USE OF THESES

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Political Organisation and Society in Victoria 1864-1883

(Geoffrey Bartlett.)

ERRATA SHEET 1.

Page 27, line 12 - for 'werewere' read 'were'; insert 'the' before 'country interest'
Page 33, line 12 - for 'righly' read 'rightly'
Page 34, line 10 - for 'Alred' read 'Alfred'
Page 76, note 3 - for 'editoriale' read 'editorials'
Page 93, note 41 - for 'Thompson' read 'Thomson'
Page 126, line 21 - for 'J.A.Brooke' read 'J.H. Brooke'
Page 147, note 29 - to end, 'see below, pp. 565-9'
Page 182, line 19 - for 'imbided' read 'imbibed'
Page 204, line 12 - for 'case' read 'cast'
Page 211, line 19 - for 'Burke' read 'Bourke'
Page 221, line 4 - for 'forsaw' read 'foresaw'
Page 224, line 2 - for 'statementship' read 'statesmanship'
Page 225, line 20 - for 'Burke' read 'Bourke'
Page 232, line 18 for 'Graunson' read 'Gaunson'
Page 234, line 3 - delete 'on'
Page 235, line 11 - for 'Higinbotham' read 'Higinbotham's'
Page 239, line 11 - insert 'it' before 'profited nothing'
Page 240, line 15 - insert 'of the' before 'Education Act'
Page 243, line 11 - for 'them' read 'him'
Page 260, line 7 - insert 'in' after 'Brophy'
Page 262, line 5 - for 'argument' read 'agreement'
Page 293, line 2 for 'pink line of' read 'pink line on'
Page 306, line 20 - insert 'the' before '1867-9 movement'
Page 324, line 3 - for 'Wood's' read 'Woods'
Page 382, line 1 - for 'harrassed' read 'harassed'
Page 391, line 6 - insert 'the' before 'eight hour day'
Page 405, line 18 - insert 'was' after 'eccentric'
Page 418, line 14 - for 'precedent' read 'precedent'
Page 423, note 12 - for 'his' read 'this!
Page 430, line 10 - for 'iron workers' read 'ironworkers'
Page 435, line 4 - for 'labour' read 'labour'
Page 441, line 20 - insert 'of' after 'alongside most'
Page 550, note 77 - for '1870' read '1879'
Page 593, line 3 - for 'C.M. Crawford' read 'R.M. Crawford'

(G.R. BARTLETT)
Political Organisation and Society in Victoria 1864-1883

(Geoffrey Bartlett)

ERRATA SHEET 2.

Page 49, note 50 - for '695' read '694'

Page 107, note 78 - for '699' read '698'

Pages 176 to 258 - all dates in footnotes are of the nineteenth century.

Page 180, line 21 - delete 'the'

Page 434, lines 17-25 - this quotation is also covered by the reference in note 33.

Page 442, note 47 - insert, '47. Age, 25 September 1872'

(G.R. BARTLETT)
AMENDMENT SHEET

Table of Contents and Page 178 - amend section heading to read, 'The Irish Heyday (1856-1863)'

Page 189, lines 12 - 13 - amend to read, 'Two Irish intellectuals, Moses Wilson Gray and J.J. Walsh, were especially prominent among its leaders.'

Page 190, lines 2-3 - amend to read, 'It almost seemed therefore as if the Southern Irish minority was taking over popular politics.'

Page 193, line 16 - for 'ascendancy' read 'heyday'

Page 586, lines 2-3 - amend to read, 'the first significant reform of the Council.'
A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy : The Australian National University
This thesis is based on my original research and is all my own work.

Geoffrey R. Bartlett
Canberra
12 October, 1964
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The purpose of this study is to examine the relations in Victoria between society and politics, and especially political organisation, during the period between the democratic reforms of the 'fifties and the beginning of the Labour Party. Limitations of space and time, however, have made it necessary to concentrate on 1864 to 1883. This period contains the three great constitutional battles which so marked Victorian politics, and, so far as can be ascertained, all major political organisations between the Land Convention of 1857-9 and the Labour Party. It divides conveniently into two cycles, each comprising three stages. The first was a personal ascendancy during the crises, when rigid divisions between radical and conservative parties appeared and political organisation flourished. The second was a brief interlude under an Irish Catholic Chief Secretary while the disintegrating parties of the ascendancy moved towards a great coalition which ruled for several years. There were thus two stable forms of parliamentary organisation between which Victoria alternated, in contrast with the model which Dr.
Martin found in New South Wales of two political groups divided on the basis of allegiance to two dominant leaders.

As this work necessarily deals largely with attitudes, the question frequently recurs, what was the connection between a group's experience and its politics? Was it simply one of economic interest? The conclusion here is that it was not. Even when Victorians sought to follow what they thought of as their interest, their assessment of what this required was based upon previous attitudes; a mass of fears, prejudices, assumptions and associations intervened between a situation and their reaction to it. Support for particular policies or individuals was the criterion for confidence; judgment went by association. This is not to deny the connection between a man's occupation and his politics, but simply to suggest that the connection is much more complicated than has often been assumed by writers on Australian history. Because of the variety of experience and problems among different groups, it is necessary to consider different sections of the community separately.
Three stand out in Victorian political organisation and structure: the Southern Irish, the rural community, especially the farmers of the northern wheatbelt which developed during the 'seventies, and the higher ranges of the working classes, particularly in the Melbourne artisan suburb of Collingwood.

There were also certain general problems of organisation which hampered its growth during this period: the isolation of many communities, the mobility of much of the population, local and sectional feelings, the individualism which colonial conditions fostered and the political apathy to which the country rapidly returned after the brief crises. Although certain features of the electoral system, particularly the registration machinery and the multi-member electorate, encouraged organisation, it was on a small scale and in the short term. As well as difficulties resulting from colonial conditions, organisation in Parliament and electorate was hampered by attitudes based on individualist assumptions. These limited the
permissible forms to registration committees, election committees for individual candidates or a party, and promotional organisations agitating, by normal election activities and by reasonable persuasion, for particular policies after the general model of the Anti-Corn Law League.

Such attitudes prevailed as long as they did largely because the colonial situation fostered political disorganisation, but partly because the experience of the businessmen and professionals who dominated politics for most of the period made them especially willing to accept the conventional models, with which they had achieved, it seemed, some success. Men of lower social status, however, had begun their political careers not in Parliament but in agitation, and had not achieved great success in business. Finding themselves thwarted under the old system, they were more ready to adopt different methods; seeing politics from the local rather than the parliamentary end, they were more concerned to control representatives than to maintain their independence.
In 1877, after one of them, Graham Berry, had been provoked into an especially successful agitation, these men at last entered Parliament in large numbers and obtained power. The parliamentary caucus came into much more regular use than before, and in the National Reform and Protection League, which combined the functions of a party election headquarters with those of a promotional body, the first party organisation appeared which showed signs of becoming really effective. Remaining powerful for three years, it began to encounter new organisational problems, particularly in its relations with the parliamentary party and with the provincial branches; it therefore began to adapt the structure inherited from the earlier small promotional organisations, which had rarely spread beyond Melbourne, and whose life had rarely exceeded a year. It early made widespread use of pre-selection by ballot and other methods, developed the annual delegate conference and tried to set the relationship of Council and branches on a formal basis. Meanwhile, it provoked conservatives into creating political
forms and methods particularly suited to the conventional view of politics. All these developments had been foreshadowed, some in the Land Convention, based on Irish models, some in the Loyal Liberal Reform Association of the 1868 Darling Grant crisis, when radicals had provided the merchants' and professionals' political organisers. The Convention, however, had not been allied to a ministry with an overwhelming radical majority, and during the 'sixties the radical methods, regarded as emergency measures, were soon abandoned by the parliamentarian.

Even the Reform League soon disappeared, however. Not until society had grown together more, and ideas about the relationship of sectional organisations and politics altered enough to allow an alliance between a permanent sectional organisation and a parliamentary party, was permanent party organisation possible. This, perhaps, was the most important innovation of the Labour Party. Until then, large scale organisation was possible only during those times of great political excitement, for which Victoria was noted. These resulted from social conflicts which had parallels elsewhere, but which provoked much more powerful political
reactions in Victoria than elsewhere. Partly, perhaps, the especially large number and percentage of the population which had arrived during the gold-rushes gave Victoria a more powerful democracy. At the same time, the forces of resistance were also exceptionally powerful in the possession of a Legislative Council of remarkable strength and willingness to use this to the utmost. As it was the House exclusively of the rich, and particularly of the least popular or liberal group in Victoria, the great pastoralists, its clashes with the Assembly tended to unite all men of low status against it, temporarily polarising and exciting the normally dull and fragmented political society. Consequently it was the institution and the section of the community which was the least fertile in political organisation which was largely responsible for producing conditions favourable to the development of organisation in other sections.

By the end of the period, however, with the first significant reform of the Council achieved, with the decline of the goldfields and the increasing separation of farmers from the radical alliance, as they turned increasingly to sectional action, the basis of the radicalism of the goldfields generation
was disappearing as the new generation began to assume control.
CHAPTER 1:

THE LEGISLATURE AND THE COURSE OF EVENTS
I. Problems of a Premier.

In 1863 Charles Gavan Duffy, Minister of Lands in the third O'Shanassy Government, tried to increase squatting rents, as his Land Act had failed to do so. A number of ministerialists, largely interested in squatting, joined the radical opposition under Richard Heales to defeat the Ministry. The Government expected a mere Cabinet reshuffle, dropping Duffy and accepting some of "the Scotch element".¹ In fact, O'Shanassy never again held office; the McCulloch ascendancy, which was to last some eight years, was beginning.

McCulloch, having risen in a Glasgow mercantile house, had been sent to open a Melbourne branch in 1853, at the age of 35. He had soon set up a partnership with Robert Sellar, and prospered in squatting as well as commerce. He was elected first to the old Legislative Council, then to the new Assembly in 1856. There he had been prominent in the rise and fall of ministries, and had received

frequent offers of ministerial appointments. For all his early and sustained eminence, however, he remains one of the most impenetrable of Victorian politicians. An effective debater, highly regarded as administrator and financier, he allowed only his public self into his speeches; perhaps his public and private selves were identical. He was the commercial politician par excellence, cautious, moderate, looking to the profit, convinced, perhaps, that none could run Victoria so well as he. To be in the centre, to work by conciliating opponents between whose positions he habitually saw little difference, was his political instinct; he pursued this course with such success that he had no rival throughout his succession of Ministries, and when he fell in 1871, it was not because another more powerful than he had arisen. "Policitc, cautious and meticulous", the skilful conciliator, the master manoeuvrer, McCulloch attracted little affection but many supporters.

2. For McCulloch's earlier career, see G. Serle, The Golden Age, pp. 252-263, passim.
His Ministry, formed of Healesites and "the Scotch element", bristled with talents on the one side capable of great development, and on the other well-tried. Its main aim, however, to settle the land question, was frustrated by the Legislative Council, which rejected Heales' bills of 1863 and 1864. In the latter year, after Heales' death had led to his replacement as Minister of Lands by James Grant, a radical Scots solicitor, McCulloch went to the country with a three-point programme, the latest Government land bill, Council reform and tariff-revision. When Parliament re-assembled, the Ministerial benches were crowded, the Opposition half-empty. Moreover, the Opposition was divided into several hostile groups. O'Shanassy had but three followers; most of the Opposition was composed of dissident radicals. Among these was one tight-knit group of a half-dozen, associated with a small radical

5. The Opposition contained 22 out of 78 members. Estimates of groups in the Assembly have been based on examination of their voting record, and on analyses and other information in newspapers.
organisation called the Australasian Reform
League, and voting with unusual frequency and
cohesion.

McGuloch's position was weaker than it
looked, however. Half his supporters sat in the
Ministerial Corner, and showed by their voting-
behaviour that they could not be relied on in small
things, and might easily defeat the Government on
a chance issue. His first problem, therefore,
was one which plagued all Parliaments, the
problem of the independent member. The ideal
of independence permeated political life. Where
localism was so strong, moreover, and local needs
were so great and so dependent upon the Government
for satisfaction, the M.P.'s function as agent
for his constituents was given renewed force. The
influence of local questions was a favourite topic
among men who thought less of the pressing needs
of the provinces than of an ideal of politics. 6
To them, 7 Parliament should be a collection of
individuals chosen for good character and abilities.

6. E.g. Higinbotham, Argus, 4 November 1875.
7. Argus, 19 April 1876. And cf. Kerferd's
conservative lawyer's exposition of the received
doctrine, V.P.D., Vol. 28, p. 346.
to consult the general welfare, setting up an Executive Committee in which they had confidence, sitting in judgment on its actions, and replacing it by another when it lost their confidence.

Parliament must control the Government, not Government the Parliament. Moreover, if the best was to be obtained from the system, each must be free to exercise his own judgment. His dignity as a man, and the seriousness of his functions, demanded it. All admitted, however, that a cry of 'independence' could be a cloak for self-seekers. Such members, a stabilising influence when a Ministry was firmly in power, began to desert when its grasp seemed to be slipping, and fled from it once it had fallen;

8. Geelong Advertiser, 13 October 1868. "In any case of difficulty" (said one candidate) "I would try my explanation before my constituents, and would take their advice; but it would rest with myself whether I would resign, if I received a requisition to do so. I will not be the tool of any party, but assert my prerogative as a man. (Applause.) And I hold that unless your representative has some little spirit, he is not likely to be of much use to you. I may remark, however, that no man having any sense of honour would continue to occupy a position when those who placed him in it desired him to vacate it." The speaker, R. de B. Johnstone, a saddler, although defeated on this occasion, soon entered Parliament for Geelong, and was one of the most reliable radicals in the House. His seat was always secure until his death.
found itself in a serious minority once it had gone into Opposition.9

Well might McCulloch say to his electors,10

"I trust --- that not only this constituency, but every constituency throughout the country, will so unite on some particular leading questions - such as the settlement of the land question, for instance - as not to allow the candidates to run from the point, and say, 'We have this crotchet, or we have that crotchet'; because if every member of the House has a particular crotchet of his own on the subject, it will be impossible to carry any measure into law. The people must nail down the candidates on this point - will they support the Ministerial land policy or not?"

He was appealing to the other tradition of Parliament, which directly contradicted the ideal of independence; both ideas found favour in the same minds, and no more could be expected than a balance between them. If a representative was the man of good character he should be, he would keep his word. Having declared his views on the Government's policy and any other questions which interested him or his constituents, he would stick to them. Most candidates, however, emphasised that they supported 'measures, not men'; candidates promised to support the

9. E.g. after Duffy's Ministry (1871) and Berry's (1875). And cf. Argus, 7 January 1872 - "To our shame there is always a band of free lances in our Legislature whose political belief consists in siding with the party that has the distribution of the plunder."

10. Argus, 20 September 1864.
Government only as long as it adhered to its current 'principles', and whether it was doing that, especially on questions which had not arisen during the election, they alone could decide.  

It was often conceded that party was necessary for the proper functioning of representative government. As one politician told his electors, "Party was a necessary ingredient in constitutional government. A party consisted of men who thought the same, who had the same objects in view, and were influenced by the same principles."

It was commonly complained, in fact, that parties did not exist in Victoria because men with the same 'principles' sat on opposite sides of the House, divided merely into ins and outs. Sometimes, it was alleged, matters were still worse. The Argus early bewailed the lack of "that wholesome balance of powers which is exercised at home --- by the struggle of two broadly defined parties. Our political distinctions in this colony are based,

11. Age, 8 January 1876, tries to strike a sensible working balance between the ideas of M.L.A.s as representatives and as delegates.
12. Argus, 8 August 1865.
13. E.g. Argus, 1 August 1876, 25 April 1872.
unfortunately, not on party but on class ---." In this case, the national interest was forgotten in the struggle for class advantage and 'class legislation', which plundered one group for the benefit of another. Worst of all, party could be little more than a group of predators seeking no more than the spoils of office. Whenever important legislation was before Parliament, therefore, there was usually a demand to treat it as a national question, transcending party divisions. 15 Let the normal struggle for place and pay, the parliamentary war-game, cease, for here was serious business.

