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: **SMH, 19, 20, 22 August 1914.**

As a labourer's weekly living wage in New South Wales had been set at £2.8 in February 1914, and judging from the level and frequency of donations given, it can be assumed that the middle classes were not only the organisers but also financially and numerically the dominant contributors to the patriotic funds.² This wealth emphasised the relative deprivation among the working classes. An anonymous female correspondent wrote to the **Herald:**

> it is comforting to see our Patriotic Fund steadily increasing; but what about the sad homes all around us, also steadily increasing, either with a loved one gone to serve King and country, or the breadwinner out of employment.

She pleaded that employers remember that 'half a loaf is better than no bread' and urged that they 'reduce salaries rather than dismiss'.³

Country people seem to have donated money in a similar fashion. For instance, two weeks following the declaration of

¹**SMH, 19, 20, 22 August 1914.**

²The Citizens' War Chest was established in later months for the regular collection of small weekly sums from wage earners. H.Y. Braddon helped to organise this scheme, see **SMH, 18 August 1914.**

³Letter to the editor from 'An Australian Wife and Mother', **SMH, 29 August 1914.**
war, patriotic organisations to collect funds had been formed,
invariably on the initiative of the local mayor or shire
president, at West Maitland, Grafton, Cootamundra, Narrandera,
Grenfell, Collarencbri, Moree, Bombala, Balranald, Guyra,
Lithgow, Katoomba, Tamworth, Dungog, Forster, Peak Hill,
Tenterfield, Tumut, Bellingin, Coonabarabran, Mudgee, Young,
Mungindi and Culcairn. These centres were located in each of
the regions of the state. At the Cootamundra meeting called
by the mayor, the people subscribed £1,200 to the patriotic
fund: of this amount, George Davidson of Geraldra Station gave
£1,000. Gifts in kind were also offered. In two days the
Pastoralists' Union had donated 15,000 sheep to the federal
government for the soldiers' tables.

Middle class women living in Sydney devoted themselves to
patriotic activity. Suburban branches of the newly-formed New
South Wales Red Cross Society popped up everywhere. Leaders
in this field were Lady Cullen, Mesdames H.R. Curlewis,
Shepheard Laidley, Spencer Brunton, Consett Stephen,
T. Hughes, H.Y. Braddon, R.W. Richards, Langer Owen, Gordon
Wesche, John Sulman, W.E.V. Robson, Richard Arthur, David
Storey, and James Macarthur-Onslow. Accordingly by
mid-August the first branches appeared in middle class
suburbs: Ashfield, Auburn, Pymble, Turramurra, Westmead,
Randwick, Waverley-Bondi, Parramatta, North Sydney. Mrs John

1 PT, 14, 15, 18, 19 August 1914; SMH, 22 August 1914.
2 PT, 15 August 1914.
3 Ibid., 19 August 1914.
4 Ibid., 14, 15 August 1914; SMH, 11, 14, 18 August 1914. The
newspapers, according to etiquette, provided only the
husbands' names. The positions of the menfolk were
respectively: Chief Justice of NSW; barrister; colliery
proprietor of William Laidley and Co. Ltd.; proprietor of
Brunton's Flour Mills Ltd.; solicitor of Stephen, Jacques and
Stephen; Legislative Councillor and company director of
Toohoe's Ltd.; W.H. Soul Pattinson and Co. Ltd.; President of
the Sydney Chamber of Commerce and manager of Dalgety and Co.
Ltd.; Lord Mayor of Sydney; a King's Counsel; Australian
manager of the Pacific and Orient Company; architect and
director of the Daily Telegraph Newspaper Company; and Liberal
MLA's for Ashfield, Middle Harbour, Randwick and Bondi. Scott,
op.cit., p.732, states that Mrs Langer Owen, one of the
founders of the Red Cross, probably 'literally worked herself
to death' for the cause.
Sulman, chairing a meeting of the Women's Liberal League, stated that over one hundred letters had been posted to their country branches urging them to set up a Red Cross branch. Sydney branches of the league in St Leonards, Hornsby, Chatswood, Mosman, Darling Point, Kirribilli, Burwood and Ashfield had already promised their support. The secretary of the Political Labor League explained that Labor women, although 'giving loyal support' to the various local patriotic committees, did not 'have the time' to organise meetings themselves. Working class energies were needed elsewhere. Mrs Kate Dwyer, president of the Women Workers' Union and a leader within the labour movement, stated that they had been preoccupied in making provision for single women and girls thrown out of work.

Almost all endorsements of the war recorded in the press were uttered by persons of standing. In the first two weeks after 4 August for example, the following persons helped to nourish the flow of pro-war sentiment: J.C. Watson; a former State premier Sir Joseph Carruthers; the State Governor Sir Gerald Strickland; the Anglican Archbishop Dr Wright, and the Roman Catholic Archbishop, Dr Kelly. Liberal Opposition leader, lawyer C.G. Wade, MLA for Gordon, spoke of 'a fight to the death'. He declared: 'England's quarrel is...our quarrel', and that 'every young Australian should be thrilled with pride in offering a helping hand to the mother country.'

On 22 August at a patriotic rally in Albury, Holman declared

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1 *DT, SMH*, 14, 15 August 1914. Between 15 and 19 August, the following country branches of the Red Cross had been formed: Armidale, Wollongong, Forbes, Moree, Nowra, Berrigan, Goulburn, Lithgow, Liverpool, Uralla, Wagga, Yass, Balranald, Tumut. See *DT*, 15, 17, 18, 19 August 1914.

2 *SMH*, 11 August 1914.

3 Ibid., 12 August 1914.

4 *SMH*, 4, 5, 7, 10 August 1914; *DT*, 4, 6, 10 August 1914. But see also Kelly's statement made on 4 August, before the British declaration of war became known: 'If Russia was winning, help Germany; if Germany was on top, let Russia be helped.' *SMH*, 5 August 1914.

5 *SMH*, 5 August 1914.
that 'the interests of human liberty were at stake'. Bishop G.M. Long of Bathurst, formerly headmaster of Trinity Grammar School at Kew, Melbourne, 'thanked God there was still a nation left to the world prepared to go to war for a scrap of paper'.

The bodies reported as vowing their loyalty to Britain seem to be overwhelmingly middle class or middle class-dominated organisations: the New South Wales Parliament, municipal and shire councils, churches, business, professional and private associations. A typical patriotic resolution was that passed by the New South Wales Justices' Association, which proclaimed: 'That this council expresses its loyalty to the Motherland, and promises to do all in its power to uphold and maintain the prestige of Empire.'

Values imparted to New South Wales schoolchildren reflect official and middle class thinking on Australians' relationships with Britain and the British. 'Proper' conduct signified the values of honour, duty, sacrifice, patriotism,

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1 DT, 24 August 1914.

2 Ibid., 22 August 1914. Of the eight people mentioned above three were born in the British Isles, three in Australia, Strickland in Malta and Watson in Chile. Apart from Long who was thirty-nine, all were in the forty to sixty age group in 1914.

3 Excluding the few unions mentioned above, during August the following organisations resolved to support Britain or to contribute in some way to the war effort: Millions Club, NSW Chamber of Manufactures, Sydney Chamber of Commerce, Motor Traders' Association of NSW, NSW Justices' Association, Sydney Stock Exchange, Women's Liberal League, Pastoralists' Union, British Empire League, South African Soldiers' Association of NSW, St John's Ambulance Brigade, League of Ancient Mariners' of NSW, Country Press Association, Employers' Federation, Veterinary Surgeons' Association of NSW, Dental Association of NSW, Health Society of NSW, Civic Club, Tattersall's Club, National Rifle Association, Federal Cycling Council, Queen Victoria Club, Women's Patriotic Club, Naval Comrades' Association, Farmers' and Settlers' Association, University Undergraduates Association, University Club, NSW Masonic Club, several hospital boards of directors, Clerks' and Warehousemen's Club. In addition large numbers of local government councils and business firms were recorded as taking part in patriotic activities. Evidence from SMH, DT, for August 1914; NSW PDC, Box 7/4693, file 14/5130.

4 DT, 14 August 1914.
obligation to Britain and pride of race. These sentiments were expressed each Empire Day, which had been celebrated in New South Wales since 1905. 'Special steps' should be taken by both public and private schools, directed the official Empire Day programme issued in the State, to impress upon the minds of the Pupils such a view of the British Empire as will help to develop a feeling of pride in the achievements of the British race and strengthen the ground-work on which an intelligent patriotism may be based. Similarly the value of loyalty was esteemed by public speakers.

Sir William Cullen addressing the Royal Colonial Institute at dinner two months before the outbreak of war, declared: 'If anyone doubted the wisdom of Empire, it would still be the duty of Britons overseas to be loyal.'

Defence to British politicians strengthened the sentiments of the reflexive imperialists. Sir William Irvine, an Ulster protestant by birth, asserted from an election platform: 'We are not only bound to abide' by the decision of 'the statesmen of England' but 'to give them every assistance in our power.' Bruce Smith, English-born lawyer, businessman and Liberal MHP for Parkes, abandoned election campaign speeches. 'I have endeavoured instead to explain the significance of the war to the dominions', he wrote, 'to show what are our duties to the Mother-country, and what are our responsibilities.' In an address to the British Empire

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2 *NSWPDC*, Box 4/6251, unregistered file. This instruction was printed on each programme for 1908, 1909, 1912, 1913 and 1915. Copies for the intervening years are missing.

3 *SMH*, 26 May 1914.

4 *DT*, 3 August 1914.

5 Letter to the editor, *DT*, 14 August 1914.
League, H.Y. Braddon praised the British Cabinet for resisting the temptation to gain by remaining neutral. Instead they had 'placed national honour before the amassing of wealth, and the obligation to her allies before profit'. The obligation of Britain to France said Holman, 'is well understood in England - far better by members of the British Cabinet than by us'. It 'is something of a satisfaction to Australians to have their foreign relations controlled by a man...who would never be guilty of a mean action' wrote a Herald journalist in the War Notes column:

Sir Edward Grey, Britain's Foreign Minister in this crisis, is simply the best type of an English Public school boy, and the foreign policy of the Empire during his regime has been noticeably guided by the standards which are the ideal of the great British Public schools...transparent sincerity, unswerving truthfulness, honour as clear as the day... Excepting the few critics of the political left, no public person in New South Wales cast doubts on the wisdom of the war. The words of even Sir Oliver Lodge, president of the visiting British Association for the Advancement of Science were smothered in the rush to be loyal. 'There are times when a nation feels she must go to war, but in this case it is different', Sir Oliver had declared. 'It has arisen over some trouble in Servia. A little spark has started a conflagration, and it is the business of everyone to pour water upon it.'

Englishman A.E. Talbot, the Anglican Dean of Sydney, speaking at a 'united loyal religious demonstration' in St Andrew's Cathedral, put the committed view. 'No-one in this sacred edifice today would wish that we might have peace at any price', he declared. 'Certainly not at the price of British honour.' If the Germans won, stated Sir Joseph Carruthers, it

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1 SMH, 20 August 1914.
2 DT, 5 August 1914.
3 SMH, 11 August 1914. See also W.A. Watt at Sydney Town Hall, SMH, 19 August 1914; W.A. Holman's remarks about Mr Asquith, SMH, 9 September 1914.
4 DT, 5 August 1914. For a description of Sir Oliver Lodge's 'extraordinary ability' as a public lecturer, see G.V. Portus, Happy Highways, Melbourne, 1953, p.159.
5 SMH, 8 August 1914.
would mean 'altering the current of the history of the
British Empire and of Australia'.

Justifications for waging the Great War were soon
furnished: the need to defend 'poor little Belgium', the
obligation to adhere to international treaties and the
necessity to oppose German militarism and to conquer
barbarism. B.R. Wise declared: 'I have always held that this
war is inevitable.' He added: 'I have always thought that the
Germans looked upon Australia as the prize in their war with
the British Empire' because 'Australia is the only white man's
continent open to them.' In the midst of the conscription
turmoil of 1916-17, pro-conscriptionists reviled Archbishop
Mannix for referring to the struggle as a 'trade war'.

'Most wars are business wars', declared the Bulletin two
years earlier, 'and if every there was a "capitalists" or
"trade war" this was surely one.'

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1 DT, 15 August 1914.
2 See especially opinion of W.A. Holman, DT, 5, 24 August 1914.
3 See views of Archbishop Wright, DT, SMH, 10 August 1914; W.A.
Watt, SMH, 19 August 1914; Bishop Long, DT, 22 August 1914.
4 See views of C.G. Wade, SMH, 7 August 1914, H.Y. Braddon, DT,
SMH, 20 August 1914. See also Portus, op.cit., pp.161-2: 'We
read Cramb's Germany and England and Bernhardi's Next War, and
endeavoured to supply a background to the conflict almost
entirely in terms of German ambition and ruthlessness.'
5 DT, 4 September 1914. See also views of Dr J.M. Creed MLC, in
Creed papers, ML, uncat. MS.296, Box 1; also letter sent to
W.M. Hughes during 1913 in which the writer refers to 'the
armageddon which is surely approaching'; cited by L.F.
See also article 'Germany and Great Britain', SMH, 25 May 1914,
Wise's points were later stressed by Holman, Sir Gerald
Strickland, P.E. Winchcombe MLC, see SMH, 28, 30 July 1915.
6 Cited in Turner, Industrial Labour, op.cit., p.111, and
J.M. Main, Conscription: The Australian Debate, 1901-1970,
Melbourne, 1970, p.84.
7 Bulletin, 20 August 1914. The German Emperor was blamed for
beginning the war 'in a frantic reach after trade'. See also
E.W. Foxall at the Henry George anniversary dinner, SMH,
29 September 1914; also English-born H.E. Pratten, manufacturer
and Nationalist senator from NSW in 1917, at Millions Club,
SMH, 16 February 1915; also Trade Expansion Committee meeting
at Sydney Town Hall, SMH, 26 February 1915; also Sir Gerald
Strickland and P.E. Winchcombe at NSW Chamber of Commerce
annual dinner, SMH, 30 July 1915.
However all the justifications used and amplified particularly during the recruiting and conscription campaigns, must not obscure as they have done, the original pro-imperial impulse of the first days in August. This sprang from the values of the dominant group in New South Wales: the middle classes. Collectively the middle classes and their organisations embraced an authoritative alliance of opinions. Why did these opinions have such an ascendancy? One value required by a community at war is social cohesion - that is, 'loyalty' and 'patriotism' - which in this case was derived from allegiance to the nation-state. But the class structure associated with the nation-state itself determined the authority and superior status of the middle classes and hence the omnipresence of their values. Moreover the élite among the New South Wales middle classes - in politics, law, medicine, the clergy, business, journalism, the University, school teaching - contained an influential proportion of British-born and/or educated and British-educated Australians. The Australian-born of the élite shared in their aspirations and their ardour to serve the British Empire.

Ardour, in turn induced a single-mindedness to 'win' the war. Calling himself 'an Englishman by birth and an Australian by adoption and choice', Holman proclaimed that Australians 'should stand united and determined to exhaust every resource so that in the interests of humanity the arms of England and her Allies would eventually be victorious'. Anxiety about the war created a concurrence of interest between the New South Wales Labor party leadership and their Liberals opponents. To foster the united war effort political conflict was abated, first by the curtailing of Labor's

1For instance the NSW Labor cabinet of ten as at August 1914 had four of its members who were born in the British Isles: W.A. Holman, Arthur Griffith, J.H. Cann, Frederick Flowers. In September 1914, five of the eleven members of the new federal Labor cabinet were British born.

2DT, SMH, 24 August 1914. See also telegram from W.A. Holman to Prime Minister Cook, 3 August 1914: NSW 'Cabinet meeting today asks me to assure you of their absolute cooperation in the present crisis. Total resources of State Government unreservedly at disposal of Federal Cabinet for all purposes connected with national defence....': NSWPDC, Box 7/4692, file 14/4920.
'contentious' legislative programme. As the war lengthened this attitude progressively grew more restrictive: strikes were stigmatized as disloyal and claims for wage increases discouraged as selfish. Enforced 'sacrifices' provoked indignation within the labour movement. But we anticipate our story.

The historian of Australian middle class reactions to the Great War is Ernest Scott: forty-seven, English by birth and Professor of History at Melbourne at the outbreak of war. Scott's objective in writing his volume of the official war history was to make 'a record of national experience'. Significantly he equates nationalism with pro-imperialism. He celebrates this in the Epilogue:

The patriotism evoked by the war was singularly bright and pure....That evocation of patriotic feeling was good for Australian nationality as well as for the immediate occasion. The conviction that the duty of service justified the most extreme sacrifices, spiritualised the life of the people.

Writing about Australian behaviour at the declaration of war, he said: 'the response was immediate, it was jubilant, and it was unanimous.' In an age of nationalism, his interpretation of nationhood has perhaps disposed him to exaggerate the degree of cohesion among Australians and to attribute the views of his class to the whole of Australian society.

Contemporary observers, almost all of them middle class, presumed that their spirit was echoed by all their fellow


4 Ibid., see especially pp.859-60.

5 Ibid., p.862. See also SMH, 6 August 1914, leader: '...unity in national affairs will be a splendid discipline for ourselves and a valuable addition to the moral strength and prestige of the British race.'

6 Scott, op.cit., p.859.
Australians. Sir Joseph Carruthers, speaking at a social cricket match between the combined Banks and Insurance men against the Waverley team, announced: 'Everyone feels glad to read the utterances of Mr Fisher, the Labor leader, as well as those of Mr Cook, the Prime Minister.' He continued: 'They show that England can rely on Australia to the last penny, the last man and the last ditch.' The singing of 'Rule Britannia' and 'God Save the King' following the cricket.\(^1\) Dr Richard Arthur wrote that 'it is certain that all the British peoples will be one in heart and soul for the cause of the Empire'.\(^2\)

On the evening of 4 August at three of J.C. Williamson's theatres the Marseillaise and National Anthem were played before the curtain rose on the last act. Each audience, presumably middle class, 'sang and cheered, and a scene of patriotic enthusiasm was manifested'.\(^3\) At a meeting of the middle class-dominated Sydney City Council, the Herald reported 'a wave of patriotism' after speeches and singing of 'God Save the King' by the Councillors.\(^4\) Judging from the employment of the metaphor it was believed that patriotism had engulfed the British peoples.\(^5\) Patriotic demonstrations, in particular those marshalled by a great number of local mayors

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\(^1\) *DT*, 4 August 1914.

\(^2\) Letter to the editor, *DT*, 4 August 1914.

\(^3\) Ibid., 5 August 1914. See also *Bulletin*, 3 September 1914: the Adelphi theatre 'is having a run of military bellowdrama. This week it is "Under Two Flags"....On Saturday "A Soldier's Wedding"....'

\(^4\) *SMH*, 12 August 1914.

\(^5\) See *SMH*, 12 August 1914, in a report on the rush to join the colours: 'there is a wave of Imperial enthusiasm sweeping over the Commonwealth.' See also *SMH*, 6 August 1914. *DT* in which the leading story in the special war edition reported 'a great wave of patriotic feeling at Home and throughout the Dominions'. See also a *Century of Journalism 1831-1931*, op.cit., p.440.
and shire presidents, were conspicuous events. But they were occasions largely presided over by the middle classes.¹

We might assert from the evidence that the middle classes readily accepted the war. Can we say that their views represent the views of persons of lesser status, who were much less articulate and went largely unreported in the press? As a caution against too willing an acceptance of a correlation of opinion between the community leaders and groups of the led, the outcome in New South Wales of the conscription campaigns is instructive. Almost the entire New South Wales elite favoured conscription: the proposal was defeated. By taking for granted that their own sensibilities were shared by all classes, middle class pro-war leaders could not detect different reactions to the outbreak of war. But differences in outlook were soon to be discovered. Within four months Oxford-educated B.R. Wise referred to 'the strange indifference of our people to the momentous issues of the present war'.² English-born lawyer A.M. Hemsley asked: 'Is Australia doing her duty?' He added that 'various trades unions' had made 'a very poor response to the appeal for

¹For instance Mayors organised patriotic meetings at Mosman, North Sydney, Parramatta, Redfern, Alexandria, Petersham in Sydney; Cootamundra, Narrandera, Grenfell, Richmond, Lismore, Mudgee, Queanbeyan, Kempsey, Goulburn, see DT, 9, 14, 15, 31 August 1914; SMH, 12, 18, 20, 22, 25, 26 August 1914. The 1914 annual report of the Political Labor League stated that 'the control of Municipal and Shire Councils is almost entirely in the hands of Labor's opponents' and 'virtually monopolised by property owners'; AW, 4 February 1915. Under the restricted franchise of the Local Government Act of 1906, only ratepayers could vote at local government elections. We can assume from this that most local government councils were dominated by middle class males. Females were ineligible for office at this time. Voting was not compulsory. See H.E. Maiden, The History of Local Government in New South Wales, Sydney, 1966, pp.107, 112-3, 119, Official Year Book of New South Wales 1914, pp.806-7. For the results of municipal and shire elections of 31 January 1914, see NSW Statistical Register 1914-15, pp.695-7, 745-7. Generally only about half or less of those eligible voted at the January elections. For example in the municipalities of Balmain 1,455 voted of the 3,667 eligible; Mosman 1,005 of 3,025; Goulburn 521 of 1,521; Lithgow 496 of 1,036 eligible voters.

²Letter to the editor, SMH, 25 November 1914.
recruits'. Liberal politician J.C.L. Fitzpatrick agreed. 'The people here apparently fail to realise the seriousness of the present position...The [working] class who are in the majority are slow in responding to the call.' Company director P.T. Taylor was equally irritated by the apparent indifference of 'the great majority' of young men. They 'are simply not roused to the necessities of the position', he asserted. Irish-born Arthur Griffith, Labor's Minister for Public Works and former master at Sydney Grammar School, scolded a Broken Hill deputation seeking relief work for unemployed single men. They had no right to 'sponge' on the taxpayers he declared. They should join the army.

In August 1914 patriotic fervour seemed to pervade New South Wales society. Yet nuances of opinion existed for any who troubled to seek them. Superficially there appeared to be public agreement that Australians were unanimous in their enthusiasm for the war. The first battalions marched with bayonets drawn through the centre of Sydney bound for a secret destination overseas. They were cheered enthusiastically by proud crowds waving miniature union jacks and Australian flags. Sydney Grammar School boys roared their approval. Crowds from nearby law firms, business and public offices filled Queen's Square. Further down Macquarie Street nurses and patients waved from Sydney Hospital. The politicians watched from Parliament House next door. A band was playing 'Advance Australia Fair'. And 'weeping women clung frantically' to their soldier sons. They were separated by police at Fort Macquarie.

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1. Letter to the editor, SMH, 22 December 1914.
2. Letter to the editor, SMH, 23 December 1914. Fitzpatrick stated that 'farmers and squatters' sons' and those of 'country and city business and professional men' were enlisting in the army out of proportion to their numbers.
3. Letter to the editor, SMH, 30 December 1914. Taylor's son Patrick Gordon Taylor joined the Royal Flying Corps during the war. See also Sir William Cullen's speech at a University dinner, SMH, 12 December 1914.
4. SMH, DT, 20 November 1914.
5. DT, SMH, 19 August 1914.
Excitement abated during the months following August;¹ although there was momentary jubilation at incidents closer to home: the capture of German New Guinea in September and the victory over the raider Emden in November by HMAS Sydney.² Australians generally did not feel themselves to be directly involved in the war, judging from the temper of men like Wise, Hemsley, Fitzpatrick, Taylor and Griffith. Popular fervour flared when Australian soldiers assaulted the cliffs at Gallipoli in April 1915: Australians at home were absorbed into the war. But currents of antipathy were soon to surface.

¹See the despatch from A.W. Jose to the Times, 1 December 1914; cited above.
²The Governor-General wrote to L.V. Harcourt on 21 November 1914 apparently amused by the interstate jealousy. 'The day after the Emden was accounted for,' he said recalling the reactions of some Sydney people, '...the most common comment was "I am glad it was not the Melbourne".' Personal despatch to Harcourt, Novar papers, NL, MS.696/622.
CHAPTER 3

THE IMPACT OF CENSORSHIP

Censorship was imposed in Australia almost simultaneously with the declaration of war. 'At 1 p.m. a press censor took charge' at the General Post Office in Martin Place; he 'will only allow certain messages to be delivered' declared the Telegraph in the 'special' war edition of 4 August.\(^1\) The announcement proclaimed the start of a military censorship which significantly affected Australian perceptions of the war for more than four years. The work of the censors leaves a puzzle: to what degree and in what areas are the newspapers of 1914-1918 rendered unreliable as a historical source? The press is a major artefact for any interpretations of Australian experiences of the Great War, but a detailed inquiry as to how censorship of the press has handicapped the writing of Australian history must be set aside so that we may pursue our immediate concerns. Australians depended on newspapers to provide them with both battle news and strategic appraisals of the war raging in distant Europe and the Middle East.\(^2\) Accordingly what were the general results of the censorship upon the press, and in turn what was the net effect of this on Australians' perceptions of the war when they went to vote on the conscription question in October 1916?

The sudden blanket put on news was a new experience for Australians.\(^3\) It proved irritating to those accustomed to being kept fully informed and who were anxious to follow

\(^1\)PT, 4 August 1914. The machinery for censorship in Australia had been set up before the war, see Scott, op.cit., p.59.

\(^2\)Ken Inglis states that at this time 'among Australians the habit of reading newspapers was possibly more popular than anywhere else in the world'. See K.S. Inglis, 'The Australians at Gallipoli-I', Historical Studies, Vol.14, no.54, April 1970, p.221. Note that readership is not synonymous with 'opinion'. Newspapers only provided information from which opinions could be formed.

\(^3\)See Scott, op.cit., p.58. So fierce was the wrangle that Scott devotes much of his chapter on censorship to its defence, see pp.57-104.
events in Europe. 'All citizens promptly recognise and
delightfully accept any military or defence duty', wrote
businessman C.W. Wagstaff to Holman. He demanded 'our rights
to be treated by our Authorities as an intelligent and sane
people, and not be kept in ignorance of our true and actual
position in this crisis'. Newspapermen also grumbled. The
Telegraph on 5 August, annoyed at the twelve hour delay put
on cables from Europe before their release for publication,
declared:

'It rests with the authorities to recognise that
the public has a legitimate claim to know all it
can safely be allowed to know, and that to feed it
with correct information is the only way to
discredit and discourage the circulation of
exaggerations and of rumours.'

The Australian Statesman and Mining Standard, reporting the
'somewhat fussy interference' of the military censor, warned
that distortion of war news contradicted one of the purposes
for which the censorship existed.

Instead of letting people feel assured that the
news they are receiving is absolutely reliable,
they have created a belief in their minds that the
news given to them cannot be accepted, and that
something is being held back.

The Bulletin of 27 August in mock-seriousness stated that 'the
Censor has become a familiar feature on every Australian paper
of any size or importance. The Bulletin naturally has one of
the species.' Moreover during his first week 'he cut the
Editor's leading article to pieces' and 'severely ruined' the
literary editor's page of reviews. The two journalists
consoled themselves over glasses of whisky and soda. Censors
did not normally inhabit newspaper offices it seems, this
being the treatment reserved for editors who strayed beyond
what were considered to be the permissible boundaries of war
news reporting. Scott suggests that this practice of resident
censors belonged mainly to the early months of the war, when

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1 C.W. Wagstaff to W.A. Holman, 10 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box
7/4693, file 14/5130.

2 DT, 5 August 1914.

3 AS and MS, 13 August 1914.

4 Bulletin, 27 August 1914.
it was used 'to remind an offending newspaper of its obligations'.

As the rules became better known to pressmen, doubtful matters could be submitted to the local censor for approval. It seems that in general the authorities relied on the cooperation of the press, and in any case this was guaranteed by the inhibiting effect posed by the wide powers granted under war time legislation.

Censorship cut off news; scanty news fed rumours. In the first fortnight of war the Bulletin noted that men who were 'ordinarily decent citizens lied like gas-meters'. The 'worst-looking' of its many received rumours was that Switzerland had declared war against Bolivia: the editor was instructed 'in pencil on 2 in. of paper by the Censor's Head Office' that he must not reveal the 'secret'. The War Precautions Act among its accumulating prohibitions, penalised the circulation of rumours. But penalties were inadequate vetoes. In April 1916 Senator Pearce angrily denied that a 'disaster' had befallen the 8th Infantry Brigade. 'To spread false rumours is an offence under the War Precautions Act', he threatened, 'and any known offenders will be rigorously punished.' But who could distinguish truth from rumour? Even censors could be confused. News of the Russian Czar's abdication in March 1917 'was held up for a long time by a censorship officer, on the ground that he did not think it was true'.

The censorship system was an elaborate one. Australia, as part of the British Empire, became enmeshed in the imperial organisation of censorship. It worked like this. First,

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1 Scott, op.cit., p.68.

2 Deputy Chief Censor, Rules for the Censorship of the Press, (revised to 31 January 1917), Sydney, 1917, p.5.

3 Bulletin, 27 August 1914.

4 Ibid. See also the rumours concerning the German warship Goeben, referred to in AV, 20 August 1914. Printing paper shortages ended the spate of 'specials' and 'extras' at this time.

5 SMH, 14 April 1916.

6 For this allegation, see (anonymous), Sun Newspapers Ltd 1910-1929, Sydney, 1929, p.24.
naval and military communicés were censored at battle headquarters or at either the Admiralty or War Office in Whitehall. The policy adopted in these reports according to C.E.W. Bean, was to exaggerate successes and minimise reverses. 1 Secondly, within Britain the censoring authorities were split in two. One division headed by the Chief Censor formed part of the War Office. It censored all private and commercial cablegrams (other than press cables), and all postal communications. The second division was a non-military body entitled the Official Press Bureau. 2 Among other things it controlled every press cable. No cable message was allowed to reach a British newspaper or to leave Britain for publication overseas unless it had been approved by the Bureau. This restriction also applied to naval and military communicés which had been released at Whitehall. 3 Thus the Official Press Bureau regulated the news reaching Australian newspaper readers. 4

The muzzle applied in Britain was quickly felt. The Argus on 4 August reported that its cable service from London had been strictly censored in Britain. 5 A.C. Carmichael, a New South Wales cabinet minister, cabled from London to Premier W.A. Holman the following day saying that he was unable to supply additional information on the European situation as requested, for all cables were affected by 'heavy censorship'. He also visited Lewis Harcourt, Secretary of State for Colonies, to protest at the 'undue censorship of the press


3 Ibid., pp.36, 41, 46-9.

4 See also press release by the Deputy Chief Censor, SMH, 11 August 1915.

5 Argus, 4 August 1914.
cable messages to Australia'.\(^1\) In late August the Premier received the news from the state's Agent-General in London: 'Extreme reticence is still being used with regard to the movements and casualties of the British troops.'\(^2\)

But an extra filter was clamped upon war news reaching Australians. From 3 August 1914 an Australian system of censorship controlled by the Defence Department was put in operation.\(^3\) A Deputy Chief Censor in London, was appointed as chief officer of the Australian censorship staff. Unlike the British system, where the military lost control over the sensitive area of press regulation, in Australia soldiers directed all censorship functions. Accordingly military interests and points of view dominated censorship operations throughout the war. Further, the military censorship as part of the Defence Department, came under the supreme authority of a politician. From this came the germs of suspicion that, rightly or wrongly, censorship for political reasons was being exercised. In Sydney the system was in 'full swing' by 7 August records the company historian of the Herald: 'Confidential and not for publication' notices 'were being fired as rapidly as the bullets from a machine-gun'.\(^4\)

Despite their quickness in acting, the authority for censors to perform their duties does not appear to have been officially granted until seven weeks after 4 August 1914. A Commonwealth Order-in-Council, dated 24 September, retrospectively 'approved and ratified' all acts of censors as from 3 August. The same Order granted considerable power to censors by giving them both a broad discretion and jurisdiction by defining their functions in very general terms: they were empowered to prohibit publication of any material 'likely' or 'considered likely' to be 'useful to the enemy' or 'injurious to the public safety or welfare'.\(^5\) The federal War

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\(^1\)NSWPDC, Box 7/4692, file 14/4964; DT, 7 August 1914.
\(^2\)DT, 27 August 1914.
\(^3\)See Scott, op.cit., p.60.
\(^4\)A Century of Journalism, op.cit., p.441.
Precautions Act of October 1914, 'the main instrument of war-time government', confirmed the censorship powers assumed during the early days of the war. For the guidance of journalists the Deputy Chief Censor issued in September 1914 a 'strictly confidential' booklet entitled Rules for the Censorship of the Press. As the War Precautions regulations affecting censorship were changed, so the Rules were revised accordingly.2

The censorship was devised to achieve two things. First the prevention of naval and military information passing into the hands of the enemy. Demands had to be made upon 'the patience of the community', said Senator Pearce, because 'the general dissemination' of certain information 'may facilitate the work of the enemies' spies'.3 Second, the regulation of public morale and public opinion. There was a range of prohibitions governing this. The main ones made it an offence to encourage disloyalty or hostility to the British Empire or to the cause of the Empire during the war. Other regulations penalised the spreading of false reports likely to cause disaffection or alarm,4 or likely to interfere with the success of the King's forces, or likely to prejudice recruiting, training, discipline or administration of the forces.5 Military censors were empowered to enter, search and confiscate material on publishers' premises, using force if

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1 Geoffrey Sawer, Australian Federal Politics and Law 1901-1929, Melbourne, 1956, p.134. See also pp.135, 140-1. The Act, amended in 1915 and 1916, delegated 'a very wide authority' to the Governor-General in Council. A 'great part' of the war-time law affecting the civilian population was made by regulation under the Act. For a complete list of the War Precautions regulations, see Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, No.11, 1901-1917, Melbourne, 1918, pp.1034-43.

2 Scott, op.cit., p.64ff.

3 SMH, 26 September 1914.

4 Frederick Bones, licensee of the Railway Hotel in the Melbourne suburb of Richmond, was fined £2 for posting in his window 'Latest War News. Runic Torpedoed in Channel. Australian Troops on Board'. Bones had received distorted information via a telephone chain of four others. The ship sunk was the 'Medic'. DT, 2 April 1915.

5 Scott, op.cit., p.64.
necessary. Material that had been censored could not be
published, nor could the publisher indicate in any way that
particular matters had been censored. The penalties for
disobedience were fines or imprisonment or both. The official
assumption behind the restrictions on public information and
the circulation of certain points of view was, of course,
that the entire nation should fight in the war. 'I trust that
as politicians and press', said Senator Pearce to the New South
Wales Institute of Journalists in January 1915, 'we shall be
optimistic, not foolishly but confidently so, and endeavour to
inculcate that spirit into our fellow-citizens.' The nation
would appear to be more cohesive to all its citizens if
potentially divisive information were diluted or prohibited.
In the official wording: 'The enemy is assisted by reports or
statements which cause disaffection to His Majesty, which
excite public alarm....' Senator Pearce, when driven to
justify the military censorship, based his defence on the
presence of 'the enemy within our gates'. If given 'the
opportunity, such an enemy will disseminate facts, fancies, or
statements', he asserted, 'which will have the effect of
disrupting public opinion and causing dissension and disunion'.
The military censorship also modified the rhetoric of politics.
It choked criticisms of war policy and permitted optimism to
prevail. Pearce told the same gathering of journalists: 'We
have every right to believe in ourselves, to believe in our
people, and to preach that doctrine in the press and on the
platform.' He added: 'It is the doctrine that is going to
spell success for us.' He left unsaid the corollary that

1Ibid., pp.64-5. See also Rules (31 January 1917), op.cit.,
p.4.

2DT, 22 January 1915. See also remarks made to Commercial
Travellers' Association of NSW by Senator Albert Gardiner,
Assistant Minister for Defence: 'They wanted confidence in
their midst, because, as Mr. Winston Churchill had said,
"pessimism on the part of a civilian is the same thing as
cowardice in a soldier".' SMH, 26 July 1915.

3Rules (31 January 1917), op.cit., p.3, 'General Principles of
Censorship'.

4Commonwealth Parl. Deb., session 1914-17, Vol.LXXX, pp.8781-2,
21 September 1916.

5DT, 22 January 1915.
opposing doctrines which did not sustain his cause nor fit into his mythology of the war would be suppressed.¹

The difficulty was that agitation on several political issues which allegedly impinged on the war effort also hurt the standing of politicians. For instance, the temperance crusaders in New South Wales seized on the drunkenness of soldiers to advance their cause. They brought unpopularity to both state and federal Labor governments because of their reluctance to regulate the sale of drink.² The New South Wales Alliance, a confederation of temperance organisations, led the fight. It reprinted 100,000 copies of Arthur Mee's anti-liquor pamphlet Defeat which had been widely circulated in Britain. 'When about eighty thousand had been distributed', claimed a temperance worker, 'the Authorities suddenly discovered that this book was prejudicial to recruiting and prevented further publication of it.'³ Similarly, political implications might be seen in a censorship action of March 1916. Holman protected in their public service employment about sixty persons of German descent despite a savage campaign for their removal and internment. Anti-German Leagues sustained the hatred during 1915-16, which maligned Holman and blackened his party. When a Sydney newspaper printed a story entitled 'A Hun in the Treasury', the Premier requested that the local censor prohibit publication of similar tales, for he feared that further bigotry would 'encourage a possible riot and attack upon the Treasury Building'. Captain Armstrong replied: 'We are endeavouring to get instructions from Melbourne to act more drastically with this paper.' He added:

¹For the political impact of censorship in the 1916 conscription campaign, see Chapter 7. See Bulletin, 10 August 1916: 'The Democracy's Right to Choose its Dictator.'

²See for example despatch from Sir Gerald Strickland to Secretary of State for Colonies, 22 February 1916: 'Having in view the next General Election' both State and Commonwealth Labor leaders 'take care to avoid being the ones to give offence' to the wealthy and influential drink 'Trade'. Colonial Office Records 418/147, folios 85-6.

³Enclosure in a letter from George Fitzpatrick to J.D. Fitzgerald, 10 January 1918, J.D. Fitzgerald papers, MSQ257/13. Fitzpatrick said that 1,000,000 copies of Defeat had been distributed in Britain.
'Such articles as those enclosed in your communication we will delete for the reasons given by you.' In September 1915 the Labor-held seat of Willoughby had been lost to John Haynes who had capitalised on the hatred of 'Germans' and had stressed Labor's alleged leniency in dealing with those of enemy birth. The New South Wales general elections were due at the end of 1916. A clearer case where ruling politicians were tempted to wield their censorship powers occurred during the great strike of August-October 1917. In the midst of the bitter conflict between the New South Wales Nationalist government and the trade unionists (the strikers numbered about 68,000 at this time), Attorney-General D.R. Hall cabled a coded message to the Prime Minister requesting that news reports of a coalminers' protest march to Sydney be censored:

I.W.W. and others arranging route march this week from South Coast. Success depends entirely upon publicity. You will greatly assist by instructing censor to forbid all references to route march in New South Wales press.

Hughes replied 'Censor was instructed accordingly'. We can only speculate on the frequency at which politically-motivated censorship was justified under the elastic dragnet of 'inflaming' and 'exciting' public opinion. But there is an indication. Pointing to the difficulties in working the rules, the censor deemed it his duty to say that many instructions issued to the press could not possibly be justified as an exercise in military censorship under the proclamation establishing a censorship of the press, or under any War Precautions regulation which was *intra vires*.

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1 Correspondence between W.A. Holman and Captain L. Armstrong, 17 and 20 March 1916, NSWPDC, Box 7/4730, file A16/1239. For further details on the 'anti-German' campaign, see Chapter 4.


3 Scott, *op.cit.*, p.76.
In part conflicts over the practice of censorship arose because of additions to the rules. It would seem that this tightening had more to do with quelling 'unnecessary alarm' or the 'inflaming', exciting' or 'prejudicing' of the public mind than with military purposes. In January 1916 newspapers were prohibited from indicating that matter had been censored unless the censor had given permission to do so.¹ Coincidentally the censorship became more stringent and wider in its scope at the time that the conscription issue came to dominate public affairs. Senator Millen complained in September 1916 'that the censorship is today being carried to an extreme not dreamt of six months ago'.² In August 1916 publications referring 'in any way' to the methods of recruiting or raising troops had to be approved by the censor;³ and in September pictures and cartoons had to be inspected before publication.⁴ The revised rules issued in January 1917 ordered that 'disparaging' remarks about neutral 'America' were to stop; that comments 'likely to reflect on the loyalty of our Irish fellow-subjects' or 'prejudice the relations' of the Japanese and the Australian governments (particularly on the question of 'coloured labour') should not be made.⁵ An

¹SMH, 29 January 1916.
²Commonwealth Parl. Deb., Vol.LXXIX, session 1914-17, p.8468, 13 September 1916. See also pp.8394, 8404.
³SMH, 10 August 1916. This restriction was evidently aimed at controlling pamphlets and leaflets as registered newspapers were exempt from its provisions. See also DT, 1 August 1916: Pearce justified the seizure of leaflets during a raid on the Melbourne Trades Hall, because they contained, in his opinion, 'some most seditious and disloyal statements' under the guise of condemning conscription.
⁴Ibid., 20 September 1916.
⁵Rules (31 January 1917), op.cit., pp.7-8. The censors seem to have been lax in preventing the abuse of Catholics, who were chiefly of Irish descent. See particularly the sectarian invective of the Australian Statesman and Mining Standard, 19, 26 April 1917; and cartoon of 8 March 1917, which included the comment: 'Arrayed on one side you have Roman Catholic Party, Sinn Fein, I.W.W., P.L.L., and Pro-German. On the other, the rest of the community.' In January 1915 Thomas Henley, Liberal MIA for Boxwood, had castigated Catholicism as the 'microbe of disloyalty'. He declared that what 'Russian militarism was doing for Europe Roman Catholicism would do for Australia'; Footnote continued on next page...
interesting curb is that put on references to venereal
diseases:

The press is requested to avoid details likely
to inspire unnecessary alarm or likely to give
currency to exaggerated ideas on the subject of
venereal disease among the members of the
Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force.¹

As is now known, the rate of infection from venereal diseases
among Australian troops serving overseas was one of the
highest achieved by any of the Imperial forces serving during
the Great War.² Rumours of this filtered back to Australia.
The alarm circulated in New South Wales during 1915 and 1916
about the contagiousness of the sinister 'Red Plague', as
these little-understood diseases were called, helped to
influence voting against conscription.³ The press was also
requested to avoid misrepresenting the military situation by
either publishing rumours, unconfirmed and unauthorised
reports of victories and defeats, or printing headlines
exaggerating successes or failures. Prohibitions were also
put on statements 'evincing disloyalty, or likely to encourage
disloyalty'; and last, the press was instructed not to publish
any statistics relating to the number of refusals to enlist.⁴

It seems probable that the strengthening of the censorship in
early 1917 reflects official reactions to the defeat of
conscription: they were belated attempts to cut off the
exaggerated beliefs which had been provoked by the political
ferment of the previous September and October.

Footnote continued from previous page:
see DT, 27 January 1915. See also DT, 2 August 1916: the
Lithgow Catholic Federation complained that the local
Orangemen had made statements 'calculated to prejudice
recruiting here'. See also letter to the editor from
P.S. Cleary, President of the Catholic Federation in SMH,
23 November 1915.

¹Ibid., p.12.

²See A.G. Butler, Official History of the Australian Army
Medical Services 1914-18, Vol.3, Canberra, 1943, pp.152, 180,
185, 187. The gross total admissions to hospital for the
treatment of venereal diseases among AIF members overseas
during 1915-18 was 52,538, which included 8,605 relapsed cases.
The mean strength of the AIF overseas 1915-18 was 154,960.

³For details on the Red Plague agitation, see Chapter 5.

⁴Rules (31 January 1917), op.cit., pp.6, 7, 10.
Given the generalised language of the ever increasing censorship regulations, much of which involved questions of opinion, difficulties of interpretation naturally arose. What constituted disloyalty? what things were likely to inflame or excite the minds of Australians? who decided which things were or which were not likely to prejudice recruiting? did news of victories inspire men to enlist? did stories of defeat dishearten the people at home? did they doubt the accuracy of the reports they read? Censors, as well as newspaper editors, had to rely on their own prejudices in deciding on interpretations both of meanings of words and of policy. It seems clear that local censors, although nominally responsible to the Minister for Defence, had considerable autonomy. There were practical reasons for this. At the outbreak of war 1,843 newspapers and periodicals were regularly published in Australia. Considering the delays made by distance and time, together with the pressing cares caused by a rapidly expanding war time department centralised in Melbourne, it is not surprising that local censors assumed a great deal of effective power. Pearce, as Minister for Defence, was ready to trust the opinion of local censors, even to approve the use of military force to prevent material going to press. Cautiousness also came from the top. Ministers were prepared to widen the scope of the newspaper censorship if it were judged necessary, as can be seen in the flow of additions made to the censorship rules. In May 1915 Prime Minister Fisher, in a response at question time, declared that even statements made in Parliament would be prevented from being published by the press if they conflicted with 'the interests and welfare of the country'.

The latitude allowed to individual censors by the generalised rules makes the personalities of the local censors important, particularly as much of the political anger during the later war years was directed at the practice of censorship.

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1 For evidence of this see Scott, op.cit., p.69.

2 Ibid., p.57.

3 Ibid., p.69.

Three men in turn headed the censor's office in Sydney. Only two held long terms of office. The first incumbent, J.T. Wilson, served for the seventeen months from 4 August; the second, L.F.M. Armstrong, a lawyer, briefly filled the post at the beginning of 1916. The third, G.G. Nicholson was in charge for almost three years from April 1916 to January 1919. Thus his occupancy coincides with the period in which the censorship grew more severe and correspondingly incurred increasing odium. Both Wilson and Nicholson taught at the University of Sydney, the former being Professor of Anatomy and the latter Assistant Professor of Modern Languages.

Wilson, fifty-three years old on his appointment as censor, was a Scot who had been educated at Edinburgh University. English-born Nicholson, almost thirty-nine at the outbreak of war, spent all his war years as a censor. A specialist in French and German, and educated at Sydney, Oxford and Paris, he became Assistant Censor in charge of postal communications at Sydney in August 1914 until his promotion in 1916. He was mentioned in the Commonwealth Gazette during October 1917 for 'specially meritorious services in connection with the war'.

A rough calculation would put the number of Sydney censors at about twenty-six or more. Most of these men were drawn from the academic community. A University Committee report dated 12 August 1915, which proudly detailed all the war efforts of the University, claimed that:

The Office of Chief Censor is at present filled by Professor (Lieutenant-Colonel) Wilson with a staff drawn largely from university men, Professors MacCallum and Woodhouse rendering gratuitous services. Other members of staff have undertaken extra work in order to free their colleagues for work at the Censor's Office.

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1 Biographical details from Who's Who in Australia, 1922 and 1927-8 editions.

2 Scott, op. cit., p.61, puts the maximum number of censors employed in Australia as 187 in 1918, and the minimum as 124 in 1914. The medium figure of 155.5 divided by six for each of the state capitals equals roughly 26. As allowance should be made for the greater number of newspapers in Sydney and Melbourne, it is probable that their staffs exceeded that of smaller cities.

3 For a copy of this report see NSWPDC, Box 7/4770, file A18/2449. All three professors were British born and educated.
G.V. Portus wrote that Wilson invited him to join his staff late in 1915. He called his three year stint as a censor the 'barren and useless years'.

The Sydney academics were vigorous supporters of the war. In August 1915 they formed a War Organisation Executive Committee and passed a resolution placing 'the services of the whole of the University staff, administrative and otherwise, including engineers, medical and scientists, at the disposal of the Commonwealth government'. Eight professors, the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar of the University were among the academics who helped to organise and propagate the conscriptionist pressure group, the Universal Service League, in the months following September 1915. Over ninety University staff members, including twenty professors, signed a pro-conscriptionist Manifesto in October 1916, which among other things, declared 'that at this grave juncture it may well be said that whosoever is not for us is against us'. Recruiting appeals, the conscription debates and pamphlets reveal the corporate values of these men. Welsh-born Professor T.W.E. David, addressing a recruiting meeting in Martin Place, referred to 'the spirit of self-sacrifice, which orders a man to risk all, even his very life, to save those principles which are dearer than life itself, and which are the very soul of honour'. Scottish-born Professor MacCallum, who became the second president of the Universal Service League when David enlisted, stated that 'the fundamental idea of the league was the idea of duty. Their best and truest rights were composed of duties.' It is probable that these attitudes were shared by the censors in New South Wales, and perhaps influenced them to adhere to a strict interpretation of their

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1 Portus, Happy Highways, op. cit., pp.163-4. 'I made several mistakes in interpreting our voluminous instructions', wrote Portus, 'which I was told by an irate senior who was the author of most of them, might well have cost us the war. Fortunately they did not. How absurd it was!'

2 DT, 3 September 1915.

3 SMH, 20 October 1916.

4 Ibid., 3 August 1915.

5 Ibid., 23 June 1916.
regulations, which so angered both radical and conservative journalists.

The general operation of the censorship system in Australia may have been much more stringent than that applied to newspapers published in Britain. J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, Liberal MLA for Orange complained of this in the Legislative Assembly. He told Holman that cables published in the London Times and allowed by British military authorities to go abroad, 'are censored in this State to such an extent that they are practically useless to the community at large who read the newspapers'.¹ A Labor MHR gave another example. Speaking in the Commonwealth Parliament during May 1915, King O'Malley alleged that reports concerning ammunition shortages, although published in 'English papers', were not permitted in Australia.² In December 1914 Mary Lloyd wrote that the staff of the Worker eagerly read copies of the British paper Labour Leader because it was 'full of things that would be censored here': she selected as an example Ramsay Macdonald's criticism of the war.³ The Governor General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, when writing to the Colonial Secretary in early 1916, reported that Australian newspapers 'are discreet with the help of the Censor', and remarked: 'it has seemed from this distance as if there was more to be feared than hoped for from [British] press assistance'.⁴ This suggests that he was aware that Australian newspapers were more tightly supervised than those printed in Britain. In February 1916 Munro Ferguson was approached by a British war correspondent, E. Ashmead Bartlett, who had been present at the Dardenelles campaign and had come to Australia to lecture about his war experiences. He encountered the

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² Commonwealth Parliament Deb., Vol.LXXVI, p.3344, 21 May 1915. The Bulletin, 2 November 1916 noted that in England 'after the first few weeks of the war, there has been no censorship comparable with the insufferable tyranny which has been imposed and maintained in Australia'.

³ Sidelights, op.cit., p.30.

⁴ Despatch from Governor-General to Secretary of State for Colonies, 7 February 1916; Novar papers, MS.696/801-2.
Minister for Defence. Pearce, reported Munro Ferguson, 'defended the strictness of his censorship by stating bluntly that the Censor at Home should never have allowed Bartlett's statements to be published here'. Australian authorities went to great lengths to stifle Bartlett. Senator Pearce, as Acting Prime Minister, sent a 'strictly confidential' letter to Holman urging that Bartlett be not 'in any way recognised' by the State government. He added that both the New Zealand and his own government were taking 'strict precautions' so that the journalist's lectures and publications would be 'rigorously censored'. In Pearce's opinion, had Bartlett been allowed to comment freely on the Dardenelles campaign, he would have had 'a very detrimental effect on recruiting'.

George Fitzpatrick, the secretary of the Voluntary Workers' Association stated that the Sydney censor had refused to allow any references to the concentration camp for German civilians at Holsworthy, 'despite the fact that it was known all over the State that the men were concentrated' there. Cabinet Minister J.D. Fitzgerald MLC wrote to John Burns MP in London explaining to him how the pro-conscription cause was beaten. 'The Censorship here is so stupid', he growled, 'that, though you will hardly believe this, no such statement as I have given you would be permitted in the

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1 Despatch from Governor-General to Secretary of State for Colonies, 22 February 1916, Novar papers, MS.696/803. See also despatch of 22 February 1916, MS.696/803. For further details of Bartlett at the Dardenelles and his relationship with Australian journalist Keith Murdoch, see K.S. Inglis, 'The Australians at Gallipoli II', in Historical Studies, Vol.14, no.55, October 1970, p.361.

2 Letter from G.F. Pearce to W.A. Holman, 9 February 1916; copy in J.D. Fitzgerald papers, MS.Q255/29. Pearce also alleged that certain information which had military implications had been disclosed by Bartlett. See also Scott, op.cit., p.92, for Bartlett's encounter with Captain Armstrong, the Sydney censor.

3 A patriotic body set up to build homes for wounded soldiers and soldiers' widows.

4 This was forbidden by the censorship rules, see Rules (31 January 1917), op.cit., p.14, 'The Treatment of Aliens'. Enclosure in a letter from George Fitzpatrick to J.D. Fitzgerald 10 January 1918, J.D. Fitzgerald papers, MS.Q257/13.
The State Governor also had reason for complaint. He had to submit his official cables to London for scrutiny in the censor's office before their transmission. The Colonial Office accidentally discovered this procedure because the censor lost one of Strickland's cablegrams. The practice of censoring the Governor's communications stopped at once. The Minister for Defence apologised that the censor had acted under a misapprehension, as the instruction regarding the submission of cables to the censor had been intended only for the public.²

How did journalists react to the restrictions imposed on their customary editorial liberties? Unlike the position in the Second World War the government and the press did not collaborate until late in the Great War, when the public controversy over censorship prompted a conference between the two parties in April 1918.³ At the April meeting the censorship of editorial opinion was a secondary concern. Editors of the twenty-seven metropolitan dailies objected to the needless restraints put on the printing of news, including the practice of censoring press cables in Australia which had already been censored by the Official Press Bureau in London.⁴

T.W. Heney, war time editor of the conservative and patriotic Sydney Morning Herald wrote an impassioned

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¹Letter from J.D. Fitzgerald to John Burns, 31 October 1916, J.D. Fitzgerald papers, MS.0255/269-71. See also Fitzgerald's remarks made to the NSW Institute of Journalists. He declared that the war despatches would have been more revealing 'had it not been for the crude pencils which were wielded by the terrified amateurs who were running the censorship'. SMH, 11 March 1916.

²Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, 16 June 1916; Ferguson to Strickland, 20 June 1916, 31 July 1916; Strickland to Secretary of State for Colonial Office Records, 418/148, folios 109-12.

³For the administration of press censorship in the Second World War see Paul Hasluck, The Government and the People 1939-1941, series 4, Vol.1, of the official war histories, Canberra, 1952, pp.179-87. For 1918 controversy over censorship see DT, 3, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17 January 1918; SMH, 3, 12, 15, 16 January 1918; Sun, 15 January 1918; Bulletin, 17 January 1918. For 1918 Conference see Scott, op.cit., pp.76-8, 81-2.

⁴Scott, op.cit., pp.76-8.
condemnation of the military censorship methods.\textsuperscript{1} Plainly mortified by his experiences with the University-dominated censorship staff in New South Wales, he castigated the 'rigid and unsympathetic official attitude' taken towards 'cablegrams, ordinary telegraphic reports, general reports of public movements, and even of military agitations such as that for recruitment'. He was further angered by the 'obsolescent war-regulation, censor's order, or pedantry which some new censor regarded as still of formidable importance'.\textsuperscript{2} The company historian of the \textit{Herald} agreed with Heney's views. Using the evidence collected in the newspaper's archives, he declared that the censorship was 'at times a grievous and an illogical tyrant'. He wondered how the staff had kept their sanity: 'There would often be as many as half a dozen prohibitions, or releases, or cancellations of both, or one, or either, during the one day.'\textsuperscript{3}

The journalists of labour newspapers who were critical of the war had greater cause to detest the local censor. In October 1914 the \textit{Navvy}, the journal of the Railway Workers' and General Labourers' Association was censored for reprinting 'an account of the horrors of war'.\textsuperscript{4} Henry Boote who denounced the war as an 'atrocious crime' and the 'culmination of Capitalist misrule',\textsuperscript{5} wrangled constantly with the censor. Some of these early battles were provoked by Hector Lamond, the \textit{Worker}'s ardently pro-war and pro-conscriptionist business manager (and former editor), who sent across to the censor in secret those articles he believed should be banned. Boote discovered the scheme by accident. The censor ordered an article in which Boote had condemned the sending of the Australian troops to the war to be removed from the \textit{Worker}. An angry Boote

\textsuperscript{1} Heney was chosen to write the official history of the war as it affected Australians at home. On his death Ernest Scott took his place. The extended quotation in Scott's volume pp.79-82, on which this paragraph is based, is apparently an extract from Heney's draft of the official history.

\textsuperscript{2} Scott, op.cit., p.80.

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{A Century of Journalism}, op.cit., pp.440-1.

\textsuperscript{4} Sidelights, op.cit., p.30.

\textsuperscript{5} \textit{AW}, 15 October 1914.
confronted the censor in the seventh storey of the Martin Place General Post Office. 'Both got very heated, but cooled down in the end.' And the censor remarked: 'Even your own people got frightened, and drew my attention to it.' The staff stigmatised Lamond as 'the military spy'. He resigned in September 1916. Mary Gilmore, the editor of the women's page who apparently supported Lamond, was branded by Boote as the 'office Jingo'. However the constant battle against 'the satraps of militarism' was dispiriting and lonely work. Despite the 'senseless and vindictive judgments there is no appeal - except to a war maddened mob, and what's the good of that?' lamented Boote in a letter to Robert Ross in Melbourne. 'Freedom is dead. Sometimes when I write I seem to feel the shackles on my wrists.' From early 1916 coinciding with the gradual strengthening of the regulations and with the headship of G.G. Nicholson at the GPO, his conflicts with the censorship authorities became more frequent. In February according to Mary Lloyd, the censor told Boote that 'all sorts of things must not be referred to and nearly every article must be examined by him before it is printed'. When the censor called at the Worker office in June and ordered that 'coloured labour' must 'never be used in reference to the Japanese', Boote retorted that 'he would sooner have the Kaiser here than the Mikado'. In July an edition of the paper emerged 'after a desperate struggle with the censor,' and the following month 'Henry had a trying day. Nearly all the paper has been censored.' As the conscription cause took possession of more

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1 Sidelights, op.cit., September 1914, p.28.
2 Ibid., p.65.
3 Ibid., p.29.
4 Letter from H.E. Boote to Robert Ross, 28 January 1916, Robert Ross papers, NL MS.3222/1.
5 Sidelights, op.cit., p.38.
6 Ibid., p.43.
7 Ibid., p.44.
8 Ibid., p.50.
people these battles with the censor behind the scenes grew fiercer.¹

How much of the responsibility for the working of the military censorship upon the newspapers should be attributed to the politicians, to the censors and to the editors themselves? Pending further research these questions cannot be clearly answered. The Bulletin suspected in part the politicians. It suggested that a senior journalist be appointed to administer the censorship in place of the politicians and their military subordinates and that ultimate control rest in appeals to the High Court. In this way it hoped, public apprehensions about censorship would be diminished.² T.W. Heney, like Boote, resented the censors, but for different reasons. He was nettled at the imputation cast on his paper. The censorship 'took itself with the most deadly seriousness; it treated the leading and most devoted organs of public opinion as if they were all vehemently suspect', he wrote, 'and as if they necessarily desired to publish dangerous matter'.³ Left to their own devices on non-military matters most editors would have enforced a degree of self-censorship, for they supported the war. Censorship after all was a professional skill employed by an editor. 'The censorship was applied on the whole with discretion', wrote the chronicler of a Sydney daily, 'and not much that was done would not have been done by the newspapers themselves upon request to consider the national interest in an emergency.'⁴

During the 'long, long crisis' of the Great War

it became the duty of the public press (quite apart from any censorship instructions) to aid in the strengthening of the national spirit. Of the Press of Australia as a whole it may be said that it performed this duty with a single-minded devotion, and The Sun strove to do its share.⁵

Gnawed by misgivings in May 1915, the Bulletin attacked the 'big dailies' for the mood they induced. It protested that

¹Ibid., pp.49-51, 53, 56, 58, August to October 1916.
²Bulletin, 14 September 1916 leader, 'The Principles of the Censorship'.
³Scott, op.cit., pp.80-1.
⁴Sun Newspapers Ltd, op.cit., p.21.
⁵Ibid., n.25.
their cocksure war news was 'chloroform' to the people instead of 'dynamite'. For this over-confidence the leader writer asserted:

The astonishing Censor's Department has, no doubt, to share part of the ignominy. But its functions are mostly negative. The Censor is content to say what shall go out. It is the newspaper's stipendiary optimist who decides upon the glozing blither that is to go in.¹

If we look at the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph*, and for comparative purposes the Melbourne *Argus* covering the period August 1914 to October 1916 we discover two susceptibilities: there was near uniformity and almost unvarying optimism in the war news that was published. Headlines and texts fostered the belief that the Allied armies had nearly always triumphed or had won some military advantage. 'When the French line, is driven back five miles it is a masterly retreat', scoffed the *Bulletin*; 'when the same thing happens to the Germans it is a smashing defeat.'² Here are some examples.

The landings on the Gallipoli peninsula took place on 25 April 1915. 'To many here it is the beginning of the war,' wrote the Governor-General of Australia on 5 May.³ Despite tantalising evidence that the Australian army was fighting its first critical battle, only brief paragraphs verifying the landings amid 'hard fighting' were allowed to be printed.⁴

On 3 May the first major battle casualty list of the Australians at war was published. The *Herald* printed over the

¹*Bulletin*, 20 May 1915, leading article, 'A Community Which Requires Dynamite and is Given Chloroform'. See also Deputy Chief Censor's remarks paraphrased in *SMH*, 11 August 1915: 'As to the suggestion that the public may have been misled by the too optimistic comments of our local papers, the Deputy Chief Censor considers that the right of comment and the reasonable liberty of the press should not be interfered with, unless the seriousness of the situation requires this action.'

²*Bulletin*, 20 May 1915.

³Despatch from Governor-General to Secretary of State for Colonies, 5 May 1915; Novar papers, NL, MS.696/682. A.W. Jose in a despatch to the *Times* of 18 May 1915 similarly observed 'the intense and all-pervasive' popular feeling; A.W. Jose papers, ML, uncat. MS.266.

⁴See *SMH*, *DT*, 28, 29, 30 April 1915; *Argus*, 30 April 1915.
top of the list the headlines: 'Dardenelles, Brilliant Achievement by Australians. High Praise by the Admiralty. Heavy Casualties.' The only snippet it could give to people was one bare sentence: 'The Allies now hold the end of the Gallipoli Peninsula, and the colonial troops have maintained their positions, Turkish reports to the contrary being untrue.' 'Public tension almost reached breaking point.' 1 The Minister for Defence urged Australians to 'be patient'. 2 At last on 8 May, two weeks after the landings, E. Ashmead Bartlett's story of the 'heroic' feats of the Australian and New Zealand soldiers was told. 3 Eight months later Australians at home were told that the imperial troops had retreated from the peninsula. Newspapers pictured the brightest side: 'Dardenelles. Anzac and Suvla Troops Withdrawn. Fine Military Feat.' 4 Defeat was not mentioned, although the Herald in a minor story referred to the campaign as the 'Grandest Failure in History'. 5

It would have been interesting to see what Bartlett might have divulged at the time had he been free to do so. After the war he wrote a book entitled The Uncensored Dardenelles. In it he declared: 'Never, in fact, was a gallant army so miserably mishandled by its chiefs as were the British and Dominion soldiers on Gallipoli.' 6 Bartlett's first lecture

1 A Century of Journalism, op.cit., p.445. See also Prime Minister Fisher's brief statements of the general military position on the Peninsula, Commonwealth Parl. Deb., Vol.LXXVI, pp.2723-4, 2813-4, 3007-9, 29, 30 April and 12 May respectively.

2 SMH, 3 May 1915.

3 SMH, Argus, 8 May 1915. The Argus headlines across the page, read: 'Australians at Dardenelles: Thrilling Deeds of Heroism.'

4 SMH, 22 December 1915. See also Argus, 22 December 1915: 'Australians Leave Anzac. Suvla Bay Evacuated. A Remarkable Achievement. Turks Kept in Ignorance....'

5 SMH, 22 December 1915.

in Melbourne in 1916 was entitled 'The Anzacs at Gallipoli'. The reporter noted that he had 'very little to say with regard to the actual fighting'. Despite the application of censorship, criticism of the campaign had begun to circulate. Senator Pearce thought it necessary to counter it. Just before the first Anzac Day celebrations in Sydney he asserted that 'Gallipoli was not a failure'. The care taken to inhibit any criticism of the campaign suggests that the symbolic value of the Gallipoli to Australians at home may well have been partially derived by accident from the work done both by the military censors and the newspaper editors. Critics of the campaign were muzzled: Australian troops in combat were exalted.

Australians were told in early May 1916 that their troops had arrived and occupied front line trenches in France. On the night of 5-6 May, German soldiers, preceded by a heavy bombardment, successfully raided a section of the Australian line held by the 20th Battalion (NSW). British newspapers boosted this incident. Australian papers developed it further. The Sydney Sunday Times of 14 May printed the following headlines: 'Anzacs Smash Huns. Anzacs Taste Blood. In Contact with the Enemy They Prove Their Worth to the Hilt.' The next day the Herald printed the following account:

The Anzacs....sprang out of the trench, and met the bombers in No-man's land. A very pretty fight followed....The Australians drove back the

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1 Argus, 23 February 1916. His other lectures were reported in a small paragraph each, see Argus, 25, 28 February 1916. See also DT, 12 February 1915 for Bartlett's arrival in Sydney; DT, 17 February 1915 for his talk at the Millions Club.

2 SMH, 25 April 1916. Pearce gave several reasons to support his statement, adding that the withdrawal became necessary because of inadequate reinforcements.

3 DT, 9 May 1916; SMH, Argus, 10 May 1916. See also Bean, The AIF in France 1916 op. cit., 113: the 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions took over the lines at the French town of Armentières near the Belgian border during 7 to 20 April 1916.

4 NSW PDC, Box 7/4733, file B16/2597.
raiders, who sustained substantial losses in killed and wounded. It was a new thing, and pleased the Australians immensely.

C.E.W. Bean, the official war correspondent attached to the Australian Imperial Force, quashed these tales. 'Exciting fights by Anzacs in "No Mans Land"...and heroic combats between Germans and Australians', he wrote on 18 May, 'have gone unreported by the war correspondents here, not because the censor stops them, but because they never occurred.' The facts of the raid, which were not made public, were the opposite. The Germans captured from the Australians two Stokes trench mortars, at that time secret weapons. Moreover British General Headquarters had demanded that 'special care' be taken to prevent their capture. Eleven Australians were taken prisoner, 120 more were killed or wounded. Furthermore, the Australian troops had failed to counter-attack the raiders. The Germans escaped with their prizes and without casualties.

During 1916 two critical battles were fought on the Western Front: the prolonged struggle around Verdun (February to December), which merged into the Battle of the Somme (July to November). News reports of these battles convey an assurance of Allied military headway. To save space only headline captions will be cited as evidence, for they reflect the stories printed underneath sufficiently well for our purpose. In any case, as war news was based on military communiqués, the phrasing of many headlines was often composed from the words of the communiqué itself. The following examples relating to Verdun are taken from the Sydney Morning Herald:

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2 *Argus*, 22 May 1916. In the same despatch Bean stated that the Australians held a quiet sector of the Western Front and that so far there had been only one small German raid on their trenches.

3 Bean, op.cit., p.196. The Stokes mortar was secret because of its rapidity of fire and for a new bomb fuse which enabled the exploding mortar bomb to cut barbed wire entanglements. GHQ had ordered that the mortars were never to be left in the front line after use. See also p.206.
The news of Verdun proved too scanty for those Australians who wished to understand the detailed military situation. Despite the reassuring stories, John Haynes, MLA for Willoughby, asked Holman "if it is a fact that news of a most satisfactory character with regard to the battle raging at Verdun has been received in Sydney?" Holman was also dissatisfied with locally printed news. On 1 March he cabled to the State Agent-General in London. He asked:

while the present battle is undecided, we shall be glad if you will send a short cable each day giving statement of position as disclosed and any authentic explanations of the movements. General anxiety here owing to inadequacy of press reports....


3 Cablegram from W.A. Holman to Agent-General of NSW, 1 March 1916, NSWPDC, Box 7/4716, file A16/1077. Holman received thirteen cables on the Verdun battle, ten arrived between 1 and 16 March 1916.
Reports of the battle of the Somme have a greater significance for Australians. The bulk of their troops fought there. The total battle casualties of 32,262 on the Western Front for July to September 1916 were the severest quarterly losses inflicted on the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War. Accordingly the focal point of the Australian news reports was on France, overshadowing the exploits of Australian cavalry in the Middle East. In the Herald over the eight week period 18 August to 27 October, forty-four casualty (battle and non-battle) lists from all theatres of war were published. These listed 36,994 names, including well over 5,000 deaths. Cumulative totals of Australian casualties (excluding those returned to duty) were periodically printed in the press. The Herald gave them as follows for these dates during 1916:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 May</td>
<td>41,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 September</td>
<td>52,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 September</td>
<td>64,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 October</td>
<td>72,040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australians in New South Wales would have been aware when they came to cast their votes for or against conscription that large numbers of their 'boys' were being killed or injured in France. For example, Miss Scobie, addressing a women's pro-conscription meeting in North Sydney in mid-October, complained that 'millions of pamphlets were being distributed throughout the country towns, headed "wholesale slaughter", to frighten the women'. Yet how was the bloody fighting on the Somme reported? The following headlines appeared in the Herald:

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1 Butler, Australian Army Medical Services, Vol.3, op. cit., p.912, table 41. The next highest were 28,404 for the third quarter 1918, and 26,494 for the second quarter 1917.

2 Calculations from SMH, 18 August to 27 October 1916. This period was chosen because it begins two weeks before W.M. Hughes announced on 30 August that a conscription referendum would be held.

3 SMH, 18 October 1916. A 1916 anti-conscription leaflet written by R.W. Cruickshank stated: 'The more men you send the more will be killed!!! Do you want the furnace of war to consume all your fathers, husbands and brothers?...VOTE "NO" AND PRESERVE YOUR HOME LAND.' Anti-Conscription Papers, Vol.1, Dixson Library, F91/49.
4 July

17 July

31 July
The Somme. Local Successes.

14 August
Progress On All Fronts.

5 September

8 September
The Somme. Importance of Gains. More Positions Taken.

18 September
Two Miles Advance. British Victory on the Somme.

27 September

3 October

14 October

23 October
British Advance on Somme on Three Miles Front.1

The Australians' share of the Somme fighting took place at the village of Pozières and the adjacent Mouquet Farm. They began at dawn on 20 July. The survivors were replaced by British units on 5 September. The bloody struggles waged here by three of the five Australian infantry Divisions, the first, the second and the fourth, completely overshadowed the first major battle, Fromelles, fought in France by Australian infantrymen. The first battle was brief. It started on 19 July. It ended the next morning. The 5th Australian Division in company with the 61st British Division, attacked

the German trenches near the village of Fromelles. It was hoped that a feint at this point would deter the Germans from shifting troops from there to reinforce their line at the main battle raging on the Somme, some fifty miles south of Fromelles. Despite grave eleventh hour doubts from British General Headquarters' staff, the local army commander pushed for the action.¹

At 5.30 in the afternoon of 19 July Australian and British soldiers forming the first assault wave filed onto No Man's Land. The Germans were ready. They had been given two days' warning by the British artillery bombardment. Their ridge-top observers on the day spotted the massing enemy troops. 'The sun of a bright summer afternoon was still fairly high' wrote Bean, when the enemy 'opened heavily upon the front and reserve lines with all available guns'.² A soldier from New South Wales put the trench-eye view: 'When men looked over the top they saw No-Man's Land leaping up everywhere in showers of dust and sand...confirming our fears that the Germans knew something.'³ No ground was gained.

After fifteen hours the survivors retreated. Fearing for his soldiers, the Australian commanding the 8th Infantry Brigade, Major-General Tivey, hurried to the front line: he discovered it to be crowded with bleeding and dying men. The General wept.⁴ More than 5,500 men fell from the broken 5th Division. Half its infantry strength. The British lost about 1,500 killed and wounded; the Germans suffered less.⁵

The truth was censored in the field. On 20 July Sir Douglas Haig issued the following communiqué:

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¹For details of the Battle of Fromelles, see Bean, op.cit., pp.328-447. The erratic evolution of the battle plans is told at pp.332-50.
²Ibid., pp.357-8.
³Ibid., p.358.
⁴Ibid., p.437.
⁵Ibid., p.442. Not counting the supporting units of artillery, transport, signals etc., a Division had twelve infantry battalions, each of which numbered 800 to 900 men at this time. Calculations derived from Bean, op.cit., pp.340n., 442 show that the Divisional infantry strength varied between say 9,600 to 10,800 men.
Yesterday evening, south of Armentières, we carried out important raids on a front of two miles in which Australian troops took part. About 140 German prisoners were taken. This misleading report soon appeared in the Australian press. Some days later a few more facts were revealed. The Telegraph headed its story 'Anzac Raid. Many Prisoners Taken.' The story concentrated on 'bravery' and the 'extraordinary' difficulty of the 'operation'. Australians were told that their troops had attacked a 'very strongly-fortified German salient' and encountered machine-gun and artillery fire. The report ends:

The manner in which they carried it through seems to have been worthy of all the traditions of the Anzac. At least 200 prisoners were captured, and also several machine-guns. Many Germans were killed. The losses amongst our troops engaged were severe.

Apart from brief references over the next week, the 'local fight at Armentières' disappeared from press reports.

Newspaper reports of the Australian Divisions fighting at Pozières and Mouquet Farm, although much more extensive than those relating to Fromelles, similarly did not clarify the military situation to those at home, largely because of the generalised vocabulary employed in the communiqués. 'Important advantages', 'severe fighting', 'heavy losses', 'considerable progress', 'slight advance' were not enlightening. Further, news again was rosy, as the following headlines of the Daily Telegraph show:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Headline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>German Positions carried. Intense Battle in Progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 July</td>
<td>Capture of Pozières. Strong Trenches Seized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stubborn Fighting in Progress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Ibid., p.446. Bean adds: 'In accordance with the policy at this time adopted by G.H.Q., the severity of this reverse... was concealed from the British public.' Fromelles was about six miles from Armentières.

2 See DT, 21 July 1916; Arques, 22 July 1916.

3 DT, 24 July 1916. This report came from a 'Commonwealth official Correspondent', presumably C.E.W. Bean himself. See also SMH, Arques, 24 July 1916.

7 August

15 August
Trench Fighting. Struggles at Pozières. Successful British Raids.¹

Repetitive tales of Australian military prowess also continued.

The Anzacs leapt over the parapets at dawn, and faced not only shell fire but a cross-fire of machine-guns, yet they raced on with an irresistible dash and gained the enemy's lines.²

In less than seven weeks, the Australian Imperial Force suffered over 28,000 casualties. Each Division lost as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Casualties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>7,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>8,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>7,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>5,500³</td>
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The people at home were unaware of the extent of divisional and sub-unit losses. They could only observe the stream of casualty lists, which only gave away the details of rank, name, place of residence and corps (infantry, artillery, cavalry etc.). There were no means of relating casualties to military units or to the place of action, which could provide some measure of human cost for military gain. One of the few calculations Australians could make, in the light of the advances placed so constantly before their eyes in the daily press, was that the sacrifice of life seemed to have produced satisfactory results. One soldier wrote home: 'For Christ's


² SMH, 6 September 1916. See also the report by Philip Gibbs of the Daily Chronicle, as printed in DT, SMH, 6 September 1916. Telegraph headlines read 'Anzacs in the Hunt. Harrying the Enemy. The Fight at Mouquet Farm.' Gibbs wrote: 'One of these clean-cut Australian boys, with the fine, steady, truth-telling eyes, which look so straight, even after a nerve-breaking ordeal of fire, said the bombardment preceding the battle was the greatest they ever had.'

³ Bean, op.cit., p.862. For the impact of the Somme on the AIF, see pp.862-77. The new 3rd Division training at Salisbury Plain under Major-General Monash, did not arrive in France until November 1916.
sake, write a book on the life of an infantryman, and by doing so you will quickly prevent these shocking tragedies.\(^1\) He had forgotten about the censors.

How did contemporary newspaper reports of the war effect Australians? After several months of war, A.W. Jose suggested that the double isolation created by geography and the censorship had induced complacency.

This country is so far removed from the actual battlefields, and so removed (by the assiduous care of several censorship) from any satisfactory intellectual contact with the daily varying currents of advance and retreat along the fighting line, that its population had ceased to be much stirred by cable messages about the storming of a trench and the burning of a village.\(^2\) Australians were 'stirred' by the Gallipoli landings. As combat deaths mounted sections of the population grew more fixed in their commitment to the war and to their absent 'boys' in the foreign trenches. But men outside the military age group chafed at the thought of the younger fellows not doing their duty. 'The people are going back to their old interests and recreations', complained forty-eight year old Dr Richard Arthur nearly four weeks after the landings, 'and even the ever-increasing list of casualties among our Australian soldiers seems to have no direct effect, except upon those immediately concerned. They are left to mourn in silence.'\(^3\) The agitation for more troops which ultimately generated a demand for a conscription policy, can be separated from the sentiments aroused by the war and the identification with the fate of the Australian soldiers. Yet the success of the pro-conscriptionists depended upon how other people perceived the war. We can imagine that favourable impressions of the war lingered on in the minds of many during

\(^1\)Ibid., p.872.

\(^2\)Despatch to the Times, 16 January 1915, A.W. Jose papers, ML, uncat. MS.266. See also Holman's views in SMH, 15 November 1915: 'I have always regarded speculations on the progress of the war as futile. In the first place, the information that comes to us is censored and mutilated, and..., even if the information were complete, we are too far away to apprehend its bearings.'

\(^3\)Letter to the editor, SMH, 22 May 1915. Arthur's son had enlisted in the AIF.
the following years. Annoyed that such views were too widespread, the Bulletin in August 1915 attacked the cause. It parodied the Western Front war reports of the 'dailies' with several paragraphs about a mock invasion of Sydney. Under the headline 'Invaders Firmly Held' was printed:

Fighting continued during the whole of yesterday between Newport and Narrabeen. The invader was repulsed with terrific slaughter in the French's Forest sector, though towards night-fall he was suffered to occupy some trenches abandoned by us with the object of straightening out our line. The enemy continues to be firmly held everywhere.¹

Henry Boote epitomised the communiqué style that November. Mary Lloyd records: 'In the papers, as Henry says, we are still winning all the battles, and the Germans taking all the towns.'²

Not all persons read the available newspapers. But the chief and perhaps only source of war news which circulated among the great number of people was derived from the daily press. From the evidence considered we have seen that censorship at various points restricted the pool of facts about the war, and that the pool contained facts of a reassuring kind. Anti-conscriptionists profited from this. 'Every day we had reported victories on land,' declared Labor MHR Frank Anstey to the crowd in the Sydney Town Hall, 'and the only justification for putting another 200,000 Australians in the field was by assuming an utterly preposterous position.'³ Advocates of conscription agreed with the strategic situation. In his opening remarks during the debate on W.M. Hughes' conscription referendum policy, E.D. Millen, Liberal Opposition Leader in the Senate, stated that the military

¹Bulletin, 26 August 1915. Five similar paragraphs appeared with this example.

²Sidelights, op.cit., p.36, November 1915.

³DT, 23 September 1916. See Bulletin, 28 September 1916, leader 'Pozières': '...the truth that we must know, unless our referendums and elections are to be worse than a farce - this is still suppressed or glozed over. Pozières was, according to the cables, a glorious victory. The anti-conscriptionists said that we had the enemy beaten - he was on the run; what need was there for any such new and untried effort as conscription?'
position 'so far as we are allowed to understand it from the
daily papers', has 'heartened us considerably'. But, he added
taking even the most favourable view of this
later news, the most we can say at the present
juncture is that we have reached the stage at
which we can...say with confidence that it is
now clear that Germany cannot win.¹

Holman, speaking to a crowd at the Lockhart Agricultural Show,
stated that there was no possibility of 'their race being
defeated under any circumstances'.² At Hughes' first pro-
conscription campaign rally which was staged in the Sydney
Town Hall, the Lord Mayor, R.D. Meagher declared to the
throng before him: 'The great offensive now being...carried on
on all fronts, has been crowned with great success.'³

Three weeks from the poll the pro-conscriptionists in New
South Wales suspected that their intense campaigning had not
shifted the bulk of the people to support their cause.
Perturbed by this, Brigadier-General E.T. Wallack, who had
recently returned from France, hastened to the Premier's
Office. He feared that the press, contrary to their
intentions, 'would prove a very strong factor' preventing the
growth of a large pro-conscription vote by 28 October. 'The
general attitude of the New South Wales Press (particularly
the morning dailies) is now one of extreme optimism so far as
the war is concerned.' He added in confidence to Holman's
secretary that although the papers had 'emphasised the
victories' and 'the local successes achieved', there had
been 'of course very serious reverses'. To reverse the tone

¹Commonwealth Parl. Deb., Vol.LXXIX, session 1914-17, p.8460,
13 September 1916. Like all other pro-conscriptionists who
made the same remark, Millen then went on to declare that
greater efforts were needed because Germany had to be beaten.
For Hughes' announcement of the referendum, see Commonwealth
Parl. Deb., Vol.LXXXIX, session 1914-17, pp.8402-3, 30 August
1916.

²SMH, 16 September 1916.

³Ibid., 19 September 1916. See also NSW Attorney-General
D.R. Hall at Redfern Town Hall: 'Recent events gave hopes of
greater progress, but no one of the Allies could afford to
stop until the last German was driven off allied soil;'
Ibid., 12 October 1916.
of the press reports, he urged that Holman use his 'very great
influence' with the journalists in New South Wales.¹

Not only were newspapers continually suggesting that the
Allied armies were successful in driving back the German
forces. Other reports implied that the German nation was in a
state of imminent collapse. These are some of the headlines
printed by the Herald during 1916:

19 February  Sad Times. Germany From Within.
Evidence in Prisoners' Letters.
4 March  "Bread or Peace!" Demonstration
in Berlin.
19 April  Food Troubles. In Germany.
Complaints of Food Usurers.
15 May  German Food Riots. Berlin
outbreak....
29 June  Riots in Leipzig. Martial Law
Proclaimed.
8 July  Riots in Germany. Serious
Disturbances. Violent Anti-war
Cry....
14 August  German Casualties. Over Three
Million.
27 September  Germany in Defeat. Neutral Opinion.
No Doubt as to Result.
23 October  A Cry for Peace.²

The optimism of the press, aided by a meticulous
censorship, partly explains the passions of September-October
1916. Pro-conscriptionists were desperately trying to undo
two years of relative assurance during which it seemed that
the end of the world and Germany's defeat were close at hand.

¹As Holman was absent, these notes of Wallack's thoughts
given on 7 October were made by 'E.H.S.' (E.H. Stoney), the
Confidential Clerk to the Premier. See NSWPDC, Box 7/4781,
file B18/520, memorandum dated 9 October 1916, printed as
appendix B to 'Memorandum by the Secretary, Premier's
Department, Respecting the Minute on Recruiting submitted by
the Premier to Cabinet on 7th February, 1917.' This was the
notorious 'Secret' memorandum leaked to the press and printed
by the Worker, 20 December 1917, the polling day for the
second conscription referendum.

²See also SMH, 29 December 1915; DT, 12, 13 April; 15 May,
14 August 1916; Argus, 7, 16 March, 12, 15, 25 May, 27,
29 June, 17, 21 July, 14 August, 6 October 1916.
In June 1916 Professor MacCallum had condemned 'the existing tendency to believe the end of the war to be nearer than it really was'. Yet it was difficult to convert people to his sombre views. They had to reconcile his opinion with contrary impressions derived from their newspapers. The opposition to conscription in New South Wales must at least be partly attributed to the impact of censorship: the war situation did not seem to warrant a greater sacrifice from Australians. The views of Henry Fletcher, an orchardist at Riverstone near Windsor, New South Wales, corroborate this statement. He lived in the Liberal-held rural electorate of Nepean, which included the towns of Liverpool, Campbelltown, Richmond, Windsor and Penrith. In October 1916, the valid vote for Nepean on the conscription question read:

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<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>22,252</td>
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<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>17,138</td>
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For Fletcher's sub-division of Riverstone:

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<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>343</td>
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<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>238</td>
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Although it cannot be proven, it might be that Fletcher's views were shared by many who voted against conscription with him. Four weeks before polling day, he wrote to George Waite, President of the Anti-Conscription League:

I have been a long time making up my mind on this conscription question; but the intemperance of its advocates - the usually sane Sun is going hysterical - has put me among the opponents. Not to the theory in case of dire necessity; but against its application at the present time.

The howl to throw every ablebodied Australian in the fighting line and so save a corresponding number of Russians, Portuguese, or Romanians, doing their bit; seems to be born of a fatuous desire for our men to stand in the international limelight. While authorities who should know, assure us: that the Hun has shot his bolt, that he is now greatly our inferior in men and munitions; and it is only a case of months when he must break down on his now extended front; Billy Hughes speaks of the situation as one of desperation, as do his press barrackers.

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1SMH, 23 June 1916.

2The major army training camp within New South Wales was near Liverpool.
Are all our cables lies that tell of the millions of trained Russians, who lacking equipment, are not yet in the field; of the millions of British soldiers who have not yet crossed the channel; of the over a million Romanians who have just entered the fray [?].

The operation of the military censorship deprived pro-conscriptionists of the rationale for conscription: its necessity. There seemed to be no real need for the Australian authorities to strengthen the army by this method when the strategic balance seemingly had tilted in favour of the British Empire and its allies. Nonetheless many Australians voted in favour of conscription. We can perhaps attribute the Yes vote to a strong identification with the 'boys' facing death at the front. As J.B. Peden, professor of law put it: 'The whole thing boiled down to the single question: were they going to do their simple duty to the boys in the trenches, or were they prepared to shirk, and to leave them to bear the brunt of battle unassisted?'

The disagreement over the necessity for conscription slid into assertions about loyalty. 'Was Australia going to "scab" on the Allies?' asked D.R. Hall. 'Australia also owed a duty to the motherland', declared John Garland MLC, 'the land that had always protected her.' Loyalty is a relative perception, for people distinguish categories of behaviour, such as loyalty or disloyalty, from the standpoint of their accustomed values. Loyalty also describes behaviour considered fundamental for the cohesiveness of society. As we shall discover, certain people grew resentful of behaviour which they branded as unjustifiable. They alleged that its persistence weakened both the community and its war effort.

To understand the success of the anti-conscription cause in New South Wales, and the bitterness left by the campaign, we need to probe into some of the anxieties generated by the Great War.

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1 Henry Fletcher to George Waite, 25 September 1916; George Waite papers, ML, uncat. MS.208, Box 1.