McCulloch had to foster the belief that he was engaged on serious business, while encouraging the idea that his following formed a party in the Burkean sense. His problem was the greater because some two-thirds of this Parliament had not sat in the last, and so lacked the habit of united action

15. E.g. V.P.D., Vol. 28, p. 588 - "Surely, if there is one thing that should, on an occasion like the present, be more absent than another from the proceedings of a deliberative body like ours, it is a spirit of party. It is the interests pure and simple of the country, and not the question who is to occupy the Treasury Bench, that we ought to be considering." The same views were expressed by a large number of members during the debate, on Berry's 1878 Reform Bill; it was apparently one of the few things on which both sides agreed.
or community of views; nor had he or his ministers yet acquired the national stature which was later to add such prestige to their views. Finally, the land question was one on which 'crotchets' were especially numerous, and once it was settled, he had to face, in the tariff, a question which transected divisions on the major question. In the arts of managing a majority he was well-skilled. To control a party effectively, however, he must be able to influence their chances of re-election, to bring outside pressure to bear upon them. The effectiveness with which a Chief Secretary could do this varied greatly, for Governments could not be certain of a dissolution if defeated, least of all early in a Parliament; if an alternative Government seemed available, it was generally expected to be given its chance. ¹⁶

McCulloch and his Government had already tried mobilising public opinion by addressing the country through their constituents: it was capable of further exploitation, but this was hampered by

¹⁶. The full principles governing dissolutions at this time are discussed in G.P. McCormack, Victorian Governors and Responsible Government, 1856-1892, (Mel. M.A.), c.8.
political convention. Each electorate was expected to make its own decisions, without outside interference, least of all from the Government; stump-tours were therefore generally condemned. This attitude was shared by McCulloch, always the Chairman of Directors, the parliamentarian to whom agitation was distasteful. His Attorney-General, George Higinbotham, the brilliant and passionate orator who could have had no peer in the stump-tour, was similarly inhibited, often refusing invitations to speak, when his party and his causes stood to benefit, because it would constitute interference. Principle inhibited him as much as custom and inclination inhibited his chief.

The next method suited McCulloch better: operating on electorate and representatives by use of patronage. This took innumerable forms, ranging from temporary work for individuals to the routing of a major railway. Ex-ministers became judges or Agents-General. Lawyers were employed on drafting bills, and Royal Commissions had to be staffed. For friends and relations of M.L.A.s and deserving constituents, there were regular jobs in the public

17. Argus, 10 May 1869.
service. The Civil Service Act had tried to control appointments, but left a loophole in the supernumerary system, intended to supply extra hands for sudden pressures, but which became a system of permanent temporary appointments. 18 There was also a large number of posts to which the Act did not apply, particularly in Lands and Railways, and in electoral appointments. None attempted to deny that these were used for political purposes. Grant, as a witness in a trial involving a Government supporter, stated that "All things being equal, it is the rule of the Department to allow the minor patronage to be dispensed by members of Parliament in the districts concerned who support the Government." 19

This system had its political disadvantages, however. It absorbed much of a member's and a Minister's time, 20 and it was impossible to satisfy more than a very limited number. One Minister of Railways, 21 no doubt with some exaggeration, told

18. V.P.D., Vol. 43, pp. 659-669
19. Argus, 6 May 1867 (Sands v. Armstrong)
20. This was one of the main reasons advanced for giving patronage to independent boards. For a discussion of the whole question, cf. V.P.D., Vol. 35, pp. 1492ff, esp. Patterson's remarks, pp. 1502ff.
one applicant that he was the four thousand and first in line for a particular job. The only area in which patronage was practically unlimited, in fact, was the Bench of Magistrates; consequently, as The Age put it, \(^{22}\) "That an Administration should make a batch of J.P.'s the day before it goes out of office is come to be regarded as natural as that a man should make his will before he dies."

Much of the patronage arose in Departments which existed because of the Government's role as landlord and as development authority for necessary projects which private enterprise would not undertake. These functions, and the desperate need for development expenditure in many areas, also multiplied opportunities for a black market in land disposal, for individuals, and for localities in development projects. "Land is the bribery fund of the Ministry", Niel Black complained, with, it seems, some justification.\(^{23}\) Ministerial discretion, the magic sword upon which Grant stumbled, was double edged;

\(^{22}\) Age, 15 August 1876.

intended to slay the dragon of land monopoly, it could carve up the land among the Government's friends, whether great squatters or publicans.

The Government also had flexible control over works. Even when the list of projects had been approved by Parliament, it could still put proposals in the areas of recalcitrant representatives among projects which, for departmental reasons, it had been impossible to start. Once again, there was little attempt at concealment. William Tytherleigh, M.L.A., added to the Berry Government's fame when, in the presence of ministers, he told his constituents that they

"were not --- the stuck-up nob we had been accustomed to. If he went into the office of the Minister of Education for anything, the answer was, 'All right, my dear boy.' Mr. Longmore also placed confidence in him, knowing he would not bring a case before him without foundation, and so with all the members of the Ministry."

These methods, however, had not prevented ministerial instability before, nor, probably, would they have maintained McCulloch in office with only

24. Members fostered this power very often by voting more projects than Ways and Means. V.P.D., Vol. 21, p. 696.
25. Argus, 8 December 1877.
brief interludes until 1871. Paradoxically, the answer to his first problem lay in his second, the Legislative Council. Intended as a check upon the democracy, this was as near perfect for its function as constitutional arrangements could make it. Property qualifications for members and electors ensured that it would be elected from among the rich by the well-to-do.26 Electoral provinces were so large that campaigning was very expensive, and as the drawing of boundaries favoured country areas, an undue percentage of those elected came from the most conservative section of the upper classes, the great pastoralists.27 The House was indissoluble: its members were elected for ten years, one fifth retiring every two. There were no constitutional arrangements for forcing it to withdraw its veto. Any Bill to amend its constitution or powers must receive an absolute majority

26. G. Serle, *op.cit.*, pp. 147-8, summarises this and other sections of the constitution.

in both Houses; the only alternative was to persuade the reluctant Imperial Parliament to amend the Constitution Act.

It was generally accepted that the Council should bow to public opinion, but the form which this principle took made it almost valueless. As the function of a second chamber was to prevent 'hasty legislation', to prevent the democracy, which, conservatives held, contained the unstable elements of the population, doing in times of excitement what it might regret later, the Council had every justification for resisting strong public pressure, and when agitation had subsided, claiming that the public had thought better of it. Some even spoke as if the mass of the people could not be counted among the public.

"It had been asserted," said Charles Sladen, leader of the Council during most of the constitutional crises, "that the opinion of the country was in favour of the (land) bill, but he denied that there was any proof of this. Under universal suffrage, those electors who talked most loudly were, generally speaking, the most uneducated;"

28. *E.g. Argus*, 6 March 1874 - "While the Assembly represents the popular will, the Council should represent the sober reason and deliberate judgment of the people." Note that at this stage even *The Argus* went on to suggest that the Council as then constituted was failing to do this.

and if honourable members concluded that the bill had the support of the country from anything which had been said during the recent elections they were much deceived. No doubt the class who had the least capital would be the most favourable to the bill, because the bill thoroughly ignored capital."

The Council ignored public opinion sufficiently to reject McCulloch's bill to reform it by halving property qualifications, but despite Sladen and others like him, and the absence of strong public agitation, the land bill eventually passed. The hopelessness of seeking a return to the auction system, as the Council had recommended before the election, had been demonstrated not only by the Assembly elections, but also by the periodical Council elections, which had favoured the Government, and so increased the liberal component of the Council. Moreover, the Government had made further concessions to the Council's views by including auction provisions in the bill, and resisting demands for increases in squatting rents. Many pastoralists had either secured much of their land already, or hoped to evade Grant's bill.

McCulloch now had to pass his tariff, which reduced duties on tea, sugar and opium, abolished the gold export duty, and increased duties on numerous other articles. Fearing that the Council, already hostile because of Grant's skilful use of administrative powers to prevent evasion of the Land Act, would heed the mercantile clamour, he tried to use the only parliamentary method of coercing the Council: he decided to tack the tariff onto the Appropriations Bill.\textsuperscript{32} The Constitution Act, attempting to reproduce in Victoria the financial relations of the Houses of Parliament, provided that the Council could reject but not amend financial legislation. The House of Lords had not then dared to reject an Appropriations Bill, but the Council now did. The relations of the Houses, which previously had aroused little interest, suddenly monopolised attention.

The contrast with the House of Lords was frequently made explicitly or implicitly.

\textsuperscript{32} McCulloch's and other people's motives and positions are discussed more fully below, pp. 90ff.
"The real danger to this country," said Higinbotham, "consists in the selfishness - in the want of education - in the want of a liberal tone of thought and character - that marks the wealthy class of this colony. It is a small class - a very small class, but enormously powerful, and its power is derived chiefly from a monopoly of the public property. This class enjoys wealth which it has not inherited, and very many of its members are ignorant men, and have all the sordidness of character which ignorance entails."

He exaggerated the Council's lack of education, but it was true that few of ability or political experience ever sat in the Council. The impregnability of their position encouraged irresponsibility, and the tendency of practically all Governments, when they included M.L.C.s at all, was to give them the more insignificant portfolios. Few M.L.A.s moved to the Council; those who did were usually nonentities or defeated conservatives often eager to hurl thunderbolts upon

their old enemies from another place.34

Lacking the political experience and responsibility of the Lords, the Council also lacked their social responsibility and easy assumption of leadership. The Victorian magnates had not come to their wealth and status easily, nor grown up to take it for granted. They lacked the paternalist tradition of the happy estate, which mitigated some of the evils of the English country class system;35 where the Lords met tenants, small freeholders, tradespeople and farm workers bred to submission in their varying degrees, and were regarded as leaders of country interest, the Niel

34. The leadership of the Council usually fell to old conservative politicians. Of the first Ministry under responsible government, the leader, Haines, entered the Council after his defeat for the Assembly in 1864, but died early in 1866. His former colleagues of 1856, T.H. Fellows and Charles Sladen, became M.L.C.s in 1858 and 1864 respectively, and held the leadership in turn, until Sladen left for England in 1868, and Fellows resigned to lead the Constitutionalists in the Assembly. The lead was then taken by O'Shanassy, who had taken over Fellows' old seat, until he resigned to stand for the Assembly in 1874; failing to be elected then, he was successful in 1877 and remained there until 1883; although he had been Haines' main opponent in the late 'fifties, they had been colleagues in the Ministry McCulloch had defeated in 1863. Sladen returned to the Council in 1875, and continued to lead it until he retired in 1882. Apart from these three, only nine ex-M.L.A.s entered the Council between 1856 and its reform in 1882.

35. Hanham, Elections and Party Management, c. 1-4, passim, and Kiddle, Men of Yesterday, s.II and c.14 and 15, passim, would afford quite a detailed comparison.
Blacks and William Campbells had met mobs of diggers ruining their lands, selectors out to break up the basis of their lives, or to help land sharks fleece them, and hired men outrageously independent and demanding. Whereas large numbers of landowners and sons of noble houses sat in the Commons, relatively few squatters could gain a seat in the Assembly, nor did many now try. By the 'seventies, if not earlier, pastoralists hardly even bothered to vote for the Assembly.36 The separation of the Houses was about as absolute as it could be. M.L.A.s included few of really low status, but by 1866 virtually all were townsman.37 However, bankers and merchants, often tied closely by ownership or financial participation to pastoralism, allied socially and by marriage with the squatters, now, as a result of the tariff, formed a loose alliance with them. Suddenly, the conflict between Government and Opposition and between the Houses had become practically a battle between men of high status and low.

37. For the composition of the Assembly during the crises of the 'sixties, see Crowley, op.cit., p. 139.
A similar polarisation took place in the Assembly. The tariff had cost McCulloch the support of eleven M.L.A.s, of whom four were pastoralists, four merchants and three goldfields representatives. The tack lost him three more pastoralists and another goldfields man. When he took measures of doubtful constitutionality to maintain the public credit, he lost a pastoralist, two more merchants and another from the diggings. At the same time, he was gaining support among the radical opposition; the centre of his support was shifting to the left, and declining socially, for although he retained the confidence of several of his own status, the radicals generally came from the lower middle class and the lower ranks of the professions. There were signs, however, that his new allies might be unreliable. Graham Berry, a Healesite protectionist who owned a small suburban newspaper, and opposed the 1863 coalition, attacked his handling of the crisis as being too cautious. Perhaps anxious for his majority, perhaps simply regarding an

**Merchants** - Blackwood, Moore, Harker, Houston, Creswick, Cohen.
**Goldfields Representatives** - Carpenter, Zeal (engineers), Kerferd (brewer turning lawyer), Gillies (independent means?) and Howard - who described himself in his nomination as simply a 'quartz miner', was apparently the only one of these who was lower class.
election as the final appeal, McCulloch obtained a dissolution.

Since the rejection of the Budget, the country had been in uproar. Members and radical militants declaimed against the Council, and discovered virtues in their conservative Chief Secretary. The elections brought him a greatly increased majority, so that his supporters now outnumbered his opponents by three to one. It was also a majority heavily committed to supporting, not just a measure, but the People's Ministry and its leader. The Council had achieved for McCulloch what the routine measures had failed to do.
II. The First Cycle.

The popular hero, however, was not McCulloch but Attorney-General, George Higinbotham, an orator without peer. Insanely principled, somewhat priggish, handsome and personally charming, a Sir Galahad bred from the Protestant Ascendancy of Ireland, he set his lance against Collins Street, and the Western District, and the crowds ran cheering after him.

The crisis ended, however, not with a knightly triumph, but with a commercial compromise which left the Council's powers untouched. The Council had even won a victory in another respect. Governor Darling, who had assented to the Government's doubtful expedients for maintaining payments, and been increasingly attacked by the Constitutionalist, had become so partisan in despatches that he was recalled. Numerous public meetings expressed sympathy and urged Parliament to pass a grant in his favour. The Assembly passed appropriate resolutions but the grant, made ostensibly to Lady Darling to evade Colonial

1. A detailed account of this and the subsequent crisis, with a discussion of the constitutional points involved, is to be found in Crowley, op.cit.; or, more briefly and accessibly in R. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics: A Study of Eastern Australia, 1850-1910, c.3.
Service regulations, had to be delayed to see if the evasion was permissible. When Darling left, cheering crowds attended him to his ship. 2

Parliament was prorogued for eight months. Politics cooled off; the Ministry underwent a few changes, which allowed McCulloch to take in one of his more capable former radical critics. 3 Nevertheless, there were rumours of a new protectionist Opposition, centred around the representatives for the Geelong area. 4 C.E. Jones, a brilliant organiser and speaker, completely unscrupulous, most colourful of villains, had resigned as whip and gone into opposition because he had not been given office. 5 The revenue was not encouraging; farmers around Melbourne and Geelong were pressing for agricultural protection. Nor was the new Land Act working well, for despite Grant's ingenuity, the land was still falling to the squatter. 6

2. Argus, 8 May 1866.
3. Macgregor replaced Sullivan as Minister of Mines, whose health was poor, but retained a portfolio without office. Bindon replaced Michie as Minister of Justice after the latter had lost his seat for St. Kilda, the main upper-class residential area.
5. Argus, 9 November 1866.
However, the crisis predicted for the new session did not materialise. The Government's majority, on major questions, had decreased only from 50-20 to 45-25. The Budget, however, which slightly raised some duties and covered a wider range of articles, began the Government's troubles. Its majorities were falling; the small corn duty was passed by only five votes. Rumours of dubious land transactions were heard; a Quearing of Titles Bill which passed its second reading against the Government, and was eventually shelved by two votes only, was rightly suspected as a squatter intrigue. Higinbotham, having conducted a Commission into education, produced an anti-clerical bill which pleased nobody and had to be withdrawn. Parliament was drifting, the Ministry was not wholly in control, but the radical and constitutionalist Oppositions were unable to combine, and unlikely to succeed if they did.

7. Motions of no confidence, moved by Geelong protectionist members, defeated on 30 January and 28 February 1867, 42-24 and 45-24. Figures in text will usually be rounded, because on practically no occasion could a full vote be obtained, because on a given issue there were usually one or two who voted differently from usual.


Then, in July, the news arrived that Darling had left the colonial service, so that the grant could be paid. On 6 August, it passed the Assembly by 42 votes to 15. As the Council prepared to reject it, McCulloch was obliged, if he was to retain office, to tack it to the Appropriation Bill, which the Council rejected. Another series of public meetings began, but these were generally less well-attended than those of 1865-6, and the crisis was postponed during Prince Alfred's visit. When negotiation failed to settle the crisis, the Governor granted a dissolution.

The Government was returned with much the same majority as in 1866; but for Catholic opposition to the Education Bill, led by Duffy, the Constitutionalists would have been annihilated. The radical opposition had either returned to the fold, or been crushed. A fortnight later, the Government resigned. The Colonial Secretary, the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, to keep the Governor out of party politics, had ordered him not to send the necessary message to the Assembly suggesting the grant

11. *The Age*, 21 February 1868, estimated 60-18, but when *The Argus* claimed 21 Constitutionalists, admitted (The *Age*, 22 February 1868) that there were two or three doubtfuls. The voting suggests 20 Constitutionalists, the rest practically solidly ministerialist.