2 SMH, 5 October 1916.

3 Ibid., 21 October 1916.

4 Ibid., 18 October 1916.
ANXIETIES AND AGITATION
CHAPTER 4
ANTI-GERMANISM AND THE GROWTH OF INTOLERANCE

The urge for conformity, a fundamental social cohesive force, flourishes under the pressures of war; for war expands peoples' awareness of social cohesion. War arouses anxieties about 'disloyal' or uncongenial behaviour. Anxious people itch to enforce solidarity: they agitate for remedies which will curb or mitigate the particular behaviour which nourishes their respective fears. If their remedies involve unpalatable restrictions, resistance is encountered. And so war aggravates social conflict. In 1915 various groups in New South Wales urged the adoption of measures which allegedly would improve national 'efficiency'. They claimed, sometimes in disagreement with each other, that the necessary improvements could be achieved by various means: if 'Germans' were interned; liquor bars closed at 6 p.m.; horse racing, gambling and boxing restricted;¹ foreign goods boycotted;²

¹See SMH, 10 November 1915. The Presbytery of Sydney criticised the vice-royalty for attending race meetings. Rev. C.A. White said 'this was a time for sacrifice and for the supreme sacrifice'. See also SMH, 22 July 1916: Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart, Archbishop Wright, Rev. Professor Macintyre and Rev. Dr Carruthers, as the deputation from the Council for Civic and Moral Advancement, urged the Chief secretary to close the Sydney Boxing Stadium.

²A Manufactures Week was held in September 1915. Its slogan was 'Support Australian Industries'. See SMH, 6 September 1915. The policy of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce for the capture of enemy trade was printed in SMH, 18 December 1915. See also H.E. Pratten at Millions Club, SMH, 16 February 1915. The Sydney Chamber of Commerce, NSW Chamber of Manufactures and the Millions Club jointly organised a public luncheon in the Sydney Town Hall for the purpose of cultivating trade within the Empire and Allied countries. P.E. Winchcombe presided, and H.E. Pratten and Arthur Rickard were vice-chairmen. Nearly 500 men attended, including representatives from the Goulburn and Newcastle Chambers of Commerce. A Trade Expansion Committee was formed. SMH, 26 February 1915.
'contentious' legislation abandoned;\(^1\) strikes voluntarily repressed; if personal and public 'economy' were practised respectively by individuals and the government, and if more men enlisted in the army.\(^2\) Three of these reactions to the war merit closer investigation. The anti-German, early closing and pro-conscription movements each had important social and political repercussions.\(^3\) They also affected the political career of W.A. Holman. His steadfastness in each of these controversies helped to dissolve the bonds that bound his party.

The advocates of war time social reorganisation stressed that Germany threatened everyone's lives, rich and poor.\(^4\) Thus, it was constantly urged, all Australians should co-operate to their utmost in the national endeavour. William Brooks, president of the Employers' Federation, demanded the fostering of a 'militant patriotism which must dominate the minds not only of our leaders, but of the whole people'.\(^5\)

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\(^1\) See especially the agitation to prevent the federal Labor government holding its constitutional referendum. At a meeting in Sydney Town Hall Sir William McMillan moved that 'all party dissension should cease', *SMH*, 19 August 1915.

\(^2\) Dr Richard Arthur advocated most of these policies in his letter to the editor, *SMH*, 22 May 1915. See also the pamphlet written by Professor D.A. Welsh, *The Great Opportunity*, Sydney, November 1915.

\(^3\) The conscription controversy will be discussed in Chapter 6.

\(^4\) See letter to the editor from B.R. Wise, *SMH*, 25 November 1915: 'The prize of this war is Australia, whose conquest will be the first fruits of a German triumph.' F.E. Winchcombe told the Sydney Chamber of Commerce in his presidential address: 'the victory of Germany in this war would mean the enslavement of Australian citizens under the iron rule of the Prussian Kaiser.' *SMH*, 30 July 1915. See especially the letters written to his family by Dr J.B. Nash MLC who left Sydney on 24 November 1914 and served at Australian army hospitals in Egypt during 1915. He frequently referred to 'Teutonic' discipline and organisation and believed that the German leaders had spent years 'preparing for the gigantic struggle that is now with us'; see letters dated 8-13 September 1915; War Letters of Dr J.B. Nash, ML, uncat. MS 245.

\(^5\) Letter to the editor, *SMH*, 10 November 1915. See also Brooks' speech to the Commercial Travellers' Association of NSW: he said they needed 'an aggressive, militant, pro-British, anti-German patriotism to fill the minds of the people'. *SMH*, 26 July 1915. Brooks was a founding member of the Universal Service League.
Pro-war idealists from the middle classes were attentive to the unity of the nation partly because of their operational perceptions of the polity. Society, from the standpoint of the middle classes, functioned as an organic community in which people were associated in mutual dependence: status differences segregated people into classes, but their social interests were amalgamated. Accordingly the middle classes valued patriotism for its cohesive power. 'One thing the war should do, and has begun to do already: it has brought together all classes and sections of the community into one common band of nationality', declared Sir William McMillan in April 1915, 'rising above all social distinctions, and exhibiting in the highest degree, if not the brotherhood of man, the brotherhood of race.'

From the middle class perspective it was personal endeavour and competitiveness which shaped individual status

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1 See interview with Mrs H.E. Barff, DT, 14 April 1915. She was a Sydney University graduate, a member of the National Council of Women and married to the University warden. She saw the University Women's Settlement, which was located in the inner city of Sydney, as an organisation for 'the bringing together of different classes of women with mutual benefit to each, the great aim being to create a broad tolerance between people of different views'. See also Acting-Premier Fuller's attack on the Worker: 'I find that it contains a week after week appeals to all the baser sentiments of humanity. Its pages are honeycombed with appeals to class sentiment and class bias. It cuts the community into two sections....' SMH, 27 August 1917. See also AW, 30 August 1917, leader 'Mr Fuller Accuses the Worker'. A classic Australian middle class view of society is contained in the book by F.W. Eggleston, Reflections of an Australian Liberal, Melbourne, 1953. For example, see p.5: 'Another threat may come from classes of citizens who organise to secure their own interests at the expense of the whole.'

2 Address to the British Empire League, DT, 14 April 1915. McMillan also said: 'the joy I experienced when the cable flashed the news of our declaration, was the greatest emotion of my life.' See also views of Rev. Joseph Woodhouse, President of the Methodist Conference. Among the social problems which he saw existing before the war ('nationalism rampant, the old Book robbed of its unparalleled dignity, the growth of luxury'), he included 'the alienation of the working classes'. He concluded that the war had changed outlooks on these matters. DT, 21 October 1915. See also Eggleston, op.cit., p.256: 'Patriotism is the essential condition of a good community.'
differences. As the Catholic Dr J.B. Nash told his family:

While the human individual is constituted upon the present model there must be for him leaders in all departments of activities, and upon him who has the most capacity must the rank and file lean. Our friends the socialists, and like dreamers, forget the anatomical basis upon which all action is based, neglecting the evident fact, that God has given to each of us special capacity in some direction, while limiting the power of each in other directions, and he must become dominant, if he applies himself dilligently [sic], in that department of human energy....They also forget, or never knew, that there is but one factor that makes any nation at the head of ruling crowd [sic], and that is the quantity and quality of work which is the sum total of the energies put forth each moment by the units which make the whole. ¹

For Nash it was the 'duty' of each person 'to do his full share of the labour that awaits his energies'.² Those who did not he castigated as 'loafers' and 'slackers'.³ He declared his intolerance: 'I hate loafers in all departments of life.' Wanting to discipline such behaviour, he had advocated legislation 'where by every one will be placed in the class of work or trade, which he claims to be able to perform, this that he may be compelled to undertake for the good of all'.⁴ Middle class status was dependent on occupation and the income derived from it. During the war, the cause of militancy among the trade unions was simplified as 'IWW-ism': part of the doctrine of the Industrial Workers of the World, 'go slow', threatened to undermine a pillar of the middle class world. The fear that 'go slowism' was spreading among workmen was to shape Nationalist political attitudes to the labour movement during 1917.

Despite evidence of certain inequalities, middle class impressions of the comparative social integration of Australians added further reassurance to their perspective of

¹Letter from Dr J.B. Nash MLC to his family, 1-5 September 1915; War Letters of Dr J.B. Nash, ML, uncat. MS 245.
²Ibid., 18 September 1915.
³Ibid., see also 1-5 September 1915.
⁴Ibid., 16 July 1915.
the community. As many British emigrants had observed, the new society was much less closed in its social structure than the more complex, more solid social hierarchy in Britain. 'In Australia we have no aristocracy, and it should be easier to get rid of class distinctions', wrote the British-born Anglican, Rev. Arthur Brownfield, of Gladesville, 'and to lift the industrial masses out of the narrowing and soul-destroying grooves of strife and place them on the broad highway of mutual love and brotherhood.' Meliorism was fostered by experience of the democratic evolution of Australian politics, and by reliance on the mitigating influence of the industrial arbitration system. Holman himself had discovered that class was no barrier to energy and ability. Twenty-five years following his arrival in Australia as an artisan of seventeen, he became the Labor Premier of New South Wales.

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1 Letter to the editor, AW, 13 September 1917. Brownfield called himself a Christian Socialist who 'took an active part in the great Dock Strike in London'. See also paper read to the Workers' Educational Association on 7 June 1915 by F.W. Eggleston, 'The Effect of Industrial Legislation in Australia upon the Ideals and Aspirations of the Workers', in Meredith Atkinson, ed.; Trade Unionism in Australia, Sydney, n.d., p.78: 'Workers generally are content with their position....The class war may be a reality in England, America, or Europe, but in Australia it is a figment of the imagination.' See SMH, 8 June 1915. Eggleston was attacked in AW, 17 June 1915, leader: 'The Class War. Does it Exist in Australia?' The leader writer admitted: 'true, the conditions accruing from the capitalistic system may not be so bad here or elsewhere....'

2 See Eggleston, 'The Effect of Industrial Legislation', op. cit., pp.79-80: 'I think industrial legislation has worked an appreciable redistribution of the produce of labour in favour of the worker.' See also pp.81-2.

3 Evatt, Labour Leader, op.cit., p.6. Holman's personal experience was reflected in his political philosophy. He told the 1915 PLL Conference that his government would continue its 'programme of uplifting the masses'. DT, 5 April 1915. See also Holman's views on education as an agency of social change, DT, 9 April 1915. See also Atkinson, op.cit., p.113: The Workers' Educational Association 'makes all its workers social and educational missionaries, who preach that knowledge is the servant of life'. What sociologists call 'social mobility' is evident in some of the titles of memoirs or biographies of labour men, such as G.F. Pearce's From Carpenter to Cabinet, London, 1951, and T.H. Smee's From Stone Cutter to Premier and Minister of Education, Adelaide, n.d. The last is subtitled: 'The Story of the Life of Tom Price, a Welsh Boy Who Became an Australian Statesman.'
Both status and social perceptions fostered an assumption among middle class people that the war tended to equalise everybody. Yet middle class advocates who urged greater self-denial half-sensed the economic pinch on many people if their pleading for self-restraint were obeyed, for they constantly invoked the obligation of sacrifice: 'This war is a time for strenuous effort, for self-sacrifice, for generosity in giving, for moderation in demanding', said Mr Justice Heydon in the Industrial Court, 'for a cheerful sharing in the labours and burdens of an enormous and, to us, unprecedented national effort.'

Exasperation grew during late 1915 and 1916 because people did not seem to be sufficiently self-sacrificing. 'I do not think this community has sobered quite enough yet', Sir William Cullen told the Sydney Central Methodist Mission in May 1916. 'There are extravagances, public and private; there are frivolities and plague spots, which this community has not yet set itself earnestly to obliterate.'

The alleged failure of men to join the colours after the intensive recruiting drives of 1915-16 nurtured the discontent. 'When the Empire demanded sacrifices we should be prepared to obey', asserted H.C. Hoyle, Minister for Railways, 'and the man who stood by and held his liberty and his rights of citizenship at the expense of another man's blood was a cur of the worst type.'

During the war the word 'community' became even more of a symbol of ordered social relations. And the cohesion of the community, as implied in the war time rhetoric, was best obtained by adhering to the virtues of self-discipline: obedience, duty, loyalty, sacrifice, honour, responsibility. These values guided the competitive behaviour of the middle class world. 'Honor, strength, altruism, and reverence',

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1 SMH, 14 December 1915.
2 Ibid., 9 May 1916.
3 Ibid., 5 August 1916.
declared Mrs H.E. Barff, a member of the National Council of Women, 'must be our watchwords'. As middle class status had been achieved by or relied upon conduct of a self-disciplinary kind, the middle classes responded more readily to appeals evoked in these values. Moreover, behaviour which deviated both from their social assumptions and their war time expectations, was not understood except as a manifestation of 'disloyalty'.

Middle class people were foremost in displaying their 'militant patriotism' in New South Wales. They led recruiting and economy drives. They dominated most of the war time organizations: the patriotic funds, the early closing and the pro-conscription groups. Several of their causes impinged on the livelihood of many working class people. Restrictions on wages, the stigma assigned to war time strikes and the Universal Service League's rigorous programme for controlling and directing the labour force, although advanced as necessary for the war effort, helped to preserve the economic status quo. But they were made during a time of monetary inflation. Agitation on these matters helped to provoke class conflict.

Hatred of the enemy fostered cohesion: atrocity stories nurtured the hatred. Tales of German atrocities were doubted at the beginning of the war. The Herald reminded its readers that similar stories had been spread about British soldiers during the Boer War. 'The troops of the German nation were not likely to be any more brutal than those of other nations',

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1 DT, 14 April 1915. Professor D.A. Welsh referred to the character building of 'home life and the school life' which developed common habits of behaviour among conscripted and volunteer soldiers: 'a sense of humour; a realisation of the decencies of life, including those of the fighting life'; Welsh, The Great Opportunity, op.cit., p.27. See also the remark of Professor G.A. Wood: 'Let us fight, and let us triumph as British gentlemen and as Christians.' SMH, 25 May 1915.

2 See Appendices 1-9, pp.436-48; Chapters 2, 5 and 6.

3 'War Notes' column, SMH, 12 August 1914.
Holman declared. 'Reported outrages by German troops were probably as false as other stories that had been circulated.\(^1\) By early September 1914 reports of German atrocities were becoming longer, more varied and more frequent.\(^2\) In December 1914 Holman prevented the Legislative Assembly voting on David Storey's motion which condemned the German atrocities. He said that the evidence was hearsay. Yet repetition had fostered doubt. He believed that there was some truth in a 'large number of occurrences', but he urged members to wait until official information was available.\(^3\)

Official testimonies soon arrived. During April to July 1915 the New South Wales government received several British, French and Belgian reports testifying to the German military's barbaric behaviour. Sir Timothy Coghlan, the Agent-General, posted to Holman a 'circular relating to the sufferings of several hundred Belgian refugees, mostly children'. The press printed the details.\(^4\) Using another document received in June, Holman drafted a synopsis for the

\(^1\) SMH, DT, 24 August 1914. Dr J.B. Nash wrote to his family on 27 January 1915: 'When I think of...Schiller & other Germans that I have known, it has been hard to believe that men of their race would be guilty, even in times of war, of the savage & unmentionable crimes which have been so often charged against them. The statements of my friend Frank Fox who saw some of them, and of many others who had a similar opportunity, have been so definite and so frequent that...doubt cannot be thought or uttered.' J.B. Nash papers, ML, uncat. MS 245.

\(^2\) For example see SMH, 3 September 1914, which carried the following headlines: 'German Brutality. Further Evidence. Slaughter British Wounded.'; 'The Louvain Horror'; 'Jesuit Professors shot'; 'German Method. Army Organisations. Human Elements Eliminated.'

\(^3\) NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1914-15, Vol.56, p.1591, 2 December 1914. See also SMH, 15 September 1914: 'I feel no doubt that there is a residuum of fact in these horrifying stories.'

\(^4\) SMH, 2 April 1915: 'Belgian Horrors. Agent-General's Report.' See also DT, 21 April 1915: 'Belgian Atrocities. What the German Soldiers Did.'
press. The evidence, said the Herald, 'shows that British prisoners, with a few notable exceptions, have been treated with studied cruelty'. Quoting the words of Sir Edward Grey, who drew on a report of a Major C.B. Vandeleur, who in turn had been told 'on the authority' of a French priest, the paper said:

The German soldiers kick the British prisoners in the stomach, and break their guns over their backs; they force them to sleep in marshy places, so that many are now consumptive. The British are almost starved, and such have been their tortures that thirty of them asked to be shot.

The Report of the Committee on Alleged German outrages, commonly called the Bryce Report after its chairman, Viscount Bryce, like several other official allied atrocity documents, was reprinted in New South Wales by the Government Printer. Authorities in Britain were keen to have it read in Australia. 'I should suppose that the Government...have arranged for there being a proper supply there', Bryce told J.C. Watson before his return to Sydney. He added: 'but if not, perhaps you will kindly let me know'. R. Muirhead Collins, secretary of the Australian High Commission, who thought it 'an essentially important report', despatched over one hundred

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1 The document, entitled Correspondence Between His Majesty's Government and the United States Ambassador... on the question of the treatment of prisoners of war, was despatched by the Agent-General. See letter from Coghlan to Holman, 23 April 1915, NSWPDC Box 7/4701, file 15/3557. A copy is bound in NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.2, pp.9-82.

2 SMH, 25 June 1915.

3 Ibid. For contrary impressions, see letters in the same document from the American Consul-General in Berlin, 4 November 1914, and the Consul in Leipzig, 16 November 1914, published in Correspondence..., op.cit., NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.2, pp.24-5, 31.

4 The report was ordered to be printed on 22 July 1915, see NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.2, pp.419-49. For the Appendix to the Bryce Report see pp.451-638.

5 Letter from [Viscount] Bryce to J.C. Watson, 2 June 1915, J.C. Watson papers, NL, MS 451/1/124.
copies for the federal politicians. In New South Wales copies were distributed to bodies active in recruiting: local recruiting associations, local government councils and politicians.

The Bryce Report, which detailed German atrocities committed in certain Belgian localities, concluded that: 'Murder, lust and pillage prevailed over many parts of Belgium on a scale unparalleled in any war between civilised nations during the last three centuries.' The seven man committee hoped that their disclosures would 'rouse the conscience of mankind'. It had the desired impact in New South Wales. 'No one need look beyond Lord Bryce's report' to justify the internment of every naturalised German and Austrian in Australia, Alderman A. McElhone told his colleagues on the Sydney City Council. 'A most impartial report. Lord Bryce's reputation is recognised in all nations', added Alderman R.D. Meagher, the Speaker in the Assembly. Sir William Cullen, speaking at what he called the first recruiting 'crusade' in New South Wales, declared: 'May Providence have mercy on that soul which is not stirred to indignation by that recent report of Lord Bryce on German atrocities.' Cabinet Minister J.D. Fitzgerald was similarly affected by the 'awful' report. 'If the Germans were deserving of any consideration, I would

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1R. Muirhead Collins to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 18 May 1915, Commonwealth Archives, file 15/4703, German Atrocities. The politicians received their copies on 7 July 1915.

2See letter to Secretary of Premiers' Department from Thomas Jones, Yalgogrin Recruiting Association, 20 September 1915, asking for copies of the 'Report on German Outrages': NSWPD, Box 7/4706, file 15/7849. See also Defence: (Particulars Respecting Assistance Rendered by the State Government...), item 5: '...literature printed by Government Printer and adequately distributed...', in NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.2, pp.999-1001.

3Bryce Report, op.cit., p.38.

4Ibid.

5SMH, 19 May 1915.

6Ibid., 2 August 1915.
'defend them,' he wrote to Holman. 'But they are cut throat pigs & always were in history & the world must get them down & out.'

Another atrocity testimony horrified Holman. At the request of President Poincaré a French Commission of Inquiry had considered the behaviour of German troops in France. A copy of their report arrived in New South Wales. It was translated and abridged, probably by Holman himself. Accomplished in the French language, he regularly received from his Agent-General copies of the dailies Le Temps and Le Matin and the weekly L'Illustration. The New South Wales version of the French report was entitled the Conduct of the German Army in France. 'The most horrifying facts are set forth with a cold severity', wrote the translator in his prefatory remarks, 'which is typical of the French nation at the present time.' He continued:

While some of the incidents narrated are of a character almost impossible of publication it is felt that the women of our State should be acquainted with them in order that they may fully realise the nature of the cause in which the men of Australia are called upon to fight.

Pillage, rape, incendiarism, and murder are common practices of our enemies. The facts... also give evidence of an astonishing retrogression in German mentality since 1870. The many brutal scenes described in the Conduct rendered a stark image of the innocence, suffering and helplessness of the French civilians pitted against the depravity and

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1 Letter from J.D. Fitzgerald to W.A. Holman, 8 September 1915; J.D. Fitzgerald papers, Dixon Library, MSQ 254/449-452. Fitzgerald's wife was of French birth. For biographical details see SMH, 23 April 1915. He became Vice-President of the Legislative Council on 27 April 1915.

2 Cable correspondence, W.A. Holman and Agent-General, 2 September, 21 October, 29 December 1914, 19, 25 February 1915, NSWPD, Box 7/4699, file 15/1967. A translation of 'Quatre mois de guerre' from Le Temps of 6 December 1914 was sent from the Premier's Office on 29 January 1915 to T.W. Heney, the editor of the Herald. See NSWPD, Box 7/4702, file 15/4681.

mercilessness of the German military. For example:

At Saint-Denis-les-Rebais, on 7th September, a Uhlan forced a woman, X -, to undress herself while he threatened her with his gun; then he threw her on a bed and violated her, while the mother-in-law of the victim...strove to prevent her grandson, aged 8 years, from seeing this horrible sight.¹

Like the Bryce Report, the Conduct was widely circulated. 'The Premier is of opinion that the dreadful doings of the Germans, as disclosed by impartial inquiries of an official tribunal of such distinguished personnel', wrote E.B. Harkness, the Secretary of the Premier's Department, 'should be made known far and wide in New South Wales to stimulate recruiting'.²

Holman's fascinated horror at the sexual brutality coloured his recruiting propaganda. In a circular distributed during August 1915 he concluded:

Remember, if German troops set foot on British soil, mothers, wives, daughters, sisters will be subjected to all the horrors of outrage and violation which have befallen the women of Belgium and Northern France.³

A spate of war-inspired literature showed that hatred was alive. The writers, many of them amateurs, were probably mostly from the literary-conscious middle classes, who formed the larger portion of the book-buying public. The Bulletin ploughed through many of their works on its Red Page, spurning much of it as trash. It ridiculed a set of poems called Memories of the Great War, which included 'The Death of Lord Kitchener', 'The Lusitania' and 'The Death of Miss Cavell', declaring: 'Surely these events did not happen merely to give Violet B. Cramer an excuse for the production of banal and inconspicuous verse?'⁴ Books reviewed in the months July to

¹Ibid., p.7.


³Copy in NSWPDC, Box 7/4705, file 15/6856.

⁴Bulletin, Red Page, 17 August 1916. See also Red Page, 12 August 1915, for a review of Dorothy Frances McCrae's The Clear Call: '...the booklet is too reminiscent of the hurried output of the Australia Day poets.'
October 1915 included The German Peril written by Dr J. Mildred Creed, a New South Wales Legislative Councillor; Germany v. Australia, the story of the capture of German New Guinea by a Sydney Morning Herald journalist, F.S. Burnell; and a locally written detective story by W. Gordon Henderson purporting to provide 'some idea of the system on which the Kaiser's spies work'. This was called Foiled: The Enemy in Our Midst. Overseas publications reviewed were Ford Madox Hueffer's When Blood is Their Argument, an 'elaborate analysis of Prussian culture'; war correspondent Phillip Gibbs' The Soul of War, which was hailed as 'the finest book upon the war' to that date;¹ and a new one-shilling edition of Pan-Germanism written by Roland Usher. 'Pregnant women unfailingly receive the bayonet thrust in the womb', said the Bulletin quoting from Belgium's Agony by Emile Verhaeren and Maurice Maeterlinck.²

Atrocity tales had divided effects: there were the sceptics and there were the believers. A Sydney man, Charles Brooks, discovered disbelief when he arrived home late in 1914. 'I was told that German cruelty was greatly exaggerated, and that probably a single instance had been multiplied a thousandfold,' he said. 'Then I understood how it was that every tram was filled with crowds of people off to enjoy themselves at the races or in the surf.' He hoped that knowledge of his experiences in London would bring home to Australians the need to wage war against the Germans.

'I am not speaking from hearsay', he asserted:

I have seen with my own eyes in St Thomas's Hospital a little Belgian girl...with both hands cut off at the wrists. I have stood outside Waterloo Station, and witnessed the victims of German mutilation carried from the train, and heard their pitiful cries and groans. I have seen literally hundreds of men, women and children, whose right forefingers have been hacked off by

¹For an example of Gibbs' war reporting, see Chapter 3, page 102, note 2.

²These examples came from the Bulletin, 8, 22 July 1915, 5, 26 August 1915, 9, 16 September 1915 and 14 October 1915.
the Germans, and heard them tell in their broken English of what the Germans had done. It was heartbreaking to listen to them.\footnote{SMH, 7 January 1915. As the battles in Belgium spread over many miles, engulfing towns and villages, civilians inadvertently were caught in the fighting. Fragments from exploding shells fired during artillery bombardments inflicted ghastly wounds. It could be easily construed that these mutilations were the result of German savagery. For illustrations of soldiers' injuries, see Butler, *Australian Army Medical Services*, Vol.3, op.cit., facing pp.320-1.}

Isolated acts of war, like the sinking of the passenger liner *Lusitania* or the shooting of Nurse Edith Cavell, probably had a far wider impact than the shock disclosures of the Brooks kind. But the readers of official reports of atrocities, who were also the leading recruiters for the army, readily imagined the worst of their enemies. The German became the Hun. The German social system had produced a soldier who 'was at best an automatic fighting machine', asserted C.G. Wade, 'whose character was devoid of those enlightening and ennobling traits which characterised the patriotic fervour of the British volunteer'.\footnote{SMH, 30 July 1915.} In August 1914 the Great War had been partly perceived as a war between different 'civilizations', in the sense of a power struggle between great and rival nations.\footnote{See views of Sir Gerald Strickland, *DT*, 6 August 1914; editorial in *DT*, 15 August 1914; C.G. Wade at the Millions Club, *SMH*, 7 August 1914; W.A. Holman at Albury, *DT*, 24 August 1914. Books about expansionist Germany were advertised: Prince von Bülow, *Imperial Germany*; R.G. Usher, *Pan-Germanism*; F. von Bernhardi, *Germany and the Next War*. See advertisement in *DT*, 15 August 1914. G.V. Portus comments that in the early days of the war academics at Adelaide University 'endeavoured to supply a background to the conflict almost entirely in terms of German ambition and ruthlessness'. Portus, *Happy Highways*, op.cit., pp.161-2.} The belief that the Germans had systematically perpetrated 'atrocities' transformed these earlier perceptions. The struggle became a war between peoples holding conflicting values. 'This war involved the existence of civilisations itself', J.D. Fitzgerald told the Fort Street High School children on Empire Day, 1915. 'On one side they had aggression and brutality, and on the other
resistance in the cause of honour and freedom and civilised methods.'

Holman hoped that at the end of the war the Allies, 'in the interests of civilisation', would put members of the German General Staff and the German Ministry, on trial for murder. 'If I live to see that day,' he said, 'I shall feel that I have belonged to a nation and a race that deserves well of humanity, and has justified its existence in the long and universal history of mankind.'

Atrocities sharpened horror; they also intensified an impatience of people who did not seem to 'understand' the exigencies of the times. After ten months of war complained Dr Richard Arthur, the community had 'lost the sense of its unspeakable gravity'.

In July 1915 an Anglican churchman advocated conscription which, he said, would give men who should have enlisted 'a good patriotic kick'.

R. Scott-West, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly of New South Wales, agreed: 'The young men have failed in time of need. Does that not point to degeneracy?' Sir Joseph Carruthers, like Scott-West a member of the Universal Service League, was also exasperated. 'I have no hesitation in saying that the bulk of the people do not understand the war, and what it really is and means', he declared in November 1915. To 'stir the blood' and boost the number of enlistments he wished to send a pamphlet to every 'man, woman and child' over fourteen. In it he wanted to describe German-perpetrated atrocities and depict

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1 *SMH*, 25 May 1915. See also Rev. Professor MacIntyre's address on 'Nationality and Empire' given to the Ulster Association of NSW: 'the Briton is a missionary of civilisation to the world, where the German is a drill-sergeant'. Ibid., 24 May 1916.

2 Ibid., 26 July 1915.

3 Letter to the editor, *SMH*, 22 May 1915.


5 *DT*, 21 October 1915.
'the German and his fellow-Huns as they really are'. The Acting-Prime Minister, Senator Pearce, half-wished for a more drastic stimulant. Australians had largely been 'spectators' of the 'horrors' of the Great War he told the members of the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales in April 1916. If the enemy warships Gneisenau and Scharnhorst, had 'landed a few shells upon some of our ports', he said, 'the people of Australia would have taken a very much more real interest in the war'. The members applauded.

A German submarine torpedoed the Lusitania on 7 May 1915. The Australian press denounced the 'colossal murder' the following day, a Saturday. Ashmead Bartlett's 'graphic story' about the Australians locked in combat with the Turks at Gallipoli took second place on the main news page of the Telegraph. The sinking was not only dramatic: it was convincing evidence. The 1,198 civilian deaths at sea readily confirmed the numberless allegations of 'atrocities' committed by anonymous members of the German army in unheard of European villages and towns.

The sinking was given wide publicity. Excoriations of the German 'crime' exploded the next day from the Sunday pulpits. At St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Scottish-born Rev. John Ferguson, who had been holidaying in Britain at the outbreak of war declared the event 'so unprecedentedly fiendish that one's soul is so moved' and 'words fail to express real

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1 Ibid., 29 November 1915. See also views of William Brooks, President of the Employers' Federation. He wanted 'an aggressive, militant, pro-British, anti-German patriotism to fill the minds of the people of Australia with the fact that they had to fight a brutal and unscrupulous foe'. He wanted 'to rouse the lust of blood in the young men in this country'. SMH, 26 July 1915. Brooks expressed the same sentiments in a letter to the editor, SMH, 10 November 1915.

2 SMH, 20 April 1916.

3 DT, 8 May 1915. The Lusitania sinking may have had a particular impact on Australians: many families undoubtedly had either family traditions or personal experience of the long sea voyage from Britain to Australia.

4 For Ferguson's account of the 'remarkable' unity at that time, see DT, 6 February 1915.
feeling'. 1 Professor T.W.E. David declared at a public meeting that the sinking of the Lusitania was 'the wickedest murder' that had 'ever stained' a civilised nation. 2 President Arthur Rickard of the Millions Club declared 'that no retribution could be too heavy' for the nation which sank the Lusitania. 3 At the Royal Exchange on Empire Day, Attorney General D.R. Hall, supported by P.E. Winchcombe MLA, moved That this meeting of Australian citizens expresses its abhorrence of the act of those of the German nation responsible for such outrages as the sinking of the Lusitania, and the use of poison gases on the battlefields. 4 J.C. Watson at lunch with the Empire Parliamentary Association in London declared: 'Australians regret the necessity for prosecuting the war, but it must be prosecuted to the last degree.' He continued: 'A suggestion has been made that we should appeal to Germany's better nature to bring the war to a conclusion, but the sinking of the Lusitania is the best answer to that suggestion.' 5 Ferguson, David, Rickard, Hall, Winchcombe and Watson subsequently became founding members of the Universal Service League.

The sinking prompted a spate of letters to newspaper editors. Not only did the writers condemn the German act, they also urged punitive measures within Australia. J.L. Marsden demanded that all unnaturalised Germans and Austrians be put in prison camps. 'The time for namby-pamby methods must cease so far as Australia is concerned', he said. 6

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1 DT, 10 May 1915. See also Holman's motion at the Premiers' Conference in May 1915: that the indignation 'at the sinking of the Lusitania should find immediate expression in increased participation in the war'; NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.1, p.406.

2 SMH, 22 May 1915.

3 Ibid., 14 May 1915.

4 Ibid., 25 May 1915. Gas was first used on the Western Front in April 1915.

5 Ibid., 13 May 1915. Watson was absent overseas from February to July. See DT, 18 February 1915; SMH, 31 July 1915.

6 Letter to the editor, DT, 12 May 1915. The Telegraph's editor reported the following day: 'We have received numerous other letters of the same character.' Ibid., 13 May 1915.
J. MacD. Bell who pictured the 'Germans' in the community as people 'who chuckle to themselves at the weak-kneed policy of the Government', urged the imprisonment of all 'Germans'.

On 19 May the Councillors at Manly unanimously agreed that all enemy subjects of military age should be interned. Copies of their resolution were to be sent to all local government councils in the state. Outraged timber merchants tried to prod more men into the army. The secretary of the Sawmill and Timberyard Employees' Union, A.E. John, reported that a notice had been posted at one yard which read: 'All single men who are physically fit to enlist will not be employed here after Friday night.' At the Co-operative Box Co. Ltd. the general manager, R. Hanson, put up a less objectionable poster:

To My Employees: The dreadful events of the last week have branded our foes as inhuman and barbarous. We can no longer treat them as honourable foes. The British nation is faced with the serious situation of wiping out of existence a nation whose ruthlessness knows no bounds....The call to the colours was never more insistent than today. The defenceless living women and children have to be protected from the foe. Liberty, the watchword of modern civilisation, enjoyed so well by British dominions, must be safe-guarded to the last. The manager will give every assistance and encouragement to single men to join the colours and thus do their duty to their country. In so far as his power lies their position will remain open for them on return.

Special police guards were placed outside the two German clubs in Sydney on 8 May. Five days later the premises were closed. In explanation the Inspector-General of Police, James Mitchell, said that following the news of the sinking of the

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1 Letter to the editor, DT, 14 May 1915. See also letter by R.N. Allworth, ibid. Alderman A. McElhone expressed a similar view to his colleagues on the Sydney City Council, SMH, 19 May 1915.

2 Ibid., 20 May 1915.

3 SMH, 13 May 1915. See also AW, 20 May 1915: 'Boss-Applied Conscription.'
The shock of combat at Gallipoli and the sinking of the *Lusitania* sharpened reactions to the war. Excited by both events men joined the colours at Victoria Barracks. On 10 May nearly three hundred men enlisted. 'They were mostly businessmen, accountants, railway and tramway men, post and telegraph men, motor men and motor mechanics,' said the enrolling officer, 'but all were of a fine solid stamp'.

A few days earlier he had remarked on the representativeness of the men enlisting. He had added:

> Not only are many professional men enlisting, but there is now a steady stream of those who state on their application forms that they are of independent means. Men of these classes set a fine example, because as a rule they are giving up a comfortable income and an easy life for a life and income exactly the opposite.

In the week 10 to 16 May almost 1,450 men enlisted. Well over 1,000 of these were judged fit for the army. The state enlistment figures for the first half of 1915 were as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Enlistments</th>
<th>Monthly Difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>3,969</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>4,108</td>
<td>+ 139</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>3,957</td>
<td>- 151</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>3,482</td>
<td>- 475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>5,654</td>
<td>+2,172</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>5,279</td>
<td>- 375</td>
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1 *SMH*, 14 May 1915. See *Bulletin*, 20 May 1915: 'A Holocaust and some Fools.' Unlike other organs, the *Bulletin* pointed out that it was common knowledge that ammunition and military supplies were being shipped from the United States. It suggested that possibly 'contraband' had been loaded on the vessel on the gamble that the Germans would not sink a large passenger liner. If this had been the case said the *Bulletin*, then 'the passengers should have been told so'. For a recent exploration of this view, see Colin Simpson, *Lusitania*, London, 1972.

2 *SMH*, 11 May 1915.

3 Ibid., 7 May 1915.

4 Ibid., 17 May 1915.
At the end of 1915 just over 90,000 men had enlisted from New South Wales.¹

The growing number of soldiers absorbed an increasing number of families into the war. As casualties mounted any obstruction to the war effort seemed a renunciation of the sacrifices of combat. In October J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, the Liberal MLA for Orange, whose son was wounded² at Gallipoli, attacked striking coal lumpers and textile workers. Angered that anyone — 'I do not care a continental what are his views' — could allow 'such an injustice and indignity upon the community', he wished to impose a penalty of death. 'The president of the union and those controlling its destinies, if they had their deserts', he raged, 'would stand with their backs against a wall with a platoon of musketry firing into them.'³ Australians were at war.

Belgian Day was held on 14 May in New South Wales. In Martin Place under banners inscribed 'Show Belgium you mean it!' was centred the main platform ringed at intervals with bunches of Australian and Belgian flags and festoons of electric lights. Treading on a giant Union Jack, ladies spent the day with long rakes, 'after the fashion of those employed by croupiers at Monte Carlo', separating tossed coins into piles of copper, silver and gold.⁴ Thirty-eight lots of £500 had been received for the Belgian Day fund by the honorary organiser Hugh Ward by 12 May. Twenty-two wealthy individuals gave £500 each.⁵ Around £100,000 was poured into the fund.⁶

¹Scott, op.cit., Appendix 3, p.871.

²His wounding was referred to by Alfred Edden Labor MLA for Kahibah, NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.60, 28 October 1915, p.3097.

³Ibid., p.3905. See also remarks by C.G. Wade, John Haynes, pp.3092-3, 3098-9; SMH, 29 October 1915.

⁴SMH, 14, 15 May 1915. For details of organisation see SMH, 2, 5 March 1915.

⁵For instance, Messrs Samuel, Anthony and Lebbeus Hordern donated £1,500 between them and Anthony Hordern and Sons Ltd gave a further £500. For details of the donors see SMH, 13 May 1915. Samuel Hordern was an original member of the Universal Service League.

⁶See Scott, op.cit., p.728. He gives the date of Belgian Day incorrectly as 15 May.
This success stimulated another venture. H.D. McIntosh, sports entrepreneur and vaudeville promoter, sensed that an 'Australian Day' on the 'same big lines' as the Belgian Day would be opportune. 'There is a great deal of sentiment and sympathy now felt for "Our Boys''', he wrote to Holman on 24 May, 'and it would be a big day to provide comforts etc. for the wounded, and would have, I feel sure, a marked effect on the public contributions'.

An Australia Day to raise Red Cross funds for sick and wounded servicemen was planned accordingly for 30 July, the day before the first recruiting campaign opened in New South Wales. Money must flow in, urged Hugh Ward. 'But it is not generosity that should move people; it is gratitude.' By mid-June Ward had organised a press campaign for Australia Day. He had enlisted the aid of several bodies with state-wide branches, including the Licensed Victuallers' Association (over 3,000 members) and local agricultural societies. The Commercial Travellers' Association had promised to use its members as 'advance men' who were 'to stir up local committees' in the country towns.

Schools were also thoroughly organised. The Department of Public Instruction published a booklet for its senior pupils called Australians in Action: The Story of Gallipoli. The story was taken from the Gallipoli cables of E. Ashmead Bartlett and C.E.W. Bean. The Catholic Federation resolved to make similar efforts among their own schools. In a

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1 Letter from H.D. McIntosh to W.A. ('Will') Holman, 24 May 1915, NSW PDC, Box 7/4701, file 15/3757. See also A.W. Jose's despatch to the Times, 18 May 1915, entitled 'Australia's War', in A.W. Jose papers, NL, MS 266.

2 SMH, 9 June 1915. Hugh Ward resigned as honorary organiser of Australia Day so as not to jeopardise the organisation following a public fuss over his administration. See SMH, 17, 18 June 1915.

3 Ibid., 17 June 1915.

4 NSW Department of Public Instruction, Australians in Action: The Story of Gallipoli, Sydney, May 1915. See also review on the Red Page of the Bulletin, 8 July 1915, in which it was noted that the Department had 'done the right patriotic thing'. Arthur Griffith was the responsible Minister.
circular entitled Australia Day and the Catholic Schools, signed by James Meany, Catholic Schools Inspector, and P.S. Cleary, President of the Catholic Federation. The organisation declared:

The celebration of Australia Day, and the fostering of the national spirit is not new in the Catholic schools. It is years old.... Inaugurated by Cardinal Moran, Australian history, Australian literature, Australian nationality — in fact, everything Australian are its ideals. There is no cutting of painters. There is no flying a Cross without a Jack. But there is in this Australian movement the robust spirit of the youngster learning to walk alone, learning to be a man. What the Australian spirit is was shown to the world at Gallipoli....

The Federation's objective was to raise a shilling for each child on the school roll. The first wounded men from Gallipoli arrived at the Central Railway Station on 18 July. Thousands jammed the area as the special train from Melbourne steamed to a halt. The police and the military had difficulty holding back the crowds. 'The first of our braves have come home', said the Herald. On Australia Day the city streets were congested once more. Coins were tossed away. 'You don't have to ask at all — they throw it at you', remarked a lady collector. 'They've quite destroyed all my fine feathers.' As with all other patriotic fund raising committees, middle class people

1Cleary was sub-editor of the Catholic Press.

2A copy of the circular can be found in NSWPDC, Box 7/4703, file 15/5030. The Federation advised that Catholic schools 'co-operate locally' in raising funds but that separate records of their efforts be kept. For further information on Catholic education, see S.G. Firth, 'Social Values in the N.S.W. Primary School 1880-1914', op.cit. Moran, Archbishop of Sydney in 1884, and made a Cardinal in 1885, died in 1911. His political impact on NSW is given sympathetic treatment by Patrick Ford in his book Cardinal Moran and the A.L.P., Melbourne 1966.

3SMH, 19 July 1915.

4Ibid., 31 July 1915.
threw their energies into the organisation. By 31 July over £339,000 had been counted. As cash arrived from the country the total rose to £550,000 at mid-August. But these collections could not be repeated. Percy Hunter, joint secretary of the Allies Day committee, reported to Holman in November 1915 that despite thorough canvassing, 'the result was disappointing compared with either Australia Day or the general Belgian movement'. Soldiers were paraded on Australia Day. As they marched past the Town Hall just after 12.30, the packed crowd took up the refrain from the band. It was playing 'Boys of the Old Brigade':

Ready and strong, marching along,
Like the Boys of the Old Brigade.

Among the crowds hobbled a handful of wounded soldiers. White bandages covered their khaki.

The cumulative summary of casualties for all Australia stood at nearly 1,500 on 13 May 1915. 'Just think of it', wrote Dr J.B. Nash from Cairo on 9 June, 'after nearly eight weeks of strenuous fighting on the peninsula, our men are on the small piece of ground that they took during the first twenty-four hours....Wounded continue to pour in here, and this is the periphery of the hospital zone.' On 21 July the number exceeded 12,000 and at 8 September over 17,000. The number of hurt and killed men saddened Nash: 'What a large

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1 See Appendix 4 for the membership of the Australia Day Committee. See also Appendices 1, 2, 3, 6 for the membership of the French-Australian League of Help, National Belgian Relief Fund, Relief Committee for War Victims in Poland, and the Soldiers' Club.

2 SMH, 31 July 1915, 17 August 1915.

3 Memorandum from Percy Hunter to W.A. Holman, 23 November 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4709, file 15/9716. He expected street collections to total £13-14,000 compared with £22,000 on Belgian Day. He observed that Belgian Day had 'everybody's whose souled and unanimous support' and had been held 'before any disputes had arisen to could the simple issue of giving'.

4 SMH, 31 July 1915.

5 Letter from Dr J.B. Nash to his family, 9 June 1915, War Letters of Dr J.B. Nash, ML, uncat. MS 245.
number of families that will affect.¹ Later he watched the soldiers defending their ground on the Gallipoli battlefield: 'Men from Manly, Mosman, Waverley, Paddington, Bondi, Sydney City, Balmain, Tamworth, Cooma, Bourke, Cowra, & many another town and hamlet in sunny New South Wales, keep vigils and uncomplainingly do their duty to their country & their King.'² By 3 November more than 22,000 casualties³ had been suffered by the Australian Imperial Force: this total exceeded the strength of the first contingent of 20,000 men offered to the Imperial Government just fifteen months before.

While the soldiers fought the Turks at Gallipoli, members of their family hounded the 'Germans' at home. Anxious people united to form Anti-German Leagues. The first groups appeared in the Waverley, Bondi and Paddington districts during August-September 1915.⁴ The self-proclaimed founders, who belonged to the Bondi Labor League, began the organisation because of 'a strong feeling' that the Germans 'were having the best of the deal, whilst loyal Australians had to fight and take all risks'.⁵ The Anti-German League was 'a people's movement, irrespective of party' they asserted.

There are many of us who have sons and others near and dear to us at the front....It cuts across our grain when we think of the brutalities of the Huns, and of the dangers from [sic] men at the front, from poison gases, as well as from shot, shell, and bullet, and then read of our Premier weeping on the shoulder of an ex-President of the German Club and

¹Ibid., 10-15 August 1915.
²Ibid., 20-26 October 1915. Nash, a Catholic, concluded: 'Your prayers should assail high heaven that God may deal leniently with their offences & grant to them the highest reward that the brave deserve.'
³Statistics taken from Official Casualty Lists as published in various Military Orders.
⁵Letter to the editor from Weller and Weekes, DT, 13 September 1915.
commiserating with him on the loss of a pane of glass out of his front window.¹

The Anti-German League adopted a platform in October 1915.² It desired 'to endorse Australia's pledge of "the last man and the last shilling" to aid Great Britain and her Allies'. But its main objectives were twofold: 'to safeguard the public interests from danger at the hands of the enemies in our midst and other people of doubtful loyalty or antecedents.' It advocated the imprisonment of 'all alien enemies: as well as of all other disloyal persons'. It asserted that naturalisation did not guarantee 'loyalty'.³

The league did not become a large organisation, as its branches and members were relatively few.⁴ It drew moderate-sized audiences to its evening meetings.⁵ Audiences, particularly at open air meetings, did not only contain sympathisers. Hecklers sometimes interrupted the speakers.⁶ We have no conclusive evidence of the social composition of the Anti-German Leagues, but judging from the location of the meetings, the speakers, their sentiments and the connections in a few instances with local Labor party branches, it seems that the organisation appealed greatest to people who felt themselves to be neither securely middle class nor assuredly

¹Ibid. See also SMH, 26 August 1915. The 'German' referred to had two sons in the Australian army.

²A brief report of a meeting of branch delegates for this purpose appears in SMH, 18 October 1915.

³A copy of the constitution of the Australian Anti-German League exists in NSW PDC, Box 7/4754, file B17/624. Sometimes newspapers referred to the organisation as the Imperial Anti-German League. A smaller body calling itself the Australian Anti-Alien League also existed. See letter to editor from its secretary H.C. Brierley F.C.P.A., in DT, 13 September 1915. See also report in SMH, 27 September 1915.

⁴For instance a branch was formed in Vaucluse in October 1915 and in Randwick in August 1916. See SMH, 7 October 1915, DT, 2 August 1916.

⁵See SMH, 26 November 1915: at the Mosman Town Hall 'the audience was by no means large'.

⁶See meetings at Glebe, SMH, 11 March 1916; and North Sydney, SMH, 3 June 1916.
working class. ¹ League meetings occurred only in certain localities: frequently at Glebe, Darlinghurst, Waverley, Bondi, Mosman and Manly, which were likely to contain such people. ² The agitation provided opportunities for minor public figures to vent their anxieties. 'While enemies were moving about on every hand', said Captain John Strachan JP to a meeting on Glebe Road, 'every British man, woman, and child in the community was in danger of life, honour, and property.' The government was protecting the Germans he continued, 'and bribery and corruption were stalking the land'. ³ Speaking to a gathering in Victoria Street, Darlinghurst, Mr T. Lutton argued that even if the cost for the internment of all Germans in Australia was high, 'the money would be well spent, as it would ensure a sense of security in the community'. ⁴ The local mayor frequently presided at league meetings. ⁵ Other aldermen often addressed the Anti-German Leagues, particularly

¹See R.S. Neale, Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1972. Neale has called this uneasy group 'the middling class'.

²Several of these suburbs were relatively new and still experiencing growth. For example see DT, 30 January 1915: the growth of Mosman and DT, 13 February 1915: North Sydney's Steady Progress. The home-ownership phenomenon was being assisted by firms such as Arthur Rickard and Co. Ltd.: see advertisement SMH, 12 April 1916: 'Working-Man's Opportunity. Cheap Land on Very Easy Terms, and HELP TO BUILD A HOME.' Manly residents were particularly active in war matters. The practice of handing white feathers to 'eligible' volunteers seems to have first begun in their district. See also letter to Holman from the town clerk of the Newcastle Municipal Council, 5 October 1915, stating that the President of the Manly Anti-German League had asked for assistance in their agitation to obtain the internment of 'Germans'; NSWPDC, Box 7/4707, file 15/8143.

³Meeting of the Glebe Anti-German League, SMH, 15 January 1916.

⁴Meeting of the Darlinghurst Anti-German League, SMH, 24 November 1915.

⁵For example, Mayors Meacle, Sautelle, Danks, Walker and Fenton presided over meetings in their respective municipalities of Paddington, Vaucluse, Waterloo, Mosman and Randwick. See SMH, 6 September, 7 October, 4, 26 November 1915; DT, 2 August 1916.
Arthur Keirle, Mayor of Manly and Alderman W.J. Walker of the Sydney City Council.¹

Sir Joseph Carruthers MLC, as patron, gave the Anti-German League some respectability. He justified his fanaticism from 'a sense of public duty'.² He urged his view to others. 'Public men must serve as Britishers', he asserted, 'and in serving us they must give no quarter to the Germans.'³ Democratic forms should be discarded: 'We ought to go down on our knees and pray [to] God to give us another Cromwell who will send our Parliaments and our petty politicians to the rightabout', he told the Mosman League, 'and with firm and resolute hand do the work before our Empire as it ought to be done.'⁴ He used his motor car on one occasion to hunt for 'treasonable placards' supposed to have been pasted to a bootmaker's shop window at Surry Hills.⁵

Several Liberal politicians aided Carruthers, as many of the Anti-German League's meetings occurred in their electorates. The chief agitators were David Storey, D. Levy, P.B. Colquhoun, John Haynes and J.C. L. Fitzpatrick, Legislative Assembly members for Randwick, Darlinghurst, Mosman, Willoughby and Orange respectively; W.H. Kelly MHR for Wentworth (Bondi, Waverley and Woollahra districts) and a former Senator, C.W. Oakes.⁶ Irish-born David Storey, who had

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³ Ibid., p.1814, 15 September 1915.

⁴ SMH, 26 November 1915. Alderman A.D. Walker chaired the meeting.


⁶ See DT, 3 September, 7, 18 October, 4 November 1915, 2 August 1916; SMH, 21 August, 6 September, 22, 26 November 1915, 8 January, 26 May 1916. Only one instance was discovered of a Labor politician addressing an Anti-German League meeting: J.P. Osborne, MLA for Paddington. See SMH, 6 September 1915.
two sons in the army, was a demonstrative patriot: early each morning, pyjama-clad, he hoisted the Union Jack up the flagpole planted in his front lawn.

Holman's steadfast refusal to dismiss all persons of enemy birth from the public service provided the Liberals with much of their ammunition. In the Assembly Liberals pestered Labor ministers for details on the private lives of individual 'Germans', demanded ministerial statements and presented petitions urging the dismissal of enemy aliens.

Anti-German agitation was disproportionate to the cause. A member of the Anti-German League claimed that 37,000 'Germans' lived in New South Wales: according to the 1911 census less than 8,000 persons, who had been born in either Germany or Austria-Hungary, lived in the state. Over half this number had dwelt in New South Wales for more than twenty years, while about five-eighths of them had taken out British citizenship. Investigations made during 1915 by public

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1 See Storey at a recruiting meeting SMH, 3 August 1915. See also SMH, 17 December 1915: Major David Storey returns home badly wounded.

2 See P.S. Cleary, Australia's Debt to Irish Nation Builders, Sydney, 1933, pp.160-1. A copy of Storey's motion condemning the German 'brutal atrocities', which Holman refused to allow the Legislative Assembly discuss on 2 December 1914, exists in NSWPDC, Box 7/4693.


5 Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, Vol.2, pp.140-1, 194-5. Less than half lived in the County of Cumberland which included Sydney. It is probable that a large number had also married Australians. See also Germans and Austrians within the Commonwealth... naturalised in NSW, in NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.1, p.189.
service heads and sometimes unofficially by busybodies in more lowly positions, revealed sixty-three persons of 'enemy birth or origin' out of a total of over 60,000 persons employed in the service. At the beginning of the war some 250 persons of German birth had been employed by the state. All those in casual employment or not naturalised were dismissed. Of the sixty-three remaining, most had sons or near relatives serving in the army.

The Bulletin, which bore no great love for Holman's government, castigated the anti-German cry as 'Liberal party tactics first and patriotism a very long way afterwards'. Arthur Griffith, who supported Holman's protective policy, thought that the Liberals were stigmatising the Labor party as 'pro-German'. He warned Holman in September 1915: 'I regret to say that all over the country I find a tremendously powerful sentiment, almost amounting to unanimity', in which people desired the dismissal of persons of enemy birth from the public service. Holman suffered from some of this 'powerful sentiment'. A newspaper in his electorate of Cootamundra regretted the 'number of malicious rumours'.

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3 Ibid., p.346.

4 For instance, see Bulletin, 10 September 1914: the political reputation of Holman's cabinet 'stinks to Heaven like a dead carcase'.

5 Bulletin, 23 September 1915. Not all Liberals were like Carruthers. See letter to the editor from A.A.C. Cocks, MLA for St Leonards, in which he urged that naturalised and long-settled Germans be treated with 'justice and fair play'. SMH, 14 May 1915.

6 Letter from Arthur Griffith to W.A. Holman, 7 September 1915, NSW PDC, Box 7/4709, file 15/9460.
circulating about the Premier, which alleged that his real name was 'Hoffman', that his sister had married Dr Schlink,\(^1\) and that his mother was a German who could not speak English properly.\(^2\) Holman subsequently won a libel case against the Cumberland Argus, which had referred to him as 'Herr Hollmann'.\(^3\)

In the period 16 August to 25 September he received thirty-two letters urging that the 'Germans' be sacked from the public service. The bulk of the mail came from local government councils.\(^4\) Against this unremitting agitation Holman stood firm. On 25 August he told the House that dangerous aliens had been 'steadily and quietly' removed to internment camps ever since the war had begun. Public servants of enemy birth who held positions of 'responsibility' he continued, had been taken from their normal jobs for the duration of the war. He begged members 'not to encourage the stupid hysteria' against defenceless persons of alien birth, for, he said, such outbursts of 'blind zeal' distracted the people from the recruiting drives which were then in progress.\(^5\) Griffith backed his leader. Because of the 'bitter national stress and struggle' he wrote to one over-zealous group, the government could easily 'earn cheap popularity' by harassing the unfortunates who happened 'through an accident of birth, to be of alien blood. 'There is', he continued, '...something very

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\(^1\) Schlink had been employed at the Liverpool military camp until he was forced to resign because of his surname.


\(^3\) SMH, 12 April 1916. See also Evatt, Labour Leader, op.cit., p.357.

\(^4\) NSWPDG, Box 7/4705, file 15/6851; Box 7/4707, file 15/8056. Twenty-nine letters were sent by councils, and three by unions: the Building Trades Federation, the Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union and the NSW Operative Plasterers' Association.

much more important than achieving popularity and that is to prevent injustice.'

The Willoughby by-election coincided with the growing animosity towards enemy aliens. It had been occasioned by the death of Sergeant E.R. Larkin at Gallipoli on 10 June. He had won the marginal north shore seat for Labor in 1913. Owing to the political truce no official Liberal candidate stood. Demagogue John Haynes, publisher and editor of a scurrilous weekly called the Newsletter, filled the waiting niche. Obsessed with internal security, he warned a crowd on a later occasion: 'Your next door neighbour may be a German spy who may be quietly working to place bombs in passenger steamers.' Holman faced rowdy audiences during the short campaign. At a meeting in Crow's Nest he could not speak 'for more than three minutes consecutively at any time'. A man asked: 'Do you think it a fair dinkum thing for men to volunteer for service when Germans are employed in the Public Service?' The crowd applauded. Haynes won the seat. He declared that the fight 'had been won by the people'. After the declaration of the poll he was 'carried shoulder high to the Crow's Nest Junction, where, on a lorry, under a Union Jack', he harangued his supporters.

On 3 November T.S. Crawford, MIA for Marrickville, moved in the parliamentary Labor party caucus that all 'enemy born employees' of the state be dismissed immediately. The caucus

1 Letter from Arthur Griffith to R. Broadhurst Hill, secretary of the Stanmore Baptist Brotherhood, 15 October 1915, copy in NSWPD, Box 7/4707, file 15/8365.
2 A copy of the Newsletter, exists in NSWPD, Box 7/4716, file A16/1876. Much of its contents boosted Haynes' activities.
3 Address to a recruiting meeting at Gore Hill, SMH, 18 January 1916.
4 SMH, 17 September 1915.
5 DT, SMH, 17 September 1915.
6 SMH, 27 September 1915.
7 Ibid. A second ballot was necessary, at which Haynes won by 831 votes. Larkin's majority at the second ballot in the general election of December 1913 had been 307 votes.
8 Caucus Minutes, 3 November 1915. A copy of the minutes exist in V. Molesworth papers, NL, uncat. MS 71, Box 1.
wrangled over the matter at two consecutive meetings. There were twenty-two speeches. Holman spoke twice.¹ No vote was taken. When his arguments failed, Holman forced the minority dissidents into line. He threatened to call a vote on the issue in the Assembly.² As such a move would undoubtedly put the Government at risk, the Labor rules dictated that a solid vote be taken: the caucus majority decided how the party vote was to be cast. If the threat was tested, then Labor men voting against the party line in the Assembly would be expelled and stigmatized as 'rats'. Thus by capitalising on deep-rooted solidarity sentiments within the Labor party, Holman deterred the minority from publicly assisting the anti-German movement.

Holman's threat should be seen in the context of the discord existing within the parliamentary party. Antagonisms resulted from the intricacies of personality conflicts, ideological disputes, quarrels over political priorities, and tensions arising from the power exercised by the Cabinet over caucus. Discontent within the labour movement, which was provoked by the alleged legislative and administrative lapses of Holman's government, further complicated matters.³ Absenteeism among Labor politicians partly reflected the uneasiness within the party.⁴ Holman in exasperation told the caucus on 17 November that he intended 'to improve the discipline' of the party. Absentees would be reported to the Political Labor League Executive which held the power to

¹Ibid., 3, 10 November 1915. Out of the forty-eight member caucus, twenty-three attended the debate on 3 November, and thirty-eight on 10 November.


³Some of the tensions in the labour movement will be explored in Chapter 7.

⁴See complaints made by G.A. Burgess, the party whip, and Holman, Caucus Minutes, 21, 28 July, 18 August 1915. See also Minutes, 8 December 1914: Holman spoke on the 'loyalty' that Cabinet expected from the rest of the parliamentary party.
refuse the party's electoral endorsement to any offending candidate.¹

The 'rational' temper of liberally-minded men like Holman and Griffith could not counter the 'irrational' emotions brewed by the impact of war. 'To brand a man who holds one particular view as a pro-German, anti-British or hostile to the Empire', said Holman in defence of his government's policy of employing people of German birth in the public service, 'is a most intolerant and unsatisfactory attitude for critics to adopt.'² The 'rational' calculus of this reformist group of politicians made them temperamentally ill-equipped to understand passionate war time behaviour. Moreover, they in their turn grew intolerant of people whom they alleged did not 'appreciate' the sacrifices needed within the British Empire to wage the Great War.³ Their attitudes led them to the logic of conscription, which they viewed as a rational policy for organising the military strength of the nation. In September 1915 both Holman and Griffith announced their membership of the Universal Service League.

The founding of the Anti-German League was a manifestation of war time collective anxieties. Other groups also emerged during 1915. They, too, demanded that restrictions be put on certain behaviour which they found disturbing. They distrusted the heterogeneity of their own society. Individuals were

¹Statistics on each member's performance, based on speaking time in the Legislative Assembly covering the period 23 December 1913 to 16 December 1915, were ordered by Holman on 29 November 1915. The results were circulated on 27 March 1916. See NSWPD, Box 7/4713, file A16/436. See also Holman's circular letter to all ministers, 30 November 1915, requesting a 'more expeditious and systematic discharge of the work of the Government'. He added that ministers must attend cabinet, caucus and Executive Council meetings: 'I intend to have this full measure of attendance.' NSWPD, Box 7/4710, file 15/9953.

²Holman's speech to the country newspaper proprietors' conference, SMH, 29 October 1915.

³See for instance, letter from W.A. Holman to Frank Bamfield, Mayor of Newtown, 30 August 1915, in which he refers to the 'general failure on the part of the population...to realise either the dimensions or the seriousness of the struggle'. NSWPD, Box 7/4705, file 15/6890.
angered by nonconformity. At a public meeting in Manly, Alderman Reid declared that 'socialist' agitators who spoke on the Domain should be stopped from making their claim that the war was being fought for the 'capitalists'. He urged that they be 'interned along with the Germans'.

William Anderson, formerly the Liberal MLA for Balmain, told the same crowd: 'If we are to win this war we should have to adopt similar methods to some of those used by the enemy.' Accordingly, he asserted, all the 'able-bodied men one could see walking about the streets' should be conscripted.

Bishop Long was equally intolerant. 'At such a time as this', he told a congregation one Sunday, 'those who are not for us are against us. To all practical purposes such persons are pro-Germans.'

Mr Justice Heydon, like J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, denounced the striking coal lumpers in October. Their hold up of the military transports made him 'doubt whether freedom is a right form of government, especially at war time'.

Intolerance seemed to be justified by the exigencies of the Great War. To win it, more soldiers were needed. But certain behaviour was believed to be hindering recruiting in New South Wales. Two movements reacted in different ways to the call for more troops and the demand for improvements in national 'efficiency'. These were the early closing and conscriptionist movements. Let us look at the first.

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1 SMH, 14 June 1915.  
2 Ibid.  
3 Ibid., 6 July 1915.  
4 Ibid., 29 October 1915; Heydon made these remarks in the Industrial Arbitration Court of NSW. He said that the strike was 'blacker far than anything we have ever had in industrial troubles'. 
CHAPTER 5

THE EARLY CLOSING CAMPAIGN AND THE RED PLAGUE SCARE

Two weeks before the Labor caucus battled over the issue of employing persons of German birth, it had entangled itself with a second public controversy: namely, whether to restrict the hours of sale for alcohol. The temperance movement and the liquor interests held equally strong and opposing convictions. The former alleged that alcohol hindered the war effort. In January 1915 James Marion, the secretary of the New South Wales Alliance for the Suppression of the Liquor Traffic, told a Sydney street meeting that he believed that at least 500 men had been discharged from the army in New South Wales because of their drunkenness. 'Drink', he asserted, 'was the Empire's greatest enemy, and the present time afforded a magnificent opportunity to fight against it.' Some accused them of opportunism. They were using the war, Holman complained, 'to sneak forward untrue and fallacious arguments in support of temperance legislation'. But, the reformers countered, alcohol was always evil, and the war merely showed the evil at its worst. Archdeacon F.B. Boyce, the English-born veteran president of the Alliance and first president of the British Empire League in New South Wales, embodied both reformist zeal and patriotism. 'The temperance question becomes more important than ever', he wrote on his return from Britain in April 1915: '...This is most assuredly a time for earnest action, for patriotism, and self-sacrifice.'

1 SMH, 20 January 1915.
3 Boyce, Fourscore Years, op.cit., pp.112-3. See also pp.114-8: Boyce pioneered the Empire Day movement in Australia.
4 Letter to the editor, DT, 12 April 1915. For his welcome home by the British Empire League, see DT, 14 April 1915.
Scottish-born professor of Physiology, Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart, was equally emphatic when he delivered his annual report of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital: 'Alcohol is a drug.' He continued: 'As the events of the day in connection with the great war prove, it is the most soul-destroying, body-destroying, nation-destroying substance ever known.'

As usual, the temperance forces and their enemies disagreed about the facts. They disputed as to whether drunkenness had significantly increased during the war and whether the prevalence of drunkenness was such as to justify legislative remedies. The temperance advocates had a propaganda advantage in that drunken soldiers in uniform caught the attention of the public. They asserted that as much of the drunkenness occurred in the evening, such behaviour would diminish if pubs were closed at an earlier hour. The controversy over war time drunkenness accordingly raged around which particular hour the pubs should shut: the normal hour of 11 p.m., or a range of alternatives, the most favoured of which were 6 and 9 o'clock.

At the South Australian referendum on closing hours on 27 March 1915, 56.3 per cent of the South Australians voting chose 6 o'clock as the closing hour for liquor bars. At its

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1 Ibid., 15 April 1915. Anderson Stuart along with several others at the meeting - Archbishop Wright, Rev. John Ferguson, Samuel Hordern, J.J. Cohen MLA and Dr Cecil Purser - subsequently joined the Universal Service League. Anderson Stuart founded the medical school at Sydney in 1882, and became chairman of the hospital board in 1901.


3 For results see South Aust. Statistical Register, 1915, p.26. Of the 178,283 votes cast, 34.4 per cent were for 11 p.m., 5.8 per cent for 9 p.m., and the remainder divided chiefly between 8 and 10 p.m.
meeting on 8 April, inspired by the South Australian results, the Alliance decided to embark on an 'aggressive movement' for a similar reform in their state. On 3 May with Boyce presiding, the Alliance held its inaugural meeting for early closing during war time. The Sydney Town Hall was packed to the doors. Archbishop Wright told the crowd that alcohol was the 'foe inside the gate'. A few days earlier Lloyd George's criticism of alcohol, which he alleged had incapacitated numerous munition workers, had been reported in the Australian press. 'Australia', said Wright, 'was vitally interested in the failure of some workmen in England to return to their work at the making of munitions.'

Economy and efficiency justified the actions of the early closers. The necessities of war declared Dr Richard Arthur, had removed the liquor debate from ethical arguments to the 'great' economic one. In mid-April King George pledged himself to abstain from alcohol during the war. A 'Follow the King' movement partly organised by Rev. R.B.S. Hammond, the treasurer of the Alliance, began immediately in New South Wales. Its objectives were 'to set an example of abstinence

1 DT, 10 April 1915. Churches were requested to observe Sunday 25 April as Alliance Sunday. Meetings were planned for early May. The South Australian referendum was the model of that held in NSW fourteen months later.

2 Ibid., 4 May 1915.

3 See DT, 30 April 1915: 'Drink Evil. An Empire Danger. Slackness of Workers....'

4 Ibid., 4 May 1915.

5 NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, Vol.58, session 1915-16, p.864, 27 July 1915. See also letter to the editor from Rev. R.B.S. Hammond of the NSW Alliance, DT, 23 February 1915, complaining of the 'hundreds of men' dismissed from the army for drunkenness: 'the cost to the country being very heavy, the loss of efficiency to the army very great.'

to our Australian soldiers' and 'to practise economy, so that the various patriotic funds' would be augmented. 1 This 'great patriotic movement for the defences of the Empire' as Archbishop Wright described it, 2 held its inaugural meeting in the Sydney Town Hall ten days after the Alliance began its public campaign for 6 o'clock closing. The Lord Mayor presided. Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart told the audience that he would forego his daily glass of wine at dinner while the war lasted: 'The efficiency of a nation was made up of the efficiency of its citizens.' 3

It is difficult to judge how much support that the Alliance attracted during the first six months of its campaign, but it seems at least to have rejuvenated its traditional adherents and to have attracted many new and determined ladies. On 17 August a petition two miles long was presented to parliament. That day the Assembly began its debate on the early closing question. The petitioners urged that liquor bars be shut at six. 4 A newly-founded group calling itself the Women's National Movement for Stopping the Sale of Intoxicants at 6 p.m., which was led by Mrs C.M. David, 5 helped to collect the signatures. The petition, acclaimed as the largest submitted to any Australian parliament, had been signed by 143,572 people. 6 Boyce alleged that 'thousands' of other people had supported similar petitions. 7

1 Ibid., 17 April 1915.
2 Ibid., 14 May 1915.
3 D.P., SMH, 14 May 1915. Other speakers besides Wright and Stuart were Liberal MLA's, A.A.C. Cocks and Dr Richard Arthur, Professor T.W.E. David, Rev. R.B.S. Hammond and P.C. Evans the P.L.L. secretary.
4 SMH, 17 August 1915; Bulletin, 26 August 1915.
5 She was married to the geologist, Professor T.W.E. David. After the liquor referendum victory the group called itself the Women's National Movement for Social Reform: one of its main concerns became the prevention of venereal diseases.
6 SMH, 17 August 1915.
7 Letter to the editor from F.B. Boyce, SMH, 31 August 1915.
We can compare these figures with the local option poll held concurrently with the 1913 general election, when 245,202 people voted for the removal (i.e. prohibition) and 44,453 for the reduction of liquor licenses within their respective electorates.\(^1\) If we assume a rough correlation of interest between the two blocs of local option opinion, on the ground that both groups wanted to apply restrictions to the sale of alcohol; and secondly, if we arbitrarily credit a further 146,000 signatures to all the early closing petitions of 1915\(^2\) so that there is a numerical similarity with the paired 1913 vote, then by around August-September 1915 the early closing campaigners probably had not stirred larger numbers to support their cause. Indeed there was entrenched opposition to any change in the drinking hours. Between 11 August and 15 September ninety-seven petitions countering those of the early closers were presented to parliament. The petitioners argued for no change in hotel trading hours on class grounds:

That whereas, in the interests of the great majority of people, law and custom exempt certain classes of traders from the early closing rule, such as restaurants, theatres, tea-shops, refreshment places, and hotels, it would be inconsistent with Democracy, and entirely a class measure, if these were closed at the only time when the great bulk of the working population

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\(^1\) For a summary of the local option poll see NSW *Statistical Register 1914-15*, p.538. For detailed statistics of each electorate see NSW *Parl. Papers*, session 1915-16, Vol.4, pp.105-41. The poll resulted in 380,707 people voting for no change in the number of existing licenses. Within each electorate prohibition could not take effect unless 30 per cent of electors voted, and a 60 per cent majority of the votes achieved. If prohibition was not carried, the votes for prohibition would be added to those for reduction of licenses. In 1913 nine electorates (eight held by non-Labour) voted for prohibition but did not obtain the requisite majority. After counting, fifteen electorates voted for reduction, and seventy-five for no change.

\(^2\) During the period March-November 1915 twenty-three petitions were lodged with parliament by church and temperance groups, the University and Electors of New South Wales.
of the State, and the general body of citizens, 1 are able to use them, viz., after working hours.

The battle of the petitions influenced the politicians. They chose a compromise. The early closing debate began on 17 August. It resumed on 7 September. In the early hours of 8 September a majority, voting on non-party lines, declared that because 'of the moral and social ills arising in the evening through the sale of intoxicating liquors', the liquor bars 'should be shut' at 9 o'clock. 2 The expression of opinion had been taken at the instigation of Thomas Brown, the Methodist Labor MLA for Lachlan. 3 He had been disturbed by the opinions as to the evils caused by alcohol which he had heard being given that day to the Select Committee investigating the prevalence of venereal diseases. 4 Dr L.P. Johnston, the Honorary Physician for skin diseases at

1 See NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.4, pp.143-57. This quotation formed part of the preamble which apparently was common to all ninety-seven petitions. See also remarks of Jabez Wright, MLA for Willyama, who criticised the 'wowsers' as persons who did not 'have the knowledge of the inner workings, the habits, and customs of the working-class'; NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, Vol.58, session 1915-16, p.858. Note that there were also several Labor politicians who wanted restrictions on sales of alcohol so as to 'improve' the working classes.

2 For the early closing debate, see NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, Vol.59, session 1915-16, pp.1121-40, 1592-1647, 17 August and 7 September 1915. The amendment for 6 p.m. closing moved by R.J. Stuart-Robertson, Labor MLA for Camperdown, was defeated 51 to 20; the amendment for 9 p.m. put by A.A.C. Cocks, Liberal MLA for St Leonards, passed 38 to 33. Cocks' amendment was finally put as the original motion and passed 44 to 26. In this last vote 12 Labor politicians voted for, 24 against.

3 Ibid., p.1121. Brown said that he wanted to obtain 'the feeling of the House'. As any change in the closing hour required an amendment of the Licensing Act, he said that the task of selecting a new closing time lay in the province of the Cabinet.

4 Brown did not base his argument for early closing on the evidence given to the Select Committee, but his fears are implicit in the wording of the motion. The Committee began work on 13 July. It heard evidence on 15, 20, 27 July, 11 and 17 August. Brown attended on 27 July and 17 August.
St Vincents and Sydney Hospitals, had given startling testimony. The Chairman, Dr Richard Arthur had asked him: 'Would you say that the consumption of alcohol and the infection from syphilis go hand in hand?' The witness replied: 'Undoubtedly. A man in ordinary times may be fairly moral and careful; but, as the result of taking a little too much alcohol, he may consort with a horrible prostitute, that he would not look at on an ordinary occasion. It is generally the low dirty class of women that have syphilis.' Arthur applied Johnston's words in the early closing debate. As a student of eugenics, Arthur claimed that 'the three poisons which make for physical degeneracy are alcohol, tuberculosis, and syphilis, and alcohol is regarded as the principal of the three'. He underlined his argument: 'We had evidence given to us today...that alcohol and syphilis went hand in hand - that whenever you got drunkenness, infection by the disease mentioned followed.' As we shall discover, Arthur's propagandist zeal became tangled with his Select Committee's function, which was the collection of facts. Eager to rid the community of the evils of alcohol and venereal diseases, he seized the opportunity to do both.

2 First Progress Report, op.cit., Q.803.
3 Ibid., A.803. See also Q. and A.804. P.B. Colquhoun, Liberal MLA for Mosman asked: 'A man is more subject to contagion when under the influence of drink?' Johnston replied: 'Yes, because it takes a longer while to perform the sexual act.'
5 The Select Committee on the Prevalence of Venereal Diseases had been instituted at the urging of Arthur; see NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.58, p.464, 7 July 1915. Arthur was born at Aldershot Camp in England in October 1865 where his father, Rev. David Arthur, had been chaplain. He was...
Other members were no doubt partly influenced in their vote by the growing involvement of Australians in the Great War. From 28 July to 10 August Parliament had been specially adjourned. The members, organised by the Premier, had launched the first campaign in New South Wales for more soldiers. English-born J.B. Mercer, Labor MLA for Rozelle and a prohibitionist, reminded his parliamentary colleagues of the discrepancy in their endeavours: 'The war list in New South Wales up to last Saturday shows there were 4,265 either killed or wounded for one year. In the same year 34,000 men and women were brought before the police courts because of drink.' When the early closing debate resumed, A.A.C. Cocks, Liberal MLA for St Leonards, said that moderate drinkers had joined forces with the temperance people. They would sooner curtail their own habits 'than continue to put temptation in the way of young men, more particularly at a time of excitement like the present, when so many of the community have enlisted under the King's colours', he asserted. 'There is no hon.[urable] member here to-night who does not regret to see the King's uniform dishonoured by soldiers going about drunk.'

The Alliance conceded that its agitation to reduce the hotel closing time by five hours faced defeat. After the Assembly had rejected 6 o'clock closing in favour of 9, the

Footnote continued from previous page:

educated at the universities of Edinburgh and St Andrews, and arrived in Australia in 1899. He married Jessie Bruce in 1890, whose father was also a clergyman. He became MLA for Middle Harbour in 1904, and was endorsed by the NSW Alliance and the Australian Protestant Defence Association. He was active in many causes, including immigration, eugenics, temperance and the construction of homes for returned soldiers. Details from Who's Who in Australia, 1922. Arthur may have been influenced in his youth by the agitation during the 1870s and early 1880s for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, which had been introduced in 1864 (amended 1866, 1869) to eradicate venereal diseases from naval stations and military camps such as Aldershot. See F.B. Smith, 'Ethics and Disease in the Later Nineteenth Century: the Contagious Diseases Acts', in Historical Studies, Vol.15, No.57, October 1971, pp.118-35.


2 Ibid., p.1621, 7 September 1915.
agitators sought to compromise. They offered to end their campaign if they could gain immediate legislation for 9 o'clock. 1 Boyce, as president of the Alliance, believed that the 'small concession of two hours' would at least mitigate the evils caused by alcohol. 'Nine o'clock closing of all bars would cut off every night the two most dangerous hours of the drink traffic', he wrote. 'Thousands of wives and mothers would bless the law.' 2

Holman was absent from the Assembly on both days when the early closing issue was debated. 3 Brown's general motion as put on 17 August had not suggested any particular closing hour: these amendments were made on 7 September. Holman arrived too late to determine the voting of his party. Although the Assembly's expression of opinion was politically embarrassing, he regarded the decision to alter the licensing laws as a Cabinet prerogative. On 23 August he had warned his ministers that they should not publicly give an opinion on the early closing issue until a Cabinet decision had been reached. 4 Influenced by the liquor trades, particularly the Licensed Victuallers, the majority of whom, as Holman later put it, 'were enrolled amongst our supporters', 5 the Cabinet

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1See Evatt, Labour Leader, op.cit., p.370. See also views of Thomas Brown: 'the temperance movement would have been prepared to accept 9 o'clock'; NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.60, p.3085, 28 October 1915.

2Letter to the editor, SMH, 2 October 1915.

3He was present for Question Time but not for the debate on 17 August. J.H. Cann was Acting-Premier during his absence on 7 September. Holman was present for Question Time the following day. C.C. Wade remarked that he was paired with the Premier who was 'absent from the state'; NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.59, p.1607, 7 September 1915.

4Premier's memorandum to all ministers, 23 August 1915, NSWPDc, Box 7/4705, file 15/6798.

decided to legislate for 10 o'clock closing.¹

The early closing issue was vented at a caucus meeting on 20 October. R.J. Stuart-Robertson, MLA for Camperdown and a persistent critic of 'Holmanism',² rebelled. He declared that he would not be bound by the Cabinet decision.³ He took his stand on the opinion expressed by the Political Labor League Conference the previous April. In a close vote, when many delegates were absent,⁴ the conference had recommended the 'desirability' that all pubs be closed at 6 p.m. But when the caucus voted on the question, the majority supported the Cabinet decision, thus binding the parliamentary party to that vote.⁵

The Liquor (Amendment) Bill for 10 o'clock closing was introduced in the Assembly on 27 October.⁶ Spectators crowded into the public galleries.⁷ If the bill was amended to any other hour Holman threatened, then 'the Government will simply not go on with it'.⁸ A Liberal politician interjected: 'Ten

¹Cabinet members included D.R. Hall, a temperance advocate, and J.D. Fitzgerald, a former editor of Fairplay, the organ of the Liquor Trades Defence Union of NSW. The Union had eleven affiliated organisations, which included brewers, wine and spirit merchants, cordial manufacturers, the United Licensed Victuallers' Association of NSW, master carriers, glass manufacturers, bottle merchants and hotel owners.

²See Stuart-Robertson's outburst, SMH, 13, 16 March 1915, and SMH, 6 December 1915. He moved a vote of no-confidence in Holman's leadership in caucus on 3 December 1915. He was a member of the 1915 Political Labor League Executive.

³Caucus Minutes, 20 October 1915.

⁴DT, 17 April 1915. The vote was 53 to 47 (= 100). See also DT, 9 April 1915: a censure motion was lost 73 to 68 (= 141).

⁵Caucus Minutes, 20 October 1915.

⁶For the debate, see NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.60, pp.2993-3020, 27-28 October 1915. It was also proposed that hotels open at 8 instead of 6 a.m.

⁷DT, 28 October 1915.

o'clock or nothing!' 'That is so', the Premier retorted.\(^1\)

Like the Anti-German agitation, he regarded the early closing ferment as another manifestation of irrational behaviour, of 'hysteria' about 'one of the minor problems' of the community\(^2\) and therefore not to be heeded: 'Stories about drunkenness among soldiers are enormously exaggerated.'\(^3\) He came to regret his intransigence. Nine o'clock closing would have gratified the agitators. 'This was one of the most serious tactical errors of which looking over the whole of my ministerial career - I can see that I have been guilty', he wrote afterwards.\(^4\)

The cabinet's repudiation of the majority, non-party opinion expressed by the Assembly enraged the early-closers. The action prompted immediate counter-organisation from the Women's National Movement. Mrs Curlewis, better known as the writer Ethel Turner, was elected convenor of the press committee.\(^5\) The chairwoman, Mrs David, whose son was at the front with the Cameron Highlanders and whose husband had just decided to enlist,\(^6\) swore that she would 'go to prison if the going would bring about the early closing of hotels'.\(^7\) In mid-December Dr Arthur warned the government of 'the extraordinary change in the public attitude' on the liquor question, 'such as there never was in Australia before'.\(^8\) He

\(^1\) Ibid.


\(^3\) Ibid., Vol.60, p.3082, 28 October 1915.

\(^4\) Holman's reminiscences, p.365.

\(^5\) DT, 30 October 1915.

\(^6\) Professor David helped to persuade the federal government to recruit a mining battalion. He visited Melbourne for this purpose, see DT, 20 October 1915. He was referred to as Major T.W.E. David in SMH, 10 November 1915. David told the Athletic Sports Rifle Club that his son was at the front, see SMH, 29 July 1915. See also M.R. David, Professor David: The Life of Sir Edgeworth David, London, 1937, p.210.

\(^7\) DT, 30 October 1915.

indicated that much of the 'new opinion' originated from women who formerly had been 'perfectly indifferent' to the issue. Many had joined the Women's National Movement. They were respectable women asserted Mrs David, not of the 'shrieking sisterhood variety and did not believe in window-smashing crusades'. She wrote: 'We are out for National Efficiency, and are not cranks or faddists...we have both teetotallers and moderate drinkers in our ranks.' Ethel Turner was one of the converts to early closing: 'We are at war, and it is not absolutely certain that we are going to win. A few months ago one would have been torn limb from limb for saying such a thing: but one is just permitted to say it just now.' She opposed 'the total prohibition of the soured temperance advocate', but feared that alcohol endangered the 'lion-hearted soldiers who are going out to defend us'. She wanted six o'clock closing to restrict accessibility to liquor. No longer 'one of the comfortable multitude' on this question, she declared herself 'a fanatic - a burning fanatic'.

Prohibitionists welcomed the new recruits. 'The women who have sacrificed and are sacrificing so much for the Empire', wrote Florence Reeve, 'are now in deadly earnest over this

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1 Ibid. see also SMH, 18 December 1915: the secretary of the NSW Alliance said that the Women's National Movement was 'composed almost entirely by women who have hitherto taken no part in temperance agitation'. See also DT, 8 July 1915: the two large deputations from the Alliance and the WNM who visited D.R. Hall to put the case for early closing contained mostly women. See also Boyce, Fourscore Years, op.cit., pp.159-60: 'we found that the women particularly feared the temptation of the open bars at night.'

2 SMH, 10 November 1915.

3 Letter to the editor, AW, 28 October 1915. Letters were sent to all clergy, Mayoresses of towns in New South Wales, and all Red Cross branches urging that they call local meetings and collect petitions for 6 o'clock closing.

4 Letter to the editor, SMH, 25 September 1915.

5 Ibid.
matter.¹ She objected being stigmatised as 'soured'. Temperance advocates 'are amongst the noblest and most self-sacrificing of our social reformers, and are the truest philanthropists and patriots', she declared. 'They have no self-interest to serve, and receive a great deal of unmerited abuse and ridicule.'²

Largely because of the zeal of energetic women like Turner and David, both British-born and wives of established professional men, early closing became a mainstream middle class issue, particularly during 1916.³ Traditionally the temperance cause had attracted people from the lower stratum of the middle classes.⁴ It had also drawn a relatively small group of salvationists from the labour movement; they formed their own war-time organisation, called the Workers' Anti-Liquor League. They similarly saw the control of alcohol as a moral issue. But it was also a means of class exploitation: alcohol helped to keep the working classes down. The publicans and brewers they said, were 'exploiters who batten and fatten on the honest toil of working men'.⁵ A member of the Burwood Labor League typically asserted that 'progress would be impossible unless the sale of drink was restricted'.⁶ But they encountered hostility among their own people. At an Anti-Liquor League meeting held at the Sydney

¹Letter to the editor, SMH, 28 September 1915.
²Ibid.
³See also DT, 17 April 1915: the Women's Liberal League agreed to support 'actively' the agitation for early closing.
⁴See Bollen, 'The Temperance Movement and the Liberal Party', op.cit., p.164: the movement was 'the outworking of a Protestant and predominantly middle and lower-middle class social conscience'. His claim is supported by the results of the 1913 local option poll. For example, the Liberal-held electorates of Ashfield, Burwood, Gordon, Petersham and Ryde voted for prohibition.
⁵Leaflet issued at 1916 PLL Conference, see SMH, 25 April 1915.
⁶1915 PLL Conference, DT, 17 April 1915. Another from the Ryde branch declared that 'workers were wasting their time and energy over drink'. H.R. Boote also thought that liquor suppressed the working classes. See leaders, AW, 27 April, 25 May 1916.
Trades Hall in November 1915, several men who were 'violently opposed' to early closing smashed a glass panel and 'did all in their power to create a disturbance'.¹ The coal lumpers and wharf labourers were angered when Senator Pearce, using the War Precautions regulations, temporarily closed the pubs at 6 p.m. following a soldiers' riot. 'We have to work in stuffy holds and contend with coal dust for as long as 20 hours at a stretch', declared one lumper, 'In fact, I have put in 28 hours with but short breaks for meals and smoke-ohs, and although I am not a drinking man I find that there is nothing better than a drop of beer to satisfy a man when on a long job.'²

The Legislative Councillors blocked the bill. Voting 13 to 9, the majority amended the hour of closing to 9 o'clock.³ Some, like F.E. Winchcombe, wanted bars shut at six. Several councillors disclosed their fears about the behaviour of young soldiers. 'They come from the camp, after all day being under a restriction to which Australians are unaccustomed', declared N.J. Buzacott

they meet their mates in the city, and they go from hotel to hotel and load themselves up with liquor; then they meet degraded women, and, as a consequence, the efficiency of the Australian force is sapped by that nameless disease which is growing up to a very great extent among them. If we allow these men to lose their reason by too freely imbibing liquor, they became the easy prey of these diseased immoral women....Syphilis stalks among these soldiers after they have given way to drunkenness, and many a good young fellow is ruined for life.'⁴

L.F. Heydon also accepted the excessive temptation theory. After several drinks 'if some woman of the streets comes up

¹AW, 25 November 1915. In the referendum of June 1916, dominantly working class city electorates like Belmore, Darling Harbour, King and Phillip voted two to one in favour of 9 o'clock closing against the state preference for 6 p.m.

²SMH, 25 February 1916.

³NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.62, pp.4536-7, 13 December 1915. The total membership of the Council was 54 at this time.

⁴Ibid., pp.4532-3.
and speaks to one of them, he has poisoned himself, and
dethroned his reason - a decent boy from a good home', he
said, 'whose mother thinks he is in good hands under the
control of the authorities....That poor fellow we have driven
to syphilis, and to ruin for life.'¹ Many of the soldiers
came from the country said Sir Joseph Carruthers, 'where they
never had such times in their lives. They are allowed to
throng to the heart of the city, with its attractions - its
gaudy beer saloons and women on the streets....Half the cause
of the red plague is drink, and the debauchery of our young
men.' He declared: 'I would sooner see my boys go down on the
field than I would see their moral fibre ruined by influences
which Parliament is making no real effort to check.'² On
15 December the councillors insisted on their amendment.³ That
day the Parliament adjourned until 29 February 1916. The bill
lapsed.

The issue came to a head at the first party contest
fought since the declaration of the political truce in August
1914. At the Parramatta by-election on 12 February the
Liberal Albert Bruntnell decisively beat the Labor candidate.⁴
The by-election was fought on the early closing issue:
Bruntnell was vice-president of the Alliance. Influenced by
the Parramatta results, which he regarded as a 'clear
indication of the existence of a large body of public feeling'
in favour of a change in the licensing hours, Holman
introduced a bill on 8 March to enable a referendum to be held

¹Ibid., p.4240, 2 December 1915.
²Ibid., p.4765, 15 December 1915. See also SMH, 8 December
1915, for a report of the speech given by James Ashton MLC:
"In view of the evil that existed it would not be a matter of
surprise if parents hesitated in the face of a risk which
might be quite as deadly as that in battle in allowing their
sons to enlist."
³Ibid., p.4824.
⁴See AW, 24 February 1916: 'The Writing on the Wall'. The
Liberal vote was 5,156 to Labor 4,073, a difference of 1,083.
In the 1913 general election with the same Labor candidate
the difference was 192 votes, viz. 5,010 to 4,818.
on the question.¹ On 10 June 60 per cent of the people voting chose 6 p.m. as the closing hour.² Even the temperance groups were surprised, and gratified, by the margin of their victory. To understand their success and their growing support in late 1915 and early 1916, we need to uncover the fears engendered about venereal diseases and the association of these anxieties with alcohol. The disquiet about both diseases and drink was nurtured by misgivings about the allegedly prevalent self-indulgent behaviour of the soldiers: many people in New South Wales had close family who had joined or were eligible to enlist in the army.

These anxieties were provoked initially by rumours from abroad. In January 1915 Major-General Bridges ordered C.E.W. Bean to report that a small proportion of the First Division would be returned to Australia for misbehaviour in Cairo.³ The report provoked indignation. Senator Pearce tried to soothe anxieties: 'There are wasters in every community and some find their way into the army.'⁴ Holman received an angry letter from Mima Redford of Killara, North Sydney. 'Australia is disgraced the same as it was in the South African war, by

² Calculated from results in NSW Parl. Papers, session 1916, Vol.1, pp.834-7. Of the 579,106 votes recorded, 3.6 per cent were for 8 p.m., 30.9 per cent for 9 p.m., the remainder divided between 7, 10 and 11 p.m.; 3.6 per cent of the votes were informal. The total number of voters enrolled were 1,071,916; thus 54.02 per cent of the electors voted. In the December 1913 general election 1,037,999 voters were enrolled; 684,352 electors (68.24 per cent of those enrolled) voted.
³ C.E.W. Bean, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18, Vol.1, The Story of Anzac, 9th ed., Sydney, 1939, p.129. About 300 soldiers were absent without leave and technically speaking were deserters. Bean emphasised that the vast majority of the troops were not causing mischief. See Argus, 20 January 1915: 'Australians in Egypt. A leaven of "Wasters". Weeding out Undesirables: A Candid Statement.' See also Argus, 21, 22, 25 January 1915, for letters criticising the soldiers' misbehaviour. See also SMH, 22 January 1915 for Defence Department statement on disciplinary rules, the most severe of which was discharge and return to Australia.
⁴ DT, 25 January 1915.
men who should receive imprisonment for life', she wrote. 'Why should they be free to scatter disease [sic] and living death maybe to hundreds of innocent trusting women and children [?]' Mary Gilmore demanded legislative action. She quoted the words of a nurse: 'Think where our soldiers are gone! Think of the dreadful diseases they will bring back!' Gilmore added: 'These diseases brought back will haunt our country as they haunt the dreadful East - from Suez to Japan.' Others soon shared their fears.

'It is stated that a number of men who are returning from Egypt are suffering from venereal disease [sic]', said Pearce in mid-February. He promised that if this were true, then the infected men would 'on no account be allowed at liberty in the Commonwealth until they are completely cured'.

In March the Worker quoted alarming statements from the Medical Journal of Australia. The journal reported that it had been warned by a Cairo source 'of the large number of cases and the virulence of the venereal diseases' there, and that 'special instructions' had been given by senior officers to every soldier. 'A member of the first contingent from Australia states that there were 200 of our soldiers under treatment for venereal disease at one time', continued the Worker, 'and he makes the astounding statement that 10 per cent of the whole force has been infected since leaving our shores.'

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1 Letter to W.A. Holman from Mima Redford, 24 January 1915, NSWPD, Box 7/4695, file 15/547. Presumably Redford was referring to venereal diseases, which are mistakenly referred to in the singular. The diseases, which have a common mode of transmission by sexual contact, are traditionally grouped together. They were once thought to be the same disease. The three main diseases, syphilis, gonorrhoea and chancroid, are clinically distinct; they are caused by different microorganisms, spirochetes, cocci and bacilli respectively. See R.S. Morton, Venereal Diseases, London, 1972 (second ed.), pp.17-19, 21, 23, 30.


3 Argus, 16 February 1915. See also AW, 11 March 1915: 'Soldiers and Syphilis'.

4 AW, 11 March 1915.

5 Ibid.
Soldiers in Egypt complained about the press exaggeration. 'This Australian mail raised hell here...We don't object to the facts Bean sent back, but they should not have been published in a controversial way', wrote Pte D.H. Souter of the 3rd Battalion (NSW). He defended the majority of his mates, saying that defaulting soldiers were being shipped home along with several who were physically unfit. 'Some of the latter were suffering from venereal disease, Cairo being a veritable hotbed of such,' he admitted. 'But when you reduce them to percentages...they will be found to be very low indeed.' Others similarly tried to put the record straight. James Gillan, a Presbyterian chaplain at Cairo, said that there were only a few 'black sheep'. He added: 'Moreover, Cairo presents many temptations, and in various respects vice is more open than in Christian cities, so some may have been led into evil before they are aware.' Another soldier from the 3rd Battalion wrote:

As far as we can gather from your own daily papers, from your own letters, and your own written opinions, you are growing more and more anxious that we, of the 1st A.I.F., are not bearing ourselves in a way to ensure that respect which you consider due to Australia's name....We are on the verge of being ashamed for you.

It is true that we have some - a large number by themselves, a very small proportion of us all - who, through lack of control and an excess of money, have discredited again and again themselves and their uniform in the bars and brothels of Cairo....

And you have no right to be their judges! How can you tell of their temptations? Have you ever been tied down under stern discipline for seven weeks on a troopship, worked and trained under that same restraint until your whole body revolts against it, and then given leave and

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1 Letter published in *Sun* (Sydney), 4 April 1915.
2 Ibid.
3 PT, 20 April 1915.
money and turned loose in a strange Eastern city - a very sink of infamy, of shame, and of bestiality? 1

The names of the first group of New South Wales soldiers sent back from Egypt were published in April. No explanations were given for their return, other than for either 'medical' or 'disciplinary' reasons: 107 men were put in the first category and twelve in the second. 2 The public could not discover how many men were actually infected by venereal diseases; they were left to guess. 3 Guesses bred anxiety.

'Is it a fact, as rumoured', asked Dr Arthur in July, 'that a number of returned soldiers suffering from venereal diseases have been discharged by the Federal Government and allowed to go into the general community...?' 4 At some time during the first half of 1915 the press was requested 'to avoid details likely to inspire unnecessary alarm or likely to give exaggerated ideas' about the prevalence of venereal diseases among Australian soldiers. 5 Public reports about Cairo ceased. But disquiet about venereal diseases persisted within

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1 Ibid., letter to the editor from No. 890, 3rd Battalion, Mena Camp, Cairo. See also two letters in DT, 24 April 1915. Dr H.J. Clayton, an officer in the Army Medical Corps and formerly Medical Superintendent of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital was equally critical of the 'bunkum from the Sydney papers' about the number of men suffering from venereal diseases. He added: 'Of course, there have been a good many cases here. You could hardly expect anything else in 30,000 men, camped near a big city like this, where disease is rife.'

2 Ibid., 21 April 1915.

3 The policy of returning to Australia every soldier who contracted one of the venereal diseases was stopped in October 1915; see Butler, Army Medical Services, Vol. 3, op. cit., p. 175, note.

4 NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol. 58, pp. 530-1, 14 July 1915. The Minister for Health replied that about 23 returned soldiers were being treated for syphilis, and about 20 of these were out-patients at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

5 See Chapter 3. No actual date can be discovered for this assertion. The evidence is circumstantial, for letters from Cairo containing statements as quoted above ceased to appear. Further, as the recruiting drives began about mid-1915, military authorities would have curbed news reports which prejudiced recruiting.
New South Wales. J.J. Morrish, Labor member for King, asked George Black, the Minister of Public Health, was he 'aware that a very serious rumour exists that a very great deal of venereal disease is prevalent at Liverpool camp?'¹

Morrish was a member of Dr Arthur's Select Committee on the Prevalence of Venereal Diseases. On 15 July the committee began its first hearings. Witnesses told it about the contagiousness and virulence of the two main venereal diseases, syphilis and gonorrhoea. Such information, when spread in propagandist form, nourished the fears that the diseases would contaminate the race. An infected person is 'a public nuisance and a public peril', asserted a respected doctor, Sir Charles Mackellar MLC.² 'When gonorrhoea begins, God only knows where it is going to end', said gynaecologist Dr Fourness Barrington.³ 'I am certain that thousands of women in Australia have been put out of action and prevented from becoming child-bearers because...they have had gonorrhoea,' said Frederick Flowers MLC. Such women, he continued, are 'denied the greatest privilege of a woman, that is of helping to increase the birth-rate. That is why gonorrhoea is much more serious than syphilis from the point of view of the State.'⁴ D.A. Welsh, professor of Pathology, said that discharges from syphilitic persons were 'most highly infective'.⁵ Ophthalmologist Dr J.C.W. Halliday reported that gonorrhoeal ophthalmia among infants was common.⁶ The surgeon at the Children's Hospital, Dr Charles Clubbe,


³Ibid., A.1536, 14 September 1915.

⁴Ibid., A.1748, 21 September 1915. See also A.1332, 31 August 1915: Dr Ralph Worrall regarded venereal diseases as more dangerous than tuberculosis or cancer.

⁵Ibid., A.382, see also A.370, 27 July 1915.

⁶Ibid., A.1788, 21 September 1915.
answered that he had seen a large number of children suffering from hereditary syphilis, and that about 500 cases of gonorrhoeal vaginitis in children were treated each year.¹

Much emphasis was put on the fact that 'innocents' - married women and children - also suffered in significant numbers from the diseases. These assertions were needed to overcome the prejudice, and in part political inertia, that the diseases were a just punishment for sinful behaviour.²

The Arthur committee, aided by the needs of war, garnered the individual experiences of twenty-one professional men who worked in the separate institutions of public health administration, the University medical school, the hospitals and private practice. For the first time a public stocktaking of the social impact of venereal diseases was held.³ The committee discovered a grim picture: irresolvable imperfections in medical science and inadequate medical resources, which culminated in the perpetuation of human misery. There was no certainty of diagnosis. 'A most competent man might examine a woman and not find anything to justify him in saying that she had venereal disease', declared the Director-General of Public Health; yet the woman may have been infected.⁴ The recently-discovered Wassermann diagnostic blood test which was used to detect syphilis he explained, was 'a long and tedious process' which demanded skilled hands for its application.⁵ Furthermore, as micro-biologist J.B. Cleland revealed, the

1 Ibid., A.1969, 1998, 2015, 30 September 1915. See also A.1266, 31 August 1915: Dr Worrall said that 80 per cent of still births were due to syphilis.

2 Ibid., Dr Bray, A.706-7, 716-7, 17 August 1915; Dr Molesworth, A.971, 19 August 1915; Dr Worrall, A.1241-5, 31 August 1915. See also A.2053: Sir Charles Mackellar MLC said on 4 November 1915 that his moves to deal with syphilis some thirty years earlier had been thwarted by prejudice.

3 In part this interest had its roots in the Australasian Medical Congresses of 1908, 1911 and 1914. At these triennial gatherings the professionals focussed their attention on syphilis: the deadlier of the diseases but less frequent in its incidence. This may have been a reflection of inadequate medical statistics. For a summary of the Congress decisions, see J.H.L. Cumpston, Venereal Disease in Australia, Melbourne, 1919, pp.5-8.

medical utility of the test was complicated by two factors. First, other diseases could also give positive reactions. Second, in cases of early primary syphilis, the tests did not show positive evidence of infection until an incubation period of five to six weeks had passed. Professor Welsh said that of the several postgraduate medical students that he had trained to perform the Wassermann test, most had 'gone away since the war'. Moreover, supplies of Salvarsan, a German-invented arsenical in the treatment of syphilis were hard to get. Dr G.W. Bray, head of the newly-established venereal clinic at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, told the committee that he used intramuscular injections of mercury compounds in place of the salvarsan. Syphilitics needed this treatment over a period of eighteen months he said. Dr C.E. Corlette stated that many of his syphilitic patients preferred to swallow mercury pills. 'The injection treatment is the best, but many patients will not submit to it,' he said, '...The treatment hurts. The patient cannot walk for a few days afterwards.'

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3 Salvarsan was the commercial name for a synthetic arsenical compound invented in 1909 by Paul Ehrlich, who shared the Nobel prize for medicine in 1908. At the outbreak of war the NSW Agent-General was refused stocks of salvarsan for the NSW government, as the supply was held for 'War Office requirements'; letter from T.A. Coghlan to Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 2 September 1914, Colonial Office Records, 418/128, folio 194. See also AW, 26 August 1915, 'Commercialising Syphilis', for allegations that profiteers had 'cornered' the drug: the pre-war price of 7/6 per tube had apparently risen to £2/10 and £3. These allegations were made a year later, see NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1916, Vol.65, pp.1335, 1600, 1671, 1953, 31 August, 12, 19, 20 September 1916.

4 Prevalence of Venereal Diseases, op.cit., A.680-8, 17 August 1915. Mercury had been used prior to the invention of salvarsan.

5 Ibid., A.935, 19 August 1915.
One of the most important fruits of the inquiry was the
glimmering of understanding of the differential social
significance of the venereal diseases. Of the two most
important, gonorrhoea emerged as relatively more serious than
syphilis from the public health point of view: it was both
harder to cure and had a much wider incidence. Medical
interest in Australia had hitherto focussed on the treatment
of syphilis: the most disfiguring and deadlier of the diseases
because it invaded all organs of the body. Poor statistics
helped to make this situation possible. Those which existed
Corlette dismissed as 'mere guesswork'. Nonetheless he had
to rely on assertion to make his point: 'I am sure it
[gonorrhoea] does more damage than syphilis and it is harder
to eradicate.'

Difficulties of diagnosis made treatment more perplexing;
as well as affecting statistical categories. The festering
sores on and around the genitals frequently resembled those of
the other venereal diseases. Bray cited the error of 'a man
called Wynne', a qualified medical practitioner who wrote
regularly on the subject of venereal diseases for the Sunday
edition of Truth. Wynne had diagnosed one of his male
patients as syphilitic. 'The man came to the hospital in a
terrible fright,' Bray recalled, 'but...he had only an
ordinary pimple on his penis.' Dr Worrall inadvertently

1 Ibid., A.900, 19 August 1915. See also Sir Charles Mackellar,
A.2055, 4 November 1915: 'We know nothing whatever about the
statistics of this disease in Australia.' See also Smith,
'Contagious Diseases Acts', op.cit., pp.130-1, for British
medical statistics and the unreliability of diagnoses in the
late nineteenth century.
2 Prevalence of Venereal Diseases, op.cit., A.937.
At the Australasian Medical Congress in
Auckland, February 1914, there was a quarrel as to whether
syphilis should be declared a compulsory notifiable disease:
public health officers apparently wanted notification for
statistical purposes; private practitioners opposed their
wishes; see views of Paton, A.89, 15 July 1915; Corlette,
A.887-8, 19 August 1915.

3 Ibid., A.739-40, 17 August 1915. The Dr Wynne whom Bray
refers to probably was the Dr E.T. Wynne who argued with two
unionists, Arthur Blakeley and Mrs Kate Dwyer, via several
letters to the editor. His main point was that the diseases
were not so easy to cure and that salvarsan was still
experimental. See AW, 13, 27 May, 3 June 1915. See also
Footnote continued on following page...
illustrated the medical problems generated by double infection. A male patient 'had some drink one evening, got in tow of a girl and acquired gonorrhoea. First of all he gave it to his wife'. Two months later, he said: 'I find now he has syphilis. So he was infected with both gonorrhoea and syphilis, all as the result of having three or four drinks one evening.'

Gonorrhoea, an infection of the generative and urinary organs, perplexed the doctors. The majority of women, unlike males in the early stages of gonococcal infection, displayed no noticeable symptoms. 'After a short time the gonococcus gets into all sorts of nooks and corners about the urethra, the urinary and genital passages, and it lurks in those places,' Professor Welsh told the committee '....In the case of a woman it passes into the uterus, into the [Fallopian] tubes, and towards the ovaries.' He concluded: 'the difficulty in curing the gonococcus is the difficulty of getting access to it.' As Dr Fourness Barrington put it, gonorrhoea in women is apt to be 'very chronic' and 'latent'. Welsh explained the method used to treat male gonococcal infections: 'you can only do that by injecting large quantities of cleansing fluid into the urethra. You baloon it by means of water under pressure.' Patients were

Footnote continued from previous page:
Morton, op.cit., p.21, who says: 'Historically the venereal diseases are proving one of the most difficult of all medico-social problems to unravel.' In 1793 syphilis was distinguished from gonorrhoea; in 1889 chancroid from syphilis; and following the use of penicillin in 1943, non-gonococcal forms of sexually transmitted diseases became recognized as separate clinical identities. The identification of the causative micro-organisms took place recently: 1879 gonorrhoea (Neisseria gonorrhoea), 1889 chancroid (haemophilus ducreyi), 1905 syphilis (treponema pallidum).

1 Prevalence of Venereal Diseases, op.cit., A.1239, 31 August 1915.
2Morton, op.cit., pp.55, 58.
4Ibid., A.1536, 14 September 1915.
5Ibid., A.419.
also injected with a gonococcal vaccine. Curing women of complicated gonorrhoeal infections was a harder task. 'Once the cervix of the uterus is affected it is a matter of months,' said Dr Bray, 'nine months as a rule.' He had experimented with substances which when placed in the vagina, would create a medium acid which was toxic to the gonococcus. Sour milk proved unsuccessful; but yeast was working. 'We swab the vagina with fresh yeast, which we get every morning from the brewery,' he told the committee. Much more serious from the viewpoint of public health was the reluctance of infected persons to seek professional medical advice. Many sufferers sought comfort from the touted remedies of quacks and chemists. Sandalwood oil and copaiba were popular ointments for treating gonorrhoea. Bray condemned these home remedies. Ultimately many sufferers arrived at his venereal clinic. He was asked if he had discovered how many of these people had tried to obtain relief from paramedical quarters. 'All of them,' he replied. 'Not even one person has seen a medical man. They have all been to herbalists, chemists or Chinese doctors.' But cheapness, convenience, ignorance, fear and the possibility of humiliation made it easier for sufferers to seek relief first from the wares of the local chemist. Moreover, the doctors as a group, judging from the opinions voiced at the inquiry, reflected the hostile community attitude to the diseases. Morals rather than medicine dominated their treatment of the venereally diseased. The manifestations of the relatively

1 Ibid.; for chemicals used in the treatment of gonorrhoea, see Dr Bray, A. 693-4, 17 August 1915.

2 Ibid., A. 755, 17 August 1915.

3 Ibid., A. 756-7.

4 A resinous aromatic juice from a South American shrub.


6 See DT, 25 August 1916. Captain Andrew Wadsworth, president of the Pharmaceutical Society, told the Arthur committee that his Society opposed advertisements by chemists claiming that they could cure 'urinary' and 'blood' diseases.
little-understood maladies, namely inflamed glands and suppured flesh, was also physically disgusting to many respectable doctors. Sometimes these attitudes were reinforced by middle class prejudice. Dr Corlette, for instance, regarded many of his venereally-infected patients rather like brutish outcasts. 'Many of these people are very ill-educated. They are endowed by nature with a very small amount of brains, and that is why, very often, they go down to the dregs of the community,' he asserted. 'You cannot depend on them for anything - they neither know nor care very much.'

In January 1915 the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital opened a public venereal clinic for the treatment of poorer people. The Labor Minister for Public Health at the time, Frederick Flowers, told the Labor conference in April, that 50 per cent of venereal infections were never treated and a further 35 per cent were treated by chemists or quacks. On the first night of the clinic he said, sixty-four people attended. Four nights later the room was crowded. In August Bray told Arthur's committee that the clinic was treating 1,300 venereal patients each week. But he had been ordered by the hospital authorities not to admit any new patients until the weekly rate had fallen to 500. The large number was not a problem he said, the difficulty was space: 'We have no place where the patients can sit, no where to put them.' In mid-September Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart gave the committee further statistics. Since the clinic had opened he said, 1,763 individual patients had been treated, making nearly 28,000 attendances in all. In the period 1 March to 30 June the

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1 Prevalence of Venereal Diseases, op.cit., A.902, 19 August 1915. The evidence about the incidence of the venereal diseases among social classes is unclear. However it seems probable that those attending the Royal Prince Alfred venereal clinic were chiefly from the working classes; see Bray, Q. and A.679, 17 August 1915. He also said 'Practically all our women are a respectable class of married women'; A.704. Dr Molesworth said that venereal diseases were 'not very common among the well-to-do class'; A.977, 19 August 1915.

2 DT, 15 April 1915.

clinic treated 1,009 patients: 208 were suffering from syphilis (19 females, 189 males) and 801 from gonorrhoea (159 females, 642 males). As chairman of the hospital board, he confirmed its restrictive policy. The large numbers were 'very disorderly' he asserted. 'We had simply to close the doors when we had enough in, and leave the others out.' 

Those deterred or unable to consult qualified medical men, it would seem, still needed salves sold over the counter to ease their irritations. 

Even more alarming, the select committee heard much to suggest that, because of the unprecedented war time circumstances, venereal diseases were likely to infect many more people. And soldiers were likely to be the greatest carriers of infection. Several witnesses declared that already soldiers were being infected in disturbing numbers. Dr E.H. Molesworth said that he had treated 'a good many men' who had come from the Liverpool military camp. Sergeant Denis Coates, who was in charge of the Liverpool police district, answered that he had heard 'talk' that there was a large amount of the diseases in the camp. 'I know there are about 200 men in the venereal compound, on an average,' he added. 'Four of them got out some little time ago,' he told the committee. 'We arrested them for stealing a keg of rum.' 

Dr Bray's evidence had been more disturbing. As the medical

1 Ibid., A.1620, 1623, 16 September 1915. 

2 The NSW branch of the British Medical Association at first opposed the free venereal clinics on the ground that those able to afford treatment from a private medical practitioner might use them. See AW, 18 February 1915, for BMA resolution. See DT, 16 February 1915 for BMA deputation to Flowers. For attacks on the doctors for their attitude to the clinics see AW, 25 February 1915, 'Night Clinics and the B.M.A.'; AW, 3 April 1915, 'To the Rescue'; AW, 9 September 1915, 'Commonsense and the Red Plague'.

3 Prevalence of Venereal Disease, op.cit., A.1003, 19 August 1915.

officer in charge of the compound, he did not know how many infected men he had under his care. He guessed there were about three hundred. 'I know the roll call is generally 100 short. The other night some men in the compound clipped the whole of the wire and 100 got out,' he admitted. 'There is only a big barbed-wire fence, and the men have been throwing blankets over it to enable them to get over. The guard is in sympathy with them.'¹ Three of the escapees had turned up at his venereal clinic at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. He questioned them. One confessed that he had been in Sydney for a week and declared that he was cured. 'He had had several women and many drinks,' said Bray, 'but I found on testing his urine, that it was full of pus.'² Moreover, soldiers endeavoured to conceal their infection: to be discovered with a venereal disease meant a total stoppage of pay until recovery.³ 'They resort to all kinds of schemes to try to avoid getting caught', declared Dr Herbert Schlink, who had been Bray's predecessor at the venereal compound. Snap medical inspections were enforced. Each soldier displayed his penis for scrutiny by the medical officer: the procedure was dubbed the 'short arm parade'.⁴

Dr Arthur, from the medical point of view, appreciated that large scale population movements endangered the uninfected areas, particularly the country, where venereal

¹Ibid., A.561, see also A.556-8, 11 August 1915.
²Ibid., A.563.
³See Butler, op.cit., pp.153-4. This policy, ordered on 1 February 1915, was not modified until 1 January 1918. 'The punishment was a fierce one indeed', wrote Butler, 'and was made the more severe by the provision that the pay allotted by the soldier to his family was also forfeit, and must be made up after his recovery before he could touch his own.' The British army did not stop pay for venereal infections, p.153 note. However, see Smith, 'Contagious Diseases Acts', op. cit., p.131: in the 1870s British soldiers' pay was docked if they were found to have venereal diseases; the soldiers dodged the medical parades and bought their own remedies from chemists.
⁴Prevalence of Venereal Diseases, op.cit., A.1387, 31 August 1915. The expression is still used in the army today (personal experience).
diseases had been 'practically unknown'.\textsuperscript{1} Bray had agreed that many of the infected soldiers were 'young fellows from the country districts'.\textsuperscript{2} Arthur feared that such inexperienced 'young lads between the ages of 18 and 23' would surrender to 'the temptations of the bar and the prostitute in the streets'.\textsuperscript{3} Thus he was ready to take his inquiry beyond acceptable medical conjecture into the questionable area of morality. As chairman of the select committee he dominated the inquiry. Continually he thrust leading questions at his witnesses, perhaps expecting them to echo his own beliefs as to the 'close connection' between alcohol and venereal diseases. 'Do you think if there were some limitation in regard to the consumption of alcoholic liquors there might be a diminution in the incidence of venereal diseases?' he asked Professor Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. 'I do,' responded the professor. 'I think that the consumption of alcohol stimulates the sexual appetite and lessens self-control, and both these tend to sexual indulgence.'\textsuperscript{4} Reactions were a confusion of medical concern and personal irritation. It is impossible to state


\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}, Q.2106, 4 November 1915.

\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}, Q. and A.1633, 16 September 1915. See also similar responses given by Professor D.A. Welsh, Q. and A.348, 27 July 1915; Dr L.P. Johnston, Q. and A.803, 17 August 1915; Dr C.E. Corlette, Q. and A.885, 917, 922-5, 19 August 1915; Dr Ralph Worrall, Q. and A.1238-40, 31 August 1915; Dr G.E. Rennie, Q. and A.1692, 16 September 1915; W.G. Conley, Q. and A.2103-4, 4 November 1915. Dr C.S. Willis tendered a leaflet on 10 November 1915, entitled \textit{Some Dangers a Soldier May Avoid}, which said: 'alcoholic intemperance loosens a man's power to self-control, and in a large proportion of cases venereal disease is contracted while a man is intoxicated. Therefore be temperate.'
which was the more disturbing: the rise in the incidence of venereal infection or the surge in promiscuous sexual behaviour. There were theories to help explain the latter phenomenon. 'It is a well-known fact that the feeling of virtue, the restraint and control on the part of a woman, gives way in times of great crisis', asserted Dr Worrall. 'The sentiment of gratitude to the soldiers will induce women to offer themselves to these men.' Alcohol, it was asserted, made soldiers behave almost mechanically: 'the effect of alcohol on a man's brain is to make him fall into the hands of a woman', declared Dr C.E. Corlette. 2

The association of alcohol and venereal diseases was fostered by a view that people should behave with strict habits of self-control. Both drunkenness and venereal infection accordingly were manifestations of poor self-discipline. Alcohol got the blame for both. The argument ran: that 'immorality' occurred most frequently in the evening hours, that drunkenness induced excessive immorality, and that immorality greatly increased the risk of infection from venereal diseases. Frequently, as in the liquor referendum campaign, the argument was telescoped: namely, that alcohol caused venereal diseases. The temperance agitators grabbed their opportunity.

Humanitarianism, professional concern and patriotic expediency could not conquer deep-rooted social taboos. The contemporary reaction to venereal diseases was inextricably tangled with attitudes to sexual behaviour: the increasing incidence of the diseases demonstrated that 'immorality' was growing. Thus, to those alarmed by venereal diseases, fundamentally the problem seemed to be one of somehow

1Ibid., A.1266, 31 August 1915. Frederick Flowers MLC alleged that the spread of the diseases was due to girls who live 'respectable lives' and would not use the recently established night clinics; and that 'the impression among young people is that it does not matter if you have promiscuous connection so long as it is not with a prostitute'; see Q. and A.1733, 1739, 21 September 1915. See also Cumpston, op.cit., p.35, who from the figures available, projected that 'at least half' of the venereal disease contracted by soldiers in Australia came from women who were not professional prostitutes.

2Prevalence of Venereal Diseases op.cit., A.923, 19 August 1915.
controlling sexual behaviour. In the army the reaction was brutal. Infected soldiers were punished. In the civilian world public discussion of human sexuality was repressed. During the years 1912 until his death in December 1916, a harmless eccentric, William James Chidley, was hounded by the authorities for his persistent advocacy of unorthodox views on sexual intercourse. He desired only greater joy for mankind. His public speeches provoked antagonism. He was frequently arrested and imprisoned for short periods in New South Wales asylums on the ground of lunacy. Private prudery became public morality. Moreover, the taboo also stifled public awareness of venereal diseases. Gynaecologist Dr Worrall had spent twenty-seven years in practice: on 31 August 1915 he answered that he had only seen venereal diseases mentioned in the press 'within the last year or two'.

1 At the Langwarrin venereal camp in Victoria a change from 'prison' to 'hospital' conditions had a striking effect on the improved behaviour of soldiers, see Butler, op.cit., pp.174-9, esp. p.177.

2 Bill Hornadge, Chidley's Answer to the Sex Problem, Dubbo, 1971. Hornadge's booklet contains section III of Chidley's writings: The Answer, or the World of Joy, an Essay in Philosophy; see pp.53-90. For contemporary criticisms of Chidley made by E.B. Harkness, a public service head, and J.H. Maiden, Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens, see pp.41-3. The latter wrote in January 1914: 'it is sometimes forgotten that, in order to maintain the social fabric, some curtailment of 'liberty' so-called is necessary.' He castigated Chidley for publicly using the words 'sexual intercourse'. Maiden was a foundation member of the Universal Service League.

3 Ibid., pp.29-40, 50-1. Many, including H.E. Boote and Professor Francis Anderson, defended Chidley on the ground of free speech: they alleged that he was being punished simply for advocating unfashionable ideas.

4 Prevalence of Venereal Diseases, op.cit., Q. and A.1285. See also Arthur's comment, NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.58, p.464, 7 July 1915: 'up to quite recently the question of venereal diseases was very severely tabooed by the general public.' For conspiratorial views of the suppression of information about the diseases, see Arthur Blakeley, letter to the editor, AW, 27 May 1915; W.S.F. Bottomley, The Red Plague, Sydney, 1919, p.2. See also AW, 3 December 1914, for the report that the Minister for Public Health was establishing a night clinic at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital to treat 'sexual diseases'; men and women patients were to go on separate nights for treatment.
Dr Arthur Palmer said that young men who came to be treated suffered mostly from gonorrhoea. 'They have talked about "clap" in a vague sort of way, without knowing what it was. Even the ordinary adult knows very little as to how serious a disease gonorrhoea is.' He added, 'Some people regard it as they would an attack of cold or influenza'.

A dilemma faced the agitators raising the alarm about the war time spread of the diseases. They wanted to dispel the prevailing ignorance about the sexual diseases; yet to institute preventive measures they needed to refer to hitherto unmentionable sexual matters. Private inhibitions triumphed. It was agreed that the younger generation should be warned and given some instruction on sex hygiene. But the majority view was that the information should be strictly limited. The influential Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart believed that not 'too much information' should be provided. 'If you give too much you awaken that which ought not to be awakened; you give knowledge which very often people are better without.' In short, he believed that ignorance about sexuality was a method of imposing self-control over one's own sexual behaviour: people should 'avoid thinking and talking about these things'.

The necessity for greater self-control was discussed again shortly after the first conscription campaign. The Workers' Educational Association and the Parents and Citizens' Association held a joint conference in Sydney from 23 to 25 November 1916. The theme of the conference became the title of the book, Teaching of Sex Hygiene, which contained the

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2 Ibid., A.1636, 1641, 16 September 1915.
3 AW, 5 October 1916. The programme as advertised was criticised by Jennie Scott Griffiths for its dominance by men: 'The committee has merely followed long established precedence [sic] that while women do the work [of sex education] men know how it should be done!' She was a member of the Feminist Club. The conference itself was attended by 171 delegates (94 men, 77 women) representing 42 organisations. The conference was probably instrumental in launching the teaching of sex education in NSW schools: the Director, Peter Board, and 22 male staff were delegates for the NSW Department of Education.
conference papers and the discussions following their delivery. Fears of venereal diseases had prompted the conference: 'It was plainly evident how strongly the public conscience had been moved by the revelations of an evil fostered by the conditions of a world-wide war', wrote Meredith Atkinson after the conference. 'Australia...was clearly ready for a positive advance in a domain treated hitherto with shameful neglect.' He added that the 'great task' was 'that of preparing the minds of the young and stiffening their moral fibre'. He concluded: 'There was general agreement with Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart in his plea that too much should not be attempted.' Dr Arthur also saw the urgency for greater self-discipline in sexual behaviour. But he trusted the altruism of men. In his paper, 'Teaching Control of the Sex Instinct', he asserted: 'If we train and strengthen the chivalry which is latent in every boy's heart,' then 'immorality, prostitution and venereal diseases will disappear to a great extent.' Professor Welsh also spoke. His lecture, half of it culled from the final report of the British Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases which had become available early in 1916, was called 'The Massacre of the Innocents'. He declared: 'Next to the war the campaign against venereal disease [sic] is the most important thing that could engage our attention.' The 'two great objects' to be accomplished, he said, were first 'an improvement of public morals', and second, 'an improvement of public health'. Thus the suppression of 'immoral' behaviour provided the impetus

1Workers' Educational Association of NSW, Teaching of Sex Hygiene, Sydney, 1917. Meredith Atkinson, who wrote the introduction, presumably edited the book.

2Ibid., p.vii, Introduction. Atkinson said that 'large audiences' attended the lectures.

3Ibid., pp.vii, ix.

4Ibid., p.142; Dr Richard Arthur, 'Teaching Control of the Sex Instinct', pp.137-43.

5Ibid., pp.1-13; D.A. Welsh, 'The Massacre of the Innocents'. Welsh named venereal diseases 'the Herod of the modern world'.

6Ibid., pp.2, 3.
for the mutually reinforcing early closing and Red Plague agitations.

In short, the technical evidence given to Arthur's committee revealed that the diseases were easy to transmit, hard to diagnose, and difficult to cure. It also showed what could happen if venereal diseases infected larger numbers of people. Given the limitations of medical knowledge and resources, attempts to control behaviour by restricting access to alcohol may have seemed the only way to enforce a mass preventative measure against the venereal diseases.¹ The beliefs associating alcohol and venereal diseases were summarised by a Commonwealth government committee of four men, who were investigating the causes of death and invalidity within Australia. Three of them were doctors, among them was Dr J.H.L. Cumpston, of the Commonwealth Quarantine Service. In their Report on Venereal Diseases, dated 24 May 1916, they wrote:

In a large proportion of cases, a man is led into danger by loss of self-restraint through taking alcohol. It is believed by many that resistance to infection is diminished by alcohol. Actual disease is lit up afresh by alcohol. Many of the most awful cases of syphilis of the nerve centres are partly conditioned by alcoholic excess.²

In 1919 Cumpston contradicted their first sentence. Anxious to prevent 'danger to the community, presented by the discharge of 55,000 or more soldiers who have suffered from venereal diseases',³ he wanted the facts: 'the hygienist should know whether alcohol is one of the contributory agents'.⁴ From 'careful inquiries at two establishments in Victoria, one


³ Cumpston, op.cit., p.4.

⁴ Ibid., p.34.
civil and one military, he concluded from the statistics: 'Even allowing for the errors inevitable in an enquiry of this kind, it is evident that the sexual impulse is in itself the important factor, and that in the majority of cases it requires no alcoholic stimulation.'

By the end of 1915 two things were believed by a growing number of people: that alcohol helped to spread venereal diseases; and that the behaviour of soldiers threatened to scatter the infection. Undoubtedly the information about venereal diseases became garbled as it percolated first through the mangle of the military censorship, and second through the simplification of agitators. In the pressing circumstances, the agitators communicated their horror by trying to scare. Dr William Bottomley produced his pamphlet, the Red Plague in 1915. Its sub-title was 'An Illuminating discourse on the Terrible Danger of Ignorance regarding Venereal Diseases'. He assailed the 'conspiracy of silence on the part of pulpit, press, physicians and teachers'. Ignorance of the diseases, he declared, would bring 'disastrous consequences to the individual, the family, and the race'. He relied on assertions to back his claims. 'It is fairly certain that from 8 to 15 per cent of the population of all large cities is syphilitic,' he wrote, 'and in addition, a large number are suffering from gonorrhoea.' The lack of information induced many to make guesses; invariably their suspicions sounded alarming. 'I made the statement the other day that through the action of alcohol plus venereal diseases, which are very closely connected with intoxicants,' Dr Arthur

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1. Ibid. At the Langwarrin venereal camp, of 521 individuals questioned 24 per cent were teetotallers; 52 per cent described themselves as 'light drinkers'; 24 per cent as 'heavy drinkers'; and 6 per cent said they were under the influence of alcohol at the time of infection. At the Victorian Health Department Clinic, of the 995 individuals questioned, 26.13 per cent said that they had taken alcohol within a few hours preceding infection; 73.86 per cent said they had not taken alcohol during that evening. For further information which supports his conclusions, see p.34.

2. Bottomley, op.cit.

3. Ibid., pp.2, 9.
told the assembly on 27 October 1915, 'we had lost the services permanently or temporarily of at least 10,000 Australian soldiers'.

Arthur sustained the red plague agitation through the Australasian White Cross League, of which he was president. Its objects included 'purity among men and boys' and 'a chivalrous respect for womanhood'. During 1915 the league wrote to over 1,100 clergymen in New South Wales asking for their help in warning the public about venereal diseases; and it printed 196,000 assorted leaflets and booklets for the soldiers in camps. Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart also helped to educate the troops. He gave three lectures on 'Egypt' to the recruits, and another entitled 'How to Keep Fit', which was printed and distributed throughout the military camps in Australia.

On 9 July Arthur had spoken to the women's session of the New South Wales Liberal party conference on the subject of 'the red plague'. He urged that they had 'to face the evil to grapple with it successfully'. He concluded ominously by saying that an army doctor had written telling him that he was treating 200 soldiers suffering from venereal diseases: half of them would be returning to Australia on one of the

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3 Report of the Australasian White Cross League, for year ending 31 December 1915. In 1915-16, 20,000 copies of Keep Yourself Fit were distributed among the soldiers; 5,000 copies of The Military Problems of Venereal Disease were given to officers and NCOs; and 130,000 copies in total of four leaflets entitled Lord Kitchener's Straight Talk to his Men; Letter from a Soldier's Sister; Chastity and Health and Appeals to the Chivalry of Young Men were also printed.

transports. In November, after the Labor government had refused to budge from its 10 o'clock closing bill, he advertised one of his public lectures as 'Holman, the Ally of the Hun'. Dr Mary Booth, the honorary secretary of the Soldiers' Club, believed that the Holman government's energies in recruiting young men for the army brought them into moral danger. She wrote in October:

One marvels that members of the Government can presume to make personal appeals for recruits while they fail to do their little bit and by early closing lessen the waste of good material through drink and disease. In normal times the youths we are sending away to fight would be safe during the day under the discipline of college, trade and business, and be surrounded at night by wholesome family and social life. To-day, dislocated as they are from their social setting and its standards, they are readily learning tastes and habits that make them useless as citizens and soldiers....

If every son, brother and husband who left home with a clear eye and brave heart could have escaped the snares of the publican and the prostitute, we should have been happier about Gallipoli to-day.

Clergymen were also anxious about immorality. The Rev. Dr Burgess, who had three sons in the army was concerned lest

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1 [DT, 10 July 1915.]

2 [Question asked by Simon Hickey, Labor MLA for Alexandria; NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.61, p.3519, 16 November 1915.]

3 [See SMH, 30 March 1915: the Club's organizing committee were William Brooks, J.O. Fairfax, D.J. Gilligan, Robert McMillan, W.A. Purves, G. Milner Stephen, Dr F. Antill Pockley, Miss I.G. Garran, and Dr Mary Booth. Speakers at the public meeting to establish the club included H.Y. Braddon and Professor T.W.E. David. The District Commandant, Colonel Wallack, approved of the Soldiers' Club, as it 'would keep them off the streets, which had so many undesirable attractions for the unwary'. The Club probably provided the meeting ground for the launching of the Returned Soldiers' Association, of which William Brooks was the first president. The RSA later became the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Association, see SMH, 16 August, 1 September 1916.]

4 [Letter to the editor, SMH, 22 October 1915.]

5 [SMH, 3 November 1915.]
'Mr Holman's action over the liquor question' hurt the army. When parents of young boys heard the revelations about drinking and disease among soldiers, he told a committee of the Presbyterian church, 'it made them hesitate to expose their boys to the temptations.' At the Presbyterian assembly in May, the Rev. C.E. James reported on the recently-established interdenominational body which called itself the Council for Civic and Moral Advancement. Among other things, James declared, the council was watching over 'the sale of intoxicants' and 'the question of venereal disease and its incidence on the moral life of the community and on the soldiers in our Expeditionary Forces'. James went on to give the views of the Presbyterian committee on religion and public morals. The Great War had forced 'a great awakening' among people he asserted. 'In the red furnace of war national character is being subjected to the most searching tests which can be applied to moral qualities....The nation is in search of the highest and the best,' he continued, 'and it is found ...that [this]...can alone be discovered where the principles of sobriety, self-control, and self-sacrifice are the rule of life.'

These self-disciplinary sentiments were repeated by other groups. The Australasian League of Honour for Women and Girls was founded by Mrs Barff and Mrs David in June 1915. They wanted women 'to live a simpler life, and a life of self-sacrifice to match the lives of the brave soldiers on the field of battle'. Their motto was 'Strengthen Honour'. In effect they hoped to reduce war time sexual promiscuity. 'The battle will be won not in the trenches, but at home,' declared Mrs Barff. 'Women must, by their behaviour, encourage

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1 Ibid., 10 November 1915.

2 Ibid., 12 May 1915. The first of its monthly meetings had been held on 27 May 1913. It included lay and clerical representatives from the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, Salvation Army and Jewish churches. The Catholics subsequently withdrew. The Council had a delegate at the Teaching of Sex Hygiene conference in November 1916.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.
everything that is righteous, pure and true.' The object of each member, explained Mrs F.W. Wood, a university graduate, was 'to do an earnest, individual part in the moulding of the character of the troops'.¹ Like so many other middle class groups attempting to further the war effort, the League of Honour nurtured an idealised view of war and of the knights in shining armour who were needed to fight it. From this in part grew their concern that the behaviour of their nation's soldiers should be morally stainless.

Several incidents nourished their anxieties. Mr Justice G.E. Rich, appointed to inquire into the administration of the Liverpool military camp, submitted his final report on 18 August 1915.² The press summarised his findings.³ Rich had lived at the camp for the fortnight 16 to 30 July. He discovered the soldiers to be living in undue disorder, under lax discipline and enduring unnecessary privations. Alcohol aggravated the problems of administration, which mostly had resulted from the rapid expansion of the army. 'Some of the men get drunk and lie out all night in the cold and wet', he wrote: '...the effect of some of the liquor on the men was so extraordinary as to suggest alcoholic poisoning. The effect of excessive drink is to impair the efficiency of the soldiers, and endanger their health...and to expose them to temptations they might otherwise avoid.'⁴ He advocated a

¹Ibid., 12 June 1915. David, Barff and Wood were delegates at the Teaching of Sex Hygiene conference in November 1916.


³See SMH, 21, 29 August 1915. See also Bulletin, 26 August 1915, which declared that the judge's conclusions were 'a more seething indictment of the stupid Censorship than of anything else. The scandals would have been barely possible had the press not been muzzled'.

⁴Report on Liverpool Military Camp, pp.288-9. Rich ordered that samples of alcohol from the Liverpool hotels be tested; but no impurities - apart from one case of dilution with water - were found.
stringent remedy: that all public houses in Australia be
prevented from selling liquor to soldiers. As an alternative
he urged that all hotels at Liverpool and within a five mile
radius of the camp be barred to soldiers at 6 o'clock, and
that military pickets be mounted at the doors to prevent
liquor being taken away in bottles.\(^1\) As in the case of
Arthur's committee, Rich found that infected soldiers were
escaping from the venereal compound. He urged that such cases
be sent to a more distant camp like the Langwarrin camp in
Victoria. 'If this is not done', he wrote, 'a barbed wire
entanglement consisting of two fences... should be placed round
the present isolation Camp and the wire electrified to prevent
the escape of the prisoners.'\(^2\) Finally, among his many
recommendations, he urged that the New South Wales police and
the military police co-operate 'to prevent the visits of women
of loose morals to the camp or its vicinity'.\(^3\)

The early closing cause received unexpected help from
the soldiers. They committed sporadic acts of hooliganism,
often with several of their number affected by alcohol.\(^4\) One
of the most serious incidents happened on 13 December 1915.
Believing that several of their mates had been victimised by
its proprietor, three or four hundred soldiers marched on
Casimaty's Oyster Saloon in George Street. At the order
'Right turn', the marchers hurled rocks into the shop's
plateglass windows. The smashing spread to adjoining shop
fronts: the Original Candy Kitchen, the Oxford Picture Framing
Company and Miss McEwen's Millinery Shop. Forty policemen
arrived. They found that a civilian crowd, judged to be about
4,000, had joined the soldiers. They drew their batons and
charged. The crowd scattered. Several of the fugitives
scaled the railings surrounding the nearby St Andrew's
Cathedral and escaped within. The Rev. Wilton shooed them
out again. For most of the night the police were kept busy

\(^1\)Ibid., p.294.
\(^2\)Ibid., p.295.
\(^3\)Ibid., p.297.
\(^4\)SMH, 23, 29 November, 1, 2 December 1915.
moving to various points where disturbances threatened.\(^1\)

But most notorious of all, about 15,000 soldiers mutinied on Monday, 14 February 1916. Although most apparently remained sober, groups of them became drunk. The violence that followed in Liverpool and Sydney dominated the press for several days. The apparent cause of the mutiny was the sudden increasing of drill from thirty to forty and a half hours each week.\(^2\) As well as this, soldiers were expected to carry out duties necessary for the camp, including picket duty.\(^3\)

The soldiers commandeered trains at Liverpool. On their arrival at Sydney, the *Herald* reported that 'many were semi-drunk, and nearly all very noisy'.\(^4\) The last train load formed themselves into a column of fours. Led by two buglers and two standard bearers carrying respectively the 2nd battalion colours and the Union Jack surmounted by a small red flag, the column marched through the streets of Sydney. They yelled at passersby, telling them what they thought of the camp and the new regulations.\(^5\) The *Telegraph* photographed another column headed by Union Jacks and bearing the placard declaring: 'Strike we won't drill 40\(\frac{1}{2}\) hours.'\(^6\) Once in the city, many soldiers broke away to drink in the hotels. Others robbed fruit and soft drink stalls, pelted bystanders with

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2 *Ibid.*, 15 February 1916, report on new training syllabus for soldiers; military instruction took place seven and a half hours each day for the five weekdays and three hours on Saturday. The minimum training time before embarkation for the front was set at twelve weeks. In the notice posted to his men, Col. David Miller, the Commandant of the Liverpool and Casual camps, referred to 40 rather than 40\(\frac{1}{2}\) hours of training each week. The trouble apparently first began among the 5,000 men at the Casula light horse camp near Liverpool. See also Scott, op.cit., p.230.

3 *Ibid.*, see view put by an anonymous private.

4 *Ibid.* But see conflicting statement by A. Jones, a bootmaker of Liverpool. In a letter to Holman, 17 February 1916, he said that thousands of soldiers who entrained for Sydney were sober; see NSWPDC, Box 7/4727, file B16/754.

5 *SMH*, 15 February 1915.

6 *PT*, 15 February 1915.
fruit and threw bottles at policemen, putting one of them into hospital. They seized motor cars, bicycles, drays and lorries to carry them about the streets.¹

At the town of Liverpool the hotel keepers had shut their doors when they heard that the soldiers had broken out of camp. An inquisitive barman at the Railway Hotel opened the front door to peer out at the soldiers. They shoved him aside and looted the shelves. Across the street the Commercial Hotel was broken into with an axe. Hogsheads of beer, wine and spirits were hauled from the cellars and rolled into the streets.² Drinking vessels were readily produced: 'broken bottles, tobacco tins, washbasins, saucepans, and caketins.'³ Police Sergeant Coates and his eight men were helpless in the face of overwhelming numbers. Inspector Musgrave arrived in the early afternoon. He found that the streets near the railway station were 'thronged with soldiers more or less intoxicated'. He called for reinforcements from Sydney, for the rioters were 'drinking, fighting, and dancing about the streets, some of them acting like lunatics'.⁴ Vicious fighting followed as the leading rioters were arrested and dragged struggling to the lockup. 'Stones and bottles were thrown freely', wrote Musgrave.⁵

The Cabinet met in the late afternoon. They ordered that the hotels be shut at once.⁶ That night excited crowds milled around the Sydney city streets. Despite the efforts of police, soldiers smashed the windows of eight premises, including a Grace Brothers' store, the Evening News newspaper

¹Sun, 14 February; SMH, DT, 15 February 1915.
²Report of Sergeant Coates, in NSWPDC, Box 7/4727, file B16/754.
³Sun, 14 February 1915 (final extra edition).
⁴Report of Inspector A. Musgrave, NSWPDC, Box 7/4727, file B16/754.
⁵Ibid. Patrick Murphy, a recently arrived Irishman, was arrested as one of the ringleaders. He was described in court as being 'mad drunk', see SMH, 18 February 1916.
office and the German Club. \(^1\) After the hotels closed, disorderly groups of soldiers straggled back to the Central Railway Station throughout the evening. There the military pickets, apparently in inadequate numbers, herded them aboard trains bound for Liverpool. Just after 11 p.m. tempers flared. The pickets used the butt ends of their rifles on unruly soldiers. Some of the rowdies were imprisoned behind the sliding iron gates at the station. Finding a fire hose there they drenched the pickets. Another fired a revolver. The pickets retaliated. They fired twenty rounds, killing a nineteen year old soldier and wounding five others, two of whom were civilians.\(^2\)

Reaction was swift. The Returned Soldiers' Association was enraged. Several speakers asserted that their good name won at Gallipoli had been stained. The meeting, over 700 strong, moved

...that in order to fit themselves for work at the front, and make themselves worthy to join the ranks of those who have so heroically established the fame of Australian soldiers, they [all soldiers] should obey without question all orders by their superior officers....\(^3\)

More importantly, there were stronger demands for early closing. The heads of the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, Church of Christ and the Salvation Army churches sent a joint letter to both Holman and Senator Pearce declaring that 'the present conditions of the sale of liquor were chiefly responsible for the unfortunate incidents of Monday'. They appealed for 'immediate and drastic steps' to curtail the sale of alcohol.\(^4\) The Alliance reacted in the same fashion. Archdeacon Boyce, Dr Arthur and Sara Nolan, the vice-president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union,

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\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) SMH, 15, 16 February 1916. As newsreporters were barred from the scene by the military, the events were reconstructed from eyewitness accounts. For others were injured by baton or rifle butt; one was struck on the head by a brick. See also DT, 15, 16 February 1916.

\(^3\) SMH, DT, 16 February 1916.

\(^4\) Ibid.
blamed the riotous behaviour on alcohol. The Mosman branch of the Women's National Movement pledged itself to continue the early closing campaign 'until the Parliament of this State is compelled to pass legislation that shall embody the will of the people'. Dr Mary Booth, who presided over the meeting, attacked the Holman government for its stand on the liquor question. 'It would be through the women that restrictions on liquor would be obtained,' she declared, 'so that the soldiers would be made efficient and allowed to do their duty.'

The aftermath of the Monday rebellion trailed through the newspapers. The magistrates convicted soldiers for assault, riotous behaviour, malicious damage and indecent language. By 18 February, over 1,000 soldiers had been discharged from the army. A further 116 were held for trial before the district court-martial.

On 17 February Senator Pearce issued a proclamation under a War Precautions regulation, ordering that all hotels in the County of Cumberland or within five miles of any military camp in New South Wales be shut at 6 p.m. The state Labor government was embarrassed. The day before Holman had written to Pearce urging that the military authorities take greater precautions to control their men, because the state police had found it difficult to quell such a serious military riot. 'It is, in our [Cabinets] judgment, obvious that no earlier closing of hotels...could have affected the course of the day's [14 February] events', he wrote. 'The disorder began and lasted through hours during which, under any system of early

1Letters to the editor, DT, 16 February 1916; see also six letters in DT, 17 February 1916. The WCTU had a delegate at the Teaching of Sex Hygiene conference.

2 SMH, 18 February 1916.

3 Ibid., 16 February 1916.

4 DT, 18 February; SMH, 19 February 1916. Senator Pearce had ordered that all troops who failed to appear on parade on Tuesday 15 February at 11 a.m., were to be discharged.

5 The court-martial met on 10 March, see SMH, 11 March 1916; Sun, 14, 15, 16, 17 March 1916.

6 SMH, DT, 18 February 1916.
closing, the purchase of drink would have been possible. J.D. Fitzgerald pleaded with Pearce to reconsider his action. He declared that the enforcement of 6 o'clock closing 'encouraged those who flushed with unexpected victory at Parramatta' a few days earlier, were 'pushing their advantage'. He concluded with a postscript: 'May I point out the fact that when Mrs David and her friends say they will "inundate" you with congratulations,' he wrote, 'it is common knowledge that neither your Government nor ours ever did or ever will get a single vote from the faction she represents.' On 24 February, Pearce amended the closing hour to 8 p.m., saying that he did not intend this to be a permanent measure.

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1 W.A. Holman to G.F. Pearce, 16 February 1916, NSWPDC, Box 7/4729, file B16/1199. Holman also suggested that the soldiers be dispersed in a number of smaller camps throughout NSW. Pearce replied on 7 March 1916. Liverpool camp was to be reduced to a maximum of 6,000 and country camps were to be established at Armidale (2,000), Dubbo (1,500), Cootamundra (1,500), Bathurst (2,000), Goulburn (1,250). Albury was being investigated as a possible site.

2 J.D. Fitzgerald to G.F. Pearce, 19 February 1916, J.D. Fitzgerald papers, MSQ255/37-43, Dixson Library. A series of letters between Pearce and Fitzgerald followed, dated 23, 29 February, 2, 8, 18, 23 March 1916, MSQ255/536-55, 59-63, 65-9, 75, 113, 115. Fitzgerald alleged that on 14 February the State Commandant had placed his military police under the control of the civil police; that Pearce's closure of the hotels helped to hide the fact that military discipline had broken down; and that this 'will only lead to the shielding of incompetent officers'. Fitzgerald also pointed to the conflict between police and military versions of conditions in Sydney 'at a certain fixed date'. He believed the police reports, owing to 'the utter incapacity of the Military Authorities in this State, as displayed on one hundred occasions'. See also Scott, op.cit., p.230 for an account of the mutiny. He played it down. 'Reports of the incident went the world over', he wrote, 'but it was not symptomatic of bad command or of any dangerous state of soldier psychology.' But see comments of Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, trained at Sandhurst, and subsequently posted to the Grenadier Guards. He visited the Liverpool Camp in early January 1916. He had 'a special interview with the Officers' pointing out 'their responsibilities as regards defective discipline in the Camp'. He said that the 'difficulty now is to find superior Officers competent to act as State and Camp Commandants'. Despatch from Munro Ferguson to Andrew Bonar Law, 11 January 1916, Novar papers, NL, MS 696/795.

3 SMH, 25 February 1916.
Forced by political circumstances, the early closing referendum was set down by the Labor government for 10 June. At the third reading debate on the Liquor Referendum Bill, the words of Thomas Waddell, who held the rural seat of Lyndhurst, reflect the change in opinion on the early closing question. He was one of the few non-Labor politicians who had supported 10 o'clock closing the previous September. On 16 March 1916, he urged that the closing hour be 8 p.m. The training camps contain very large numbers of men who get ready money every week, and having a good deal of spare time on their hands, especially at night," he said, 'it has been found that many of them have indulged too freely in intoxicating liquors, and that by doing so they have exposed themselves to some of the foulest social diseases that exist in the community.' He argued that the conditions of war had nullified the local option vote taken in December 1913. Since the September vote he had seen numbers of men drunk when travelling home on the western suburbs railway. He had changed his opinion by 'reading in the newspapers of the serious effects drink was having upon the soldiers, and learning from professional men the enormous amount of disease which was caused by the drinking habits of the soldiers, mostly at night time'. Thus, he declared, early closing was 'absolutely necessary' during war time.

Others had begun to share Waddell's fears. Dean A.E. Talbot, Sir Herbert Maitland and H.D. McIntosh, representing

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1 Hughes and Graham, op.cit., p.441: Waddell was endorsed by the Farmers and Settlers' Association in the 1913 general election.

2 NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.62, pp.5393-4, 16 March 1916. See interjection of Jabez Wright, p.5394: Wright had to put the amendment for 10 o'clock in the early closing debate 7-8 September 1915. In the final vote for 9 p.m. closing, won by 44 to 26, two non-Labor politicians, Waddell and Zuill, voted with the minority. See Votes and Proceedings of the Legislature Assembly, session 1915-16, p.131.

3 NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.62, pp.5393-4, 16 March 1916. See also pp.5412, 5416-7: both Dr Arthur and David Story, in order to save the cost of the referendum, suggested that the government introduce a bill for 8 o'clock closing to accord with the amended time laid down by Senator Pearce under the War Precautions regulation.
the Returned Soldiers' Association, urged Holman on 4 April that measures needed to be taken to deal with venereal diseases. Talbot had been attached as a chaplain to a venereal camp in Egypt, and had been in 'daily and hourly contact with the menace'.¹ 'It was a fact well known that many of our soldiers had been temporarily, and some permanently incapacitated for active service by this scourge', he declared. Moreover among civilians, he continued, 'the evil was worse than generally believed, because it was largely a hidden evil.'² Sir Herbert Maitland supported Talbot, adding that because of the number of soldiers returned to Australia suffering from venereal diseases, 'over a million of money has been thrown away'.³

The horror of venereal diseases was propagated during the liquor referendum campaign. Battling once more against the formidable liquor interests, Boyce was anxious lest the early closers not be able to arouse sufficient support at the poll. 'It must not be forgotten that we are up against the brewers, ... the wealthiest monopolists of this country,' he wrote. No doubt the plans of these late-hour advocates will be extensive and very astutely made.

Surely patriotism should be more powerful than wealth. Self-sacrifice and intelligent

¹Deputation to the Premier on Venereal Diseases, 4 April 1916, report, NSWPDc, Box 7/4713, file A16/366. The gist of this report appeared in STH, 5 April 1916. Holman had spoken privately with Talbot and had asked him to organise the deputation, see NSWPDc, Box 7/4730, file B16/1240.

²Ibid., Talbot urged that venereal diseases be declared notifiable, and that 'quacks' be suppressed, because 'owing to the stigma attached to it, victims of the disease might shrink from consulting reputable medical men who would be law compelled to notify their cases'.

³Ibid. Holman thanked the deputation, saying that although he had recognised the problem, he 'was not until then aware of the dimensions of the evil'. See also questions in the Legislative Assembly concerning Talbot's deputation; NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.63, pp.6357-8, 10 April 1916. Holman admitted that Maitland had asked him privately 'many months ago' to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate venereal diseases. He added that amongst the Returned Soldiers' Association were men 'who have either been sufferers or who have comrades who have been sufferers from the prevalence of venereal disease [sic] in the ranks'.
action for love of country should be triumphant. But it will not be unless the 6 o'clock friends are alive to the serious danger and work hard, and so counteract the efforts of their rich opponents.\footnote{1}

Accordingly the early closers fought a vigorously organised campaign. Three main groups coalesced to fight the liquor trades: the Alliance, the Women's National Movement and a new formation called the Citizens' Referendum six o'clock Association. The president of the last group was L.P. Heydon MLC, assisted by eight vice-presidents: Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart, Meredith Atkinson, H.Y. Braddon, William Brooks, J.N. Buzacott MLC, A. Sinclair MLC, J.P. Franki and Senator David Watson.\footnote{2} Each group organised speakers and meetings all over New South Wales. Bishop Long, Rev. R.B.S. Hammond and Albert Bruntnell, the newly elected Liberal member for Parramatta, were the chief speakers for the Alliance in country centres.\footnote{3} Several Sydney Town Hall and Domain rallies were held.\footnote{4} The Alliance alone dispatched 15,000 pictorial posters to various parts of the State.\footnote{5} Door-to-door canvasses were conducted to bring out the women's votes.\footnote{6} In the last week before the poll, the Alliance held numerous open-air meetings in the Sydney suburbs, as well as daily midday meetings at Martin Place.

\footnote{1}{Letter to the editor, SMH, 27 May 1915.}
\footnote{2}{Citizens' Referendum Six O'clock Association advertisement in SMH, 6 June 1916. Included in the 46 man general committee were A.A. Cocks MLA, F. Boyce, Dr Donald Luker, Dr E.H. Molesworth, Dr G.B. Rennie, F.E. Winchcombe, Professors C.S. Fawcett, R.D. Watt and G.A. Wood, George Lewis of the Workers' Anti-Liquor League and R.J. Stuart-Robertson MLA.}
\footnote{3}{DT, 3 June 1916. See also DT, 5 June 1916: the secretary of the Citizens' Referendum Association, Frank Pulsford, returned to Sydney after addressing meetings at several centres in the northern rivers district of NSW.}
\footnote{4}{SMH, DT, 23, 26 May, 6 June 1916; DT, 22, 29 May 1916. An estimated crowd of 4,000 attended the Sunday 22 May meeting on the Domain, and 6,000 the following Sunday.}
\footnote{5}{DT, 26 May 1916.}
\footnote{6}{Ibid., 30 May 1916. Mrs Burton, secretary of the Women's National Movement, said that 'plenty of vigor' was being thrown into the campaign by their members, and that the 'home' argument was being 'used to the utmost'.}
The liquor trades were also energetic campaigners. 'I ask friends to beware of the brewers' canvassers', wrote Archdeacon Boyce. 'They are most active, and very numerous. They call on women probably in the midst of housework. When they cannot win for 9 o'clock, I have evidence that they will seriously mislead.'

Indeed the liquor trades organisations had conceded the force of the 6 o'clock closing movement. A brewer from Wagga Wagga wrote to Holman in March: 'The silly Referendum for Hotel closing will result in 6 o'clock. The Wowsers, women, and cold feet crowd, will all vote for it, so many of the manly men are away at the war that we are practically disfranchised.' In self-defence the liquor interests concentrated their forces to make the new closing hour no earlier than 9 p.m.

The duel between the opposing parties resembled in several respects, although on a somewhat smaller scale, the campaign fought over the single issue of conscription a few months later. Great human energy was organised, particularly on the early closing side, to win what was believed to be a vital cause. Emotions were strong and arguments were heated. As L.F. Heydon put it: 'Patriotism versus selfish interests is the issue for June 10.' Neither side could win over the champions of the other: they fought to attract the mass of voters in the middle. The early closers told the people to be 'patriotic' and vote for 6; while the slogan of the liquor trades urged them on the other hand to be 'moderate' and vote for closing at nine. The liquor people argued that 9 p.m.

1Letter to the editor, SMH, 3 June 1916. See also DT, 1 June 1916: Boyce warned that the liquor trades canvassers were telling women that as they were not on the electors' roll they need not bother to vote.

2Letter from H.S. Headley of Mahon and Headley Pty Ltd, Federal Brewery, Wagga Wagga, to W.A. Holman, 13 March 1916. NSWPDC, Box 7/4729, file B16/1165. Anticipating defeat Headley urged that the referendum be dropped in favour of a bill for 8 or 9 o'clock closing.

3DT, 9 June 1916. Heydon added: 'the call of the Empire is for sacrifice, for economy, and for efficiency.' See also Archbishop Wright who said that voting was 'a national duty'; DT, 8 June 1916. See also the speech given by Meredith Atkinson at the Mosman Town Hall, SMH, 6 June 1916.
closing would be more convenient for the community and would not decrease military efficiency. They asserted that early closing would increase home drinking ('there is the danger that the bottle at the elbow will become handier than the bottle on the hotel bar shelf! Is that in the interests of temperance?'), and encourage sly grog selling. 1 But the arguments of the early closers had the greater impact. They focussed on both 'the evils of night drinking' and on appeals to patriotism.

Every person who is not blind and insensate to the world about him is aware of the social pollution, the foul want and disease, the wretchedness inflicted upon innocent child life, the degradation of manhood and womanhood.... Australians.... are encouraged to get drunk by the law. 2

The Citizens' Referendum Association declared the poll was a

...FIGHT FOR THE FLAG
Every hour rescued from the liquor bars means the INCREASED EFFICIENCY OF OUR SOLDIERS
The military authorities say so - and they know.
The doctors say so - and they know. 3

The early closers were able to dramatise their cause by referring to the dangers facing society from a threatened increase in venereal diseases. At the 'great inspirational meeting' of the Alliance held in the Sydney Town Hall on 22 May, Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart told the crowd of 4,000 to 5,000 people that alcohol had 'a great influence on the sexual passion' and that 'the diseases which resulted were the shame and bane' of the military authorities. 'I have seen 499 in one day in one place. They all came from one military camp, and alcohol was the indirect cause of all their misery', he declared. 'When one man asked another, "what is your poison?" he does not know how correctly in a scientific sense he is speaking.' 4 His argument that 6 o'clock closing was needed to

1 Advertisement of the Liquor Trades Defence Union of NSW, in SMH, 9 June 1916.
2 NSW Alliance advertisement, SMH, 8 June 1916.
3 Citizens' Referendum Six O'clock Association advertisement, SMH, 6 June 1916.
4 DT, 23 May 1916. See also SMH, 23 May 1916, for a shorter version of the same speech.
protect the soldiers and ultimately the community from an increase in venereal diseases was echoed by others.¹ Mrs Lee-Cowie, a temperance campaigner from Invercargill, New Zealand, told a crowd of five hundred at an open air meeting in Park Street of 'the dreadful effects of venereal disease, particularly in our military forces'. She appealed for 'a sane and calm judgment on that great issue' on 10 June.² The Rev. Dr Burgess spoke to a meeting at the Hunter's Hill Town Hall. He referred to the 'ravages of drink' among the Australian troops. 'Through drink and venereal disease 1,500 of these men had been detained in Egypt', he said, 'and another 1,000 had been discharged at Sydney owing to a riot caused through strong drink.'³ A man who had recently returned from England, asked the secretary of the Citizens' Referendum Association at a Sydney Town Hall meeting, why could not the soldiers be barred at an earlier hour, like the 7 p.m. rule in England, and civilians be permitted to drink until the normal closing time? 'That would dispose of the argument of soldiers inviting venereal disease as a result of being allowed to drink at night,' he declared.⁴ E.J. Loxton KC, accompanied by Archdeacon Boyce, told a Martin Place rally that he had thought previously that the 'temperance party' was being opportunistic by invoking the needs of war to advance its 'fads'. But his sons had since joined the army. When he had realised 'what they were exposed to', he had changed his opinion. 'The men who spent the evenings drinking till 11 o'clock were amongst the 2,000 sent back from Egypt', he declared.⁵ The Citizens' Referendum Association asked: 'Is liquor interfering with Military Efficiency?' The Association

¹Several instances of this argument can be cited; it is likely that the military censorship affected the newspaper reports where venereal diseases and their incidence among the soldiers became too prominent in the public debate. Most of the reports used in evidence here were paraphrased rather than published verbatim by the press.

²DT, 31 May 1916.

³Ibid., 8 June 1916.

⁴Ibid., 7 June 1916.

⁵Ibid., 9 June 1916.
provided its own answer: 'We have evidence that alcoholism is prevalent and excessive among recruits....We are convinced that if drunkenness were checked, venereal diseases would be much less common....'\(^1\) Mary Gilmore castigated the 'Drink Traffic'. It was, she wrote
cursed by the good and clean; cursed by the poor soldier who went forth to fight an enemy without, and came back because the enemy, 'pretending friendly', to lie in hospital, to suffer in jail, or to be segregated, as unfit to touch, behind barbed wire, the far enemy-land never even sighted.

You would think a decent man would be ashamed to even THINK of living on the profit of such a thing as this!\(^2\)

A campaign to arouse public awareness of the dangers from venereal diseases accompanied the liquor referendum agitation. It had been generated by the early closing controversy; by mid-1916 it was a distinct movement. But the same agitators served both causes. In early May the Herald published in a series of articles a lecture which Professor Welsh had given to the troops on the subject of venereal diseases.\(^3\) The president of the Methodist Conference, the Rev. Joseph Woodhouse, preached on 23 May at intercessory service for the Australasian League of Honour's week of prayer: 'There was tremendous need to devote consideration to the need for purity in the nation.' He referred to Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart's report of the 499 cases of 'disease from impurity' which he had encountered at one military camp. Woodhouse added that 'another eminent authority had estimated that one-sixth of the population of a city like Sydney suffered from some form of such disease'.\(^4\) The Council for Civic and Moral

\(^1\)A Citizens' Referendum 6 O'clock Association advertisement, AW, 25 May 1916. The advertisement continued: '...and the susceptibility of the men to other infectious diseases, such as pneumonia and meningitis, would be diminished.'

\(^2\)'Our Women's Page', AW, 1 June 1916.

\(^3\)The third article, entitled 'The Results of the Contagious Venereal Diseases' was published in SMH, 5 May 1916.

\(^4\)SMH, 24 May 1916.
Advancement published its manifesto on 24 May urging that voters select 6 o'clock for their first preference in the coming referendum. Among the signatories were several who had taken an active interest in the problem of venereal diseases: the council's president, Anderson Stuart, together with Dean Talbot, the Rev. Dr Burgess and Thomas Brown MIA.\footnote{Ibid.  The Signatories included four Anglicans (including Archbishop Wright), eight Presbyterians, six Methodists, three Congregationalists, three Baptists, three members of the Jewish church, and two from the Salvation Army.} Sixty-five doctors also issued a manifesto. It was published on 1 June.\footnote{SMH, DT, 1 June 1916. See also SMH, DT, 2 June 1916. In a letter to the editor, an anonymous doctor pointed out that the 65 signatories represented a minority of the 714 doctors within the Sydney metropolitan area as registered in the 1915 Medical Directory. Further, that of the 20 man BMA Council, only one had signed. However, by 10 June before the poll, 126 doctors had signed the manifesto; see SMH, 10 June 1916.} Anderson Stuart headed the list. Besides Dr Arthur, other signatories included nine who had given evidence to his Select Committee on the Prevalence of Venereal Diseases.\footnote{Robert Paton, Director-General of Public Health; E.F. Sinclair, Inspector-General of the Insane; D.A. Welsh, Professor of Pathology; E.H. Molesworth; C.W. Corlette; Fourness Barrington, R. Worrall; J.B. Cleland; G.E. Rennie. Others, such as G.W. Bray and L.P. Johnston, who had asserted the causal connection between alcohol and venereal diseases, did not appear on the manifesto of 1 June; Bray being overseas.} In their appeal, the doctors asserted that it was 'the patriotic duty of every intelligent citizen' to help the movement to restrict war time drinking. 'We subscribe to the setting forth of the pathological side of the drink question by Professor Welsh, in his luminous articles in the public press', they said, 'available to all who consult the files of the Sydney newspapers.'\footnote{SMH, 1 June 1916.} Relevant portions of Welsh's words were repeated verbatim. The argument focussed on the impact of alcohol on the soldiers.

The military significance of alcohol is derived mainly from its relation to the incidence and severity of infective diseases among the forces. Indirectly, alcoholic excess relaxes those inhibitory influences on which self-control and...
good conduct largely depend, so that men under its influence become exposed to foul diseases, which they would otherwise be less liable to contract. It is the cause of much of the incapacity and invalidism that are inseparable from military camps as they are at present conducted.

The doctors concluded:

Nothing but our deep sense of the tremendous issues at stake and the great gravity of the present situation would have induced us to take what may be regarded as the extraordinary step of issuing this appeal.1

The people voted on the hotel closing hour shortly after two momentous events. On 5 June the newspapers reported the long awaited naval battle between the British and German fleets.2 The readers were told of 'heavy British and German losses'. If they had counted the tally provided by the Admiralty, the more curious readers would have discovered that the British had lost fourteen warships to the Germans' eleven.3 'The Naval Battle' also dominated the war news pages on the following day.4 On 8 June the press published the news of the drowning of Lord Kitchener, whose face was known to many by the celebrated recruiting poster; his pronouncements against alcohol had been employed by the early closers during their campaign.5 He, as Minister for War, had been credited with the rapid building of what were popularly known as 'Kitchener's armies'. Moreover, in early May, Australians had been told that their first troops had joined what was for all people in

1Ibid.

2Ibid., 5 June 1916. The battle of Jutland took place on 31 May-1 June 1916.

3Ibid.

4Ibid., 6 June 1916. The news was built around the Admiralty announcement, which read: 'Undoubtedly the German losses were heavier than the British, not merely relatively, but absolutely.'

5Ibid., 8 June 1915. Bishop Long concluded a lunch hour meeting saying that Kitchener, as with Lord Roberts 'had emphatically pronounced against liquor as the greatest enemy of any army'. See SNH, 27 May 1916. See also the final appeal by Eric Rowley, solicitor, the joint secretary of the Citizens Referendum Association, and the advertisement by the NSW Alliance, SNH, 10 June 1916.
the British Empire the most vital point of combat: the
Western Front. 1 There, since February, French and German
troops had died in their thousands for the military symbol of
Verdun. Before the beginning of the Somme offensive in July,
the war situation seemed grave. Those who cared in New South
Wales had a chance to improve the Empire's military
'efficiency'. They voted for 6 o'clock closing.

On 10 June, the Telegraph later reported, the 'feature'
of the day was the behaviour of women, who 'rushed' into the
booths between 8 and 10 a.m.: in North Sydney the paper judged
that women voters outnumbered men by three to one. 2 All day
women canvassers 'were working hard for six at every booth'. 3
The six o'clock cause won. The results of the referendum are
summarised in the following table.

**LIQUOR REFERENDUM VOTE, 10 JUNE 1916**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELECTORATES</th>
<th>CITY (6)</th>
<th>SUBURBAN (33)</th>
<th>COUNTRY (51)</th>
<th>TOTAL NSW (90)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electors Voting:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>15,177</td>
<td>121,923</td>
<td>170,511</td>
<td>307,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>13,353</td>
<td>134,942</td>
<td>123,200</td>
<td>271,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28,530</td>
<td>256,865</td>
<td>293,711</td>
<td>579,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per cent</td>
<td>43.66</td>
<td>56.65</td>
<td>53.10</td>
<td>54.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voting to electors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enrolled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votes cast for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
<td>10,686</td>
<td>172,067</td>
<td>164,741</td>
<td>347,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 p.m.</td>
<td>14,952</td>
<td>65,505</td>
<td>98,385</td>
<td>178,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,785</td>
<td>12,095</td>
<td>16,682</td>
<td>30,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>7,198</td>
<td>13,903</td>
<td>22,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28,530</td>
<td>256,865</td>
<td>293,711</td>
<td>579,106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1See press reports, DT, 9 May; SMH, 10 May 1916.
2**DT**, 12 June 1916.
3Ibid.
As can be seen from the table, the 'suburban' category, despite its smaller number of electors voting, provided more support for 6 o'clock than the country category. Of the ninety electorates, eighty voted for 6 o'clock closing.\(^1\) Owing to the war, in 28 Sydney electorates females enrolled outnumbered males. Thus, on polling day, female voters outnumbered male voters in 25 of the 39 electorates within the Sydney metropolitan district. In the case of Ashfield, the proportion of females voting on early closing to females enrolled exceeded that of the 1913 general election.\(^2\) Several 'suburban' electorates recorded high margins for 6 as against 9 o'clock.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>6 p.m.</th>
<th>9 p.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>8,638</td>
<td>1,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryde</td>
<td>8,344</td>
<td>1,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>7,807</td>
<td>1,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>7,488</td>
<td>1,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosman</td>
<td>7,152</td>
<td>1,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Harbour</td>
<td>7,008</td>
<td>1,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drummoyné</td>
<td>6,845</td>
<td>1,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dulwich Hill</td>
<td>6,625</td>
<td>1,373</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of these electorates had a larger number of females than males voting. Compare this group with three other electorates, where male voters exceeded females, where voting for 6 p.m. was also high:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6 p.m.</th>
<th>9 p.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>8,580</td>
<td>2,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurstville</td>
<td>7,543</td>
<td>2,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granville</td>
<td>7,037</td>
<td>2,736</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the second group the 9 o'clock vote is somewhat larger than the first group. Whether the female-male voting differences

\(^1\)One in the 'city' classification, 32 in the 'suburban', 47 in the 'country'.

\(^2\)In December 1913 60.56 per cent, in June 1916 63.50. Note however the rise in enrolments: 1913 4,538 females enrolled, in 1916 the number was 8,376. Burwood, Gordon, Middle Harbour and Mosman all had high female turnouts in June 1916 which came close to the turnout in 1913.
contributed to this result is open to speculation. One interesting comparison emerges between the 1913 and 1916 votes: in the referendum there was a high proportion of absentee votes recorded.

**PERCENTAGE OF ABSENTEE VOTES TO TOTAL VOTES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>December 1913 election</th>
<th>June 1916 referendum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>city</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suburbs</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>country</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** DT, 1 August 1916.

This may reflect not only the importance of the early closing issue to some people, but also the war time population shifts from the normal place of residence. If the latter, it could be that a significant segment of women, whose husbands had enlisted, had gone to live with relatives during the war. A further comparison needs to be made. This is summarised in the table below:

**PERCENTAGE OF VOTES TO NUMBER ENROLLED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>December 1913 election</th>
<th>June 1916 referendum</th>
<th>difference 1913-1916</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>city</td>
<td>58.74</td>
<td>43.66</td>
<td>15.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suburbs</td>
<td>67.52</td>
<td>56.65</td>
<td>10.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>68.71</td>
<td>53.10</td>
<td>15.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67.19</td>
<td>54.02</td>
<td>13.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** DT, 1 August 1916.

In short, the liquor referendum was a single issue and accordingly attracted a lower proportion of voters than at the earlier general election. Nonetheless, of the electors sufficiently concerned about the early closing question to cast their vote, 60 per cent voted for 6 o'clock.

The victory of the 6 o'clock cause resulted from a combination of circumstances. The Holman government's determination to keep the hotel hour as close as possible to the normal hour of 11 p.m. provoked animosity among the long-functioning temperance groups. The demand for early closing during the war centred on the claim that it would assist the
war effort, rather than on traditional temperance arguments.\textsuperscript{1} New supporters responded to this appeal. The newcomers were chiefly from the middle classes; a large number were women. Many, like Mrs David, had relatives in the armed forces. These agitators were reinforced in 1916 by the middle class dominated Citizens' Referendum Association. Moreover, many of the war time early closers, it would seem, formerly had been indifferent or antipathetic to the temperance cause: their fear of venereal diseases attracted them to the fight. The British-born Liberal politician, Dr Richard Arthur, was actively concerned about the war effort. Committed to the two causes of temperance reform and red plague eradication, he helped to unite the desire for the first with the fears of the last. These anxieties were propagated among a wider audience during the liquor referendum campaign. Early closing measures had been either taken or promised by the governments of all the Australian states except Queensland.\textsuperscript{2} Alone among Australians, the people of New South Wales experienced prolonged agitation over the question of restricting alcohol, in which one of the principal arguments advanced for its restriction was the need to control the high incidence of venereal diseases among Australian soldiers. After 10 June

\textsuperscript{1}After the unexpectedly large winning margin for 6 o'clock closing, Archdeacon Boyce remarked: 'Only big matters are dealt with by referendum. That being so, the people's decision should be a permanent decision, and not merely a war-time measure. Personally I have referred very little in the controversy to the war, although others have done so.' SMH, 12 June 1916.

\textsuperscript{2}Apart from the South Australian liquor referendum of March 1915, Victoria had put in force 9 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. licensing hours on 7 July 1915; the Western Australian government introduced a Sale of Liquor Regulation Bill on 17 August 1915 which was laid aside in favour of a second bill for 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. opening hours, which were to operate in metropolitan and agricultural districts on 10 January 1916; and a Licensing Bill for restricting hotel trading hours was introduced in the Tasmanian Legislative Assembly on 1 July 1915. See also NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.4, p.93, Liquor Question (memorandum relating to hours of closing in the other states...); S. Aust. Parl. Deb., session 1915, Vol.1, p.vi; W. Aust. Parl. Deb., 1915, Vol.LI, new series, p.321; Journals of the House of Assembly in Journals and Printed Papers of the Parliament of Tasmania, session 1915-16, Vol.LXXII, p.8; Old. Parl. Deb., session 1915-16, Vol.CXXI, p.2098.
the early closing agitation subsided. But the suspicions aroused that alarming numbers of soldiers had been or risked infection with loathsome sexual diseases possessed their own momentum.\(^1\) Twenty weeks later these anxieties helped to swell the anti-conscription vote in New South Wales.

Anxiety provoked by the sexual behaviour of soldiers was also reflected in an uneasiness about the behaviour of Australians. Atkinson displayed great urgency in his advocacy of 6 o'clock closing. 'Could a citizen be a true patriot unless he was capable of self discipline enough to contribute towards that state of efficiency for which the nation was striving', he asked the crowd at the Mosman Town Hall, 'conscious that the one great lesson of the war...was that the nation which was most concentrated to duty was the nation which would prove victorious?\(^2\) Disturbed partly by the want of patriotism among the younger men, British-born Anderson Stuart, Welsh and Atkinson joined the Universal Service League in August-September 1915. Welsh in his pamphlet The Great Opportunity, denounced the 'men of our race who do not realise that the call to serve has come to them now'. In the same writing he displayed equal unease about alcohol: it was a handicap to recruiting 'since mothers shrink from the prospect of an unclean life for their sons more than they dread a clean and honourable death'. These two forms of unacceptable behaviour, he believed, could be repressed by military conscription on one hand and self-enforced sobriety

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\(^1\) This point will be developed further in Chapter 8. For instance, see DT, 20 September 1916. Mrs Frank Blow, president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, said at their convention: 'At first...they had refused to discuss the awful question of impurity, but, if not promptly dealt with, it threatened to become a national curse. They must not only think of a moral wrong, but of the physical danger to children. It was time women grappled with the evil with a view to preventing its spread.'

\(^2\) SMH, 6 June 1916.
on the other. Thus would national efficiency be increased.¹

On the eve of the liquor referendum, the Universal Service League revived its agitation for conscription. Meredith Atkinson argued that Prime Minister Hughes' federal recruiting scheme, for which the league had voluntarily suspended its campaign, had failed.² The league members 'were absolutely sick of waiting. The longer they waited the more lives were being lost', Atkinson declared. 'Our sense of social and Imperial responsibility should be too strong to allow us to wait any longer.'³ To understand the fears which prompted his words let us look at the response to the recruiting drives in New South Wales during 1915-1916.

¹Welsh, The Great Opportunity, op.cit., pp.11, 25, 29. Dr Arthur did not join the Universal Service League, but he supported conscription in the 1916 referendum. The fear of conscription entered the early closing campaign. A woman interrupted James Marion's speech on the Domain. She said that she would prefer her son to be a drunkard in the gutter than wearing a V.C. 'You are out for conscription', she shouted. Marion retorted that if she voted for six, she would help to prevent 'many volunteers from being rendered unfit, which is only hastening conscription'; DT, 22 May 1916.

²Atkinson, on the resignation of J.D. Fitzgerald from the post, became one of the two organising secretaries of the USL, see SMH, DT, 4 July 1916.

³DT, 23 May 1916. See also letter to the editor from Professor M.W. MacCallum and T.R. Bavin, president and secretary respectively of the USL, in DT, 24 May 1916: '...the [military] position is so grave that it is quite clear that, irrespective of any existing obligations, Australia must be prepared to make the greatest effort of which she is capable.'
CHAPTER 6

THE RECRUITING DRIVES AND THE RISE OF THE

UNIVERSAL SERVICE LEAGUE

People had adopted differing attitudes to the Great War during August 1914; but their opinions remained hidden until the recruiting campaigners encountered them during 1915 and 1916. Deference to the call of Empire and the demands of the Imperial government had flourished in New South Wales from August 1914. Anglophile Australians, British Australians and the pro-war idealists took Fisher's call for the 'last man' as a serious obligation. As C.G. Wade put it: 'If young Australia was to do its part there should be no shirkers from the challenge to mortal combat.' As the balance of military advantage see-sawed and victory seemed doubtful, people grew increasingly anxious: some agitated for more troops. But reluctant young men were discovered during 1915; the Australia-wide recruiting drive of December 1915 to June 1916 was to reveal that a huge proportion of the eligible men had resisted the individual appeals to enlist and to fight the Empire's cause. The pro-conscriptionists began their agitation in reaction to the non-compliance of the 'shirkers'.

The British-born Prime Minister returned to Australia on 31 July 1916 after a triumphant public visit to his homeland. His declaration that the strategic situation made the strengthening of the Australian Imperial Force imperative gave a rationale to the conscriptionist cause.

From the outbreak of war, Holman saw it his duty as Premier to marshal the resources of the most populous state in Australia. On 3 August 1914 he telegraphed to Prime Minister Cook: 'Total resources of State Government unreservedly at disposal of Federal Cabinet for all purposes

1 SMH, 24 July 1915.
connected with national defence.'

But he itched to play a leading part. He wrote to Cook the following day on behalf of his cabinet: 'They urge enquiry as to whether it would not be worthwhile securing in America, say, 50,000 rifles of a standard bore, to take regulation ammunition.'

On 5 August he requested both Coghlan, the Agent General, and A.C. Carmichael, then visiting London, to keep him posted on the European situation. On 26 August he urged the Liberal Minister for Defence to mobilise more Australian troops.

'Cabinet today considered certain aspects of situation likely to arise in event of allied forces suffering reverse in battle now proceeding', he cabled in code:

Suggest to your Government for consideration making immediate announcement should reverse unfortunately be reported that Australia is sending at least two additional contingents of 20,000 each speedily following force now equipping. New South Wales Government prepared undertake responsibility recruiting 40 per cent namely 16,000 men for such contingents and will if you approve instruct Police force throughout State act as recruiting agents preparing tentative lists....New South Wales Government will also charge itself if desired with all arrangements for equipment force which can be effected outside War Department namely medical service clothing tents transport. Strongly urge

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1 Telegram from W.A. Holman to Joseph Cook, 3 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4692, file 14/4920.

2 Letter from Holman to Cook, 4 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4692, file 14/4920. Holman added in parenthesis: 'The pattern and make it is thought are of no consequence.' A carbon copy version of the same letter, apart from several minor amendments, but dated 2 August 1914, exists in the same file.

3 Cables from W.A. Holman to NSW Agent-General and A.C. Carmichael, 5 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4964, file 14/4964. By March 1915, the head of the Premier's Department reported that almost £1,000 had been spent on cables dealing with 'war matters'. Minute from E.B. Harkness to Acting-Premier J.H. Cann, 23 March 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4728, file B16/1021.