12. Below, pp. 209-213
until he was assured it would be presented in a form which would let the Council consider it on its merits. After prolonged negotiations, the Governor found another Government, led by Sladen, the only M.L.C. to hold high office. The crisis, which had failed to take fire, now exploded. Public meetings were numerous, well-attended and vociferous; two ministers were defeated, and the majority flaunted its mastery of the Assembly. The agitation, coordinated by the new Loyal Liberal Reform Association, which rapidly spread all over the colony, mounted in intensity; a huge meeting in Melbourne, attended by delegates from provincial centres, threatened a national Convention. Suddenly, next day, news arrived that Darling had rejoined the colonial service, and his wife could no longer accept the grant. The crisis was over, the Government resigned, McCulloch resumed office. The Council passed an Act reducing property-qualifications for its members and electors, but otherwise the crisis had achieved nothing.

13. C.O. 309/84, No. 1, 1 January 1868. S. of S. to Governor.

14. For this agitation, and the L.L.R.A. in general, see below, c.6, s.1.

15. 32 Vic., No. 334
Discontent reappeared almost at once in the Government party. Used to consultation about every move, it was incensed to have the list of new Ministers presented to it as a fait accompli, the more, perhaps, because several of the new ministers had no established reputation above theirs. Two of them had lately been scheming against McCulloch. This may have been one of McCulloch's reasons for choosing them. He may also have chosen them from the radical wing because it was there that he saw the greatest danger. He had also lost his best insurance against another radical revolt in Higinbotham's refusal to take more than token office in a Cabinet not prepared to continue fighting the Council.  

Discontent came to little, however, as all awaited Grant's bill to apply throughout the colony the system of free selection before survey, on easier terms, and controlled by ministerial discretion, which he had instituted in 1866 under delegated

17. C.E. Jones, now Minister of Railways, and G.V. Smith, Postmaster-General. (Argus, 5-8 March 1869, evidence in Alexander v. Jones; for Smith, Argus, 8 February 1868.)
18. Vice-President of the Board of Land and Works, a post which he resigned at the start of 1869. For his chagrin at the outcome of the crisis, see Argus, 16 August 1868.
powers. He remained, perhaps, the Ministry's last claim to radical support. Grant's presence in the Cabinet was especially valuable once C.E. Jones was first suspected, then proved, to have had corrupt dealings with a ring of squatters. Before his guilt was proved, he resigned seat and office, to be re-elected by Ballarat West; when, with an accomplice, he was expelled from the House, he persuaded them that he was misunderstood, the victim of a plot, or no worse than the rest, and won again. As his opponent had been another minister, Vale, who had resigned to contest the election, there were now two ministerial vacancies.

These McCulloch held vacant while the land bill was before the House, to add to the inducements to fidelity contained in imminent railway legislation. Soon he had need of his precautions. When the two leaders of the squatters' ring were released on a technicality, from the prison to which Parliament had sent them, radical suspicions of the squatter-merchant Chief Secretary had increased. Then the land bill confirmed suspicions by proposing to

19. Below, c.4, s.III.
continue the squatting tenure another ten years. Although the Bill was never in danger, there was a good deal of cross-voting on its provisions.

Then the names of the new ministers were announced. One was the leader of the Loyal Liberal Reform Association, popular but not a member of either House. Grant was estranged because of an alleged attempt\(^{21}\) to have him put away until cured of alcoholism; Higinbotham had resigned in January. McCulloch was at last defeated.

The new Ministry was headed by John Macpherson, a native-born squatter who had generally supported McCulloch. The Opposition, some of which were included in a Government otherwise formed from radical rebels, agreed to support him for that session, while the land bill, much amended in the Council, was seen through. In the New Year, the Government would be judged on its merits.\(^{22}\) Constitutionalist support was barely adequate; two ministers were defeated, and although it survived the session, the Government majority was precarious.\(^{23}\)

21. Argus, 8 September 1869; Age, 9 September 1869.
22. Argus, 17 September 1869.
23. At times, only one or two. (Argus, 23-24 December 1869.)
During the recess, ministerial vacancies were filled by two Constitutionalists - an old land-radical and a liberal lawyer - and one radical, Berry. All were re-elected. When Parliament met, however, the Ministry was defeated on Berry's budget; two or three radicals deserted, and half the Constitutionalists, alarmed by Berry's talk about protection, abstained.24 There was talk of a dissolution, but Macpherson thought so ill of his colleagues that he refused to seek one without a Cabinet reshuffle.25 McCulloch, free of a number of his previous radical supporters, could now appeal to Constitutionalists as the safe man. He formed a Ministry not conservative, but equally not radical. According to the former Minister of Railways, "it had all been selected from the upper crust, who had got few sympathies with the people."26 The meeting Longmore was addressing, however, was small, and demonstrated that it still supported McCulloch.

He had nevertheless begun the process of disillusionment by taking for his Minister of Lands, not Grant, but Macpherson. His appointment was unpopular, and his administration of the Lands Office

25. *Argus*, 16 April 1870.
made his unpopularity increase. However, McCulloch had neutralised opposition by winning over its leader. Parliament drifted towards a dissolution whose main interest seemed likely to be the effects of payment of members, introduced on a private member's bill as a three-year experiment.

McCulloch intended his secular education bill for the main issue. It failed to dominate, and his party, for the first time since 1864, lacked an organisation. The absence of clear party lines, and the introduction of payment, brought out unprecedented numbers of candidates. McCulloch was hardly considered a liberal now; Higinbotham, however, would not come forward as radical leader, and in any case lost his seat. Nobody else could take his place: Grant was declining, as drink took its toll. The Constitutionalists were fragmented, and, apart from Duffy and his Irish allies, tended towards McCulloch. His power seemed secure.

In some respects, the new Parliament resembled that of 1864. New men, generally somewhat higher

29. Below, c.6, s.I.
socially than in the previous two Parliaments, crowded the Ministerial Corner. Now, however, there was no conflict with the Council to polarise the House and maintain McCulloch's majority. Once again, there was a revenue problem, in face of a recession; increased duties were proposed, coupled with a property tax. Some radicals, including Government supporters, demanded higher duties, some alleged the property tax would harm selectors; McCulloch's amendment to prevent this failed to satisfy them. Constitutionalists objected to increased protection. Members on all sides opposed the property tax. Seven of the twenty-three remaining McCullochites voted against it, with twenty-one of the thirty-one new members, eleven Constitutionalists, seven dissident radicals and two doubtfuls. McCulloch received fourteen votes from old supporters, nine from new members and one doubtful. He was crushingly defeated but the structure of Parliament was in chaos.

Duffy, who had only recently been thinking of the Speakership, was sent for as the most

prominent and experienced among the Opposition. The first Irish interlude began. An Irish free trade radical, Duffy stood some chance of appealing to several groups, and could hope for toleration from new members. By making Berry Treasurer, however, he opted for one side, as, with the revenue difficulty, he must. Berry increased the maximum duties to 20%; many old McCullochites supported him, but Constitutionalists began to oppose the Government. Then Duffy's other measures began to run into difficulties. The Council, having passed Berry's tariff, determined to destroy a Ministry which included Duffy and Grant; they were cried on by Duffy's old enemy, O'Shanassy, who, having abandoned the Assembly in 1866, had entered the Council in 1868 and was now its leader.

31. The choice was the Governor's; he, like McCulloch, regarded it as improper for the outgoing Chief Secretary to advise on his successor. C.O.309/100, Confidential, 7914 Victoria, Governor to S. of S.

32. His Ministry almost suggests such an attempt; it contained apart from Duffy, two Catholics (Walsh and O'Grady), three radicals (Berry, Longmore, Grant), two Constitutionalists (McLellan, O'Grady), and two new members (Walsh, Spensley).

33. Below, pp.219-20. And cf. Black Papers, Black to Gladstone, 4 August 1871: "--- when you think we have got so far as to have Duffy for Chief with Grant for his henchman you may believe anything of us."
Late in the session, while having difficulty with the Assembly, Duffy threatened to appeal to the people. During the recess, he seemed to be carrying out his threat in a triumphal provincial banqueting tour. There were rumours of combinations between former McCullochites and Constitutionalists.

When Parliament re-assembled, the seating showed numbers about even; the debate on the Address showed the Opposition better organised under James Francis, McCulloch's last Treasurer. Like his former chief, he was a merchant prosperous enough to devote his time to politics; he too was a parliamentarian, not an agitator. He lacked, however, McCulloch's relish for manoeuvre, his ferocious ambition. He could be pugnacious, but possessed a strong streak of decency and a touch of humility. Although conservative by temperament, he gradually became a reformer of the undemonstrative, businesslike variety. He was not plagued with principles, like Higinbotham, nor did he wear a tattered heart upon his sleeve, like Berry. In speech he was the antithesis of these two diverse masters, halting, involved and obscure.

34. E.g. Argus, 22 December 1871.
35. Argus, 31 January 1872.
36. Argus, 2 May 1872.
An excellent lieutenant or leader of a coalition, he needed quiet times and fair dealing to show his capabilities.

He now condemned the Government's policy for lack of any reference to education. In his speech, however, he brought out all the animus which many felt for Duffy. The Chief Secretary was a fine talker, but incompetent, and had struck at the authority of Parliament by his provincial tour. The Government barely survived the division. Immediately, a motion was moved condemning their use of patronage. The subject was safer, and one on which members had no pledges or scruples to consider. A handful changed sides; the Ministry was defeated by five votes. Duffy was refused a dissolution, as another Government was clearly available. Encouraged by public demonstrations arranged by a hastily-assembled radical association, Duffy prepared to fight the ministerial elections; perhaps because he had overestimated his support, perhaps because of his Bishop's intervention in politics, he failed completely. 38.

So began the last stage of the cycle, the coalition which dominated politics for five years, and which represented the norm to which Victorian politics tended in quiet times. The Ministry, formed of McCullochites and Constitutionalists, soon attracted the support of many who had no strong preference for any other Government, and radicals who soon found that so far from being a rich man's plot, the coalition offered an age of reform. The Education Act was passed, introducing free, secular and compulsory instruction, and finally fragmenting the Opposition. Soon, however, Francis, least radical of McCulloch's team during the constitutional crises, allied to the Council's former defenders, met the same obstruction which had frustrated Duffy; the practical men were having no better success than the visionary with his scratch team. Permissive, Eight Hours, Land, Fencing and Impounding Bills, bills for mining on private property, were destroyed by rejection or amendment. In 1873, the Upper House rejected not only fresh bills on the previous subjects, but also a bill to reform the Council and, most startling of all, a comprehensive bill for reforming

the Assembly. Having faith in the businessman's model of politics, Francis determined to send the rest of his programme to the Council, to see if it would mend its ways, and made Council reform the main election issue.\textsuperscript{40} The Council was unperturbed; only the Regulation of Mines Act was allowed to pass.

The new House was slightly different in membership, but not in character. The coalition returned with a similar majority, 49 to 28. The Opposition had not improved its numbers or its cohesion. Duffy, who had practically abandoned the leadership of the Opposition soon after his defeat, had left for Europe. Grant had fulfilled his task to some extent, but hopeless and lacking strong cause of quarrel with the Government, the Opposition lacked fire; Grant himself, perhaps, was by now practically ruined by drink. Many Opposition radicals hoped that Higinbotham, re-elected in May 1873, would lead them as before.\textsuperscript{41} He too was little more than a name, of his own choice; seeing no better alternative to the present Government, he generally supported it. Now, at the elections, McCulloch, back from Europe, returned to Parliament.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{V.P.D.}, Vol. 17, pp. 1414ff.
\textsuperscript{41} Below, pp. 478-51, 491.
His election speech\textsuperscript{42} showed that his skill and ambition had survived his popularity, and that he had no intention of loyally supporting his old lieutenant. Soon, with two of the least popular of his old ministers, Macpherson and G.P. Smith, he added another pocket of resistance to the Government.

Francis' Reform Bill was named by its enemies, after the source of its inspiration, 'the Norwegian scheme'.\textsuperscript{43} It passed its second reading by 48 votes to 28, but several supporters announced that they would call for amendments later. At this critical stage, with the problem of the independent member emerging again, Francis fell dangerously ill. Then Higinbotham noticed in one clause an implication that the Council might have some say in financial legislation. Principles bristling, practical sense

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Argus}, 16 April 1874.
\textsuperscript{43} It proposed a joint sitting after a bill had been rejected by the Council in two consecutive sessions. The Opposition's attempt to exploit the feeling that in matters constitutional British models could not be bettered, is curiously expressed in a popular song. (\textit{Argus}, 22 April 1874.)
\end{flushright}

"We really don't think this queer plan of the Storthing
Is worth the one-half of an ancient brass farthing;
And believe that the land would have made much more way
If naught had been heard of the project from Norway."

Francis' views may be found in \textit{Argus}, 18 March 1874.
no more evident than usual, he denounced the bill for a trifle, Sir Galahad wasting his powers upon windmills. Those in doubt and those who succumbed to his spell abstained or opposed the bill during its third reading. This passed by only 35 votes to 33.44 The Council had the perfect excuse to reject it; the need to obtain an absolute majority for constitutional amendments saved it the trouble.

Whether Francis would live was at first doubtful. That he could not soon resume his duties was certain. Despite the late vote, 44 attended a ministerial caucus,45 two or three more sending apologies. They wanted the Government to remain, and urged Francis to return to office when he could. Francis declined. Langton, Treasurer and head of the Constitutionalists, regarded himself as having a right to succeed Francis. However, he had offended the most powerful man in the Cabinet, Casey, the Lands Minister, who also, as a protectionist, refused to serve under Langton, arch-exponent of free trade.46 Francis recommended the Governor to send for the Attorney-General, George Kerferd, a Constitutionalist, but mild as Langton was harsh, colourless as Casey

44. These events are summarised in The Argus' Summary for Europe, 15 June, 13 July and 10 August 1874.
45. Argus, 29 July 1874. Higinbotham was among those who attended, and was sent with James Service to the sick Chief Secretary, to try and persuade him to retain office.
was vivid.

So the constitutionalist element had reason to feel resentful, and Langton soon provided a focus for them among the Opposition. His retirement, however, had opened the office of Treasurer to one of the most capable men in Victorian politics. James Service, a successful Scots merchant, had entered Parliament in 1857, and became Lands Minister within two years. Brought up among Chartist sympathisers, he was a natural reformer, but had the disadvantage of being a free trader. This had put him after 1865 into the position of supporting the Council, which had thwarted his Land Bill in 1860. The few safe constitutionalist seats being pre-empted, he had vainly attempted several forlorn hopes. In 1874, however, he had re-entered Parliament.

Prolific as Higinbotham, less elegant in speech but more forceful, he had no equal for clear exposition, nor for the vivid contemptuous phrase.

His Budget, necessarily a hasty, interim measure, began a remodelling of the taxation system, reducing duties which hampered trade without protecting anything (for as a practical man, he accepted that protection was settled policy), and promising for 1875

and by introducing progressive taxation on land and houses. On the motion for increasing the spirits duties, the first item in the tariff and therefore taken as the test vote, the various Oppositions, and several Government supporters, reduced its majority to one. When the Acting Governor refused a dissolution, Berry was sent for, as the leader of the protectionist Opposition, and mover of the amendment.\footnote{For the Acting Governor's attitude, see his despatches, C.O. 309/113, A/Governor to S. of S., No. 85 (9 August 1875) and the following confidential despatch. As in 1871, the choice was entirely the Governor's.}

His chances of success were small. Many who had opposed the duties had no intention of felling the Government; some were free traders seeking more drastic reductions, some were in the liquor trade, some were protectionist supporters of the coalition. Even among the last, Berry was not regarded as the undoubted alternative leader, for his career so far had been undistinguished. He asked McCulloch, Macpherson and G.P. Smith to join him;\footnote{Argus, 24 February 1877, 27 and 28 April 1877, 1 May 1877, give the accounts of the protagonists.} the first two pleaded ill-health, the third fell from his horse. Without them, Berry's chances of obtaining the support of the more conservative Opposition...
were very poor, but he formed a Government from his radical colleagues and two independents, Major Smith of Ballarat and James Patterson of Castlemaine, who had lately opposed the Government for its lack of vigour in caring for the mining interest. All were re-elected without opposition. Berry's Geelong speech\(^53\) had expressed a calm, assured triumph; after two false starts, he ruled Victoria. His Government, formed like Duffy's of provincial representatives, and including no merchants, bankers or pastoralists, was about to set the country to rights. His main proposal was a land tax which, singling out the large estates and unaccompanied by other measures of direct taxation, would make them pay their share and arrest the development of great estates. He would rationalise the tariff, foster mining and reform the Council.

On his return to Parliament, his Budget was attacked by McCulloch and Kerferd. McCulloch moved a resolution that the financial scheme should include a reduction in the burden of indirect taxation and

\(^{53}\) Argus, 17 August 1875.
that direct taxation should reach all forms of wealth. A Protection League hastily organised public protest meetings; Berry was still defeated. He was then, legitimately but foolishly, refused a dissolution. McCulloch formed a Government which included half the Kerferd Ministry.  