4 The Allies retreated from Mons, 24 August to 7 September 1914.
Without waiting for a reply, he asked his Inspector-General of Police and Colonel Wallack, the Second Military District (NSW) commander, to confer with him the next day.\textsuperscript{2} Cook announced at the end of August that a larger force was required.\textsuperscript{3} But Holman still chafed at the federal government's military plans, which seemed to be on a smaller scale than his own. 'As far as can be gathered from statements in the Press and from inquiries made at Victoria Barracks it appears that only a comparatively small force is at present in contemplation', he wrote to Millen on 9 September. He added that for this reason the use of the state police 'could hardly be justified. Without desiring to entrench upon your responsibilities', he continued, 'may I again urge that the additional force be of large [sic] proportions than is evidently proposed.'\textsuperscript{4} Millen cabled Holman on 10 September saying that 'no limit to further force proposed'.\textsuperscript{5}

Holman determined to hasten the war effort during 1915. He had many plans. In July he tried to persuade the federal government to alter the national identity of the Australian Imperial Force. First he suggested to Archbishop Kelly that separate Irish regiments, by appealing to Irish-Australian

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}Confidential coded telegram from W.A. Holman to Senator Millen, 26 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4702, file 15/4475.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}Letters from W.A. Holman to Inspector-General of Police; and Colonel Wallack, 26 August 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4702, file 15/4475. Senator Millen cabled a reply on 28 August, saying that plans for a further contingent had already been submitted to Cabinet.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}\textit{SMH}, 29 August 1914.
  \item \textsuperscript{4}Letter from W.A. Holman to Senator Millen, 9 September 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4702, file 15/4475. The Liberals were defeated at the 5 September poll, but continued their administration until the Labor ministry was sworn in on 17 September. See Scott, op.cit., pp.40-1.
  \item \textsuperscript{5}Cable and letter from Millen to Holman, 10 September 1914, NSWPDC, Box 7/4702, file 15/4475. He also asked the NSW government to organise their police as recruiting agents.
\end{itemize}
sentiment, might speed up recruiting.\(^1\) Kelly called a meeting; Holman then telegraphed Pearce. \('\text{Confidential: Catholic Prelates proposal forming a special Irish Regiment. This is eminently desirable and will greatly aid recruiting.}'\)^2 But Pearce refused.\(^3\) A few weeks earlier, apparently without consulting the Defence Department, Holman had ordered an expert committee to investigate the possibility of manufacturing artillery shells in New South Wales. The experts' report had been given to Pearce on 30 June.

'Unfortunately nothing has been done since, and I have not been able to obtain from your recently appointed Committee on Munitions or from the Defence Department any intimation as to the next step that should be taken', he complained to Prime Minister Fisher on 9 July. He declared that 'every week that is allowed to go by without commencing these operations obviously represents a definite diminution of our striking power'.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Letter from Fr John O'Gorman to W.A. Holman, 9 July 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4704, file 15/5771. O'Gorman said that Kelly was calling a meeting to consider Holman's suggestion to form an Irish regiment.

\(^2\) Telegram from W.A. Holman to Senator Pearce, 14 July 1915. Holman knew that the policy was not to form distinctive military units. He asked that this policy be waived because of the 'special emergency'. He asked Pearce to reply that day 'as Catholic meeting being held tonight'. NSWPDC, Box 7/4704, file 15/5771.

\(^3\) Telegram from Pearce to Holman, 15 July 1915. Holman pursued the matter; he asked the Victorian Chief Commissioner of Police to locate one of his ministers, H.C. Hoyle, then visiting Melbourne, and to request him to interview Pearce on the Irish Regiment question. This was done but Pearce refused to alter the policy. See telegram from Holman to Chief Commissioner of Police, 16 July 1915; Minute from H.C. Hoyle, 20 July 1915; NSWPDC, Box 7/4704, file 15/5659.

\(^4\) Letter from Holman to Andrew Fisher, 9 July 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4703, file 15/4935. Holman began his letter by giving his Cabinet's support to the proposed increase in the army. The other half of his letter outlined the recruiting organisation in NSW. For a list of munitions supplied by NSW, see Defence (Particulars Respecting Assistance Rendered by the State Government...), in NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.2, pp.999-1001. See also Report of the Chief Commissioner of NSW Railways and Tramways, 1915-1916, in NSW Parl. Papers, session 1916, Vol.4, pp.507-78, especially p.529 for details on munitions manufactured at the Eveleigh and Randwick workshops.
Holman played a leading part in other war time activities. He was joint president of the French-Australian League of Help and president of the Australia Day Committee and its organising sub-committee. As president of the New South Wales Parliamentary War Committee he organised and led the recruiting drives in the state. Holman's ministerial colleagues had relieved him of 'ordinary duties' wrote Sir Gerald Strickland in September 1915. This would allow him to 'devote himself to recruiting, and the organisation of the manufacture of munitions, and activities connected with the war'. Strickland added that he had 'repeatedly warned' Holman that his ventures might conflict with the responsibilities of the federal authorities. The Governor-General, who came to dislike and distrust Holman, thought him meddlesome: 'The States headed by Mr. Holman of N.S.W...., neglect no opportunity to queer the federal pitch, and to invade the province of the federal government by establishing rifle factories and recruiting agencies.' It was only by means of the proposed constitutional referenda, he said 'that

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1SMH, 23 December 1914. Madame G. Playoust was the other president; see Appendix 1, p.436.

2Ibid., 21 June 1915. Other members of the organising sub-committee were the Lord Mayor of Sydney, R.W. Richards; the general managers of the Bank of NSW, J. Russell French, the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney, T.A. Dibbs, and the AMP Society, Richard Teece; J.H. Cohen Liberal MLA for Petersham; and E.B. Harkness, the secretary of the Premier's Department.

3Despatch from Governor of NSW to Secretary of State for Colonies, 30 September 1915, Colonial Office Records, 410/136, folio 247.

4See Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson's personal despatches to the Secretary of State for Colonies, Novar papers, NL, MS 696/707-11, 722-6, 727-32, 895-8, 976-82. Occasionally Ferguson's comments were evidently thought too severe and have been unfortunately censored.
my Government can lose [sic] the State grip upon its throat and devote its strength to the service of the War'.

Holman's enthusiasm included the manufacture of machine-guns and aircraft. In September an engineer in the Department of Public Works told him that gauges used to construct the standard Vickers machine-gun were unavailable for several months. Therefore, he said, they were justified in making their own machine-guns. He added that the prototype gun would be ready for trials in several weeks. Holman had greater ambitions for the manufacture of aircraft. 'The recent writings of Desbled Wells are... convincing as to the importance of the organisation of Aircraft for attack (as distinct from reconnaissance)', he wrote in a minute for his Parliamentary War Committee during August 1915. 'I submit... that we could not do Great Britain a greater service at this moment than by constructing 100 aircraft, training 100 pilots, [and] offering the corps to commanders for raiding purposes.' He believed that the 'whole thing' could be got ready in three months. His vision was subsequently abridged. In October, the Director-General of Public Works, acting on the 'verbal instructions' of Holman, ordered two Curtis bi-planes from New York. In July 1916 two Australian pilot instructors arrived in Sydney to begin training men at the New South Wales

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1Personal despatch from Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, to Andrew Bonar Law, 30 June 1915, Novar papers, NL, MS 696/724. See also personal despatch of 13 July 1915, MS 696/728-9: 'the States are doing their utmost... to run away with the military coach. In N.S.W. the Premier informs the Governor that "he has taken certain definite steps to cooperate with the federal government to promote the successful conclusion of the War".'

2Letter from A.E. Cutler to W.A. Holman, 22 September 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4706, file 15/7697.

3Minute from W.A. Holman to the NSW Parliamentary War Committee, 10 August 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4704, file 15/6042.

4Letter from J. Davis to Secretary, Premier's Department, 29 October 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4709, file 15/9074. The two machines had been ordered from the firm of R.W. Cameron and Co., the first was to cost £1,709.
Government Aviation School near Richmond.¹

But Holman's greatest efforts were devoted to recruiting men into the army. The Australian recruiting drives began just after the midpoint of 1915. On 18 June the Imperial government responded to an inquiry from the Australian federal government; their telegram said: 'Every available man that can be recruited in Australia is wanted.'² Pressures for more soldiers began. Victoria set the pace. An intensive recruiting campaign pushed that state's enlistments from the June figure of roughly 3,400 to 21,700 in July.³ In a spirit of rivalry, New South Wales organisers began a similar effort on 31 July.

Holman, together with Arthur Griffith and George Black, made preparations all through July. His scheme was intended he said, 'to bring the executive resources and the strength of the State to bear on the problem of increasing the number of our recruits'.⁴ Holman was concerned at the apparent indifference: 'A very large number of young men, unmarried, without family ties or dependents, and of full physical capacity have not, so far, volunteered for the front.'⁵ He held the same view at the end of the month. 'These prospective recruits are not coming forward as quickly as they might', he told Senator Pearce on 27 July. But he thought that the recruiting campaign beginning on the thirty-first would change matters. 'You may rest assured that the New South Wales effort will not be a flash in the pan', he declared, 'but sustained and continuous as the [Recruiting]

¹See NSW PDC, Box 7/4720, file A16/3658, for correspondence between Holman and the NSW Agent-General, February, March, May 1916. The two pilots were Andrew Lang of the Royal Flying Corps and William Stutt of the Royal Aircraft Factory. See also SMH, 21, 22 July 1916.
²Scott, op.cit., p.292.
³Ibid., Appendix 3, p.871.
⁴SMH, 2 July 1915. Holman, Griffith and Black formed the Cabinet sub-committee which devised the recruiting organisation in NSW.
⁵Ibid.
Associations will follow up their work after the platform campaign has ended.\(^1\)

Holman ordered local public servants: the police, school teachers and clerks of Petty Sessions, to form the nucleus of the local Recruiting Associations. They in turn were to ask others to join: Mayors and shire presidents, clergymen, 'energetic business and professional men', and other private citizens.\(^2\) A network of around 260 associations were established, half of them by mid-July.\(^3\) The local headquarters was invariably the local government chambers.\(^4\) Holman wrote to all mayors and shire presidents telling them of his government's scheme. He urged them to join.\(^5\) They responded. J. Garlick summarised their patriotic and recruiting endeavours in his 1915-16 annual report on the workings of his newly-formed Local Government Department: 'The bulk of the work has, of course, fallen upon the mayors and presidents, and the town and shire clerks.'\(^6\) Holman's 'energetic' professional men also joined the Associations: a doctor was president at Picton and a police magistrate at Tamworth.\(^7\) Judging from the restricted local government franchise\(^8\) the local councils were dominated by males from the

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\(^1\) Letter from W.A. Holman to Senator Pearce, 27 July 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4704, file 15/5771.

\(^2\) SMH, 2 July 1915.

\(^3\) DT, 13, 17 July 1915; SMH, 16 July 1915.

\(^4\) J.H. Catts' newspaper *The Call to Arms*, 10 March 1916, lists 254 War Service Committees, which the Recruiting Associations were renamed when the federal government began its first Australia-wide recruiting campaign in December 1915. Of the 254, 200 had their headquarters given as the local government chambers, 42 at private addresses, 6 at schools, 2 at courthouses, 2 at police stations, one at a rectory, and one at a Government Savings Bank. Calculations from *Call to Arms*.

\(^5\) SMH, 9 July 1915.


\(^7\) SMH, 4, 6 August 1915.

\(^8\) See Chapter 2, page 70 , footnote 1.
middle classes.\footnote{Keith Swan in his book, \textit{A History of Wagga Wagga}, Sydney, 1970, provides striking evidence of this. See Appendix 1, 'Municipal Aldermen', pp.188-91. Of the eighteen aldermen who served in portions of the years 1914-18, two were listed as graziers; one a farmer; two as professionals (accountant, solicitor); eleven businessmen (baker, butcher, draper, tailor, two storekeepers, dealer, agent, wool merchant, sawmill proprietor, hotelkeeper); a clerk and one labourer.} Partly to counter this, W.M. Hughes at the end of 1915 ordered that a member from each local Political Labor League be represented on the district recruiting committee.\footnote{Press statement by J.H. Catts, organising secretary of the NSW Recruiting Committee, \textit{SMH}, 26 January 1916. The PLL representative was to serve on the local confidential sub-committee of five, which was to consider the war card returns. Hughes explained to a private meeting on 23 December 1915 that he had given assurances to Labor bodies who, according to Catts, 'were a bit uneasy at the form of the questions required to be answered'. See also \textit{SMH}, 25 January 1916: because of the intrusion of 'party politics' and the suggestion that their group was not 'representative', the Mayor of Leichhardt (T. Hastings), supported by Aldermen Blackwell, Simpson and Lambert, resigned from the Leichhardt Recruiting Committee.} There were difficulties in securing representation at Inverell. William Webster, Labor MHR for Gwydir wrote: 'It looks as though hook or by crook the silvertails mean to run the show.'\footnote{Letter from William Webster to J.H. Catts, 23 January 1916, enclosing letters from the secretary of the Inverell PLL, 18, 19 January 1916, who alleged that the Mayor and his Committee were preventing Labor representation. J.H. Catts papers, NL, MS 658, series 1.} Presumably a great proportion of the local councillors were men either over or near the maximum military age of forty-five or likely to be rejected for military service. But they, as members of the Recruiting Associations, were asked to discharge the disagreeable and complementary task to the platform speeches: moral pressure was to be put on men of military age by exhausting canvassing in each locality.

To aid the canvass, local policemen compiled a census from the electoral rolls. The names of men eighteen to forty-five years 'who have no encumbrances and who are eligible for service' were selected and given to the district...
Recruiting Association. Policemen were instructed to furnish daily progress reports on local enlistments to the Inspector-General of Police. The latter passed the information to the Premier, who had made the Premier's Department and himself the central point of the state recruiting machine. Near the end of July the associations had the names of 7,000 men who had said that they would volunteer almost immediately.

Holman had to remove one obstacle to recruiting. Until the end of July policemen had been rewarded with ten shillings by his government for every recruit they had found. On 1 April Prime Minister Fisher said that the fee was unnecessary. But Holman continued the practice. Like Holman's later decision to pay the recruiting expenses of politicians, the capitation fee provoked anger and misinterpretation of motives. 'It is I find a handicap when speaking to any eligible men, to be confronted with the remark "are you after the ten shillings"', wrote the police constable at Fig-Tree. Like other policemen, he wanted the fee abolished. The Dubbo Political Labor League complained to Fisher. As country volunteers had to report to policemen in order to collect their free rail pass to the Sydney enrolment

1DT, 8 July 1915. See also letters from W.A. Holman to Andrew Fisher, 9 July 1915, and James Mitchell, Inspector-General of Police to Holman, 13 July 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4703, file 15/4935. Mitchell said that in Sydney a census was being made of all unmarried males 17 to 60 years; but in the country two lists were being compiled of males 18 to 45. The first list had the names of immediate volunteers; the second of those less willing.

2DT, 17 July 1915.

3Letter from W.A. Holman to Senator Pearce, 27 July 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4704, file 15/5771.

4Letter from Andrew Fisher to W.A. Holman, 1 April 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4702, file 15/4475. Fisher said that recruiting by Mayors and shire presidents was preferable to using the police.

5Minute by W.A. Holman, 8 July 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4702, file 15/4475.

6Letter dated 28 July 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4704, file 15/5754. Several other letters on the file conveyed the same sentiments.
centre, the league said that the policemen were making money 'at the expense of another's patriotism'. Fisher passed the league's letter to Holman. In view of the certain amount of dissatisfaction, Holman ended the payment on 29 July.

In mid-July Holman circularised the state politicians asking for their help as recruiters: their names would help him to plan a co-ordinated recruiting tour. Parliament was to be adjourned from 28 July until 10 August. He also asked another group to help. He told the businessmen at a special meeting in the Sydney Town Hall on 13 July that two more years of war 'was a possibility which must be rationally contemplated'. Soldiers must be found: he urged them to enforce two policies. First, to assure their employees that their jobs would be secure upon their discharge from the army. Secondly, to employ 'the labour of women to set our men free to go to the front'. He hoped that their resolutions would 'be a guide to the industrial population of New South Wales as to the course they ought to pursue'. The business leaders supported him. The retiring president of the Chamber of Commerce, F.E. Winchcombe MLC, said it 'was a time of extraordinary sacrifice'. The president of the Employers' Federation, William Brooks, agreed: 'The best recruiting agents were the mothers of Australia. Women should feel more pride and satisfaction in mourning a fallen hero than in contemplating those who could have gone but had stayed at home instead.'

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1 Letter from Andrew Fisher to W.A. Holman, 15 July 1915, containing enclosed letter from J.F. Wilson, secretary of the Dubbo PLL to Fisher, 25 June 1915; NSWPDC, Box 7/4704, file 15/5754.

2 Minute by W.A. Holman, 29 July 1915.

3 A copy of this circular letter from Holman, dated 15 July 1915, was used as waste paper and appears on the back of file B17/260, NSWPDC, Box 7/4754.

4 SMH, 14 July 1915.

5 Ibid. Other speakers were the Lord Mayor, R.W. Richards; Senator Millen; Sir William McMillan; W. Vicars, president of the Chamber of Manufacturers; C. Lloyd Jones, president of the Master Retailers' Association.
To minimise the inconvenience of long distance travel for country recruits, Sydney's function as the sole recruiting centre for New South Wales was now shared with seven strategically located country towns. New recruits were medically examined, enlisted and railed from these subsidiary centres directly to the Liverpool training camp.¹ War posters and literature were printed by the Government Printer and distributed by the agencies of police, the railways and lands departments throughout the state.² As J.D. Fitzgerald put it: 'The Government is intent upon giving every young man the fullest opportunity of volunteering.'³

The recruiting campaign burst into activity on 31 July. A team of prominent citizens harangued an enthusiastic crowd at the Exhibition Building in Prince Alfred Park. The Governor opened the appeal. The Chief Justice, Sir William Cullen; the Anglican and Roman Catholic Archbishops, Wright and Kelly; the Premier; the leaders of the state and federal Opposition Liberal parties, Wade and Cook; the federal Assistant Minister for Defence, Senator Gardiner; Sir Joseph Carruthers; the chairman of the Interstate Commission, A.B. Piddington; and the military commandant, Colonel Wallack, all pleaded for more soldiers. After the speeches, the following motion was passed with acclamation:

That in the opinion of this meeting, we have reached a crisis in the present war, demanding that every physically-fit man of military age, unencumbered by family ties and not directly engaged in the production of warlike supplies, should offer himself for service in the Australian Expeditionary Forces.⁴

Earlier that same evening, Premier Holman had received an unexpected reception at another kind of recruiting meeting. Accompanied by Wade, he had arrived at the Sydney Stadium. A boisterous Saturday night crowd of 16,000 had gathered for

¹DT, 13 July 1915. The seven centres were Narrabri, Armidale, West Maitland, Dubbo, Lithgow, Goulburn and Cootamundra.

²SMH, 16 July 1915.

³Ibid., 6 August 1915.

⁴DT, 30, 31 July 1915. This motion was probably drafted by Holman.
a long awaited battle: Les Darcy was to fight the American Eddie McGoorty. A group of wounded and bandaged soldiers were greeted with applause and cheering as they filed onto the boxing ring. The noise subsided. Holman stepped forward to begin his address. The crowd erupted. 'A low growl, swelling to a mighty roar of hoots, and then the rhythmic crash of "the count", with a wild defiant "out!" to end it.' Holman shouted into the disorderly mob for several minutes, but in spite of a plea from one soldier 'to give them a chance, old sports', both politicians were forced to leave the stadium without being heard.

Judging from the press correspondence, many people reacted angrily to the Stadium rowdies. The most significant reaction was expressed in a Telegraph letter. 'It is high time', wrote the correspondent, 'that some system of universal service was brought in, and those young men made to realise the duty they owe to their country.' The stadium incident provided striking evidence to those like the Telegraph correspondent who presumed the youthfulness of the crowd: it confirmed their suspicions that 'shirkers' existed in scandalous numbers.

In the first week of the recruiting drive, one hundred and fifty well-advertised meetings were held in Sydney and the country towns. State politicians, organised into small teams and assigned to cover specific parts of New South Wales, dominated the drive. They were aided by local officials, clergymen, lawyers and academics, and a handful of federal politicians. At Tamworth the president of the Recruiting Association, police magistrate H.F. Roberts, chaired the meeting. Mayor W. Green, Wilfred Blacket KC and D.R. Hall addressed the crowd. Hall said that the young volunteers

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1 Ibid., 2 August 1915. See also DT, 15 August 1916: Les Darcy was reported as enlisting in Brisbane; he had volunteered at the outbreak of war, but was rejected as he was under nineteen years of age.

2 DT, 2 August 1915.

3 Calculation made from DT, 30 July-6 August 1915.
'went to glory and adventure and to romance'. Speakers at Sydney meetings on 6 August included J.D. Fitzgerald, C.G. Wade and Professor Peden at Chatswood; Reverend Percy Watson, Thomas Henley and W.E.V. Robson, members for Burwood and Ashfield who spoke at Summer Hill; and T.G. Hoskins, E.J. Loxton KC and barrister F.S. Boyce who spoke to a meeting in Hoskins' electorate at Dulwich Hill.  

Recruiters were not popular in all quarters. The reaction of the Stadium crowd to Holman and Wade, although no doubt partly influenced by alcohol, does show some of the popular distaste felt for recruiters, who, from a position of safety, were urging others to their possible deaths. At a lunchtime recruiting meeting in George Street, the Rev. Dr Carruthers appealed to young men to help the 'worthy' cause. 'Why don't you enlist?' a man interrupted. 'Why don't you lead the way? it is up to you', Carruthers retorted. 'Only for the age limit I would gladly have gone and faced the risk.' Some recruiters no doubt shared the opinion of Dr J.B. Nash, who wrote of some younger acquaintances: 'Both the Fisher boys should be bundled off to the war, it will make men of them if anything can.' Tom Barker of the IWW epitomised the aversion to middle-aged and frequently middle class recruiters. His famous poster of July 1915 declared:

1 SMH, 6 August 1915. Mayors presided at recruiting meetings at Waverley, Paddington, Alexandria, Albury, Leichhardt, see SMH, 2, 3, 11 August 1915. See also Holman's statement to the Assembly that payment of expenses had been promised to the recruiting speakers: 'the clergy, the bar, the medical profession; the military men, private citizens and politicians'; NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.60, p.2381, 6 October 1915.

2 SMH, 6 August 1915. F.S. Boyce was the son of Archdeacon F.B. Boyce.

3 Ibid., 3 August 1915. Senator Millen spoke of the Dardenelles and asked his audience: 'What are you going to do about it now?' Someone replied: 'What are you going to do yourself?' Millen explained: 'Unfortunately, I have reached the wrong side of 50. But...my services are at the disposal of my country.'; ibid.

4 Letter from Dr J.B. Nash to his family, 21-23 November 1915. War Letters of J.B. Nash, ML, uncat. MS 245.
TO ARMS!
Capitalists, Parsons, Politicians,
Landlords, Newspaper Editors and
Other Stay-At-Home Patriots.

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS

YOU

IN THE TRENCHES !!

WORKERS

Follow Your Masters

Barker was convicted at the Central Police Court. Some recruiters countered this antipathy: David Storey, Thomas Henley, Robert Hollis, Professor David and A.G. Ralston KC told their listeners that their own sons were at the front.

Holman helped to foster dislike of recruiters. After three weeks on the platform he said that the time had arrived for a 'universal' national effort. Could the effort be best obtained by volunteers or by conscripts he asked? 'When one reads of the whole of the undergraduates of Oxford and Cambridge serving in the trenches', he declared, men who represent the intellectual light of Britain, and upon whom Britain will have to rely for leadership in the years to come - one cannot help feeling that it is a pity there is not some power to intervene and send these men back to the positions where they would be doing still more valuable service for their country, and replace them at the front by other men who are equally good as fighters, but whose departure for the front would cause a lesser gap in civil life.

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2 SMH, 15 September 1915. The poster had been circulated in several parts of Sydney in mid-July. Harris, op.cit., 243, says that this conviction was quashed on appeal.

3 SMH, 3 August 1915. Henley's son, Captain Leslie Henley, was killed in France, aged 23 years. He had been a university student when he had enlisted; see DT, 23 August 1916. See also SMH, 10 October 1916: Lt. G.H. Peden, a younger brother of Professor J.B. Peden, was reported to be wounded.

4 DT, 23 August 1915.
There would have been less criticism had he made a general case pointing out that conscription would allow for more rational manpower controls in all fields, including the industrial. At least there was an argument for some kind of manpower policy. For instance on 14 August, an officer from the Office of the Chief Commissioner for Railways and Tramways asked E.B. Harkness if skilled men could be retained: 'considerable numbers of Fitters, Boilermakers, Machinists etc' were joining the army. They were needed in the locomotive workshops to prepare the engines for the forthcoming wheat crop.  

Holman concluded that if conscription were necessary, then conscripts could not be paid at the volunteer rate of six shillings each day. Conscription 'would have to be on the French model, and men who served with the colors would have to practically give their services without remuneration'. Such chilling attitudes and tactless articulation, coming from a prominent politician, did much to damage the case for conscription before it had gathered momentum in September: Holman had selected the intellectual elite, drawn overwhelmingly from the middle classes, for special exemption from the risk of death.

The Worker reacted angrily. The Premier's callous statements showed him to be 'entirely indifferent to the feelings of those who made him what he is....Mr. Holman is a Liberal, and a snobbish Liberal at that. He should be made get into his own class.' The Bulletin agreed. 'It should help the men who sweat for a living to measure up the glib and shallow humbug who has been masquerading as a "leader of the democracy" all these years.' University men were 'the sons of the wealthy' Richard Bramston told the Labor Council.

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1 Letter from J.S. Spurway, secretary, Office of the Chief Commissioner to E.B. Harkness, secretary, Premier's Department, 14 August 1915; NSWPDC, Box 7/4727, file B16/169. See also NSWIG, Vol.8, August 1915, p.369, in which it was said that if enlistments continue at the current rate 'there will be a shortage of labour in both skilled and unskilled industries'.

2 DT, 23 August 1915.

3 AW, 26 August 1915.

They had rushed in as strike-breakers in the past: 'Why should these capitalistic sons of luxury be the special concern of Mr. Holman, a Labor Premier?' A workingman, John Kerr, wrote to Holman asking him to contradict the 'meaning they put on your supposed utterances. That the trenches are only for the working classes. Not for Oxford or Cambridge students.' Years before he had worked with Holman, the young cabinet-maker; now he defended him: 'I have a bitter fight each day for they say it must be true for you have never contradicted it. I still deny the assertion or construction that they want to put on it I told them I would write you for proffs [sic].'

By late August some disillusionment was beginning to creep into public discussions about the results of the mammoth recruiting campaign. Nine country Recruiting Associations sent messages to the Premier reporting the apparent apathy shown by the eligible men in their respective districts. Casino and Leeton associations urged that the 'time is ripe for the state to mobilise the whole of its force by conscription.' Agitation against 'shirkers' accompanied the uneasiness over the rate of voluntary recruiting. Self-appointed patriots posted white feathers to young men who had not yet joined the army. Such harassment provoked offense, particularly as many of the recipients had apparently enlisted or had been rejected on medical grounds.

At the end of three weeks Holman singled out the 'backsliders': over 10,000 country men had promised their local Recruiting Associations that they would enlist

1 *AW*, 2 September 1915.

2 Letter from John Kerr to W.A. Holman, 30 August 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4705, file 15/6918. Kerr gave his address as care of Anthony Hordern and Sons Cabinet Factory, Redfern. His letter ended: 'I remain one of your old shop mates.'

3 *DT*, 21 August 1915.

4 These seem to have been distributed first in the Sydney suburb of Manly.

5 *DT*, 31 August 1915. In May 1916 a Rejected Volunteers' Association was formed. See letter from W.A. Claydon to W.A. Holman, 26 May 1916, NSWPDC, Box 7/4719, file A16/3579.
immediately; they had failed to do so. He wrote a circular which was to be delivered by the local recruiters. His appeal anticipated W.M. Hughes' *A Call to Arms* which was given to Australian men during December 1915. Like the white feathers, it provoked hostility. 'At a time like the present we all have to make sacrifices', Holman wrote.

Parents have a duty to perform in this hour of trial. The fate of the whole British Empire is at stake. Only by uniting our strength can we hope to drive the invader out of Europe... What the Germans did to the women and children of Belgium they will do to the ones we love if they ever land on British soil.

...Parents should not hold their sons back if they wish to join the colors. The cause is a sacred one. They go to fight for the honor of women and the lives of little children. Surely that is enough? Need any more be said? Kitchener's appeal for men is urgent. Please let your son go! All through July Holman had been uneasy at the apparent indifference towards the war: the response to the intensive recruiting drive sharpened his opinion. He wrote to the Mayor of Newtown on 30 August: '...the responsibilities of those in charge have been much increased by a general failure on the part of the population - aided by the Press - to realise either the dimensions or the seriousness of the struggle.' He felt embattled by circumstances:

The more fully we have realised the truth of the position and the more we have felt compelled to do strange and unusual things, the more we have incurred the risk of condemnation of "slow-thinking" and thick-headed people who cannot understand that there is any ground for departing from the ruts of last year....

It takes a long while for the thought to sink in that everything is changed and even now that fact is only realised by the comparatively few.

1 *DT, SMH*, 23 August 1915.
2 *DT*, 9 September 1915.
3 *DT*, 23 August 1915. There seems to have been two circulars. *SMH*, 23 August 1915, gives a different version in which men were urged to volunteer at 6/- per day as conscription was likely to be introduced with pay 'at less than 6s[hillings] a week'.
4 Letter from W.A. Holman to Frank Bamfield, Mayor of Newtown, 30 August 1915, *NSWPDC*, Box 7/4705, file 15/6890.
Sir Joseph Carruthers thought the same: 'Unfortunately, too many of my countrymen are calmly indifferent, and are content to watch the course of events without feeling any sense of personal responsibility.' ¹ Both the Labor and the Liberal politician sought a remedy for 'indifference': they advocated conscription.

Disappointment was fostered by uncertain statistics: it was impossible to discover just how recruiting was faring. Recruiting tallies were compiled on the basis of military districts, and the military authorities were too pressed during 1915 to provide similar figures for each state.² They even had difficulty in keeping up with the demand for up-to-date results in each military district. The position was peculiarly upsetting for the recruiters of New South Wales, the second military district: sections of the north and south of the state were included in the first (Queensland) and the third (Victoria), while large numbers of men from Broken Hill joined the army in the fourth (South Australia) military districts respectively. As these extremities of New South Wales included populous areas, particularly Broken Hill, the third city in the state, the real results were diminished: the corresponding results of the adjacent states were inflated.³

Their status as members of the 'mother colony' provoked New South Welshmen to compute figures which would give their state a competitive edge over the rival state of Victoria. Parochialism had been present since the outbreak of war, as the Governor-General had observed in November 1914 after HMAS Sydney had sunk the Emden: 'There is considerable inter-State competition for naval and military glory, of which the

¹ *SMH*, 10 August 1915.
² *SMH*, 14 August 1915. Recruiting figures used by the State War Council of NSW during 1916 agree with those in Scott, *op.cit.*, Appendix 3.
last example was in Sydney the day after the Emden was accounted for, when the most common comment was "I am glad it was not the 'Melbourne'". By 1 September 1915, Victoria was strongly in the van. Enlistment figures, which Holman had received from the Prime Minister's secretary, showed the total contribution of each military district for the first year of the war (4 August 1914 to 14 August 1915). The figures for the two most populous military districts were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military District</th>
<th>Total Enlistments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd Military District (New South Wales)</td>
<td>37,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Military District (Victoria)</td>
<td>46,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Australia</td>
<td>124,094</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With figures supplied by the New South Wales Inspector-General of Police, these figures were adjusted to the unit of the State:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Adjusted Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>49,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>46,179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lt.-Colonel Luscombe, the officer in charge of recruiting in the second military district, doubted this reckoning. He estimated that his department processed a weekly average of 1,500 men: accordingly the minimum figure for New South Wales over the year must have been 48,000 men enlisted. Both calculations were great underestimations. Scott's figures for the two states to the end of July 1915 — that is, after Victoria's massive July campaign and immediately before a comparable effort had begun in New South Wales — show enlistments to be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Enlistments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>56,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>49,394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Personal despatch from Governor-General Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson to the Secretary of State for Colonies, 21 November 1914. Novar papers, NL, MS.696/622.
2DT, 1 September 1915.
3Ibid.
4SMH, 2 September 1915.
5Scott, op.cit., Appendix 3, p.871.
Thus the enlistments from August 1914 to July 1915 were underestimated by roughly 15,300.¹

Statistical calculations for the August drive were equally disturbing: the total number of volunteers for the month was thought to be near 2,000. Even this count was inaccurate, for part of the total, namely 810, was expanded to become in 'round numbers 1,000'.² This figure was wrong. In early September, Acting Premier J.H. Cann, while expressing his amazement at the present 'lull' in recruiting produced the state's total for August. These figures, calculated on the basis of police estimations adjusted to those of the military, put the number of enlistments at 11,801.³ A few days later Holman produced another set of figures. With the permission of military authorities, he employed public servants from his Premier's Department to delve into military records and found that the August total was around 18,000.⁴ He admitted that even these figures were useless, as they were culled from medical registers, and hence took no account of those who had been rejected from the army on medical grounds. Thus the exhaustive methods of the August drive seemed to have been squandered for relatively poor results: there was no spectacular rush as there had been in Victoria the previous month.⁵ Moreover there were more eligible men in the eighteen to forty-five age group in New South Wales: roughly 418,000

¹Calculation: Scott's figures less adjusted state figure as printed in DT, 1 September 1915. See also L.L. Robson, 'The Origin and Character of the First A.I.F., 1914-1918: Some Statistical Evidence', in Historical Studies, Vol.15, No.61, October 1973, pp.737-49. Robson suspects from his 0.5 percent sample of the attestation papers that Scott's figures, Appendix 3, may be inaccurate for the early period of the war August 1914 to June 1915, see p.740. Whatever the facts about the rate of enlistment, contemporaries were concerned about the apparent shortage of volunteers.

²DT, 28 August 1915.

³SMH, 7 September 1915. Cann's figure was about 10,000 short of Scott's figure.

⁴Ibid., 10 September 1915.

⁵See Scott, op.cit., p.871: the Victorian July campaign produced 21,698 enlistments for the month; the August campaign in NSW brought 12,991.
to Victoria's 296,000.¹

It is difficult to discover how many soldiers the recruiters believed that New South Wales should supply. The Herald seems to have thought that around 1,200 to 1,500 volunteers were needed each week, so that after the rejections for medical reasons, the weekly enlistment would be approximately 1,000 recruits: enough to man a battalion.² If 1,000 soldiers were gained each week, the total for the year would have been 52,000. New South Wales enlistments exceeded this figure: 56,171 joined the army in the period August 1914 to July 1915; and 58,661 during August 1915 to July 1916.³ But during the year preceding Hughes' announcement of the conscription referendum, the Herald's weekly summaries fostered the opinions of the conscriptionists.⁴ In practice fixed weekly enlistment rates received less attention: anxious recruiters simply wanted more men more quickly. As Professor David put it: 'Every serviceable man should be enrolled as soon as possible.'⁵

Recruiters were mistaken as to the number of men who had enlisted from New South Wales during the first year of the

¹SMH, 22 July 1915, press statement by Senator Pearce. The figures were as at 30 December 1914.

²See SMH, 30 April, 17 May, 19 June, 6 July 1915. The daily totals and their descriptions are respectively 150, 'Good Muster'; 200 'Record Recruiting'; 183, 'An Excellent Muster'; 219, 'A Good Day'. To produce a weekly total these daily figures are multiplied by seven: 1050, 1400, 1281, 1533. For confirmation see SMH, 31 July, 28 September, 2 October 1915: the daily totals were respectively 100, 'Poor Muster'; 104, 'Another Poor Day'; 87, 'A Poor Day's Work'. If multiplied by seven the weekly totals would be 700, 728, 609. See also SMH, 27 September 1915: 'Poor Response Last Week. Less than a Thousand' (i.e. 970); 13 December 1915: 'A Disappointing Week' (i.e. 830).

³Calculations from Scott, op.cit., p.871. The average weekly enlistment rate for the two periods respectively was 1080.21 and 1128.09.


⁵SMH, 20 July 1915.
war; but they may have been right to suspect that their state lagged behind Victoria. If we take the figures on eligible men in each state, then 16.54 and 18.03 per cent had enlisted up to the end of August 1915 from New South Wales and Victoria respectively. On a proportional basis, but not an alarming one, New South Wales was thus contributing slightly fewer soldiers.

But there were reasons to make men hesitate. Holman pointed to three possible deterrents: the demand for rural labour, the notoriety of Liverpool Camp, and rejections on 'frivolous' grounds. Rural labour was needed for two reasons: the drought and the wheat harvest. 'New South Wales...is today passing through one of the severest droughts in its history, and there was never a time when the farmer and grazier had more need of his sons...', wrote W.E. Wearne in July. 'I have two sons anxious and willing to enlist, but at present stock...are so weak that they have almost to be nursed, and the boys must stay a few months longer.' For the majority of wheat farmers the 1914-15 season had 'proved the worst in their experience': the larger acreage planted for the forthcoming 1915-16 season demanded their attention.

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1 Calculated from Pearce's figures published in SMH, 22 July 1915: as at 30 December 1914 there were 418,000 men 18 to 45 in NSW and 296,000 in Victoria. Scott, op.cit., p.871, shows 69,162 enlistments from NSW and 53,377 from Victoria by the end of August 1915.

2 Minute from W.A. Holman to the NSW Parliamentary War Committee, 10 August 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4704, file 15/6042. Holman also saw the problem of erroneous enlistment figures; corrected figures should be obtained urgently: 'This is important.'

3 Letter to the Editor from W.E. Wearne, SMH, 8 July 1915. Wearne won the seat of Namoi as an Independent Nationalist in the March 1917 state election.

4 Letter to the editor from W.M. Kennedy, Tamworth, DT, 11 September 1915.

5 The wheat acreage harvested was as follows: 1913-14 3,205,000 acres; 1914-15 2,758,000 acres; 1915-16 4,189,000 acres. For the same years in order the crops was 38,020,000; 12,831,000; and 66,765,000 bushels. See NSW Statistical Register, 1915-16, p.1006.
Association, supported by F.A. Chaffey, MLA for Tamworth, urged that farmers and farm labourers be released on leave by the army for the harvest until they were needed. The press reports indicated, they said, that 'the number of recruits... is far in excess of the number required...or more than can be readily equipped, or more than the military instructional staff can cope with easily'.

Their opinions, presumably, had been partly influenced by Mr Justice Rich's report on the Liverpool Camp. His investigations were published in the press during late July and August. He had found much to distress him: severe shortages of housing, bedding, uniforms, equipment; a dearth of trained and competent NCOs and officers; poor facilities for cooking, bathing, washing and drying clothes. He was shocked at the privations endured by the volunteers:

There are no mess sheds, and the men are not supposed to take the food into the huts. The dixies are brought to the men as they squat about the ground. In some cases there is a scramble for the food, with the result that the last to come is the least served. Pannikins, to which soil or sand is adhering, are dipped into the dixies...the general practice prevailing in the camp was to clean...[them] with cold water and sand. The sand used must, in many cases, have been impregnated with urine and expectoration.

1 DT, 3 September 1915. Chaffey was an FSA candidate in the 1913 election. Chaffey had volunteered for the army in early August. His letter was read to a Tamworth recruiting meeting by D.R. Hall: 'In this national crisis I feel it is my duty to serve my country, to defend also my wife and children.' SMH, 6 August 1915. See also letter from W.J. Jackson, Commercial Bank, Lockhart, to the Minister for Agriculture [W.C. Graham], 19 July 1915 in NSWWD, Box 7/4707, file 15/8687. Jackson urged that 'expert harvest hands' be prevented from enlisting 'until the next [wheat] harvest is secure'. Unless this were done it was likely that farmers whose sons had joined the army would 'meet with enormous losses in the harvesting of their crops'.

2 See for instance witnesses statements on sanitary and cooking facilities, SMH, 22 July 1915; and Rich's final report, SMH, 21 August 1915.

Most of the Liverpool problems arose from the rapid build-up of the army: severe overcrowding resulted. The average number of soldiers in training camps in the second Military District was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September-December 1914</td>
<td>3,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January-June 1915</td>
<td>6,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July-December 1915</td>
<td>16,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January-June 1916</td>
<td>18,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July-December 1916</td>
<td>11,605</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overcrowding, poor administration and low morale helped to cause desertion and absenteeism. Thomas Henley told the Assembly in September that 30 per cent of enlisted men had deserted. It is likely that Henley exaggerated; he may also have confused absenteeism with desertion. Colonel Kirkland on taking command of an infantry brigade had found roughly one-quarter of its strength absent without leave each day. Mr Justice Rich disclosed a related kind of behaviour: 'there was a very serious discrepancy between the numbers of men passing the doctors' test at the [Victoria] barracks and those actually enlisting.' He did not pursue the matter as it lay beyond the scope of his commission.

Finally, fears about venereal infection among the troops may have affected the August recruiting drive in New South Wales. By the end of August, Dr Arthur's select committee had

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1 Butler, op.cit., Vol.3, p.885. See also Scott, op.cit., p. 227. The approximate figures for all Australian camps during the following months of 1915 were: May, 22,000; July, 33,000; October, 74,000; December, 48,620.

2 SMH, 29 September 1915. The Herald reported interjections and responses which were not recorded in Hansard; see NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.60, p.2151, 28 September: Henley asked Acting-Premier J.H. Cann if 'steps will be taken to deal with the large number of deserters?' The army had problems with soldiers on their final leave before embarkation for the front. An anonymous officer said that desertion was becoming a 'serious' problem: 120 men of 300 soldiers had disappeared during their final leave. See SMH, 10 September 1915.

3 Report on Liverpool Military Camp, op.cit., p.290. The actual number of absentees was 700 to 800 men. See also SMH, 25 March 1916: several men were charged with desertion during late 1915 by the District Court Martial.

met ten times: it had heard evidence from thirteen witnesses, including Professor Welsh, Dr Bray and Dr Worrall. 1 J.D. Fitzgerald wrote on 3 August: 'Certain rumours are afloat to the effect that of the soldiers who have returned from Egypt, there are a number who are sick, but not from wounds or ordinary illness contracted at the front.' 2

Disappointment with the rate of enlistment had its roots in August 1914: many had enthusiastically adopted Fisher's call for 'the last man'. They attempted to dragoon every possible recruit into the army. Their methods provoked resistance. They confronted those who felt less impassioned for their cause: the acquiescent people. For their failure to respond in the required manner, the eligible men were branded, in Holman's words, as 'cowards and slackers'. 3 But abuse provoked resentment, not shame. Moreover the acquiescent group, by late 1915, had grown suspicious of exploitation: they were disturbed by rising prices. 4 The apparent fizzle of the August drive fed existing doubts that a large group of men were deliberately evading their military responsibilities. Moreover, as Professor Welsh put it, Australians had an 'historic incompetence' in that they could not cope with a crisis: 5 'we do not know when the nation will awake to its

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1. Prevalence of Venereal Diseases, op.cit. The committee met on 13, 15, 20, 27 July, 11, 17, 19, 24, 26, 31 August 1915. It also heard evidence on 14, 16, 21, 28, 30 September, 4, 10 November, 13 December 1915.

2. Letter from J.D. Fitzgerald on behalf of the Premier, to W.M. Hughes, 3 August 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4709, file 15/9620. 'All venereal patients returned from Egypt to New South Wales are placed in a special camp under a guard', replied W.M. Hughes. '...There have, however, been cases of escape from the isolation camps, but the Garrison Military Police, who are always on the look out for men who have broken from these camps, have been successful in making a number of arrests.' Letter from W.M. Hughes to W.A. Holman, 11 November 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4709, file 15/9620.

3. NSW Parli. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.60, p.2381, 6 October 1915. Bishop Long also used these words, see SMH, 6 July 1915.


responsibility. The pro-war idealists in New South Wales sought a means to discipline the 'slackers' and to organise immediate 'national efficiency'.

The Universal Service League was created. On 11 September an influential group declared that they would agitate for 'compulsory and universal war service for all classes' at home and abroad. In its manifesto the league declared that the military position was critical for the British Empire. Further, in comparison to the 'Mother-country' Australia had 'not done enough'. The war was likely to be prolonged, so 'we must also prepare for the future'. More soldiers would be needed: 'It is now evident that voluntary effort is not meeting these requirements.' What the principle of universal service meant and how it was to be achieved remained undecided, for the controversy provoked by the league was fought around its first priority: conscription. As the league put it: 'Our first duty is to send more men to the front.'

These views echoed the main thrust of the argument advanced by Philip Kerr, the editor of the Round Table, in his article 'The Burden of Victory'. This was printed in the June 1915 number, which went on sale in Sydney during late July.

1Ibid., p.29.

2Universal Service League Manifesto, DT, SMH, 11 September 1915.

3Ibid.

4'The Burden of Victory', Round Table, No.19, Vol.5, June 1915, pp.511-20; the contents of this edition were reviewed on the Red Page, Bulletin, 22 July 1915. The contributors at this time were anonymous; their writings, according to Round Table practice, were discussed and sometimes modified by an editorial committee. See J.R.M. Butler, Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr) 1882-1940, London, 1960, pp.43-4: the periodical was founded 'to work for such a reorganisation of the imperial system as would offer means of marshalling the whole strength and resources of the Empire effectively behind its will'. The founders, Kerr and Lionel Curtis, wanted to influence 'a small circle whose opinions formed the opinions of others'. As the first edition of 1910 makes clear, they feared the growing power of Germany; see Round Table, No.1, Vol.1, November 1910, introductory article, pp.1-5; and its first article 'Anglo-German Rivalry', pp.7-40. Both were written by Kerr; see Butler, op.cit., Appendix 1, Round Table articles by Lord Lothian.
Because of the military strength of Germany and Austria-Hungary, he declared that the Great War must be a war of attrition and exhaustion. The winners would be the side which had the last half million men armed and trained: 'And if, as is likely, we have to kill or disable another 2,000,000 Germans before the road to Germany itself is clear, it means that not very far short of that number of English, French and Russians must be killed or disabled too. That is the conclusion.'¹ Thus his concern was 'the most fundamental problem of all - the provision of armed men'.² Volunteer methods were haphazard: now the British government must tell all 'able-bodied citizens how they are to employ themselves to the end of the war'.³ Moreover, they could use the manpower reservoir of the outer Empire: 'the Dominions have done less than we have done, and have been slower to realize the responsibility which rests upon them. That is natural and inevitable.' But he believed it probable that success would depend 'on whether the Dominions come forward, as we have still to come forward, with their last horse and their last man'.⁴ However the 'great difficulty' of the war had been 'to bring home to the British people how serious was the task before them'.⁵ The Empire, he said, stood 'at the parting of the ways': its government should act decisively. He anticipated by implication the Universal Service League: no government 'can fail to respond to strong public opinion'.⁶ A maximum war effort was needed to prevent 'an inconclusive peace' with Germany. He concluded: 'It is for every citizen to examine in his conscience how this duty is to be discharged.'⁷

¹Round Table, No.19, Vol.5, June 1915, p.512.
²Ibid., pp.513-4.
³Ibid., pp.514-5.
⁴Ibid., p.516.
⁵Ibid., p.517. Kerr urged that Dominion leaders be summoned to an informal conference where they 'can learn the real inwardness of the situation'.
⁶Ibid., pp.518-9.
⁷Ibid., p.520.
A small group of men in Sydney shared Kerr's opinions. During August they met to establish the Universal Service League: 1 Professor T.W.E. David, became the first president; T.R. Bavin and J.D. Fitzgerald MLC became the joint secretaries; the others were Professor J.B. Peden, H.Y. Braddon, J.C. Watson, Hector Lamond, F.S. Boyce, John Garland MLC and C.G. Wade. 2 Peden and Bavin, who had been undergraduate contemporaries at the Sydney University law school, with Braddon, were members of the Sydney Round Table group. 3 Several other league members may have also belonged to the Round Table; 4 certainly many within the league would have been readers of it, for 'at that time in no other periodical except the Round Table could there be found a continuous account of current events in Australia'. 5 Access to privileged and secret information helped to influence their movement: J.C. Watson had talked with British leaders.

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1 The exact date cannot be established; but on 20 August 1915 T.R. Bavin wrote to J.G. Latham in Melbourne saying, 'We are starting an organisation here to be called (provisionally) The Universal Service League.' Latham papers, ML, MS.1009.

2 Statement by J.D. Fitzgerald, DT, 30 June 1916.

3 See A. Boswell [Margaret Dalrymple Hay], A High Adventure, typescript, 1936, T.R. Bavin papers, NL, MS.1631. Hay, secretary at the Law School, later a member of the Council of the Nationalist Party and of the U.A.P., wrote the script as an account of the political career of Sir Thomas Rainsford Bavin. See pp.72-3 for Bavin's and Peden's foundation membership of the Round Table. See also Portus, Happy Highways, op.cit., p.232: Portus was invited to become a Round Table member in 1920: members of the group were Braddon, Professors M.W. MacCallum and J.B. Peden, and Dr Norman Kater - all were foundation members of the USL.

4 For instance, among the twenty-four guests at Government House to meet Lionel Curtis, twelve were members of the USL: they were Holman, Cann, Hall, Black, Fitzgerald, Sir Thomas Hughes, Watson, Braddon, Peden, Bavin, Professor Holme and A.E. D'Arcy: see DT, 28 August 1916, Personal Column. See also SMH, 28 August 1916: Curtis was met by Professor MacCallum when he arrived in Sydney.

5 Portus, op.cit., p.232. Portus adds: 'It may have been conservative in general outlook, but it was well-informed and reliable.'
during his overseas trip. He had returned to Sydney on 30 July.¹

Throughout August, the original band privately recruited members for the league among their friends and acquaintances in business, politics, law, the university, the churches and the labour movement. Many of those that joined, like themselves, had participated in the first recruiting drive. Fitzgerald enlisted Holman;² and Bavin his father-in-law, the influential businessman and Liberal politician, F.E. Winchcombe MLC.³ Thus, among the organisations represented on the Universal Service League were included the University Senate, the Red Cross, the Millions Club, the National Council of Women, the British Empire League, and the Union Club.⁴

¹See SMH, 31 July 1915. He had spent five months in Britain, USA and Canada. See also SMH, 13 May 1915: among the guests at a lunch in London was Lewis Harcourt, Secretary of State for Colonies, and R. Muirhead Collins, official secretary of the Australian High Commission. Collins, a friend of Bavin, corresponded with him during the war. According to Hay, Collins enlarged on the fiasco of the Antwerp expedition; alleged that the battle of Neuve Chapelle was less successful than publicly believed; predicted that the Dardenelles expedition would fail; and was critical of War Office blunders and methods, see [M.D. Hay], A High Adventure, op.cit., pp.49-50, 90-2. See also p.57: J.C. Watson had suggested that Bavin stand as a federal Labor candidate in 1906.

²Statement by J.D. Fitzgerald, DT, 30 June 1916: 'I was one of those who interviewed Mr. Holman to ask him to join the league. He was just back from a country recruiting campaign.'

³Winchcombe, the retiring president of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, declared during his presidential address on 29 July: 'I think the time has arrived when enlistment should be compulsory. Voluntary enlistment no longer meets the emergency.' See SMH, 30 July 1915. Winchcombe was a director of the AMP Society.

⁴Calculations based on the published membership of the USL, SMH, 11, 14 September 1915: 9 from the 30 member Senate, see NSW Parl. Papers, session 1914-15, Vol.1, p.918; 6 from the 30 man NSW Red Cross Executive, SMH, 1 December 1915; 7 from the Millions Club, 1918 council, in Novar papers, miscellaneous correspondence, NL, MS.696, series 7956-8558; 6 from the National Council of Women, SMH, 11 September 1915; 9 from the British Empire League, SMH, 25 May 1915. See also DT, 18 February 1915: the 'few old personal friends' of J.C. Watson who farewelled him at a dinner prior to his departure overseas included J.G. Cann, J.D. Fitzgerald, Hector Lamond and Arthur Rickard: all joined the USL. See also Roy H. Goddard, The Union Club: 1857-1957, Sydney, 1957. The USL members were H.Y. Braddon, Samuel Hordern, J. Russell French, Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart and later Dr F. Antill Pockley.
The Universal Service League claimed that it was representative of 'all classes, creeds and parties'. There is sufficient information to enable classification of the 110 members of the provisional committee according to their occupation or group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's organisations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>110</td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*includes eight unidentified occupations.

The claim of representativeness was misleading: on the basis of both absolute numbers and proportion of the total population, the professional, business and political occupations were over-represented. Conversely, the remaining occupations and groups were poorly represented according to their total numerical strength in society.

The élite dominated the league. The members included Archbishops Wright and Kelly; Bishop Long; the heads of the New South Wales Presbyterian, Methodist and Jewish churches; the Vice-Chancellor of Sydney University; six professors; five other academics; four headmasters of private schools;

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1*DT, SMH, 11 September 1915.*

2*Calculations from Fred Johns's Annual; SMH, DT, 11 September 1915.*

3*Scott West, Woodhouse and Cohen respectively. The 1911 census population figures show the religious affiliation of the NSW population to be: Anglican 45.5 per cent; Roman Catholic 25.5 per cent, Presbyterian 11.3 per cent; Methodist 9.4 per cent; Jewish 0.5 per cent.*

4*King's School, Sydney Grammar School, Newington, and the former head of Ascham.*
the President of the Law Institute; seven King's Counsels; seven other lawyers and three doctors. Of great significance, considering the reaction to the league within the labour movement, was the strength of the commercial group. Their representatives included the President of the Chamber of Commerce, the President of the Chamber of Manufactures, the President of the Employers' Federation, the chairman and five others from the Sydney Stock Exchange; the managers of the two largest banks - the Bank of New South Wales and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney; the manager of the Australian Mutual Provident Society, together with several other managers or representatives of Sydney business houses. Other members were President Rickard of the Millions Club; and the President of the Royal Agricultural Society, Sydney businessman Samuel Hordern.

The politicians were evenly divided between the Liberal and Labor parties: included were the Premier and two-thirds of his cabinet; R.D. Meagher, the Speaker of the Assembly; Frederick Flowers, the President of the Legislative Council; Opposition leader C.G. Wade; J.C. Watson; Sir Joseph Carruthers; and R.W. Richards, the Lord Mayor of Sydney.

The total labour movement representation in the league including politicians, unionists and other representatives amounted to less than 20 per cent. This weakness, although partly offset by the calibre of such leaders as Holman, Watson, Meagher and Black, was diminished by changes in the membership following the publication of the manifesto. First, there was an immediate defection from the league by E.H. Farrar

1 Holman, Cann, Hall, Black, Griffith, Ashford, Fitzgerald. See SMH, 13 September 1915: Holman said that ministerial members of the league had joined as individuals and that the matter had not been discussed at cabinet meetings.

2 The unionists listed as USL members were T.W. Furse, secretary of the AMIEU; Claude Thompson, secretary of the ARTSA; P.T. Turner, secretary of PEDFA; George Lewis, secretary of the Federated Millers' and Mill Employees' Union, and John Talbot, a member of the NSW Labor Council Executive. Talbot and Thompson subsequently opposed conscription.

3 Mrs Kate Dwyer; Annie and Belle Golding, Lamond, manager of the Australian Worker.
MLC, and Mrs Kate Dwyer,¹ and her sisters Belle and Annie Golding.² Second, there was a reinforcement of the conservative group in the league. Fifty names of new members were published on 14 September: twenty were politicians, but only two were Labor men.³ Among the second group were Professor Welsh, Dr Mary Booth and the President of the Undergraduates' Association, H.V. Evatt, the winner of the Beauchamp Prize in 1915 for his historical sketch of Australian politics entitled Liberalism in Australia.⁴

The Universal Service League was a coalition of anxiety: some of its members had sons in the Australian army at Gallipoli or fighting with the British forces on the Western Front; a large proportion were British-born and feared for their homeland;⁵ several were activists in the anti-German agitation; all feared that German barbarism threatened the progress of European civilisation; many had taken part in the August recruiting drive; most were middle-aged; nearly all were from the middle classes. The power which they proposed

¹Both were members of the 1915 PLL Executive.

²See press correspondence SMH, 13, 14, 15 September 1915, AW, 16 September 1915. The three sisters wrote that 'when asked to submit our names for office we were not aware that the true object was conscription...we object to our names appearing to a manifesto of such a Draconian nature that we have had no voice in drawing up, as we were invited to no meeting, public or private, to approve or dissent'; letter to the editor, SMH, 13 September 1915, J.J. Talbot.

³SMH, 14 September 1915: 19 were MLAs, 14 represented rural electorates. Among them were David Storey, J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, J. Perry and P.B. Colquhoun, who took part in the anti-German agitation. The Labor men were Thomas Brown and C.S. Fern, who later joined the army.

⁴H.V. Evatt, Liberalism in Australia, Sydney,1918. In the group were three doctors, two headmasters, a Mayor, a company director: 20 occupations of the 50 cannot be identified from sources such as Fred Johns's Annual.

⁵Details on place of birth could only be found for 40 of the original 110 member provisional committee; of this fraction (36.4 per cent) 21 were born in the British Isles. Most of the others were born in Australasia; J. Russell French and H.Y. Braddon in India; and J.C. Watson in Chile. If all birthplaces could have been discovered it is likely that the Australian-born proportion would prove to be greater.
that the federal ministers should exercise over the total population promised both to regulate society and to mitigate their fears. The need for coercion was reasoned; it seemed necessary if one believed that the British race was in imminent peril. But there was a contradiction between reason and emotion. Professor David told a recruiting rally at Five Dock on 5 August that 'the present war was a war of self-sacrifice, which was bringing together all classes, making us all brothers and sisters throughout the farthest confines of the Empire'. But he evidently felt the need to coerce people and so enforce the sacrifice.

The recruiting drive had partially revealed to the recruiters differing opinions and feelings about the Great War among the younger men: they were stigmatised as the 'slackers'. The Universal Service League's advocacy of conscription disclosed that a diversity of opinion existed among a wider group. Encountering disagreement, some of the pro-conscriptionists helped to turn it into dissension. Bishop Long foreshadowed one attitude which was to aggravate the political divisions of 1917-18. He argued that the state had supreme authority to compel every citizen to do his utmost: 'By this conception there are only two classes of people in the country - those who are willing to defeat the enemy and those who are not...the second class as revealed as enemies of their country', would have to be interned with their German 'sympathisers'.

1 SMH, 6 August 1915.

2 David told the first annual meeting of the Athletic Sports Rifle Club on 28 July 1915 that they should 'learn from our enemies to organise and utilise our great resources and superior numbers'. He believed that the war would 'unquestionably last two years'; see SMH, 29 July 1915. See also M.E. David, Professor David: The Life of Sir Edgcworth David, London, 1937. When David left aboard the troopship Ulysses during February 1916 he wrote to his wife that 'the greatest adventure has really begun'. On 21 April 1916 he wrote again saying 'one feels that one is risking one's life in a good and sacred cause'. David was evidently a reader of famous battles. Shortly before his death he admitted: 'I think it is the romance of war that appeals to me.' See pp.214-5.

3 SMH, 22 September 1915.
The Universal Service League provoked a battle over how the Australian society should function and social relations in it be governed. The debate veered from the theoretical to the practical. 'If it is right that all men should do their duty, and if the community suffers by reason of the default of any person in the performance of such duty', argued Edward Loxton KC, 'why should not the community be entitled to define the duty and enforce its performance?' J.D. Fitzgerald believed that the objective of Labor-Socialists 'was to organize the whole of the services and manhood of the State so as to secure united action for certain social purposes'. The misunderstanding of the 'desperate position' he said, arose from a lack of 'historical perspective and imagination'; the German advance was greater than Bonaparte's: 'We must not allow ourselves to be governed by abstract theories about liberty when liberty is in peril.'

But others held contrary views: the most forceful were expressed by members of the labour movement. They perceived that competing interests existed in their society. Accordingly a conscription policy did not appear to them to be a straightforward measure for meeting a military emergency: conscription, whilst threatening the interests of the working classes, also seemed to meet the interests of the middle class employers. The membership of the Universal Service League, despite the presence of leading Labor politicians, aroused misgivings. 'There are very few matters indeed, in which Labor and Capital can have the same ideal.' wrote Arthur Blakeley, the secretary of the Western Branch of the AWU. 'Conscription is not one of them. I view with distrust and suspicion any movement headed by the capitalist class and

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1 Letter to the editor from Edward J. Loxton KC, SMH, 24 September 1915.

2 J.D. Fitzgerald, Universal Service League and the Trade Union Leaders, 1915, Universal Service League leaflet number one.

3 Ibid. See also SMH, 2 October 1915: Professor David asked: 'Is it undemocratic to compel citizens to contribute their quota of assistance to the supreme end of our society in the present crisis, namely security against the destruction of our liberties?"
capitalist newspapers.1 Leaders of twelve trade unions, including the Australian Workers' Union and the Railway Workers and General Labourers' Association all agreed. Eleven of them together had 27.1 per cent of the registered trade union membership in New South Wales.2 They were supported by W. O'Neill and E.J. Kavanagh, the president and secretary of the Labor Council of New South Wales respectively, and J.W. Doyle, the secretary of the Eight Hour Committee.3 William Rosser, the president of the Railway Workers and General Labourers' Association, who joined the army in December 1915,4 declared:

What they really are after is to stem the tide of democracy....It means the enslavement of the working class. The people who are engineering this movement are Labor's greatest enemies. They are not doing it for a patriotic purpose, but merely to serve their own interests....To be straight, the capitalist class of Australia who are supporting this movement are now making a desperate effort to compel the working class to fight and defend their property.5

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1 Letter to the editor from Arthur Blakeley, AW, 21 October 1915.
2 AW, 16 September 1915; DT, 13 September 1915. Calculation from NSW Statistical Register 1915-16, pp.231-4. Union membership should be regarded as an approximation. The other nine unions were the Typographical Association, Boilermakers' Union, Timber Workers' Union, Federated Storemen and Packers' Union, Sydney Coal Lumpers' Union, Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Bricklayers' Union, Factory Employees' Union, Liquor Trades Employees Union. The 1915 membership figures for the twelfth trade union, the Federated Engine-Drivers' and Firemen's Association could not be found. The eleven unions had a total of 61,811 registered members out of a total registered trade union membership of 227,684.
3 AW, 16 September 1915. Doyle was elected president of the industrially-controlled Political Labor League Executive in 1916.
4 SMH, 15, 17 January 1916. Rosser said he had enlisted on 10 December 1915. He believed that the Great War was a war against war, that he wanted to protect the principles of 'freedom, justice, liberty and social progress' from German militarism. 'To oppose conscription, and yet not to enlist, is the act of a trifler and hypocrite.'
5 AW, 16 September 1915. According to Mary Lloyd, Sidelights, op.cit., p.34, H.E. Boote sent T.D. Mutch to collect the views of trade unionists after the formation of the USL had been announced. Mutch, a member of the 1915 PLL Executive became Labor MLA for Botany at the March 1917 general election.
The danger to 'democracy' seemed real to those who had battled to bring economic and political gains to the mass of the people: conscription threatened 'progress'. Among the members of the league were those who believed in a 'natural' hierarchically-ordained society which was organised according to social status, political and economic power. Holman had expressed the self-protective views of the élite: the men of 'less' worth could be expended on the battlefield; the 'best' men could be saved for society. But the people in the labour movement were conscious of their worth and proud of their battle against the established social order: the New South Wales Labor party celebrated the silver jubilee of its foundation on 27 November 1915. In July, Arthur Rae, a pioneer Labor politician and veteran unionist, had opposed the idea of conscription as 'premature'. He advocated a different scheme: as 'a young democracy, we Australians frequently claim to lead the world in the application of new ideas and principles'; Australians should make innovations in military policy. 'Conscription means that the lives of the young vigorous men of the community are commandeered by the State to protect the lives and liberties and property of others', he declared. 'That being so, then a democratic people should insist that the property or wealth of the non-fighters should also be commandeered for the general good.'

Arthur Rae's proposition for the conscription of wealth subsequently had greater impact: during 6 to 15 September all males 18 and under 60 years were required to complete the federal government's war census, which was to assess the

1 See SMH, 27 November 1915. The diamond jubilee of the Eight Hour movement was celebrated in October 1915, see SMH, 5 October 1915.

2 Letter to the editor from Arthur Rae, DT, 13 July 1915.

3 Ibid. Rae, a former Senator, stood as a Labor Senate candidate in the May 1917 federal election. A leaflet issued by the Labor party, called Labor and Loyalty, declared that two of Rae's sons were at the front, one in camp training, and a fourth on 'Home Service'.
wealth and manhood resources of Australia. ¹ A few days earlier the Prime Minister had announced that the first Commonwealth War Loan of £5,000,000 had been over-subscribed; nearly £13,000,000 had been received. ² Eventually the results were to be:

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<tr>
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<th>Applicants</th>
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<td>South Australia</td>
<td>1,546</td>
<td>875,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>235,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>359,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,748</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,389,440</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Percentage calculations derived from Scott, op.cit., p.875.

New South Wales, with 20 per cent fewer applicants than Victoria, provided a slightly larger subscription. In part this striking difference was due to the strength of the big business donations: the AMP Society, the Bank of New South Wales, Colonial Sugar Refining Co., the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney, and the Perpetual Trustee Co. Ltd. had their headquarters in Sydney; together they subscribed £1,725,840. The general managers of the first four companies all joined the Universal Service League. ³

¹See G.H. Knibbs, The Private Wealth of Australia and Its Growth...together with a Report of the War Census of 1915, Melbourne, 1918, p.8. The Commonwealth War Census Act 1915 was assented to on 23 July 1915; a Proclamation of 25 August 1915 fixed the date of the census at 6 to 15 September. See also SMH, 26 July 1915, for details on war census cards, SMH, 29 October 1915 for Knibbs second progress report on the census.

²SMH, 2 September 1915. The total amount eventually subscribed was £13,389,440; see Scott, op.cit., Appendix 8, p.875. The interest rate was 4½ per cent.

³See SMH, 2 September 1915, for list of the 23 largest subscribers. The managers were respectively Richard Teece, J. Russell French, E.W. Knox, and H.H. Massie. A 'Manufactures Week', organised by NSW Chamber of Manufactures, commenced on 6 September. It was held to advertise Australian-made goods; see SMH, 6 September 1915.
The Worker attacked the payment of interest on the war loan: 'It is a guilt-edged [sic] security. It does NOT represent sacrifice.' The participation of big businesses in the war loan was inequitable: the people would be taxed 'to the tenth generation, to pay these ghoulish bondholders'. Moreover the 'nation has a right to ALL THE MONEY IT NEEDS for the war WITHOUT PAYING A SINGLE FARTHING FOR IT'.\(^1\) Throughout the war Henry Boote and his staff led the agitation for heavier taxation of the wealthy.\(^2\) On 5 August 1915 the Worker had suggested: 'We have had a recruiting week for men. Why not a recruiting week for money?.... The poor are giving their lives. The least the rich can do is give their money.'\(^3\) Accordingly the Universal Service League, because of its members, was branded as 'a scheme to force the workers to fight without pay, and keep the influential classes at home, to lend their money at five per cent., and wax fatter than ever on a war-embarrassed people'.\(^4\)

Professor David sought to dispel the labour movement's suspicions; he spoke to the Labor Council. He was questioned at the end of his address. Could the government, in the case of a coalminers' strike 'call on the conscript workers to take the miners' places or shoot them down?' asked the president W. O'Neill. David said the question was irrelevant; a delegate interrupted: 'But we have to consider it!'\(^5\) Another asked whether the league would also advocate the conscription of wealth. David replied that he could not answer such an

\(^1\)AW, 9 September 1915, leader: 'Something We're Not Proud Of'.


\(^3\)AW, 5 August 1915, leader: 'The Patriotism of Shylock'.

\(^4\)Ibid., 16 September 1915.

\(^5\)Ibid., 23 September 1915. The Anti-Conscription League Manifesto also made this point. Claiming that the USL scheme would subject the workers 'to military rule whilst at work', the manifesto declared that accordingly strikers could be tried for treason or sedition: 'These methods were used by the French Government during the railway workers' strike about five years ago. The strikers were about to achieve success, when the Government ordered them to mobilise or be treated as deserters.'
abstract question: 'what was immediately wanted was more men.' A third said that the Commonwealth statistician 'had shown that 90 per cent.' of Australians owned nothing. He asked the professor 'did he consider people should be trained to fight for something they didn't own?’ Doubting the statistic, David answered that they could fight for their 'glorious liberty'. The interrogation ended. 'The position was the most serious with which the workers had been faced. The burden would be thrown upon the industrial classes of the community, and they would have to give close thought to their positions,' declared the Vice-President D. Guihen, when moving the vote of thanks. 'If the manhood of the community was to be placed in the melting-pot, the wealth of the community must be placed in the melting-pot also.'

Hostility burst out in the Workers' Educational Association: the British-born president, Meredith Atkinson, had joined the Universal Service League. Founded as a middle class organisation 'seeking to bring the University especially into closer touch with the worker', the objective of the WEA in Atkinson's words, was to create 'an enlightened democracy' - 'the great adventure of civilisation'. The vision was

1AW, 23 September 1915.

2Ibid. See also SMH, 17 September 1915. Guihen was a member of the 1915 PLL Executive.


4Ibid., p.16. Atkinson arrived in New South Wales shortly before the outbreak of war. 'He was an excellent missionary, full of enthusiasm and of energy'; see Portus, op.cit., p.172. Atkinson wrote in his introduction to *Trade Unionism*: 'The self-complacency of the Australian workers greatly retards their intellectual progress. Though the achievements of their movement are very remarkable, the present barrenness of ideas threatens it with a stagnation worse than defeat.' Atkinson, op.cit., p.16. Professor D.A. Welsh may have been thinking of the working classes when he wrote his pro-conscriptionist pamphlet in the same year, 1915: 'It is hardly too much to say that many men never think. They go through life with amazing intellectual limitations, gaining no fresh thoughts, but acquiring prejudices, which they term convictions, and which they declare with pride to be unalterable. In the light of our racial endowment and educational advantages, this hide-bound mental attitude must be counted a national sin.' Welsh, *The Great Opportunity*, op.cit., p.16.
broken: the WEA threatened to shatter on the reality of class conflict. 'Through two long evenings the matter was debated by the Council of the W.E.A., sitting close-packed in a small, ill-lit, stale-smelling, and murky room in the Sydney Trades Hall.' Atkinson offered to resign his presidency. But the commonsense and resolution of the secretary, a carpenter, David Stewart, won the day: the motion of no-confidence in the president was lost. 'It will be clear that no man could possibly express the views or represent the opinion of the movement on any political question,' Stewart wrote. 'At the same time the association has no power and no desire to resist the liberty, as a private citizen, of any of its members.' But suspicion remained. When the WEA was discussed at the Australian Workers' Union conference in February 1916, several delegates expressed their hostility to it. A.J. McNaught thought it was 'purely a capitalistic institution'. J. Cullinan declared that 'when some workers got educated up to a certain standard they used their brains against their fellows, and got out of the Labor movement'. G.V. Portus succeeded Atkinson as Director of Tutorial Classes in 1918: 'Time and time again, in the years that followed, when I was pleading the cause of independent working-class education,' he wrote, 'I had thrown at me the taunt that we were not really impartial, and that when a crisis came we would be found in

1 Portus, op.cit., p.173.
2 Ibid., pp.173-4. Stewart and Peter Board, the Director of Public Instruction, had laid the foundations of the WEA before Atkinson had arrived in New South Wales, see p.171.
3 Letter to the editor from David Stewart, general secretary of WEA, SMH, 20 September 1915.
4 AW, 2 March 1916. McNaught was a Queensland Branch delegate; and Cullinan from the Western Branch. Cullinan's words were apparently directed at Holman. At the AWU conference 1917, delegates Kenna and Cullinan moved that the AWU 'sever all connection' with the WEA because 'of its advocacy of conscription'. Cullinan used Atkinson's opinions to support his argument; see AW, 15 March 1917. On 10 April 1917 the Labor Council Executive instructed its secretary to inform the WEA that the Council had withdrawn from the association; but a general meeting, by 63 to 31, voted for reaffiliation on 31 May 1917; see Labor Council of NSW, Executive Minutes, 10 April 1917; General Meeting Minutes, 31 May 1917.
opposition to the workers, as it was alleged that Atkinson had been in the matter of conscription. 1

On 20 September the Universal Service League held its first public meeting in the Sydney Town Hall. The Lord Mayor presided. Professor David asked the audience: 'Did Australia need organising? Did she need men?' 2 They replied: Yes. 'I am a democrat, a Labour man, and a socialist....If we lose this war it is farewell to the democracy of Australia,' Holman declared. Those 'who wanted to see the structure of their liberties develop must be prepared to make sacrifices to gain enduring victory'. 3 A heckler cried: 'Renegade!' J.D. Fitzgerald declared that he would fight the league if it did not advocate that both men and wealth be taken by the state. Holman moved that the league be formally inaugurated. The manifesto was adopted; an executive committee was appointed: non-Labor people dominated. 4 Copies of the league's manifesto were posted to town and shire councils and the Recruiting Associations. They were urged to help the 'universal service'. 5

1 Portus, op.cit., p.174. The Sydney University's Department of Tutorial Classes worked in conjunction with the WEA in the establishment and conduct of University Tutorial Classes. Portus was Director from 1918-1934.

2 SMH, 21 September 1915.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid. Of the executive of 29, 13 were non-Labor, 8 Labor, and 8 unknowns: it is probable that most belonged to the first category. Apart from the president, the three treasurers (Russell French, accountant G.M. Allard, Lamond); the two secretaries (Fitzgerald, Bavin); the remainder were Holman, Wade, Watson, Winchcombe, Atkinson, Boyce, Braddon, Peden, Dr Cecil Purser, Dr Mary Booth, solicitor E.M. Mitchell, Frank Bryant MLC, John Garland MLC; three trade union secretaries T. Purse (AMEIU), F.T. Turner (FEDFA), and George Lewis (Federated Millers and Mill Employees' Union); secretary of the NSW Rugby Union W.W. Hill; C. Lloyd Jones (treasurer of the Chamber of Commerce 1915/16 and president of the Master Retailers' Association), Mrs Eleanor Mackinnon (NSW Red Cross Society), Miss Board (National Council of Women), Misses Ruth Beale and Gladys Marks, Mrs Grant.

5 Ibid., 16 September 1915.
At the Trades Hall on 23 September a meeting of around two hundred 'working class citizens' met. They founded the Anti-Conscription League.¹ Delegates attended from the Federated Furnishing Trades Society of Australasia, the United Labourers' Protective Society, the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, the Socialist Labour Party, the Australasian Socialist Party, the IWW Club and the Australian Freedom League.² They declared their opposition to all forms of conscription. They sent a telegram to Andrew Fisher, warning him not to be misled by the 'privileged classes' who advocated compulsory service: 'the War Precautions Act prevents workers from fully discussing questions involved, and the anti-Labourites are taking advantage of the situation when the voice of democracy is stifled.'³ A committee of twenty, including George Waite, Rev. A. Rivett, E.E. Judd and Luke Jones, was elected.⁴

¹ SMH, 24 September 1915. 'Working class' was a self-description.

² Minutes of the Anti-Conscription League, 23 September 1915, ML, A.1523. The minutes cover the period 23 September 1915 to 12 August 1916; there is a gap between the dates 16 February to 9 August 1916. However newspaper records show that the Anti-Conscription League was active, see letter to editor from the league's secretary H. Charlesworth (a member of the ARTSA), SMH, 12 July 1916. Accurate records were not kept of delegates and their organisations; but the following unions were mentioned either in the Minutes or in other documents: Municipal and Shire Employees' Union; Clerks' Union; Plasterers' Union; Floor Layers' Union; Ship Painters' and Dockers' Union; Plumbers Union; Amalgamated Society of Engineers; Cycle, Motor and Electroplaters' Union; Boilermakers and Iron Ship Builders' Society; Watchmen, Caretakers and Cleaners' Union; Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association; see Minutes for 1915-16; George Waite Papers, ML, uncat. MS.208, Box I, Anti-Conscription League Manifesto. The 15 unions mentioned had 24,449 registered members in 1915, or 10.73 per cent of the NSW total; see NSW Statistical Register, 1915-16, pp.231-4.

³ SMH, 24 September 1915; Anti-Conscription League Minutes, 23 September 1915.

⁴ Anti-Conscription League Minutes, 23 September 1915. The committee resolved to send representatives to all unions and other organisations to address them on the conscription question; to organise meetings on the Domain, and to print

Footnote continued on following page:
The cause which united the members minor left-wing parties, trade unionists and pacifists was the defence of liberty: 'Are we now going to sacrifice all the liberties that have been snatched from the jaws of tyranny by the libertarians of all times, by those who sacrificed their personal welfare for the great cause of HUMAN LIBERTY, for all that makes life worth living?' their manifesto asked. 'NO! emphatically NO!'  

"Conscription - never! The word belongs To the foes of freedom, the friends of wrongs!"  

William Murray who presided at the league's public meeting in the Trades Hall on 27 October, branded Holman and his Universal Service League associates, as 'psychological atavists' who 'desired to recede from the position that had already been won by the people of Australia'. The meeting resolved to urge all trade unions to strike: this was 'the only way' for the Australian workers to prevent conscription being enforced.  

Footnote continued from previous page:  
leaflets. A collection raised £1.16.0. George Waite was subsequently called the President of the League, but no election was recorded in the Minutes. On 13 October 5,000 copies of the Anti-Conscription League's manifesto were to be printed and Mr William Cooper of the Peace Society of NSW joined the committee; on 15 November the Rationalist Society of NSW, the Plumbers' Union and the Women Workers' Union were to be asked to send delegates; see Minutes, 13 October, 15 November 1915.  

1 **Anti-Conscription League Manifesto**, copy in George Waite papers, ML, uncat. MS.208, Box 1.  

2 *DT*, 28 October 1915. Murray was president of the Boilermakers and Iron Ship Builders' Society. George Waite of the United Labourers' Protective Society said the same old 'push' was 'still alive in the Anti-German League, and was advocating the internment of "other disloyal persons" such as went on strike'. Other speakers were Rose Scott, president of the Peace Society of NSW; William Cooper (Peace Society); Rev. A. Rivett (Australian Freedom League); J. Corcoran (boilermaker, IMW Club); G.H. Slade and Luke Jones (Australasian Socialist Party); and Delaney (Municipal and Shire Employees' Union); Anti-Conscription League Minutes, 27 October 1915.  

3 **Anti-Conscription League Minutes**, 27 October 1915. W. O'Brien of the AMU and J.O. Moroney put the motion urging the general strike.
But fears of conscription had been partly allayed. On 24 September, Prime Minister Fisher, after persistent questioning from a Melbourne Trades Hall delegation, declared that he was 'irrevocably opposed' to conscription. 'He felt sure that his colleagues were also against it.' But Fisher had also declared that his government did not intend to impose a wealth tax after the census of wealth had been completed.

The Labor Council of New South Wales debated the conscription question on 30 September. In the audience were members of the two antagonists: the Universal Service and the Anti-Conscription Leagues. Three motions were tabled. The principal motion declared that conscription was unnecessary because the British government had not adopted it. An amendment proposed that all Australian Labor Councils meet in conference to decide for the workers 'the terms upon which they are prepared to accept Universal Service'. E.J. Price of the Tramway Employees' Union and William Murray, the president of the Boilermakers and Iron Ship Builders' Society, put the successful amendment: 'this Council is opposed to any form of Compulsory service of life health and limb that does not first of all bring wealth under conscription.'

The labour movement's stress on the 'conscription of wealth' was a compensatory reaction which reflected the rapid deterioration in economic conditions and their impact upon the lives of the working class people. But the majority, if their views can be summarised, did not object to the principle

1 cited, 25 September; AW, 30 September 1915. Fisher re-emphasised his opposition in Sydney at the end of the month, see SMH, 30 September 1915.

2 SMH, 22 September 1915.

3 Labor Council, General Meeting Minutes, 30 September 1915. D. Guihan and J.J. Talbot, both members of the Council Executive put the principal motion; P.C. Evans and C. Bennett put the second amendment.

4 Ibid.; the Price/Murray amendment was carried 60 to 46. It then became the motion and was carried 'on the voices'. See AW, 7 October 1915; SMH, 1 October 1915. E.J. Price later enlisted; see SMH, 30 August 1916.

5 See Chapter 7.
of compulsory military service. Conscription, if it proved necessary, would be grudgingly accepted on the condition of equality of sacrifice: the last Australian shilling must be taken for the cause of the Great War as well as the last man.\textsuperscript{1} This attitude shaped much of the anti-conscription opinion during 1916.\textsuperscript{2}

The counter-demand to conscript wealth was loosely worded. Presumably the principle could have been met in practice by both capital gains and increased income taxes. But the Universal Service League did not pursue this aspect of national sacrifice. David had told the Labor Council that more men were important than more money. After the Council's debate, F.E. Winchcombe declared that wealth was already being 'conscripted' in the form of federal taxes: 'the authorities have only to raise the rate....All that is now sought is that personal service in any and every capacity shall be at the call of the Government also.'\textsuperscript{3} But advocacy of taxation increases would have provoked antagonisms within the Universal Service League and split its ranks. On 1 September estate agent Arthur Rickard had complained that the proposed introduction of a federal income tax, particularly its 'steep graduation', was a 'class tax'. As well as reducing middle class incomes he had declared that it would also generate a withdrawal of English capital. This would harm society: 'Heavy taxation of capital must result in checking enterprise and clogging the wheels of industry generally. Moreover dear money means higher rents and higher prices. In the end the consumer pays.'\textsuperscript{4} Opposition to increased taxes grew stronger

\textsuperscript{1}E.J. Price in the Labor Council debate said that 'the last shilling should go before the last man'; and that he agreed with the union leaders' views on conscription as published in the \textit{Worker}; \textit{AW}, 7 October 1915.

\textsuperscript{2}See for example \textit{SMH}, 28 August 1916: the Lithgow PLL, by 'about' 20 votes to 2, declined to pledge itself to support conscription, but 'practically all present in the debate were in favour of universal conscription of wealth, commodities and men'.

\textsuperscript{3}Letter to the editor from F.E. Winchcombe, dated 1 October 1915, in \textit{SMH}, 6 October 1915.

\textsuperscript{4}\textit{DT}, 2 September 1915.
during mid-1916: the Employers' Federation and the Chamber of Commerce called a meeting which led to the formation of a Property, Taxpayers and Ratepayers' Association on 31 May. William Brooks, Arthur Rickard and Sir Joseph Carruthers were among the leaders in its establishment.¹

The Universal Service League's proposals did not arouse much enthusiasm among the non-labour sections of the population. W.H. Kelly MHR said that there were too few officers and instructors available; thus a sudden and massive draft of conscripted soldiers might make the Defence Department 'utterly collapse under the strain'.² 'We are informed by medical authorities that drink and venereal diseases go hand in hand; we are urged by both Judge Rich and the State Commandant to lessen' alcohol sales, wrote Dr Richard Arthur. 'What is the community generally, and the Universal Service League in particular, going to do about this traffic?'³

The Presbytery of Sydney objected to Scott West's signature appearing on the manifesto with his title of Moderator. It unanimously resolved on the motion of the Rev. Dr Burgess that the Moderator's support for the Universal Service League 'in no way commits the Presbyterian Church to the policy of conscription, to which as is well known, many of her members are strong opponents'.⁴ Another eminent Presbyterian, the Rev. Professor R.G. Macintyre declared that conscription should only be used as a 'last desperate resort'. He did not believe that the voluntary system had failed; New South Wales 'has offered more men than the quota which the

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¹SMH, 26, 29 May, 1 June 1916.
²SMH, 13 September 1915; letter to the editor from W.H. Kelly, SMH, 16 September 1915. Kelly was the Liberal MHR for Wentworth. He was a minister without portfolio in Joseph Cook's administration of 1913-14.
³Letter to the editor from Dr Richard Arthur, SMH, 20 September 1915.
⁴SMH, 18 September 1915. Dr Burgess spoke at recruiting meetings and had three sons at the war. See SMH, 3 November 1915.
Defence Department advised that it could absorb'. ¹ He appreciated the implications of the Universal Service League's demand for compulsory industrial and military service: employers would profit by the control over manpower, but have 'quite the reverse' impact on employees. 'It is surely evident to any one acquainted with Australia', he warned, 'that our workmen are not going to allow themselves to be compelled to serve where the Government chooses, what hours the Government chooses, and at what wages the Government chooses, for the benefit of the private employer'. ²

Many local government councils had practical objections. For instance, the Albury town council said that conscription was a matter within the federal jurisdiction. ³ The Port Stephens shire council resolved to oppose conscription as the voluntary system had not yet exhausted itself; ⁴ while the Petersham municipal council in Sydney, although containing several councillors 'red hot' for the league, decided to 'go slow' on the issue until a lead had been given by Britain where the adoption of conscription seemed imminent. ⁵ A strong temperance faction influenced the Enfield municipal council's unanimous rejection of the league until its policy included a plank enforcing early closing of hotels, and until either the imperial authorities or the Australian Prime Minister had declared in favour of conscription. ⁶

¹Letter to the editor from R.G. Macintyre, SMH, 14 September 1915. He had taken part in the August recruiting drive and said that the enlistment rate had been hampered by rumours about conditions at the Liverpool Camp; 'the stupid treatment' of volunteers at Victoria Barracks; and rejections for defects which could have been easily remedied.

²Letter to the editor from R.G. Macintyre, SMH, 20 September 1915. He also said that the USL policies, if pushed to extremes, might provoke a political crisis such as that currently engaging Britain, 'which may cost us the strong leadership of Mr. Asquith'.

³DT, 9 October 1915.

⁴Ibid., 11 October 1915.

⁵Ibid., 7 October 1915.

⁶Ibid., 7 October 1915. Glebe and Bathurst town councils also opposed conscription, but no reasons were reported. See DT, 8 October 1915.
Forty Recruiting Associations, most of them from rural areas, favoured the Universal Service League's policies, according to a list compiled by the Premier's Department on 3 November.\(^1\) C.N. Lee, who had taken part in the August drive at Mittagong, had found canvassing an unpleasant task. From a recruiting viewpoint both voluntary enlistment and conscription seemed almost the same: there existed only 'a fine line dividing moral from physical compulsion'.\(^2\) But to most people during September-October 1915, the moment for conscription, should it ever be necessary, had not yet come.

Fisher's opposition checked the Universal Service League's agitation. 'The position is obviously very awkward for Holman, Fitzgerald & the other Labor men who are on the committee', wrote a Melbourne branch delegate on 19 October, '& it is pretty clear that if Fisher has spoken for the party that they can't go ahead'.\(^3\) Evidently Fisher also embarrassed the conservative wing of the league. On 18 August Lord Mayor Richards had presided over a 'non-party' public meeting called to protest against the federal Labor party's proposed constitutional referendum. The referendum, the speakers declared, would provoke political dissension during a national crisis: the times demanded national unity 'in order that the whole energies of the Australian Governments, Parliaments, and

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1List of Recruiting Associations in favour of the USL, compiled 3 November 1915, in NSW PDC, Box 7/4709, file 15/9052. The list was sent to the secretary of the league. Five Dock and Blacktown were the only Recruiting Associations in or near Sydney. The names of the 40 associations have been checked with the names of federal subdivisions; in 29 cases the names are the same: on 28 October 1916 only 6 of the 29 subdivisions voted for conscription.