Berry, in alliance with the Protection League and a National Reform League begun by Major Smith's supporters in Ballarat, began a brilliant agitation. Two Ministers were defeated. Berry, claiming the Assembly was demoralised and unrepresentative, and that the people had shown by demonstrations and the ministerial elections that they demanded a dissolution, began systematically to obstruct Supply. His agitators kept up the clamour before rapidly-increasing crowds. It was soon evident, however, that despite the narrowness of his defeat, most of those who had supported the coalition supported McCulloch. All that had happened, it seemed, was that McCulloch and his handful of conservatives had replaced the coalition's more liberal members, Service, Casey and Mackay. These opposed the new

54. Argus, Summaries for Europe, 6 October 1875, 3 November 1875, 1 December 1875. For the agitations, see below, c.6, s.II.
Government, but condemned Berry's methods.  

Higinbotham, who had supported Berry's government, was disgusted with both sides; rather than do anything about it he left politics for good. 

Exhaustion and the introduction of the closure defeated the obstructionists. Despite his normally ample majority, McCulloch was soon hampered by the indiscipline which had increasingly plagued the coalition. His taxation proposals, for imposts on land, property and income, were withdrawn after being passed by a majority of three. Increases in succession duties, and a tax on banknotes, provided temporary relief; meanwhile the revival of trade was now relieving the revenue problem which had so convulsed politics. To take advantage of this, and allow the late excitement to subside, McCulloch twice had the prorogation extended. When Parliament reassembled in mid-July, all was quiet. He announced

55. *Argus*, 24 April 1877, 1 May 1877. (Speeches by Mackay and Service.)
56. *Argus*, 1 February 1876.
57. During the stonewall, McCulloch had 42 supporters, Berry 22; the rest were Corner or independent men.
58. *Argus*, Summaries for Europe, 23 February 1876, 22 March 1876.
that taxation reform could now wait until after the elections.\textsuperscript{59} An Electoral Act\textsuperscript{60} was passed, remedying the worst inequalities, slightly increasing the number of M.L.A.s, and providing for all elections to occur simultaneously.

Dying as it had lived, the Assembly, having narrowly accepted McCulloch's proposal to expend part of a recent railway loan on buying the last private line, imposed impossible conditions. The Railway Construction Bill was withdrawn, McCulloch promising to take it up immediately after the elections, carrying out surveys of agreed lines in the meantime.\textsuperscript{61} Late in December, Parliament was prorogued. In April 1877 it was dissolved.

\textsuperscript{59.} Argus, Summary for Europe, 7 August 1876.
\textsuperscript{60.} 40 Vic., No. 548.
\textsuperscript{61.} Argus, Summary for Europe, 27 December 1876.
III. The Second Cycle.

The election result was so startling that for it alone was adopted the Latin habit of referring to events simply by their dates. On the Eleventh of May two-thirds of the seats changed hands. Most newcomers were Berryites, pledged more or less to the same programme, co-operating with the existing party and the National Reform and Protection League,¹ an efficient party organisation developed from the associations which had helped Berry during the stonewall. Although there were some independents or men of doubtful allegiance, including Service, Casey and Duffy, it was clear that even combined with McCulloch they could not form a majority. McCulloch resigned without meeting Parliament; within a year he left politics for ever.

The change involved more than simply giving Berry a two-to-one majority in place of McCulloch's. There had also been a change in quality. Not simply different men, but men from different backgrounds were now in power, with different attitudes to politics. Socially, they were markedly inferior to

¹. Below, c.6, ss.II ff.
their opponents. The original stonewallers followed such diverse occupations that they cannot be divided into any simple pattern of interests and are most easily described by contrast with the McCullochites. Of these, ignoring two or three whose occupations are unknown, almost three quarters were accounted for, in equal proportions, by pastoralists, commercial men or 'gentlemen' living on investments and speculations, particularly in land and mining. Another half-dozen were lawyers in good practice. Three were farmers, two were chemists. The Corner and the independents were composed of 'gentlemen', merchants, professionals and a newspaper proprietor. The Berryites included only four 'gentlemen', out of twenty three, and the three lawyers were of no great prominence. The remainder consisted of three owners of provincial newspapers, a farmer, an engineer, two building-society secretaries, six small businessmen, three auctioneers and one dependent upon his parliamentary salary. After the election, it was from occupations such as these that the radical ministry and party
were drawn.  

The immediate danger was the lack of experience and the habit of co-operation among most of the majority; there was a risk of repeating the disorganisation of 1864, 1871 and 1874. Berry could not yet count on the Reform Leagues to maintain discipline by threatening to withdraw its support at the next election: its branches were still relatively few, and on past experience it was likely soon to disappear. The Parliament had also been elected, as Berry later admitted, against McCulloch rather than for him, and some would have preferred other leaders. He therefore followed McCulloch's technique of trying to attract or neutralise possible rivals. He invited Duffy to join him; Duffy preferred to be made Speaker. Service, in an evil day for Berry, decided to remain a friendly neutral in the Ministerial Corner. Casey was appointed to represent Victoria at the Paris Exhibition.

2. The stonewall and McCullochite groups were identified from division lists and lists of those attending caucuses, especially in Argus, 18 November 1875 and 3 February 1876. Information about their occupations has been drawn from obituaries, directories and numerous casual mentions in newspapers. For the composition of the 1877-80 Parliament see Parnaby, op.cit., c.14.

3. Argus, 17 December 1878.


5. Argus, 7 February 1878.
Berry's first legislative task was to take up the railway construction which had been left in abeyance, and which meant so much to the provinces. Immediately the tone was set for the Parliament; the Council objected to certain lines, took evidence and made alterations. Not until the following year were all differences settled.\(^6\)

Meanwhile, Berry began to implement his financial programme. The land tax, his main election plank, upon which he seems to have expected a great battle with the Council which would arouse public opinion sufficiently for him to carry a Reform Bill, was passed on the votes of mercantile M.L.C.s.\(^7\) His tariff produced no difficulties, and accepted so many mercantile suggestions that his claims to moderation perhaps began to obtain as much credence in the commercial world as among his uneasy ultras.\(^8\)

The question of payment of M.P.'s remained among the urgent business; the 1874 Act, which had renewed it for another Parliament, was to expire at the end of the first session. To many of Berry's supporters,\(^6\) Below, pp. 335-6.

7. Parnaby, \textit{op.cit.}, c.5, and below, pp. 103-4
provincials and not well-to-do, it was vital. They were therefore especially anxious to pass it, and their opponents to defeat it. This could not be done in the Assembly, but it could in the Council. To prevent this, and very likely to bring on his battle with the Upper House, Berry included the payment in Appropriations. The Council rejected them once more.9 After the Christmas recess, the Government destroyed the political quiet which had reigned since the election by the coup of Black Wednesday. Large numbers of senior administrative and judicial officers arrived at work on January 8th to find notices on their desks that they were dismissed as the Council had deprived the Government of money to pay them. The news was received, as Deakin wrote10, with "feelings of dismay and terror, of stupefaction and rage, which made the beginning of 1878 forever memorable in Victorian history."

Wild talk by some ministers helped spread rumours


10. Deakin, Crisis in Victorian Politics, pp.16-17; pp.16-20 give a brief and vivid account of the start of the crisis.
of a revolutionary plot; even those who did not believe them feared that the Government had begun a process which could not be halted. The great agitation at last began; in face of the common enemy, although Service and a couple of Berryites joined the Opposition, the Government party was at last welded together.

This, and the personal ascendancy which Berry speedily achieved, were the prime sources of party unity. This was expressed and strengthened by Berry's use of the caucus. Party meetings had long been employed as an occasional measure, as well as ad hoc caucuses for gathering together members from different sides of the House to further a common sectional interest or a particular policy. During the crises of the 'sixties, they had become so frequent as to constitute part of the regular unofficial machinery of Parliament, along with the whip system. During these periods, the party had

11. Argus, 23 January 1878, Francis' speech.
12. It was a coalition caucus which persuaded the Francis Ministry to continue under Kerferd; for ad hoc caucuses, see, for example, Argus, 4 June, 27 August 1874 and 11 September 1874.
13. For early caucuses, see, e.g. Argus, 1 May 1867, 24 August 1867, 1 April 1868, 24 April 1868, 6 June 1868, 4 July 1868, 12 August 1868. They had occurred with a similar frequency during the former crisis. For the early existence of whips, see Argus, 3 June 1865; note that there was some prejudice against the office, which still seems to have existed around 1879. (Ararat Advertiser, 21 January 1879.)
been regularly consulted not only during emergencies, but also on questions of tactics. McCulloch, however, as a traditional politician, showed that he regarded the device as temporary, abandoning it after the crises.

Its frequent use by both sides began again during the stonewall period, when detailed arrangements had to be made for maintaining and countering obstruction with relays of speakers. After his victory of 1877, Berry used it regularly. Caucus discussed tactics, heard ministerial explanations and exhortations, and settled differences which, during the coalition, would have caused revolts.

If there was any disagreement, a vote was taken which bound all present, and was usually observed. Berry's opponents, who, like the Council's friends in the 'sixties, had taken the name of Constitutionalists, also employed it regularly, and for similar uses.

There was, however, some uneasiness about the institution, especially among conservatives.

14. Argus, 17 and 18 November 1875; Age, 17 December 1875, 9 February 1876.
15. Argus, 8 and 24 August 1877, 14 September 1877, 6 February 1878, 6 and 7 March 1878.
To The Argus, it was

"... an institution unknown to the British constitution, and abhorrent both to its letter and its spirit. --- The caucus is used as a massive steam roller. It is periodically passed over the party, which comes out smooth and flat, and altogether contemptible to the public eye, but in just such a condition as the wire-puller approves of."

It was, in fact, another means to make men who should be using their best judgment for the public benefit dance as party leaders and political bosses piped. This tendency was especially alarming in men who could perpetrate acts of terrorism like Black Wednesday, and make such thorough and unscrupulous use of ministerial powers as they did in the West Melbourne by-elections, when in the very stronghold of free trade they twice prevented Francis from returning to Parliament to lead the party of order.  

The justification for the caucus was that it made parliamentary government work, by damming the floods of talk about which The Argus had complained so often, and reducing the risk of a chance defeat. With the external party machine of the Reform League, which, during the excitement of the crisis, had spread over the whole colony,


17. Below, pp. 526-30. Francis was later elected for Warrnambool, after the resignation of McCulloch.

18. V.P.D., Vol. 28, p. 266.
it also provided a means of keeping representatives true to their promises. To Constitutionalists, the problem was to ensure the liberty of the representative; to the radicals, to rescue politics from his indiscipline. The caucus, however, operated successfully only if a sufficient number of members was willing to co-operate, and this depended upon maintaining a polarisation of Parliament through normal party management. The constitutional crisis provided perfect conditions for this; the composition of Berry's party, largely of men whose political life had begun in agitation and organisation, was better material for it than ever before.

The crisis ended in the passing of payment of members, although separately from the Appropriations Act. After a short recess, Berry introduced his first Reform Bill. It proposed to determine by plebiscite bills rejected by the Council in two successive sessions, except for money bills, which were to be determined by the Assembly. At the same time, Sladen introduced in the Council a bill

to reduce Councillors' terms of office, double the electorate and prevent deadlocks by allowing the Council to amend money bills. The proposals were so far apart that the conference between the Houses, after each had passed its bill, necessarily failed. The basic attitudes towards a second chamber were too far apart. To Sladen it was still a brake on democracy. To radicals, it was part of British political institutions, but one which ought not to obstruct the popular will; they therefore sought to achieve practical monocameralism in a bicameral system. This entailed either making the composition of the Council resemble that of the Assembly, or proposing novel or foreign machinery for settling disputes. The prejudice against departure from British models made Sladen's attempt to increase the Council's financial powers hopeless, but equally helped prevent the radicals obtaining agreement on new machinery.

Both bills were rejected. Berry announced that he would go to Britain, and persuade the Government to amend the Constitution Act. By so doing, he took the first step to reviving the problem of

indiscipline. It was an article of radical faith, since Buckingham's interference in 1868, that Downing Street had no voice in Victoria's internal affairs; some of Berry's party and of the League now objected to inviting interference. The two wings were beginning to crumble. The left wing, particularly in the League, had long been restive. Berry's land tax had not been progressive enough, nor his tariffs sufficiently protective; except on Black Wednesday, his handling of the crisis had been too mild. At the same time, the ultras reserved their strongest dislike for the right wing, particularly its leader, James Munro. One of the more prosperous members of the party, he was perhaps suspect of sympathy towards the enemies of the people, especially after he had twice negotiated compromise settlements to which the left objected. He now produced in caucus another compromise, suggested to him by an M.L.C. as likely to command wide support in the Council.

22. Below, pp. 540-4
23. One covering the purchase of the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway, the last private line, the other settling the deadlock. Argus, 6 and 7 March 1878, 26 June 1878, 5 July 1878.
The party supported Berry. When Munro moved an amendment in the House to the Embassy vote, it was easily defeated; nevertheless, it attracted some radical support, and marked the first serious breach in party discipline. The ultras of the League, perhaps decided by their hostility to Munro, organised meetings in favour of the Embassy, and disrupted meetings held by Munro and his supporters, soon to be known as the Corner Party.

After a successful farewell banquet and demonstration to Berry, the country settled to six months of political quiet. It was also, however, a period of mounting economic difficulty. Several times in 1878 a harrassed Berry had been faced with deputations of unemployed; the ultras' desire for increased protection was increased by this spectacle, and Berry's refusal to make serious alterations before the reform question was settled, in case it divided and distracted the party, provoked some sharp exchanges. At the same time, farmers in the northern wheatbelt, created during the

27. Argus, 21 December 1878.
30. Below, c.4, ss.IV onwards.
'seventies by the operation of the 1869 Land Act, were facing another season of drought; the Government, preoccupied with Reform, did little to help them. Longmore's well-intended but mistaken credit-regulations had alarmed them, and were commonly blamed for the restriction of loans to selectors during the depression. In mid-1879 enough farmers had moved against the Government to start the first farmers' organisation which looked at all formidable, the Victoria Farmers' Union. At the same time, political Catholics, who had apparently supported Berry generally in 1877, began to organise, having been turned against the Government by its two refusals to support Sir John O'Shamassy, who had returned to the Assembly in 1877, in his efforts to obtain assistance for Catholic education.31

When Berry returned in June, therefore, his position had seriously deteriorated. Despite a rapturous welcome, and his insistance that the

Embassy had been a success, he had in fact returned empty-handed. The Secretary of State had avoided committing himself, although he did not preclude imperial legislation if Victoria was indeed unable to settle her own affairs.\textsuperscript{32}

When Parliament re-assembled, Berry could not avoid increasing taxation in face of falling revenue. The Budget, introduced by Major Smith, Acting-Treasurer during Berry's absence, went some way towards conciliating the ultras by proposing increases in duties, but what Berry had feared in 1878 now happened. Agricultural and mining representatives demanded reductions in machinery duties, and objected to the general increases when their constituents were in such straits. The Government, nearly defeated, had to withdraw its tariff, revise it in caucus, and replace some duties with a stamp tax.\textsuperscript{33}

At last the Reform Bill could be taken. This differed from the previous one in making the Council a nominee chamber, and in providing, in Clause 6,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Deakin, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 21.
\item \textsuperscript{33} \textit{Argus}, Summaries for Europe, 6 August and 3 September 1879.
\end{itemize}
for money to become legally available on the 
vote of the Assembly. These features caused 
dissent among radicals. Sladen, meanwhile, 
introduced another bill in the Council, similar 
to his previous proposal, but omitting the attempt 
to increase the Council's financial powers, and 
leaving the question of disputes machinery to the 
Assembly. Munro, in close contact with a liberal 
M.L.C., proposed to accept Sladen's bill, adding 
the Norwegian system for settling disputes.34

As for Berry, although his bill passed its second 
reading by 53 votes to 31, he, like Francis five 
years before, found supporters calling for 
alterations. There was still no consensus.

To save his bill, he added to uncertainty by 
suggesting that he might drop some of the objection-
able features.

To discipline Munro, the Reform League in 
his constituency had a public meeting to condemn 
his actions and demand his resignation. He took 
the risk, resigned, and won both his seat and a 
propaganda victory just before the third reading 
of the Government bill. This was passed by 43

34. Argus, Summary for Europe, 3 October 1879.
votes to 38, one short of the necessary absolute majority.\textsuperscript{35} The Opposition, the Corner and several Government supporters who had objected to the tariff, had combined against it. Berry obtained a dissolution. In one of the hardest-fought elections of the period, he was defeated. Most of the Corner lost their seats, but the increase in the Opposition was enough to bring Service to office.\textsuperscript{36} No more than Berry's, however, did his Bill represent the views of the Assembly. Although one of their number, Robert Clark of Sandhurst, was given office, the few Corner members had not opposed Berry to support Service. His vehement anti-Catholicism had cost him the support of O'Shanassy. Even the political ghost of Higinbotham arose to turn a few votes, when Henry Wrixon, a Constitutionalist lawyer and an admirer of the former 'Dictator', assailed a clause which proposed to allow the democratised Council to prevent tacking. The Bill was defeated.