2Letter to the editor from C.N. Lee, SMH, 6 October 1915. Lee wrote his letter as a criticism of Andrew Fisher's rejection of conscription.

3Letter from C.A. Hack to J.G. Latham, secretary of the Victorian USL, 19 October 1915, J.G. Latham papers, NL, MS.1009, series 17, Box 80, Correspondence relating to the Universal Service League. T.R. Bavin had written to Latham on 20 August 1915 telling him of the private organisation of the league in NSW and asking for his cooperation in organising a Victorian branch.
People may be concentrated on questions of defence'. ¹ A committee of thirty was elected to sustain the anti-referendum agitation: it included seven who joined the Universal Service League: H.Y. Braddon, William Brooks, H.J. Carter, Samuel Hordern, F.E. Winchcombe, Rev. C.J. Prescott and Dr Mary Booth.²

Caught by these two pressures, the league decided to suspend its agitation for several weeks. Its members, following the example of the pro-conscriptionist Lord Derby in Britain, were to take part in the second recruiting drive in New South Wales which had begun on 11 October. In the meantime the league resolved to prepare 'for the advocacy of a system of universal service, which the events of each day seem to be making inevitable.'³ Bavin obtained a promise from W.M. Hughes that he would discuss the matter with Fisher. It was hoped that this would lead to some public statement from the Prime Minister, which 'would make it possible for labour supporters still to remain members of the League without violating their party loyalty.'⁴

¹SMH, 19 August 1915. Sir William McMillan and John Stinson convened an organising committee meeting in July, F.E. Winchcombe and H.Y. Braddon were among those who attended; see SMH, 5, 7 July 1915. The NSW Liberal party conference was held 6-8 July; it also decided that contentious subjects were taboo during the war; see SMH, 7, 8, 9 July 1915. At the Sydney Town Hall meeting on 18 August, representatives came from 30 country towns and four Sydney suburbs; the Herald reported that 61 local government councils supported the protest.

²SMH, 19 August 1915. Others in the committee included Sir William McMillan, Dugald Thomson, John Stinson, Rev. Professor Macintyre and Mrs Bogue Luffman. The referendum was subsequently postponed, see SMH, 5 November 1915.

³DT, 20 October 1915. Fifty thousand copies of a pamphlet The Case for Universal Service were to be printed; sales at a penny a copy began in November; see letters from T.R. Bavin to J.G. Latham, 18 October, 10 November 1915; DT, 19 November 1915.

⁴Letters from T.R. Bavin to J.G. Latham, 18 October 1915. Professor David interviewed Fisher on 21 October, and drew from him the grudging admission that 'the Government has no desire to suppress views on the matters that are not in accord with its policy'; Fisher to David, n.d., copy included in Bavin to Latham, 23 October 1915. See also letters from David to Fisher, 22 October 1915; Bavin to Latham, 23 October 1915. J.G. Latham papers, NL, MS.1009.
Anticipating a poor result, the league waited for the second recruiting campaign to run its course. The time now seemed more favourable: on 26 October W.M. Hughes became Prime Minister following Fisher's resignation. The league hoped that Hughes would be more sympathetic to their views; he had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Australian National Defence League, which had set the scene for the subsequent introduction of compulsory military service for home defence. The official totals showed well over 27,000 Australian casualties up to 24 October. King George appealed for more troops in his address To My People: 'The end is not in sight. More men and yet more men are wanted to keep my armies in the field, and through them to secure victory and an everlasting peace.' The shooting of Edith Cavell added a further war crime to the list of German-committed atrocities.

In early November Hughes privately urged the league to suspend its agitation for a second time. But the Executive Committee agreed that it should only obey a public declaration from the Prime Minister, for it had raised funds in public appeals and had made preparations for founding local branches. 'From all we can learn of the Recruiting Campaign in this state it has been almost a failure', wrote Bavin on

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1 For this aspect of Hughes' life see Fitzhardinge, William Morris Hughes, Vol.1, op.cit., p.221. Members of the NSW branch of the ANDL included J.C. Watson and Professor M.W. MacCallum.

2 DT, 25 October 1915. This list excluded those who had recovered from wounds or illnesses, or had been found after having been reported as missing in action. The hundredth casualty list was published in DT, 28 October 1915.


4 For reports of the execution, see Argus, 25-30 October 1915.


6 Ibid. Bavin complained that Hughes had known 'for weeks that we propose to go on with our campaign' and that the league could not delay 'because of an unofficial intimation, which is inconsistent with Mr. Hughes' earlier attitude'.
13 November. 1 "To suspend our campaign any further is out of the question; we all agree that to do so would be fatal. Under the circumstances, therefore, we feel bound to go on." 2

On 23 November the league met to elect a new president; Professor David had enlisted. Holman had been invited to take the post. He had refused after seeking a 'guiding opinion' from Hughes. 3 Professor M.W. MacCallum took his place. The meeting resolved, unlike the Victorian branch, to renew its agitation. 'I sincerely trust', said Dr Antill Pockley, 'that there is going to be no more shilly-shallying, and no more delay, and no more getting side-tracked by politicians'. 4

The next day Hughes announced that 50,000 additional soldiers would be recruited 'within the next few months': by June 1916 the Australian Imperial Force would be around

1Ibid. Holman also held the same view, see NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.61, p.3933, 25 November 1915.

2Bavin to Latham, 13 November 1915. The Victorian branch of the USL, apparently not of the size of the NSW branch, suspended its agitation. Professor Orme Masson, the branch president, said that because of the Australia-wide federal recruiting campaign, activity by the league 'would lay themselves open to the charge of injuring' it. Moreover he believed that in a few months that the federal government 'would be forced to adopt conscription'. See letter from Professor Orme Masson to J.G. Latham, 16 November 1915, Latham papers; Argus, 21 October, 23 November 1915.

3Telegrams from W.A. Holman to W.M. Hughes, 18 November 1915; Hughes to Holman, 19 November 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4709, file 15/9578. Holman said that 'acceptance would involve entering active campaign probably in all states. Am... anxious for some guiding opinion from you. If propaganda... likely to divide opinion or embarrass government. I shall not accept position. If on contrary propaganda welcome I will gladly take the risks of initiative.' Hughes replied that Holman's presidency was 'inadvisable'. Holman's offer to draw the political odium from the labour movement was not self-sacrificing. Evidently restless, he was seeking invitations to visit Britain from British government leaders. The first to a series of telegrams, which later included references to a scheme to secure a seat for himself in the House of Commons, was despatched to his appointee Agent-General B.R. Wise on 18 November 1915; see NSWPDC, Box 7/4728, file B16/840.

4SMH, 24 November 1915.
300,000 strong. To fulfil this ambition an intensive recruiting campaign would be needed. The news strengthened the resolve of the Universal Service League executive: the voluntary method was 'likely to be a failure'. The group decided to put its case once more to Hughes: the deputation, wrote Bavin, 'must call public attention to the bankruptcy of the voluntary system, and it will bring before the public, in a way which has been up to the present impossible, the strength of the case for compulsion'.

But Hughes did not change his mind. The league's executive decided that agitation for conscription could jeopardise the new recruiting effort. It suspended its activities, declaring: 'We believe that the real solution of the problems with which Australia is confronted in this war will sooner or later have to be sought on the lines of compulsory universal service.' Amid some anger at the pre-emptive decision of its executive committee, a general meeting of the Universal Service League resolved on 13 December to refrain from public propaganda while the federal recruiting campaign continued.

On 28 December 1915 the Imperial cabinet adopted the principle of conscription. Hughes left Australia for Britain...

1Ibid., 25 November 1915. The monthly quota of 9,500 reinforcements had to be raised as well as the 50,000.


3Ibid. Hughes spoke to the NSW Institute of Journalists on 29 November 1915; the decision to send a deputation to him was made on a motion put by Holman.

4Press statement of the Universal Service League executive, SMH, 3 December 1915: compulsory universal service was the 'only method' that would 'make quite sure' of prompt reinforcements, 'that would leave the leaders of the recruiting campaign free for other work, that would spare individuals the cruel choice between public and private duty, that would obtain the right men from the humanitarian and economical point of view'. Only half of the 28 member executive were present when the decision was made; among them were MacCallum, Holman, Wade, Bavin, Atkinson, Peden, Braddon, Fitzgerald, Booth and Garland.

5SMH, 14 December 1915.

6DT, 30 December 1915.
on 20 January 1916.\textsuperscript{1}

To supply both the reinforcements and the new force of 50,000, the federal government, acting in cooperation with the state governments, set up an Australia-wide recruiting organisation. The existing local Recruiting Associations in New South Wales were each given a full-time recruiting agent; usually a returned soldier. The central organisation was the State War Council of New South Wales; Holman was its president.\textsuperscript{2} J.H. Catts, MHR for Cook, took charge of recruiting in the state on 1 December.

The result of the war census became available in late November: it revealed 600,000 'fit' men of 18 to 44 years in Australia.\textsuperscript{3} The exhaustive appeal to each eligible male which had been applied during the August drive in New South Wales was repeated. The Commonwealth Statistician mailed war cards to the eligible men in December, asking them three questions:

Are you willing to enlist now? Reply yes or no.
If not willing to enlist now, are you willing to enlist at a later date? Reply yes or no, and if willing, state when.
If not willing to enlist, state the reason why as explicitly as possible.\textsuperscript{4}

The completion and return of the cards to the local recruiting association was compulsory.\textsuperscript{5} Compulsion was condemned; it

\textsuperscript{1}L.F. Fitzhardinge in his manuscript second volume of the life of Hughes has corrected the date of his departure which Scott, op.cit., p.320, gives as 16 January.

\textsuperscript{2}See letter from C. Gavan Duffy, secretary of Federal Parliamentary War Committee, to W.A. Holman, 30 August 1915. Letters were sent to J.B. Holme, Under-Secretary of the Department of Labour and Industry; the presidents of the Employers' Federation and the Chambers of Manufactures and of Commerce; and the secretary of the Labor Council, on 22 September 1915, inviting them to join the War Council of NSW; see NSWPDFC, Box 7/4770, file A19/2449. A second letter from Gavan Duffy was released by Holman for publication, see SMH, 6 September 1915.

\textsuperscript{3}Scott, op.cit., p.310.

\textsuperscript{4}SMH, 9, 15 December 1915.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 18 December 1915.
seemed to be a forerunner of conscription.\(^1\) Local confidential sub-committees of five reviewed all the returned cards: men who gave 'unfavourable' replies were asked to reconsider. Catts declared that eligible men only had to make a 'straight' reply: 'The duty of deciding what men are required in Australia and those who are not is...the special function of the sub-committee of five appointed for the purpose on each municipality and shire.'\(^2\) Each man also received a copy of the Prime Minister's circular letter: 'The Call to Arms'.\(^3\)

Judging from the few indications in the press, the war cards were disliked. Seven weeks before the 1916 conscription referendum, the *Telegraph* reported that the Commonwealth Statistician had sent 180,000 further cards to men who had not replied to the appeal of December 1915. This number represented 30 per cent of the 600,000 'fit' men revealed by the war census.\(^4\) Some of the partly processed results for several localities in New South Wales were inadvertently released to the press in January 1916. At Manly, of the 535 cards that had been classified, 55 (10.28 per cent) were enlisting immediately, 85 (15.68 per cent) were enlisting later and 324 (60.56 per cent) refused to join the army.\(^5\) At Redfern 75 per cent of over 1,000 replies, and in Kuringai Shire 92.86 per cent of the 701 replies declared their refusal to enlist.\(^6\) Catts stopped this publication of information.\(^7\)

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\(^1\) The AWU conference condemned the compulsory completion of the cards at its annual conference, see *AW*, 3 February 1916. See also Scott, op.cit., p.312.

\(^2\) *SMH*, 15 January 1915.

\(^3\) Ibid., 15 December 1915.

\(^4\) *TP*, 6 September 1916. Catts had warned in January that the Statistician kept a record of every card sent out: 'by this means he is enabled to check those who have filled in their cards and those who have not.' See *SMH*, 15 January 1916.

\(^5\) *SMH*, 12 January 1916: a further 71 (13.27 per cent) had already enlisted.

\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Ibid., 14 January 1916.
In June 1916 J.J. Morrish, Labor MLA for King, and chairman of the City of Sydney confidential sub-committee, said that of the 30,000 replies in his area 28,000 (93.3 per cent) had refused to enlist.  

By the end of July Rev. Professor R.G. Macintyre, the chairman of the Headquarters Confidential Sub-Committee, had received 18,000 replies: 15,564 (86 per cent) were negative. He guessed that this negative proportion was greater than that of the war cards processed by the local recruiting associations. In a second report, although statistics for New South Wales were incomplete, he estimated that 'fully 55 per cent of those who answered "yes" failed to appear for examination when instructed to do so, and ignored every attempt to induce them to appear before the medical officer'.

The aggregate picture disclosed a contrast between official intention and individual choice: it disturbed the authorities. Macintyre reported that 31,800 men had joined the army in New South Wales during the period 1 December 1915 to 30 June 1916. But the state quota for the seven months had been set at approximately 53,200: the shortage was thus 21,400 soldiers. However, the quota had been overestimated:

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1. Ibid., 6 June 1916. Morrish's area included the city proper, Darlinghurst, Surry Hills, Ultimo, Pyrmont, the Rocks, and Camperdown.

2. Undated report of Headquarters Confidential Sub-Committee. The report was made in late July 1916 and considered by the State War Council on 31 July. NSWPDC, Box 7/4736, file B16/3820. For minutes of the meeting of the State War Council of NSW held on 31 July 1916, see NSWPDC, Box 7/4735, file B16/3528. The reports of both Professor Macintyre and of Brigadier-General Ramaciotti were sent to Senator Pearce. Individuals had the choice of sending their completed war card to either their local or to the headquarters sub-committee.

3. Ibid. The remaining figures were 1,195 (6.6 per cent) already enlisted; 771 (4.26 per cent) ready to enlist within a month; 567 (3.13 per cent) willing to enlist later or conditionally. Of the 15,564 negative responses, 7,222 were judged 'unsatisfactory'; the 8,137 'satisfactory' replies were marked on the criteria of being needed for their businesses, or being married with four to ten dependant children.

4. Undated report on the NSW Recruiting Campaign, prepared by Professor Macintyre for the State War Council of NSW, NSWPDC, Box 7/4736, file B16/3820.
the 'shortage' had not affected 'the military efficiency of the Australian army', he said, 'owing to the fact that the reinforcements actually required were considerably less than that which was estimated in the original scheme'. Thus an intensive campaign had been organised, but for a quota that was proven too high.

Two conflicting attitudes were developed during the canvass: those who believed it necessary to sacrifice as many men as possible for the Empire confronted the objects of the sacrifice, who individually did not wish to fight for a cause which did not arouse them. To protect themselves from harassment around 200 younger men formed a Rejected Volunteers' Association on 1 June.

Wearying of their waiting, the members of the Universal Service League decided to resume their agitation for

1Ibid. Macintyre made an intriguing remark concerning NSW enlistments: from 4 August 1914 to 22 July 1916 about 120,000 men had enlisted. He added: 'This number, however, was not eventually available for military purposes, and for various reasons which are known to the Minister for Defence, and confidentially to members of the Federal Parliament, the actual numbers of available soldiers from New South Wales may be reckoned at 95,000.' He did not provide any information on the 'missing' 25,000 men. According to the figures, NSW was fulfilling its quota better than the other five states, see statements and figures given by J.H. Catts, SMH, 29 May, 10 July 1916.

2See SMH, 6 June 1916, for a report on some of the reasons given for refusing to enlist, and the letters drafted by confidential sub-committees to cover each 'excuse'. Married men for instance, were frequently replying that they would not enlist until all the unmarried men had joined the army. One sub-committee's letter in reply said in part: 'In reality you have more to defend than the single men have, and the call is so urgent that the appeal is issued to all men of military age; and where the burden is not too great your country expects you to respond to it.'

3Ibid., 2 June 1916. The Commonwealth had designed a rejected volunteer's badge, see SMH, 19 April 1916, but the RVA produced its own design as the authorities were too slow. When the Commonwealth reject badge became available, numbers of young men, fearing the introduction of conscription, attempted to obtain it: the issue of badges to rejected volunteers was to be temporarily discontinued on 1 October 1916 during the call up of men 21 to 35 years for home service; see SMH, 11, 14, 15 September 1916.
conscription on 22 May. 'Conflicting figures have been published by different authorities. But it seems perfectly clear, whatever figures are accepted, that the number of men available by June 30 next will fall far short of the 300,000 promised by the Prime Minister', wrote MacCallum and Bavin. 'In any case, the position is so grave that it is quite clear that, irrespective of any existing obligations, Australia must be prepared to make the greatest effort of which she is capable.'

The League held a meeting in the Sydney Town Hall on 28 June. Before the meeting began 'moving pictures of war subjects were screened, and patriotic selections' played on the organ. 'The community must declare its readiness for the most strenuous discipline, the most absolute obedience, and the most unstinted self-sacrifice', declared MacCallum from the chair, 'in order to shake off the nightmare that was pursuing all who had eyes to see and ears to hear.'

Notably absent were the Labor leaders, Holman, Fitzgerald and Watson, who had helped to launch the league the previous year.

Branches of the league were established during June to August. On 15 July copies of its newspaper Universal Service went on sale. In the edition of 26 August, the league listed

1 SMH, DT, 23 May 1916. Speakers in favour were Professor MacCallum, Bishop Long, Senator Millen, Meredith Atkinson. See Millen's letter to the editor, DT, 8 May 1916. J.D. Fitzgerald opposed the revival of the league until W.M. Hughes returned from Britain; his motion lapsed for want of a seconder. He subsequently resigned as (joint) secretary; Meredith Atkinson was elected in his place, see SMH, 4 July 1916. For a further clarification of Fitzgerald's views, see DT, 30 June 1916.

2 Letter to the editor from Professor M.W. MacCallum and T.R. Bavin, DT, SMH, 24 May 1916.

3 SMH, 29 June 1916.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid. Besides MacCallum, the speakers were Archbishop Wright, C.G. Wade, Senator Millen, Dugald Thomson, H.Y. Braddon; from the Labor party P.S. Carr, MHR for Macquarie and a Mrs Dillon, whose husband had enlisted. J.D. Fitzgerald said that he had not attended the meeting, because he thought the 'renewal of the agitation premature'; DT, 30 June 1916.

6 DT, 20 July 1916.
23 metropolitan and 40 country branches. Judging from the location of the Sydney suburban branches, it would seem that the league had the greatest appeal to the same social classes that had been attracted to the Anti-German League. But conscription was the stronger movement. The rise of the Universal Service League in September 1915 had mobilised opinion against conscription in the labour movement; but its revival in May 1916 was prompted by the growing strength of anti-conscription views. In early December 1915 the Political Labor League Executive had regretted that its members had allowed its party to be associated with the Universal Service League. The Executive had warned: 'it is inadvisable for members of the Labor movement to publicly associate themselves with controversial issues upon which the movement may be called to express an opinion.' But during early 1916 the strongest opposition, aided by the unionists in the Anti-Conscription League, grew within the trade union wing of the labour movement. George Waite told an anti-conscription meeting in the Sydney Trades Hall that he had been forced to

1 Universal Service, 26 August 1916. Copy in the Dixon Library, F91/59. Addresses of secretaries were as follows: 17 in council chambers, 9 recruiting committees, 32 private addresses, 2 clergymen, a teacher, journalist and a solicitor. Aldermen presided at USL meetings at Newtown, North Sydney, Hunter's Hill, Paddington, Glebe, Waverley, Balmain, see SMH, 14, 24 June, 20, 28 July, 10, 11, 12 August 1916.

2 Sydney suburban branches existed at Neutral Bay, Waverley, Randwick, Dulwich Hill, Marrickville, Rockdale, Drummoyne, Balmain, Newtown, Glebe, Paddington, Chatswood, Hunter's Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Turramurra-Wahroonga, Hornsby, Ashfield, Burwood, Bankstown, Carlingford, Five Dock, Brookvale, Darlington; see Universal Service, 26 August 1916, SMH, 10, 12 August 1916.

3 At the 22 May meeting MacCallum had declared: 'what makes action more necessary is that large and most influential organisations have declared on the other side, and when they are no doubt busily exerting pressure on their members', the USL must accordingly put its case.

4 AW, 9 December 1915; DT, 6 December 1915. Conscriptionist members of the 1915 PLL Executive included Holman, Fitzgerald, Meagher, Watson, Black, George Lewis, Claude Thomson. Several of the anti-conscriptionists were Arthur Rae, D. Guihen, T.D. Mutch, E. Grayndler, Mrs K. Dwyer, Arthur Blakeley. The Executive discussed the issue for several weeks; according to the Worker the first discussion took place on 8 October 1915.
chair the meeting: he had 'great difficulty' in getting a chairman from among 'the politicians or aspiring politicians'.

On 28 January 1916 the AWU conference declared its opposition to conscription. The Illawarra Labor Council supported the Anti-Conscription League. It added: 'we consider wealthy capitalists should first of all be prepared to put their wealth upon the later of sacrifice before asking the workers to give up their lives.'

On 8 May Arthur Rae successfully put a motion at the Political Labor League Conference:

That this conference solemnly pledges itself to oppose by all lawful means the conscription of life for service abroad, and directs all affiliated unions and leagues to oppose all Labour members who vote for, or otherwise support, conscription, so as to make this a clear cut issue between the forces of democracy and despotism.

The conference further authorised the incoming Executive, which had been captured by the secretly-organised Industrial Section, to refuse the party's endorsement to conscriptionist candidates; and instructed it 'to oppose at all costs the policy of conscription'.

Rae's uncompromising motion was passed near the end of the nineteen day conference. It had been overshadowed by an eight day conflict between the unionist-controlled conference and the Labor parliamentarians over the question of abolition of the Legislative Council, the first plank of the state Labor platform. Rae's argument was significant. He developed the implication of the Universal Service League's principle of total control of manpower. If military conscription were enforced he declared, the civilians would be inflicted with compulsory industrial service: 'no man would dare to strike or ask for higher wages because that

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1 SMH, 6 January 1916.
2 Ibid., 5 February 1916.
3 Ibid., 9 May 1916.
4 The Conference had censured the Holman government for its failure to act. All ministers gave their ministerial resignations to caucus; John Storey was elected leader. With the threatened fall of the government and after hours of negotiations, the two sides found a compromise on 3 May. Storey resigned and caucus re-elected the ministry on 4 May. See SMH, 27 April to 5 May 1916.
would be interfering with military discipline. It would be putting this country under martial law.\(^1\) Others agreed. T.D. Mutch, a journalist from the \textit{Worker}, had already encountered the power of 'militarism'. The military dominated Australia today, he declared: 'the truth was absolutely forbidden; the free press was not free.'\(^2\)

Arthur Rae was a representative of the small band who rejected conscription for idealistic reasons. As Australian democrats, military compulsion did not accord with their vision of their society. But these attitudes were not isolationist. Robert Cruickshank, who had unsuccessfully stood as the Labor candidate for Wentworth in September 1914, declared to his fellow Australians: 'we must fight this hellish war to a finish', in order that British liberties might be preserved.\(^3\) Compulsory service for home defence was acceptable; he opposed 'the continental form of conscription for military service in any part of the globe where British statesmen think it necessary to fight. The British electors have some voice in such quarrels - we have none.'\(^4\) He spoke in the voice of the independent Australian Britons. But the anti-conscriptionist idealists were to be joined by many working class people who saw conscription primarily as a threat to exploit them further. But the voluntary system itself was not opposed: the 1916 Political Labor League Conference resolved 'to assist the Federal and State Governments in securing victory for the allied nations and

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\(^1\) \textit{SMH}, 9 May 1916. While the conference met, martial law was proclaimed in Ireland following the Dublin rising; the first news was printed on 27 April. See \textit{SMH}, 27, 28, 29 April, 1 May 1916.

\(^2\) \textit{SMH}, 9 May 1916. J.D. Fitzgerald, who opposed Rae's motion said that the military position 'had been hidden by the censor both in England and Australia'.

\(^3\) Letter to the editor from Robert W. Cruickshank, \textit{AW}, 23 September 1915.

\(^4\) Ibid. See also views of W. McCormack, a Queensland state politician, who said at the 1916 AWU conference: 'with the firing of the first shot in the war Australia practically lost self-government. Australia's say in the settling terms at the end of the war was important and her participation in the battlefield should give that right.' \textit{AW}, 3 February 1916.
the restoration of peace...and the downfall of militarism'.

Expressions of opinion like this arose from sentimental bonds: many people in the labour movement had family or workmates in the army. The Worker harshly criticised aspects of the war, but it continued to publish the names and photographs of the unionists who had enlisted, died or been wounded. In January 1916 E. Grayndler stated that during the first twelve months of war, although the figures were not completed, about 15,000 members (18.75 per cent) of the Australian Workers' Union had volunteered.

While the Labor Conference was meeting the first Anzac Day was celebrated on 25 April. As nine struck in the morning all stopped their work and gave three cheers for the King, the Empire and their 'Anzacs'. Over 4,000 uniformed returned men marched with their unit colours through the Sydney streets: 'There was much hand-clapping, but little cheering.' They were wet by a passing shower of rain; the sun was shining when they entered the Domain, where an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 people crowded to join the midday

1 SMH, 11 May 1916. The resolution was put by A.C. Willis, delegate of the Southern Collieries Employees' Federation and J.D. Fitzgerald was seconder.

2 For instance see AW, 16 September 1915: C.L. Hartt, a cartoonist contributor and C.A. Scott of the Worker staff were reported to be wounded; Andy Price, formerly caretaker of Worker office and of the Sydney Trades Hall was reported as killed.

3 SMH, 12 January 1916. Grayndler claimed that the AWU had about 80,000 members and that enlistment figures had not yet been received from Tasmania or Western Australian branches. The Commonwealth Statistician G.H. Knibbs received returns from 624 unions with a total membership of 435,557 (i.e. over 85 per cent of the total Australian unionists). The returns covering the period August 1914 to 31 January 1915 showed that 20,111 or 4.52 per cent of the members had enlisted. Knibbs computed the total numbers of unionists (344,000) and non-unionists (766,000) of military age and estimated that 6.77 per cent (23,300) and 4 per cent (30,600) respectively had enlisted: the total enlistments being 50,900. See SMH, 24 March 1915. See also AW, 19 April 1917, for enlistment returns from 32 NSW trade unions, with memberships ranging from 60 to 5,000, making a combined total of 28,890: 7,096 (24.56 per cent) of these had enlisted.

4 SMH, 26 April 1916.
memorial service. The English-born Colonel-Chaplain A.E. Talbot called: 'Heads bare for a moment, for the fallen.'

He had lived with Australian workingmen under gunfire at Gallipoli; he was to defend the workingman's point of view during the Great Strike of late 1917. The huge congregation sang the first hymn on the order of service: 'O God, Our Help in Ages Past'. After prayers and an address from Archbishop Wright, a squad of Light Horse trumpeters blew the 'Last Post'. Many wept. It was the last time of peace before Australians battled each other to decide the way that their army was to be reinforced on the Western Front.

On 31 July the State War Council of New South Wales met to consider the report which Professor Macintyre had written on the seven month recruiting campaign. 'It must be manifest that the limits of a voluntary system still leave untouched a very large number of men who in the present urgency of the Empire ought to be giving themselves for the defence of their country', he wrote. He had argued against conscription in September-October 1915; some nine months later he had to admit: 'I cannot but recognise that the demands of this war go beyond the limits of a voluntary system.' Macintyre's report was sent to the Minister for Defence. The day of the meeting Prime Minister W.M. Hughes returned to Australia. But he was to encounter entrenched opposition to his proposals for conscription.

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Undated Report of Professor Macintyre, NSW PDC, Box 7/4736, file B16/3820. Minutes of the War Council for 31 July 1916 are found in NSW PDC, Box 7/4735, file B16/3528. Present at the meeting were ministers W.G. Ashford and J. Estell; C.G. Wade, J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, J.C. Watson, Brigadier General G. Ramaciotti, Captain T.P. Conway; Under-Secretary J.B. Holme, and employers' representatives G.A. Parkes and W.T. Willington. Apologies were given for Holman, Meagher and William Brooks.
CHAPTER 7

ECONOMIC CONSCRIPTION AND THE PROFITEERS

While middle class spokesmen were calling for uncompromising social unity and greater austerity, economic forces generated grievances among the working classes. But their efforts to protect their livelihood against deteriorating economic circumstances by strikes, by agitation for increased pay and for greater opportunities for employment were met with incomprehension and resentment among the middle classes. Despite the measures to provide some employment and to control prices through the Necessary Commodities Control Commission, 1 many people in the labour movement came to believe that they had lost the sympathy of their Labor politicians at the time when they needed them most. Parliamentary collaboration for the cause of 'national' unity, and the dumping of 'contentious' legislation which the Liberals opposed and the Legislative Council later blocked, helped to nurse discontent in the labour movement.

From the outbreak of war the degree of unemployment, both absolute and partial, was a critical political problem in New South Wales. The government was continuously solicited for assistance by union or employer deputations representing industries in the doldrums. During November 1914 the Minister for Public Works told a deputation of workers seeking employment that they should join the army; in January he refused to see any more of the unemployed: his department had

1 The NSW Commission was superseded by the Commonwealth Prices Adjustment Board, which was proclaimed by the War Precautions Prices Adjustment Regulations on 24 March 1916. J.H. Catts was the board chairman. A new federal authority, the Necessary Commodities Commission, took over the board's functions when commissioners were appointed on 20 July 1916. The Commonwealth government's constitutional power to fix prices was subsequently decided in the High Court case Farey v. Burvett. Scott, op. cit., pp. 638-42 ff.
no money to provide more work.\textsuperscript{1} The metropolitan Labor leagues met in late September 1914. They resolved that 'the industrial strain' be 'more equitably distributed' over the whole community by a drastic increase in income tax. They proposed that all annual incomes up to £150 be taxed at the rate of 10 per cent; with progressive increases up to 20 per cent on incomes above £300.\textsuperscript{2} In 1911\textsuperscript{3} of the total 718,820 breadwinners, only 5,846 (0.81 per cent) paid income tax.\textsuperscript{4}

The outbreak of war upset the London money market and threatened the New South Wales public works programme which were financed from loans. The Commonwealth government, after much haggling during August to November 1914, agreed to lend sufficient money which enabled the public works to continue until the following November.\textsuperscript{5} Holman, as Treasurer, entered

\textsuperscript{1}\textit{SMH, DT}, 20 November 1914; \textit{SMH}, 16 January 1915. Like Holman's statement on the 'intellectual elite', Griffith's remark provoked hostility; see letters to the editor from David Elliot, T. Skelly and T. Palmer, \textit{AW}, 10, 24 December 1914.

\textsuperscript{2}\textit{DT}, 30 September 1914. The amended NSW Income Tax Act of April 1914 only taxed annual incomes at the rate of 3.3 per cent up to £700. The maximum rate, after six gradations, was 6 per cent, on annual incomes over £9,700. See \textit{Official Year Book of New South Wales, 1915}, p.289.

\textsuperscript{3}1911 was the last year when details of the number paying NSW income tax were made public.

\textsuperscript{4}Calculations from \textit{Official Year Book of NSW, 1915}, p.289 and \textit{NSW Statistical Register, 1914-15}, p.63, occupations according to the 1911 census. Commonwealth income taxes were first introduced in 1915-16, see Scott, op.cit., p.481. The number of Commonwealth income taxpayers in NSW was 88,415 (37.6 per cent of the Australian total), see \textit{Monthly Summary of Australian Statistics}, Bulletin No.55, July 1916, p.42. All persons earning £150 gross annually were required to furnish returns; deductions were permitted. Figures are given for gross, net and tax assessed incomes, but these are not meaningful on a state basis, as one category, 'Central' (referring to those taxpayers deriving income from sources in more than one state), had 33.2 per cent of the tax assessed incomes, but only 3.6 per cent of the total Australian taxpayers. NSW had 28.5 per cent and Victoria 16.3 per cent of the tax assessed incomes.

\textsuperscript{5}\textit{NSW Parl. Deb.}, series 2, session 1914-15, 8 December 1914, p.1831; Scott, op.cit., pp.484-7. The British government created difficulties in raising finance in London as it objected to loans being floated during war time for public works.
an unorthodox and controversial agreement to provide finance after the end of 1915. Using his Agent-General, he privately negotiated a loan with the London firm of Norton Griffiths.\footnote{In return for lending £10,000,000 over five years, commencing from January 1916, the company took over the function of the Department of Public Works in the supervision and construction of specified railway, water and harbour works. For this service it charged 5 per cent on its total net expenditure. See NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.5, pp.1029-79. At the outbreak of war NSW was in the midst of negotiating a loan on the London market; the war ended the negotiations. Holman had the endorsement of the PLL Executive in negotiating the Norton Griffiths scheme, see statement by Capt. Samuel Toombs, MLA for Hurstville, and a member of the 1915 Executive, DT, 7 April 1915.}
The scheme angered both Liberal and Labor supporters.\footnote{The conservative criticism was that 'economy' should be enforced during war time; moreover the method used to compute profit was also an incentive for the firm to make its expenditure as high as possible.} At the 1915 Political Labor League Conference, against considerable opposition Holman defended his action, even though it broke with the party platform, on the ground that 'it was equally the duty of the Government to keep its people in employment, as it was to keep the platform'.\footnote{DT, 7 April 1915. Mrs Macnamara (King PLL) called the scheme the 'greatest contravention of Labor principles during the existence of the Labor party. State enterprise was the ideal of Labor....' The Railway Workers and General Labourers' Association conference voting 37 to 24, expressed their 'strong disapproval' of the scheme; their members were some of the chief beneficiaries. See SMH, 7 January 1915. A plebiscite was held; of the 18,000 members only 7,000 voted: 3,469 for the Norton Griffiths scheme, 3,051 against. See DT, 24 April 1915. D.A. O'Sullivan, the union's secretary, strongly supported the scheme at the 1915 PLL Conference: it was the 'bread and butter' of his members.} In accordance with the government's policy to share the work available, to 'reduce time' rather than 'the rates of pay',\footnote{NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1914-15, Vol.57, p.749, 8 September 1914.} the men who kept their jobs on public works were put on short time.

Unemployment statistics are rare for these years; but the state Department of Labour and Industry compiled figures for a short period which were published in the monthly Industrial Gazette. They begin at September 1914 and end abruptly at

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The department recognised that their figures probably underestimated the actual number of people classified as either partially unemployed or totally unemployed. For instance, although the Gazette shows roughly 11,000 unemployed in November 1914, the written report accompanying the statistics guessed that the actual number might vary between 11,000 to 18,000 out of work.2

The statistics can be taken as minimum figures, assuming that the department recorded all the unemployed people it could discover. As can be seen from Table 1 Sydney had the largest number of unemployed, and that unemployed people were scattered throughout the rural areas. The aggregate picture shows a fall in unemployment during the period; but was accompanied by a large increase in partial unemployment. The impact of unemployment was severe at Broken Hill. 'The latter part of 1914,' wrote factory inspector F.V. Field, 'will long be remembered as the worst period of depression experienced on the Barrier'. He estimated that by 31 December 1914, the pre-war work-force of 11,573 (roughly one-third of its estimated population of 30,500), had been almost cut in half.

1 No reason is given for the termination of the series. However the Under-Secretary of the Department of Labour and Industry, J.B. Holme became a member of the State War Council at this time. See letter from Under-Secretary, Premier's Department, to J.B. Holme, 22 September 1915, NSWDC, Box 7/4770, file A18/2449. According to the Public Service List, 1915 (NSW Parl. Papers, session 1915-16, Vol.5, pp.451-730) Holme's small department numbered 84, half belonging to the Office of Chief Inspector of Factories. The remainder had many tasks connected with arbitration, so that staff may not have been able to compile unemployment statistics because of their becoming a part of the recruiting bureaucracy.

2 NSWIG, Vol.6, November 1914, p.1462. There is also evidence given in the written monthly summaries that the department held an optimistic attitude to employment opportunities: they expected that army enlistments created substantial job vacancies. Several sources were used by the department to compile its statistics: factory censuses; factory inspectors', employers', police and newspaper reports; trade union estimates; and a makeshift self-registration system involving free post cards set up in August-September 1914 both to help estimate the number of and provide assistance for the unemployed. See NSWIG, Vol.6, November 1914, p.1451; Vol.7, December 1914, p.50. 15,000 registrations were received during the period August 1914-June 1915.
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sydney</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>6,574</td>
<td>7,280</td>
<td>5,118</td>
<td>4,264</td>
<td>4,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part-time</td>
<td>4,807</td>
<td>6,075</td>
<td>9,866</td>
<td>16,222</td>
<td>17,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>11,381</td>
<td>13,355</td>
<td>14,984</td>
<td>20,486</td>
<td>21,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per cent of total</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newcastle</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>1,144</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>1,731</td>
<td>1,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part-time</td>
<td>1,617</td>
<td>3,414</td>
<td>3,692</td>
<td>11,925</td>
<td>7,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>2,761</td>
<td>3,706</td>
<td>4,006</td>
<td>13,656</td>
<td>9,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per cent of total</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broken Hill</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>1,830</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part-time</td>
<td>4,860</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>2,958</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>6,690</td>
<td>1,934</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>3,317</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per cent of total</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rest of NSW</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>1,986</td>
<td>2,895</td>
<td>2,136</td>
<td>1,546</td>
<td>1,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part-time</td>
<td>2,911</td>
<td>27,065</td>
<td>26,687</td>
<td>25,099</td>
<td>24,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>4,897</td>
<td>29,960</td>
<td>28,823</td>
<td>26,645</td>
<td>25,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per cent of total</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NSW</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>11,534</td>
<td>11,053</td>
<td>7,706</td>
<td>7,900</td>
<td>6,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part-time</td>
<td>14,245</td>
<td>37,002</td>
<td>40,833</td>
<td>56,204</td>
<td>50,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>25,779</td>
<td>48,955</td>
<td>48,539</td>
<td>64,104</td>
<td>56,898</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NSWIG, vols 6-8, 1914-15.*
to 6,089 persons, while the net male outmigration was 4,937.1

The Commonwealth embargo on coal exports and a shortage of explosives forced several collieries to shut down in early 1915, resulting in a rise of unemployment in the Newcastle district and forcing many to work part-time during April to August 1915. Sydney had around 20,000 persons in the same position: this may have been at least 5.8 per cent of the total breadwinners in the metropolitan district.2

It is difficult to gain a clear idea of the relative proportion of people out of work and on short-time and of how abnormal the employment situation was. The official estimate was that around 4,000 persons were unemployed 'in normal times and even under conditions of high prosperity'.3 Thus the official guess of 11,534 unemployed in September 1914 represents roughly a two-fold increase. In Table 2 the trade union estimates of the proportion of their numbers out of work show that during the year covering the September quarters from 1914 to 1915 the figures were above pre-war levels.4 But these trade union estimates do not include the number on part-time work; nor do they take into account the proportion of the non-unionised workforce that was unemployed. The aggregate picture further disguises the degree of unemployment within individual unions. The Federated Ship Painters' and Dockers' Union for example claimed in July 1915 that 11.5 per cent of its members were out of work; an equal proportion had

---


2 This figure is an arbitrary one. The total metropolitan breadwinners at the 1911 census formed almost 46 per cent of the district population. Assuming that this proportion remained constant despite the metropolitan increase in population 1911 to December 1914 (629,503 to an estimated 752,500), then the number of breadwinners would have been 346,150 in December 1914. As the official unemployment figures were estimations, the proportion of breadwinners either out of work or on short-time may have been greater.


joined the army.\(^1\) Thus the trade union figures merely serve to emphasise the constancy of unemployment: the insecurity persisted despite the vacancies created by men joining the colours.

There are striking differences in the occupational distribution of unemployment. Unskilled and semi-skilled workers in labouring and mining occupations suffered prolonged part-time employment and formed the largest group of the unemployed (see Tables 3 and 4): they formed over 90 per cent

\(^1\)DT, 16 July 1915. At its half-yearly meeting the union claimed a membership of 1,739; 203 had enlisted; about 200 were unemployed.
of the partially employed in December 1914 and over 75 per cent in September 1914.¹

### TABLE 3

**NSW PART-TIME EMPLOYED 1914-15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labouring</th>
<th>Mining and Quarrying</th>
<th>Manufacturing</th>
<th>Other Industries</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1914</td>
<td>6,149</td>
<td>3,995</td>
<td>3,209</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>14,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>31,164</td>
<td>3,869</td>
<td>2,538</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>37,902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1915</td>
<td>34,823</td>
<td>2,552</td>
<td>3,240</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>40,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>34,755</td>
<td>11,653</td>
<td>7,341</td>
<td>2,455</td>
<td>56,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>31,444</td>
<td>7,288</td>
<td>6,977</td>
<td>4,615</td>
<td>50,324</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** NSWIG, Vols 6-8, 1914-1915.

### TABLE 4

**NSW UNEMPLOYED 1914-15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labouring</th>
<th>Mining and Quarrying</th>
<th>Manufacturing</th>
<th>Other Industries</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1914</td>
<td>3,051</td>
<td>2,822</td>
<td>3,468</td>
<td>2,193</td>
<td>11,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>3,336</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>3,440</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>11,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1915</td>
<td>2,406</td>
<td>1,128</td>
<td>2,212</td>
<td>1,960</td>
<td>7,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>1,923</td>
<td>1,822</td>
<td>2,515</td>
<td>1,640</td>
<td>7,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>1,512</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>2,590</td>
<td>1,532</td>
<td>6,574</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** NSWIG, Vols 6-8, 1914-1915.

Insecurity of employment fostered perceptions of inequality. In January 1915 William Rosser told the Railway Workers and General Labourers' Association conference that the government's half-time system on railway construction work was

¹The tables were derived from NSWIG, Vols 6-8, 1914-1915. The department used 15 occupational categories which have been simplified to four. The 'manufacturing' section is a combination of the following occupations: textiles, metal, food, leather, printing, shipbuilding, woodworking, and 'other manufacturing'. The 'other industries' section contains five occupational categories: building, transport, domestic, miscellaneous and power/heat/light. Like the official regional estimates the occupational unemployment figures only provide a rough picture of the unemployment situation.
'starving Peter to half-feed Paul': the 'lowest-paid men should not have the full burden of the effects of the war thrown upon their shoulders by being taxed 50 per cent whilst the incomes of the wealthy were left untouched'. Deteriorating economic conditions also favoured protective action. To create 'a closer and more effective working class organisation' the conference delegates voted 39 to 14 to begin discussions with the AWU on the question of amalgamation. The proposed merger was influenced by syndicalist thinking, which was soon to take shape in the One Big Union movement. The following day the delegates unanimously agreed that 'sectional trade unionism' could not 'successfully combat the encroachments of modern capitalism'; to hasten 'the redemption of the working class' they advocated that all unions be 'amalgamated by industries with one central executive'.

The threats to working class livelihood also provoked greater militancy among trade unionists: this also burst out in the Labor party. It is significant that the Industrial Section which captured the 1916 Labor conference was dominated by men from unions representing unskilled and semi-skilled workers, for example: the AWU, RWGLA, the Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association (ARTSA), the Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union, the Builders' Labourers' Federation, the Federated Storemen and Packers' Union, the Federated Furnishing Trades Society and the Australasian Coal and Shale Employees'

1AW, 7 January 1915.

2SMH, 8 January 1915. D.A. O'Sullivan the RWGLA secretary 'strongly' opposed the amalgamation. Although 'efficient and popular', his stand cost him the secretaryship, which was won by G.C. Bodkin; see AW, 5 August 1915, 'Merely Personal' column.

3In September 1916, 41 unions were represented at OBU conference in Sydney, see SMH, 4, 5 September 1916. See also Ian Bedford, 'The One Big Union, 1918-1923', in Ian Bedford and Ross Curnow, Initiative and Organization, Melbourne, 1963; Turner, Industrial Labour, op.cit.; Robin Gollan, The Coalminers of New South Wales, Melbourne, 1963.

4SMH, 9 January 1915.
Federation. Moreover, the Anti-Conscription League derived many of its activists, such as George Waite of the United Labourers' Protective Society, from the same body of unionists. The lack of employment opportunities may have influenced some men to join the army. Officials believed that over 2,000 unemployed men had enlisted at the outbreak of war.

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1 See SMH, 3 May 1916. See also DT, 22 April 1916: the industrialists claimed that the Holman government was not sufficiently 'class conscious' and that it had harboured 'outside supporters' who, because of their 'capitalist tendencies' did not have any 'genuine sympathy with Labor'. The 'industrialist' militancy also had pre-war roots. Dissatisfied over the Labor government's Industrial Arbitration policy, which had been influenced by the craft-union dominated Labor Council, several of the largest NSW unions including the AWU, RWCLA, ARTSA, AMIEU, Furnishing Trades Society, the Water and Sewerage Board Employees' Union, and the Municipal and Shire Employees' Union, formed an Industrial Unions Committee on 31 July 1914. See DT, 10, 13 July, 1 August 1914. See also comment by Claude Thompson, secretary of the ARTSA, that legislation could be effected if 'a strong industrial organisation' existed to watch the parliamentarians; DT, 29 June 1914. See also meeting of unions in Newcastle which resolved that it was 'time for industrial unions to affiliate' with the PLL; SMH, 22 January 1915. The annual PLL report claimed that there were over 550 branches in existence and that 96 unions had affiliated. The report continued: accordingly 'there does not appear to be the slightest justification for the suggested formation of a separate trades-union party'. SMH, 14 January 1915.

2 See Chapter 6.

3 See Chapter 2. Quoted from NSWIG, Vol.7, December 1914, p.51: of the 6,580 self-registered unemployed, 500 (7.6 per cent) had joined the army by the end of November 1914. From November 1914 to September 1915 statistics of AIF enlistments were inspected by officials from the NSW Department of Labour and Industry, and published in the Industrial Gazette under the title of 'The Diversion of Employees to Military Service'. It was intended that the information would reveal job vacancies; the department believed that an approximation of 'real' employment opportunities could be estimated by deducting the number of unemployed from the number of army enlistments. The statistics are not of value; at the end of the period there is a discrepancy of about 24,000 when compared with Scott's figures (76,073 enlistments from NSW up to 30 September 1915). The attempt to compute the number of unemployed enlisting, however, was abandoned during 1914; although it was not made explicit, it seems possible that the assessments may have caused a conflict: men were supposed to enlist out of patriotism, not from necessity.
The official army enlistment figures (Table 5) show that labourers made up 30 per cent of the Australian Imperial Force that went overseas. At this time Macarthy has estimated that unskilled labourers, who were found in many industries in all

**TABLE 5**

**OCCUPATIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No. Embarked</th>
<th>% of Total Embarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tradesmen</td>
<td>112,452</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>99,252</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country callings</td>
<td>57,430</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>24,346</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>15,719</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>12,878</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafaring</td>
<td>6,562</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>2,131</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>330,770</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


the major sectors of the economy, comprised roughly 30 per cent of the Australian work force. As Macarthy admits, his figure is only a crude approximation, so that it is impossible to tell whether the labourers were disproportionately over-represented in the army. Some statistics of trade union enlistments were published during the 1916 conscription campaign which could support the view that the pressure of unemployment was a factor which influenced some men to enlist. However the statistics should be treated with caution: they were presumably used as propaganda to counter charges of trade unionist disloyalty. Moreover, trade union membership statistics are not reliable; and many of the enlistment figures appear to have been guesses. Both craft and mass unions were represented in the sample. If the unions are ranked according to their proportion of members who had

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1 Macarthy, 'Harvester Judgment', op.cit., p.124, see also p.36. Macarthy made this assessment from the 1933 census, when the unskilled accounted for about 25 per cent of the work force.
enlisted, many which had a high rate of unemployment also had some of the highest enlistment rates. This can be seen in Table 6. The correlation is not perfect: the United Labourers for instance appears at the bottom of the scale rather than the top.¹

The persistence of unemployment throughout New South Wales aroused suspicions that employers were exerting their power of dismissal to push men into the army. Arthur Griffith's retort to the unemployed to join the army accorded with the opinion of some of the middle classes. Businessman P.T. Taylor wrote: 'It was very gratifying to read the remarks of the Minister for Works with regard to the unmarried men who are out of employment at Broken Hill.'² The attempt made by the few Sydney timber merchants during May 1915 to prod their able-bodied single employees into doing their 'duty' helped to keep suspicion alive.³ The suspected conspiracy was branded as 'economic conscription'. This fear shaped the trade unionist reaction to the Universal Service League during September 1915. 'There is absolutely no excuse whatever for this agitation, which seems to have largely originated from the employing classes', declared Edward Grayndler, the secretary of the AWU. 'Are the Federated employers not satisfied with the power they possess already...that of forcing the workers by starvation into going to the front?'⁴

The grievance was also aired at Anti-Conscription League meetings. The Chief Commissioner for Railways had discharged 400 men 'when there was plenty of work to do', declared Gearing of the RWGLA. 'This was forcing men in an unjust way to

¹Note that the United Labourers Protective Society was one of the first unions founded in NSW; accordingly its members may have been in an older age group than the RWGLA, hence contributing fewer eligible men to the army. To investigate further we need accurate information on age structure, unemployment and enlistment rates.

²Letter to the editor from P.T. Taylor, SMH, 30 December 1914.

³See Chapter 4.

⁴AW, 16 September 1915.
### TABLE 6

**ENLISTMENTS FROM SELECTED NSW TRADE UnIONS, SEPTEMBER 1916**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Male Membership[^1]</th>
<th>Number Enlisted</th>
<th>% Enlisted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RNGLA</td>
<td>18,790[^2]</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWU</td>
<td>80,000[^3]</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trolley Draymen and Carters' Union</td>
<td>5,500 [5,077]</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union</td>
<td>4,782[^4]</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation</td>
<td>12,000[^5]</td>
<td>3,580</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federated Seamen's Union</td>
<td>11,000[^6]</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operative Bakers' Union</td>
<td>1,246 [1,200]</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop Assistants and Warehouse Employees' Federation</td>
<td>3,700 [2,869]</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brickmakers' and Brickcarters' Union</td>
<td>2,000 [1,522]</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers and Wigmakers' Employees Union</td>
<td>1,083 [1,000]</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawmill and Timberyard Employees' Union</td>
<td>3,500 [2,500]</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federated Ship Painters and Dockers' Union</td>
<td>2,157 [2,000]</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association</td>
<td>3,500 [3,000]</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tramway Employees' Union</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastrycooks' Union</td>
<td>550 [476]</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federated Furnishing Trades Society of NSW</td>
<td>2,200 [2,100]</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTSA</td>
<td>8,563</td>
<td>1,040</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Coal Lumpers' Union</td>
<td>1,650 [1,648]</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Clerks' Union</td>
<td>2,150 [1,800]</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Labourers Protective Society</td>
<td>8,007 [3,000]</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMIEU</td>
<td>3,000 [2,800]</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federated Ironworkers' Association</td>
<td>4,500 [4,300]</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boilermakers and Iron Ship Builders' Society</td>
<td>1,450 [1,430]</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federated Millers and Mill Employees' Union</td>
<td>2,554 [200]</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** DT, 21 September 1916; NSW Statistical Register, 1916-17.

[^1]: Where DT and Register membership figures disagree, the higher figure is used for the enlistment calculation; the lower figure is bracketed.
[^2]: 1915 membership.
[^3]: Total for Australia.
[^4]: Estimate based on 1915 figures.
enlist. The sacking undoubtedly resulted from the unavailability of funds for public works. Nonetheless Holman had shown himself to be more concerned to augment the army than to keep able-bodied eligible men in civilian jobs. During November 1915 John Perry, the opposition MLA for Byron, asked him if the 'slackers' in government and private employment could be replaced with returned soldiers. 'The Government is considering various proposals...', the Premier replied, 'for bringing some measure of pressure to bear upon certain sections of the community of whom it might fairly be urged that they ought to volunteer.'

Resentment had also developed over wages. Holman had declared on 5 August 1914 that his government would have to suspend industrial regulations so that employers could share the work available among all their employees on a half-time basis: mass sackings would thus be avoided. Two ministers J.H. Cann and D.R. Hall, visited the Labor Council the following day to explain the government's views, for they believed that 11,000 to 15,000 people had lost their jobs since 3 August. They corrected misinterpretations of Holman's 'alleged' declaration that industrial laws would be abandoned: 'both ministers assured Council that this would not be done'. In September Holman affirmed that there was no 'necessity' to suspend arbitration awards: the government's

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1 NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.61, pp.3121-3, 2 November 1915. See also Holman's cabinet memorandum, 7 February 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4781, file B18/520. A portion of this entitled 'Memo. on Recruiting' was published in NSW Parl. Papers, session 1917-18, Vol.2, p.1000; see Chapter 8.
2 SMH, 6 August 1914.
3 Ibid., 7 August 1914.
4 Labor Council of NSW, General Meeting Minutes, 6 August 1914; 107 delegates were present at this, the Thursday weekly meeting. See also report in AN, 13 August 1914. Cann suggested ways of coping with unemployment: 'the men might work for two or three shillings a day less - (loud dissent) - or on the other hand, instead of working six days a week they might work four. (Hear, hear.).' See also Chapter 2.
policy was to 'reduce time' rather than 'rates of pay'.  

But a wage freeze was a separate question. During November 1914 the issue was fought between the employer organisations and the Labor Council before Mr Justice Heydon in the New South Wales Industrial Arbitration Court. Because of the war time circumstances, and probably because it was the largest single employer in the state, the government intervened as a third party in the case. T.R. Bavin was their counsel.  

On 30 November Heydon ordered that the wages boards, which were subordinate to his court, could not consider any further applications for wage increases. A restricted number of cases could be heard in 'special circumstances' he continued; but they must argue the general question as 'suggested by Mr. Bavin, namely - can the increase asked for be given without detriment to the public interest?'  

Heydon, whose only son had enlisted, was affected by the notion of sacrifice: 'We are protected by the mother country, and it is not our place to lag behind her....Mr Fisher has said that we must fight to the last man and the last shilling.' But his judgment affected most of the workers in New South Wales.  

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2 See SMH, 4, 10 November 1914, for details of the case. See also SMH, 4 November 1914: Mr Justice Edmunds dismissed the appeal of the Railway and Tramway Officers' Association on the ground that the war had affected railway revenues adversely. On 9 November Holman announced that men employed on public works would be put on short time; SMH, 10 November 1914.  

3 Ibid., 1 December 1914; NSWIG, Vol.7, December 1914, pp.4-16.  

4 DT, 30 August 1916; Captain Heydon MC, served as a medical officer in Egypt, Gallipoli and France.  

5 SMH, 26 January 1915.  

6 It is difficult to get figures on the proportion of the NSW workforce working under either state or federal awards. For Australia as a whole, in 1914 and 1915 respectively 17.10 and 8.30 per cent of the workforce obtained federal awards; 69.58 and 65.10 per cent respectively received state awards. The remainder received their wages in several ways: voluntarily increased by employers; direct negotiation; intervention by a third party or by registered agreements lodged with state or federal courts. See Macarthy, op.cit., p.137.
Trade unionists reacted angrily. The Labor Council resolved on the motion put by F. McQueen, the delegate from the Storemen and Packers' Union: 'That owing to the great danger of a general industrial eruption...this Council requests the immediate removal of Mr Justice Heydon from the Presidency of the Court and from all offices under the Act.' The Boilermakers' Society was particularly angered: Heydon's decision stopped their current case before their wages board. A seven man deputation from the society was to wait upon the government. At a mass meeting on 19 December the boilermakers side-stepped the arbitration system. Denied the 'full use of the Arbitration Act', they resolved: 'we give the employers notice that we will not work under the present conditions and for the present wages, after January 14, 1915'. The Worker was equally critical. Both employers and workers had representatives on each board it said, and the chairman was 'usually' sympathetic to the employers: 'Under such conditions, what prospects were there of wages being raised to an extent which would have embarrassed industry?'

E.J. Kavanagh pointed out in his annual report to the Labor Council that 'thousands of workers, their wives and children, are at the present time suffering very severely owing to loss and partial loss of wages, and the excessive prices of the necessaries of life'. But there was no complaint against the Empire for being at war, only that 'we, as workers are called upon to bear more than our fair share of the Empire's burdens'. He singled out the Heydon decision: 'Prices may be increased... but wages must remain stationary until the war is over.'

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1Labor Council of NSW, General Meeting Minutes, 17 December 1914.

2Ibid.

3SMH, 21 December 1914.

4AW, 24 December 1914, leader 'War and Wages'. The leader writer declared that Heydon had 'wiped out of existence legislation which the workers of New South Wales had been twenty years in winning': thus the war was 'being used as a pretext for the resurrection of sweating'.

5SMH, 22 January 1915.
The reaction led Heydon to reconsider. As he put it on 25 January: 'the pronouncement has created a feeling of injustice'. So as not to 'destroy confidence' in his court he ordered the wages boards to recommence hearing claims for increased pay. But he nullified much of his concession: 'the boards should take into account the existing state of things and the effect of the war both upon industry itself and the community, and doing this may perhaps bring about the same result as the pronouncement, but...will be less open to misconstruction'.

Resentment flared once more at the Political Labor League Conference in April. Several speakers, particularly the boilermakers William Murray and Sinclair, declared that Holman's remark about the need to discontinue the arbitration system had influenced Heydon's judgement. 'If it had not been for the hysterical state in which Mr. Holman went to the press', said R.J. Stuart-Robertson MLA amid applause, 'the judge would not have taken the action he did.' By a slender majority of 73 to 68 the motion was defeated. It was a double-barrelled criticism protesting at unequal treatment: the 'Government is deserving of the severest censure for allowing the workers to suffer by the suspension of wages boards...and at the same time appointing a commission with power to increase the price of commodities'.

The decisions of the Necessary Commodities Control Commission had allowed the 'Gas Company, the miller, the brewer and the publican' to pass on 'extra costs to the public, plus a little more profit', wrote J.J. Griffiths of

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1 Ibid., 26 January 1915.
2 PT, 9 April 1915.
3 Ibid. Stuart-Robertson frequently appeared as a trade union advocate before wages boards. Other speakers supporting the motion of censure against the government were E. Jackson (Illawarra Colliery Employees' Association); H. Lamond (AWU); W. O'Brien (Federated Furnishing Trades Society of NSW). Defending the government were John Estell (Minister for Labour and Industry); Holman; J.J. Morrish, MLA for King; and D. Guillen (Hospital and Asylum Employees' Union).
4 Ibid.
Lithgow, protesting about the halting of wage claims and the half-time employment. 'One hears throughout the country blatant ranters appealing to the workers, and telling them they must make sacrifices...but what sacrifices are the profit-mongers making?' he declared. 'Donating a few pounds to the patriotic funds, and recouping themselves to the tune of hundreds of pounds which they squeeze out of the public' by raising their prices.1

The pressure upon their livelihood and their inability to obtain redress through political means fed two movements among trade unionists: syndicalism and the desire to remodel the existing Labor party. 'Every member of an organisation should be guaranteed work whenever he wants it; he should not be at the mercy of an irresponsible person who happens to be possessed of capital', declared the Navvy, the organ of the RWGIA. The State was the 'most fiendish piece of machinery that mankind has yet invented', for whether administered by Labor or Liberal, it would 'leave its citizens [to] starve'. Moreover the State preserved inequality: it protected the 'rich man' but murdered the 'poor man'. Heydon in February 1914 had established a living wage of £2.8 for a man, wife and two children; in 1915 'the great State of New South Wales is paying thousands of its workmen £1.16s per week'; but the money could be found 'to pay Cabinet Ministers about £1,250 per annum each and £500 per annum for each member of Parliament'.2

1 Letter to the editor from J.J. Griffiths, AW, 14 January 1915. See also evidence given by E.W. Knox, general manager of the CSR Co., AW, 21 January 1915; Labor Council discussion provoked by M. Burke (United Labourers Protective Society) on the subject of high prices and low wages; and the meeting of the metropolitan branches of the PLL to discuss unemployment, AW, 28 January 1915; the angry reaction of the Hotel, Club and Restaurant Employees' Union to their award, AW, 11 February 1915; Labor Council discussion on the failure of the Necessary Commodities Control Commission to protect the workers, AW, 18 February 1915; protests by the Women Workers' Union of NSW at the reduction of women's wages by employers, AW, 18 March 1915.

2 Extracts from the Navvy, quoted in DT, 9 February 1915.
Inequality of power in the Labor party provoked discontent among trade unionists. In Newcastle the executive of the Coal and Shale Employees' Federation called a meeting of local Unions in January 1915. Thirty unions sent representatives: these included the Colliery Employees Federation, ARTSA, Federated Ironworkers' Association, Boilermakers' Society, Amalgamated Society of Engineers, United Labourers' Protective Association, and the Shop Assistants and Warehouse Employees Union. The meeting gave its opinion 'that the present representative of Labour in Parliament is not a true reflex of the workers'. The Minister for Labour and Industry, John Estell, who held Wallsend, one of the four Labor seats in the Newcastle district, defended his government at the opening of the new Trades Hall. 'The people are a long way better off to-day than they ever were in the history of New South Wales', he declared. 'Nonsense', an interjector retorted. W. O'Neill, the president of the Labor Council of New South Wales, similarly disputed Estell's remark.

A. Lewis, the treasurer of the Colliery Employees' Federation supported his fellow unionists; he warned that if Labor parliamentarians 'did not do their duty and carry out the ideals of the Labour movement' they would be removed.

The question of tactics was raised again during October 1915 in the Labor Council during a debate over a motion of no-confidence in the Holman government. W. Cahill of the Operative Bricklayers' Union and 1916-17 president of the

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1 Complaints about the 'representativeness' of the Labor party strengthened during the war years. See letter to the editor from H.N. Smith, of Griffith, who urged that a trade union party be formed; alternatively unionists should join the PLL branches 'to ensure the return of candidates who will truly represent the Labor movement, and not "all classes"'. _AW_, 24 December 1914.

2 _AW_, 28 January 1915. See also _AW_, 21 January 1915: invitations were issued to 51 unions in the district.

3 _SMH_, 22 January 1915.

4 Of the five seats around Newcastle, Labor held Cessnock, Newcastle, Wallsend and Wickham.

5 _SMH_, 1 March 1915.

6 Ibid.
Council, urged that the unions should capture 'the political machine' that they had lost: the Labor Leagues were 'practically filled with Liberals'.

1 E.J. Price of the Tramway Employees' Union proposed that a trades union party be formed, for the 'vital principles' of the labour movement were being ignored.

2 William Murray spoke on behalf of his Boilermakers' Society: 'We have to fight the Labor Government in my union harder than we have had to fight any conservative or Liberal Government in the State.'

To preserve their predominance over the Labor party the Industrial Section attempted to increase trade union representation at future conferences. 'We find that the personnel of the leagues is to a great extent made up of business men, lawyers, employers, land agents, landjobbers and middle-class wishy-washy Labourites', declared Arthur Blakeley of the AWU, 'who are in the movement with a view of serving their own personal ambition and ends.'

He was to become the federal member for Darling in May 1917. C.E. Last, also an AWU official, threatened: 'I am instructed to say that if we can't get more adequate representation, we will withdraw from

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1 DT, 8 October 1915.

2 Ibid. See also Labor Council of NSW, General Meeting Minutes, 6, 14 October 1915. The motion of no-confidence was put because of the Holman government's 'failure to introduce Industrial legislation as promised at the PLL Conference' in April 1915. It was lost 72 to 59 to an amendment inviting Holman to explain the intentions of his government.

3 DT, 15 October 1915.

4 SMH, 3 May 1916. Arthur Blakeley of the AWU put the motion that affiliated unions be represented at conference on the basis of 'one delegate for each 1,000 members or part thereof'. As league of 50 members was entitled to one delegate, Blakeley argued that six leagues of 50 totalling 300 members obtained 6 delegates; whereas a union of 20,000 members had also 6 delegates. The basis for union representation at the time was 50-1,000 members, one delegate; up to 4,000 members two delegates; up to 8,000 members, three delegates; and one delegate for each additional 4,000 members or part thereof; see SMH, 24 May 1916.

5 SMH, 3 May 1916.
affiliation.\(^1\) The bluff failed, for the necessary two-thirds majority needed to achieve a constitutional alteration could not be marshalled.\(^2\) But success was obtained at the 1917 conference. As the party executive reported: 'This reform strengthens the industrial basis on which the ultimate success and stability of the Political Movement rests.'\(^3\)

Underlying the political disquiet in the labour movement was an anxiety generated by rising prices. The last half of 1915 saw a period of unprecedented inflation, which given the condition of employment and the lag in wage rises, imposed severe hardships among many sections of the community. Soldiers' dependants were also afflicted. Two founders of the Anti-German League wrote that soldiers' families were suffering 'very bad times, and it was galling to see at the same time the men of enemy race and blood lording it in business; in public positions and in many other ways'.\(^4\)

Annie Golding, a member of the labour movement, told the Australasian League of Honour: 'We must realise the distress that is in our midst. If the leisured women of this country did all they could do, our soldiers would be able to go to the war with a feeling that their families will not suffer

\(^1\) Ibid. C.E. Last was the unsuccessful federal Labor candidate for Gwydir, May 1917.

\(^2\) Ibid. Voting was 84 to 43 in favour; on the recommittal of the motion it was lost again 88 to 56 in favour; see SMH, 4 May 1916. A subsequent report said that 100 unions (about half the number in NSW) were affiliated with the PLL: their membership totalled 110,000. The Labor Leagues on the other hand totalled around 50,000 financial members.

\(^3\) Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Australian Labor Party, state of NSW, for year ending 31 December 1917.

\(^4\) Letter to the editor from W. Weller and W. Weekes, DT, 13 September 1915.
through their absence.¹ The price index² (Table 7) reveals the sudden shift in prices during 1915. The annual average price level for 1915 obscures both the velocity and the magnitude of price changes. The quarterly statistics show a much more dramatic picture: in the July-September quarter the index rose by 18.46 per cent.³

**TABLE 7**

**NSW ANNUAL PRICE LEVEL INDEX 1912-1918**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>index level</th>
<th>numerical increase</th>
<th>% increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>1134</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>1139</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1164</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1404</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>20.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>1530</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>9.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>1548</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>1557</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Commonwealth Labour and Industrial Branch Report, No.9, pp.33-35.*

For an unknown number of wage earners the pressure of unemployment, rising prices and wage freezes pushed them from subsistence living into struggling poverty. An Englishwoman, who had emigrated in 1910 with her stonemason husband and her eight children, wrote in desperation for employment:

³ Calculated from *Commonwealth Labour and Industrial Branch Report, No.9, pp.33-5*. The first quarter of 1915 had a fall of 1.97 per cent; the second quarter a rise of 4.75 per cent.

¹ EMIL, 12 June 1915. AW, 28 October 1915: over £750,000 raised during the Australia Day appeal. On 26 October £170,000 was given to a special sub-committee to aid wounded soldiers. Mrs Kate Dwyer moved that £300,000 be granted, this was lost. The sub-committee was criticised for not having 'working-class representatives'; thus the 'appeals of needy working-class soldiers' had not been looked at with 'sympathetic eyes'.

² The index is the weighted average price level computed from 46 commodities at prices ruling in selected town and cities within each state. 1911 = base 1,000 for total Australia. The tendency of the index is to underestimate the shifts in prices.
My husband has been out of work for the past month, our rent £1 per week, of which eight weeks is owing. My eldest boy, aged 19, is at present unwell and my second son, 16, was recently invalided from H.M.S. Tingira.

We had a little capital between us when we arrived, but all it has gone. We are prepared to go anywhere or undertake any duties we may be capable of performing, as long as we have not to part with our young children.¹

As Macarthy has shown, the Harvester minimum national wage set in 1907 by Mr Justice Higgins for the unskilled worker, was not achieved until 1921.² Given the high proportion of unskilled labour in the workforce, many families would have been living near subsistence level during times of economic pressure. Moreover as there was a surplus of the unskilled, they competed with each other for jobs, thus helping to bid down the wages for their wage earning group.³ As the Worker put it: 'One hard knock, such as sickness or prolonged idleness through trade depression, and the struggling little family pass below the line of tolerable existence and enter the frozen region of want.'⁴ From this group, desperate for work, undoubtedly came part of the scab labour which broke the great strike in 1917.

Minimum wages had been set in New South Wales on the basis of the 'average' family: a man, his wife and two children. But averages hide the variations: many families were far larger than the mean established by the authorities.⁵

¹Letter to the secretary (Herbert Easton), British Emigration League, Sydney. The letter was published in AW, 20 May 1915, but the woman's name withheld. Charitable bodies were probably inadequate to the need; and accordingly may have had stringent regulations governing their handouts, see comment by Herbert Easton, AW, 3 August 1915, who was 'more than surprised that such difficulties lay in the way of any needy and helpless person seeking relief in Sydney'.

²See Macarthy, op.cit., Chapter 2.

³Ibid.

⁴AW, 18 March 1915. The Worker was considering in this case the weekly expenditure of a family of two adults and three children.

⁵Mr Justice Heydon set the living wage in February 1914 at £2.8.0 for an unskilled worker on the basis of a family of five; see NSWJC, Vol.5, March 1914, pp.100-49.
Nellie Kinchington, an organiser at the Newtown Recruiting Office, was disturbed by what she saw. She wrote to Acting-Premier G.W. Fuller in August 1917 telling him of the hardships suffered by soldiers who had left large families.

Dear sir

I would like to draw your attention to the serious rise in prices, which has taken place since the War; of the common necessaries of life; I do this because it is my duty to see the relatives [sic] of the men who enlist in this Office, are attended to, & are not in want. The task is a very hard one, as in nearly all cases in this district the men leave families from 12 to 5 children & I find that it takes the whole of their military pay for groceries, leaving nothing for rent or clothes, Bread is altogether too dear, where there is a family of 4 or 5 children it is the principal item & it would take at least 3 loaves a day for a family of that size which would cost 1/- per day. Milk Butter Jam, golden syrup are all things necessary to a family & the prices have flown sky high. Sago used to be 2d per pound now it is 3½ per pound, sugar which used to be 2½ has risen to 3½d per pound; the consequence is that the relatives [sic] of the men at the front are really in a very bad state, & this state of affairs hinders recruiting. I visited one soldier's wife one day last week who had 5 children she had ½ a blanket to cover 3 of them. Usurly [sic], a man will say, oh her pay is [£]2.2.0 per week, but when a woman pays from 17/- to [£]1-5.0 for food & clothes, which for 3 people leaves 0/- per person per week, with the cost of these items I mentioned, it cannot be done, leaving out clothes & boots, common table salt which cost as a rule two pounds for 1½ [pence] rise yesterday to 2 [pence] per lb. I thought you might like this information, so as you know exactly how the soldiers people have to make sacrifice [sic] they cannot live, let alone save it of their military pay & I really think as a mother of 5 soldiers it is a very unjust state of affairs. ²

¹Nellie Kinchington may have been the Mrs Kinchington of the Waverley PLL referred to in the press during the 1915 Labor conference: she argued the necessity for a reduction in transport fares for working boys and girls; see DT, 15 April 1915.

²Letter from Nellie Kinchington to Acting-Premier G.W. Fuller, 8 August 1917, NSW PBC, Box 7/4748, file A17/5684. See also criticisms by G.F. Davis, secretary of the Returned Soldiers' Association, who alleged that the 'dependents of many returned and discharged men were almost starving'. AM, 20 July 1916.
While prices were going up, real wages were going down, as can be seen in Table 8. The New South Wales Industrial Court could not remedy matters. Mr Justice Heydon, aghast at the unprecedented jump in prices as disclosed by the July-September quarterly statistics, abandoned 'with extreme reluctance' his innovation of February 1914 that the living wage should be adjusted to changes in the purchasing power of money. 'I cannot feel that I am justified in taking the responsibility of ordering that changes so abrupt, so extreme and so obscure, should be instantly and blindly followed', he declared. 'The consequences are quite past my powers of prevision.' Thus when declaring the living wage on 17 December he ignored the changes in Commonwealth Statistician's index as a guide: they showed a picture that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>index number</th>
<th>numerical change</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>-51</td>
<td>-5.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>924</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>909</td>
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<td>-1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>-59</td>
<td>-6.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Commonwealth Labour and Industry Branch Report, No.9, p.100.

1 The index is computed by dividing the nominal wage index by the purchasing power of money index; 1911 = base 1,000 for total Australia.

2 NSWIC, Vol.8, December 1915, p.1457; SMH, 23 November 1915. Heydon was also thinking of the need to wage the war: high price rises occur 'at a time when the war is necessitating very heavy taxation and the borrowing of enormous sums of money at high rates of interest; while the end of the war itself seems to be farther off than ever'.

was 'too violent' to follow. He set the weekly wage for 'ordinary labourers' at £2.12.6, an increase of 4/6 or 9.4 per cent on his February 1914 living wage. But over the same period the New South Wales price level index had risen by 33.3 per cent. He also directed the wages boards to cut the increases granted to other wage earners: 'Other workers cannot claim that their wages are to rise above the labourers' wage in the same proportions as before.' As he had told his court a few days earlier: 'This war is a time for strenuous effort, for self-sacrifice, for generosity in giving, for moderation in demanding, for a cheerful sharing in the labours and burdens of an enormous, and, to us, unprecedented national effort.'

But the wages boards could not cope with the pressures. The wage freeze of late 1914-early 1915 had created a bottleneck. With the impact of rising prices the wages boards became choked with a backlog of cases. Some, like the Hotel, Club, and Restaurant Caterers' Employees' Union (HCRCEU), had lodged their claims months before the war. But W.H. Mocatta, the barrister chairman of the restaurant wages board, cut the wages of cooks, waiters, waitresses and storemen by amounts

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1 SMH, 18 December 1915; see also Heydon's further comments in November: 'I think we had better await the publication of Mr. Knibbs's figures for the next quarter, with the hope that they may assist us in determining our future course.' SMH, 25 November 1915.

2 The price changes were calculated from the January-March 1914 quarter (1153) to the October-December 1915 quarter (1537), the difference being 384, or 33.3 per cent increase from 1153. The Argus noted that had Heydon kept to the purchasing power of money criterion, the minimum living wage in December 1915 should be £5.3.0 per week, or almost double the wage subsequently granted; Argus, 23 November 1915.

3 SMH, 18 December 1915.

4 Ibid., 14 December 1915.

5 Mr Debeull, the president of HCRCEU, told the Labor Council that the claim had been submitted eight months before the war, see AM, 11 February 1915. In 1916 the union had a registered membership of 1,762 members (920 males, 842 females).
up to 25 per cent.\(^1\) But the HCRCEU, along with the Saddlers' Union which was in a similar position, had to wait at least six months before there were judges available for appeal.\(^2\) The previous president of the Labor Council, W. O'Brien, told the Council that the cause of the accumulated appeals rested with the middle class chairman of the wages boards: they 'were mainly barristers with no sympathy for the working classes, as shown by the awards they delivered, it was inevitable that there should be appeals from their decisions'.\(^3\) The effects both of the temporary freeze in wage increases and of rising prices can be seen in Table 9.

T.R. Bavin, the chairman of the Government Railways Group of wages boards\(^4\) tried to sort out the 'congested condition' of the group which had been created by the absence of hearings since August 1914. 'Several awards have expired since the suspension of the boards,' he declared on 1 December 1915, 'and there are a large number of claims before different

\(^1\) AW, 4 February 1915. For instance, a chef preparing A grade meals (i.e. costing over 1/9) was cut from £5.0.0 to £4.0.0 per week; tea shop waitresses from 16/6 to 13/- per week; storemen from £2.2.6 to £1.15.0 per week. See the comments by Mrs Kate Dwyer, president of the Women Workers' Union who declared that the wage cut would force girls 'into the streets. No girl could get a room in a decent locality for less than 5s.; she had to pay her own laundry (2s.), she had fares to meet and meals outside to pay for.'\(^5\) AW, 11 February 1915.

\(^2\) Ibid., 4 March 1915. See also SMH, 14 September 1915: Mr Justice Heydon resumed his duties at the Industrial Arbitration Court after an illness of five weeks; but his brother judge Edmunds had been unable to attend industrial matters as he was occupied in another jurisdiction.

\(^3\) AW, 4 March 1915.

\(^4\) The Government Railways Group consisted of 13 boards. Bavin was chairman from 26 May to 1 December 1915. He was also chairman of the Government Tramways Group (four boards) from 26 May 1915 to 29 September 1916. G.S. Beeby took over as chairman of the Railways Group on 1 December 1915. See NSWGC, Vol.8, August 1915, pp.458-60, December 1915, p.1665; Vol.10, October 1916, p.1348. Both Bavin and Beeby strongly opposed the Great Strike in 1917 which had originated in the railway and tramway workshops.
### Table 9

**NSW Quarterly Changes in Rates of Wages 1914-1916**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>No. of wage changes</th>
<th>No. affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>25,936</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>37</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>65,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>56,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>69,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>50,420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Commonwealth Labour and Industrial Branch Reports*, Nos 6, 7.

Therefore, unless there were 'special circumstances', he ordered that the claims be heard in order of the time of application.

In the same judgment, Bavin made a second influential decision. Before him was the wage claim of the RWGLA, first submitted on 3 June 1914 and eventually recommenced on 25 May 1915 following Heydon's January decree. But Bretnall, the counsel for the Railway Commissioners, argued that no railway board was justified in hearing any wage claim: the railways were losing revenue. Bavin dismissed the Bretnall view. Because of the circumstances the boards should hear each claim. But the same circumstances, he added, 'might very well justify the board in declining to grant that increase'.

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp.1450-2. R.J. Stuart-Robertson Labor MLA for Campberrdown appeared for the RWGLA.
4. Ibid.
Thus was pressure applied. During late 1915 and the early months of 1916, under the combined influence of wage restrictions and price rises, the industrial situation resembled that of late 1917 when the great strike erupted. Strikes for higher pay, many called by the rank and file, broke out in many industries. For example, the following unions or workers stopped work for this reason: Coal Lumpers' Union, cement workers (members of the NWCLA), General Textile Workers' Union, Federated Liquor Trades Employees' Union, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers at the Eveleigh railway workshops, the Federated Ironworkers' Association at Newcastle, Wharf Labourers' Union, cokeworkers at Wollongong, the Illawarra Colliery Employees' Association, Ship Painters and Dockers' Union, the Clayworkers' and Brickmakers' Union, and chemical workers of the United Labourers Protective Society.¹ The following unions agitated or supported claims for pay increases: the tramwaymen of the ARTSA and Tramway Employees' Union, the Builders' Labourers' Federation, the Federated Clerks' Union, Water and Sewerage Board Employees' Union, ARTSA members working on the Newcastle district coalfields for the East Greta Railway Co., the Crane Employees' Union at Newcastle, and the Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association.²

 Strikes, many of them lasting a few days or a week continued through 1916. In September 1916 G.C. Bodkin, the secretary of the NWCLA, declared that the union executive was having 'considerable difficulty in preventing serious industrial trouble'. It had taken two years to get an award; but five months to interpret it.³ Equally, the executive of the Carrington Coal and Coke Shipping Employees' Union had 'great difficulty' in preventing a strike among their members employed by the Railway Commissioners. Hibble, the chairman

¹SMH, 28, 29 October 1915, 9, 18, 29 November 1915, 17, 18 December 1915, 6, 11, 12, 20 January 1916, 26 February 1916.

²Ibid., 13, 30 November, 10, 13 December 1915, 1 February 1916.

³Ibid., 5 September 1916. Bodkin was the unsuccessful Labor candidate for the state seat of Albury in the March 1917 general election.
governing their board, had reduced their pay by 9d per day. But the men, on short-time of around four days a week, were required to labour for eight hours continuously 'without a break for a meal'.¹ W.S. Bathgate, the secretary of the Federated Ironmoulders' Union, declared that their board had refused to increase their wages; but the cost of living had risen 'over 30 per cent'. Their employers had refused to grant a rise. The men could now not take 'responsibility' for strike action, Bathgate said: 'Our men have been recognised as a most law-abiding and peaceful organisation.'²

Many condemned the agitation for higher pay. Archbishop Kelly deplored the tendency of the 'industrial classes' to take advantage of the war conditions and to press their claims for higher pay. Instead they should be 'grateful for the work which was being provided by the State and other employers of labour'.³ But strikes were even more abhorrent. G.S. Beeby, who was returned as the Nationalist MLA for Wagga in 1917 and became the Minister for Labour and Industry, declared in February 1916: 'A spirit of lawlessness has prevailed in Australia for some years past and is steadily increasing. A large percentage of our people have been encouraged to believe that they are free from the ordinary rules of discipline on which all community life is based.'⁴

The failure to punish the strikers according to the Industrial Arbitration Act, of which he had been the architect in 1911-12, had encouraged the workmen to 'obey, or disobey the law as it suits them'. Because of this, he said, the 'whole industrial life of the community' had been 'demoralised'.⁵ In August 1917 he had the power to put his opinion into practice.

But even strikers recognised the anti-social implications of their actions, particularly during war time. The Coal

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¹Ibid., 21 September 1916. The men claimed they would be satisfied with a guaranteed minimum of £2.15.0 per week.
²Ibid., 22 September 1916.
³SMH, 17 January 1916.
⁴DT, 16 February 1916.
⁵Ibid.
Lumpers' Union went on strike for higher wages in October 1915. Their action halted the ships in Sydney Harbour: among these were several military transports. A union official emphatically declared that their action was not a strike: 'We have merely knocked off work until we straighten out things a bit.' As there was a slump in the coal trade arising from the war, the lumpers suffered from intermittent work. Accordingly their take-home pay had fallen. 'Most of us have large families, and with the high cost of living we experience difficulty in making ends meet. At its best our work is one uncertain grind,' declared the coal lumpers to the newspaper. 'You are speaking to a man who never touched drink, and, would you believe me, I am not one pound the better now than at this time last year. And I and my wife never squander.' From his parliamentary seat J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, who became a Nationalist minister in November 1916, declared that the coal lumpers should be shot by soldiers. At his bench Mr Justice Heydon wondered whether 'freedom is a right form of government'.

The striking coal lumpers reacted angrily to the stigma of pro-Germanism. 'I am as loyal to Britain as any man, and have always been so....Four of our members enlisted at Martin Place yesterday, and these are not the only ones', declared one '...We do not pretend to be saints, and judged on several grounds we would probably be no better than the generality of workers in other occupations. But we object - and strongly too - when our loyalty is questioned. We want a fair deal.'

The rapid price movements gave impetus to the opinion that 'profiteers' were capitalising on the war. And the 'patriots' who gave large sums into the patriotic funds were

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1 SMH, 28 October 1915.

2 Ibid., 29 October 1915. See also Chapter 4.

3 Ibid. The Coal Lumpers' Union was summoned to the Industrial Arbitration Court by the Sydney Steam Colliery Owners and Coal Stevedores' Association under section 47 of the Industrial Arbitration Act 1912, which set a penalty of up to £1,000 and suspension or cancellation of the registration of the union.

4 SMH, 29 October 1915.
stigmatised as the group who were deriving their wealth from the people. As a Newcastle school inspector put it in November 1915: 'Patriotism and profits have kissed each other.'\(^1\) In January 1916 the Worker commenced its agitation for the results of the Commonwealth census of wealth: the census of men had been made available quickly to the recruiting organisations. Lacking accurate information, the workers could only judge the nation's wealth from their own eyes: the 'mansions and motor-cars, on the extravagances of the "elite", and on what has been stolen from them in the shape of high prices by some of the people who, as subscribers to the war loans, are making still more money out of the workers'.\(^2\) In December 1915, the Worker declared: 'THE LIMITS OF WORKING CLASS ENDURANCE HAVE BEEN REACHED.' They had volunteered their lives, but 'THEY ARE NOT GOING TO SUBMIT TO STARVATION AS WELL'. The cost of living had risen during the war by 34 per cent the leader writer declared, but wages remained at the 'old levels': strikes would be the consequence of discontent. He wished 'to warn Australia that the increased exploitation of the workers which the war has brought is a source of frightful danger to the Commonwealth'.\(^3\) His statement was prophetic.

Agitation over the rising cost of living and the exploitation of 'profiteers' grew during 1916. When the Labor party interstate executive met in January, J.D. Fitzgerald and Frank Anstey moved that a wealth tax should be imposed to pay for the expenses of war.\(^4\) The Labor Council resolved that the Necessary Commodities Control Commission take the

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\(^1\)Letter from Donald Fraser to R.S. Ross, 18 November 1915, Robert Ross papers, NL, MS.3222/1. See also NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1915-16, Vol.69, p.3058, 28 October 1915; Captain Toombs, Labor MLA for Hurstville, asked Holman if the 34 per cent increase in the cost of living was due to increased profits.

\(^2\)AW, 6 January 1916.

\(^3\)Leader, 'Self-Denial and the War', AW, 16 December 1915.

\(^4\)Minutes of the federal executive of the ALP, 6-7 January 1916, copy in J.D. Fitzgerald papers, Dixson Library, MSQ 269, miscellaneous political folder.
power to fix the cost of living. The Labor conference passed a similar resolution. P. Adler of the Blacksmiths' Society declared that the workers were living in a 'fool's paradise': they were 'getting higher wages, but the purchasing power of their money had decreased'. More drastically the conference urged that all 'war profits' be confiscated. Further, that interest bearing war loans be abandoned and replaced by compulsory pro rata contributions from all people earning an annual income over £300. 'Huge profits were being made by contractors and other capitalists in the supply of war material....[they] had most patriotically invested their surplus profits in the war loan - patriots at four and a half per cent', declared Claude Thompson, the secretary of the ARTSA during September. 'The Black Hand of Doodle seemed to pervade the whole of the present war policy.' Thompson condemned conscription: one year earlier he had been an original member of the Universal Service League.

Just as wage earners denounced the greed of employers as the cause of rising prices, so employers blamed the demands of workers for the same phenomenon. The Herald leader writer arbitrarily devalued the 33 per cent increase in the cost of living down to 25 per cent to allow 'for some exaggeration'; he proposed that no wage increases should be granted: the 'only practical remedy' was to increase the productivity of labour. 'This may be done if the worker will work harder and more efficiently, and by the introduction of every possible labour-saving device that will cut down the cost of production. If prices can be reduced in this way the position would soon cease to be so intolerable, and the lot of the worker would gradually improve once more.' But preventing

1 EMH, 3, 10 March 1916. The motion was put by P. Adler, Blacksmiths' Society. As one of the Industrial Section, he was elected to the 1916 PLL Executive.

2 Ibid., 9 May 1916.

3 Ibid., 11 May 1916.

4 LT, 20 September 1916.

5 EMH, 14 December 1915, Leader.
productivity improvements was the evil of 'I Won't Work' propagated by the Industrial Workers of the World: the IWW. Their two by two inch slogans were pasted on many workshops and factories throughout New South Wales. Their message, written in many ways, was always the same. For instance:

'Fast workers die young, and die poor. The Boss gets fat, oily and ugly, when you work hard. Slow down and share your work up with the Boss. Work keeps the Boss moral. Slow work is moral.'