\textsuperscript{35} Argus, Summary for Europe, 24 December 1879.
\textsuperscript{36} Argus, Summary for Europe, 4 March 1880.
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{V.P.D.}, Vol. 33, pp. 167ff. It provided for a considerable widening of the franchise, a double dissolution and joint sitting to settle bills rejected by the Council in two successive sessions, and for the British conventions governing financial legislation.
Service gambled on a dissolution and lost. 38
A few months later he resigned his seat and left for England.

Berry, having limited his aims to a simple reduction of qualifications, tenure and the size of provinces, 39 was in little better position. His attempts to attract liberal Constitutionalist support failed, nor could he make sufficient concessions to O'Shanassy. 40 However, his Bill 41 passed the Assembly with little opposition. The Council then insisted on certain amendments, particularly over the size of the electorate. Some Berry accepted, at the risk of splitting his party, but the Council was not satisfied. Caucus voted to withdraw the bill, and another violent agitation seemed likely. A few ministerialists, however, refused to accept the decision of caucus, understanding that the Opposition had guarantees from enough M.L.C.s to ensure the passage of the bill as Berry had accepted it. It was passed, against the votes of the half-dozen ultras, who,

39. Argus, 3 July 1880.
40. Below, pp. 246-8.
41. For an inside account of its course, see Deakin, op.cit., c.7 and 8. And see below, pp. 577-90.
as the old Corner disappeared, had formed a new Corner.

Immediately, Sir Bryan O'Loghlen, Berry's Attorney-General in 1878-80, who had refused to join the Ministry for the same reasons as O'Shanassy, moved want of confidence. Although the new Corner eventually supported Berry, a few more votes were lost and he was defeated. The Berry ascendancy was over, and the second Irish interlude was about to begin. To everyone's surprise, O'Loghlen succeeded in forming a Government, of nonentities and rebels from all parts of the House. Only two had held office before, only one ever held office again.42

Its main aims more or less achieved, Berry's party was exhausted, divided and lacking in policy. The Reform League, although it still existed, was but a shadow after the election of February 1880.43 Neither party nor League seriously attempted to contest the 1882 Council elections, although a dozen seats were at stake. For the next eighteen months the Constitutionalists kept O'Loghlen in office

42. Deakin, op.cit., pp. 78-81, gives a series of pen-portraits of the new ministers; perhaps not altogether free from bias.
43. Below, pp. 570ff.
as the only way to keep Berry out. Perpetual agitation was to be replaced by practical legislation. 44 This, however, the Government failed to achieve, although saved from revenue difficulties by the return of prosperity. An irrigation act was passed, but for all the time spent during 1882 on the Land and Railway Construction Bills, both were withdrawn at the end of the session.

Berry took every chance to attract the more liberal Constitutionalists. 45 He obtained some response, and many Constitutionalists became restive about supporting O'Loghlen, but old animosities and the influence of Francis, who had succeeded Service, kept the ministry alive. Nor was Berry's party growing more cohesive. The estrangement of the ultras, an advantage in seeking Constitutionalist support, was followed by the loss of the handful of radical Catholic M.L.A.s. The party had always contained a strong

44. *Argus*, 17 May 1882. Francis' intended speech conveniently sums up the fears and aims of the Constitutionalists during 1881-3. The article by 'Ptolemy' in *Argus*, 3 January 1882, performs a similar service for the structure and rationale of the Assembly since the July election.

45. E.g. V.P.D., Vol. 37, pp. 483 ff; *Age*, 24 June 1882; *Argus*, 26 June 1882.
anti-Catholic element. This was now aroused by the thought of an Irish Premier and three other Irish ministers, although only one of these was Catholic. The news from Parnell's Ireland and the presence of his emissary in Victoria to found branches of the Land League added to their animosity. Patterson in particular, one of Berry's foremost supporters, began calling for a Protestant party. In May 1882 the exasperated Irish radicals helped save the Government, and were therefore expelled from the party. Now Berry could bid strongly for anti-Catholic support; as in the coalitions of 1863 and 1872, national and religious prejudice were helping reconcile former antagonists.

During the recess, news arrived of the partial failure of the latest loan. O'Loghlen's claim to stand for practical legislation was finally destroyed. Rather than face certain defeat, he obtained a dissolution in mid-recess. The

46. Argus, 9 December 1881, 22 May 1882; and see below, pp.254-5.
47. Argus, Summaries for Europe, 17 and 31 January 1883.
Constitutionalists decided to abandon him, but in the hope of obtaining a party majority, both they and the radicals ran separately. The Ministry's defeat was sealed by O'Loghlen's failure to secure re-election. Service, returned from England, accepted the invitation to stand as Patterson's colleague at Castlemaine. The two anti-Catholics were elected. When the Assembly met, it was clear that the two main parties had each narrowly missed a majority. The second cycle had moved into its final phase, as another great coalition settled to rule for the rest of the decade.

I. Propaganda and Protection.

Legend credits The Age with having been the greatest propaganda power of the time, to an extent which has obscured the activities and importance of other institutions: except in the case of Higinbotham, the power of oratory has been forgotten almost as completely as the great variety of organisations. As early as 1908, Ambrose Pratt was suggesting that from the middle 'sixties the population of Victoria, including Berry, danced as Syme piped.¹ Deakin, a more reliable observer, had written in 1900² that "only those who were acquainted with Victorian politics from 1875 could realise the enormous influence exercised by The Age upon its 100,000 readers ---."

It is difficult to know what criteria to apply to such claims. Deakin's appeal to figures is misleading. Not until the end of the century did circulation approach 100,000. During the Darling Grant crisis, The Age's circulation was 13,000, rising rapidly to over 20,000 after Syme had cut the price to 1d. on 1 June 1868.³

3. Australasian Typographical Journal, February 1877. This initial rise in circulation can be traced in the audited figures which now began to appear above the editoriale.
Of this output probably a disproportionate amount was sold in Melbourne, since so many provincial newspapers, from substantial dailies to single-sheet weeklies, could survive and flourish, despite the lower literacy rates outside Melbourne and Geelong. Indeed, the 1870s saw a remarkable expansion in the numbers of country newspapers, mostly in the new agricultural areas. As the railway did not begin to reach the Wimmera until 1879, they probably had few rivals. In the conditions of country life, especially in new areas, Syme's influence had to depend on his weekly, The Leader, which, although it apparently sold well, was predominantly an agricultural, sporting and literary magazine. Its main competitor in this field, The Australasian, was owned by The Age's main Melbourne competitor, The Argus. The circulation of these two is unknown, although after 1868 at least, The Argus, at 3d., sold appreciably less

5. I am grateful to Mr. James Hagan of the A.N.U., currently carrying out research into Australian printing unions, for this information.
copies than \textit{The Age}. By 1881, its circulation seems to have been about 8,000.\footnote{Age, 18 June 1881, gives average daily circulation as 43,436 during May 1881, which it claimed to be more than five times as great as that of any other Australian newspaper. It is probably reasonable to assume that \textit{The Argus} would have been, if not the next largest, at least not far behind.} As \textit{The Age}'s circulation, having risen gradually to 28,000 in 1877, had increased rapidly to 43,500, it is quite likely that \textit{The Argus} figure had formerly been higher. 

Nor was it the only competitor. There were also two other Melbourne dailies, a host of suburban papers and a number of sectional publications, mostly weeklies, like the Methodists' \textit{Spectator} and the Catholics' \textit{Advocate}.

Although the most important single newspaper, therefore, \textit{The Age} in the 'seventies was far from the dominance it achieved towards the end of the century; Syme's great leap forward in 1868 could not prevent the successful establishment of the \textit{Daily Telegraph}, a political neutral, the following year. The next rapid rise in circulation coincided with the coming of age of increasingly large numbers of increasingly literate young Australians during the late 'seventies, increasingly concentrated in Melbourne. The marked
improvement in rural communications during the 'eighties probably helped increase sales outside Melbourne, and may, therefore, partly account for the difficulties which many small provincial papers encountered towards the end of the century. 8

Circulation alone, however, is an inadequate index of a newspaper's influence, which depends also on who reads it. The Age was read by radical opinion leaders in Melbourne and some areas of the provinces, including provincial editors, and through them reached their followers or had its influence upon them strengthened. The Age's approach to journalism was also well-suited to make the maximum impact. The difference in its presentation of news and comment from that of its main rival is curiously similar to the difference between the radical and the gentlemanly view of politics. Information and solemn argument predominated in The Argus, and views rarely encroached upon news. The Age was full of violence and personalities, sudden changes of front, cries of 'Treachery!' and 'Conspiracy!'; news was often distorted or suppressed, and political

8. My source of information is once again Mr. Hagan. (n.5, above.)
items in the news of the day columns were frequently partisan.

If even the most effectively-presented propaganda is to be accepted, however, it must be tailored to the attitudes prevalent among its audience. "The result of propaganda," as Dr. Brown says, "depend upon the nature of the target --- as much as upon the power of the propagandist." 10

Syme's technique was perhaps especially suited to appeal to the working classes' approach to politics, 11 just as his pride was especially suited to their pockets, but he was too much of the recluse and intellectual to have a clear understanding of those of their attitudes which he did not happen to share. Consequently he often campaigned for causes which, because they conflicted with ideas strongly held by his audience, or because they could not be attached to any powerful emotion or prejudice, had little

9. Any issue of The Age during times of political tension will illustrate these points - in March 1868, for example. The parliamentary columns of 'Quip' (Age) and 'Timotheus' (Argus) during the O'Loghlen Ministry, (e.g. Age, 24 June 1882, Argus, 26 June 1882) express a similar difference of approach. For the suppression and distortion of news, see the treatment in the two journals of the National Reform League meetings, 19 and 26 May 1876, 2 June 1876.


hope of success. His opposition to federation in 1898 failed for the former reason, his advocacy of elective ministries, and earlier of leasing against alienation of Crown lands, for the latter.  

An alternative source of influence for a newspaper with even a small circulation is a readership which is in a position to make or strongly influence policy-decisions. It is unlikely that The Age was in this position until the radical victory of 1877. Thereafter, as Berry's party retained power, or a large share of power, for practically all the next thirteen years, The Age was in a far stronger position to influence politics at the top, at the same time as its rapidly-expanding circulation increased its power below. After 1886, when Berry left politics for some years, the radical leadership fell to Deakin, the golden boy of Victorian politics, who had been thrust into his public career by his employer, David Syme, and who seems never to have

lost his admiration for the old newspaper-owner. With the departure of his other mentor, Syme's influence probably became all the greater.

It was also, perhaps, fortunate for the growth of Syme's influence that the radical leader in 1877 was Berry. Although his previous contact with The Age had been limited and not always cordial, he no doubt, having been a newspaper proprietor himself for as long as Syme, thought highly of the press, and particularly of the leading radical journal. He was also, for all his gifts as a practical politician, an unoriginal man, and cautious of new ideas. During the early 'seventies, he seems to have relied on Higinbotham to supply his lack; when the latter abandoned politics in 1875 it was easy to turn to Syme.

13. Cf. his introduction to Pratt, op.cit., written in 1908. For the beginning of his political career, see 'The Crisis in Victorian Politics', c.1 and passim. Professor J.A. La Nauze's forthcoming biography of Deakin will no doubt illuminate the career and influence of Syme after 1883, at which point the present writer's detailed knowledge of Victorian politics ends.

14. The Age had, in fact, suggested during the election that he was not fit to be the radical leader. (Age, 15 January 1877, 12, 14 and 16 February 1877.)

15. Below, pp.478ff. And cf. Deakin, 'The Crisis in Victorian Politics', p. 14; and his reactions to suggestions that the Government should lend to farmers, which had long been in the air. (Argus, 30 October 1880.) and to factory legislation (Argus, 1 October 1880.)
Pratt's extravagant claims "that The Age ruled the country and that the Government was merely the channel through which its influence was expressed," need not be taken seriously, but it is clear from his account that Syme was frequently consulted as if he had been an unofficial member of the Cabinet. At the same time, he was not the radical dictator he apparently liked to imagine himself. Pratt's account, very likely derived from Syme himself, of the remodelling of the 1879 tariff after an Age onslaught on it as a mere revenue tariff, and high words in the newspaper's office between an inflexible Syme and an irate but helpless Berry and Lalor, ignores the fact that Berry was compelled to remodel the tariff by its near-defeat in the Assembly at the hands of radicals representing farming and mining areas, and who wanted, not higher duties but lower. Syme was more interested in speaking his mind and in attacking any Government with which he disagreed,

and in scuffling with The Argus, than in practical politics. 21 He attacked Berry's Government in 1879 when it most needed his help. Unlike Berry, and like the wild men of the League, 22 he was free from responsibility for keeping together a brawling party, and carrying out important reforms against a hostile Council when economic distress made routine administration difficult enough. He was one of a mob of snorting brumbies - the Cabinet, the ultras, the moderates, the militants, The Age - which Berry had to keep moving in the same direction. He must be cajoled and flattered, and might in some things prevail, but too much concession would make the others break away.

Fortunately, Berry was also a power in his own right, and could count on two powers of the second rank, Major Smith of Ballarat and James Patterson of Castlemaine. Whereas their power was local, however, his was national. Deakin's description 23 of his position on his return from

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England in 1879 was in some respects true of the whole period from 1877 to 1883: "His colleagues were all classed in public opinion far below him. He was the central figure both in the House and in the country and knew it well." Syme might control one of the great instruments of propaganda, but Berry had no peer in the other, the public meeting. This was one of the great traditional methods of evoking and displaying public opinion; it was also one of the common forms of public entertainment. Public lectures were so popular as to be one of the favourite ways of raising funds for any purpose. 24

At a great public meeting, literacy was no bar, and a sense of participation was possible which was beyond the power of any newspaper to conjure up. The crowd, having followed the parade of torchlit devotees and the brass bands to the meeting place, could see the gestures and grimaces of the orators, hear the passion of their voices and the shouts and applause of their more ardent supporters. They could feel themselves invincible, free in anonymity to vent their high spirits or their resentment at the boredom and uncertainty of their daily lives. No

24. Including, occasionally, filling the coffers of a political association - Ballarat Courier, 16 September 1869, 15 March 1870.
doubt many, unmoved, wondered cynically what
the orators stood to gain; probably others,
having purged their souls, returned home cheerful
and at ease with themselves, and thought no more
of it. If the excitement could be maintained,
however, participation at all levels tended to
increase, from the leadership through the militants
down to the lumpenproletarian who now spoke of
politics where he had not before, and thought of
taking out an elector's right some day. This was
the world where Berry's political career had begun,
and where the root of his power lay.

Unfortunately, these two men, masters of
propaganda, the two giants of Victorian radicalism
in the late 'seventies, were so different in character
that co-operation was very difficult. Syme was the
youngest son of a Calvinist schoolmaster, who
educated him without companions, in a home where
"Duty, not love, except to some extent on the
mother's part, was the law ---." 25 His mother,
however, hardly appears in the autobiographical

letter he wrote to his biographer; the memory of the old newspaper proprietor, like the house of his childhood, was dominated to a remarkable degree by the father he so admired and feared. This man died when David was sixteen, so that the event which Freud regarded as one of the psychological turning-points of a man's life occurred when he was a cloistered guilty adolescent. This terrible dead man was to haunt him to the end of the earth.

His account of his early life was a tale of rejection. Having failed to gain the affection and approval of his father, he fared no better on the Californian diggings, where he found no friends, only a nation narrow, ignorant, xenophobic and violent. He left for Australia in 1853, less, it seems, in hope of riches than to be among his own people, where he would be an outcast no longer. The events which he recalled of his year on the diggings were of being robbed and deserted by his mate when ill, of having his claim jumped, of failing

to obtain redress from contemptuous, overbearing officials. Having amassed a little capital, he fled to his brother Ebenezer in Melbourne, where they bought *The Age*. It survived, but made so little profit that David turned contractor. At last he prospered, and, having just turned thirty, he married.  

Two years later his brother died. *The Age* closed around him. His father's ghost had caught him finally. He assumed the role of the stern, just father of several thousand ignorant, brawling children; at the same time, he could fight the dead tyrant, who now assumed the shape of a squatter, a merchant, a banker. Having, just after his father's death, rejected his father's form of Christianity for one more gentle, and thrown himself into the studies to which this led him with such ardour that health and faith gave way, he now devoted a religious zeal and the rest of his life to the worship of *The Age* and the propagation of the gospel.