During 1916 the middle classes reacted to price inflation by blaming the prevalence of the 'go-slow' doctrine among the workmen. Work moreover, was the foundation of society. A.A.C. Cocks MLA, Vice-President of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, asked the annual public meeting of the Sydney Central Methodist Mission 'whether we are doing our part to make the community worthy of all the privileges we possess'. He denounced the agitators who preached the policy of go-slow to the workers of their 'community': they were 'spreading broadcast a moral leprosy'.

English-born William Brooks, the president of the Employers' Federation, believed that there was a 'general tendency' to slow down among the workers. He was not advocating 'speeding-up' the employees: 'I am satisfied that if all the workers were imbued with the principle that they should return a fair day's work for a fair day's wage the productive wealth of this country in our secondary industries would be increased by many millions of pounds per annum.'

On 18 August 1916 Mr Justice Heydon gave his cost of living judgment: the minimum wage was to be £22.15.6, a rise of 3/-.

1 Ibid., 21 July 1916.

2 Ibid., 9 May 1916. Sir William Cullen, the Chief Justice, presided at the meeting.

3 Ibid., 21 July 1916. See also the view of A.E. Reed, who told the Rozelle Liberal Association that go-slow 'was bringing about an unreasonable increase in the cost of production'; DT, 14 August 1916. Reed was the unsuccessful Nationalist candidate for Rozelle in March 1917.
share the burden of war. But he spent most of his time
denouncing go-slowism and strikes as the major cause in the
cost of living, despite the fact that the late 1915-1916
industrial unrest was provoked after prices had jumped. 'The
employers had complained for a long time that slow work was
increasing; the public service had now confirmed them', he
declared: 1 the parents of go-slowism and sabotage 'seemed to
be hatred, envy, fraud, and laziness: feelings directly
opposite to the manly and upright instincts which mankind had
in all ages admired'. He wondered, not whether the living
wage should be increased, but whether it should not be
reduced, for laziness had helped to increase the cost of
living. The Court, he warned the workers, should consider
whether 'the practice had permeated their ranks': but for the
present judgment the Court would hold that the case had not
been proven. 2

Heydon's well-paid 3 moralising helped to destroy the
impartiality of his court: his words fostered the belief
among the working classes that the inadequate rise granted by
his living wage judgment had been determined by prejudice.
Industrial discontent simmered. The Railways and Tramways
Department had been singled out as one of the centres of
goslowism for it was showing a fall in earnings. Assistant-
Commissioner E. Milne castigated the 'imported evil, which
fattened on ignorance' and grew 'by playing on the credulity
of the thoughtless'. 4 A mass meeting of workmen at the
Eveleigh railway workshops gathered to repudiate Heydon's

1 SMH, 19 August 1916. Heydon made reference to concern over
go-slowism in government munition factories and in the
railways.

2 Ibid.

3 See AW, 8 February 1917, which reported that Heydon was paid
£2,500 annually, Edmonds £2,000, and the two new industrial
judges £1,500. Heydon's salary was over seventeen times
greater than the August 1916 living wage, assuming that the
wage-earner was employed for the whole year and did not receive
overtime wages.

4 DT, 12 September 1916. The most effective weapons against
the 'awful doctrines were education and the free, untrammeled
use of sanely-balanced intelligence'.

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allegations of go-slowism. The president of the Vigilance Committee, Arnold told his fellows that in their investigations they had not discovered any loafing. He urged that a Royal Commission investigate the judge's charges. 'We are quite prepared to show that we are not loafers', declared H. Vaughn. Any man who called them thieves, said another speaker 'is either a misguided fool or a deliberate, wicked, malicious liar'. Heydon had glossed over the other causes of the rise in the cost of living, he continued: 'he never talks about the big man and all his rings and combines - only the slow worker'.

Unionists at the Clyde Repair Siding endorsed the action of their fellow workers at Eveleigh. They protested at the 'slanderous and malicious public utterances' of the judge: they called for cooperation in the labour movement to resolve that Heydon 'no longer holds the confidence of the workers of New South Wales'.

The influence of the IWW was exaggerated: the middle classes feared the political innovation of a powerful trade union bloc; militancy among unionists for pay increases exacerbated their fears. Moreover industrial unrest revived the politically conservative activists: they feared that such unrest was another manifestation of the growing Labor extremism. In May 1916 William Brooks chaired a joint meeting called by his Employers' Federation and the Chamber of Commerce. A.D. Walker, vice-president of the Chamber, denounced Labor's government businesses which competed with private enterprises: 'They had worked hard for what they had got, and the question was whether they were going to be allowed to keep it.'

W. Scott Fell declared that 'the intrusion of the Government into industrial enterprises' helped cause the current industrial unrest. He urged that the strikers be punished. Moreover the establishment of Government businesses was infringing their liberties: 'There

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1Ibid., 1 September 1916.

2SMH, 2 September 1916.

3SMH, 26 May 1916. It is probable that he was the Alderman A.D. Walker who chaired the Anti-German League meeting at Mosman, see SMH, 26 November 1915.
had been times in British history when such infringements of liberty as were now complained of would have caused men to shoulder muskets and stand to their doors prepared to defend hearth and home.'¹ Brooks declared that they must fight 'politically'. But he condemned the composition of the Liberal party: he suggested that they might ally themselves with G.S. Beeby's Progressive party.² Beeby had been attacking the industrially-controlled Labor Executive. He had declared that the body was seeking 'to perpetuate the appalling idea that there could be no co-operation between different groups in the community': with its advent 'the last thread of mutuality had disappeared'.³

The exacerbation of class conflict can be illumined by two events. In April 1916 the Labor Council resolved that henceforth no employers of labour could sit as union delegates on the Council.⁴ In June, 'owing to the extremely serious industrial situation now developing' the Sydney Chamber of Commerce received from its national association a request to consider 'profit-sharing as a possible means of restoring happier relations between capital and labour'.⁵

Anxiety about the spread of IWWism was related to conservative political convictions: the belief that go slow

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¹ *SMH*, 26 May 1916. Scott Fell alleged also that 'wealth was well distributed in Australia'.

² *Ibid.*. The new organisation called itself the Traders' Defence Association; at a second meeting the title became Property, Taxpayers and Ratepayers' Association, see *SMH*, 1 June 1916. The City and Suburban Shopkeepers; Association resolved to oppose 'aggressive unionism'; see *SMH*, 29 May 1916; and militant dairy farmers formed themselves into a Primary Producers' Union; see *SMH*, 20, 28 April 1916. The PPU helped provide scab labour during the Great Strike.

³ *SMH*, 5 May 1916. T.R. Bavin was the Progressive party candidate for Albury. He declared that the test of any government was how its measures assisted the war effort: he anticipated the ideology of the Nationalist party; see *SMH*, 12 September 1916.

⁴ *SMH*, 21 April 1916. The motion of exclusion was carried on 2 March 1916, the matter was raised on 20 April; it was unanimously agreed that the following Thursday the ban was to be put into effect.

practices were prevalent among the government employees was
to shape the Nationalist government's reaction to the strike
called in the railway and tramway workshops at Eveleigh and
Randwick on 2 August 1917. If such slow practices existed among
the workmen it was more from resentment at the limited wage
increases rather than from a belief in the principles of the
IWW. The Worker leader writer declared that 'the universal
tendency of man...is to do the best of which he is capable'.
He denounced the IWW doctrine of sabotage as an 'obsolete
mode of industrial warfare': Luddite practices were repugnant
to the majority of workers. He explained the psychology of
 strikers: 'Under an intolerable sense of injustice, to knock
off is a natural impulse. And its effectiveness as a rough-
and-ready remedy for industrial grievances is beyond
question.'\(^2\) If productivity losses did occur on a
significant scale, then a great proportion of them must be
reckoned as a cost of the war. In the period 4 August 1914 to
30 June 1916 117,107 men in the 18 to 44 age group, the
younger and more productive workmen, had withdrawn from the
workforce to join the army.\(^3\) By the end of the war, 164,000
men or 39.8 per cent of the males in that age group in New
South Wales had enlisted. This was the highest ratio in all
Australia.\(^4\) Thus the stigma of IWWism served only to
intensify the sense of injustice and to alienate further the
mass of the working classes whose anxieties about war time
economic pressures were steadily growing.

The belief in the ubiquity of 'slackers' and 'loafers'
among the eligible men on one side, and of 'profiteers' on the
other illustrates two diverging tendencies in reaction to the
war. The better-off sections of the community, particularly

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\(^1\)See for instance the resentment of the slaughtermen of the
AMIBU at the Glebe abattoirs, \(\text{AWU, 7 September 1916.}\)

\(^2\)\(\text{AW, 13 July 1916, leader, 'The Gospel of "Go Slow".}\)

\(^3\)Calculated from Scott, op.cit., p.871.

\(^4\)Butler, op.cit., p.890. Butler's figure is based on the
2nd Military District rather than the state of NSW, so there
may be an error, but in favour of a slightly higher NSW
enlistment ratio.
their leaders, were obsessed with winning the war: accordingly they were angered by 'slackers'. The poorer people, preoccupied with the constant burden of stretching marginal incomes, blamed the reality of their daily experience on the evil of 'profiteering' from the war. The relatively recent innovation of official statistics, which recorded at quarterly and yearly intervals both the incidence of strikes and the rise in the cost of living summarised their respective discontents in graphic form. Conscription therefore, had different implications for each of the classes. To one side it meant the control of irritating behaviour and a means of winning the war. To the other it meant the imposition of greater hardship. But the conscription controversy in New South Wales encompassed more than class conflicts: it was complicated by further anxieties.
DIVIDING THE PEOPLE
CHAPTER B

THE CONSCRIPTION CONFLICT IN 1916 AND ITS
POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS.

On 30 August 1916 W.M. Hughes told the House of Representatives that a referendum would be held to decide whether conscription for service overseas should be enforced: 1 Australian voters were to be given an opportunity to help in the making of the federal government's war policy. But the censorship of war news, extended at the beginning of the campaign, 2 made the people's decision farcical: they had no hope of understanding the military position on the distant European battlefields. Largely at the instigation of the


2 See PT, 1 September 1916, which reported that a new regulation under the War Precautions Act required any matter referring to the war 'or to any subject connected with it or arising out of it' had to be submitted to the censor. For further information on the impact of censorship see Chapter 3; also the allegations of Senator Ferricks (Labor, Queensland), see Commonwealth Parl. Deb., session 1914-17, Vol.LXXX, p.8776, 21 September 1916, p.9230, 3 October 1916. See also Bulletin, 10 August 1916, 'Democracy's Right to choose its Dictator'; 28 September 1916 'Pozières'; 19 October 1916, 'The Cock and Bull Story and the Daily Perjury.'
pro-conscriptionists, the debate over the method of strengthening the army became a feud over loyalty: opposition to conscription was stigmatised as a betrayal both of the 'boys in the trenches' and of the 'mother country'.

Two opposing groups of agitators, pro- and anti-conscriptionist, fought each other in their attempt to mobilise people to support their cause. But it is likely that the attitudes of the 298,997 who voted on conscription in New South Wales had already been shaped by war-time events: the Universal Service League had helped in the shaping of class attitudes. But the fanaticism of the conflicting groups did not reflect the emotions of all Australians: many did not see the issue as black or white. They were unsettled. As a trade unionist W.L. Duncan put it: 'I myself have many objections to conscription, but I am prepared to sink those objections in what I believe to be the national interest.'

Almost one-fifth of the electors enrolled in New South Wales did not vote on 28 October. The conscription conflict was divisive: the two warring groups generated new political combinations, thus entrenching the hatred and intolerance aroused during the campaign.

The referendum campaign inflamed the passions of those with family in the forces. By the end of September 1916 almost 125,000 men had enlisted from New South Wales: 38.8 per cent of the Australian total. Anxiety was intensified by the lengthy Somme battle casualty lists: from 18 August to 27 October 36,994 casualties were listed, including well over

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1 Letter to the editor from W.L. Duncan, *DT*, 6 October 1916. Duncan was a former president of the Labor Council.


3 Calculation from Scott, *op.cit.*, p.871. The total Australian enlistments to 30 September 1916 were 323,626; in the same period 90,042 enlisted from Victoria, 27.8 per cent of the national total.
5,000 deaths.\textsuperscript{1} T.D. Burling whose son had been killed on 19 July declared: 'How can any of us desert them?'

F. Violette Smith demanded conscription; she had three sons at the front: 'All arguments against it appear futile beside the one fact that our boys at the front are crying out for reinforcements.'\textsuperscript{2} Her son, Captain B. Teasdale Smith, had written of his brother: 'Dale's battalion suffered so heavily that I feared to inquire for him. I was going into the trenches as he came out, thank God still safe and sound and smiling.' He concluded: 'The idea of the labor unions working against conscription is awful. Here we are, suffering and dying, fighting on the double for want of men.'\textsuperscript{3} On 1 September Arthur Paton feared the defeat of the just announced referendum: the 'shirkers' and the 'unfit' were going to help to decide the vote: 'We have sampled the temper of the citizens of the Commonwealth during the past couple of months, both in the Sydney Domain and in certain country towns.'\textsuperscript{4}

On 12 August the Political Labor League Executive had called a mass meeting on the Domain in opposition to conscription: a vast crowd, estimated to be 100,000 strong, over 10 per cent of the estimated metropolitan population, had

\textsuperscript{1}See Chapter 3. Calculations from SMH, 18 August to 27 October 1916: 44 casualty lists were published during these weeks. The cumulative summary of Australian casualties at mid-October was 72,040; see SMH, 13 October 1916.

\textsuperscript{2}Letter to the editor from T.D. Burling, DT, 10 October 1916.

\textsuperscript{3}Letter to the editor from F. Violette Smith, DT, 10 October 1916.

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid. See also SMH, 20 June 1916: Gundagai PLL voted against conscription. George Marshall advocated conscription. He had four sons in the army: 'Why should they fight for loafers' he asked.

\textsuperscript{5}Letter to the editor from Arthur L. Paton, DT, 1 September 1916.
responded to the call. 1 Idealist Arthur Rae, who had two sons already at the front, amid cheers of 'good old Arthur', rose on the platform to address the people before him. 2 He declared that his 'duty as an Australian citizen was to preserve the freedom of those remaining at home'. 3 The 'vast majority' of the soldiers were from the working classes he said. He castigated the 'capitalists' lending their money as war loans at 5 per cent interest: they were 'making money at the expense of their fellow-men'. D. Guichen agreed. He denounced the Universal Service League, pointing to its neglect of equity: 'If it was right that every man should sacrifice everything he had in life, then it was also right that the rich should make some sacrifice too.' 4 The motion opposing conscription was put: it was carried by 'a forest of hands'. 5 At the One Big Union conference in Sydney on 2 September, A.C. Willis, secretary of the Australasian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation, hinted at the suffering caused by the Great War: 'with the workers in control, a great calamity like the present war would become impossible'. 6

1 DT, 14 August 1916: the 100,000 figure was reported as a police estimate. However Police Inspector Nolan, who was giving evidence in a magistrate's court a few days later, estimated that 60,000 people were present, the Telegraph of 14 August noted that the crowd dwindled during the afternoon. The estimated population of the Sydney metropolitan area was 764,600 in December 1916; see Official Year Book of NSW, 1917, p.66. See SNR, 10 November 1915: Presbyterian Rev. G.A. White referred to the 'last' horse race meeting where 40,000 had attended.

2 DT, 14 August 1916.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 2 September 1916. Over 40 unions were reported at the conference: by 58 votes to 2, the conference affirmed the principle of One Big Union. The motion was put by Claude Thompson (ARTSA) and D. Johnstone (Boot Trade Employees' Union). Willis, in supporting the motion, declared that the new organisation 'would supersede arbitration to some extent. To have a Court or board inquiring how much their wives paid for a bonnet, or how much they spent in picture shows, was a

Footnote continued on following page:
Many groups in the labour movement carried motions opposing conscription: the United Labourers' Protective Society, Wharf Labourers at a lunch time meeting at Darling Harbour, the Federated Ironworkers' Association, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, ¹ and the Operative Bricklayers' Union. ² The Federated Mine Employees' Union at Cobar, at a 'largely attended' meeting, unanimously declared that conscription would 'be a death-blow to trade unionism and the working class movement generally'. ³ The older generation of unionists had grown up with the rising labour movement: the General Textile Workers' Union opposed conscription because 'it undermines the principles of trade unionism that the workers have fought so hard to win for the last half-century, and without which the workers of any country are serfs'. ⁴

Footnote continued from previous page:

disgrace to civilisation. (Applause.)' See also DT, 21 August 1916, for the manifesto of the Osw, signed by P. Adler president pro tem. and W.J. McKell, secretary pro tem. Adler (Blacksmiths' Society) was subsequently elected chairman of the conference and D. Johnstone the secretary, as McKell was disqualified as his union, the Boilermakers' Society, had not appointed a delegate. See also DT, 4 September 1916.

¹ DT, 15, 16 August, 23 September 1916. J.W. Doyle, the PLL president, announced as an anti-conscription rally that the ASE had voted 600 to 7 against conscription.

² DT, 14 October 1916. The union conducted a ballot: 214 opposed, 36 supported conscription; £50 was donated to the No-Conscription Council. W. Cahill, president of the Bricklayers, was reported as one of the five PLL Executive members who had voted for conscription when Hughes had tried to persuade them to support his proposals. Cahill, also the president of the Labor Council, told the Council, following the Bricklayers' vote, that he now had 'seen the light' and would join the anti-conscription cause. See also SW, 14, 15, 28 August, 15, 25, 26, 30 September, 6, 18, 20 October 1916, for trade union opposition to conscription: the Sydney branch of FEDFA and the Federated Ironworkers' Association unanimously opposed conscription; the Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union, at a meeting of 3,000 members voted almost unanimously against conscription; the NSW Association of Operative Plasterers voted 260 against, 22 for; the Postal Sorters' Union, Cokeworkers' Association of NSW, NSW Journeymen Confectioners' Union, and the PLL branches at Lithgow, Grafton, St Leonard's and Newtown all opposed conscription. The Campsie PLL voted 16 to 9 in support of W.M. Hughes.

³ Ibid., 15 August 1916.

⁴ Ibid.
The Kensington Political Labor League applauded the anti-conscription stand of the party executive, and urged that they 'continue fearlessly to carry out the decisions of the annual conference on this and other questions vitally affecting the welfare of the industrial masses'.

Conscription provoked a generational conflict. Senator Millen denounced the 120,000 young men who had declared on their war cards - 'to their shame' - that they would not enlist. Younger men retaliated with equal passion: why should their lives be subjigated by the opinions of the militarily ineligible older generation? Corporal Squires, a returned soldier attacked the politicians: they 'carefully exempted themselves' from being conscripted: 'if they shot half of them they would be no loss'. Clergymen, he continued, 'a class of men who ought to be most prepared to die' were equally safe. Young men repeatedly interrupted Holman at a meeting in Junee, his own electorate: why didn't he join the army? 'You are a politician, and exempt', one shouted. At

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1 Ibid., 16 August 1916. N. McKeogh was the secretary of the Kensington league. The Rozelle PLL wrote to the Dalley Federal Electorate Council urging that they instruct the member, William Mahony, to vote against conscription: presumably they meant in caucus and in parliament. Mahony was elected to Dalley at the by-election, 6 May 1915. At the Rozelle meeting, Mr Morgan declared that Hughes was 'very cunning': if a referendum was decided upon and was won, the Prime Minister would then 'turn around and say' to the labour movement 'the people themselves decided on conscription; not I or the Labor party'. The West Sydney Federal Electorate Council, Hughes' seat, declared its 'uncompromising' opposition to conscription, see DT, 14 August 1916.

2 Ibid., 21 August 1916, speech to a USL meeting Ashfield Town Hall. Mayor J.H. Hammond presided; other speakers were Professor MacCallum and Meredith Atkinson. See also DT, 6 September 1916: 180,000 recruiting slips were despatched by the Commonwealth Statistician to the men who had not sent in their replies on the war cards.

3 DT, 14 October 1916, speech to a meeting at Woollahra.

4 Ibid. An anti-conscription leaflet of 1916 declared: 'Is it fair that EXEMPTED men should use their Parliamentary positions and passes in a Campaign to COMPEL FREE CITIZENS to fight abroad?'

5 Ibid., 10 October 1916. The Mayor of Junee, Hiscock, said that the meeting had pledged itself to support conscription by 100 votes to 14.
the booths on polling day a *Telegraph* reporter observed that 'a surprising number of the younger men — many of whom one suspected had not yet reached voting age — wore the "No" button'.

Many young men 21 to 35 encountered military life during October. All were ordered to register at once for military service inside the Commonwealth: those who responded had their fingerprints taken. The reason for this, explained Senator Pearce, was to prevent trafficking in certificates issued by the newly-established exemption courts. Exemptions were granted to politicians, judges, clergymen, policemen and prison officers, doctors and others; they were also allowed for jobs necessary for the national interest; for only sons or for those who were the sole supporters of their widowed mothers. Several thousand people attended a meeting on the Domain to protest at the proclamation. George Waite, the president of the Anti-Conscription League, told them that his sons had said to him before they had left for the front: 'When we are on the sea we will think of you all fighting the Huns.

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1Ibid., 30 October 1916. The Commonwealth Statistician reported that an estimated 232,508 single men (i.e. unmarried, widowed or divorced) in the age group 21 to 44 years, had not enlisted as at 1 September 1916; see DT, 10 October 1916. This number formed 10.3 per cent of the total valid votes (2,247,590) cast on 28 October 1916. It is difficult to compute the total number of men 21-44 years for 1916, owing to population changes after the 1911 census. However men in the 16-39 group in 1911 (and hence in the 21-44 group in 1916) formed 21.3 per cent (350,256 of 1,648,448) of the total population in NSW; 19.4 per cent in Victoria and 22.2 per cent in Queensland. Enlistments in the army, as well as normal in- and out-migration would have altered these figures; however variations in the age structure might help to account for voting differences in October 1916: NSW and Queensland had majorities for No; Victoria for Yes.

2See Scott, op.cit., pp.350-2. See SMH, 30 September 1916, for the proclamation; DT, 6 October 1916, for lists of places where the young men had to report.

3Scott, op.cit., p.351.

4Ibid., pp.350-1.
here.'

George Burns, Labor MHR for Illawarra, declared amid cheering: 'You know where the only sons come from...they come from Pott's Point. They had no more right there than at Woolloongooloo and other working-class suburbs to be exempt.'

Some of the magistrates conducting the exemption courts provoked anger. Mr G.H. Smithers, in charge at North Sydney and Burwood, was particularly unpopular. A lithographic draughtsman explained that he had a widowed mother in England to support. 'You ought not to be allowed to be relieved of your share of the responsibilities in this way,' declared Smithers. He refused the application. Frank Allen, whose two brothers were at the front, was reluctantly exempted because 'he was the 'last' son according to the regulations. 'But don't you feel ashamed that a strong man like you should let others do your fighting?' Smithers asked. The Anti-Conscription League protested at the 'prejudiced partisan & unjustish' conduct of Smithers. 'Nothing worse in Germany than our exemption courts', wrote Mary Lloyd. 'Smithers, magistrate, should have a special hell some day.'

J.D. Fitzgerald, evidently fearing that Smithers was hurting the conscription cause, urged the Attorney-General to remove

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1 DT, 9 October 1916. Waite quoted to the crowd a circular letter to all employers from William Brooks, asking that they give funds to the conscriptionist cause.

2 Ibid. See also SMH, 4 October 1916: three groups besieged the recruiting office: volunteers; the call-ups, and 'ladies anxious to have their sons exempt from military service'. One lady managed to invade the District Commandant's office. The Herald reporter said that the size of the crowd was like the days following 25 April 1915.

3 SMH, 17 October 1916, North Sydney Court.

4 Ibid., 19 October 1916, Burwood Police Court.

5 Anti-Conscription League Minutes, committee meeting, 18 October 1916. Rev. A. Rivett proposed the motion.

6 Lloyd, Sidelights on Two Referendums, op.cit., p.57.
him from the exemption courts: the magistrate was 'relieved' of this duty.¹

Of the 60,456 men who responded to the call-up, 50 per cent had applied for exemption.² Previously the doctors had been troubled constantly by men, who, despite multiple medical rejections, were striving to join the army. They now encountered a new attitude. During the call-up, Butler wrote, 'medical officers had to meet the determined, and very effective endeavours of a large number of "fit" Australians to prove that they were "unfit" for service'.³

Tensions grew within the Labor party. On 26 August the Political Labor League Executive asked Holman to 'fully acquaint them' with his views on conscription.⁴ Holman replied in a lengthy letter: 'I have been all my life a pronounced and declared anti-militarist.' The Great War was a struggle against militarism, he argued, which seemed as if it would result in either the defeat of the Allies or a stalemate. If the latter, 'the Allied nations must instantly arm themselves to the teeth and devote themselves wholly to military preparation. All national progress would have to be subordinated to the one over-mastering necessity of defence.

¹Letter from D.R. Hall to J.D. Fitzgerald, 21 October 1916. Hall referred to Fitzgerald's request for Smithers' removal dated 19 October. J.D. Fitzgerald papers, Dixson Library, MSQ 255/239a. See also SMH, 20 October 1916.

²DT, 27 October 1916. Of the requests, 2,981 had been dealt with, 2,190 had been granted, 791 refused. Only 6,586 of the call-ups reached the military camps in New South Wales, according to a report three days before the vote: 3,583 of these were in the Sydney district. Butler, Australian Army Medical Services, op.cit., Vol.3, p.889, lists the figures for the October 1916 call-up: in NSW 69,218 reported for medical examinations.

³Butler, op.cit., p.888.

⁴Letter from P.C. Evans, general secretary, PLL Executive of NSW, to W.A. Holman, 26 August 1916. A copy of the 1916 conference resolution opposing conscription and urging the executive to deal with offenders in the Labor party was enclosed. NSWPDC, Box 7/4736, file B16/4153.
Conscription would be inevitable, universal and permanent.¹ He went on, saying that the question whether conscription was necessary 'is entirely a matter for those who possess confidential information in which we do not share'. Nonetheless his own advocacy of conscription was 'borne out' by the enforcement of this policy by the Imperial and the New Zealand governments: 'I recognise, however, that I speak without expert knowledge, but I cannot believe that these Governments acted without full and trustworthy advice. My own view is that this is a matter to be settled by the Federal Government.'²

W. H. Hughes met the New South Wales Labor Executive on 4 September:³ he had little chance to persuade, for attitudes had already been fixed. Later he met a special meeting of the Labor Council: at its regular Thursday meeting the Council, by 116 votes to 60, endorsed the anti-conscription attitude of the Labor party executive.⁴ Hughes had more support among the parliamentary Labor party: only 18 declared themselves anti-conscriptionists.⁵ In order to meet the opposition, he sketched a gloomy picture of the military situation. Holman cabled his Agent-General on 7 September asking for confirmation: 'Hughes during speech before secret gathering of Labor party here stated France had lost two million deaths, disablements, prisoners, situation desperate relieved recently by arrival Russians and substitution of British troops for

¹Letter from W.A. Holman to Secretary, PLL Executive, 30 August 1916. This document is an unsigned carbon copy, but was without doubt written by Holman. NSWRA, Box 7/4736, file B16/4153. Holman released the letter for publication, see SMH, 18 September 1916.
²Holman to Secretary, PLL Executive, 30 August 1916, op.cit. Holman concluded his letter arguing about legalisms, the chief of which was that the 1916 conference motion against conscription was unconstitutional, as it had not been circulated among leagues and affiliated unions for the requisite three months before the conference. However there is no mistaking the clear cut attitude expressed in the motion put by Arthur Rae, see Chapter 6, p.262.
³SMH, 4 September 1916.
⁴Ibid., 7 September 1916. About 200 delegates attended: the meeting began at 8 p.m. and ended near midnight.
⁵See letter to the editor signed by the 18, SMH, 12 October 1916.
French over one hundred miles front. Wise replied after consulting with the Military Secretary of the War Office: 'French losses a complete secret. Figures given by Hughes pure guess work. Very few Russians in France. British took over 100 miles many months ago in pursuance of prior arrangement. Quite incorrect that situation was or is desperate. Somme success very great: over 33,000 prisoners and many guns captured.' Wise quoted the slogan of Sir William Roberts: 'we have not only to win the war but also to win the peace'. In short, more troops were required in order to preserve British power after the Great War had ended. It is unlikely that Wise's reassuring words weakened Holman's commitment to conscription. Moreover, according to Sir Gerald Strickland, Holman and his ministers had party motives for enforcing conscription: a deputation of two had met Hughes on his return from Britain. They had told Hughes 'that if the Labour Party were to win the next General Election in New South Wales it was deemed imperative by my Ministers that the Federal Government should at once declare itself in favour of some form of universal service or "conscription"', wrote Strickland on 3 October. They had told Hughes that 'from his personal point of view, he was bound either to do so, or be done for as a politician and sink in political importance'.

Moreover Holman had repeated his opinion that the élite of the nation be preserved from death. 'At a time like this...

1Cable from W.A. Holman to Agent-General B.R. Wise, 7 September 1916. NSWPDC, Box 7/4728, file B16/840. Holman asked if the information were true, could some of it be used during the conscription campaign. Holman also asked Wise to discover if the British Government intended to set up a Royal Commission to devise a scheme for the 'future closer organisation of the Empire'; if it was he said 'should personally greatly value offer of seat on such Commission'.

2Cable from B.R. Wise to W.A. Holman, 7 September 1916, NSWPDC, Box 7/4728, file B16/840. See also despatch from Wise to Holman, 8 September 1916: 'I had the greatest difficulty in replying, because I am under obligation of honour not to refer to war matters in my cables.'

3Ibid., cable from Wise to Holman, 7 September 1916.

4Despatch from Sir Gerald Strickland to Bonar Law, 3 October 1916, Colonial Office Records, 418/148, folio 166.
when the intellect of the race was suffering a tremendous 
shock, when many of the best writers and thinkers were 
fighting in the trenches, when the scientists and authors were 
carrying the rifle', he said at the opening of the new School 
of Arts building in Newtown, 'it was obvious to any thinking 
man that unless we took every precaution there would be in the 
next generation a falling back from the intellectual standard 
which had been attained.' 1 His attitude betrayed his 
insensitivity to the dominance of anti-conscription opinion 
within the labour movement.

On Friday 15 September the Labor executive expelled 
Hughes and E.S. Carr, withdrew the party's endorsement of 
Holman, Griffith, Hall and Bagnall, and declared the South 
Annandale Labor league to be a 'bogus' branch. 2 Holman visited 
his electorate during the weekend: the Cootamundra Labor 
League unanimously supported the Executive in cancelling the 
Premier's candidature. 3

Hughes began the battle on 16 September: 
pro-conscriptionists filled the Sydney Town Hall by 6.30 p.m. 
although the meeting was to begin at eight. Entry was 
permitted for ticket holders only. 4 The crowd, the 'vast 
majority' of which were men, rose to sing the 'Marseillaise', 
the Russian Anthem and 'Rule Britannia'. Amid cheering, 
whistling and cries of Coo-ee! the Prime Minister entered the 
hall. Returned soldiers began in impromptu 'For He's a Jolly 
Good Fellow'; the crowd joined in. 5 Hughes spoke for an hour. 
He was followed by Holman. The third British-born politician,

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1DT, 4 September 1916.
2DT, 16 September 1916. The South Annandale league, in 
Griffith's electorate, unanimously expressed its determination 
to assist Hughes' campaign, see SMH, 15 September 1916. See 
also DT, 18 September 1916: the speculation in political 
circles was that Hughes was expelled so as to disqualify him 
sitting on the Inter-State Executive. See also AW, 
21 September 1916.
3SMH, 16 September 1916.
4DT, SMH, 19 September 1916.
5SMH, 19 September 1916.
the 56 year old Joseph Cook then rose. 'Every one of you had
a chance, and you said, lost election, "Yes, the war to the
bitter end." You said, "Every man and every shilling"', he
declared. He pointed to Hughes and Holman: 'These men are
deeply pledged, if men were ever pledged in the world. And
right glad am I to see them standing up to their
responsibilities.'1 By 4,000 votes to 7, the meeting resolved
to organise a campaign 'to secure an unmistakable expression
of the popular will in favour of extended co-operation in the
present conflict'.2

Outside the Town Hall an 'immense crowd' of mainly anti-
conscription supporters had gathered, spilling across the
surrounding streets and blocking the trams." In Druitt Street
an estimated crowd of 10,000 remained long after the pro-
conscriptionist meeting had ended. Impromptu speakers took up
their posts and addressed the people.4

The twenty-third parliament of New South Wales was to
expire on 22 December 1916.5 Rejected by his party, Holman was
in a predicament. To safeguard his power he cabled Agent-
General Wise on 19 September:

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1Ibid. There were several other speakers, including
G.W. Fuller, deputy leader of the state Liberal party,
J.C. Watson and Hector Lamond. Present on the stage were
seven of the NSW Labor cabinet: Holman, Griffith, Black, Hall,
Ashford, Hoyle and Fitzgerald. All except Hoyle had been
founding members of the USL. The three absent ministers were
J.H. Cann, who had been a member of the USL in September 1915,
W.C. Graham and John Estell: Cann's electorate was at Broken
Hill, the electorates of the other two at Newcastle. Among
the Liberals on the platform were Garland, Ball, Storey, Levy,
Cohen, Hoskins and Price.

2Ibid.

3LT, 19 September 1916.

4Ibid. Among the speakers were T.W. McCristal (Sydney Wharf
Labourers' Union); J. Bramston; J.J. Power, Luke Jones,
T. Walsh; and T. Glyn and Reeves. The last two may have been
Thomas Glynn and Charles Reeve, two of the IWW twelve: warrants
for their arrest were issued on 22 September 1916; see Ian

5The Crown Solicitor had given his opinion during July 1916,
see Letter from E.B. Harkness to Secretary, Premier's Office,
13 July 1916, NSWPDc, Box 7/4724, file A16/4818.
Confidential: Referendum Campaign now launched last night meeting entirely successful situation one of great difficulty following Hughes' protracted stay in England definite anti-compulsion organisation took place Labour organisation s] were captured state conference in New South Wales and Victoria carried resolution penalising all Labour members supporting compulsion threatening refusal endorsement.... Self and colleagues who are strenuously supporting 'Yes' in referendum campaign are under ban of Labour movement. We know Governor is Civil Bonar Law explaining situation. It will help us materially in present difficulties if Bonar Law could cable reply inquiring from Governor whether arrangements could not be made to postpone General Election in view of circumstances.1

But Wise died that day.2 White his secretary, took the cable to the Colonial Office. An official wrote that it was improbable that the Secretary of State would send Strickland such a cable: 'it would bear the interpretation of an attempt to interfere with the holding of an election, which was a matter for the local Government'.3 This attitude was to help Holman during November.

Holman believed that the situation in Ireland would decrease the pro-conscription vote. In the same telegram he declared: 'throughout Australia universally believed here military law prevalent in Ireland as result Dublin outbreak and Home Rule suspended by consequence'. He urged that the Imperial Government declare that martial law in Ireland had

1 Cable from W.A. Holman to B.R. Wise, 19 September 1916, Colonial Office Records 418/148, folio 138. The Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland, had cabled Bonar Law, the Secretary of State for Colonies on 16 September 1916, informing him that a 'political crisis' was imminent. He did not suggest postponing the elections. Ibid., 418/148, folios 135, 139.

2 See SHL, 21 September 1916. Sir Timothy Coghlan was recalled to take his place.

3 Colonial Office minute, 20 September 1916, initialled by 'JCD' or 'JCV'. Colonial Office Records, 418/148, folio 137.
ended and that Home Rule would be implemented.\textsuperscript{1} The largely Irish-descended Catholics formed roughly one-quarter of the New South Wales population; Holman believed that an announcement as he had suggested would enable Catholic church leaders to influence their religious adherents to vote for conscription. But Holman was mistaken: opinion against conscription in New South Wales had begun to take shape in the wake of the Easter Rising in Dublin. Economic pressures had created grievances among the working classes and had entrenched their suspicion of the pro-conscriptionists: the Irish were dominantly working class people.\textsuperscript{2} If the treatment of Ireland did become important to the Australian Irish before October 1916, then it added yet another grievance to justify their vote against conscription.\textsuperscript{3}

The anti-conscription cause began with a rally at the Sydney Town Hall on Friday 23 September. Once more the hall was packed by a crowd of around 4,000: nearly 3,000 of these

\textsuperscript{1}Cable from W.A. Holman to B.R. Wise, 19 September 1916, Colonial Office Records, 416/148, folio 138. The Colonial Office regarded the referendum as a Commonwealth not a State question; the reply was directed back to NSW via the Governor-General; see folio 143, cable from Pearson Law to Munro Ferguson, 20 September 1916. Holman's telegram added further fuel to the continuing 'channel of communications' quarrel between the state of NSW and the Commonwealth.

\textsuperscript{2}See also Lyons, 'Catholics and Conscription', op.cit. Lyons supports this argument from another angle: he examines the Catholic reactions to the conscription and finds that events in Ireland were little mentioned during the 1916 campaign as a reason for voting No, see pp.55-6. During the 1917 campaign sectarianism entered the conscription controversy in New South Wales as it had not been in 1916. For a passionate condemnation of the shooting of the Irish rebels, see letter to the editor from John Meagher NLC, DT, 16 May 1916. A meeting was held in the Sydney Town Hall on 4 September 1916 to collect funds for relieving distress in Ireland; Holman, Fitzgerald, R.D. Meagher, Black, and Archbishop Kelly attended the meeting. Holman put the motion urging the Imperial government to treat the Home Rule question as one of urgency.

\textsuperscript{3}See also Robson, 'The Origin and Character of the First A.I.F.', op.cit., pp.740-1: from his sample of the attestation papers, he has found that there was no significant change during the war in the number of Roman Catholics joining the army.
the *Herald* reported, were men 'well within the military age'.\(^1\) Unable to get inside, an estimated crowd of 8,000 to 10,000 gathered in the streets to listen to the speakers.\(^2\) If the referendum was defeated declared George Burns MHR, 'W.M. Hughes, Joseph Cook and Company would get their quietus from the people', and would receive notice to quit politics and Australia.\(^3\)

The following morning, Saturday 21 October, police raided the Sussex Street headquarters of the Industrial Workers of the World. Four IWW men, the first of the twelve, were arrested and charged with treason.\(^4\) 'The "International [sic] Workers of the World" is the name of a small body of extreme members of the Labour Party', Sir Gerald Strickland had written the week before, '...they are taking advantage of the political situation to organise a general strike and outrages such as sedition and the burning of property; this body seems to have command of ample funds, but the Police have matters well under control.'\(^5\) On 10 October the TWU twelve were brought before the Sydney Central Police Court for committal proceedings.\(^6\) For the next few days the Crown's charge of treason was bolstered by allegations of association

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1 *SMH*, 23 September 1916.

2 T.D. Mitch, R.W. Cruickshank, W. Mahoney MHR, Frank Anstey MHR and A.C. Willis addressed the main group, see RT, *SMH*, 22 September 1916. Speakers inside the hall included Anstey, G.H. Burns MHR, Kate Dwyer, J.H. Catts MHR, Peter Bowling, Mrs McMahon, S.A. Rosa, Captain S. Too-mbs MLA, P.J. Minahan MLA. J.W. Doyle the PLL president presided over the meeting.

3 *SMH*, 23 September 1916.

4 Ibid., 25 September 1916. The four men were described by the *Herald* as follows: Charles Reeve, 30 years, bricklayer, a native of England; Thomas Glynn, 35 years, journalist, a native of Ireland; Peter Larkin, 46 years, seaman, a native of Ireland, John Hamilton, 42, painter, a native of Victoria.

5 Cable from Sir Gerald Strickland to Bonar Law, 16 September 1916, Colonial Office Records 413/143, folio 139. Strickland also reported that the TWU members were principally Irish Americans who had recently arrived in Australia.

6 *SMH*, 11 October 1916.
with Germans and the burning of buildings in Sydney.\(^1\) The men were then committed for trial on 20 November.\(^2\)

But the behaviour of the IWW was associated by some with the cause of the labour movement anti-conscriptionists: both were hurting the nation. 'What has pleased me more than anything in this great fight for freedom', Eleanor Mackinnon told a pro-conscription rally at North Sydney on 17 October, 'is the surprising number of good, loyal Labour women who have stood by Mr. Hughes in his magnificent efforts to keep Australia free from the taint of IWW'ism.' She denounced those who associated themselves with the 'villainous gang of wretched German agents'.\(^3\) Crawford Vaughan, the Labor Premier of South Australia declared to a crowd at the Sydney Town Hall that the IWW were not 'merely anti-compulsionists, but anti-war, anti-British, and in favour of Germany'.\(^4\) Sir William Irvine on the same platform said: 'The "Yes" side was going to win this referendum despite all the noise and all the shouting of the pro-Germans and the I.W.W.'s.'\(^5\) He attacked as being 'worse than falsehoods' the anti-conscriptionist leaflets distributed under the name of J.H. Catts MHR, the organiser of the New South Wales campaign. One of the many interjectors yelled: 'Don't blame Catts: it might have been only one of the kittens.' Irvine retorted: 'it also might

\(^1\) SMH, 12, 13 October; Turner, Sydney's Burning, op.cit., pp.36-40; P.J. Rushton, 'The Trial of the Sydney Twelve: The Original Charge', Labour History, 25, November 1973, pp.53-7.

\(^2\) Turner, op.cit., p.40.

\(^3\) SMH, 18 October 1916. She was married to R.R.S. Mackinnon. Anderson, the Mayor of North Sydney presided at the meeting. Other speakers were Miss Scobie (probably a relative of Robert Scobie, Labor MLA for Murray), Dugald Thomson, and Mr Loxton KC. See also DT, 10 October 1916: Mrs Hogan asked a meeting in the Mosman Town Hall: 'Were they going to stand by the Domain loafer and the IWW, or send men to help save the lives of the men at the front?'

\(^4\) Ibid., 19 October 1916.

\(^5\) Ibid. A pro-conscription leaflet of 1916 made the same associations. Entitled Can Australia Find the Men?, it began: 'The I.W.W., the Germans, and the other ANTS say "No".'
have been the "sab. cat"; the IWW jargon for sabotage.  

At the anti-conscription headquarters in the 'Labor Daily' building, Catts was 'a live-wire' who would 'stay up all night working' said Mary Lloyd. Headquarters was 'a busy scene - eight women typists, four men clerks, great enthusiasm, and splendid reports from everywhere'. Alexander McCallum, a West Australian helping the anti-conscriptionists in New South Wales, wrote on 24 September: 'There may be many changes before polling day but present indications are that the three largest states will defeat the proposal pretty substantially.' But the military censorship was hindering their battle he alleged: 'All Trade Union letters were opened and the telephones to the Trades Hall tapped. Of course nothing was done to the other mob. The tyranny [sic] that has been exercised over the Press and the Labor organisations in these state[s] exceeds anything that Russia has done in her darkest days.'

The Worker was also severely censored: Henry Boote had to sign 'a bond to observe the regulations of the War Precautions Act'. But the circulation of the paper increased

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1 SMH, 19 October 1916. W.A. Watt also spoke at this meeting, which the Herald described as 'noisy'. Some of the interjections reported were 'Why do you not don khaki?'; 'Lead the way' (i.e. join the army); 'It is a capitalists' war'. When one of the interjectors was removed, 200 to 300 men and women rose and left the hall.

2 Lloyd, Sidelights, op.cit., p.47.

3 Ibid.

4 Letter from Alexander McCallum (secretary of the W.A. Labor party), to Donald Cameron, 24 September 1916. Donald Cameron papers, NL, MS.1005, Box 1.

5 Ibid. Cameron continued: 'All the wires between the State [Labor] Executives giving there [sic] decision on conscription was censored and never delivered. In the end they had to send men from state to state to carry the news.'

6 Lloyd, Sidelights, op.cit., p.53. Lloyd records many examples of Boote's clashes with the censor during these weeks; see pp.56, 58: in the week before the vote Lloyd wrote: 'The censor must have had extra special instructions from Melbourne to deal with it. Every political article was slashed unmercifully.'
by 31,500 in three weeks: the pro-conscriptionist Sun found its sales cut by 40,000 in two months. The Worker articles had never been 'so popular before. [R.W.] Cruickshank sent his leaflet to all mayors, aldermen, and leading business men. David Jones' manager wrote for fifty copies. Leaflets galore are printed, but no daily paper', wrote Lloyd. 'Editor and sub-editor of "The News" here, and Lionel Lindsay, have offered their services free for anti-conscription. Randolph Bedford is printing an anti-leaflet at his own expense, "Bulletin" refusing to print it. The "Worker" will have four extra pages during the campaign. Mary Gilmore has asked for her holidays. Mrs. Jennie Scott-Giffiths, a good writer and a rebel, will take her place.' One leaflet written by W.R. Winspear entitled The Blood Vote was passed by the censor in Brisbane: the New South Wales anti-conscriptionists promptly ordered 20,000 copies. Its success was 'phenomenal'

1AW, 26 October 1916. No information is given as to whether the increase occurred in NSW only. In December 1916 Mary Lloyd wrote: 'The big circulation of the "Worker", gained in the No-conscription fight, has never slumped.' See also AW, 3 September 1914: the Worker said it was owned by 70,000 unionists, and claimed it was read by at least 250,000 people.

2Anon., Sun Newspapers Ltd., 1910-1929, op.cit., p.26. See p.48: the net daily sales of the Sun, according to the table, was 79,145 in 1916. The cut was temporary, as the net daily sales rose to 87,682 in 1917.

3Lloyd, Sidelights, op.cit., p.52. See DT, 31 October 1916, which reported that around five million leaflets had been printed in the Worker office for distribution mainly in NSW.

4On 16 July 1915, CIB Detective N. Moore accompanied by three other detectives, Captain Wilson of the army, and armed with a search warrant issued by Colonel Wallack, raided 115 Goulburn St., the premises of the Marxian press. Several thousand anti-war leaflets and pamphlets were seized. William R. Winspear, in charge of the premises was questioned. See report by Detective N. Moore to Inspector-General of Police, 15 July 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4703, file 15/9176. Turner, Sydney's Burning, pxiv, calls N. Moore, now a Detective-Sergeant, a police expert on subversive activities.

5A copy is reprinted in Harris, The Bitter Fight, op.cit., p.239. Harris alleges that the pamphlet was censored in some states and issued illegally.

6Lloyd, Sidelights, op.cit., p.57.
said Lloyd: 'Orders piling in for it. Winspear seems to have done it by a happy accident.'

Tempers became heated during the final weeks. 'Many women say that because they have lost a son Mrs Brown's sons should be made to go', wrote Alexander McCallum. Mrs Eleanor Mackinnon and Grace Scobie warned women: 'We want you to know that the antis will spread every conceivable lie abroad to prevent you voting. Do not believe them. Vote, and vote "Yes".' They urged women not to be intimidated by the possibility of violence at the polling booths: 'the arm of the Government is long and strong - and no disorder will be permitted on that day'. Returned soldiers attacked an anti-conscriptionist street procession at mid-day and destroyed their 'Vote Against Conscription' banners. Meetings were rowdy: Holman angrily attacked the young men hooting and jeering at his words. 'What kind of men have we got here at Marrickville? (Hoots) Are these miserable specimens to whose minds nothing that is worthy can make appeal the hope of Australia? God help our young democracy. (Uproar) Those hoots and rowdyism are the only arguments you possess. You curs!...You disgrace your breed....You are cowards; do you hear? Cowards!'. On Sunday afternoon 22 October 'one of the biggest crowds ever seen' assembled on the Domain despite the rain falling at 2 o'clock. Both sides had advertised meetings there. Every few yards there were anti-conscriptionist speakers on small tables and chairs; the conscriptionists spoke from three motor lorries. J.C. Watson, one of the first speakers, was ringed by a cordon of police and 'a line of men

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1 Ibid., p.59.

2 Letter from Alexander McCallum to Donald Cameron, 24 September 1916, Cameron papers, NL, MS.1005, Box 1.

3 Letter to the editor from E. Mackinnon [Mrs R.R.S. Mackinnon] and Grace I. Scobie, joint secretaries, National Campaign for Compulsory Reinforcements, SMH, 21 October 1916.

4 Ibid.

5 SMH, 3 October 1916.

6 Ibid., 16 October 1916.
in khaki'. He was frequently interrupted and counted out. Later the crowd around bellowed No! each time he paused. Apart from noisy interjectors, no attempt was made to break up the meetings.

Fears of conspiracy flourished. Each side tried to scare people to support its cause. The pro-conscriptionists stigmatised their opponents as DMW sympathisers: the anti-conscriptionists alleged that if conscription were carried, then the conscripted men would be replaced with cheap labour. 'The general impression here is that Hughes is forcing this matter in return for the support of the Northcliff[e] Press which he received in England and that he is shortly returning to England for good', wrote McCallum. 'No doubt the aim is to deplete Australia of her manhood and then introduce cheap labor. Labor organisations here are convinced that arrangements are completed for that and the Maltese now arriving are the first of many thousand cheap workers previously arranged for.' The 'Maltese bogey' had an impact among the unskilled, already suffering intermittent unemployment, who formed such a large proportion of the workforce.

The Universal Service League, joining with the National Referendum Campaign Committee for Compulsory

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1. SMH, 23 October 1916.
2. Ibid.
3. Letter from Alexander McCallum to Donald Cameron, 24 September 1916. Donald Cameron papers, NL, MS.1005, Box 1. The Maltese scare began in late September. The Fremantle Labor Council cabled that the mailboat Arabia had 97 Maltese aboard, who had been allegedly engaged by the NSW government as railway and wharf labourers. The cable was read in the NSW Labor Council. J. McDonald (Bricklayers' Union) suspected a plot: he alleged that 'thousands' of Maltese had replaced labour at Picton and Mittagong: 'when we are conscripted they will need a lot more'; see DT, 22 September 1916. Blastfurnacemen refused to work with 20 Maltese whom C.G. Hoskins wanted to employ at his Lithgow ironworks. See SMH, 30 September 1916. Holman and Wade issued a lengthy circular on the 'Maltese bogey' setting out the statistics on Maltese emigration to Australia 1912-1916; see SMH, 19 October 1916. An interjector yelled to Holman at a meeting in Balmain: 'We ought to give you the Maltese Cross.' See DT, 17 October 1916.
Reinforcements, declared Professor MacCallum, 'the opposition to conscription was more than a fad - it was disloyalty.' He had assumed that all had welcomed the British declaration of war in August 1914; events since then had made the acquiescent people even less enthused. Moreover the league was silent on taxing profits and war loans. Yet it was an important question: the Bulletin declared it had received 'shoals of letters' urging the conscription of wealth. A.A.C. Cocks MLA, the president of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, who had denounced go-slowism and had supported the Universal Service League, opposed any new federal tax on wealth even though it would be used for war purposes. Such propositions aroused apprehension he said: 'it is felt that this is practically an attack on the security that has hitherto been absolute in regard to private rights of ownership'. W. Morgan, 'an ardent conscriptionist', attacked the 'paltry objections' raised about the wealth tax: 'the strange feature is that those who have taken up the war loan are staff[un]ch advocates of conscription, yet they quibble about a trumpery one and a half per cent. tax on the said loan. Cannot they realise that thousands of those who are now fighting for us have left behind them wives and families who must live on a far less sum than they have been accustomed to.'

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1 W.A. Holman was the president of the NRCC, Hector Lamond and F.J. Thomas, MLA for Gough, were the joint honorary secretaries. The USL held a general committee meeting at the Sydney Town Hall on 29 September. Holman and Professor MacCallum were the two main speakers; see SMH, 30 September 1916.

2 SMH, 30 September 1916. See also comments by Meredith Atkinson at a USL meeting in the Glebe Town Hall, 9 August: he declared his conviction that the opponents of the USL were 'a tiny group of extremists, who had no following'; SMH, 10 August 1916.


4 Cocks spoke at a USL meeting in North Sydney, see SMH, 24 June 1916.

5 DT, 29 September 1916.
If this group would understand the inequity of the situation he declared, 'the better chance we have of conscription being carried'.

Both sides moved to extremes when arguing their case. Many pro-conscriptionists, like Joseph Cook, harped on Fisher's promises made two years before. Frequently they based their view on obligation: 'It is incredible that Australia could be made to appear so mean and ignorantly stupid that when the Motherland calls for more men we hold back', declared Dr Mary Booth. But several anti-conscriptionists repudiated what to them was an excessively deferential attitude. 'What right has any man in temporary office to promise for us the last man and the last shilling?' declared Miss Rose Scott, president of the Peace Society. '...We refuse to learn our national duty from those who put their own countries, (though they may have emigrated here), first.'

Thus the conscription controversy provoked a conflict over national identity; this became entangled in Lionel Curtis' movement for closer imperial ties. It was to provoke the formation of a No-Imperial Federation League immediately after the referendum.

Agitators stirred emotions and sharpened anxieties in order to gather support for their respective causes. Anti-conscriptionists took the words Hughes had used in April at one of his London meetings: 'War prevented us from slipping into the abyss of degeneracy, and from becoming flabby. War...has dried up the mists of suspicion with which class regarded class. War has purged us. War has saved us from physical and moral degeneracy and decay.' The Darwinian view of the arm-chair strategist was contrasted with a pacifist-

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1 SMH, 12 October 1916.
2 DT, 23 September 1916. The Telegraph collected a number of women's opinions on conscription, including that of Dr Booth. Lady Gould declared: 'our bounden duty [was] to the Motherland for the protection we enjoy'.
3 Ibid.
4 See DT, SMH, 23 August 1916, for details on Curtis. Many who met Curtis at Government House were conscriptionists. See Chapter 6, p.231, note 4.
cum-soldier's-eye-view of the reality of combat: 'For one
agglomeration of human meat to fall upon another, to rip and
jab, make rivers of blood and plains of dead men, to be blown
to pieces, brains scattered, arms and legs and entrails strewn
in every direction — this is the way to prevent yourself
becoming flabby.'\textsuperscript{1} In the context of the battle between
causes, in which principles were freely invoked, such
propaganda was a chilling reminder of the increasing
casualties among the embattled Australian troops.

Experience of the Great War had generated several group
anxieties not logically connected with the issue of
conscription. These surfaced during the conscription conflict
or else remained as undercurrents influencing the behaviour
of the voters. The great number of arguments invented by
both sides are impossible to summarise here.\textsuperscript{2} However more
needs to be said about the ideas embodied in anti-
conscriptionist propaganda. They were based on preservation:
of the race and of White Australia. These ideas were embedded
in the small emigrant nation, isolated from its cultural home
in the British Isles. The pro-conscriptionist \textit{Bulletin},
itself a strong advocate of White Australia, thought that
these appeals had 'a strong influence' during the campaign.\textsuperscript{3}
It quoted an anti-conscriptionist leaflet: 'Conscript all our
white men... and either we must behold our industries perish
and the remnants of our population starve, or we must import
colored labor, jeopardise our racial integrity, and give up
the cherished ideal of a great white nation enthroned in the
Pacific.' The Maltese bogey and the leaflet, \textit{Women of

\textsuperscript{1}No-Conscription Council Campaign Committee leaflet, 1916,
entitled \textit{Prussian — Patriot}, in \textit{Anti-Conscription Papers},
Dixson Library, F91/49. The title of this volume of
collected leaflets is misleading, as the collection includes
pro-conscription leaflets as well as 1917 election leaflets.

\textsuperscript{2}F.B. Smith has written a concise account of the major appeals
made by both sides; see Smith, \textit{The Conscription Plebiscites},
op.cit., pp.10-11, 16-17.

\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Bulletin}, 2 November 1916, leading article: 'Is White
Australia Worth Doing Anything for Except Talk?'

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid.
Australia, Beware! 'The more men you send the more will be killed!' each underlined the threat to the race.

Had it not been for the stringent military censorship, it is likely that three further racial arguments would have been prominent in the anti-conscriptionist propaganda: the slaughter on the Western Front, the Japanese menace and the threat from venereal diseases. J.H. Catts, who had been Organising Secretary for the New South Wales federal recruiting campaign, feared the Japanese. In May he had written a confidential report for the State War Council entitled 'Australia's Peril and Australia's Need'. He narrated how 'the Japanese Menace' had expanded into China and the Pacific since August 1914, and concluded: 'Danger is not yet passed. Shall we do absolutely nothing whilst the rumblings of War (with the Pacific as its theatre) are being anxiously canvassed by every interest in the Pacific but Australia.' As a safeguard he had urged that all Australian males be compulsorily trained for home defence: 'at the present moment we are more helpless than impotent China.' Henry Boote, like Catts, was in the vanguard of the anti-conscription fight. Boote had declared his preference for 'the Kaiser' rather than 'the Mikado', and had been ordered by the censor in June 1916 not to refer either to Japanese labour or to Japanese 'coloured' labour in his articles. It seems probable that


2 See Chapter 3. One leaflet written by J.H. Catts referred to the high casualty rates: Wholesale Slaughter. Catts claimed that conscription would mean 'Exterminating Australia's Manhood 100,000 each six months killed or permanently disabled. Conscription for Australia means race suicide.' Copy in Anti-Conscription Papers, op.cit.


4 Ibid. Catts also urged that machine guns, artillery and ammunition be manufactured in Australia. He proposed however that voluntary enlistment continue for 'Empire Service'.

5 Ibid. Catts also urged that machine guns, artillery and ammunition be manufactured in Australia. He proposed however that voluntary enlistment continue for 'Empire Service'.

6 Lloyd, Sidelights, p.43.
the arrival of the unfortunate Maltese was seized upon by
the anti-conscriptionists as a way to beat the censorship and
to illustrate the much more alarming threat from Japan. 1

The threat from venereal diseases was equally disturbing:
soldiers had come to be known as carriers of the infections.
Following their victory on 10 June, many of the early closing
agitators redirected their energies into alerting the public
to the evil of the 'racial poisons'. 2 The investigations of
Dr Arthur's select committee continued, thereby sustaining the
public discussion of the diseases and the spread of 'impurity'.
Dr G.W. Bray, who had been in charge of the Australian
Dermatological Hospital 3 in Egypt, 4 told the committee on
23 August that 9,000 soldiers had been treated during his six
month command: all except 400 were Australians or New
Zealanders. During a five week period when transports were
arriving from Australia, his hospital had received new patients
at the rate of 250 each day, most had been suffering from
gonorrhoea. 5

Arthur continued his quest for possible ways to limit
the infections, such as education of the young, certificates
of good health and the licensing of brothels. But it was

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1 One anti-conscription leaflet hinted at the Japanese 'menace'.
For the first of six reasons for rejecting conscription it
declared: 'Because self-preservation is the law of nature
to-day. Let us, now that the Empire is safe, guard against
and prepare for a future enemy who might come rapping at our
White Australian door.' See Australian Democracy ... Attention!
partly written by T.W. McCristal, president of the Sydney
Wharf Labourers' Union. McCristal had fought at Gallipoli,
and a photograph showing him in a full battle dress was
printed on the leaflet.

2 See DT, 6 September 1916, 'For Women' column. The columnist
noted that the Women's National Movement had begun a campaign
against '"racial poisons", venereal diseases'.

3 See Butler, op.cit., pp.169-70, 175 note. The
'Dermatological' hospital was despatched from Australia on
22 December 1915; its function was to treat venereal cases in
Egypt. In August 1916 the ADH was set up at Bulford on
Salisbury Plain in England.

4 DT, 24 August 1916. Bray had served from 15 January to
8 July 1916.

5 Ibid. The maximum number of patients was 2,367 in March 1916.
When Bray arrived there were 800 patients; and 300 when he left.
evident that discussions about the sexual diseases and their control were blocked by reticence and unyielding personal values. Archbishop Wright believed that education in sexual matters was a parental duty; however he would discuss among Anglicans the desirability of instructing the older children at their church schools on the subject of the 'secret diseases'.¹ The Presbyterian Rev. Scott-West said that people should obtain 'certificates of freedom from venereal disease' before their marriage; the officiating clergyman, having read each document, would then decide whether the ceremony was to proceed.²

'There is a wave of immorality sweeping over us here', Sir Herbert Maitland told the committee on 29 August. 'Such a wave as comes over all countries in war-time....It is not the tolerated house, properly kept, that spreads the disease as it is being spread; it is the clandestine mating - cheap, free, and uncontrolled.'³ He blamed 'the bands of giddy girls' who met soldiers alighting from the trains. The girls, 'outwardly respectable', did not know when they were infected; accordingly they sought no medical help until driven to it. 'Down at Milson Island'⁴ I have had, in seven months, 2,000 cases of men suffering from venereal diseases', he said, 'and I find that the greatest number of patients "blame the Central Railway Station". They confess that there had been no talk of payment.'⁵ He rejected the suggestion that medical

¹Ibid., 25 August 1916. See also views of W.A. Purves, English-born headmaster of the Sydney Church of England Grammar School. He opposed sex education, as there was 'a danger of arousing a curiosity which might not be beneficial'; DT, 13 September 1916.

²Ibid.

³SMH, 30 August 1916.

⁴Milson Island was the army venereal hospital for NSW; it was opened on 14 October 1915. See Butler, op.cit., p.753.

⁵SMH, 30 August 1916.
practitioners be compelled to notify public authorities of every venereal case they had treated: 'Such a proposal would bring ruin to half — well, a very great number — of homes in this country. It would lead to divorce and all sorts of things.'\(^1\) As a practical public health measure he urged that prostitution be officially tolerated in restricted houses subject to 'stringent inspection'. Thus he hoped to bring into the open the numerous illegal brothels existing in the Sydney suburbs, and so enable public surveillance of one source of the diseases.\(^2\) In effect he advocated similar regulative measures to the repealed British Contagious Diseases Acts.\(^3\)

Maitland's words provoked alarm. 'There can be little doubt that this druck of obscenity has percolated extensively. Doctors openly say that venereal disease is regarded by most soldiers in camps as a joke...', declared Anglican Rev. W.F. Wentworth-Sheilds. 'Filth kills patriotism.'\(^4\) He repudiated any 'revival of the C.D. Acts'; he believed that women, 'who set the standard of purity', could 'cleanse our social life by a united protest'. He declared: 'every girl who is false to her honor is false to her country'.\(^5\) Mrs David, whose group now called itself the Women's National Movement for Social Reform, was equally vehement: 'the organised women of this state will be very pugnacious if any attempt is made to introduce C.D. Acts here'.\(^6\) There were two ways to fight the 'epidemic of impurity' she declared: first, the government

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{2}\text{See DT, 9 September 1916: the Chief Secretary reported that in the previous six months 600 women of the 'vagrant class' had been prosecuted for soliciting and kindred offences in the city streets.}\)

\(^{3}\text{See Chapter 5; Smith, 'Ethics and Disease in the Later Nineteenth Century', op.cit.}\)

\(^{4}\text{Letter to the editor from W.F. Wentworth-Sheilds, St James, King Street, Sydney, DT, 31 August 1916.}\)

\(^{5}\text{Ibid. He pictured them thus: 'the Australian Delilahs are the Philistines who rob the Samsons of their strength'.}\)

\(^{6}\text{Letter to the editor from C.M. David, DT, 1 September 1916.}\)
night clinics for venereal patients, and second, an educational campaign organised by women. The themes of the movement's battle against venereal diseases were to be: 'sound scientific knowledge, the beauty of morality, the happiness of a clean conscience, the manliness of self-control, and the logic of a single standard of morality'.¹ The Women's National Movement was still organising its campaign, 'The Promotion of Social Purity', a few weeks before the conscription poll. Local committees in towns and suburbs were to be enlisted: 'There are so many women ignorant of the great social evils which are menacing our national health and intellect', wrote Mrs David, 'that we feel it will be necessary to arrange for literature and classes for children, for adolescents and for women.'²

Mrs David was half-right: people generally remained ignorant of the complexities of the venereal diseases, so did many medical practitioners of the time. But the war had made many aware that the diseases existed. The Women's Christian Temperance Union 'had refused to discuss the awful question of impurity, but, if not promptly dealt with, it threatened to become a national curse', declared Mrs Frank Blow in her presidential address to the WCTU convention during September. The diseases were not just a moral problem she said, they endangered children: 'It was time women grappled with the evil.'³

By mid-September 1916 the Arthur committee had involved doctors, policemen, public health and government officials, politicians, churchmen, school teachers, academics, and representatives from women's groups in its explorations of the impact of venereal diseases on people in New South Wales. Each week the Telegraph published the number of patients

¹Ibid.

²Women's National Movement for Social Reform manifesto written by Mrs C.M. David, AM, 28 September 1916, 'Our Women's Page'.

³DT, 20 September 1916.
attending the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital venereal clinic. J.P. Osborne, MLA for Paddington, had asked the Minister for Public Health if venereal infections could be declared notifiable diseases: he said that there was a 'general feeling of unrest displayed by the community'. P.H. Molesworth of the Health Society of New South Wales, lectured on 'Universal Efficiency' at Government House. Lady Edeline Strickland presided. Molesworth wanted to conscript 'everyone into the ranks of the fighters for health and happiness'. He urged that the National Council of Women, the Women's National Movement and the British Medical Association create an 'educational revolution' in the teaching of hygiene. Dr Ramsay Sharpe, president of the Health Society, told the annual conference of Health Inspectors that restaurant staff needed inspection in order to combat venereal diseases: he cited a case where an infected employee had been serving food.

On 12 October the Society for Combating Venereal Diseases was formed within the University. Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart, chaired the meeting. The WEA, impelled by the energetic Meredith Atkinson, joined with the Parents' and Citizens'

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1 For example see DT, 8 June 1916: for the week ending 3 June there were 868 attendances (694 males, 174 females), of these 58 were new patients; DT, 13 September 1916: for the week ending 9 September there were 914 attendances (670 males, 244 females); 58 were new patients.

2 NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1916, Vol.64, p.643, 9 August 1916. See also NSW Parl. Deb., Vol.65, p.1600, 12 September 1916: Dr Arthur in a question put to the Minister, George Black, revealed that J.P. Cochran, Labor MLA for Darling Harbour, had protested on behalf of his constituents at the proposed establishment of a venereal clinic on Dawes' Point.

3 DT, 5 September 1916.

4 Ibid., 25 September 1916.

5 SMH, 13 October 1916. Speakers were Professors J.T. Wilson, D.A. Welsh, Peter Board (Director of Education), Rev. A.H. Garnsey (Warden of St Paul's College) and Meredith Atkinson. Wilson had been the chief military censor in NSW. Office bearers elected were Sir William Cullen, patron; Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart, president; Professor J.T. Wilson, chairman. Members of the Society's Council included: Professors D.A. Welsh, J.B. Peden, R.P. Irvine, A. Mackie, Mr H.E. Barff, Dr A.T. Lovell, Meredith Atkinson and Miss I.M. Fidler.
Association to plan a conference on the teaching of sex hygiene: it was to meet three weeks after the conscription referendum. The conference was a response to the growing alarm about venereal diseases: it came to be dominated by middle class organisations, people and lecturers. People had encountered the realities of the contagious diseases; middle class people presumably, came to fear the contagion most.

Women were particularly anxious. Because of 'the imperative need for personal hygiene and physical education among women', the fourth YWCA triennial convention meeting in Sydney during October, voted that local associations appoint 'a strong committee' to direct this work. Mrs Barff, president of the League of Honour, addressed the convention,

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1 The dates of the November conference, speakers and their topics were announced in AW, 5 October 1916, 'Our Women's Page'. See Chapter 6.

2 See Teaching of Sex Hygiene, op.cit., pp.201-3, for a list of the 171 delegates (94 males, 77 females) and 42 organisations (11 trade unions, 31 other) represented at the conference. Included among the organisations were the WBA, Department of Education, Australasian League of Honour and its central council, White Cross League, Council for Civic and Moral Advancement, Congregational Union of NSW, Women's National Movement, YWCA, Women's Reform League, WCTU, University Women's College, University Women's Council, Feminist Club, Mothers' Union, Ashfield Infants' Home, Theosophical Society, National Council of Women (Queensland), Social Dept. of W.D. and N.O. Wills Ltd., Woolloomooloo Day Nursery, Enmore and Darlinghurst Parents and Citizens' Association, Association for the Advancement of the Blind, Deaconess Institution, Seekers, four tutorial classes (Drummoyne, Sydney Grammar School; Economics, Psychology), Educational Committee of the Diocese of Newcastle, Groupe D'Etudes Scientifiques. See also letter to the editor from R.W. de Vuldor, AW, 7 December 1916. de Vuldor, a union delegate at the conference and a member of the Tamworth PLL, complained that Professor Welsh had not mentioned the 'economic system' as a contributing factor in the spread of the diseases.

3 Mrs David (WNSR); Mrs R horror Luffman (Women's Reform League); Kate Dwyer, Annie Golding (Women's Progressive Association) and Mrs Rhodes, a female constable, gave evidence to the Arthur committee; see DT, 15 September 1916.

4 DT, 10 October 1916.

5 Ibid. She gave the membership of the league: NSW 1,700; Victoria 1,452; other four states 513; New Zealand 110, total 3,785.
as did Dr Mary Booth, who denounced 'the prevalent lack of self-control'. 1 A deputation of women, troubled by the evidence given to the Arthur committee, visited the Lord Mayor urging that patrols be appointed to protect young people walking through the parks and the railway station. 'Women and girls were subjected to all kinds of annoyances in the parks', declared Annie Golding. 'Well-dressed men molested decent girls who attended night classes.' 2 Mrs Kinchington declared that she had removed some young girls from soldiers at week-end camp at Bondi: one girl had been wearing the badge of the Girls' High School. 3 The contagiousness of the diseases was exaggerated. The City councillors believed that the diseases could be acquired by the genital organs contacting venereal organisms living on toilet seats. 4 Lord Mayor Meagher told the deputation that they had decided that U-shaped seats, being 'less dangerous' than the circular kind, were to be put in public toilets. 5

Churchmen were equally concerned. The Bishop of Goulburn told the League of Honour: 'the Immorality of the soldiers in the camps was as much the fault of silly, giddy, wild girls as of bad and bestial men'. Australians faced 'a terrible plague': he urged the women to keep their ideals 'pure and lofty'. 6 The Presbyterian General Assembly feared 'the grave danger caused by the prevalence and alarming increase in venereal diseases'. It urged its Public Questions Committee

1 Lecture to the YWCA, DT, 11 October 1916.
2 DT, 19 September 1916. Annie Golding, with Mrs David, represented the WNM at the November conference on sexual hygiene.
3 Ibid. Other members of the deputation were Kate Dwyer (Women Workers' Union), Mrs Dickie (Women's Organizing Committee of the PLL), Mrs Lalor (Labor Women's Council), Elsie Simpson (Feminist Club), Mrs Callaway (Women's Liberal Association) and Miss Geach (Child Study Association).
4 See Morton, Venereal Diseases, op.cit., p.17, who indicates that this false notion is still common.
5 AW, 5 October 1916.
6 DT, 9 October 1916; the Bishop preached at St James' Church. He claimed that 'almost half' of the marriages in Australia were 'forced marriages'.
to 'take all possible steps to warn and educate our people' and for its churches to do their utmost 'to wipe out this deadly evil'. While those alarms were being sounded, young men were being called up for home service.

As in the early closing campaign of May and June, propagandists sought to frighten women. 'The sentiment and the sympathy of the women voters was cruelly played upon by every artifice that could be devised to check in them their desire to do the right thing', complained Eleanor Mackinnon on 29 October, 'and by threats and intimidation so swayed them that it was impossible to bring reason to bear upon their fears and scruples.' The conscription issue divided the agitators who were alarmed about the spread of venereal diseases. For instance: Mrs David, Dr Mary Booth, Mrs Bogue Luffman, Dr Arthur, Meredith Atkinson, Professor D.A. Welsh and P.H. Molesworth took part in the pro-conscription campaign; Kate Dwyer, Mrs Kinchington, Jennie Scott-Griffiths, Annie Golding, Lucy Sullivan and Mrs Lalor fought as anti-conscriptionists. The views of Mrs W.E. Strang of Wahroonga, the newly-elected president of the WCTU, indicate the dilemma facing many voters. In her case she was divided by her support for conscription and her fear that military life would expose young men to the risk of venereal infection. When interviewed by the Telegraph she favoured conscription, but added: the military authorities had failed to provide 'moral

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1 Ibid., 5 October 1916. Of all the churches, the Presbyterian seemed to be the most public in its concern about venereal diseases. Robson, in his sample of attestation papers, has found that enlistments among Presbyterians decreased significantly in the period July 1915 to August 1916 (i.e. coinciding with the period in which the Arthur committee took its evidence). Unfortunately he does not provide figures for enlistments classified by religion and by state, so there is no knowing whether the fall was confined to NSW. See Robson, 'Origin and character of the First A.I.F.', op.cit., p.741.

2 DT, 30 October 1916.

3 See SMH, 24 October 1916; DT, 28 September, 5, 20 October 1916.

4 See Lloyd, Sidelights, op.cit., p.71, who refers to 'Nurse Lucy Sullivan'.

5 For a list of the chief women anti-conscriptionist speakers, see SMH, 10 October 1916.
shelter and guardianship' for the young men in their 'impressionable' years.¹

It had become public knowledge that soldiers were suffering from an extraordinary incidence of venereal infection. 'If you go to Milson Island, near Sydney, you will see where many who come back from Egypt are kept,' wrote Mary Gilmore. 'Some you will see; some none but the doctor and the nurse may see.'² Anti-conscriptionists had a ready argument to help their cause: conscription, if carried, would expose more males, and hence their families, to the risk of contagion from the 'loathsome' diseases. Professor Welsh and others had declared in 1915 and early 1916 that venereal diseases among the troops deterred men from enlisting, for mothers would 'shrink from the prospect of an unclean life for their sons'. Wentworth-Sheilds had declared: 'Filth kills patriotism'; and Mrs Strang had doubted the ability of the military authorities to protect the 'impressionable' young men. Horror had dominated the exposure of the 'secret diseases' to society: undoubtedly the fearful revelations particularly about syphilis,³ implicating private sexual matters which had hitherto been repressed, had left their imprint on some people. The anti-conscriptionists reminded them of their anxieties.

The censorship of news reports, made more stringent during the weeks preceding the conscription poll, has largely diluted into paraphrases the anti-conscriptionist references to venereal diseases, or else destroyed them altogether. However there are a few surviving traces. Kate Dwyer told the crowd at the Rockdale Town Hall that conscription must be crushed: if it were carried it 'would prove a curse to

¹DT, 28 September 1916. Mrs Strang was a Presbyterian; see DT, 13 February 1918.
²AW, 28 September 1916, 'Our Women's Page'.
³See for instance AW, 28 September 1916, for the description of what was evidently an advanced case of syphilis: 'On the underside the skull was bare; in the open socket there was no eye; the flesh of the cheek and part of the neck was gone.'
mothers and the manhood and the future of the Australian race'.
Annie Golding asked the wives and daughters of the workers: 'Are you WOMEN OF THE COMMONWEALTH, by your vote on October 28th, going to open your doors to such evil, insidious influences, with their long train of DISEASES, ENDING in DEATH?' Frank Cotton in a hard-hitting leaflet entitled The Curse of Cairo, put together the fears of venereal diseases with the threat to White Australia:

Egypt has a reputation for iniquity that few countries in the world can equal....In both Port Said and Cairo commercialised vice and immorality manifest themselves naked and unashamed in open daylight.

The Red Plague has eaten into the very bones of the nation, and, as all medical missionaries know, the almost universal loathsome eye diseases which inflict these people are the result of infection at birth.

He declared that the military authorities had done little 'to restrain the conscienceless vultures who drugged our soldiers with poisonous liquors and swept them into the pit of perdition by every possible lure of temptation'; and alleged that 'the awful toll paid in Egypt' was 'worse than the casualties at the Dardanelles'. Immorality always occurs 'where there is unrestricted mixture of different races' he said. Conscription, if carried, would deplete Australia of her men; capitalists would demand 'alien' labour to replace them. He sketched a fearful picture:

If this happened the moral status of our Australian cities, already weakened by what Sir Herbert Maitland describes as the universal wave of immorality consequent upon the world war, will rapidly fall towards the level of infamy of Cairo and Port Said.

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1DT, 19 October 1916. This report was probably paraphrasing Dwyer's speech.

2AW, 12 October 1916. She added: 'In conscript countries regulation and the WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC are rife.'

3The Curse of Cairo was published in AW, 28 September 1916, a copy of the leaflet is in Anti-Conscription Papers, op.cit. Lucy Sullivan of the Women's Peace Army, authorised its distribution.
To ask any Australian woman who realises the mystery of iniquity behind the world tragedy to vote in favor of conscription is to ask her to deliberately elect to go down to hell with her eyes open.

VOTE NO.

On Saturday 29 October, 81.3 per cent of the electors enrolled in New South Wales cast their votes. The Telegraph reported that women on both sides worked hard at canvassing votes all day. After weeks of argument the behaviour of the voters was 'calm almost to funereality'. But at the Arthur Street polling booth in Surry Hills anti-conscriptionists stoned Dr MacKellar's motor-car and his chauffeur and ripped away the vote 'YES' placard: they scratched 'NO' on the rear of the car. Conscription was lost by a margin of 117,739 votes: 356,805 people voted for conscription, but 474,544 voted against. Thirty-seven per cent of the total Australian valid votes were cast in New South Wales; but the state's anti-conscription vote represented 40.9 per cent of the Australian NO vote. Thus the large NO majority in the most populous state enabled the national defeat of conscription. But it was a close victory: the overall result was a margin of 72,476 votes for NO. Had 37,000 people reversed their votes, conscription would have been carried. The results of the voting in each of the twenty-seven New South Wales federal electorates are summarised in the following table.

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1 The total NSW enrolment was 1,055,986; of this number 858,399 people voted; 55.4 per cent (475,669) were males, and 44.6 per cent (382,730) were females.

2DT, SMH, 30 October 1916.

3Ibid. In the Surry Hills division of the South Sydney electorate, 76.6 per cent of the electors voted against conscription.
### TABLE 1

**NSW VOTES CAST IN THE FIRST CONScription REFERENDUM**

28 OCTOBER 1916

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Valid Vote</th>
<th>Number Voting NO</th>
<th>% Valid Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>32,102</td>
<td>23,126</td>
<td>72.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sydney</td>
<td>24,932</td>
<td>17,873</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sydney</td>
<td>30,994</td>
<td>21,840</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>34,236</td>
<td>22,987</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalley</td>
<td>32,036</td>
<td>20,549</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Sydney</td>
<td>27,307</td>
<td>15,547</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang</td>
<td>37,455</td>
<td>20,209</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkes</td>
<td>45,642</td>
<td>21,560</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wentworth</td>
<td>37,620</td>
<td>17,374</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>41,069</td>
<td>15,925</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Sydney</td>
<td>38,278</td>
<td>12,108</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>381,671</td>
<td>209,100</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL-URBAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrier</td>
<td>22,007</td>
<td>13,512</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra</td>
<td>36,843</td>
<td>20,800</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepean</td>
<td>39,390</td>
<td>22,252</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>98,240</td>
<td>56,564</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Werriwa</td>
<td>30,765</td>
<td>20,617</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calare</td>
<td>26,615</td>
<td>17,461</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie</td>
<td>28,689</td>
<td>18,677</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling</td>
<td>22,952</td>
<td>14,935</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>30,426</td>
<td>19,478</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robertson</td>
<td>26,685</td>
<td>16,978</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden-Monaro</td>
<td>24,631</td>
<td>15,257</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>26,659</td>
<td>16,445</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwydir</td>
<td>24,894</td>
<td>14,886</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>27,776</td>
<td>15,516</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowper</td>
<td>28,891</td>
<td>14,933</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverina</td>
<td>25,638</td>
<td>13,104</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>26,817</td>
<td>10,593</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>351,438</td>
<td>208,880</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL NSW**      | 831,349    | 474,544          | 57.1         |
Twelve of the thirteen rural electorates voted against conscription. As can be seen from Table 2, the electors in country town subdivisions contributed substantially to the high anti-conscription vote. Many of these voters would probably have been navvies, farmers' and town labourers, miners, and railwaymen.¹ Campaign meetings in country towns were often rowdy: sections of the Blayney audience were 'strongly hostile' to the pro-conscriptionist T.R. Bavin.² At Armidale, H.W. Lane, the local Liberal member, and his colleague T.J. Hoskins, MLA for Dulwich Hill, were frequently interrupted by anti-conscriptionists. When they had finished speaking, Arthur Blakeley of the AWU leapt on to the platform and put the motion against conscription. Uproar followed. People crowded around the platform. Policemen restored order.³ Only 56 of the total 248 rural subdivisions voted for conscription. The corresponding figures for the other two categories were: rural-urban 13 out of 52; urban 21 out of 80 subdivisions. Thus of the 380 subdivisions in New South Wales, less than one-quarter (90) voted YES.

The farmers did not form the decisive group who beat conscription as Turner has claimed:⁴ much of the rural NO vote should be attributed to working class and self-employed people living in country towns. Undoubtedly many farmers helped to swell the NO vote because they feared further labour shortages. In the Cootamundra district the Telegraph reported

¹Metherell, 'The Conscription Referenda', op.cit., Chapter 6, has investigated aspects of the rural NSW vote. He examined the Richmond electoral roll and found that the Tenterfield subdivision which voted against conscription (YES 538; NO 845) had the following occupations recorded: farmers (426); farmers' labourers (154); town labourers, self-employed tradesmen, carters etc. (294); see p.298ff.

²SMH, 6 October 1916. Mayor Dudley Westgarth chaired the pro-conscription meeting.

³Ibid., 18 October 1916.

⁴Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics, op.cit., p.116. See also Metherell, op.cit., who also argues this point. Ontario farmers wished to retain rural labour, arguing that the production of food was necessary for the war effort; see W.R. Young, 'Conscription, Rural Depopulation, and the Farmers of Ontario, 1917-19', Canadian Historical Review, Vol.LIII, 1972, p.300ff.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Subdivisions</th>
<th>Combined Valid Vote of Subdivisions</th>
<th>Combined NO Vote %</th>
<th>% NO Vote of Electorate</th>
<th>% Valid Vote of Electorate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WERRIWA</td>
<td>Goulburn, Picton, Murrumburra, Boorowa, Young</td>
<td>13,136</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALARE</td>
<td>Cowra, Forbes, Orange, Parkes, Wellington</td>
<td>13,940</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACQUARIE</td>
<td>Bathurst, Lithgow, Penrith, Blayney Wallerawang, Carcoar</td>
<td>16,491</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUNTER</td>
<td>Cessnock, Maitland, Kurri Kurri</td>
<td>14,649</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DARLING</td>
<td>Cobar, Dubbo, Coonamble</td>
<td>7,280</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDEN-MONARO</td>
<td>Braidwood, Cooma, Araluen, Yass, Gunning, Queanbeyan</td>
<td>6,704</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUME</td>
<td>Adelong, Albury, Cootamundra, Tumut, Wagga Wagga</td>
<td>13,719</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that most families in the town and on the land had relatives in the army: 'Conscription could hardly get more - unless the women are alone to be left to do the work of the town, the work of the farm, and the forge, and the shop.' By December 1916 it was estimated that 6,000 to 7,000 men had enlisted from the Hume electorate; the minimum figure being 28.4 per cent of the male electors enrolled in September 1914. Heavy rains fell over the west and tablelands of New South Wales during late September. 'The whole of the wheat country reports heavy falls.... Along the tablelands, unless something untoward happens, the rain will ensure one of the best and most prolific seasons on record.' The dry year of 1914-15 was broken: in the 1915-16 season 4,189,000 acres of wheat were to be harvested in New South Wales, an increase of 1,431,000 acres over the previous season. A.K. Trethowan and T.I. Campbell, president and secretary of the Farmers and Settlers' Association, issued a manifesto to farmers: they urged that the pledge to the last man and last shilling 'must be honoured'; they warned against the 'specious pleading of the anti-conscriptionists and the I.W.W. combination'. They declared: 'As a class, the farmers of Australia have suffered grievously at the hands of our legislators, but their spirit of loyalty and sacrifice in the Empire cause has stood the

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1 *DT*, 4 August 1916. In the Cootamundra subdivision of Hume, conscription was defeated by 1,169 votes to 648. See also Metherell, *op.cit.*, pp.576-8; he investigated the attitude to conscription of 75 rural newspapers in 17 electorates of NSW: 49 favoured conscription, 9 were opposed, 17 were neutral.

2 Confidential memo to W.A. Holman from Robert Patten, Liberal MHR for Hume, 5 December 1916. NSW PDC, Box 7/4737, file B16/5624. See also *DT*, 4 August 1916: the Albury district (not defined), was said to have had 3,000 men in the army. Albury was also in the Hume electorate.

3 *SMH*, 27 September 1916.

4 See letter to the editor from W.M. Kennedy of Tamworth, *DT*, 11 September 1915, who claimed that for the majority of wheat farmers the 1914-15 season had 'proved the worst in their experience.

5 *NSW Statistical Register*, 1915-16, p.1006. In the 1913-14 season 3,205,000 acres of wheat were harvested, in 1914-15, 2,758,000.
test on every occasion.' But yeoman farmers, it seemed, were equally moved by self-interest on polling day.

Broken Hill provided 66 per cent of the NO vote in the rural-urban electorate of Barrier, and the coal mining districts of Wollongong and Bulli polled 31 per cent of the Illawarra NO vote. In Nepean the following fringe suburbs of Sydney and surrounding small towns all recorded NO majorities: Bankstown, Concord, Granville, Liverpool, Smithfield, Richmond and Windsor.

The most interesting group of voters was the urban middle classes. One would expect from their dominance of recruiting drives, fund raising and other patriotic efforts, that the middle classes would record a high pro-conscription vote. Moreover the Liberal politicians were strongly identified with the pro-conscription campaign; the majority had joined the Universal Service League in September 1915. Municipal and shire councils were strongly pro-conscriptionist; mayors and shire presidents formed local branches of the National Referendum Council and chaired the pro-conscription meetings in their districts. Yet many middle class-dominant subdivisions in Sydney polled less pro-conscription votes than one would expect. This can be illustrated in two ways. First, by comparing the proportion of valid votes cast for YES in October 1916 with the proportion of valid votes cast for the Nationalist candidates in the federal elections of 5 May 1917. There are methodological problems in comparing the two aggregates of behaviour at the referendum and at the election. But the two events were relatively close in time, appealed to similar values and were each fought as 'win the

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1 SMH, 13 October 1916.

2 For example the Wickham, Murwillumbah, Junee municipal councils, the Tweed River and Nepean shire councils supported conscription; SMH, 14 August 1916. Mayors formed branches of the NRC at Penrith, Grafton, Lismore, Tamworth and Woollahra; SMH, 30 September 1916. Mayors chaired pro-conscription meetings at Paddington, Balmain, Hurstville, North Sydney, Blayney, Hay, Armidale; SMH, 4, 6, 10, 13, 18 October 1916.

3 The assumption made in the selection of subdivisions is that voting generally reflects class affiliations.
war' issues by their partisans; accordingly the comparison seems valid. Disparities in Sydney voting patterns are also revealed when they are compared with selected middle class-dominated Melbourne subdivisions. Again there are difficulties, as there is no way of knowing if we are comparing like with like; but the similarities in Nationalist affiliation of 1917 make the inter-city comparison worthwhile. The results are summarised in Table 3: all the Melbourne subdivisions voted YES and Nationalist; six Sydney subdivisions voted NO, but all voted strongly Nationalist, their support for that party varying between 66 and 58 per cent of the valid vote.