Of Berry's early life little is known except that he was born at Twickenham in 1822, five years before Syme, the son of a moderately successful tradesman who yet took him from school at the age of eleven to become an apprentice draper. He too was an eager reader, but while David was fearfully beginning in hard languages and weighty abstractions, Graham was hidden behind a door in his master's shop, with one eye to the adult world, the other to Pope, Gibbon or Chamber's Magazine. If his father was stern, he could hardly have been as grim as old Syme; and the gentlemanly God of the Church of England, in which Berry was brought up, had little in common with the malevolent deity whose servant drove David to his studies.

So Berry grew up, an egotist like most shy people but eager to please and serve his fellows, anxious to be loved. Vulnerable, often clumsy, he possessed the talent to improve his talents, and

31. Pratt, op. cit., pp. 299-301, cites a letter of Syme's about his first ten years as owner of The Age, during which he worked some fifteen hours a day. Deakin, in his Introduction, notes that Syme still retained a very detailed control during the early 'eighties.

had a gift for words, not the Scots gift shared by Syme and Service of conveying precise meanings and connected arguments, but one of communicating powerful emotion.\textsuperscript{33} Syme wrote with puzzled sadness of the impossibility of winning his father's affection, and was known among friends for startling generosity and kindness, but his public reputation for cold ferocity was richly earned.\textsuperscript{34} When Berry attacked the rich it was with a cry of uncomprehending horror at the hardness of their hearts; to Syme they were emblems of the wickedness and ignorance which he, the stern and wise father, must scourge from the nation. "His estimates of men were not high nor his expectations sanguine."\textsuperscript{35}

The greatest propaganda achievement with which Syme has been credited was to turn Victoria from the Australian norm of free trade towards protection. More recently, it has been pointed out that there were other protectionists in Victoria before him, and Professor La Nauze's view seems to be generally accepted, that "The economic crisis, combined with

\textsuperscript{34} Pratt, \textit{op.cit.}, p. xi.
\textsuperscript{35} Pratt, \textit{op.cit.}, p. xii.
a nationalistic anti-English sentiment, explains why he and others came to advocate the protectionist remedy for a society faced with a sudden cessation of prosperity." 36 In such circumstances, protection appealed to "the 'natural' judgment of the unacademic man ---." 37 Syme's part, although reduced to reasonable proportions, remains considerable, as the steady preacher of what others were ready to receive, "the most considerable force in Victoria in moulding public opinion." 38

While all this is true, it does not necessarily explain why Victoria became protectionist and New South Wales did not. Although the Victorian population increased so much more rapidly than that of New South Wales during the 1850s, the older colony's population nevertheless doubled, also suffered severe economic distress and dislocation, and, as it contained a much higher percentage of native-born, 39 should have been especially open to

37. Ibid., p. 122.
nationalist feelings. Nor is it easy to see why the natural judgment of Victorians should have been more natural than that of the New South Welsh.

In 1860, in fact, when, with David Syme's assumption of control, The Age became steadily protectionist, the 'natural' cause for most of those who sought to remain in Victoria, or were trapped there, and who were inclined to political action, was still unlocking the lands. Irish land hunger, and perhaps the recollection of the land settlement phase of Chartism, could be appealed to. The assumption that land was the true wealth of any colony, the lack of hope for any rapid expansion of urban employment, and perhaps the hope of that independence which was socially approved and a condition to which diggers had become accustomed, made practically everyone, including protectionists, turn to land legislation.

This agitation also had the advantage of offering battle with old enemies, the squatters and the Council. Having achieved, often in danger and hardship,40 a

40. M. Kiddle, Men of Yesterday, c.4, passim.
home, a competence or better, and a rise in social status, the squatter now fanatically defended himself against mobs who over-ran the lands he had made productive, destroyed pasture, fouled creeks, stole animals, menaced his life and home with bushfires, and now sought to take away all he had toiled to obtain.

"The one regarded the other as an unwelcome intruder", as one old Bendigonian put it,41 "while the new arrival looked upon the earlier settler as an obstructive monopolist in the possession of vast tracts of land of which he made but little profitable use."

Entrenched in the Council, having access to the banks, the squatter compensated for inferiority of numbers by superiority of position and resources.

With the Council, however, diggers and others had a longstanding feud. The old Council had been responsible for digger-hunting and prohibition on the goldfields. To diggers, and to democrats everywhere, it was the House of men aping an aristocracy. That the new Council was entirely elective hardly affected its image, since half its members were squatters.42 The Victorian working classes were not, of course, composed entirely of the politically minded and the politically


experienced, but the resentment was sufficiently widespread for squatters and Council to perform a psychological function in the Victoria of the post-goldrushes depression similar to that of the Jews in the Third Reich. And like the Jews, they were continually accused of plots and conspiracies; stories of corrupt dealings with M.L.A.s, and the wholesale evasion of the Land Acts 43 gave this some plausibility.

The strength of their opposition, and the failure of two Land Acts, diminished the force of this agitation; the New Zealand gold rushes offered an alternative escape for some, the Methodist revival for others. Yet others were ready for another political panacea. Some had always rejected free trade because they were old-style Tories. 44 Many ex-Chartists no doubt continued to reject it, as they had done in Britain with a ferocity which had often led to violence, as a manufacturers' plot. Others associated protection

43. The Age's comments on one 'plot' are typical (Age, 4 May 1877.) Cf. Kiddle, op.cit., pp. 247-257, on the reality behind the myth.
44. Like, for example, Capt. George Ward Cole, R.N. (Retd.), the first McCulloch Government's representative in the Council, or Captain John Dane, an ardent protectionist later active in the N.R.P.L., who told his electors in 1864, "No man, reared as he had been in the British army, could possibly be a democrat." (Argus, 26 August 1864.)
with the United States, that hope of radicalism, whether they had been there or not. For others, no doubt 'protection' had a comforting sound. To some, determined not to be made fools of by the defeat of their hopes, it appealed to their desire to make Victoria something more than the humble handmaiden of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Yet others, unable to earn their living at their trade or on the goldfields blamed their misfortunes partly or wholly upon their old enemies, the British manufacturers, whose products, arriving irregularly, caused an alternation of glut and scarcity in the local market, and so disturbed employment. Both were becoming Victorian patriots, as the England of their friends and relations conceded in their minds to the England of the rich, the boss and the overseer. The cliches of protectionist meetings hinted at this new nationalism; "native industries" was the answer to the question, "What shall we do with our boys?"

46. E.g. Treasurer Verdon - "None would say that it was desirable that the colony should for all time consist of diggers, and shepherds, and stone-breakers." (Argus, 27 October 1864.)

McCulloch does not fit any of these categories. As Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Colony of Victoria he was faced in 1864 with a revenue problem. He was politically unable, and probably unwilling, to return to alienating land at auction, or to increase pastoral rents.\textsuperscript{48} As direct taxation would cause endless difficulties, he must raise money through the Customs. It was also necessary to reduce the valuable tea and sugar duties, in harmony with neighbouring colonies, to avoid serious losses through smuggling.\textsuperscript{49} Moreover, many of his supporters were Healesite radicals, some ardent protectionists, all partly committed to protection. His conservative colleague Francis was a protectionist; so was his Healesite Treasurer, Verdon.

The coalition might collapse, however, if he openly deserted free trade. Many supporters were free traders, especially softgoodsmen and lawyers, and intellectuals like Higinbotham. Nor, if McCulloch was to settle the land question, did he dare place such an excellent red herring before the

\textsuperscript{48} Below, pp. 259 and 475-6.

\textsuperscript{49} Argus, 6 September 1864. That McCulloch and Francis dealt in these articles at least removed any personal reluctance.
Council. He therefore sought credit among protectionists, while disclaiming any intention of departing from received principles, by presenting his tariff as one of 'incidental protection'.

Higinbotham, insisted it was a revenue tariff only; Francis and Verdon, that it was the beginning of protection. The Minister of Mines said that much nonsense was talked by the extremists on both sides, a view which Michie seemed to share.

Grant, Minister of Lands, urged the electorate to ignore such trivialities: "--- of what use is protection", he asked, "if this colony is to be a sheepwalk?"

The interests of the pastoralists were hardly affected by the tariff. Although they imported fencing wire and wool bales, the duty on these would have had little effect on production-costs.

50. By this he meant that since duties had to be removed from tea and sugar, and the total raised, it could do no harm to put the duties on articles whose manufacture locally might be encouraged. Revenue was the main purpose, protection a mere bonus.

51. Argus, 12, 24 and 27 October 1864.
52. Argus, 8 and 21 October 1864.
53. Argus, 19 September 1864.
54. Used in the early 'fifties in the Western District. (Kiddle, op.cit., p.200.)
which depended much more on seasons, wool prices, transport facilities, and the quality, price and tenure of their land. They might also have reflected that this was preferable to direct taxation. When the tariff reached them, however, they had just been forced to accept Grant's Land Bill. When they took comfort in the possibility of evading the Act, Grant's use of administrative powers and espionage, although not entirely successful, made it more difficult, uncertain and expensive.55

Unless this man, their avowed enemy, were removed, they might lose their lands.56

It was therefore to men shaken by vengeful panic that the softgoodsmen appealed against the tariff. Whether this was entirely to their interests may be doubted. Anxiety about the effects on their profits of increased prices for their goods, during a time of poor trade, was

55. Kiddle, op.cit., p.246.

56. Cf. Black Papers, Black to Gladstone, 21 August 1865. "The last land act crowned all in setting class against class the gulph between them is unmeasurable. Where or how it is to end heaven only knows. It has produced the Dead lock --- between the two Houses of Parliament." In his letter to Mackinnon (11 July 1865) he tells of Grant declaiming "that he was a Revolutionist Atheist and that if he had lived in France during the Revolutionary times he would have been another Robespierre, that he carried a guillotine in his heart - and that he would cut the heads off the Squatters rather than that they should have the land." Deakin, The Crisis in Victorian Politics, p. 15, suggests that Grant commonly expressed himself in this way.
understandable, but it was not in these terms that the question was argued. As there had been so much talk of protection against free trade, an adverse adjustment of taxation was inflated, with the aid of the doctrinaire Argus, into the thin end of a protectionist wedge, which would bring upon them dangers perhaps the more disquieting for not being very clear in outline. Protection would damage the economy, and raise up competitors to them. They do not seem to have considered that if anyone stood to gain from attempts to foster industry, they did. They could command resources of capital and credit, they possessed established reputations, business contacts and systems of distribution; they could afford to import machinery, expert managers and skilled craftsmen.

In their anxiety, however, they listened not to McCulloch, but to the jeremiads of The Argus. They recalled that in England free trade was the doctrine of the Liberal Party, especially its radical wing; they saw in the New South Wales election signs of an Australian reaction against
The people therefore would be on their side, except for Melbourne agitators and layabouts; the goldfields population, whom it was proposed to rob for the sake of a few metropolitan loafers, would rally to them. 58

Mistakenly attributing the achievement of free trade in Britain to the work of the Anti-Corn Law League, they lavished money on the Free Trade League; 59 for all the expenses of starting a newspaper, working the registration system, producing pamphlets and arranging lecture tours, there was enough left to pay Langton, 60 the Secretary, a salary of £750 and the expenses of his election for East Melbourne. 61 They urged

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57. Argus, 1 April 1865.
58. Argus, 4 April 1865 (Fitzroy meeting) is a fair sample of their arguments. And cf. Harker's description of protection (Argus, 14 September 1864) as "setting one set of men to rob another."
59. Inaugural meeting, Argus, 1 April 1865.
61. Age, 3 March 1877; Langton's evidence in his libel case against The Age.
the Council to reject the tariff, and mercantile M.L.C.s helped defeat it. When eventually passed, the tariff did not harm them, but their actions did. Early mercantile opposition had decided McCulloch, a month before the inauguration of the League, that despite its handsome majority in the Assembly, there was no hope of putting the tariff through the Council unless, following the Westminster precedent of the 1861 Paper Duties Bill, it were tacked to the Budget. When this was rejected by the Council, therefore, the House of Squatters, the bunyip aristocracy, had done what the House of Lords, the real aristocracy, had not yet dared to do. It had struck at one of the most firmly-held tenets of British parliamentary government, the popular House's control of finance. The colony was in uproar; well might the Council eventually give way in fear of revolution.

Yet there had been little sign at the 1864 election that the protectionists were at all powerful.

63. *Black Papers*, Black to Gladstone, 20 April 1866.
beneath harangues about the rights of the people and the iniquities of the rich. Such was the theme of the 1865-6 election, which gave McCulloch such an overwhelming majority. Graham Berry had caught the prevailing tone at a Protection League meeting in July:

"He called upon the people --- to separate all questions of free trade or protection from the great constitutional question which was now before them ---."

On the goldfields, where there had been little sign of protectionist feeling previously the change of issue made speeches against taxing the poor digger, which might have been successful had the Council not rejected the Budget, quite irrelevant. In popular myth, the merchant now became the enemy of the people. He had associated himself with the squatters in circumstances so dramatic as to make escape impossible. His illusions had trapped him in the illusions of others. So he helped destroy his influence and the cause he had so foolishly and unnecessarily sought to maintain. The 1866 tariff was now essential to the defeat of the enemies of

69. Argus, 29 July 1865.
the people; because opposed in the name of free trade, it was widely regarded as protectionist, and protection as beneficial to the people. Rational arguments and appeals to self-interest could find no market.

The softgoodsmen had not even gained reliable allies in the pastoralists. These were as ready to pass the 1871 tariff, with its twenty percent duties, as the merchants to pass the 1877 land tax.\(^{70}\) When merchants organised promotional leagues and registration associations, they received little help from the pastoralists. During the 1868 election many even secretly supported McCulloch,\(^ {71}\) their best hope of considerate treatment. When the rumours were shown to be true by the 1869 scandals, Robert Murray Smith, who had been intimately concerned in constitutionalist and free trade organisation and electioneering for some years, complained to Professor Pearson,

70. V.P.D., Vol. 13, pp. 1667-1682; Parnaby, op.cit., c.5.
71. Bendigo Advertiser, 11 January 1868; Ballarat Star, 9 January 1868; Advocate, 8 and 15 January 1868.
"---it just shows what sort of trouble we have been subjected to, by being associated in popular opinion, with the squatting party, when now we find that the most eminent of them were helping the other side. We have all along found we could get no real help from them, but attributed it to individual fear." 72

As protectionists recognised, however, the 1866 tariff, with its five and ten percent duties, had not established protection, even with additions73 for the sake of the revenue in 1867. The victory over the Council, in fact, had brought the cause to a critical stage. It was vaguely felt that protection was established policy, so that serious agitation seemed unnecessary. When the next crisis came in 1867-8, moreover, tariff policy had nothing to do with it, and as the depression lifted briefly thereafter, there was no economic basis for agitation. The defeat of Macpherson's Ministry, although largely protectionist, on Berry's tariff provoked no outcry, for the popular image of the Government was of a body of radical traitors supported by the Irish and the rich, and support for the People's Ministry was in more demand than high tariffs.74 During the recession of 1870,

73. V.P.D., Vol. 3, pp. 194-98.
74. Below, pp. 409-11, 469ff.
Melbourne protectionists revived their agitations, but their organisations were as ineffectual as The Age's propaganda; the public was uninterested. At the amorphous election of 1871, the tariff was but one question of many, and not the most prominent.

McCulloch, however, now faced another revenue shortage. Land revenue could not be greatly expanded. Unlike New South Wales, Victoria could not continue to balance its budget by land-sales. Moreover, the 1869 Land Act had earmarked £0.2m. a year for railway construction, and produced a comprehensive settlement politically dangerous to upset. As in 1865, therefore, McCulloch had to turn to the Customs. Francis, now Treasurer, seized the chance of raising duties. He did not believe in exceeding a certain level, however. He and McCulloch must also have been aware of the need not to alienate the free trade support they had lately received, and to spread the load of new taxation among all interests. They therefore proposed to meet part of the deficit with increased duties, part with a

75. Below, pp. 429ff.
76. 33 Vic., No. 360.
property tax. 77

When this was defeated, Duffy replaced McCulloch, dependent upon the radicals with whom his sympathies lay, despite his personal preference for free trade. Berry, as Treasurer, naturally introduced a still more protective tariff. 78

There were sufficient high protectionists on both sides, and legislators who regarded this as a lesser evil than direct taxation, to pass it. Thereafter, despite attempts to rationalise duties and increase the Customs revenue, the general level and extent of protection remained unchanged until revenue difficulties led to further small increases in 1879. Protection had been established without great public demand, and produced no great public rejoicing.