There are significant differences between the proportions voting in each of the two cities: the mean fluctuation in Sydney was 12.3 per cent; the Melbourne voting pattern remained relatively stable with a mean difference of 2 per cent. Moreover in five Melbourne subdivisions the YES vote slightly exceeded the Nationalist vote recorded in 1917. Anxieties about venereal diseases undoubtedly influenced some of the marked NO vote in the Sydney middle class subdivisions and presumably also elsewhere in New South Wales; but the evidence remains circumstantial. To recapitulate: the Arthur committee had broken the taboo surrounding the public discussion of venereal diseases and had shown that they were far more prevalent than had been believed. Five months before the conscription poll, the early closers had publicised throughout the state the high incidence of the 'foul' diseases among the soldiers; fears had gathered force in the following months. Middle class people had dominated the early closing and venereal diseases agitation. As has been shown the Sydney suburban electorates had high voter turnouts on the 10 June making 44.4 per cent of the total valid vote for 6 o'clock closing. The middle class subdivisions as shown in Table 3 held much of the same population; unfortunately, as federal and state boundaries differ, no comparisons can

---

1See Chapter 5, pp.197-9.
# Table 3

## Pattern of Valid Votes in Selected Subdivisions of New South Wales and Victoria, 28 October 1916 and 5 May 1917

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subdivisions</th>
<th>% 1916 vote below 1917 vote (1)</th>
<th>% Yes voting 1916 (2)</th>
<th>% National voting (3)</th>
<th>Subdivisions</th>
<th>% 1916 vote below 1917 vote (4)</th>
<th>% Yes voting 1916 (5)</th>
<th>% National voting (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dulwich Hill</td>
<td>-16.6</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>Camberwell</td>
<td>-6.0</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingstone</td>
<td>-16.5</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>Ivanhoe</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick</td>
<td>-16.2</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>Kew</td>
<td>-3.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armcilffe</td>
<td>-15.6</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>Essendon</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrickville W.</td>
<td>-15.4</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>S. Elsternwick</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bondi</td>
<td>-15.2</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>-3.4</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petersham</td>
<td>-14.6</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
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<td>60.4</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>Caulfield</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
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<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>-14.0</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>Malvern East</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlingford</td>
<td>-13.8</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>Malvern</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bexley</td>
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<td>49.7</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>E. Melbourne</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>-13.4</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>Elsternwick</td>
<td>-2.1</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogarah</td>
<td>-12.1</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>Surry Hills</td>
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<td>69.9</td>
<td>71.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homambush</td>
<td>-11.9</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryde</td>
<td>-11.7</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>Moonee Ponds</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>59.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chatswood</td>
<td>-11.4</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>St Kilda West</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>-11.4</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>Ascot Vale</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter's Hill</td>
<td>-11.2</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>South Yarra</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drummoynne</td>
<td>-11.1</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manly</td>
<td>-9.3</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>Sandringham</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crow's Nest</td>
<td>-8.2</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>Balacalava</td>
<td>+0.2</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>-7.6</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>Toorak</td>
<td>+0.2</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>75.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Sydney</td>
<td>-7.5</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>St Kilda E.</td>
<td>+0.4</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosman</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>Latrobe</td>
<td>+0.4</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlinghurst</td>
<td>-6.9</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>Parkville</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| MEAN                    | 12.3                            | 58.7                  | 71.0                  |                          | 2.0                            | 66.4                        | 68.4                   |
| MEDIAN                  | 12.1                            | 57.0                  | 71.1                  |                          | 2.0                            | 66.7                        | 70.4                   |
| RANGE                   | 9.7                             | 34.8                  | 29.8                  |                          | 6.5                            | 25.4                        | 27.0                   |
be made between the early closing and the conscription polls. The high vote for 6 o'clock closing in the state electorates, which roughly correspond to the geographical area of the federal subdivisions, is shown in the next table.

### TABLE 4
RESULTS OF THE LIQUOR REFERENDUM IN SELECTED STATE ELECTORATES IN SYDNEY SUBURBS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Total vote (6 p.m. and 9 p.m. only)</th>
<th>% for 6 p.m. closing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dulwich Hill</td>
<td>7,998</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick</td>
<td>8,629</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>5,974</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bondi</td>
<td>7,216</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petersham</td>
<td>6,483</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>9,175</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>6,564</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>8,861</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryde</td>
<td>9,945</td>
<td>83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>5,533</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drummoyne</td>
<td>8,577</td>
<td>79.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>9,792</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosman</td>
<td>8,356</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlinghurst</td>
<td>4,977</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During October the call up of young men in their 'impressionable' years dramatised the fears of anxious parents. For instance, in the week 5 to 12 October over 23,000 young men in the metropolitan district reported for duty: Table 5 shows the distribution of the call up among metropolitan electorates. The decisions of magistrates like Smithers who dealt harshly with those applying for exemptions, helped to swing the doubtful to vote NO.¹

¹The exemption courts were located at the following magistrates' courts: Manly, North Sydney, Burwood, Ashfield, Kogarrah, Canterbury, Redfern, Balmain, Glebe, Paddington and Newtown; see SMH, 9 October 1916.
TABLE 5
CALL-UP, 5 TO 12 OCTOBER 1916

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>No. Reporting</th>
<th>Male turnout 28 October 1916</th>
<th>Call up 5-12 October as % of male turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Sydney</td>
<td>2,196</td>
<td>18,379</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sydney</td>
<td>2,579</td>
<td>14,053</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wentworth</td>
<td>2,522</td>
<td>19,009</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>2,261</td>
<td>17,633</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sydney</td>
<td>1,839</td>
<td>14,687</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Sydney</td>
<td>2,263</td>
<td>17,646</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalley</td>
<td>2,075</td>
<td>17,239</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang</td>
<td>2,155</td>
<td>19,565</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkes</td>
<td>2,487</td>
<td>23,625</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>1,566</td>
<td>21,152</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepean</td>
<td>1,538</td>
<td>22,236</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,481</strong></td>
<td><strong>205,224</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Calculated from SMH, 7-14 October 1916.

Class, age differences and family involvement shaped the aggregate vote in New South Wales; rural labour shortages and fears of venereal diseases among soldiers contributed to the NO victory. But conscription was not defeated by a single cause: many people were torn by indecision. Henry Fletcher, who voted NO, did not oppose the principle of conscription: the war situation did not seem to demand compulsion, for newspaper reports of the great battle around the Somme showed a string of Allied successes. Pro-conscriptionists were unable to convince enough people that the Great War had reached a critical point; anxieties and doubt favoured the anti-conscriptionists.

But the protagonists simplified the result. The victors hailed it as a triumph of the sovereign people over the

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1See Chapter 3, p.107.
omnipotence of the political establishment and its military censorship. Anti-conscription was a populist cause: 'When you come to think of it it was a great victory. Not only did we have all our life long opponents against us but our own "Leaders". The Press were never so aggressive. The Pulpit has never before fought in the open against us as it did this time. (the blood thirsty lot)', wrote Alexander McCallum. 'Money was poured out like water. The Military were used to coerce and cagole [sic]. The power of employer were used to intimidate and...the force of the Law and Censorship were used to gagg [sic] us Acts both Legal and illegal were committed in order to block the truth being told and through it all Hughes has proven himself to be the biggest liar that breathes.'

Equally the pro-conscriptionists attributed their defeat to the labour movement and the IWW. 'Unions have been weakened by the best of their men having gone to the fighting lines, leaving room for the less worthy to fall under the spell of the I.W.W.', declared Eleanor MacKinnon. J.D. Fitzgerald agreed; he believed that the unions were 'permeated and terrorised by militant I.W.W. agitators'.

On 1 November the coalminers went on strike for the principle of eight hours bank to bank. In the weeks that followed 25,000 to 30,000 people in New South Wales were thrown idle by coal shortages. The Prime Minister intervened. After three fruitless conferences with the miners, Mr Justice Edmunds was appointed to a special tribunal established under the War Precautions Act. On 8 December the miners' eight hours claim was recognised; two weeks later Edmunds raised the existing hewing rates by 15 per cent. But during November

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1 Letter from Alexander McCallum to Donald Cameron, 16 November 1916, Donald Cameron Papers, NL, MS.1005, Box 1.
2 DT, 30 October 1916.
3 Letter from J.D. Fitzgerald to John Burns, 31 October 1916, J.D. Fitzgerald papers, Dixson Library, MSQ 255/269-71.
4 The miners wanted the eight shifts to be reckoned from the time the first man left the surface to the time the last person on the same shift returned to the surface.
Holman was prepared to 'see the fight right through' if the miners did not return to work on the promise of amending legislation conceding the bank to bank principle. Hughes' intervention made the battle unnecessary; but Holman's mood foreshadowed growing intolerance of strikes: nine months later the success of the coalminers was to be singled out as a reason to justify the punishment of workmen involved in the great strike of 1917. It was alleged then that government passivity during November had stimulated the growth of industrial lawlessness, for 'the surrender of that occasion whetted the appetite of the revolutionaries'.

On 31 October the Legislative Assembly met after its adjournment during the conscription campaign. John Haynes pressed Holman for information on the rumoured coalition between the pro-conscription Labor members and the Liberals and the proposal to postpone the general elections: the Premier replied that he had made no offer to Wade. He announced the resignation of John Estell, the Minister for Labour and Industry and the Secretary for Mines. Arthur Griffith wrote to Holman on the same day: 'In view of your statement to me that you propose, along with some of your Colleagues, to join the Liberal Party and to introduce a Bill for the extension of the life of the present Parliament, I beg to inform you that I cannot give my support to any such arrangements.' The next day Ernest Durack, MLA for Bathurst, announced that the Labor (anti-conscriptionist) group had elected him as their leader. He gave notice that he would put

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1 Undated Memorandum re the Coal Strike from Holman to all Ministers (November 1916), NSW PDC, Box 7/4737, file B16/5437.
2 Argus, 10, 11 September 1917.
4 Ibid., p.2317.
5 Letter from Arthur Griffith to W.A. Holman, 31 October 1916, copy in J.D. Fitzgerald papers, Dixson Library, MSQ 255/283. Griffith added that he would resign his portfolios when Holman officially announced his intentions.
a motion of no-confidence in the government.\(^1\) The Assembly
was adjourned until the following Tuesday, 7 November.

In the days following Holman negotiated the coalition of
his followers with Wade's Liberals; two businessmen,
H.D. McIntosh and P.T. Taylor, helped to form the union.\(^2\) On
30 October Senator Gardiner had tried to prevent the Labor
split. He had urged that J.H. Catts ask the state Labor
Executive to withdraw their expulsion of the conscriptionists,
provided that they 'loyally support Labor party and oppose any
further attempt to bring in conscription this would prevent
coalition of state parties and enable reconstructed federal
government' to continue in office.\(^3\) But there could be no
hope of reconciliation: many in the labour movement welcomed
the loss of Holman. 'There is no split in the movement. It
is only a few Politicians who have broken away. The movement
was never more solid or united', reported Alexander McCallum.
'The places of those that go can easily be filled.'\(^4\)

Holman completed the union with his former political
opponents on 6 November. 'Conscriptionists both sides now
united to form National Government within State. Taking power
to postpone election for twelve months', he cabled to the
Acting Agent-General Coghlan. 'Universally felt election at
this moment might possibly return anti-conscriptionists
majority Government of comparative novices as all leaders both
sides were for conscription.' He added that the elections
would not necessarily be postponed for the whole period; a
'favourable opportunity' would be chosen to call the general
elections.\(^5\) But Holman was not so emphatic when he wrote to

\(^1\) NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1916, Vol.65, p.2363, 1
November 1916. See AW, 9 November 1916: eighteen Labor members
who had supported conscription were expelled.

\(^2\) Evatt, Australian Labour Leader, op.cit., p.417.

\(^3\) Telegram from Senator Gardiner to J.H. Catts, 30 October

\(^4\) Letter from Alexander McCallum to Donald Cameron, 16 November
1916, Donald Cameron papers, NL, MS.1005, Box 1.

\(^5\) Cable from W.A. Holman to Acting Agent-General, 6 November
1916, NSWPDC, Box 7/4725, file A16/6404.
his colleague George Black that same day: 'No final plan for what you call a coalition has been agreed upon.' He chided Black for his 'ambiguous attitude' on conscription; he had been a member of the Universal Service League, but he had not joined the conscription campaign. Accordingly, said Holman, 'it has not been possible to discuss the matter confidentially with you during the last two or three weeks'.

He put the situation to Black: 'The whole position is one of extraordinary difficulty. If I had chosen to act upon the individual and selfish lines that seem to have animated some members of the Cabinet, I had nothing else to do at this juncture but to appoint myself to the vacant Agent-Generalship for five years—go to London and leave my colleagues here to sink or swim. I am trying to do the best for everybody.' In April 1918 the final bargain of the coalition agreement had to be fulfilled; Holman told Fitzgerald that he would have to give up his leadership in the Legislative Council. 'I beg you to believe, my dear fellow, that it has cost me a very considerable pang to write these lines. This is, as far as I know, the very last of the obligations of that awful period of negotiation, & it is the most painful of all.'

On 7 November the Assembly met. David Storey set the mood: he branded the anti-conscriptionist Labor members as the 'German reserve party'. Holman announced that Griffith had resigned. For three days the Liberals listened to charge and counter-charge from both of the embittered Labor factions: of the thirty-three speakers, only two were Liberals. A third, John Baynes, was the only non-Labor politician to attack the proposed coalition: Holman's manoeuvres to retain office he

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1. Letter from W.A. Holman to George Black, 6 November 1916, George Black papers, ML, uncat. MS.256, Box 3.

2. Ibid.

3. Letter from W.A. Holman to J.D. Fitzgerald, 10 April 1918, J.D. Fitzgerald papers, Dixson Library, MSQ 257/199. Fitzgerald retained his position as Vice-President of the Executive Council until 30 July 1919.

declared, was another example of his 'continuous trickery'. Holman was the main target. 'It is not pleasant to find that a man whom you have idealised for twenty years, and whom you have believed to be 18-carat, is ready to go back on all his old convictions and to sell his self-respect for a mess of pottage', declared Captain Samuel Toombs, who spoke amid such an uproar that the Speaker wondered whether he could have made himself heard 'even with a megaphone'. James Dooley, MLA for Hartley, declared that Holman's ambition and domination had helped to provoke the split: 'We in the Labour movement have begun to realise that it is not from leaders,... kings, czars, emperors or kaisers that the people are ever going to get the inheritance that the world can give them.... I am here representing the working class movement.'

Conscription dominated the parliamentary conflict. Durack declared that his group would not support any pro-conscriptionist government. Dooley attacked Holman for his urging that the 'intellectual élite' should be prevented from enlisting. 'The great no-conscription campaign', he declared, 'has been fought and won because it was the people's fight, and has been fought against all the so-called leaders in Australia'. Patrick Minahan, MLA for Belmore declared: 'New South Wales saved Australia'. As for the Great War, he continued 'we are only indirectly involved'.

Pro-conscriptionist Arthur Griffith was one of the handful of independent-minded critics. He warned that the labour movement would be destroyed by 'internecine quarrels' should it continue its heresy hunting. Most of the Labor Executive, he said, had acted with 'good intentions'; but a minority had schemed 'so that they can get our seats'. He

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1 Ibid., Vol.66, p.2525, 8 November 1916.
2 Ibid., p.2520, 2522, 8 November 1916.
3 Ibid., p.2461, 7 November 1916. See also p.2462.
4 Ibid., Vol.65, p.2446, 7 November 1916.
5 Ibid., Vol.66, p.2465, 7 November 1916.
6 Ibid., p.2467.
then attacked the two coalescing parties which had battled over 'great principles' for twenty years: 'Ruskin said that where principles are involved compromise is apostasy.' He declared that Holman and Wade had failed to show how both the coalition and the abandonment of the elections 'will help the Empire to any extent to win the war'.\(^1\)

Holman defended his advocacy of conscription: 'I am, as the Premier of this State, one of its leading citizens, from whom others have a right to expect advice and guidance in a time of great national crisis.' Durack, he declared, was 'a mere puppet in the hands of an outside organisation'; and his group, controlled by the Labor party machine, 'compelled us to break away from them and look elsewhere for an alliance'. The National party would be based on the fundamental principles of Australian democracy: 'freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of action in parliamentary life; the control of the affairs of the State by the Government and not by a secret conclave'.\(^2\) C.G. Wade declared that there should be no disunity while the Great War raged. He referred to the 'menace' of the coal miners' strike; the Labor governments' policy of 'over-leniency' had been its cause: the failure to penalise strikers in the past had fostered 'a feeling of unrest and insubordination amongst some sections of the workers'. He urged that there be 'a combination of all parties which now stand for good government'. He argued that the 'intense bitterness' provoked by the conscription conflict would make a 'mockery' of an immediate general election: in the future 'the public mind will have calmed down, and the vote can be taken with safety'. In the meantime, 'higher things' had to be considered: 'The Empire comes first and then the Commonwealth.' Accordingly Wade amended Durack's motion, declaring that it

\(^1\) Ibid., 2500-5, 8 November 1916. See also views of Simon Hickey, Labor MLA for Alexandria, who agreed that Holman had the right of his conscience on the conscription question and questioned the right of the Labor Executive to be 'Inquisitorial'. But he declared that Holman should have retained his independence and not capitulated to their political opponents: ibid., pp.2495-7.

\(^2\) Ibid., Vol.55, pp.2446, 2460, 7 November 1916.
was not desirable to decide 'whether or not the Government possesses the confidence of this House': the time had come for the formation of a National party, because the 'State' was confronted with 'financial stringency, industrial disturbance, and, in some quarters, a growing and dangerous disregard for law and order'. The wrangle continued through the whole night of 9-10 November. At 11 a.m. Durack's motion was defeated by 21 votes to 52, John Haynes voted with the twenty Labor men. Wade's amendment was carried. The members adjourned until 14 November.

 Shortly after the vote had been taken, the Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland, sent a minute to the Premier saying that he would 'be glad to receive a formal intimation of Mr. Holman's resignation'. He made this demand because Wade had 'taken the business of the House' away from Holman, who had been supported by less than half of his former party. But he told the press that he had dismissed Holman from office. On Saturday, 11 November, the Premier discovered 'To the profound astonishment of myself, my Colleagues, & Mr. Wade there

1Ibid., Vol.66, pp.2483, 2486, 2488-94, 8 November 1916.

2NSW Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, session 1916, p.175. Among the twenty were 17 of the 18 who had proclaimed their opposition to conscription, see letter to the editor, SMH, 12 October 1916. The remaining three were Griffith, Thomas Brown (Lachlan) and G.T.C. Miller (Monaro). Voting against the Durack motion were 17 Holman Labor (including five ministers: Holman, Cann, Hall, Grahame, Ashford); two Labor independents (F.J. Page, G.R.W. McDonald; and 33 members of the Opposition. Prominent among the absentee members were John Estell (anti-conscriptionist; ex-minister); George Black (Colonial Secretary) and H.C. Hoyle, who had taken over Estell's portfolios on 31 October.

3Minute from Sir Gerald Strickland to W.A. Holman, 10 November 1916, Colonial Office Records 418/148, folio 395.

4This was to lead to Strickland's recall. See letter from W.A. Holman to Sir T.A. Coghlan, 14 November 1916, Colonial Office records, 418/163, folios 83-5. The dismissal announcement published in the press on 11 November Holman wrote 'we are informed confidentially from the newspaper office, was authorised' by Sir Gerald Strickland. See also despatch from Walter Long, Secretary of State for Colonies to Sir Gerald Strickland, 12 January 1917, Colonial Office Records, 418/148, folios 309-10: Long wrote 'you seem to me to have been guilty of a very grave error of judgment'. 
appeared in the morning press... the announcement that "Governor Dismisses Premier"... It caused a gigantic sensation throughout the State'.

But Holman did not intend to be deprived of power. After consulting his cabinet he visited the Governor. Earlier, on 8 November, Strickland had cabled the Secretary of State for Colonies: 'Parliament expire by effluxion of time 22nd December... Ministers are entertaining proposals for prolongation of life of Parliament.' As this course would require an Act of Parliament and be in breach of the constitution Strickland argued, he proposed to withhold his assent. When shown the cable that day, Holman had told the Governor that he had no constitutional means of deriving information other than from his ministers: no advice had been tendered. Thus on the Saturday Holman refused to resign. He repeated his argument: the Governor had not been told of the state of the parliamentary parties by his ministers.

The governor backed down. Later that day, at the suggestion of Strickland, Holman and Wade together returned to Government House. Both assured the Governor that they would cooperate to form a new ministry with all speed.

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2 Cable from Sir Gerald Strickland to Bonar Law, Secretary of State for Colonies, 8 November 1916, Colonial Office Records, 418/148, folios 250-1.

3 Minute from W.A. Holman to Sir Gerald Strickland, 8 November 1916, Colonial Office Records 418/148, folios 390-1.

4 Memorandum from W.A. Holman to Sir Gerald Strickland, 11 November 1916, Colonial Office Records 418/148, folio 274A.

5 Letter from W.A. Holman to Sir T.A. Coghlan, 14 November 1916, Colonial Office Records 418/163, folios 83-5. See also despatch from Sir Gerald Strickland to Secretary of State for Colonies, 14 November 1916, Colonial Office Records, 418/148, folios 271-4. See also Evatt, Australian Labour Leader, op.cit., pp.421-3; Evatt is wrong in claiming that Holman requested the Colonial Office to order Strickland to revoke his request for Holman's dismissal.
On 15 November Holman told the Assembly that Cann, Black and Hoyle had resigned. He announced the National ministry: himself as Premier, and four other former Labor ministers, Hall, Fitzgerald, Ashford and Graehe; six former Liberals, G.W. Fuller, J. Garland MLC, R.T. Ball, A.G.F. James, David Storey, and J.C.L. Fitzpatrick; and last, G.S. Beby of the Progressive party, who, not holding a seat, was nominated to the Legislative Council. Wade was to be made Agent-General; Fuller took his place as leader of the former Liberals. Seven of the twelve were lawyers; they were dubbed the 'legal brigade' by J.P. Cochran MLA for Darling Harbour. The Nationalist government was 'diametrically opposed to the democratic instincts of the country' warned John Haynes. 'The legal mind is trained to administer the law severely. There cannot be much progress and freedom under the fetters of the law.'

On Friday, 17 November at 4 a.m., the standing orders were suspended. The Legislative Assembly Continuance Bill was introduced. The debate, with breaks for meals, raged until evening. At midnight debate was gagged. During the five hours following, in division after division, the bill was pushed through all its stages. The text was cabled to London. Strickland, still objecting to the bill, was ordered by the

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1 Cann was made a Commissioner for Railways and Tramways; Black refused to enter the National coalition, but wrote: 'I feel that my limit of endurance has been reached with regard to exactions made by [the Labor] conference and by the executive'; see his press release, PT, 6 November 1916.


3 Ibid., p.2830.

4 Cable from Sir Gerald Strickland to Secretary of State for Colonies, 17 November 1916, Colonial Office Records, 418/148,folios 316-7.

5 See Cable from Strickland to Secretary of State for Colonies, 12 November 1916, and despatch, 14 November 1916; Colonial Office Records, 418/148, folios 268-9, 298-300.
Secretary of State to grant his assent. 1 On 13 December the twenty-third parliament adjourned. This was to be its last day.

Following the defeat of the conscription referendum, Captain P.H. Coates, organising secretary of the New South Wales Recruiting Committee, suggested a list of measures which might help in the enlisting of volunteers. 'The great difficulty' of the recruiters, he believed, was that attitudes to the Great War had been changed by the conscription conflict and the political schism. He advocated that 'a spiritual war atmosphere must be created so that the public mind will become obsessed with the one paramount subject of national interest - the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion'. 2 Holman took his suggestions and those of others and submitted a memorandum to his cabinet on 7 February 1917. People were 'quite unaware' that the war situation had altered he wrote. To counter this he advocated 'a well-organised censorship' of the press. He suggested how this could be done. 3 More importantly, he advocated 'economic conscription': all men working on railway duplication who were 'unmarried and of military age should be dismissed'. This should be contrived

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1See Colonial Office minute, 18 November 1916, Colonial Office Records, 418/148, folio 315. See also folios 248-9, 253; Bonar Law had cabled Strickland on 9 November 1916, in response to his cable of 8 November, telling the Governor that if the question of prolonging the parliament should arise, then he was to grant his assent. See also folio 138, containing Holman's cable to the Agent-General, 19 September 1916, warning him that postponement of the elections would be necessary. Coghlan, who took over as the Acting Agent-General, visited the Colonial Office on 7 November to discover its attitude, and was 'well satisfied' with his discussions; see folios 243-6. For the Colonial Office's view of the legal position, see folios 248-9, 264-5, 297.

2'Suggestions for the Furtherance of Proposed New Recruiting Campaign', by Captain P.H. Coates, 27 November 1917 [sic]. The date is a misprint; the internal evidence of the report, and the accompanying memorandum by C.H. Hay, Secretary of Premier's Department show that Coates' report was made on 27 November 1916. NSWPDC, Box 7/4781, file B18/520.

3See Memo. on Recruiting, 7 February 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4781, file B18/520. This was subsequently published in NSW Parl. Papers, session 1917-18, Vol.2, p.1000.
'not necessarily simultaneously, but by degrees'. Similarly, he suggested that private employers could also plan to rid themselves of single, military-aged men and to replace them with boys, women, married men and men over the military age. Holman again had discovered that attitudes to the Great War were not as whole-hearted as he and others had assumed in August 1914. The democratic method of the referendum having failed, he turned to coercion.

Holman was a British Australian conscious of his status as leader and with aspirations for a place in British politics. During the Great War he had lost his primary interest in Australia; as a Labor politician he had also lost his party constituency. Not all shared his attitudes. While admitting to being British, the independent Australian Britons were alive to the interests of Australia. The proposed Imperial Conference, accompanied by suggestions for an imperial federation, sharpened their attitudes. Conscription had provoked a battle over the status and responsibilities of Australia within the Empire. Anti-conscriptionists had appealed to national self-interest during the referendum campaign; their opponents had accused them of disloyalty. Anti-conscriptionists took the lead in repudiating proposals for a closer union. The Anti-conscription League declared: 'it is desirable to make known in England that any proposals for Imperial Federation involving the slightest surrender of Australia's self-governing powers in return for a voice in the Empire's foreign policy would be disastrous to Australian ideals'. Robert Cruickshank declared that when looking at the debt 'we owe the British people, we must also, in fairness to ourselves, remember the quid pro quo': Australians provided profits for British investors, paid interest on huge loans,

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1 Ibid. Holman did not use the words 'economic conscription'; he referred to his policy as 'economic factors'.

2 Ibid.

3 See for instance, letter to the editor from Professor G.A. Wood, 'Should We Have Imperial Federation?' AW, 18 January 1917.

4 Anti-Conscription League Minutes, 3 January 1917.
gave preference to British goods and provided armies for its wars.1

Cruickshank, like others, feared that closer political union with Britain would swamp the political democracy of Australia. He observed also that the imperial federationists were also men 'who have no real sympathy with working class ideals'.2 Others associated imperial federation with the pro-conscription movement. O.J. Doyle of Darlinghurst declared that such a union would destroy the 'fruits of organised Labor's effort, from Eureka to the Conscription Referendum'.3 A writer in the Worker declared that had conscription been carried, 'the tender human relation of mother and daughter, existing between England and Australia, would have been changed to that of Empress and serf'. Imperialism was the foe of democracy: 'Just as the 'Red Plague' saps the physical vitality of man, so does Imperialism destroy the moral life of a community'.4 The Political Labor League Executive opposed imperial federation.5 The Industrial Section, which had several members on the executive of the No-Imperial Federation League,6 objected to W.M. Hughes representing Australia 'at any Imperial conference'.7 Henry Fletcher observed that politicians like Hughes had been overwhelmed by their deference to Britain: 'English air is bad for local Democrats,

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2 Ibid.
3 Letter to the editor from O.J. Doyle, AW, 22 February 1917.
4 The Red Plague of Imperialism', AW, 30 November 1916.
5 AW, 7 December 1916.
6 J.M. Power was league president; C.C. Lazzarini, L.J. O'Hara and O.D. Zieman were vice-presidents, Lucy Sullivan and Mrs Kate Zieman were league committee members. Lazzarini was a member of the 1916 PLL Executive; he became Labor MHA for Marrickville in March 1917. J.M. Power was elected to the 1917 PLL Executive. All the above attended meetings of the Industrial Section in 1916. The secretary of the league was W.J. Miles, who was also secretary of the NSW Rationalist Society.
7 AW, 25 January 1917.
as witness Republican Dibbs. We should have some law against it: - "No Australian visiting the Mother Land to be allowed to return as a politician". The cause of the No-Imperial Federation League also attracted isolationists. Elections interrupted the controversy.

On 13 February the Nationalist Cabinet decided to call an early election. J.D. Fitzgerald wrote to Holman making suggestions for his policy speech. 'The Cabinet policy is to imbue the people of the State with the idea that their social destinies are in their own hands', he said, 'and that they must co-operate with the organised governmental forces to secure all the results of a true co-operative Commonwealth.' The integrationist views of the former Labor man survived; but the acceptance of social conflict now shaped the mood of the dominant groups in the Labor party. Holman delivered the Nationalist policy at Gundagai on 15 February: the general elections were to be held before the end of March.

The Labor party was caught unprepared. Durack suddenly resigned. John Storey, MLA for Balmain, was elected leader. Labor strove to profit from the strong anti-conscription vote. Their propaganda leaflets ended with the words: 'Vote for the Labor No-Conscription Candidate.' One leaflet entitled: 'TIME: declared: 'THIS STATE ELECTION IS THE BEGINNING OF A GIGANTIC CONSPIRACY TO WELD THE SHACKLES OF CONSCRIPTION ON THE LEGS AND ARMS OF THE WORKERS.' Holman's concern for 'the intellectual élite' was raised again: 'Thousands of workers

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1Letter from Henry Fletcher to George Waite, 25 September 1916, George Waite papers, ML, uncat. MS.208, Box 1.

2Letters from W.A. Holman to R.D. Meagher and Daniel Levy, 13 February 1917, NSNPDC, Box 7/4755, file B17/1181. Holman wrote that 'the idea has been under discussion for nearly a fortnight'. He said to Meagher 'I hope we shall both come well out of our troubles'.

3Letter from J.D. Fitzgerald to W.A. Holman, 13 February 1917, J.D. Fitzgerald papers, Dixson Library, MSQ 256/127-9.

4SMH, 16, 17 February 1917.

5Ibid., 21 February 1917.

6Copy in V. Molesworth papers, ML, uncat. MS.243, Box 7.
have been thrown out of employment for no other reason than that they have refused to be coerced.' Two 'typical' cases of Nationalist policy were cited. 'The Humble Worker': Daryll Byrne, 22, sacked from the Tramway Department, supports sister and paralysed father; 'The Society Lawyer', Ralph Vivian Hodgson, appointed member of the Railway Appeal Board, annual salary £750, single man of military age.1 'The enemy are circulating a leaflet', wrote Holman: he ordered his secretary to discover any facts about Byrne and Hodgson which could be used as counter-propaganda.2

'It is needless for me to say that I believe this Election will be carried out Bitterly & from Experience of the Dirty unscrupulous tactics of the P.L.I. & party I appeal to you don't throw away any chance keep them at arm's Length and fight them every Inch', advised a Nationalist supporter from Erskineville.3 C. McArthur, an official at the Tuncurry Prisoners' Afforestation Camp denounced the 'irresponsible "Clique" of red raggers' in the Labor party. A self-admitted supporter of the labour movement since 1884, he had voted No in October 1916. But he declared that a National government was required: 'all political differences of opinion should be laid aside and every loyal minded man or woman should do their utmost in supporting such a Party, at a time when Britain is at death grips with the greatest Powers in the World: any person sharing a different opinion cannot be termed loyal'.4 Nationalist propaganda appealed to these attitudes. Their propaganda made the election a battle over who were the most trustworthy patriots. Labor candidates were stigmatised as flagrant collaborators of the revolutionary IWW, which had been declared an illegal organisation by the federal Unlawful

1 'Labor leaflet Holman's Policy of Starvation, in Anti-Conscription Papers, Dixson Library, P91/49.
2 Memorandum from W.A. Holman to C. Hay, 6 March 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4755, file B17/1261.
3 Letter from G.E. Douglas to G.W. Fuller, 8 March 1917, NSW Colonial Secretary's Department, E/17/86, NSW Archives 5315.24.
4 Letter from C. McArthur, to W.A. Holman, 16 March 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4756, file B17/1614.
Associations Act of December 1916. Percy Brookfield was one of the main targets. He had been president of the Labor Volunteer Army at Broken Hill during the conscription campaign; he was released from gaol on New Year's day after serving a one month sentence.\(^1\) He was endorsed as the Labor candidate for the Sturt by-election on 3 February. Quickly he became notorious for his sympathy with the imprisoned IWW twelve, his criticisms of the war, and his cries about the red flag of the working class. The Nationalists grabbed their chance: 'The opportunity is unique for the Premier to hit hard & get on the right side with the public', wrote a jubilant member of Holman's staff.\(^2\) During the general election Brookfield's name was employed in Nationalist propaganda: E.L.L. and I.W.W. The Broken Hill Baby Proves the Alliance. Another declared \(\text{WHICH? A NATIONAL PARTY OR THE P.L.L.-I.W.W.?}\)\(^3\)

Polling day was 24 March. The Nationalist party won 52 seats, Labor 33; the remaining five were distributed among Independent Labor and Independent Nationalist one each, and Independents three. The distribution of the vote was not as marked as the disparity in the seats won by each party. The Nationalists won 47.4 per cent and Labor 42.9 per cent of the total valid vote. Despite the split and its subsequent disorganisation, the Labor share of the valid vote compared with the 1913 figures, had fallen by only 3.7 per cent.\(^4\)

Among the new Labor members were Michael Burke, J.W. Doyle, C.C. Lazzarini, W.J. McKell, J.D. Mutch and W.J. O'Brien, all members of the Industrial Section and the 1916 Labor Executive.

\(^1\) \text{AW, 25 January 1917.}

\(^2\) Undated and unsigned commentary on reports of Brookfield's preselection in \text{SMH, FT, 31 January 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4753, file B17/651.}

\(^3\) Copies in J.H. Catts papers.

\(^4\) Hughes and Graham, \text{Australian Government and Politics, op. cit.}, pp.441-3. Labor had contested 85 seats in 1913 and 79 in 1917.
Holman left for London in mid-April. G.W. Fuller, MLA for Wollondilly, became the Acting-Premier. The official reason for Holman's departure was to help secure loans and to assist in the reorganisation of the Agent-General's Office and the Immigration Department shared jointly with Victoria. But it is likely that he was more interested in gaining entry into British politics.

Since November 1915 Holman had tried to secure an official invitation to visit Britain. He and his Agent-General found several reasons for leaving Australia: as the representative of the 'States' views of Australia' at a proposed Imperial conference; as a member of a second proposed munitions campaign; as the representative of the Australian Irish on the Home Rule question; as a member of a proposed Imperial conference on the settlement of returned soldiers; and as an organiser for the War Office. Shortly before he died, Agent-General Wise wrote: 'If you entertain a desire to enter public life in Great Britain, your presence as Premier of New South Wales at the Peace Congress would give you a position

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1 See telegram from W.A. Holman, Ballarat, to Secretary, Premier's Department, 18 April 1917; telegram from G.W. Fuller to W.A. Holman aboard Salsette, Fremantle, 20 April 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4757, files B17/1959, 17/1911. Second ballots for the general elections were held on 31 March, 7 and 14 April.

2 Circular signed by W.A. Holman and G.W. Fuller, 9 April 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4756, file B17/1797.

3 Cable from W.A. Holman to Agent-General, 13 November 1915, NSWPDC, Box 7/4728, file B16/840.

4 Cables from Agent-General to Holman, 22 December 1915, 2 February 1916, NSWPDC, Box 7/4728, file B16/840.


6 Cable from Holman to Frederick Flowers, 13 March 1916, NSWPDC, Box 7/4728, file B16/840. Flowers was visiting London at this time.

7 Cable from Holman to Agent General, 8 June 1916, NSWPDC, Box 7/4728, file B16/840.
which could not be obtained in any other way.\footnote{Private and confidential letter from B.R. Wise to Holman, 29 August 1916. Holman met with the anti-conscriptionist Labor Premier T.J. Ryan in Brisbane during the conscription campaign to discuss his representing the states at the European Peace Congress; see letter from Holman to Ryan, 5 October 1916; telegram from Ryan to Holman, 13 October 1916; NSWPDC, Box 7/4728, file B16/940.} Despite constant meetings with Lloyd George, Bonar Law and John Redmond, the leader of the Irish in the House of Commons, the much prized invitation could not be obtained. Bound for England in May 1917, Holman cabled for H.D. McIntosh to 'secure advance English publicity before my arrival also complimentary account of my services and work'.\footnote{Cable from W.A. Holman, Colombo, to Acting-Secretary, Premier's Department, 4 May 1917. The cable was to be passed to McIntosh, who was to cable London and the Agent-General for the publicity.} After his departure the Nationalists appointed twenty-one Legislative Councillors. Among the nominees were H.D. McIntosh, P.T. Taylor, H.Y. Braddon, William Brooks and Professor J.B. Peden.\footnote{Other nominees were former Labor men who had been defeated during the state election: Black, McGowan, Meagher; and the former Liberal Thomas Waddell. See letter from T.I. Wallas, clinical chemist, to G.W. Fuller, 7 May 1917, protesting that the appointments of Meagher and McIntosh were 'an insult to the decent life of the community'. NSWPDC, Box 7/4758, file B17/2131.} Hughes led the federal Nationalists to victory on 5 May. Alienation provoked by the conscription conflict was sharpened by the two elections, but hatred was to be intensified during 1917.
CHAPTER 9

THE GREAT STRIKE, AUGUST-OCTOBER 1917

Over four of the seven months from early September 1916 to early May 1917 political energies in New South Wales were consumed by bitter controversies. At the end of the period the state and federal polls had proven Labor to be electorally isolated, despite its affiliation with the popular vote in the conscription referendum. But the battles had created a divisive political mood: the motives of Labor, and particularly the trade unionists who had come to dominate the party, were branded as either unpatriotic at best, or at worst, traitorous. The Nationalists, under Acting-Premier G.W. Fuller, wished to improve the war effort within the State: industrial unrest was uppermost in their minds. The annual incidence of strikes was increasing: New South Wales had the Lion's share: 64, 70 and 76 per cent of the Australian total strikes in each of the years 1913 to 1915. The official total of strikes during 1916 appeared in early July 1917: they revealed a 41.9 per cent jump above the 1915 figure for Australia. Again most of the strikes occurred in New South Wales: the number had risen from 272 in 1915 to 336 in 1916, 66 per cent of the

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2 Commonwealth Labour and Industrial Branch Report, Nos 5 to 7.
The upward trend aroused alarm. 'The Industrial position is becoming very critical. The 'direct action' crowd seem to be getting complete control of everything', wrote G.S. Beeby, the Minister for Labour and Industry, on 20 June 1917. 'There have been no general stoppages of work, but some of the disputes which have arisen have been on matters which even a couple of years ago would not have been accepted as sufficient cause for a strike.'

The industrial situation was volatile: just as they had stigmatised the Labor party for being infected by the IWW and with IWWism, the Nationalists blamed political agitators for the spirit of industrial unrest. But save for a relatively small group of left-wing political sympathisers, the IWW were outcasts. In mid-July an angry mob of three thousand fought with police in an attempt to smash into the IWW headquarters in Sydney: a rumour had circulated that a returned soldier had been 'stripped of his badges, and brutally kicked' by IWW men.

The Great War was unsettling. Arthur Rae believed that it would end with a general European revolution which could spread to other continents. 'The mountains of debt will make such a crushing burden for this & untold generations that absolute Repudiation will be the only alternative to perpetual slavery...but there are so many vested interests & so many flunkeys to work & vote & fight for them, that only civil war is likely to bring about the relief sought,' he told George Waite. 'The throne is the symbol of class & special privilege

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1 DT, 6 July 1917.

2 Letter from G.S. Beeby to W.A. Holman, 20 June 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4715, file A16/853.

3 Notable among the sympathisers was H.E. Boote, the editor of the Worker, who denounced IWW ideas. However, after the conviction of the twelve IWW men in December 1916, he fought a prolonged campaign for their release. At the June 1917 PILL Conference, H.L. Denford of the ARTSA, successfully moved that a committee of six be appointed to collect evidence for a petition calling for a Royal Commission to investigate the cases of the IWW prisoners.

4 DT, 16 July 1917.
and the apex of the whole system of aristocracy, snobbocracy & Bureaucracy, which makes cover for the plutocratic pirates and their ill gotten plunder. Therefore the lot must go together & a clean sweep is the only thing which can wake up the slumbering manhood and restore the lost dignity of our Race.' But revolutionary talk made some people afraid. In July Mr H. Giles SM fined Percy Brookfield, the radical Labor MIA for Sturt, £50 for declaring at Broken Hill: 'I will never spill a drop of my blood for a Union Jack. The only flag I will spill a drop of blood for is the red flag.' The welcome to the Russian revolution given by the June Labor conference nourished anxiety: it implied a wish to use force to achieve similar ends. The revolutionary movement in Russia, wrote W.F. Ahearn in the Worker of 21 June, had 'for its purpose the overthrow of Capitalism and the instituting of a Socialist Republic'. The conference's welcome was written into the preamble of its contentious peace proposals, although the nominal help of out-of-date sentiments expressed by the Herald was incorporated as an expedient to dull some of the public revulsion: 'We, to quote the Sydney Morning Herald of 18th April, 1917, "rejoice over the revolution in Russia", and congratulate the people of that country upon their efforts to abolish despotic power and class privileges. There was nothing particularly exceptional in this endorsement of democracy; but several speakers, while supporting the proposals, argued for the necessity to end the war by popular action. 'The Labour movement should come out and oppose the

1Letter from Arthur Rae to George Waite, 20 May 1917, George Waite papers, NL, uncat. MS.208, Box 2. Rae was one of the Labor Senate candidates beaten at the poll on 5 May.

2SMH, 27 July 1917. Brookfield told the Assembly: 'I said I would not spill a drop of my blood for the Union Jack...but there was a proviso - while the Government allowed returned soldiers to starve.' See NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1917-18, Vol.67, p.105, 18 July 1917.

3AM, 21 June 1917.

4DT, 5 June 1917; AM, 14 June 1917.
war', declared H.L. Denford of the Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association (ARTSA), 'just as the workers of England and Russia were doing'. W. Davies, MLA for Wollongong, urged that the Labor party 'do anything in its power to stop the slaughter now taking place'. A former member of the IWW and of the Tramway Employees' Union, now newly-elected member for Surry Hills, A.W. Buckley, declared his willingness 'to go as far as the Russians', only that the labour movement had insufficient power to do so. A.C. Willis, the Welsh-born secretary of the Australasian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation, declared that 'the people should show that they could not stand the war any longer'.

Militancy at the conference intensified political mistrust. The party, transformed by the split and its two electoral defeats, nursed sufficient political animosity to make it seem dangerous to alarmists obsessed with the need for national unity. The militant Industrial Section, itself a cause of conflict within the conference, used its backstairs influence to capture virtually all the executive positions in the league for the second year in succession. Strong factions tried to restrict the power and influence of its politicians, who were led in the state parliament by the moderate John Storey. Cynicism towards politicians for their social and economic isolation from the experiences of the working classes, and a crude, inflexible conception of the democratic 'will' of the conference inspired the 1917 endeavour to assign politicians duties but no rights.

Not only was there a strong tendency to discount the role of politicians: there was an inclination to reject parliamentary action. This shift was demonstrated by the growth of syndicalism within several mass unions. 'Labor has placed too much power on the political arm of the movement', declared the mid-1917 report of the Labor Council, 'and not enough on the industrial.' The Worker developed the point

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1 Ibid.

2 See AW, 14 June 1917: by 119 votes to 20, politicians were excluded from membership of the PLL Executive.
more explicitly in its edition of 2 August: 'Even with the Tories in office, there is nothing - except the workers' indifference - to prevent the governmental centre of gravity being shifted from Parliament House to the Union offices.' But others believed that the party membership was the impediment to achieving Labor objectives: 'In the past the Labor party had been a very respectable middle class party..., E.J. Kavanagh told a Labor election rally in May. 'Now we are going to build up a straight-out working class party.'

Following the 1916 conscription battle, the Worker increased its political influence. Henry Boote was welcomed by the president of the PLL conference as 'Australia's foremost philosopher'. He was given an enthusiastic ovation from the delegates. But his campaign for the release of the TMW twelve brought him into conflict with authority. The Premier's publicity officer urged the Crown Solicitor, J.V. Tillett, to investigate each of Boote's articles on the twelve. But Tillett replied that 'the man Boote' could not be prosecuted. Such writings had been common for a century he wrote: 'They are in the main the fanatical outpourings of the ill-balanced journalists who cater for certain of the lower classes; the average decent man does not read them.'

While sections of the labour movement were thinking about peace, many were still engrossed in winning the Great War. But the unpredictable nature of the struggle aroused apprehension: 'The feeling of despondency about the war is

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1AW, 2 August 1917.
2DT, 4 May 1917.
3AW, 14 June 1917.
4Minute by Publicity Officer, Premier's Department, 23 June 1917; letter from J.V. Tillett, Crown Solicitor, to Under-Secretary, Premier's Department, 2 July 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4744, file A17/4160.
5See also Minutes of the Anti-Conscription League, ML, A.1523. At its regular weekly meetings in 1917 several motions relating to ending the war were passed. For instance, 16 May 1915: the meeting declared its 'emphatic opinion' that the Australian and allied nations engaged in the 'European suicidal war' should make 'peace without annexation' the basis for 'immediate' negotiations to end the war.
pretty considerable here', Beeby wrote from Sydney to Holman in June.\(^1\) Dr J. B. Nash MLC was awed by the magnitude of the struggle: 'This is the first time in the history of the world that there has been a war which has involved entire peoples; in which every individual in a nation must be a soldier.'\(^2\) The war seemed to have reached a stalemate; this was given recognition by the publication of Pope Benedict's peace note in mid-August. As Donald Mackinnon, Director-General of Recruiting, put it: 'The allies were not winning. The present hour was the darkest in the Empire's history.'\(^3\) Events seemed to back his alarm. The British fleet was immobilised in the North Sea guarding an equally immobile German fleet. In late January 1917 German submarines had begun an unrestricted offensive that sank neutral and allied ships alike. The Russian military 'steam roller' had collapsed on the eastern front and the growing internal chaos following the March revolution made further military revival doubtful.

In mid-June German aircraft bombed London in daylight, causing five hundred civilian casualties. The one bright spot was the arrival in France of the first division of United States troops during June. On 31 July 1917, Sir Douglas Haig began the massive Third Battle of Ypres. Soldiers named this battle Passchendaele. As the magnitude of this offensive became apparent during August, so anger against the strikers became more impassioned. Their action was seen as analogous to the revolutionary ferment in Russia, both for its impact on society and its effect on the war effort. The Russian revolution, the symbol of social collapse was being imitated in Australia: on 4 August at the war anniversary celebrations Fuller stigmatised the strikers as being 'equally as disloyal and equally as cowardly as those Russians who dropped their arms and fled before the enemy'.\(^4\)

\(^1\) Letter from G.S. Beeby to W.A. Holman, 20 June 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4715, file A16/853.


\(^3\) SMH, 7 August 1917.

\(^4\) Ibid., 6 August 1917. Speech at the Sydney Town Hall.
After the victory of the federal Nationalists in May the conscription controversy was raised once again. In early June, Joseph Cook, Minister for the Navy, informed the Governor General during a private conversation that he favoured another conscription referendum immediately.\(^1\) Strong public agitation for conscription revived after the Nationalist election victories. Sir William Irvine, an influential conservative member of the federal Nationalist party, who had tried to make conscription the primary issue during the May election, pressed for its adoption in an address to the Sydney Central Methodist Mission.\(^2\) The Associated Chamber of Manufactures meeting in Sydney 'expressed regret' over the conscription defeat in October, and vigorously applauded a delegate who declared his strong support for conscription.\(^3\) On 2 August, the federal Nationalist party arranged for a special meeting to discuss the question of a second conscription referendum. Several members held 'that the Russian situation is a sufficient menace to the safety of the Empire to justify another appeal to the people'.\(^4\)

Alarmed by the pro-conscription revival the labour movement planned defensive measures: it seemed that conscription would be summarily enforced under the power of the War Precautions Act. The Labor Council appointed an anti-conscription committee to consider counter-moves. It met in mid-June; several unions not affiliated with the Council also sent delegates.\(^5\) They planned in camera. Retaliatory strikes against conscription by government decree were still

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\(^1\)Personal despatch from Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson to Walter Long, 4 June 1917, Novar papers, N2, MS.696/923.

\(^2\)DT, 21 May 1917.

\(^3\)Ibid., 1 June 1917.

\(^4\)Argus, 3 August 1917.

\(^5\)Labor Council of NSW, General Meeting Minutes, 31 May 1917. The anti-conscription committee met on 14 June. Unaffiliated unions represented were the Australasian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation (A.C. Willis and four others), AWU (Western Branch), AWU Industrial Branch (formerly the RWGLA), the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and four other unions.
being planned when the great strike began. The Council minute books were later seized in a police raid. The clandestine planning among unions which were also on strike was declared to be 'ample evidence' that the great strike itself was a political conspiracy. Delegates at the Labor conference also feared conscription. Conference, on the motion of H.L. Denford, instructed the party executive to prepare for the onslaught: 'conscription is not dead'.

The stockpiling of coal under Commonwealth government contract at the northern collieries excited speculation. 'The threat of conscription is being made more boldly than ever', declared the Worker in June: '...is industrial trouble expected in the near future?' The Governor-General declared that a general strike was threatened if conscription was enforced: 'The Government has been quietly storing coal for such a contingency but a legend chalked on a coal dump announcing that "this coal is to carry conscription" suggests that the suspicions of the workers are aroused.'

Rank and file stoppages took place at the northern pits in reaction to the rising stacks of coal. Union leaders were 'impotent' in calming the restlessness reported the Telegraph.

But middle class people were becoming more angered at the increase in strikes: they urged that punitive measures be used by the Nationalists. Irish-born Sir William McMillan, merchant, formerly the New South Wales Colonial Treasurer and

1 The anti-conscription committee elected an executive 'to deal with all matters' related to conscription. The members of the ten man executive were J. Woods (Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union); A.C. Willis (ACSEF); B.E. Judd (Municipal and Shire Employees' Union); R. Corcoran (Boilermakers' Society); C. Last (AWU); W. O'Connor (Coal Lumpers Union); T. Smith (Federated Seamen's Union); T. Furse (AMIEU); A. Edwards (AWU Industrial Branch); Connolly (Trolley Draymen and Carters' Union). Nearly all these unions went on strike during August. See Labor Council of NSW, special anti-conscription meeting Minutes, 14 June 1917.

2 DT, 6 June 1917. Denford declared that 'Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty'.

3 Personal despatch from Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson to Walter Long, 23-25 June 1917, Novar papers, NL, MS.696/927.

4 DT, 3, 4 July 1917.
later a federal politician, urged that 'the new political combination' use the opportunity 'for the complete cleansing of our State departments' as there had been an 'absolute defiance of discipline in all parts of the public service'.

As an economic individualist he attacked the former Labor governments for their weakness and partisanship: they had 'demoralized the working classes'. He claimed that the 'productive power' of Australia would rise by 20 per cent if war-time strikes were prevented: 'Are we to have a united cabinet determined at all costs to lift this country out of the industrial depths to which it has sunk, fearless of all consequences?'. His advice was directed at the conservative wing of the Nationalists, who, as former Liberals, were at that time formally disbanding the New South Wales Liberal party machine prior to its incorporation within the existing structure of the Nationalist party. His opinions were shared by others. A.K. Trethowan MLC hoped that a 'united front' would be held against war-time strikes: 'The official Labor party having been beaten at the polls, would undoubtedly turn their energies in another direction.' He told the annual Farmers and Settlers' Association conference that the defeated party would provoke 'the largest industrial crisis Australia had known in the very near future'. Businessmen hated strikes: self-made employers were particularly angered. A member of the Country Traders' Association told a meeting of the City and Suburban Shopkeepers' Association: 'The unionists are just about the dizzy limit. We must see that our rights are not further trampled on.'

1 Letter to the editor from [Sir] William McMillan, DT, 10 July 1917.

2 Presidential address to the FSA conference, DT, 9 July 1917. Over 300 delegates were reported present.

3 DT, 19 July 1917. See also statement made by Mr Williamson to the Master Builders' Association: 'There is now more industrial unrest in this country than every before, despite the immense energy and enormous sums of money spent in industrial processes.' See DT, 16 May 1917. See DT, 13 April 1915: the MBA had an appeal pending in the Privy Council in an attempt to overthrow the Federal Arbitration Court award given to the Federated Builders' Labourers' Union.
W.W. Forwood told the Manufacturers' conference, 'the past twelve months have been the most worrying year that Australian manufacturers have ever had to put up with.'\(^1\) He was also exasperated by 'go slowism'. He reviled the 'sneak thief, the animal who agrees to work for a certain wage per day, and consistently robs his employer by deliberately loafing'.\(^2\) Cabinet ministers sympathised. Annoyed at the continual stoppages for higher wages in the meat industry Beeby declared: 'if the revolutionary element in trades unionism persisted in its present tactics the community would have to face it, and see it right through.'\(^3\)

Earlier Beeby had told the manufacturers that they needed to 'break down the bitter class prejudices which had arisen in recent years': the interests of wage-earners and employers were not 'antagonistic'.\(^4\) Others also held a co-operative view of social integration. Mr Justice H.B. Higgins, whose only son had been killed in 1916,\(^5\) spoke to the Millions Club on 'The Promotion of Better Relations Between Capital and Labour'.\(^6\) All employers, he said, should encourage unions to discuss 'any minor grievance' to prevent it becoming a 'festerling sore': industrial unrest was caused by the workers having 'no say whatever as to the conditions of the factory or workshop in which they spend most of their

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\(^1\) Presidential address to the Associated Chamber of Manufactures of Australia, Sydney, DT, 30 May 1917.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) DT, 14 June 1917. Beeby alleged that some unspecified unions were less interested in improving work conditions as 'in enforcing a serious conflict between employer and workmen'. Beeby told the Newcastle Labor Council that the strike weapon 'should only be used on great provocation'. Ibid.

\(^4\) Ibid., 1 June 1917. Address to the Associated Chamber of Manufactures of Australia.


\(^6\) DT, 2 June 1917. Present at the address to the club were G.S. Beeby, J.D. Fitzgerald, Professor J.B. Peden, Professor R.F. Irvine, William Brooks, Sir Albert Gould, and J.W. Doyle, PLL President and newly-elected Labor MLA for Phillip.
waking hours'. ¹ Employers should remember fundamental aspects of industrial relations Higgins told them: 'employees are human beings with human nerves and human needs'. As the cost of living had gone up 'by over 50 per cent.' in 1916, it was 'futile to complain of abnormal wages'; for they were fighting an 'abnormal war'. ² Higgins' humanitarianism was lost amid the passions of the times. Strikes and calls for peace originated from the labour movement: both conflicted with the commitment of the pro-war idealists. The Australian Manufacturers' Journal of 1 August 1917 declared that the community must 'squash our own soi-disant pacifists by any and every means': the success of their 'malevolent activities' would permit 'a renewal of the bloody conflict' with Germany in later years. ³

The ready explanation for those hurt by price rises was exploitation: 'profiteers' were capitalising on the war. Frustration at such an elusive phenomenon provoked industrial action to secure relief: arbitration courts and wages boards had failed to provide financial compensation. On the eve of the great strike Melbourne waterside workers refused to load foodstuffs needed for war purposes until food prices had returned to their pre-war level. ⁴ Discontent simmered in New South Wales during June and July. Upset over a recent award, members of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association (FEDFA) at Cobar threatened 'serious trouble'.⁵


²Ibid., pp.6-9. Higgins also delivered an address to the WEA of NSW on 21 April 1917, entitled Toleration. He wrote: 'if there is one thing in British principles of freedom which we ought to cherish more than any other it is tolerance for minorities', p.3. A copy of this exists in George Waite papers, NL, uncat. MS.208, Box 3.

³Australian Manufacturers' Journal, Vol.1, No.2, 1 August 1917, p.33. The monthly journal was the organ of the NSW Chamber of Manufactures. A.A.C. Cocks, Nationalist MLA for St Leonards, was the 1917 president of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce.

⁴Argus, 31 July 1917.
The militant Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union (AMIEU) staged a series of short strikes for higher wages. Workmen at the Eveleigh railway workshops stopped work when a member of their union, the Locomotive Engine Drivers', Firemen's and Cleaners' Association (LEDFCA) was sacked. A spokesman claimed that the railway was 'in a ferment' arising from 'pinpricks of various kinds and especially to the fact that the rates of pay were not keeping up with the increased cost of living': they had been waiting fifteen months for their Wages Board to give a new award. 2 Claude Thompson of the ARTSA complained of the 'long policy of pinpricks and goadings' of the Railways Commissioners, the delays in wage hearings and the 'miserable pittance of wages'. 3 A small number of boy labourers at the Randwick tramway workshops impulsively ceased work over pay grievances in early July: they involved around 1,000 other workmen from fourteen unions. All work stopped. Men refused to do the boys' tasks. The boys went ice skating; their adult supporters gambled at the pony races. After consultation with the Railway Commissioners, Beeby declared: 'We will not negotiate in this matter until the boys go back to work. Right or wrong, that is the Government policy...the Government has determined that it will not allow in the public service of the country small, irresponsible bodies of men to hold up the workings of a huge service.' 4 The boys returned. The size of the railways and tramways workforce had provided opportunities for disputes to occur; the integration of tasks had presented a means for their expansion: workmen not sharing the particular grievance could become unintentionally implicated in the dispute. Three weeks later accumulated discontent united workmen within the government transport service: the biggest strike in Australian history erupted.

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1 See Beeby's reaction, DT, 14 June 1917.
2 DT, 19 July 1917.
3 SNN, 9 August 1917.
4 DT, 11 July 1917. See also DT, 2, 3, 5, 10 July 1917.
But the demand for 'economy' was paramount. Fuller told the final Liberal conference that 'many economies' had been introduced in the public service by the Nationalists: loan expenditure had been reduced from eight to five million pounds, and the Norton Griffiths contract had been cancelled. As a result workmen were 'retrenched'. The Worker had dubbed this as 'Saturnalia of Sacking': the dismissals were on a big enough scale to keep suspicion alive that 'economic conscription' was being used by the Nationalists. 

Apprehension over growing unemployment was expressed at the Labor conference. George Waite, leading a deputation from the unemployed committee, told the Labor Council on 26 July that there were a 'great many workless men in Sydney'.

In the context of a noticeable level of unemployment, innovations used to increase the 'efficiency' of workers carried the implication of redundancy: it was feared that the less 'efficient' would be singled out and sacked. At James Stedman and Henderson Sweets Ltd where 'efficiency methods and scientific management' had been introduced, the managers had 'difficulty' in persuading their employees to use the innovations. Chief Commissioner James Fraser was disturbed

1 DT, 6 July 1917.
2 AW, 13 January 1917.
3 See for instance AW, 26 April 1917: about 2,000 men were sacked from railway construction works. See also letter to the editor from G.C. Bodkin of the AWU (Industrial Branch).
4 See AW, 7 June 1917, 'Conscription and Unemployment'; also AW, 16 August 1917: the Worker claimed that 11,668 men had been sacked since the NSW Nationalist government had taken office: 'It might not be economic conscription, according to the capitalistic way of thinking, but it came precious near it.'
5 DT, 27 July 1917. See also Labor Council of NSW, General Meeting Minutes, 23 January, 1, 8, 15 February, 7, 21 June, 26 July 1917. The Unemployment Committee held regular street meetings. On 24 July about 1,000 people attended the unemployed meeting at Queen's Square. A deputation visited John Storey, leader of the Labor Opposition, see DT, 25 July 1917.

6 Lecture by T. Poole, 'Efficiency Methods and Scientific Management in Practice', to the industry section of the Royal Society of NSW, DT, 11 July 1917. James Stedman Ltd had been burnt in the series of fires attributed to the IWW during 1916, see Turner, Sydney's Burning, op.cit., p.22.
by the deteriorating financial position of his department: his annual report revealed a huge deficit.\(^1\) Stringent economies were deemed necessary: fares and freight rates were to be increased,\(^2\) and a business system to increase productivity was to be introduced into the department's workshops.

The Nationalist-dominated parliament of New South Wales began its first working session in mid-July. One of the primary concerns of the new government was industrial unrest.\(^3\) Lawyer T.R. Bavin, the newly-elected Nationalist MLA for Gordon, declared: 'I am quite certain, from my knowledge of the working of the industrial tribunals of this country, that justice can always be secured.' He believed that unions had 'deliberately taken advantage of the critical necessities of the Empire' in order to gain industrial concessions: 'I think that in many cases strikes are criminal acts and should be punished as criminal acts.'\(^4\) William Brooks, a Nationalist appointee to the Legislative Council, told his fellow councillors: 'we are standing upon the edge of an industrial volcano...not only employers, but Governments have lost control of the industrial situation.'\(^5\) P.F. Loughlin, Labor MLA for Burragong, foreshadowed events: 'the National Government is less concerned about securing industrial peace here by a resort to justice than it is about using all the powers of Government to compel the working classes to put up

\(^1\)DT, 14 July 1917.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)See Governor's address read by Lt-Governor Sir William Cullen: 'The industrial position has caused concern, but my advisers are confident that, by careful consideration of grievances, and by continued sympathetic administration of industrial laws, a truer co-operation between all classes of the community during the Empire's hour of supreme crisis can be established.' NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1917-18, Vol.67, p.30, 17 July 1917.
\(^5\)Ibid., p.65, 18 July 1917.
with present conditions....It is about to enter upon the road of coercion.'

The anti-strike sentiment was embodied in law. The first New South Wales Labor government in its Industrial Arbitration Act of 1912 had replaced the concept of the strike as a criminal offence with the notion that the strike was 'an extravagant expedient'. A.B. Piddington, who completed a Royal Commission into the operations of the Act in October 1913, held strong views about strikes by public service employees: they were 'no more defensible than a mutiny amongst our naval or military forces, or a strike amongst policemen'.

Thus the withdrawal of labour en masse was regarded as an anti-social act, an aberration which should be controlled or in some undiscovered way, gradually eliminated from society. Among the Nationalists were those who believed that a reduction of trade union power would help to restore social unity. 'There is a dangerous and increasing element that believes the only possible means of salvation of this community is by perpetual class warfare,' declared Beeby on 26 July, 'men who repudiate the idea of co-operation, the idea of mutual assistance, and deliberately try to keep the whole community involved in a continued state of industrial ferment.' But Beeby was equally dogmatic: he mistook the industrial ferment for political defiance. Attitudes had been shaped by the events of war: the middle class Nationalist government was ready to assert its values.

On 20 July the long threatened job time cards were introduced into the Randwick tramway workshops as a means of costing skilled work. The Commissioners intended the cards to do no more than record information: but workmen were

1 Ibid., p.127, 19 July 1917.
2 Official Year Book of NSW....1916, p.830.
suspicous that it would prove to be an insidious method of
forcing them to greater toil without reward. They stigmatised
it as a 'speeding up' system. As D. Black had put it to
H.C. Hoyle, the Labor minister for Railways in November 1915:
'the portions [of work] taken on the cards will be totalled,
an average struck, and a standard arrived at. The result will
be "rush work". The system is in operation in America.'

Hoyle understood their fears: 'if one man's card is brought
up against another man's, friction will result, and what it
really means is the introduction of task work and piece work
by subterfuge'.

But in 1917 sympathy had vanished.

The Electrical Trades Union brought the matter of the
cards before the Labor Council on 26 July. One delegate
complained that they had been promised that they would be
consulted before any recording system was introduced: the
cards were 'the biggest change in industrial life' for ten
years; they were 'an American "speeding-up" system, and only
young and vigorous men could keep up with the fast rate of
work'.

These grievances were keenly felt among the remaining
craftsmen: many presumably were in the older age group and
unfit for the army. Moreover they had protested at the stigma
of 'go-slowism' which the Commissioners and others had
applied to them.

The matter was given to the Council
Executive 'to take immediate action with a view to defeating
the Card System'.

On 31 July a union deputation debated the card issue
with Chief Commissioner James Fraser. They wished to retain

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1 Minutes of deputation from the Iron Trades Federation of
NSW to the Minister for Railways, 10 November 1915, NSWPDC,
Box 7/4747, file A17/5487.

2 Ibid. The unionists pointed out that the cards did not take
into account the different circumstances of similar jobs
which could lead to different completion times.

3 LT, 27 July 1917.

4 See Chapter 7. The proportion of tradesmen in the Australian
army was the highest of any occupational group: 34 per cent
(112,452 of a total embarkation of 330,770); see Butler,
op.cit., p.890.

5 Labor Council of NSW, General Meeting Minutes, 26 July 1917.
a voice in the conditions of their labour at which they spent 'most of their waking hours'. When they had spoken1 Fraser criticised them for making 'a very poor case' which was 'grounded upon absolutely baseless suspicions'. He had been appointed the Chief Commissioner on 1 January 1917; he was anxious to rectify the declining financial affairs of his department.2 As managing director he had power over the largest aggregation of employees in New South Wales: he admitted that his objective was industrial efficiency. He pointed to the model: Henry Ford's factory system in the United States, 'the most perfect thing in the world'.3 He told the deputation: 'you don't want our shops Americanised. We wish we could, in many ways, and if we did it certainly would be enormously to the advantage of our workers'. Fraser intensified the suspicions he had disregarded: to many Australian workmen the United States was fabled for its aggressive entrepreneurs and exploited workers and for the speeding-up systems of Frederick Winslow Taylor.

1The speakers among the union delegates were A. Dengate (Amalgamated Society of Engineers); D. Black (Electrical Trades Union); W. Sturgess (Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners); O. Bryant (Australasian Society of Engineers); McDonald (ARTSA); see DT, 1 August 1917. The remainder of the fourteen unions involved in the dispute were: United Society of Boilermakers and Iron Ship Builders of NSW; Blacksmiths' Society of Australasia; Operative Plumbers' Society of NSW; NSW Tramway Employees' Union; Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia (NSW division); Amalgamated Timber Workers' Union of Australia; Amalgamated Coachmakers, Railway Car and Waggon Makers and Wheelwrights' Society; Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers' Society and the Federated Iron, Brass and Steel Moulders' Union of Australasia (NSW district). Twelve were craft unions, the ARTSA and TEU were general (or 'industrial') unions. See Labor Council of NSW, Executive Minutes, 27 July 1917.

2See DT, 1 August 1917: Fraser said that the department's annual report would be made public during the following week. In the public interest he said that the Commissioners had to do 'everything possible' to reduce expenditure before they 'saddled' the public with 'rates and taxes'.

3Ibid.
The union delegates met again that evening with the Council Executive. Reaffirming the decision taken at a meeting the day before it was resolved that an ultimatum be issued to the Commissioners: men forced to work with the cards would strike unless the system was removed by 2 August.

E.J. Kavanagh delivered the ultimatum to the Commissioners at noon, 1 August: effectively they had twelve hours to withdraw the cards. Later Kavanagh visited a group of Cabinet ministers: Fuller, Beeby and J. Garland, the Minister for Justice. The lawyer ministers considered the dispute. Fuller rejected the unions' ultimatum: the workmen's complaints were 'not a legitimate matter for industrial dispute' he told the Assembly. He promised 'ample protection and reward' for those workmen who refused to go on strike. The threat thus directed by workmen at their immediate employers, the Commissioners, was challenged by the paymasters: the government had turned an industrial dispute into a political conflict.

Late that night John Storey acted as an intermediary for the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. He informed Fuller and Fraser that the strike would be called off if the cards were withdrawn for one week while an independent tribunal investigated the system. Fuller refused: the men must go back to work and an inquiry would be held on the card system after three months. But the men affected were equally adamant: mass meetings reaffirmed the stop work decision if the cards remained.

On 2 August the men began work at 7.30, the normal hour. The cards remained. At 9 a.m. the stop work whistle blew: 5,780 craftsmen belonging to the fourteen unions walked out.

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1 Labor Council of NSW, Executive Minutes, 31 July 1917. The minute is a continuation of the Executive meeting on 27 July held to discuss the card issue.


3 Ministerial statement delivered at around 4.30 p.m.; NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1917-18, Vol.67, p.349, 1 August 1917.
A contemporary witness reported them to be 'in a cheerful spirit, displaying no bitterness and leaving everything in good order'. Police squads placed outside the workshops in anticipation of trouble were not needed. Almost 85 per cent of the men affected by the cards left work in Sydney, Newcastle and Goulburn workshops, leaving roughly 1,000 craftsmen (or 15 per cent of the total) at work.

The striking unionists set up an ad hoc body called the Strike Defence Committee (SDC) which was to co-ordinate the strikers and to negotiate. Childe says that the Executive of the Labor Council 'refused formally to take the lead in the negotiations' as the leaders of the unions involved had informed them that they could not control their members. Kavanagh, as secretary of the Council, played a leading part on the SDC until his arrest. Later he wrote: 'It was originally intended to confine the strike to those directly affected by the Card System, but this was found impossible owing to the general dissatisfaction which existed throughout the Railway Service.' As unions joined the original strikers or their involvement seemed imminent, their representatives attended the committee's daily meetings.

Fuller reacted swiftly: he declared that the offending trade unions were controlled by 'irresponsible and dangerous men' who were devoid of all 'sense of patriotism and responsibility'. He claimed that the strike was begun for political rather than industrial motives, that it was an attack on the state and a challenge to the authority of his Nationalist government. He called the men the 'tools of Disloyalists and Revolutionaries': 'The time has come for the

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1 SMH, 3 August 1917.

2 Vere Gordon Childe, *How Labour Governs*, Melbourne, 1964, p.154. Matters may also have been complicated by the changeover in the Labor Council Executive: the officers for 1917-18 were elected on 2 August. D.F. Dwyer (Shop Assistants and Warehouse Employees' Union) was elected president; and W. Morby (Federated Furnishing Trades Society) Vice-President; Labor Council of NSW, *General Meeting Minutes*, 2 August 1917.

3 Report and Balance Sheet of the Railway Strike, 1917, presented to the Labor Council, p.3.
people of this State to take their stand against those extremists who have for a long time been deliberately conspiring against the public interest and who have been responsible for the industrial ferment which has disgraced this state since the beginning of the war.\(^1\)

The strike rapidly expanded. On 3 August the brass moulders at Randwick and Eveleigh workshops refused to work alongside non-union labour brought in to assist them. Railway fuelmen belonging to the ARTSA joined the few of their fellow members already on strike. Their involvement was critical. Railway services were now directly threatened. To keep the service in operation, railway clerks replaced the fuelmen and loaded several locomotives with coal. The use of non-union labour meant the coal was declared 'black'. Engine drivers and firemen in the Sydney district refused to drive locomotives with 'black' coal. They went on strike late on 5 August. They were accompanied by signalmen, shunters, guards and fettlers belonging to the ARTSA. The number of strikers had doubled to about 10,000 men.\(^2\)

On Monday, 6 August, the SDC acted: it placed a black ban on all coal used in the railway service.\(^3\) But bans were put on coal outside the service: the strike burst outside the government enterprise. The card issue lost its impact as the number of strikers and their reasons for striking multiplied. But the rapid spread of the strike nourished the fear of political conspiracy. The government's demand for an immediate return to work became more pressing. Late on 6 August Fuller issued a public statement: he threatened the railway and tramwaymen and made an 'Appeal to the People of New South Wales'. If the strikers did not return to work on Friday 10 August (subsequently amended to 13 August), they were to be dismissed and lose both seniority and superannuation. Men who remained at work were promised preference in seniority. In conjunction with this threat of

\(^1\) SMH, 3 August 1917.

\(^2\) Strike Crisis, p.8; SMH, 6 August 1917.

\(^3\) Strike Crisis, p.9; SMH, 7 August 1917.
mass dismissal, Fuller announced that volunteers would be recruited and guaranteed permanent jobs in the two public transport services.

The strike was to peter out on 22 October, a total of eighty-two days. In this time approximately 76,000 workers, mainly men, went on strike in New South Wales: about 14 per cent of employees in the state workforce, and about 33 per cent of the registered trade union membership.¹ The maximum number of strikers out at one time was around 68,000 workers in early September, affecting particularly the fuel, food and transport industries. The strike was concentrated in the three major industrial centres of Sydney, Newcastle and Broken Hill, and in the lesser centres such as Bulli-Wollongong, Lithgow, Bathurst and Goulburn. The strike also had a secondary impact: coal provided 97 per cent of Australian manufacturing industries' energy and New South Wales coalfields supplied over 80 per cent of the national demand for coal.² As the strike halted the crucial industrial sectors of coal mining and transport, it therefore severely disrupted industries in each state: uncounted thousands of workers were dismissed or put onto short-time.³

¹*Strike Crisis,* calculated from Appendix I; *NSWIG,* Vol.7, May 1915, p.1163; *Official Year Book of NSW,* 1918, p.225. The number of working days lost by the strikers alone amounted to roughly 2,570,000 days; wage losses were about £1,780,000, see *Commonwealth Labour and Industrial Branch Report,* No.8, pp.121-2. The strike extended to most parts of Australia, but the upheaval was concentrated in NSW. The *Commonwealth Labour Report,* No.8, judged that 79% of the total estimated 97,597 persons on strike, and 77% of the estimated working days lost in Australia during the strike occurred in New South Wales. The corresponding figures were 15% and 16% respectively for Victoria, 2% and 3% for Queensland, with the remaining small proportions divided among the three smallest states.

²Calculated from *Commonwealth Official Year Book,* No.12, 1901-18, p.479, No.13, 1901-19, p.468.

³Comparable statistics are not available for the maritime strike of 1890, the predecessor of the 1917 industrial upheaval in terms of magnitude. An estimate of the strikers involved in 1890 over all Australia, puts the minimum figure as 50,000 workmen. In absolute terms, this is close to half the number of strikers in 1917. In crude relative terms, 1.58% and 1.97% of the total Australian population went on strike in 1890 and 1917 respectively. See Brian Fitzpatrick, *A Short History of the Australian Labor Movement,* Melbourne, 1968, p.116, for the estimation of strikers in 1890.
The battle between the SDC and the Nationalist government raged over the question whether the men should immediately return to work under the card system. Both sides adopted intransigent attitudes: the strike spread. Unionists were either called out or were joined by their fellow-members, or became involved by the imposition of black bans on commodities, particularly coal. On 7 August members of a local branch of the ARTSA employed on the East Greta Railway Company left work in support of the card grievance. Their action cut off two-thirds of the northern coal trade: about 9,000 miners in all the Newcastle and Maitland district collieries were thrown idle. During the same day 600 crane-drivers and coal trimmers who objected to working with non-unionists on the Newcastle waterfront left work, together with 250 Newcastle tramway men.¹ Engine drivers and firemen at Bathurst and Goulburn and members of the ARTSA at Goulburn joined the strikers. A mass meeting of the Tramway Employees' Union in Sydney voted to go on strike. Partial strikes also occurred. Sydney carters refused to move goods in and out of railway yards (and subsequently wharves); a meeting of coal lumpers decided not to unload coal arriving by coastal steamship for the railways. On 8 August leaders of eight large unions representing coalminers, coal lumpers, wharf labourers, carters, seamen, meat industry employees, gas workers and the Australian Workers' Union met government ministers. All these unions except the AWU subsequently joined the other workmen on strike. The deputation proposed that the card system be investigated by Mr Justice Edmunds of the Industrial Arbitration Court, while the men either went back to work or remained on strike. In return they promised a halt in the expansion of the strike. This bargain was refused. 'You can take it from me', Vice-President W. Morby told the Labor Council following the abortive deputation, 'this fight is about to commence.'

The next day Sydney wharf labourers and Illawarra coalminers went on strike. By 16 August all New South Wales

¹ *Strike Crisis*, pp.9-10.
coalminers, together with seamen and firemen, coal lumpers, ship painters and dockers, slaughtermen, and more engineers left work. Much bitterness was created over the coal lumpers' strike, for it affected the coaling of military transports. The strike at this time involved about 50,000 workmen in New South Wales, and had spread to the wharf labourers in Victoria.¹

Coalminers, seamen and wharf labourers joined the strike, they claimed, for no reason other than for solidarity and sympathy with the strike over the card system. A.C. Willis declared that the miners 'had absolutely no quarrel with the Government or with the coal owners', but that work would only be resumed on the settlement of the card dispute. Most of the strikers like the coalminers, became involved either through the operation of black bans, or by refusals to perform functions normally carried out by those already on strike. Some unions also had specific and irritating grievances which impelled them to strike for their own cause. The Tramway Employees' Union for instance, which also had members involved in the card dispute, nursed a long standing grievance over the inspection system: plain clothes ticket inspectors and private detectives, disguised as 'swagmen and workmen', were employed to spy on tram conductors.² Many unionists who handled coal were idle for several days before calling a strike, because coal distribution in the state, largely governed by the railway network, collapsed with the spread of the strike among the railwaymen. The Illawarra miners were idle and the Lithgow iron works were partially closed on 6 August. The Lithgow miners were idle on 7 August; the Walsh Island government works and the Maitland and Newcastle district coalminers on 8 August; and the Sydney coal lumpers on 9 August.³ In these cases, the withdrawal of labour after days of idleness was a technicality, but their declaration of joining the strike provoked a fiercer Government reaction.

¹Details from SMH, 8 to 17 August 1917; Argus, 14 August 1917; Strike Crisis, Appendix 1.
²SMH, 9, 10, 11, 15 August 1917; AM, 16 August 1917.
³SMH, 7, 8, 9, 10 August 1917; Strike Crisis, pp.9-10.
The unsettling effect of 'profiteering' and general wage grievances over a prolonged period of time had loosened unionists' inhibitions: they had become more reluctant to repress strike action in war time. 'Social conditions will never be the same again. The clock can never be put back', a senior public servant had written to J.D. Fitzgerald on 25 July: one of the great problems was the 'present day distrust between employer and employee'. Suspicion of the Commissioners' intentions had prompted the original dispute; distrust of the Nationalist government helped to expand it. The SDC could not stop men from joining the strike. The

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1Letter from John Garlick to J.D. Fitzgerald, 25 July 1917, J.D. Fitzgerald papers, Dixon Library, MSQ 256/351-8. Garlick was Under-Secretary for Local Government. He wrote: 'If reconstruction is to be effective that [distrust] must give way & be replaced by mutual understanding and co-operation, mutual sharing in the control of industry and mutual sharing of its profits.'

2Mass meetings, many being reported as the largest in each union's history, among the following unions or union branches in Sydney voted for the strike: LEDFCA; Wharf Labourers' Union; Federated Seamen's Union of Australasia; Federated Ship Painters' and Dockers' Union of Australia; Federated Marine Stewards and Pantrymen's Union of Australasia; Progressive Society of Carpenters and Joiners; Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners; Sydney Coal Lumpers' Union; Amalgamated Miners' Association (Barrier branch), and the Federated Storemen's and Packers' Union of Australia. The AMIEU and the Wool and Basil Workers' Association of NSW both held mass meetings in which they placed themselves under the control of the SDC. Mass meetings of the TEU and the Electrical Trades Union of NSW ratified the decision of their executive in calling them out on strike. Black bans ordered by the executive of the Trolley Draymen and Carters' Union were voluntarily extended by the rank and file. Action taken by rank and file members against 'black' commodities drew the following unions into the strike: Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association of Australasia; Cokeworkers' Association of NSW; Federated Liquor Trades Employees' Union of Australia; Pyrmont Sugar Works Employees' Union; Glass Employees' Union; Glass Bottle Workers' Union and the Amalgamated Timber Workers' Union. Rank and file pressure had also forced the fourteen unions to take action over the candid dispute in the railway and tramway workshops. Although the list is not complete, it at least firmly indicates the widespread readiness among the unions' grass roots to support the strike. See SMH, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 21, 22 August, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 September 1917. An estimated forty-five or more unions went on strike in NSW. Statistics on this are difficult to compile, as union titles were frequently omitted from contemporary reports.
Committee strove to restrict the conflict to an industrial dispute: on 7 August Kavanagh repudiated 'those well meaning enthusiasts' in the Labor party who had attempted to transform a 'purely' industrial matter into a 'political question'.

Onlookers were astounded that so many workers joined the strike while the massive allied offensive was being fought on the Western Front. The Nationalist government refused to believe that the workmen had behaved of their own volition: behind the upheaval lurked the anonymous 'extremists' who had 'engineered' the upheaval. There seemed to be no 'real' cause: 'No rational person can believe that rational men have worked themselves into this rebellious fever upon an issue so trifling.' The Nationalists believed that the Labor party was angered at its electoral defeat and seeking to gain its ends through trade union action. 'I think the clash was inevitable and a direct result of the Nationalist victory at the last elections. I also feel certain that the strikers will remember this strike for a long time', wrote H.D. McIntosh MLC on 8 September. Fuller declared on 11 August: 'The influence of the I.W.W. and the Direct Action party must, and will be broken. Government employees must not issue an ultimatum and suddenly go on strike.'

Many middle class groups publicly supported the government. Mayors and shire presidents called public meetings. At a 'well attended meeting' the 'citizens' of Lindfield deplored the 'unwarranted strike in the midst of the greatest national crisis in the history of our country and Empire': they declared that the great strike was 'a deliberate and wanton attack on constituted authority'; they resolved 'to stand solidly behind the Government in any action it deems

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1 *SMH*, 8 August 1917.
2 *Argus*, 13 August 1917, leader.
3 Letter from H.D. McIntosh to J.D. Fitzgerald, 8 September 1917, Fitzgerald papers, MSQ 256/363.
4 *SMH*, 13 August 1917.
necessary for the restoration of industrial order'.

University students and private school boys volunteered to fill the places of striking workmen. Meredith Atkinson urged that the University should not take sides; A.H. Garnsey, Warden of St Paul's College declared: 'Since the Strike Defence Committee is engaged in waging war against the duly constituted Government of a democratic state, neutrality on the part of University men is neither expected nor desired.'

R.W.D. Weaver, Nationalist member for Willoughby, was disgusted when he discovered 'the red flag of revolution' floating from the rear of a lorry: 'You never saw that in Australia before.'

Mesdames Macarthur-Onslow, Antill and Misses Macarthur-Onslow and Preston-Stanley opened a Women's Loyal Service Bureau on 23 August: during the first three days 1,742 women were enrolled as cooks, bakers, cleaners, laundresses, shop assistants, packers, motor car and horse drivers and clerical staff.

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1 SMH, 9 August 1917. In the first two weeks of August, the Herald reported 65 meetings called to oppose the strike; most were called by local government officials; other groups were the Motor Traders' Association, Commercial Travellers' Association, Women's Reform League, Master Builders' Association, Farmers and Settlers' Association, Master Carriers' Association, Chamber of Manufactures, and the Employers' Federation.

2See Harris, The Bitter Fight, op.cit., p.252, for a photograph of a group of youths working on the railways: scrawled on the engine above them were the letters 'S.G.S.' (Sydney Grammar School). Other photographs of the great 1917 strike show a crowd on the Domain, strikers' wives wheeling prams in a procession; and scab labour working at the Wallarah coal mine.

3Letters to the editor from Meredith Atkinson and A.H. Garnsey, SMH, 13 August 1917. See also SMH, 23 August 1917: Professor J.R. Peden seconded the motion put by T.R. Bavin at a public meeting in the Willoughby Town Hall pledging support for the Nationalists and offering 'every possible assistance in upholding constitutional government'.


5SMH, 24, 27 August 1917. See also Minute, Chief Secretary's Office, 30 August 1917, NSWEDC, Box 7/4748, file A17/5711: the bureau had over 3,000 enlistments.
But a few saw that the government's obduracy had inflamed the situation. Dean Talbot courageously defended the strikers' point of view amid strong hostility at the Anglican Synod. He rebuked the Nationalists for 'going too far beyond common justice' in their methods to beat the strikers, and repudiated the allegation 'that constitutional government is in danger'; this could be solved by the government withdrawing from the conflict. He urged that the way to solve the conflict was to ask the government 'to show some spirit of compromise, to ask them to bend a little, to ask them to try to put themselves in the place of the workers'.

His forceful speech squashed the politically-worded motion devised by the Bishop of Goulburn as a means to condemn the strike. Talbot received loud cheers for his action that day from the strikers' procession as they passed by St Andrew's Cathedral. Fuller condemned Talbot's 'hasty intrusion': his government had not been vindictive and unreasonable because 'our appeal from the outset has been to the reason of the men'. But by its prompt intervention in the dispute the Nationalist government abandoned its role as caretaker of the public interest: as men they had put their prestige at stake. Fuller admitted in an unguarded moment: 'the Government has to consider its face and its responsibilities'.

The behaviour of the strikers was judged and denounced from the middle class viewpoint of 'reason'. But the speed and spread of the strike was unusual, indicating not just a

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1 _SMH_, 18 August 1917.

2 See also _AW_, 4 October 1917. Talbot was 'wildly' cheered for several minutes at the Eight Hour banquet. The Executive of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League (NSW) repudiated Talbot's views because it 'strongly' supported 'the maintenance of law and discipline'; see _SMH_, 22 August 1917. Shortly after Talbot resigned from the presidency of the league, see _AW_, 13 September 1917.

3 _SMH_, 20 August 1917.

4 _Argus_, 18 August 1917. Fuller was reported to have declared this to a deputation from the Royal Orange Lodge which had about 1,000 of its members in the railway service involved in the strike.
high level of restiveness and responsiveness, but also a need to express accumulated discontent: the great strike was a social protest. Daily strikers' processions were organised to pass through the streets of Sydney to end at rallying points on the Domain: in mid-August an estimated 40,000 people marched in a Sunday procession, which was always much bigger than the weekday marches.¹

During most of August the processions were cheerful affairs, its marchers described as being in 'high spirits', who 'waved their hats and cheered at the people who watched them from windows and sidewalks...The strikers were in an excellent humour with themselves'. The most popular marching song seems to have been 'Solidarity Forever'. During the 40,000 strong Sunday march, 'squad after squad took up the tune and lustily shouted' the last stanza 'For the union makes us strong'. Often the daily march became a family outing. Children and women with picnic baskets marched in the ranks with their menfolk. They seemed to enjoy the outing more than their male friends; and it was the women, it seemed, who 'hooted loudest' at the 'scab' operated trams. Brass band music and painted banners provided a festival touch to the demonstrations. The strikers' concerns were reflected in the slogans on the banners. They proclaimed: 'The men's answer to the Government's manifesto'; 'Preserve pre-war conditions for the men at the front'; 'Don't be lashed with the speed-up whip'; 'The cost of living doesn't worry the speeders-up, does it?'; 'Australians will never be slaves'; 'Railway room girls stand loyal for pre-war conditions'; 'Be not dumb-driven cattle. Be a hero in the strife'; 'Returned sailor and soldier unionists stand solid behind their fellow-workers in the dinkum fight for justice'.² The cry for the preservation

¹AW, 16 August 1917. The Worker claimed that the Domain meeting that day, which included many more people in addition to the marchers, was larger than any held during the 1916 conscription campaign, for the crowd overflowed from the Domain to half-way across Hyde Park. See also SMI, 27 August 1917, which reported that a record Sunday crowd of over 100,000 had packed into the Domain to listen to the speakers.