In 1879, however, the increases nearly brought down the Government. Whereas in 1871 agricultural prospects were hopeful, and mining was rapidly working up to a boom, in 1879 agriculture was depressed and mining was dull. Consequently, there was an outcry against further taxation of these

77. V.P.D., Vol. 12, pp. 507 ff.
industries, and a demand for reductions in the duties on agricultural and mining machinery. 79
At the same time, there was no demand for a general return to free trade. After 1871 the cause which had first won favour among those who on a rational calculation would have stood to lose, by its association with the defeat of the squatters, became firmly associated with the prosperity which in England and New South Wales firmly established the reputation of free trade. Many avowed that the apparent results of protection had converted them. As for the merchants, many of them were becoming increasingly engaged in manufacturing by the late seventies. 80 To increase protection might be unnecessary, but to propose reductions suggested not only a leaning towards the oligarchs, but also the risk of destroying Victoria's lucky charm. When the second Free Trade League was set up in 1876, therefore, it had to face the combined force of two major superstitions. Moreover, as will

80. Parnaby, op.cit., c.2.
be seen later, its support among the commercial classes was limited, and once again its unpopularity was assured by association, not only with the squatters, but also with the most unpopular man in Victoria, McCulloch, who had been so largely responsible for establishing protection's reputation. The League's appeals to reason were naturally unavailing.
II. **Organisation Discouraged.**

According to the gentlemanly view of politics, electors, like legislators, should decide how to vote coolly and rationally, considering the common interest only, and free from external pressures. This severely limited the permissible forms of political organisation and activity, and although nobody, perhaps, believed the ideal to be really likely or practicable, it did limit behaviour, if only by calling for concealment.

Organisation was not entirely precluded.¹ Promotional organisations, on the lines of the Anti-Corn Law League, perhaps the most frequently mentioned model, were formed to educate and persuade electors in favour of a particular policy, to demonstrate the extent to which public opinion supported this by public meetings and petitions, and to work to elect candidates favourable to their views. Politicians might join the organisation, and were among its more useful acquisitions, but they might be required to retire from office in any organisation from which they stood to benefit

¹ The most complete statement of the received ideas about organisation appears in *Ararat Advertiser*, 24 June 1879.
to show that it was not a personal clique; for the same reason, the committee of their friends formed to help them during the election was expected to disband afterwards.

The same men might, however, legitimately form either a promotional organisation - or a branch of one already existing - or else, as several constitutionalist committees did after the election of July 1880, form a registration society. There was never any argument about the propriety of such organisations, although there was a good deal about the activities indulged in by some of them, and some of the promotional organisations which set up registration sub-committees. Occasionally members might imply that a registration society should in theory work for the enrolment of all citizens irrespective of party, but when Moses Alexander described himself as "agent of the Victorian

2. E.g. *Age*, 10 June 1876.
3. N.R.P.L. Branches commonly began in this way - e.g. *Age*, 16 and 28 February 1876.
5. *Age*, 6 September 1865. "The haul of shillings netted by the registrars during the past week has nearly rivalled in abundance the take of pilchards in the Bay, and the proceedings in both cases have been equally fishy."
Registration Association and interested in the welfare and progress of the said colony,\textsuperscript{7} nobody took him seriously.

The principles governing the permissible activities of parliamentary parties were governed by somewhat similar assumptions. Like promotional organisations, they might ensure that candidates representing their views stood at any given election, but otherwise they were expected to avoid uninvited "interference". The selection of candidates was to be left to their local supporters as far as possible;\textsuperscript{8} they might intervene to control the number of candidates only if asked. Nor should they send members of the party to speak in a constituency, or otherwise influence the election, unless they were connected with it; even if they accepted an invitation to speak, they must take great pains to emphasise that they were not trying to "dictate" to the electors or even to their own supporters.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{7} Argus, 3 August 1867.

\textsuperscript{8} Conservative organisations laid greater emphasis on local independence (cf. below, p. 464) but local radicals were always jealous of their rights. Cf. Deakin, \textit{Crisis in Victorian Politics}, pp. 9-10, and below, pp. 531ff.

\textsuperscript{9} Cf. the pleading of exceptional circumstances in Grant's speech at Richmond (\textit{Argus}, 17 June 1872), and Berry's at Warrnambool (\textit{Argus}, 5 Nov 1875); also Berry's attempt to persuade North Melbourne radicals to limit the number of their candidates, while avoiding accusations of interference (\textit{Argus}, 14 April 1877).
Government was especially delicate since although the political use of patronage was customary, its use at election-time was open to suggestions that it was being used as a form of bribery,\textsuperscript{10} which at other times, by a polite fiction, it apparently was not. Again, just as candidates were expected to show that a particular organisation did not exist for their personal benefit, so party leaders (especially Ministers) had to be ostensibly separate from their party organisations. G.P. Smith had political reasons to attack Berry during the 1877 election, but could do so because Berry had in fact flouted a convention.\textsuperscript{11}

"--- it was the first time" he said, "within his knowledge of political societies that he had ever heard of a political organisation in which the head of a Government and a leading politician became the President and chief actor. Such organisations were left to men who did not seek office or place for themselves - outside politicians - who were content to give their services in aid of their political leaders and their political party."

\textsuperscript{10} V.P.D., Vol. 32, pp. 1990 ff.

\textsuperscript{11} Argus, 24 February 1877. And cf. Bindon's and Higinbotham's refusal to appear at the inaugural meeting of the L.L.R.A. while still Ministers. Argus 21 April 68.
Finally, just as individual election committees were expected to disband after each election, and promotional organisations once the policy which they had been formed to advocate was achieved, so should a party headquarters organisation after the election. Otherwise, the foundations of the representative system would be subverted, as they had been in the U.S.A. In that unfortunate country, as the Ararat Advertiser put it,\(^{12}\)

"--- with two great organisations 'bossing' the people and the Parliament, the electors became a mere pack of cards shuffled by certain leaders, and the members of Parliament will be mere wooden dummies to vote at the command of the 'machines'. --- The organisation which gets the vote of the people rules the country and 'annexes' all the patronage and profit, having in view purely the advantage of its own ring, and tyrannising over the unfortunate minority. --- Representative institutions suppose responsibility, but to whom are the leagues responsible? For instance, here we have the Central Reform League, with a membership of two hundred nobodies attempting to dictate a policy to 900,000 people! Some people are disposed to laugh at and ridicule the leagues, but that is a fool's policy. The people are rather lazy, and if they get any league to think for them, and to propound a policy that saves trouble, - they are grateful. Besides, such leagues 'bid' high for the support of the unthinking and are ever ready with a bunch of carrots."

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Despite elements of hypocrisy, such protests were something more than cynical claptrap. This view of politics suited certain basic attitudes which constitutionalists and liberals shared, which restricted their political armoury, and which eventually put them at a disadvantage before the radical challenge. Commercial politicians had risen in business largely by their own efforts, and generally in one man firms or partnerships; participation in companies tended to come later, perhaps more as a sign of their success than as its basis. McCulloch, Francis and Service might be bank-directors, but were regarded, and regarded themselves, primarily as heads of mercantile houses. The occupation of lawyers, the main group allied to them in the Assembly, was still more individualistic. Such men naturally tended to regard the country as a business, needing practical, respectable men to run it efficiently and maintain the confidence of the local and London shareholders. 13 There might be disagreement about the policy or competence of the Board of Directors for the time being, and others

might seek their places from personal ambition, but significant differences of interest or attitudes were so unlikely as to excite suspicion.

Radical politicians, however, usually lacked wealth and standing, having often been working-men or small traders very recently. Francis, Service and McCulloch had entered politics as established businessmen having qualified themselves to lead the community by making money. In them the old attitudes prevailed; for them, the old methods had worked. Men like Berry, Longmore and Burtt, however, began their political careers in agitation. They had no ready-made theory of politics to take over, and they produced no theory of their own, as the men of Birmingham tried to do. To them, organisation was simply the means by which the people could be aroused to see through the plausible men who imposed upon and plundered them, and could be brought into unanimity so that they could

effectively put pressure upon the legislature. 15

The form it took was simply that which they could devise to be most effective. The radicals must take account of the gentlemanly view, and argue in its terms as far as possible, since they accepted parts of it, had no theory of their own, and were intruders in the gentleman's Parliament, but although the leopard became partly domesticated, leopard he remained.

After 1877, however, the gentlemen had to accommodate themselves to the intruders. Berry's opponents were obliged to organise in self-defence, as in the 1860s. During both periods, however, their organisation bore the stamp of their idea of politics. 16 Although the Constitutional Association of 1868 was structurally similar to the Loyal Liberal

15. Argus, 14 April 1877, 29 October 1878. Note Berry's suggestion, on the latter occasion, that the N.R.P.L. was simply a Constitutional Reform League, which would disband, like the Anti-Corn Law League, as soon as the Council was reformed, a suggestion which other parts of his speech belied. And cf. The Age's unquestioning acceptance of the idea of party organisation, as distinct from (although clearly related to) the promotional organisation - "The disorganisation of the Liberal Party --- is due to the want of an organisation about which opinion may centre and form itself. Before a party can be consolidated its ideas must be crystallised for it. It must know the principles for which it is contending, and it must be provided with a platform round which to rally." (Age, 14 January 1876.)

16. Below, c.6, ss. I and II.
Reform Association, it was spiritually quite different, and much less successful. Between 1875 and 1880, however, they evolved distinctive forms which suited their conventions, and were as efficient as those of their opponents.

In 1866 and 1868 they had been defeated by an existing Government and men of their own kind; tacking, moreover, had arguable precedents. In 1877 a moderate coalition with a strong majority had been crushed by a group of maniacs who had halted public business, stirred up class hatred and turned Parliament into a bear garden. Having provoked the Council into rejecting the budget, they took the first steps towards destroying the machinery of order, and, it was believed, caused a profound depression, which, unlike that of the late 'sixties, came after seven years had accustomed them to prosperity.\footnote{Cf. Francis' speech, \textit{Argus}, 23 January 1878, and Joseph Jones', \textit{Argus}, 2 February 1878.} Nor could they rely on the Council so much, once Berry had defeated it, nor, despite Bowen's recall, on the support they had received from Governor and Downing Street in 1868. Moreover, by the end of 1878 Berry's support was dwindling, and to beat the revolutionaries at the polls seemed possible. They were therefore pushed and pulled...
towards effective organisation as never before.

A similar mixture of frustration and opportunity partly accounted for the organisational zeal of radical politicians. Had they all been accepted in the gentleman's Parliament without reserve, they might all have forgotten their past as agitators. Some did; some hardly tried. Others, however, especially Berry and Longmore, key figures in the development of the small radical organisations of the early 'sixties into the radical power of the late 'seventies, hovered between two worlds, seeking acceptance in their new roles without abandoning the old. They could never be quite sure of themselves, perhaps, in their new roles, nor lose the resentment of the unsuccessful for the successful. When rejected, they turned to organisation. It was the three radical defeats of 1870, 1872 and 1875, after the briefest tastes of power, which led them to organise, or to ally with outside agitators. 18

After 1877, the prestige which the victory had brought to the party organisation which had assisted Berry, and the frustration of a powerful Government by the Council, provided a further incentive to men raised to agitation and organisation, to maintain it as long as possible. The Council

18. For these organisations, see below, c.5., s. III, and c.6., ss. 2ff.
and with some reason, since the shadier politicians were generally radicals. At the local level, personal animosities and faction were common. Whatever the strength of doctrines of individualism among these undocilnal men, egotism was rife, fostered by colonial society in much the same way, perhaps, as by the industrial revolution in Britain.

In both cases, there had been not only a prospect of rapid wealth to excite competitiveness, but the uprooting of large numbers from familiar surroundings and primary groups which established some degree of individual and social stability by teaching and enforcing well-understood ways of behaviour, to dump them in outlandish surroundings.

22. Those implicated in land scandals during the 'sixties were nearly all McCullochites. Jones and Butters were expelled in 1869, and Kyte probably escaped expulsion only through death. (M. Kiddle, op. cit., pp. 255-262.) Sands had to resign in 1867. (Argus, Sands v. Armstrong, 3-6 May 1867, gives the circumstances.) McCann was gaoled for forgery in 1867 (Argus, 21 August 1867) and Wardrop ran off to Valparaiso after certain malpractice upon a building society (Argus, 16 July 1867). Cowell attempted to cheat his creditors after becoming insolvent, and it appeared at his trial that he had been exploiting his mistress in a quite despicable manner. (Argus, 27 February 1868, 20 May 1868). Radicalism also attracted men of ferocious righteousness, many intellectuals, and many perfectly ordinary men, but it seems quite likely that for a large number, it was rooted in frustrations which turn some to drink, some to crime, some to religion, some to politics - or any to a mixture of these.

23. Argus, 18 December 1879; 6, 13, 16 and 24 January 1880. Ballarat Courier, 26 and 31 August 1870; 26 January 1876, and see below, pp. 344-6.
often among strangers. Many, of course, came with relations, men from their own area, or soon found them, giving them a basis to create new primary groups quickly. In Melbourne or Geelong, adaptation was generally easier than in the bush or on the diggings. In particular, the lack of women, limiting the number who could achieve the relative stability of family life, affected inland areas more severely. For the married, however, there were other anxieties; the roving man was tied down, the good family man was often hard put to it to feed a growing family. Even the best husbands might be forced to seek work away from home. The temporarily or permanently deserted wife therefore became a serious social problem.24

For many, only the small group of mates possessed sufficient mobility to endure; as it had to carry such a heavy emotional burden, it is no wonder it became legendary. When it did, it was extended by some enthusiasts to include all working men in one mateship. This idea was something completely different from the mateship of Victorian

diggers, a grouping of two or more against the world. A sense of common diggerhood did develop during the very early 'fifties, but this was no more than the ordinary consciousness of a common way of life, common interests and grievances, which also appeared among the upper classes. Moreover, for large numbers, particularly after 1857, the diggings became a trap from which they hoped to escape. The relative anonymity of the goldfields and the crowds of unemployed who occupied the half-formed suburbs of Melbourne during the depression were fertile soil for egotism; the organised political activity which expressed something of the co-operative side of the radical classes was always shot through with personal quarrels and suspicions which weakened or destroyed many promising ventures.

25. Especially after Black Wednesday, which made them co-operate as never before. For a different view of the diggers, see R. Ward, 'The Australian Legend', pp.109-11. The diggers no doubt co-operated more than the rich in the details of everyday life, like many groups whose life is precarious, but whether that amounts to something so different from the mutual assistance of other deprived groups as to deserve a special name may be doubted, nor does this kind of co-operation preclude egotism in other directions, especially when the group is not under attack. One may also doubt Ward's suggestion (p.109) that it was 'mateship' rather than the hope of riches which made many diggers continue working small, co-operative claims when employment was available in company mines. (Cf. Blainey, 'Rush that Never Ended', pp. 294-300.)
The vigour of the politically active, however, whether co-operative or not, was played against a matt back-cloth of general political apathy, the norm to which Victorians tended; for all the uproar into which they could be thrown, the speed with which demonstrations and organisations disappeared after these political saturnalia was remarkable. The frequent complaints, and the general impression, received some statistical confirmation in the low percentage of the adult male population registered to vote, despite automatic enrolment of ratepayers, and of those registered who voted, even when registration and voting occurred during the most agitated times. Roughly two-thirds of adult males registered, of whom only two-thirds voted, so that the Assembly was elected by somewhat under one half the enfranchised population.26

Naturally, percentages varied considerably with area and the density and composition of population. During the 1877 election Avoca polled 39.6% of the poll, Kyneton 77.7%; the average, 26. See the return prepared by the Government Statistician covering the elections of 1871, 1874 and 1877, on which the following paragraph is based. (V. and P. (L.A.), Session 1877-8, Vol. 1, C.9). Cp. the polling figures for 1865-6, V. and P. (L.A.), 1st Session 1867, Vol. 2, C.6.
however, despite the radicals' passionate campaign, and the concentration of polling into one day, was only 63.1% where a contest took place; in four constituencies, none occurred. Local and personal factors affected some areas; Avoca was Grant's pocket county by then, Ballarat West's poll of 52% was unusually low because of a recent exodus to Queensland, and the absence of a contest in its county, Dalhousie, probably freed voters and workers for Kyneton. In general, large constituencies and safe seats tended to poll small or be uncontested. It is not easy to group constituencies according to economic and social characteristics, since these were so mixed, but in general older agricultural areas and towns dependent on them polled below 58%, the numerous inland constituencies combining a number of diggings with agriculture 58-65%, the few gold towns with separate representation (excluding Ballarat West) 61-68%, Melbourne working class areas 63-70%, and Melbourne upper class concentrations 68-75%. The Government Statisticians' investigations into the polling rates of different occupations showed that
of the five major groups, the highest percentage, 69, was polled in 1877 by the artisans, the lowest, 60, by the labourers. Farmers polled 62%, miners 64, and commercial and professional men of all grades 66. His figures for 1871 and 1874 show a very similar pattern. Unfortunately he did not continue his investigations before or after that date, but the percentages polled overall and by electoral districts in the quiet year of 1874 are much the same as during the political ferment and economic depression of the 1865-6 election.