²SMI, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 27 August 1917.
of 'pre-war conditions' was perhaps also a manifestation of a yearning for a known stability, for what had been 'normal', among the domestic victims of an exceptionally demanding war, whose purposes and meaning was becoming less clear.

The slogans painted on union banners, the songs sung in the marches, and countless speakers on the Domain all urged with passion the necessity to struggle for the recognition of their grievances. Some perceived their social isolation from an ideological view: 'The so-called Nationalist party, are, according to themselves, the Win-the-War party, and the war we are waging is the great class war,' G. Sutherland, a member of the Labor party executive, told a Domain crowd. 'We belong to the working classes, and we are for our class, fighting for our class alone.'1 The apocalyptic T.W. McCristal, 36 year-old president of the Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union and a returned soldier, declared: 'All kings, governors, bosses and parliamentarians are parasites fattening on the backs of the workers....I did not go to the other side to fight for love of king, but so that I could get necessary knowledge, so that when the time comes I will be able to stand side by side with my fellow-unionists in the great fight against the parasites, and even though they will kill some of us we will fight on.' He was arrested for sedition.2 The reactions of the Nationalists fostered the political militancy that they feared; the angry orators on the Domain intensified the undercurrent of apprehensiveness during the great strike, in which violent

1SMH, 13 August 1917. Sutherland was a delegate for the Australian Letter Carriers' Association at the Industrial Section meetings.

2Ibid., 1 September 1917. See also AW, 29 November 1917. McCristal was sentenced to nine months hard labour in Goulburn gaol by Mr Justice Pring, who had also sentenced the TWW twelve in December 1916. Dean Talbot gave McCristal an 'excellent character' according to the Worker. McCristal was a delegate to the Industrial Section.
behaviour was expected. The precautions taken by the Nationalist government indicate their fears: the police force was more than doubled. Over 1,500 special constables were hastily recruited from mainly within the metropolitan area and added to the normal police strength of over 2,500 men.2

But anger did not beget violence among the vast number of strikers: 'Serious offences arising directly out of the strike were remarkably few,' Inspector-General Mitchell reported later.3 Strike leaders determined to keep the strike orderly: pickets were placed outside hotels. 'Keep off the beer', advised Mooney, the vice-president of the Tramway Employees' Union to a Domain crowd. 'I am no temperance man as you know (laughter). But you will command the respect of the public by sobriety and that is a step towards success.'4 The Worker declared that the strike 'should go down in industrial history as the most orderly and sober strike that

1 For instance, the Nationalists characterised the strike as 'anarchy', 'a rebellion', 'a civil war', 'a mutiny', 'a trial of strength', 'a war to the knife', 'a war upon the state', 'blackest treachery', 'a revolt', and 'treason'. The strikers and particularly their leaders were stigmatised as 'microbes of disloyalty', 'extremists', 'traitors', 'disloyalists', 'Germans', 'German sympathisers', 'German agents', 'red-raggers', 'political desperadoes', 'industrial bandits', 'evilly-disposed persons', 'secret juntas' and 'secret tyrants'.


3 Ibid., p.670. The most riotous incident took place at Broken Hill, where policemen wielded their batons against a crowd of miners assembled outside a police station in protest at the arrest of one of their number. There were two major shooting incidents. One 'scab' railway fireman was shot and wounded on his engine; the press dubbed this the 'Coledale Outrage'. The second casualty was caused by R.J. Wearne, a strike-breaking stock and station agent from the country and a brother of a Nationalist politician. He shot and killed a striker who had attempted to stop his waggon. Railway lines were a favourite target for obstruction: on one occasion two miles of line ascending a steep gradient were smeared with grease, so that the Bathurst goods train took forty minutes to crawl over the distance. See SMH, 18, 24, 31 August 1917.

4 SMH, 9 August 1917.
has ever taken place in New South Wales'. The Labor Council urged all strikers 'to refrain from committing any acts of violence, and all acts that may tend to provoke violence'.

It is impossible to describe the different attitudes among the thousands of strikers, varying as they did in age, temperament and occupation. But some observed the unique combination of militant and non-militant unions acting together, of unskilled labourer and craftsmen both striking for a cause. In August 1917 Henry Boote saw the strike as the heir to the big strikes of the early 'nineties, from which had emerged 'the fiery consciousness' of class in Australia. He declared the origin of the 1917 strike to have come from a 'spontaneous manifestation of feeling', wherein unionists, united by 'a passion for class loyalty as grand as unparallelised...took the field and swept to battle'. From this 'Greatest of All Strikes', Boote proclaimed, class consciousness 'will arise reborn, regenerated, revivified, and endowed with an invincible capacity for progress. It cannot fall. No strike ever did.'

But this romantic view of human behaviour rested on a conception of the nobility and altruism of the working classes. The spirit of humanitarianism fiercely burning in Boote had led him to select the people most deprived in wealth, power and status, the working classes, as possessing one great cause: the redemption of society. But the majority of workmen were spurred by grievances, not by visions of social reformation. A Loyal Orange Lodge deputation met Fuller on 17 August to report the attitude of about 1,000 striking Orangemen who had worked in the Eveleigh and Randwick workshops. 'The members of the L.O.L. desire to be loyal,' declared Deputy Grand Master R.E. Barton, 'but the men were

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1 *AW*, 16 August 1917.

2 *SMH*, 7 September 1917. Luke Jones of the Social Democratic League told a crowd: 'If you listen to those who advocate violence you will be lost. You will play right into the hands of those who desire your defeat. Stand with your arms folded, stick together and you must win'; see *SMH*, 9 August 1917.

3 *AW*, 16 August 1917.
not satisfied with the conditions that existed in the various work shops." Even so, about one-third of the public transport wage earners did not join the strike. There were also reluctant strikers: 'I opposed the strike from the beginning', declared Robert Todd, president of the New South Wales Traffic Employees' Association (NSWTEA) as he quit the strike, 'because with the country engaged in a dreadful war, we should not cripple it by striking.' The Commissioners' declaration which sacked all public transport workmen on strike undoubtedly created pressures to return to work: it also created conflicts of loyalty. 'If any man resumed he was branded as a coward in addition to being a scab', Percy Jennings, a member of the NSWTEA, wrote on 12 August. 'The result is that a large number of us are on strike and now declared out of service, not because we wish to fight the National Government or the Commissioners or have any sympathy with such as Brookfield and Buckley, but because we could not bring ourselves to scab.'

Loyalty 'to the boys in the trenches' influenced the behaviour of the strikers: returned soldiers on strike were prominently placed in the daily marches. The SDC declared that the Commissioners had 'no right to break down trade union working conditions while thousands of railway unionists are away with the expeditionary forces'. Nationalist tactics

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1 EMI, Argus, 13 August 1917.
2 Argus, 15 August 1917. Todd said that he had been in the railways service for 38 years and was close to the retiring age. He declared that 'I.W.W.ism' was 'endeavouring' to control the strike. The Chief Commissioner reported on 10 August that the pickets organised by the SDC were 'very perfect'; see NSWPD, Box 7/4761, file 617/4315.
3 Letter from Percy M. Jennings, Marrickville, to G.W. Fuller, 12 August 1917, NSWPD, Box 7/4747, file A17/3465. The NSWTEA had decided on Saturday 4 August not to join the strike, but when the Locomotive Enginedrivers', Firemen's and Cleaners' Association struck, the NSWTEA 'decided that they had either to scab or strike and they decided they would not scab'. Jennings offered to join the army if his wages were made up to those he received on the railways; he indicated that he had voted for the Nationalists in March 1917; he had no quarrel with the Government that 'many of us supported at the election'.

gave the strikers a cause: within less than ten days, the cry 'defence of unionism' began to flourish.

Several hundred women marched to Parliament House on 9 August: a six woman deputation met Fuller. Mrs Knight said that surely the Acting-Premier could see that 'everything would be right' if the cards were withdrawn. 'There is quite enough turmoil in the community now without this industrial trouble spreading', declared Mrs Toohey. Mrs Bodkin agreed: 'We know there is a lot of hardship existing. Thousands of women are on the verge of starvation, and we all know that a full stomach never feels for an empty one.\(^1\) But Fuller could not change his attitude: 'We have the best feelings for the working classes of this country....This is not a revolt against the card system, but against the National Government.'\(^2\)

The Nationalists had the power to beat the strikers. On 14 August the government commandeered all horses, lorries, carts and motor vehicles, announced that 5,000 volunteer strike breakers had been enrolled, and began to use the first volunteers among the essential public services. The same day the Commissioners sacked about 17,000 men who were on strike. On 15 August stockpiles of coal at colliery pit heads and in railway waggons were commandeered. On 16 August two acts were rushed through parliament. These granted the government power to introduce inexperienced labour into the coalmines and power to establish a Gas Control Board to restrict gas consumption and to enable gas companies to weaken the pressure and quality of their product. On 29 August the entire fleet of twenty-seven colliers engaged in the coastal transport of

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\(^1\)SMH, 10 August 1917. Mrs Bodkin was married to G.C. Bodkin of the ANU (Industrial Branch).

\(^2\)Ibid. Fuller also declared: 'you are asking me as head of the Government to give over the control of the work of one of our greatest public utilities into the hands of the men working there, and to take it out of the hands of the Commissioners.'
coal to Sydney were seized and operated under government control.\textsuperscript{1}

On 18 August the police arrested A.C. Willis (ACSEF), Claude Thompson (ARTSA) and E.J. Kavanagh. They were charged with conspiring to induce unionists employed by the Commissioners to go on strike.\textsuperscript{2} The arrests of Willis and Kavanagh deprived the SDC of two of its most prominent and able leaders. Documents and cash belonging to the Labor Council were also seized when councillors and council officers were absent.\textsuperscript{3} But the main effect of the arrests, as the SDC declared, was 'to steal the unionists to continue the fight until justice is done'.\textsuperscript{4} One week later the police arrested A.W. Buckley on a similar charge.\textsuperscript{5}

Employers had quickly rallied 'to help the Government whatever the cost might be'. A deputation from seventeen organisations representing merchants, manufacturers, retailers, coal and ship owners, graziers, carriers, butchers, builders and iron trades employers met with Fuller after the first week of the strike. In co-operation with the Department of Labour and Industry, they formed sub-committees which met daily to cope with special problems, particularly the transport of foodstuffs, which were created by the strike. Motor vehicles and horse teams were organised at two marshalling

\textsuperscript{1}SMH, 15, 16, 17, 30 August 1917. These proclamations, invoked to defend law and order, were most likely invalid; see Commonwealth Law Reports, Vol.24, 1917-18, pp.95-106. H.B. Higgins, one of the High Court full bench hearing the case, declared that the proclamation granting the NSW government power to take over coal mines was 'wholly invalid' (pp.100-1). See also comments by Chief Justice Barton (p.93). The other judges, with whom Higgins formed the majority, found it unnecessary to rule on the question of validity.

\textsuperscript{2}SMH, 20 August 1917.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid. The Council minute books were taken in this raid to be used as evidence in the 'conspiracy' trial. Atkinson in 'The Australian Outlook', in Atkinson, ed., Australia, op.cit., p.36, said that the books were seized under the military censorship power.

\textsuperscript{4}SMH, 20 August 1917.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 27 August 1917.
points. Near the end of August over 3,000 horses and a 'considerable amount' of carrying plant had been quartered both for security and operating efficiency, at the Sydney Show Ground, which adjoined the volunteers' camp.¹

The Farmers and Settlers' Association and the Primary Producers' Union organised rural strike breakers. A.K. Trethowan MLC, A.S. McKenzie, the secretary of the PPU, together with J.B. Holme, the Under-Secretary of the Department of Labour and Industry, managed the labour camps at the Sydney Cricket Ground (nicknamed the 'Scabs Collecting Ground') and Taronga Park. Army ordnance stores supplied the hardware for the camps while the government spent almost £40,000 to operate them. The official balance sheet, besides showing the total operating costs, also included costs for amusements, funerals, bonuses, tobacco and 'refreshments', which meant free beer.² Strike breakers also came from Sydney: apart from the students, the remainder presumably were unemployed or had been stood down during the strike. According to the official strike report, a number of large businesses which had temporarily closed down during the strike, 'invited their employees to volunteer their services to the Government, and offered to keep their positions open for them when a normal condition of things had been re-established'.³ Fuller requested all newspapers to describe the strike breaking labour as 'loyal' rather than as volunteer or free.⁴

Workmen from major industries joined the great strike, but the railway and tramway services, although severely cut,
did not stop completely.\(^1\) Over one-third (10,800) of the total wages staff (28,000) employed by the Commissioners remained at work after every major railway and tramway union had gone on strike. These men, together with volunteers, returning workmen and the salaried staff of about 4,500 persons were sufficient to run and gradually improve the skeleton train and tram services. By 20 August 2,200 strikers had returned to their former rail and tram jobs; and 2,000 new men had signed on.\(^2\)

Union representatives from the railwaymen in New South Wales and Victoria, seamen, wharf labourers and delegates from the Melbourne Trades Hall met Prime Minister Hughes on 16 August urging that his government intervene in the strike. Hughes wrote to Fuller: 'I told them that...a condition precedent to any action at all by the Federal Government must be a return to work.' He had warned the deputation: 'every additional man brought out would stiffen the determination of the Federal Government to remain in its present attitude'.\(^3\) The federal government had set up an interstate National Service Bureau in mid August\(^4\) under the authority of a War Precautions regulation. Hughes intended to recruit volunteer labour for coaling, loading and discharging ships. But his action complemented the labour already organised to break the strike in New South Wales. When the Bureau began its operations on 24 August, it also supplied labour for the coal

\(^1\) On 6 August the normal service of 660 trains in and out of Sydney Central Station was cut down to 11 per cent (seventy-four) of the daily total, while tram services were reduced by 50 per cent.

\(^2\) SMH, 9, 22 August 1917; Strike Crisis, p.10.

\(^3\) Letter from W.M. Hughes to G.W. Fuller, 17 August 1917, NSWPDSC, Box 7/4760, file B17/3300. See also telegram from Hughes to Fuller, 16 August 1917: 'Commonwealth Government has no intention interfering in dispute between Railway Commissioners and employees'; but the strike by seamen, wharf labourers, coal lumpers interfered with 'interstate and national services', hence it was necessary for labour to be organised by the National Service Bureau.

\(^4\) Hughes to Fuller, 17 August 1917, NSWPDSC, Box 7/4760, file B17/3300; see also SMH, 18, 20 August 1917.
mines. A second regulation empowered the Commonwealth to seize all coal stocks in Australia, and vested the control and rationing of coal in the Navy Department. In late August the giant AWU, which had 32,000 members in New South Wales, was apparently under strong pressure, particularly from the construction section of the union (formerly the Railway Workers' and General Labourers' Association) to order its members to strike.\(^1\) Hughes issued a third regulation on 29 August, which granted him the power to de-register any union which ceased work or hindered in any way the shearing or transport of wool. This was an effective measure; it threatened the June 1917 interstate award given to the pastoral section of the AWU which comprised over two-thirds of the New South Wales membership.\(^2\)

Some private employers may have provoked their employees to strike. P.T. Taylor MLC\(^3\) was aware after seeking information from Samuel Rawlin, the secretary of the Gas Employees' Union, that the employees of the Australian Gas Light Company were likely to strike if 'black' coal was unloaded at the company's Mortlake wharf. According to Rawlin\(^4\) there was no need to bring in coal as the company had two weeks' supply. Moreover at this time the strike was breaking up. Taylor had warned him that if the men left work he could

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1. See SMH, 1 September 1917: it was reported that about 10,000 of the construction workers had ceased work. See also SMH, 3 September 1917: G.C. Bodkin said that about 2,000 of his members had been locked out through shortages of cement.

2. See SMH, 3 September 1917. J. Bailey, vice-president of the AWU said that no decision about striking could be made until the councillors from each of the six states held a meeting.

3. Taylor was a Nationalist appointed to the Legislative Council in May 1917. He was a director of the Australian Gas Light Co. and chairman of the North Shore Gas Co. Ltd. On 20 August 1917 he was appointed a member of the government Gas Board which was to control the use and consumption of gas during the strike. Other members of the five man board included Beeby and his Under-Secretary J.B. Holme.

4. Affidavit evidence presented to Mr Justice Thomas Rolin, 17 September 1917. See SMH, 18 September 1917; Strike Crisis, pp.131-4, for Rolin's judgment.
replace them immediately with 500 volunteers who would be
given preference of employment if they wished to remain.1
On 3 September workmen were ordered to unload a collier at
Mortlake. The Mortlake men struck; they were joined by
fellow unionists at the AGL Company Kent Street works: 740
gasworkers in all. They were promptly replaced.2 The action
fortified the unionists' suspicion of conspiracy. 'It seems
that the Government wishes the strike to extend', declared the
SDC. 'Else, why did it send coal to the gasworks, when it
know that the men would not touch it? There was a fortnight's
supply of coal in the Gas Company's bunkers.'3 The company
took the union to the Industrial Court on 17 September; that
day the men returned to work. Mr Justice Thomas Rolin4
denounced the principle of unionism that declared commodities
blacklisted. He held a 'higher' principle: 'every man owes
a duty to the State to do his job to the best of his ability'. 5
He cancelled the union's registration and fined it £500:6 a
scab union took its place, the Sydney Gasworkers' Association.7

The last half of the great strike was accompanied by
growing, acute and widespread distress. Starvation was
breaking the strike. As Henry Boote put it: 'we have paid in
turmoil and tears all that we can afford at the present'.8
At the regular Sunday meeting on the Domain in mid-September,
the Herald reported that appeals for funds to help prevent
starvation and to mitigate the wretchedness of the strikers'

1 Ibid.
2 SMH, 4 September 1917.
3 SDC press statement DT, 5 September 1917.
4 Rolin was appointed with J.P. Pickburn to the court in
Pickburn died shortly after and was replaced by H.R. Curlewis.
5 Strike Crisis, p.133, judgment of Mr Justice Rolin.
6 Ibid.
7 Strike Crisis, p.142.
8 AW, 23 August 1917.
wives and children dominated the speeches. Fuller ordered that the police investigate each application made to charitable organisations to prevent strikers' families receiving aid: 'they would have to stand the responsibility of their action'. Subsequently the government granted £20,000 for the relief of distress. Women set up a Women and Children's Relief Committee at the Trades Hall: in mid-September they were dealing with over 1,000 applications for assistance each day. The unions were to distribute over £23,000 in relieving distress; the Lord Mayor's Fund gave out a further £5,931. Starvation was to be part of the punishment for striking. As Nationalist minister J.C.L. Fitzpatrick put it: 'If people are starving in this community, if children are crying for bread, is the community responsible, or the strikers?'

From 31 August to 8 September, leading citizens tried to mediate between the government and the Strike Defence Committee. The Lord Mayor of Sydney, R.D. Meagher MLC, was moved by 'the impasse which has now been reached in regard to a solution of the present industrial paralysis, if not civil war', and sent to Fuller several proposals for ending the strike. He was rebuffed. 'I have endeavoured to mediate in this Industrial cataclysm & I think the Govt by absolutely closing the door to Conciliation have made a mistake — & I feel some how [had] you been here — you would have shown the fatuity of such an attitude', he wrote to J.D. Fitzgerald. 'The lines of

1 SMH, 17 September 1917.
3 Ibid., p.1533, 4 October 1917.
4 AW, 20 September 1917.
5 Strike Crisis, pp.56-7; Railway Strike, 1917 report and balance sheet, p.5.
6 SMH, 25 August 1917, speech made to the volunteers at the Sydney Cricket Ground.
7 Strike Crisis, p.27.
8 Letter from R.D. Meagher to J.D. Fitzgerald, 6 September 1917, J.D. Fitzgerald papers, MSQ 256/359-62.
Schiller contain a great truth "A merely fallen enemy may rise again but the reconciled one is truly vanquished["]. The government also rejected the services of the Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church, the Rev. R.G. Macintyre. On 6 September, J.B. Holme, who had hitherto been engaged as an emergency labour organiser, began to exercise his statutory duty as Industrial Commissioner.

The railway section of the strike ended officially on 10 September: almost the midpoint of the great strike. Fuller cabled Hughes that day: 'Railway strike collapsed. Resumption of work on Government terms. Situation as to sympathetic strikers still critical and complicated.' The strike was to last for another six weeks. The SDC and union leaders were denounced at stormy mass meetings when the government's settlement terms were announced. A vast crowd of angry strikers met outside the Trades Hall and carried a resolution 'That the workers and trades unions of this country have no more confidence in the strike executive'. The slogan 'No Surrender' was worn in many hat bands of strikers on the Domain.

Despite this initial bravado, railway and tramway men began to sign on for work, although large numbers who signed on were not employed for several weeks. Fuller wrote to Hughes on 17 September: 'Outside the coal trades the Unions have become utterly disorganised. There is no doubt that during the next few days nearly every union outside the coal trade will carry resolutions in favor of returning to work on any terms that are offering.' The Commissioners stated

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1 Ibid.

2 Telegram sent in code from G.W. Fuller to W.M. Hughes, 10 September 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4761, file B17/4315. The message also said that a 'colleague', presumably Beeby, was going to Melbourne to discuss the position with Hughes.

3 SMH, 11 September 1917. The SDC adjourned on 18 September, determining not to meet until called together by its executive; see SMH, 19 September 1917.

4 Letter from G.W. Fuller to W.M. Hughes, 17 September 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4761, file B17/4315.
publicly that it was impossible to re-employ all the strikers until a full schedule of operations was restored, and that this depended on a guaranteed supply of coal.

The enforced settlement of the great strike embittered the workmen. The Nationalists made no concessions to the railway and tramway workers; this was to be repeated in the suppression of the strike among the coal, shipping and road transport workers. The card system was retained and a Royal Commission promised within three months. 'Loyalist' volunteers were guaranteed employment; striking workmen lost their old jobs, seniority and were put on lower pay. Black lists were kept of prominent or allegedly prominent strikers, who were consequently not re-employed. The last of the railway strikers, engineers, ironworkers, moulders and boilermakers decided to return to their workshops on 19 September.

Other unionists continued to defy the Nationalists. Both the government and employers, by guaranteeing employment and protection to 'loyalist' labour, had created grievances which prolonged the strike. The seamen, the railway navvy section of the AWU (who had been laid off by the strike) and the glass bottle makers decided to support the miners; the coal lumpers and storemen and packers resolved to stand by the railway workers; slaughtermen and gas workers decided to stay out until they could return in a body; timber workers decided to stand with the wharf labourers. The Trolley Draymen and Carters' Union called out more men on strike. ¹

But Fuller's 'new order of things' could not be beaten. The remaining strikers found it impossible to outlast the government and the resources of the state. Coal was being won by a government-organised labour force with apparent success: seventeen collieries were producing coal. The miners fought for a repeal of the emergency legislation which allowed the use of inexperienced labour in the mines. But Fuller was adamant: the act was to be retained in case of further coal strikes.² Moreover he did not want an immediate end to the

¹SMHR, 11 to 15 September 1917.
²Letter from G.W. Fuller to W.M. Hughes, 13 September 1917, NSWPDG, Box 7/4761, file B17/4315.
coal strike: he wished to show the miners that the community was not completely dependent on their labour. 'Within the next few days we shall be able to demonstrate to the coal miners that it is possible, in a time of crisis, to produce enough coal to meet the bare needs of Australia without the members of the [Coal and Shale Employees'] Federation working at all,' he told Hughes on 17 September. 'Anxious' that Hughes should not intervene as he had done in the December 1916 coal strike, Fuller declared: 'We regard this as a most necessary object to accomplish before the present strike concludes.' He was also determined to rid the mines of militants: 'there are a number of I.W.W. men, less than 4 per cent in all, whose re-employment must lead to the industrial unrest. We cannot consent to these men being taken back.' Starvation won: by mid-October the miners had capitulated.

But the returning miners continued their battle underground. On Friday 5 October 150 led 80 loyalists along the Aberdare Extended mine at Cessnock. Half a mile in they blocked the way with horses; yelling 'filthy epithets' they threatened the intruders. Murdoch the manager separated the angry men. 'Throughout the whole day we were subjected to the most violent vituperation and murderous threats,' wrote Hubert Jessop, Secretary of the Aberdare Extended Loyalist Coal Workers' Association. The tunnel was blocked again on Saturday. Police Inspector Brown who accompanied the two groups moved them on. Again the loyalists suffered 'every form of vituperation...short of actual violence'. Jessop wrote that the returned miners had declared that 'they will

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1Ibid., Fuller to Hughes, 17 September 1917. See also letter from J.M. Baddeley, president of the Australasian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation, to W.M. Hughes, 23 March 1918, NSW PDC, Box 7/4767, file A18/1302. Baddeley said the ACSEF were 'convinced' that many of the alleged IWW men had been 'victimised because of the prominent part they have taken in our organisation as Lodge Officers'.

2Telegram from G.W. Fuller to W.M. Hughes, 19 September 1917, Box 7/4761, file B17/4315.

3Letter from Hubert Jessop to J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, Minister for Mines, 7 October 1917 (Sunday), NSW PDC, Box 7/4762, file B17/4983.
settle us & hunt us out' on Monday. That Sunday several loyalists left to look for other work.\footnote{Ibid.}

There is evidence from the Western district coalfield which suggests that coalmine proprietors were reluctant partners in the government's schemes: they preferred coal and profits to protracted conflicts between strikers and loyalists. The manager of the Lithgow Valley mine told loyal workers that from Monday 8 October they would have to work at the coal face at tonnage rates. Lacking experience the newcomers would not have been able to earn a living wage: 'the men elected to leave'.\footnote{Memorandum to W.C. Grahame, Minister for Agriculture, 8 October 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4761, file B17/4315.} Three men from the Abermain Colliery 'declined to make a formal complaint' but alleged that 'loyal workers were being squeezed out to make room for strikers'.\footnote{Ibid.}

The waterfront strike was prolonged by the zealous protection given to 'loyalist' labour and excessive discrimination shown in the re-employment of strikers. In the words of the shipowners, 'we had been instructed by the Prime Minister to take whatever steps were necessary to purge the wharves and ships of foreign labour'.\footnote{Strike Crisis, p.39.} The wharf labourers suffered in another way. 'On a matter of principle we stood by our fellow-unionists,' declared their president, 'but we discovered to our sorrow that they were so weak and disorganised that they either ran back or, in some cases, offered to take the places of the wharf labourers who had come out in sympathy with them.'\footnote{SMH, 8 October 1917.} The Sydney Steam Collier Owners' and Coal Stevedores' Association refused to confer with the Coal Lumpers' Union because they were already employing 'loyal workers'.\footnote{Letter from W.A. Firth, secretary of the Sydney Steam Collier Owners' and Coal Stevedores' Association to W. O'Connor, Secretary of the Sydney Coal Lumpers' Union, 15 October 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4761, file B17/4315.} But the coal lumpers were desperate to obtain work
for their living. W. O'Connor, the union's secretary pleaded with the employers on 17 October: 'we think it is our duty as Patriotic Citizens in this supreme crisis to come together and at least attempt to bridge the gulf that separates us'.

Re-employment was humiliating for thousands of strikers. Many employers, both private and public, forced returning workmen to sign application forms which reduced their status. Railway and tramway men had to sign a special 'Form of application for re-employment of men who left duty on strike'. This gave the Commissioners the authority to alter the grade, seniority and rate of pay of each workman, despite his standing before 2 August. Men returning to work at the Broken Hill Propriety Company's Newcastle steel works were forced to sign forms giving personal details of their age, height, colouring, distinguishing marks, marital status, and number of children. This identification system was designed to discriminate against 'the I.W.W.'. In addition to the vendetta on prominent unionists, there were attacks on the unions themselves. Members of the General Textile Workers' Union of NSW, who had been discharged because of the strike, were required to sign a form which obliged them to resign from their union 'when called upon by the employer to do so. The employee shall, when called upon, join and support such new union as the employer shall approve.'

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1. Ibid., Letter from O'Connor to Firth, 17 October 1917. Kavanagh reported in December 1917 that the Coal Lumpers' Union had 900 members still out of work, 'their places being filled with "Loyalists"'; Railway Strike, 1917, p.4.

2. SMH, 12 September 1917, J.B. Chifley, an engine-driver dismissed for his participation in the strike, was grudgingly re-admitted to the railway service with lower pay and status as a fireman. Years later he declared that the lack of tolerance shown to the strikers in 1917 had propelled him into politics. 'All that harsh and oppressive treatment did as far as I was concerned was to transform me, with the assistance of my colleagues, from an ordinary engine-driver into the Prime Minister of this country.' See L.F. Crisp, Ben Chifley, London, 1961, p.11.


4. SMH, 13, 22 September 1917.
Wool and Basil Workers' Association of NSW, which had joined the strike, were forced to sign an identical form.\textsuperscript{1} Twenty-two unions were de-registered by the Court of Industrial Arbitration, and eleven of these were replaced by 'scab' or state-fostered unions.\textsuperscript{2} De-registration meant the loss of rights to apply for an industrial award or have it enforced. This penalty was relatively weak if the union was sufficiently powerful to use direct bargaining to obtain better wages and conditions. However, the protracted strike so impoverished the unions that an opportunity existed for 'scab' unions to obtain a foothold.\textsuperscript{3}

The labour movement had collided with the cult of 'winning the war': when the great strike erupted, the pro-war idealists saw it as another and more flagrant manifestation of the disloyal spirit that had been previously displayed during the anti-conscription campaign. But the Nationalist reaction was not only a quest for war time restraint: it was also a crude attempt to remedy dissatisfactions with social, economic and political changes over a generation of time.

\textsuperscript{1}\textit{ANZ,} 20 September 1917. The application form for the WHEA was required by the Colonial Coupling, Spinning and Weaving Co. Ltd.; F.W. Hughes was its manager.

\textsuperscript{2}Among the unions de-registered were the ARTSA; LEPFCA; TEU; NSW Traffic Employees' Association; Carrington Coal and Coke Shipping Union; Newcastle and District Trolley Draymen and Carters' Union; Trolley Draymen and Carters Union (Sydney); Gas Employees' Union; United Labourers' Protective Society; Amalgamated Timber Workers' Union; Federated Storemen and Packers' Union; Wood and Coal Labourers' of NSW; Federated Ironworkers' Association (NSW); Australasian Society of Engineers; Federated Liquor Trades Employees' Union; Sydney Coal Lumpers' Union; Newcastle Wharf Labourers' Union; Wool and Basil Workers' Association.

\textsuperscript{3}On 10 August the Chief Commissioner had asked R.T. Ball, the Minister for Public Works and Railways, to de-register some of the railway unions on strike apparently as a means of forcing the men to return to work. See NSWPDC, Box 7/4761, file B17/4315. See also Fuller's coded telegram to W.M. Hughes, 7 September 1917: 'Strongly urge you now de-register Waterside Workers' Federation. New Organisation can be formed. Large numbers of members of present Federation will join new union if de-registration occurs.' Fuller regarded this measure as 'the only method of protecting loyalists'. See NSWPDC, Box 7/4761, file B17/4315.
The expansion and evolution of trade unionism lay at the heart of the unease: from 1902 to 1917 the number of unions in New South Wales rose from 103 to 298, their membership from 58,000 to 232,000. As J.C.L. Fitzpatrick put it: 'We don't want to crush unionism. What we want to crush are the insects hanging on to unionism. (Cheers.) Then unionism will become again what it was originally - not something to be used as a political instrument for the elevation of a lot of men who are too lazy to work for themselves outside. (Great cheering.)' 1 The formation of the Nationalist party had revived the power of the conservatives. Nationalists claimed they had put an end to the sectional and class-biassed government of Labor. Fuller reasserted the middle class view of the 'natural' order of society: he denounced the writings in the Worker. 'Its pages are honeycombed with appeals to class sentiment and class bias. It cuts the community into two sections....The whole of the official publications which are behind this strike reek with this perpetual appeal to the baser instincts of human nature. It is this attitude which is undermining the whole community to-day.' He urged 'intelligent unionists' to rid themselves of the 'revolutionary element' and 'settle down to a sane policy of progress'. 2 The Nationalists fought the strikers with moral fervour for 'a just and righteous cause': 3 but by their punitive measures estranged a vast number of working class people. They smashed such chance they may have had of achieving the social unity that they prized.

Potential strikers could not be disciplined: New South Wales was a burgeoning industrial society. Strikes were to

1SMH, 25 August 1917. Fitzpatrick claimed that the object of the strike was 'general revolution'. If the Nationalists capitulated to this band of political desperadoes and industrial bandits, they would earn the detestation of all who want to see this country wisely and well governed'.

2SMH, 27 August 1917. Fuller also declared the Nationalists were 'united absolutely on this one broad question, that the constant industrial disorder of recent years, the perpetual strike in spite of arbitration laws, cannot continue'.

3Speech by G.W. Fuller, see SMH, 9 October 1917.
prove endemic in the industrial system. But the industrial and general economic grievances of 1917 were overshadowed by the political battle. Ideological approval given by Labor polemicists and orators, namely that strikes were a weapon in the class war, fortified conservative prejudices. Paranoid suspicions strengthened political animosity. Antagonists nurtured 'conspiracy' theories to explain their respective discontents. Complex forces had been simplified into identifiable evils: either 'I.W.W.-ism' or 'profiteering'.

The great strike, as it dragged on week after week, polarised attitudes. It was a popular strike at an unpopular time: it was the incisive war time political experience in New South Wales. It welded the two major parties into mutual hatred and distrust. It shaped the impulse of post-war left wing radicalism, which in turn made politicians on the right ultra-cautious in their political endeavours. The upheaval, wrote the official historian of the *Herald* in 1931, 'was as dangerous as civil war, and which, indeed was a form of civil war, in that it raised between class and class passions so bitter that the years have not even yet allayed them'.

Inequalities of power had embittered the working classes. 'The employers, backed up by the Government, are taking full advantage of the surplus labor and the hungry unemployed, and are "putting the boot in" with a vengeance, regardless of the misery and suffering of the innocent women and children', wrote E.J. Kavanagh at the end of 1917. 'Never in the history of Australia has there been such callous vindictiveness shown towards the workers, excepting, perhaps, in the convict days. Surely such treatment will cause the workers to wake up to a full realisation of their position and power. If it does, and the power is wisely used, then we may truly say, "Out of evil cometh good".'

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CHAPTER 10

DIVIDED PEOPLE

The great strike ended. Bitterness remained. The Allied military situation had deteriorated since October 1916. Agitation for conscription revived in New South Wales. 'Recruiting is a failure' Mayor William Anderson told his audience in North Sydney on 25 October. 'We told our sons that we would give them "the last shilling and the last man". Well, will we do so?' Joseph Cook spoke next. When pressed to make a statement on conscription, he was guarded about the federal government's proposals for obtaining recruits. He told his listeners: 'Everything should be placed unreservedly on the altar of sacrifice.' 1 On 1 November the Referendum Petition Committee commenced its agitation for a revival of conscription. 2 On 7 November, as the battle for Passchendaele closed and Lenin and his Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, Hughes announced that a second conscription referendum would be held in Australia. As Mary Lloyd put it: 'the worse it is for the Allies, the busier become our body-snatchers'. 3 But the federal government's proposal had changed from the mass conscription scheme of the previous year: voluntary enlistment was to continue and any deficiency in the monthly quota was to be made good by compulsion; the conscripts were to be selected by a ballot among the single men of military age. Once more exemptions were promised for special groups and particular circumstances. 4 Thus the limited conscription proposal of 1917 which affected fewer people, would seem to have a better chance of being accepted by the majority.

1 SMH, 26 October 1917.

2 Ibid., 30 October 1917. Barrister F.A.A. Russell was one of the Committee secretaries, see DT, 12 November 1917.

3 Lloyd, Sidelights, op.cit., p.81.

4 Scott, Australia During the War, op.cit., p.413.
particularly in view of the apprehension about the outcome of the Great War. But hatreds which had festered during 1916 and 1917 were revived. The military situation, the reason for the referendum, became lost in the tangle of conflicting attitudes held by impassioned people. Divisiveness was further entrenched.

'Loyalty' divided people. The battle between conflicting views of the national interest became more fanatical. Pro-conscriptionists contended that Australia and the Empire were indivisible. 'Loyalty to the Empire', declared Sir Thomas Hughes, 'is loyalty to Australia, and anything else is hateful to every true Australian.'1 But anti-conscriptionists laid equal claim to their Australianness. 'Welshmen like Hughes, North of Ireland men like Irvine, and Yorkshiremen like Webster', J.H. Catts told his Newtown audience, did not understand 'the temperament of free-born Australians.'2 The conscription campaigns soon ended, but Australians had adopted divided views of their own nation: deference to Britain rivalled isolationism; dependence countered independence. The conscription controversy, by entrenching rigid political values, thus obstructed the development in post-war years, of a broader conception of nationality which could be shared as a common value by all political opinions.

But 'loyalty' encompassed more than an attitude to conscription: it was a cry expressing dissatisfaction with social changes. Defeat of conscription in 1916 had nourished sectarian animosities in 1917. Catholics were singled out as a 'disloyal' group: being predominantly working class and therefore associated with anti-conscriptionist Labor, the prejudice was easy to sustain. During 1917 the Australian League of Loyalty was formed. L. Vickery believed that 'Irish Roman Catholics led & organised by men sent out from Rome' were making a 'strongly organised effort...to separate Australia from England'. As evidence he cited the strength of

1Letter to the editor from [Sir] Thomas Hughes, *DT*, 22 November 1917. Hughes' two sons had enlisted; one had died from wounds in 1916, the other returned in 1919.

2*DT*, 15 November 1917.
the Catholic Federation of New South Wales, the success of the Labor parties and the defeat of the 1916 conscription referendum. 'At the request of the Archbishop of Sydney and in conjunction with all other [Protestant] churches I am organising branches of this league throughout Australia', he wrote to Walter Long. 'I am giving myself, my time & my large income to this work because I am a strong Imperialist & everyone sees the danger ahead here where we have a very strong association of the I.W.W. joined up with the R.C.'s & the Protestant population careless & indifferent.'

On 6 November 1917, the League of Loyalty held its first public meeting in the Sydney Town Hall. R.B. Orchard, Nationalist MHR for Nepean, chaired the meeting. Several representatives from Victoria and Queensland also attended. The league's objectives were to protect the 'national' system of education, freedom of speech, the free press, 'to resist sectarian influence in the distribution of privileges in the public service', and to 'promote loyalty to King and to country'. Earlier, a Colonial Office official had minuted after reading the league's propaganda: 'Anti-Roman Catholicism rather than Loyalism seems to be the dominant motive.' The prominence of Labor Premier T.J. Ryan of Queensland and Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne in the 1917

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1The Catholic Federation of NSW was founded in 1912.

2Letter from L. Vicke[ry], to Walter Long, Secretary of State for Colonies, 4 April 1917, Colonial Office Records, 418/168, folios 297-300. The last two letters of Vickery's name are obscured on the microfilm. Mrs Ebenezer Vickery, wife of the late Ebenezer Vickery MLC (merchant, colliery owner and pastoralist; 1827-1906), was the acting honorary secretary of the Australian League of Loyalty; see DT, 7 November 1917. See also letter from Archbishop Wright to Walter Long, 4 June 1917, urging that the next governor of NSW should not be a Catholic like Sir Gerald Strickland. 'At any time,' he wrote, a Catholic governor 'has a prejudicial influence both in political and social life of this whole community.' Colonial Office Records, 418/168, folio 289.

3DT, 7 November 1917.

anti-conscription cause, a position they partly owed to the
abuse given them by W.M. Hughes, exacerbated Protestant
hatred. The Loyal Orange Lodge of New South Wales urged its
members and all Protestants to vote YES because 'of the
attitude of the Roman Catholic Church and the utterances of
Dr. Mannix and others' on 'the present trouble in the Empire
and the conscription issue'. Sectarian passion supplanted
the hatred which had been directed at the IWW during the 1916
campaign. It embittered existing hostility rather than
influenced the conscription vote.

Some middle class Catholics repudiated Mannix and
condemned his opposition to conscription. 'A wise rule
prescribes that judges shall take no part in politics. But
there is a distinction between politics and loyalty', wrote
Mr Justice Heydon: Mannix's stand was a 'stab in the back of
the Empire'. Moreover, the prelate was leading his
cow-religionists 'along the paths of sedition' in contradiction
to the teachings of their church: 'Obedience to, and loyal
cooperation with, duly constituted authority and all its
lawful commands.' Heydon's words, similar to those he had
used when de-registering several unions which had taken part
in the great strike, expressed anxiety for social cohesion:
his was an attitude influenced more by class affiliation than
by his religion. As one of the relatively few Catholics in a
Protestant-dominated élite, he had encountered rejection of
Catholics among sections of the middle classes. 'Loyalty'
meant inclusion: Mannix and the stigma of anti-conscription
assigned to Catholics threatened their prospects for upward
social mobility and for social acceptance.

'Loyalty' also carried class implications for Protestant
sectarians. The Australian League of Loyalty, fearing the
aspirations of Catholics, was anxious to preserve power and
economic opportunity. As L. Vickery put it, the League
existed 'to prevent Municipal Councils & Parliament as well
as the civil service in all the states being monopolised by
the Roman Church'. Thus, 'disloyalty', among other things,

\[1\] *DT*, 15 November 1917.

meant exclusion from the middle classes. Significantly, protestant sectarianism in New South Wales was a phenomenon dominated by 'middling' people, aspirants from the working and lower middle classes,¹ anxious about status and dissatisfied with their chances for improving their lot. Protestant sectarians embittered politics and helped to cement the Catholic affiliation with the Labor party.²

Conscription divided the returned soldiers. Of the 14,000 in New South Wales,³ 2,000 belonged to the state branch of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA).⁴ W.A. Gibbs and W.K. McKenzie founded the Returned Soldiers' Anti-Conscription League:⁵ They deemed themselves 'traitors' to their comrades in France if they did not fight against conscription, 'knowing as we do that when the last referendum was taken the great majority of our comrades were opposed to it being introduced into Australia'.⁶ Anti-Conscriptionist Corporal C.H. Murphy amid frequent interruptions, urged that the RSSILA not take part in the referendum campaign. But the meeting, chaired by Captain F.W. Kane, voted to support conscription. Lt. Thompson moved that the resolution be cabled to the troops at the front.⁷ On


²See also Bollen, Protestantism and Social Reform, op.cit., especially pp.130-73, for aspects of the political-religious developments 1890-1910.

³See statement by Lt F.P. Killeen, DT, 18 January 1918.

⁴Ibid. See also G.L. Kristiansen, The Politics of Patriotism: The Pressure Group Activities of the Returned Servicemen's League, Canberra, 1966, Appendix 3. Owing to internal disputes, the membership of the Returned Soldiers' Association (later to be the RSSILA) fell from 5,000 in June 1916 to 1,955 in December 1917. By December 1918 there were 7,015 members.

⁵DT, 9 November 1917.

⁶Motion passed by the Returned Soldiers' Anti-Conscription League, DT, 13 November 1917.

⁷DT, 16 November 1917. Before the meeting, the Executive Committee of the RSSILA (NSW) had decided to support Hughes; see DT, 14 November 1917.
18 December the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Universal Service Committee, which had been organised by Lt Francis Killeen, turned out in force to greet returning soldiers at the Central Railway Station. They bashed a few foolhardy Antis who had come to jeer at the pro-conscription demonstration. Kane welcomed the Prime Minister. Killeen called his men to attention: Hughes was seized and carried shoulder high in the march to Martin Place. There, Union Jack in hand he declared: 'These men and their comrades, who alone have the right to say that Australia has done enough – these men who show to me that my cause is their cause.'

Hughes was hated as he was loved. Pro-conscriptionist John Garland, the Nationalist Minister for Justice, received a 'splendid hearing' the evening before the poll from a crowd of about 10,000 assembled in William Street, Darlinghurst. Hughes arrived: a 'storm of hooting and disorder' erupted. Angered by the crowd, he singled out an interjector and ordered that he be arrested, thus provoking greater tumult. Unable to be heard above the din, he departed from the platform within fifteen minutes.

Belief in conspiracies flourished. Nationalist actions fostered anti-conscriptionist fears. Polling day was fixed for Thursday, 20 December instead of the Saturday, which prompted allegations that Hughes was attempting to diminish the opportunity for working class people to exercise their vote. Further, the closing of the electoral rolls two days after Hughes had announced the referendum, had disenfranchised an estimated 50,000 electors who had shifted residence since the federal election in May. 'The persons struck off were not those who owned houses', declared Arthur Blakeley MHR, 'but were mostly those who paid rent and the nomadic class. Working class votes would be the ones affected.'

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1DT, 13 November 1917.
2Ibid., 19 December 1917.
3Ibid., 20 December 1917.
4See complaint by P.C. Evans, secretary of Australian Labor Party, NSW Branch, DT, 14 November 1917.
5DT, 9 November 1917.
Heavyhanded censorship provoked anger. J.H. Catts, pointing to 'detectives' scribbling down his words, declared that whatever he said as an opponent of the Nationalist government, would be construed as 'likely to prejudice recruiting'. The only way he could avoid breaching the multitude of War Precautions regulations, he told his audience, would be to talk about horseracing.¹ P.S. Cleary of the Catholic Press and president of the Catholic Federation, declared that the poll would be a vote of confidence in Hughes: when a man 'makes and unmakes laws by a few strokes of the pen during his leisure moments, it is time to ask ourselves whether we want Czardom or constitutional government'.² Agitation from the combined press in Sydney, culminating in a meeting of pressmen and the Prime Minister on 28 November, forced a relaxation of the military censorship.³ In the final days of the campaign, Holman's cabinet memorandum of February 1917, in which he had advocated 'a well-organised censorship of the press' and the dismissal of single men to force them into the army, became public.⁴

Antis summarised the document, ending with: 'Holman and Hughes are the Rasputins of Australia. STRIKE A BLOW AT THESE "DARK" FORCES OF AUSTRALIA BY VOTING NO.'⁵

In the aftermath of the great strike, allegations that power had been abused by Nationalist politicians had an impact among the working classes. During November Kavanagh, Buckley, Willis and Thompson were tried unsuccessfully for conspiracy.⁶

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¹Ibid., 6 December 1917; Catts was reported as having received two summons for making statements likely to prejudice relations with a foreign power at Armidale (20 November) and Guyra (23 November).
²Letter to the editor from P.S. Cleary, DT, 6 December 1917.
³See Lloyd, Sidelights, op.cit., p.93; memo from G.G. Nicholson, Censor, 28 November 1917, published in DT, 13 December 1917; letter to the editor from J.D. Fitzgerald, DT, 12 January 1918. Government-press friction over the operation of the censorship led to their joint conference in Melbourne in April 1918; see Scott, Australia During the War, op.cit., pp.76-9.
⁴Lloyd, Sidelights, op.cit., p.86, says that the memorandum had been passed on to E.E. Judd.
⁵NO-Conscription Council advertisement, DT, 19 December 1917.
⁶See DT, 12 November 1917.
But T.W. McCristal and E. Riley were found guilty of sedition; Mr Justice Bring sentenced them to nine months' hard labour.\footnote{DT, 14-16 November 1917.} Moreover, while strike grievances still rankled, Mr Justice Heydon's advocacy of conscription provoked hostility. Some employers were pleased at the defeat of the strikers. William Brooks MLC, when delivering his annual report to the Employers' Federation, condemned strikes and urged his listeners to vote YES. W.J. Miles, secretary of the No-Imperial Federation League, disagreed with his president's conspiracy view of the strike: 'The recent strike had its base in the psychological effects produced by the war. If employers overlook that they are never going to get into sympathy with the working men.'\footnote{Ibid., 16 November 1917.}

The Great War had an impact in other ways. Multiplying casualties among the Australian Imperial Force, over 110,000 by mid-November\footnote{Ibid., 12 November 1917.} including over 40,000 deaths,\footnote{Butler, Australian Army Medical Services, Vol.3, op.cit., p.900: by the end of 1917, there had been 43,920 deaths, 21,736 had occurred in 1917.} distressed families in Australia. Some attempted to have their sons removed from the front line. P.T. Taylor MLC, a 'specially valued supporter' of the Nationalist party, asked that his son Captain Patrick Gordon Taylor of the Royal Flying Corps be removed from France either to a safe post in London or in Australia, Holman cabled to Agent-General C.G. Wade in London. 'Eldest son recently shot', continued the Premier, '...Mother is seriously ill. Any adverse news would probably kill her. Under circumstances I regard request as legitimate and beg you to do anything possible to secure its granting.'\footnote{Cable from W.A. Holman to Agent-General, 1 November 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4783, file B13/818.} In January 1918, after the Agent-General had communicated with General Birdwood, Colonel E.H. Reynolds, the Sydney-born staff officer of the Australian Flying Corps in London,
recommended that Taylor be transferred from the front line to a post as a flying instructor. ¹

Less influential was Mary Bruce, aged thirty-five years, who had been left to care for two young children ² when her husband and son had enlisted in 1916. Her son suffered gunshot wounds when attacking Mouquet Farm on 18 August 1916; her husband, Lt Thomas Bruce, was killed on 12 October 1917 by shellfire at Passchendaele. ³ Grieving, she sought help at the Holman's home, but was turned away by the maid. She wrote in desperation to Mrs Holman that evening: 'don't you think this is very hard for me to bear 4 days after my husband being killed they send my Boy back perhaps to meet his death he is not 19 years of age yet. Now I would like to know if it is in your power in any way to help me to get my only Child out of the firing line has I feel sure he will be killed I am nearly a mad woman & dont know what to do.' ⁴ Her aunt pleaded her cause the following week, and concluded: 'We dont belong to a Shirkers family all our male Relatives are some where in France Killed or Wounded & Fighting.' ⁵ Despite the plea for Pte

¹ Cables from Agent-General to W.A. Holman, 3, 17 January, 18 February 1918; from Holman to Agent-General, 29 December 1917; 9 January, 3 February 1918; from Secretary, Prime Minister to Secretary, Premier of NSW, 20 April 1918; NSWPDC, Box 7/4783, file B18/181. The file does not record whether Taylor did take up the post as flying instructor.

² Letter from Mrs E.J.O. Cowley, Drummoyne, to [F] Edwards, secretary to Premier Holman, 21 December 1917, NSWPDC, Box 7/4765, file A18/651.

³ Mary Bruce's husband belonged to the 36th Battalion; her son Pte Thomas John Bruce to the 4th Battalion. For battalion battles, see the Official Histories, Vols 3 and 4, Bean, The AIF in France 1916, op.cit., pp.788-91; Bean, The AIF in France 1917, op.cit., p.911, note.

⁴ Letter from Mrs M.M. Bruce, Yurong St., Hyde Park, to Mrs Holman, 13 December 1917. NSWPDC, Box 7/4765, file A18/651. Her aunt, E.J.O. Cowley, wrote in the following week that her niece was 'very ill' so that 'we have to watch her movements for she seems very strange & I am afraid very soon she will be in the asylum & she has two little children to care for'.

Bruce's return, he could not be spared.\(^1\) Mary Bruce's 'cruel war' continued.

The impact of the Great War on Australians had changed the certainties of October 1916 into doubts by the end of 1917. On 7 November Sir Joseph Carruthers MLC, an ardent pro-conscriptionist in 1915 and 1916, wondered whether Australians should not send more food rather than more soldiers: 'I very much prefer to be sure of my ground before I simply vote to send men to the front, leaving other matters like the supply of food to a haphazard and unorganized effort.'\(^2\) The following week he declared his support for Hughes, but pressed his opinion on supplies: 'This referendum is troubling a vast number of people who hesitate to make up their minds.'\(^3\)

The referendum troubled pro-conscriptionists in New South Wales. Some, like T.R. Bavin and Professor Peden, wanted a federal general election on the conscription issue. 'I suppose we must make the best of it,' said Bavin reluctantly on hearing the news of the referendum, 'and see, for the honor of Australia, that there is a solid affirmative vote.'\(^4\) But most of the state Nationalists were embarrassed by the second referendum, for in March, as a counter to Labor propaganda, Nationalist candidates had declared their acceptance of the 1916 referendum decision and had pledged themselves to oppose the introduction of conscription.\(^5\) A.G.F. James, Minister of

\(^1\) See letters from J.C.L. Fitzpatrick (for Holman) to W.M. Hughes, 10 January 1918; from T. Trumble, Acting Secretary of the Department of Defence, to W.A. Holman, 4 February 1918. Trumble wrote: 'it is regretted that owing to the very serious shortage of Reinforcements, it is quite impossible to take the action desired'. NSWPDC, Box 7/4765, file A18/651.

\(^2\) Letter to the editor from [Sir] J.H. Carruthers, DT, 8 November 1917. See also letter from P.C. Evans, Secretary of the ALP, asking whether Carruthers intended to join his party; DT, 9 November 1917.

\(^3\) Letter to the editor from [Sir] J.H. Carruthers, DT, 13 November 1917. At Murwillumbah Alderman Newell resigned as Mayor for 'business and other reasons' because he could not campaign in the referendum, presumably for YES, 'which his position called for'. See DT, 23 November 1917.

\(^4\) DT, 8 November 1917.

Public Instruction, declared that his pledge stopped him from promoting the conscription cause. The parliamentary party, after a six hour debate over the question of the pledges, left it to each member to make his own decision about supporting Hughes. Many did not campaign. Thus was the pro-conscription cause in New South Wales publicly weakened.

Once more, after a turbulent campaign, polling day was 'like a Sunday'. Again the anti-conscription cause won with 58 per cent of the valid vote. When compared with the 1916 referendum, there was a slight fall in the number of people voting. But the NO vote had increased while the YES vote had fallen. This pattern was repeated in all states. The aggregate statistics for the two referenda in New South Wales are compared in the table following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1916</th>
<th>1917</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>474,544</td>
<td>487,744</td>
<td>+ 13,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>356,805</td>
<td>341,256</td>
<td>- 15,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>27,050</td>
<td>24,864</td>
<td>- 2,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>858,399</td>
<td>853,894</td>
<td>- 4,505</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1916</th>
<th>1917</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males voting</td>
<td>475,669</td>
<td>473,693</td>
<td>- 1,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females voting</td>
<td>382,730</td>
<td>380,201</td>
<td>- 2,529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As in 1916, the same five electorates, Wentworth, Parkes, Parramatta, North Sydney and rural Richmond, of the twenty-seven in New South Wales, returned majorities for YES (see Table 2). At the local level, only 61 of the 379 subdivisions voted for conscription, a drop from the previous referendum when 90 of the 380 had polled affirmative majorities.

1 "DT, 10 November 1917.
2 Ibid., 15 November 1917.
3 Ibid., 21 December 1917.
### Table 2

**NSW Votes Cast in the Second Conscription Referendum**

20 December 1917

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Valid vote</th>
<th>No. voting NO</th>
<th>% valid vote voting NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sydney</td>
<td>21,845</td>
<td>16,630</td>
<td>76.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>29,247</td>
<td>22,165</td>
<td>75.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sydney</td>
<td>29,719</td>
<td>21,816</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>32,061</td>
<td>22,900</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalley</td>
<td>30,088</td>
<td>20,563</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Sydney</td>
<td>25,192</td>
<td>15,227</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang</td>
<td>34,425</td>
<td>18,991</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wentworth</td>
<td>34,424</td>
<td>16,256</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkes</td>
<td>43,046</td>
<td>20,161</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>38,327</td>
<td>14,649</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Sydney</td>
<td>34,801</td>
<td>11,168</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>352,677</td>
<td>200,426</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL-URBAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrier</td>
<td>18,972</td>
<td>13,071</td>
<td>68.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>34,518</td>
<td>20,234</td>
<td>58.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nepean</td>
<td>37,023</td>
<td>20,867</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>90,513</td>
<td>54,172</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling</td>
<td>21,064</td>
<td>14,627</td>
<td>69.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>27,349</td>
<td>18,747</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calare</td>
<td>24,604</td>
<td>16,824</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Werriwa</td>
<td>27,932</td>
<td>18,997</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie</td>
<td>26,641</td>
<td>18,024</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden-Monaro</td>
<td>21,973</td>
<td>14,605</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robertson</td>
<td>23,876</td>
<td>15,792</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwydir</td>
<td>22,475</td>
<td>14,164</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>23,691</td>
<td>14,864</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>23,712</td>
<td>14,478</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverina</td>
<td>22,530</td>
<td>13,361</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowper</td>
<td>24,863</td>
<td>13,195</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>23,676</td>
<td>10,182</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>314,486</td>
<td>197,860</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NSW</strong></td>
<td>757,576</td>
<td>452,458</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servicemen and crews of transports</td>
<td>71,454</td>
<td>35,316</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>829,030</td>
<td>487,774</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Commonwealth Parl. Papers, session 1917-19, Vol.4.*
New South Wales slightly increased its proportion of the Australian NO vote from 40.9 in 1916 to 41.3 per cent in 1917. Mary Lloyd rejoiced: 'The curse is lifted. Conscription is dead in Australia.'

Conscription was dead; but at the cost of severe social disruption. New South Wales was the base for the anti-conscription cause at both polls. At this point it is worth making a brief comparison with Victoria, the next most populous state in the Commonwealth. Both states shared similar demographic and economic characteristics, but had contrasting voting patterns at each of the conscription polls (see Table 3). At the 1911 census, New South Wales had

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>MAJORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1916</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>356,805</td>
<td>474,544</td>
<td>831,349</td>
<td>117,739 (NO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>353,930</td>
<td>328,216</td>
<td>682,146</td>
<td>25,714 (YES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1917</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>341,256</td>
<td>487,774</td>
<td>829,030</td>
<td>146,518 (NO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>329,772</td>
<td>332,490</td>
<td>662,262</td>
<td>2,718 (NO)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1,646,734 people; Victoria, 1,315,551. Respectively their proportions of Australian born were 84.2 and 85 per cent; their British born 12.5 and 12.1 per cent. There were contrasts in religious affiliation which are summarised in Table 4. Both Sydney and Melbourne were dominant cities, holding in December 1914 an estimated 40.4 and 47.1 per cent respectively of their state's population. There were no rival cities: Newcastle was less than one-ninth the size of Sydney and Ballarat much less than a fifth of Melbourne. Together both states had over 70 per cent of the factory employees in

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1Lloyd, *Sidelights*, op.cit., p.87.
Australia in 1914, divided almost equally but with Victoria (118,399 employees, 5,650 factories) slightly ahead of New South Wales (116,462 employees, 5,268 factories). But there were differences in trade union registrations. In 1915, New South Wales had 203 separate unions (721 branches) with an aggregate of roughly 242,000 members, as against 161 unions (312 branches) and roughly 142,000 unionists in Victoria.¹ In part unionism and particularly the New South Wales coalfields and their militant miners explain the disparities in the incidence of industrial disputes (see Table 5).

### TABLE 5
INCIDENCE OF INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA, 1914-1918

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic.</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic.</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33,955</td>
<td>5,699</td>
<td>836,948</td>
<td>84,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47,006</td>
<td>5,434</td>
<td>464,343</td>
<td>64,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>91,762</td>
<td>13,576</td>
<td>1,145,222</td>
<td>228,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>118,515</td>
<td>15,976</td>
<td>3,308,869</td>
<td>760,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24,417</td>
<td>4,235</td>
<td>181,639</td>
<td>165,020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Commonwealth Labour and Industrial Branch Report No.9, 1918, p.136.

¹ Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1901-1915, pp.467, 943.
The political history of each state differed. In New South Wales Labor had achieved office in 1910 and 1913 and was to do so again under John Storey in 1920. Victorian Labor was politically weaker: the first Labor ministry only lasted several days in 1913; the second five months in 1924. Thus the political repercussions of the Labor split over the conscription issue in 1916 were to be of greater long term significance to the New South Wales party in both state and federal parliaments.

Overall, the similarities between New South Wales and Victoria at the time of the Great War were greater than their differences. Thus, the discrepancies in the conscription vote in each state were related more to internal histories rather than to significant structural variations. In particular, the forceful personality, ambition and great abilities of the English-born W.A. Holman helped to shape much of the divisiveness in New South Wales. His single-minded commitment to the war, in recruiting and conscription, caused him to neglect both his party and to underestimate working class grievances arising from the war. The survival of the values of the pro-war idealists in the Nationalist government helped to build the explosiveness which erupted in the great strike in August 1917. In turn, the industrial confrontation kept alive the spirit of conflict and helped to solidify the anti-conscription vote in December.

As has been argued in earlier chapters, reactions to conscription in New South Wales in 1915, which developed during 1916 and 1917, had been derived primarily from class attitudes. Thus, the anti-conscription vote on both occasions should be regarded partly as a protest by the working classes which reflected their powerlessness against deteriorating economic circumstances. Inflation was personified as 'profiteering'. Belief in the prevalence of profiteers fostered uneasiness about the purpose of the Great War. Moreover, it aided agitation within the labour movement for a negotiated peace. In an implicitly anti-war pamphlet, Australia's Share in the War and Who is Paying For It?, issued by the Executive of the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Labor Party in 1918, it was argued that the
war had enriched the few at the expense of the many. Further, that the Australian war debt would increase existing inequalities in the distribution of wealth, reduce the purchasing power of money and cause the 'ECONOMIC ENSLAVEMENT OF THE WORKERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH'.

Conscription provoked rival ideas of nationality. But in the battle, class attitudes had become entangled with attitudes to the nation: class nationalism was to persist after the war had ended. The rise of the middle class 'Nationalist' party demonstrates one half of this polarity; similar sentiments were to animate the founding of the middle class All For Australia League in 1931. Equally, the Australian Labor Party in New South Wales, drawing also upon the tradition fostered among Catholics by Cardinal Moran, stressed its Australianness. At the New South Wales Labor conference in June 1918, J.P. Clear of Yass put the motion 'That no person be eligible to become Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia unless he be an Australian born'. It was lost 95 to 46. Robert Cruickshank warned that conscription still threatened Australians in 1918: 'Australia can never be considered a self-governing community so long as its destiny is in the hands of men who prefer to take their instructions from London rather than from the Australian people.' Similar sentiments were shared by W.J. Miles' Advance Australia League, to which George Waite was elected president in April 1918. The League, a development from the No-Imperial Federation League of the previous year, had as

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1 Australia's Share in the War and Who is Paying For It?, Sydney, 1918, pp.9-11.
3 DT, 3 June 1918.
4 AW, 2 May 1918; the Worker was citing an excerpt from Cruickshank's pamphlet, The Future of the Labor Movement.
5 Letter from W.J. Miles to George Waite, 24 April 1918, George Waite papers, ML, uncat. MS.208, Box 1.
its motto 'Australia First!': this organisation was the forerunner of the Australia First Movement founded in 1941.1

Conscription, narrowly defined as the issue upon which the future of Australia rested, fostered the polarity of nationalisms. Pro-conscriptionists had fought for their cause by invoking 'loyalty' to Britain, thereby blurring the possibility that the interests of Britain and Australia might not coincide. Exigencies of war had fostered this attitude; the prominence of the British-born and Anglophile Australians sustained it. 'We either have to deny that we, as Australian citizens, are under any obligation to loyalty to the general cause of the nation as a whole', declared Holman in September 1918, 'I mean not the Australian nation, but the British nation...or we have to admit that we are under obligations of loyalty.'2 Deference to Britain was strengthened by adherence to the British system of conferring status. Holman, for example, working through the good offices of his friend, W.A. Watt, the Acting Prime Minister, wished to become a Privy Councillor during 1918.3 The year before his former opponent had been knighted as Sir Charles Wade.4

But gratification of status aspirations offended against egalitarianism and emphasised the deferential regard for Britain. When Sir John Forrest was made a baron, the Labor Executive in New South Wales resented 'the attempt to establish an hereditary aristocracy in Australia': it urged that 'no title should be bestowed on any Australian citizen'. 5 In April 1918, unionists were divided on the question whether to accept or reject invitations to meet the new state

3Despatch from Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson to Walter Long, 24 August 1918, Novar papers, NL, MS.696/1073.
4Others who subsequently became knights and were prominent in war time endeavours were G.W. Fuller, T.R. Bavin, A.A.C. Cocks, A.K. Trethowan, H.Y. Braddon, J. Russell French, Arthur Rickard, David Storey.
5DT, 9 February 1918.
governor, Sir Walter Davidson. One union, the tin canister makers, feared social contagion: experience had shown that 'if representatives of Labor come into contact with the aristocracy, they become more aristocratic than the aristocrats themselves'; while the ironworkers refused to attend because the governor was a 'representative of the class that is opposed to us'.

Class divisiveness became a greater concern during 1918: it disrupted national unity. Several remedies were advanced as means of integrating society. At the annual general meeting of the Master Builders' Association, W. Williamson urged that they insist that the government help workers acquire their own homes, for in parts of the city they were 'housed like cattle'. Home ownership would enable them to obtain 'a stake in the country he declared: 'we cannot wonder at some of the bitterness that exists among the workers when they are so poorly housed'. Holman wanted to enforce cohesion. On 4 June, while the state Labor conference was meeting, Detective N. Moore, a specialist in subversive activities, reported that radical left-wing groups, the Social Democratic League, the Australasian Socialist Party, the Industrial Labor Party and the Workers' International and Industrial Union, were spreading propaganda through the unions: it appeared 'to be steadily capturing those unionists who either have no material interests in this State or lack British patriotism'. He declared that 'those who have motives of self-interest' were joining the four organisations, whose objectives were to capture the labour movement and to use it 'to overthrow the Government of this State as it exists at present, and establish a system where capital and individual effort are eliminated and the working man is supreme'.

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1Ibid., 12 April 1918.
2Ibid., 25 April 1918.
3Ibid., 23 January 1918.
4Report submitted by Detective N. Moore, 4 June 1918, NSW PDC, Box 7/4772, file A18/2579.
5Ibid.
Moore's report, which was discussed by Cabinet during July, influenced Holman to introduce his Sedition Bill on 28 August. 'Undoubtedly among the seditious offences,' the Premier declared, 'would be included the offence of promoting feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes of his Majesty's subjects.' T.D. Mutch interjected: 'For example, between employers and employers!' Holman retorted: 'Quite so - they would be different classes.'

The federal government established a Directorate of War Propaganda; T.R. Bavin headed the New South Wales branch. Equally, the Directorate was anxious about 'national unity', which meant 'something not inconsistent with solidarity in the British system of nations'. But class divisions threatened the nation: 'In our present condition of disunity, one class exaggerates the "rights" that an extremely imperfect social system has conferred upon it - the rights conferred by financial strength. The other class exhibits such intolerance of the existing social order as to make all moderate opinion fear the exercise of political power by that class.' The Directorate advocated cooperation between people of both classes. But the meliorist tradition in politics had been broken by war time hostility.

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1 Minute initialled by W.A. Holman, 5 July 1918, NSWPDC, Box 7/4772, file A18/2579.
2 NSW Parl. Deb., series 2, session 1918, Vol.72, p.965 John Stor quoted Mr Justice Pring, who defined a seditious intention at an IMW trial as 'an intention to promote feelings of ill-will or hostility between different classes'; Pring had added 'different class - that is to say, the employers and employees'.
3 Scott, Australia During the War, op.cit., p.469.
4 Directorate of War Propaganda advertisement, AW, 14 November 1918.
5 Ibid.
6 See for instance, letter from J.D. Fitzgerald to W.A. Holman, 29 October 1919, advocating a convention between capital and labour: 'so far the unionists are protesting against profit sharing, fearing that it would enlist the profit sharers on the side of the capitalists and destroy the power of the unions'. J.D. Fitzgerald papers, Dixson Library, MSQ 260/51-7.
Hatred was accentuated by agitation for peace. A peace rally was held in February; about 300 attended. Arthur Rae moved 'that the time has arrived when the vital needs of humanity demand the cessation of the present world-wide war'.

The series of German offensives on the Western Front from March to June exacerbated tensions. In May, after a protracted and bitter debate, the Labor Council voted 101 to 75 in favour of E.E. Judd's motion urging that an armistice be effected, and further, rejecting unionist support for a recruiting campaign. The Labor conference debated its peace proposals in camera: the decisions arrived at were 'jealously guarded' by the delegates who left to attend the federal Australian Labor Party Conference in Perth. But advocacy of peace was disloyalty: John Garland declared at the by-election for Upper Hunter that the issue was between the 'white flag' and the 'Union Jack'.

A. Holmes, the organising secretary of the Australian League of Loyalty, declared: 'Every day it becomes more evident that there must be a united effort to stem the tide of disloyalty.' On the anniversary of the outbreak of war, 4 August, the King's Men movement was launched in the Sydney Town Hall. The movement was determined to eradicate 'disloyalty and insidious peace propaganda'; its originator was Lt-Colonel Reginald Rabett; its objectives included

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1 DT, 13 February 1918. See also Jauncey, The Story of Conscription, op.cit., p.328.

2 For the debate, see DT, 10, 17, 24, 27, 30, 31 May 1918.

3 DT, 10 June 1918.

4 Ibid., 7 June 1918.

5 Ibid., Holmes was appointed at an annual salary of £400; the League was reported to have 36 branches in the Sydney metropolitan area.

6 DT, 5 August 1918. An estimated 3,000 to 4,000 attended the meeting.

7 R.L.R. Rabett, born 1887, at Sydney, was educated at All Saints College, Bathurst, and Sydney Grammar School. He was a major in the militia at the outbreak of war; see Who's Who in Australia, 1935 edition. See also Bean, The AIF in France 1916, op.cit., pp.295-6: when building up the 12th Field Artillery Brigade, Rabett selected for his officers 'a number of youngsters from the great Australian public schools'. 
unswerving loyalty to the King and Empire; repudiation of any peace which would jeopardise the Empire and its Allies; and the combat of all tendencies to sap the Empire's war energies by 'spurious pacifism and disloyal propaganda'. The movement anticipated in its ideas the New Guard of 1931.

On 11 November, at seven in the evening, the news burst that the Armistice had been signed. A great noise erupted: people blew whistles and bugles, rang bells, beat kerosene tins and honked horns. The event was celebrated by a public holiday on the thirteenth. On the day, the streets of central Sydney were covered in inches of white confetti; a restauranter put a notice in his window: 'No meals to-day. All the cooks drunk. God Save the King.' People crowded onto the Domain: 6,000 returned soldiers marched to the celebration. Praised during war, they were needed no longer. A journalist observed that very few of them joined in the excitement. He asked one man for his thoughts on the celebration: 'What do I think of it? It seems to be a silly lot of rot. I can't play the fool like that. You get all this play knocked out of you over there.'

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1DT, 6 August 1918.

2See Eric Campbell, The Rallying Point: My Story of the New Guard, Melbourne, 1965, p.6: The New Guard represented 'Unswerving Loyalty to the Throne'; 'All for the British Empire'; 'Sane and Honourable Government throughout Australia'; 'Suppression of any disloyal and immoral elements in Government, Industrial and Social circles'; 'Abolition of Machine Politics'; 'Maintenance of the full liberty of the individual'.

3DT, 12 November 1918.

4Ibid., 14 November 1918.

5The Telegraph estimated the crowd to be 200,000 to 250,000.

6DT, 13 November 1918.
Of the 330,770 young Australians who had embarked for battlefields overseas, over 53,000 had died. In their dead, Australians from all classes could mourn together. Anzac Day gave the divided people a symbol of their cohesion.

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1Butler, *Australian Army Medical Services*, op. cit., Vol. 3, pp. 890, 896. Enlistments had totalled 416,809; 164,030 (39.4 per cent) had come from the 2nd Military District (NSW) and 112,399 (27 per cent) from the 3rd Military District (Victoria). The ratio of enlistments to males aged 18 to 44 was respectively for each district 39.8 and 38.6 per cent, the two highest ratios in the Commonwealth. The total battle casualties during the war, including the 53,884 deaths, amounted to 213,061.
APPENDIX I

FRENCH-AUSTRALIAN LEAGUE OF HELP COMMITTEE

Patron:  
M. Chayet

Presidents:  
Madame G. Playoust  
W.A. Holman, Premier

Vice-Presidents:  
Madame J. Playoust  
Mrs Shand  
H.Y. Braddon, president, Chamber of Commerce  
Madame de Possel  
Madame Puech  
Madame Houssard  
Madame Segar  
Mrs Higginbotham  
Mrs Alfred Lee

Hon. Treasurers:  
Miss L.J. Gurney  
Mr C.A. Le M. Walker

Hon. Secretaries:  
Mrs A. Jewett  
Mlle. Soubeiran

Source: SMH, 23 December 1914. The League of Help was formed on 22 December 1914 at a meeting in the Australia Hotel. The Consul-General for France, M. Chayet, presided.
APPENDIX 2

NATIONAL BELGIAN RELIEF FUND OF NEW SOUTH WALES

President:
J.H. Cann, Labor MLA for Sturt, Colonial Secretary, later Minister for Public Works.

Vice-President:
R.W. Richards, Lord Mayor of Sydney.

Committee:
Lady Cullen
Mrs W.A. Holman
Mrs A.B. Piddington
F.E. Winchcombe MLC, President, Chamber of Commerce
E.J. Kavanagh MLC, Secretary, Labor Council of NSW
A.G.F. James, Liberal MLA for Goulburn
H.E. Pratten, President, Chamber of Manufactures
J.G. Griffin, President, Local Government Association
A.K. Trethowan, President, Shires Association.

Hon. Treasurers:
J. Russell French, general manager, Bank of NSW
T.A. Dibbs, general manager, Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney
Richard Teece, general manager, Australian Mutual Provident Society.

Hon. Secretaries:
W. Beavis, Chairman, Public Service Association
Percy Hunter, Director, Immigration and Tourish Bureau.

Source: NSWPDC, Box 7/4703, file 15/5190; SMH, 5 March 1915. Present at the inaugural meeting of the Fund committee in the Sydney Town Hall were the following:

W.A. Holman, Premier
Sir William Cullen, Chief Justice of NSW
J.C. Wright, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney
R.D. Meagher, Speaker of the Assembly
Mr Justice Ferguson
Mr Justice Pring
Mr Justice Harvey
Mr Justice Street
Mr Justice Heydon
Judge Backhouse
Sir Allen Taylor MLC
Sir Charles Mackellar MLC
A.W. Meeks MLC
C.G. Wade, Leader of the Liberal Opposition
G.R.W. McDonald, Labor MLA for Bingara
D. Levy, Liberal MLA for Darlinghurst
G. Hoskins
Neville Mayman
J.J. Cohen, Liberal MLA for Petersham
Frank Grimley
Arthur Rickard, President of Millions Club
G.T. Clarke
J.D. Fitzgerald, MLC and Vice-President of the Executive Council from 27 April 1917
Professor J.B. Peden
Fr John O'Gorman.
APPENDIX 3

RELIEF COMMITTEE FOR THE BENEFIT OF WAR VICTIMS IN POLAND

President:
Sir William Cullen, Chief Justice of NSW

Hon. Organiser:
Mrs George Earp

Hon. Treasurers:
T.A. Welch, Imperial Russian Consul
Thomas Hughes MLC, company director
George Earp MLC, colliery proprietor.

Executive Committee:
Archbishop J.C. Wright
W.A. Holman, Premier
Mrs W.A. Holman
R.W. Richards, Lord Mayor of Sydney
Lade de Miklouho Maclay
Judge Backhouse
Professor T.W.E. David
Mrs David
Mrs William McMurray
Neville Mayman
Mrs Mayman
Joseph Bradley
Mrs Hugh Munro
Madame Christian
Miss P. de Broel-Plater
Mr Karbowski
Mr J. Zawadzki.

Hon. Secretaries:
Miss J. Czaykowska
Mr C.G. Derkenne.

Source: NSWPDC, Box 7/4701, file 15/3175.
President:
W.A. Holman

Committee:
Mrs Holman
R.W. Richards, Lord Mayor of Sydney
Mrs Richards
Lady Hughes
Mrs Gordon Wesche
Eleanor Mackinnon
Kate Dwyer, Women Workers' Union
Mrs Langer Owen
Mr Hanbury Davies
Adrian Knox KC
John Stinson, solicitor
H.D. McIntosh, theatre proprietor
Barrington Miller
Neville Mayman
D. Guihen, Labor Council of NSW
J.H. Toose
G. Playoust
J. Russell French, Bank of NSW
T.A. Dibbs, Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney
Richard Teece, AMP Society
J.J. Cohen, Liberal MLA
E.B. Harkness, Under-Secretary, Premier's Dept.

Source: NSW PDC, Box 7/4705, file 15/6969. Australia Day was first held on 30 July 1915; see SMH, 31 July 1915.
APPENDIX 5

SELECTED PUBLIC SPEAKERS, EMPIRE DAY, 24 MAY 1915

Sir Gerald Strickland, Governor of NSW
Sir Joseph Carruthers MLC, former Premier of NSW
Sir William McMillan, President, British Empire League
Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart, Dean of Faculty of Medicine
Professor T.W.E. David
Professor J.B. Peden, Dean of Faculty of Law
Professor G.A. Wood
Meredith Atkinson, Director of Tutorial Classes
Dr Morris, principal examiner, Dept. of Public Instruction
Arthur Griffith, Minister of Public Instruction
D.R. Hall, Attorney-General
H.C. Hoyle, Minister for Railways
J.D. Fitzgerald, Vice-President of the Executive Council
P.E. Winchcombe MLC
J. Wilson MLC
John Storey, Labor MLA
Thomas Henley, Liberal MLA
T.J. Hoskins, Liberal MLA
Colonel Macarthur-Onslow, Liberal MLA
D. Levy, Liberal MLA
Bruce Smith, Liberal MHR

Mayors of North Sydney (W. Anderson)
Bondi (Barraclough)
Balmain (H.B. Swan)
Ashfield (Hammond)
Newtown (Frank Bamfield)
Drummoyne (A. Graff)
Marrickville (Ness)
Annandale (E. Hogan)

Rear-Admiral Sir William Creswell
Archbishop Kelly
Archbishop Wright
Rev. John Ferguson
Rev. G. Cranston
Rev. S. Best
Rev. Victor Bell
Rev. H. Crotty
Rev. Alexander Clarke
Rev. James Colwell
Rev. R. Noake
Rev. Illingworth
Rev. E.C. Percival
Rev. S.B. Reid
Rev. J.H. Wilcoxson
Rev. H.A. Pyke
Rev. W.F. Wentworth-Sheilds.

Source: SMH, 25 May 1915.
APPENDIX 6

SOLDIERS' CLUB COMMITTEE

Patron:
Colonel E.T. Wallack, Commandant, 2nd Military District

President:
Dr Antill Pockley

Vice-Presidents:
J.O. Fairfax
F.E. Winchcombe MLC

Committee:
William Brooks
Professor T.W.E. David
Dr Fiaschi
Lt-Colonel Luscombe
Robert McMillan
Miss Gladys Marks
Miss M.E. Garran
W.A. Purves
A.E. Jacques

Hon. Secretary:
Dr Mary Booth

Source: Sun, 4 April 1915. The inaugural meeting was held in the Sydney Town Hall.
APPENDIX 7

RED CROSS SOCIETY OF NSW

Officers elected, 30 November 1915:

Mrs Aronson
James Ashton MLC
Mrs Ashton
Mrs Christopher Bennett
H.Y. Braddon
J.J. Cohen MLA
E. Owen Cox
Mr Hanbury Davies
Wilfred Docker
Miss Egan
J.O. Fairfax
Miss Edith Hill
Lady Hughes
Adrian Knox KC
Mrs Shepheard Laidley
Mrs Alfred Lee
Eleanor Mckinnon
Lt-Colonel G. Lane Mullins
Mrs John Mackay
Mrs Langer Owen
Mrs J.W. Macarthur Onslow
Miss Macarthur Onslow
R.W. Richards, Lord Mayor of Sydney
Mrs Richards
Lt-Colonel Crawford Robertson
Mrs Richard Sly
Miss Consett Stephen
Mrs David Storey
Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart
Mrs C.G. Wade

Source: SMH, 1 December 1915.
APPENDIX B

CITIZENS' REFERENDUM SIX O'CLOCK ASSOCIATION

President:
L.F. Heydon MLC

Vice-Presidents:
Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart
Meredith Atkinson
H.Y. Braddon
William Brooks
J.N. Buzacott MLC
J.P. Franki
A. Sinclair MLC
Senator David Watson

General Committee:
J. Shedden Adam
F.S. Boyce, barrister
William Buckingham
W.C. Clegg
A.A.C. Cocks, Liberal MLA, businessman
Alexander Cowan
Capt. Robert Craig
R.G.I. Dent
W.R. Dovey
Arthur Dowling
H.E. Farmer
Professor C.S. Fawcett
J.R. Pirth
Alexander Gray
John Hindle
T.S. Holt
Alderman C.R. Irvine
A.E. Jacques, solicitor
George Lewis JP
G.S. Littlejohn, company director
Roland Love
Dr Donald Luker
Oswald Matthews
R.W. McFadyen
Robert McMillan
F.H. Molesworth
P.H. O'Brien
F.E. Penfold
J.A.I. Perry
Alderman Petrie
Thomas Pratt
Edward Pulsford, ex-Senator
Dr G.E. Rennie
R.J. Stuart-Robertson, Labor MLA
D.H. Souter, artist
Edward Stedman
E.H. Sully
H.L. Tress
Hon. J.T. Walker, banker, company director
Professor R.D. Watt
P.E. Winchcombe MLC, businessman
W. Winn
Professor G.A. Wood
William Wood

Hon. Secretaries:
Frank E. Pulsford
Eric N. Rowley

Hon. Treasurers:
W. Cooper
W.E. Wilson.

Source: SMH, 6 June 1916, Citizen's Referendum Association advertisement.
APPENDIX 9

UNIVERSAL SERVICE LEAGUE, PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE

President:

Professor T.W.E. David

Vice-Presidents:

Archbishop Wright
Archbishop Kelly
W.A. Holman, Premier
J.H. Cann, Minister for Public Works
D.R. Hall, Attorney-General
George Black, Colonial Secretary
Arthur Griffith, Minister for Public Instruction
W.G. Ashford, Minister for Lands
J.D. Fitzgerald MLC, Vice-President of Executive Council
Frederick Flowers, President, Legislative Council
R.D. Meagher, Speaker, Legislative Assembly
Sir Thomas Hughes MLC

* E. Farrar MLC
John Garland KC MLC
C.G. Wade MLA, Leader of Liberal Opposition
Sir Joseph Carruthers
R.W. Richards, Lord Mayor of Sydney
J.C. Watson, former Labor Prime Minister
Rev. Scott West, Moderator, Presbyterian Assembly
Rev. Joseph Woodhouse, President, Methodist Conference
Rabbi F.I. Cohen
F. Leverrier KC, Vice-Chancellor of University
H.E. Barff, Warden of University
Professor M.W. MacCallum
Professor Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart
G.A. Parkes, President, Chamber of Commerce
W. Vicars, President, Chamber of Manufactures
William Brooks, President, Employers' Federation

* Annie Golding, President, Women's Progressive Association
John Russell French, general manager, Bank of NSW
H.H. Massie, general manager, Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney

W.W. Hill, secretary, NSW Rugby Union, Australian Swimming Union

National Council of Women
Lady Hughes
Miss Macdonald
Dr Grace Boelke
Mrs Edgley
Miss Fidler
Miss Board

E.L. Davis, chairman, Stock Exchange
H.C. Ellison Rich, President, Law Institute
Samuel Hordern, President, Royal Agricultural Society
Richard Teece, general manager, AMP Society.
General Committee:

A.H.H. Aidworth
G.M. Allard, public accountant, company director
Reginald Allen, solicitor
James Ashton MLC
Meredith Atkinson, Director of Tutorial Classes, President WEA
T.R. Bavin, barrister
G.S. Beeby, barrister
Dr G.M. Long, Bishop of Bathurst
R. Broomfield, barrister
F.W. Brown, Wright Heaton and Co.
F.S. Boyce, barrister
H.Y. Braddon, manager Dalgety and Co.
Frank Bryant MLC
G.A. Burgess, Labor MLA for Burragong
H.J. Carter, ex-principal of Asham
A.L. Campbell, lawyer
J.L. Campbell KC
J.J. Cohen, Liberal MLA
A.E. D'Arcy
* Kate Dwyer, Women Workers' Union
Rev. John Ferguson
T.W. Furse, secretary, Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union
Edwin Geach
G. Georgeson
* Belle Golding, Women's Progressive Association
Dr R.R. Hardman
A.M. Hemsley, solicitor
E. Herbert
Professor E.R. Holme
John Kent, President, YMCA
E.W. Knox, general manager, Colonial Sugar Refining Co.
Dr Norman Kater
S.E. Lamb KC
Hector Lamond, manager, Australian Worker
George Lewis, secretary, Federated Millers and Mill Employees' Union
Robert Little
Clifton Love, manufacturer and merchant
E.J. Loxton KC
J.H. Maiden, botanist, university lecturer
M.W. MacCallum
E.M. Mitchell, solicitor

Stock Exchange Committee:

A.L. Mullens
A.H. North
Joseph Palmer
G.H. Partridge
F.O. Steel

G.G. Nicholson, university lecturer

Langer Owen KC
W.A. Parker, barrister
Professor J.B. Peden
Rev. C.J. Prescott, headmaster, Newington College
Dr Cecil Purser
A.G. Ralston KC
Arthur Rickard, estate agent, President of Millions Club
T. Rolin KC
H.A. Rourke
A.B. Shand KC
H.N.P. Sloman, headmaster, Sydney Grammar School
W. Soutar
* John Talbot, executive committee, Labor Council of NSW
Alex. Thomson, barrister
Claude Thompson, secretary, Amalgamated Railway and
Tramway Service Association
Professor F.A. Todd
F.T. Turner, secretary, Federated Engine Drivers and
Firemen's Association
Rev. P.S. Waddy, headmaster, King's School
F.E. Winchcombe MLC

Finance Committee:
E.M. Mitchell
H.Y. Braddon
F.S. Boyce

Hon. Treasurers:
J. Russell French
H. Lamond
G.M. Allard

Hon. Secretaries:
J.D. Fitzgerald MLC
T.R. Bavin

Source: DT, SMH, 11 September 1915.

* resignations from the league.
APPENDIX 10

MILLIONS CLUB COUNCIL, DECEMBER 1918

President:
Arthur Rickard

Vice-Presidents:
Dr Richard Arthur MLA
H.Y. Braddon MLC
William Brooks MLC
Dr W.T. Chenhall
Sir Joseph Carruthers MLC
Sir Owen Cox
W. Lowe
A.W. Meeks MLC
Senator Pratten
R.B. Orchard MHR
Archbishop Wright
Samuel Hordern

Members of Council:
R.K. Allport
Dr Burnie
David Benjamin
J.M. Dempster
W.J. Donnelly
B.J. Grogan
Sir Albert Gould
Colonel Green
Percy Hunter
Aubrey Halloran
D.K. Inglis
A.E. Jacques
T.J. Ley MLA
D. Levy MLA
D.T. Morrow
H. Bjelke-Petersen
J.B. Rickard
David Storey MLA
J.E. Toole
J.T. Wall
Chaplain Captain Wilson
R. Windeyner KC

Treasurer:
J.J. Mulligan

Secretary:
George Fitzpatrick

Source: in miscellaneous correspondence, Novar papers, NL, MS.696/7956-8558.
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J.N.H. Hume Cook papers, MS.601

J.G. Latham papers, MS.1009

Hugh Mahon papers, MS.937

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