One reason for these low figures was probably the mobility of the population. It was long after the gold rushes before it settled; for many years, in fact, it was difficult to say who might be considered a Victorian. Large numbers left for gold-rushes elsewhere at various times, not a few to other forms of mining. Many turned farmer, in one colony or another, or followed the pastoral expansion northwards. Some turned planter or storekeeper in Fiji. J.A. Brooke, Minister of Lands in 1860-61, died a newspaper editor in Japan. Of those who remained, a large number moved around a
great deal. The Victorian gold-rushes decreased in intensity, but never entirely ceased during this period. Even when deep-sinking predominated a large number remained on the fringes, hopefully scratching a bare living, cut off from society by the memory and the expectation of gold, mixing mining with shearing, fencing, harvesting and general labouring. These occupations also attracted in their seasons miners with steady jobs in the company mines, and townsmen seeking the high wages which could be wrung out of the farmer. Many abandoned mining practically every year for farming or Melbourne, or moved from declining fields to the quartz mines of Stawell and Bendigo. Nor was it only diggers who moved. From the late 'sixties until the drought which closed the 'seventies the land rush to the Wimmera, the Riverina and Gippsland absorbed large numbers of labourers, miners and townsfolk; farmers moved from the coast and from South Australia. At the same time, the influx into Melbourne was gathering

27. Cf. Argus, Summary for Europe, 22 March 1876, 10 July 1876, 8 July 1878, 3 September 1879, 3 and 31 October 1879, 2 September 1880.
29. Parnaby, op.cit., c.4.
strength for the city rush of the 'eighties.

Even among more stable citizens, however, the nature of the society made the organiser's task extremely difficult: so many fissures cut across it, so many factors influenced voting, that organisation was severely limited in area and membership. Class was not usually an adequate basis. Some, indeed, thought openly in terms of a class war, but they were rare.\(^{30}\) The divisions in what would now be called the working class will be considered later, but the position is conveniently summed up in the use of the word class. It was commonly employed to distinguish any section of the population on an occupational or other basis. Bishop Goold, for example, could accurately call the 1872 Education Act "class legislation".\(^{31}\) The phrase "the working classes" was common, and pointed to a loose community of status which, as will be seen later, could be politically important, but it commonly included farmers and manufacturers,\(^{32}\) and

\(^{30}\) E.g. William Ryan, of the Seaman's Union (Argus, 16 October 1874) "There had been too much of the 'goody goody' business about the working man's rights. With capitalists it was merely a question of taking as much flesh and blood as they could for their money, and when the working men had a chance they should take an advantage also."

\(^{31}\) Argus, 20 April 1875.

\(^{32}\) Cf. Berry's speeches in Argus, 26 February 1880, and 5 November 1881, and Dow's in St. Arnaud Mercury, 4 February 1880.
even when limited to wage-earners, pointed to a division between skilled and unskilled, and between miners and the rest.33

Religious and national feeling complicated matters. Sometimes their effects were merely local. It was no accident, for example, that East Melbourne elected Cohen, Levi and Zox. In Dundas it was an advantage to be a Scot, and not of just any clan.

"What claims had his opponent on them?" asked James Macpherson of his electors. 34 "Was he a Highlander, or what? Why, at the last election the Highlanders voted for him because he was a Mac; but his opponent was not a Mac – he was a Munro. How came he to think of coming here?"

The most important, however, was the so-called Catholic vote, strong in numbers and the coincidence of religion, nationality and the sense of special grievances.35 The status of the Southern Irish being generally low, moreover, anti-Catholicism especially strong among miners,36 their cohesiveness was reinforced, and the chances of uniting the working classes, the most receptive of radicalism and organisation, were drastically reduced. Eventually,

33. Below, c.5, s.I.
34. Argus, 5 October 1869.
35. Below, c.3.
36. Below, c.5, s.I.
national differences were to weaken with the growth of the native population, but for many years this appeared as yet another division.

Even had the electorate been homogeneous, however, another influence would have fragmented it. Men who had helped found their town or village took especial pride in their offspring, all the more because many had been uprooted, wandering men for some years previously, so that something of the emotional strength of mateship attached to localism. Many areas were ill-supplied with communications, and if their total population was small, this was offset by the weighting of the electoral system against the larger concentrations. It was also weighted in favour of the stable, ratepaying electorate, the section in which local pride, and the awareness of local needs, were strongest. The abundance of local newspapers stimulated local pride, narrowing horizons as it diversified opinions. Local needs

37. For the figures of distribution during the last election under the 1859 Act, and the first under the 1876 Act, see V. and P. (L.A.), Session 1877-8, Vol. 1, C.9.

38. See next section on the operation of the registration system.
were so pressing that each settlement competed with its neighbours for sums which, trifling to those who in metropolitan ease deplored the sordid aims and limited views of the provinces, could make an appreciable difference to the welfare of large numbers of their fellow-citizens, and were essential if their views and aims were to be extended. Nor was local feeling limited to remote villages. Elections in Southwest Province were always contests between Geelong and Ballarat; when Mackay was Minister of Mines, he was suspected on Ballarat because he was a Bendigo man. The Councillors of Collingwood, moreover, opposed Vale to a man during the 1869 ministerial election, because it was he who, as Commissioner for Public Works, had diverted to Richmond money intended for draining Collingwood. As local Councillors and Members of Mining Boards were prominent in electoral affairs and organisations, such opposition could be very serious. As local Councillors frequently

39. Ballarat Courier, 9 June 1870. For an inside account of Southwest Province electioneering, see Diary of George Belcher, (Victoria State Library), 25 July 1874-9 April 1875.

40. Argus, 30 September 1869, 1 October 1869.
entered Parliament, localism permeated the entire system. The late 'seventies suggested that such influences were waning, but once quiet returned, two Geelong by-elections showed that this was not so when they resulted in the easy return of two blatantly localist independents.  

Closely connected with localism was personal feeling. There was always some prejudice in favour of a local candidate, and he necessarily had the advantage of being known and having friends in the electorate. Nor was this so only in remote areas. Practically all Ballarat representatives came from Ballarat, and it was even suggested that citizens of Ballarat East should beware of electing representatives who lived in Ballarat West. Fitzroy's ex-Mayor, Albert Tucker, was rightly regarded as unbeatable because of his local services. Sometimes, of course, personal followings were a very minor factor, especially during the


42. *Ballarat Courier*, 25 February 1871.

constitutional crises; nor would Tucker's following have availed him much if he had turned constitutionalist. At the other extreme were a few cases like C.E. Jones, re-elected after expulsion from Parliament over the 1869 land scandals, purely, it seems, on personal grounds.\textsuperscript{44} Narrowly defeated in 1871 after having alienated the Orange and temperance interests, he left for the U.S.A.\textsuperscript{45} On his return, standing at the 1882 Geelong by-election, with no clear platform, no party affiliations,\textsuperscript{46} a Ballarat man facing a large body of new electors, he came a good second to a Geelong local, Berry's radical trailing badly. At the next general election, only the returning officer's casting vote kept him from the third seat at Ballarat West.\textsuperscript{47}

Just as local and personal feelings tended to coincide, of course, so did other factors. Ballarat was perhaps the most striking example. It was

\textsuperscript{44} M. Kiddle, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 255-262.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Ballarat Courier}, 26 and 31 August, 1870, 8 September 1870, 18 April 1871.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Age}, 20 April 1882.

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Argus}, 6 March 1886.
overwhelmingly a mining town, where even those not directly engaged depended for their livelihood on the mines; practically everyone had shares in them. The town was overwhelmingly Protestant, and its radical leadership was closely connected with Methodism, Orangeism and temperance. Ballarat radicals had longstanding contacts with radicals in the adjacent county. Most goldfields tended to radicalism and therefore protection; sometimes they combined to press mining demands. Eventually, however, apathy or other divisions broke up the alliance. Even inside Ballarat, matters could become very complicated, as during the 1871 election, when the Jones and Clarke factions of the radical ascendency fought each other, while Major Smith, an ex-constitutionalist turned protectionist, and Joseph Jones, an unrepentant free trader, ran more or less together on a platform of mining reform, opposition to assisted immigration, and the aggrandizement of Ballarat.

48. Below, p.494
49. At least at the parliamentary level. Argus, 31 August 1877; Age, 28 May 1880.
50. Ballarat Courier, 8 September 1870 - 17 March 1871.
In Ballarat East, the usual battle took place with the Catholics; in both constituencies other candidates, each with his following, stood on various platforms. There was scope to spread the mining reform movement to other fields, or co-operate with the late protectionist, anti-immigration and eight hours movements in Melbourne, but nothing was done. If this was the case in Ballarat, large, relatively wealthy, exceptionally well served by early railway development, how could anything more be expected in the remote places?

51. Below, c.5, ss. II and III.
III. Organisation Encouraged.

In the long run many of these influences weakened. Communications improved, the population became more stable. Imported divisions weakened as a new generation grew up. These changes were only beginning to take effect by 1883, however; only in the short term when circumstances were exceptionally favourable, was successful organisation possible before. Meanwhile, certain features of the electoral system encouraged lesser organisations, and maintained a continuity of organisational experience.

The most important was the registration system. This had raised such problems that Registration Acts were legion until O'Shanassy's Act of 1863 set the system for the rest of the period. The main problems had been the expense and inefficiency of previous methods among a mobile population. Collectors were not always thorough or honest. Nor did all voters loyally co-operate. One collector had a harrowing visit to a group of diggers who mocked and terrorised him, scrawled nonsense or obscenities over their claim forms, or "applied them to unmentionable

1. 27 Vic. No. 168; slightly amended in the consolidating Act of 1865, 29 Vic. No. 279.
purposes". 2

The Act provided for all ratepayers enrolled for local elections to be entered automatically on the parliamentary rolls. Others could, provided they had lived in Victoria for one year, followed by three months in the electoral district for which they claimed, pay one shilling and take out elector's rights for the division of that district in which they lived. A move to another division required re-registration and another shilling; a move to another district also entailed another three month qualifying period.

O'Shanassay intended to limit the franchise to long-term residents, and to give especial facilities to those who had given the strongest proofs of their intention to remain by acquiring property. 3 In practice, it was a serious limitation on manhood suffrage. The discriminatory contracting-in system would have reduced the working class vote even in a stable society where the registration machinery was

2. Diary of James Smith, 1863, 20 February 1863. (Mitchell Library.)

3. Vic. Hansard, Vol. 9, p. 481. And cf. Diary of James Smith, 7 February 1863; O'Shanassay had told Smith "that he anticipated from the operation of the new Electoral Bill, the introduction of a superior class of men into the House."
The mobility of the population, entailing frequent re-registration for many, exacerbated its effect. Many workers were also ratepayers, especially in the larger towns, but as the Local Government Acts required rates to have been paid by June 20th for enrolment in the local elector's lists, depressions led to their disfranchisement in large numbers unless each obtained an elector's right.

In country areas, where the local franchise required a £10 qualification and property-values were lower, working men were at an especial disadvantage. According to one Shire Secretary, only 850 of his 2,220 ratepayers had the £10 qualification; of the remaining 1,370, one-tenth took out electors' rights. The reason lay partly in defective administrative arrangements.

4. According to the National Registration Society's report (Daily Telegraph, 2 April 1880) analyses of the rolls as late as 1879 had shown that even in Melbourne, half the names on the ratepayers' roll changed during the three-year period between compilations of completely new rolls; changes in the general list (elector's right voters) were still more frequent.

5. 27 Vic., Nos. 184 and 186.

6. Age, 1 May 1868.

7. Age, 14 September 1866.
"I ask any sane and respectable adult," wrote the Hamilton Spectator's Redruth correspondent, "--- whether patriotism must not be at fever heat indeed when a man can be found to brave the cold, the blinding rain, and the twenty-four miles of sand and mud he must of necessity traverse, in order to hand in his name and gaze for about three minutes on the amiable face of Mr. Garton."

Nor were registrars always punctilious over their ill-paid duties. One Warrenheip registrar deputed his functions to one person, who delegated them to another, until nobody was quite sure who issued electors' rights, or where the lists and forms were.

Errors and omissions were, according to one rate-collector, among the most frequent causes of disfranchisement of ratepayers, because rate-collectors so often garbled names; he might have added that as many electors were illiterate or semi-literate, and country printers especially often inaccurate, the most conscientious officers faced considerable difficulties. They often found it difficult to locate the person responsible for paying rates. A politically-minded landlord responsible for paying his tenants' rates, might delay payment simply to disfranchise them. Councils sometimes made matters

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8. Hamilton Spectator, 2 September 1868.
9. Age, 31 August 1865; Argus, 6 May 1864.
10. Age, 31 January 1866.
worse by leaving little time between striking the rate and the twentieth. Many collectors were not conscientious, and it was alleged that they often failed to seek out those who had moved, or deliberately avoided political opponents. Whatever the truth of these accusations, many who were out when the collector called were obliged to contract in. Many failed to do so, even when conscientious registrars or Councils seeking prompt payment placarded the area, or political organisations put out handbills and advertisements and canvassed. The possibilities for error and fraud, and the contracting-in provisions, caused a great deal of organised political activity. Sectional associations, promotional bodies, registration leagues, bands of zealots for a man or a party, all made a point of "seeing to the rolls". The weighting of the system against the poor and migratory made this especially important for radicals, but even the stationary and affluent had to beware of omission; if entitled to more than one vote they might have several rolls to

check.

Radicals and conservatives approached registration differently. Radicals, it was generally agreed, excelled at canvassing,\textsuperscript{13} large numbers of volunteers going out on well-organised house-to-house visits, confirming the faithful, converting waverers, collecting names, ticking off interminable lists. Conservative leaders felt that outside election times, canvassing was a breach of privacy; when Berry's opponents began to indulge in this activity seriously and efficiently, they expressed surprise that their efforts were not resented.\textsuperscript{14} No doubt the surprise was genuine; a life of individualistic enterprise and relatively spacious housing, had doubtless produced among the middle classes - including, perhaps, if only through imitation, its lower ranges - more demanding attitudes towards privacy. Probably there were also many too dignified to knock on just anybody's door. The working and living conditions of the lower orders limited the areas in which they expected privacy,

\textsuperscript{13} Argus, 24 August 1878.
\textsuperscript{14} Argus, 1 October 1880.
they were more accustomed to menial work, and less likely to meet hostile or suspicious receptions for their views, appearance, speech and behaviour from their own order and its uninhibited children.

There were, of course, many constitutionalist working men and shopkeepers, who might have done such jobs. However, the tendency on both sides was for the local conduct of politics to belong to the men best-known in the groups to which it appealed; committees tended to include a large number of artisans or radical shopkeepers; conservative committees tended to come from a higher social level. The former were well-suited to canvassing, the latter were not; used to hiring labour, they preferred to use paid canvassers. This tendency characterised their registration as much as their electoral activities. Several registration associations were set up by both sides, but the most prominent, the Victoria Registration Association of 1867 and the National Registration Association of 1878 and after, were conservative; since its registration activity was so vigorous, one might almost add the 1865 Free Trade League.
Constitutionalists also had a special incentive to form such organisations, as they were the ones who stood to gain most from the exploitation of plural voting. The first way in which this was attempted was by claiming votes for shareholders for company property, as joint owners. Under the Municipal Corporations Act, joint owners and occupiers could each vote, provided the rateable value divided by the number of claimants was at least £10; if it was less, then only as many could vote as gave that result. The general position was early conceded; in 1865 eight of the Free Trade League Committee obtained votes in East Melbourne for the League's offices. It seems, in fact, to have concentrated on that district. According to the *Age*, 125 names were down for the Melbourne Club, where the form of membership had been altered to make it a share in the freehold. Banks and insurance companies swelled

15. They were not alone in this, however; in 1876 Munro and Longmore, two leading radicals, were enrolled for several votes. (*Argus*, 7 September 1876.)
16. 27 Vic., No. 184, s. 47.
17. *Age*, 4 October 1865.
the numbers; it was hardly surprising that Langton, the Secretary, should have captured the second seat in 1866.

During the 1866 registration season, the Registration Association was more ambitious, instigating claims for the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company and the Melbourne Gas Company, the former for the land over which its lines ran, the latter for its gas mains. Something of this sort had been attempted in 1865, but only on a small scale. The claim now presented to the Town Clerk of Sandridge was, according to him, for 369 "men, women, children and deceased persons", in a small electorate. He refused to enter them in the burgess roll, and the Revision Court dismissed their claims, on the grounds that shares were personal, not real property; the Court also dismissed the Gas Company claims on the additional grounds that its pipes were not rateable, and that the property was vested in trustees, who were excluded from voting as such. Other courts generally followed the same reasoning, but not all. Hawthorn allowed 24 Railway Company

19. *Age*, 19 October 1865.
20. *Age*, 5 July 1866.
votes because nobody appeared to contest the claims; other places decided that as the Municipal Corporations Act allowed no more than three votes to any individual, it intended the same for companies. In such cases, three were selected at random, the claimants' representative being refused the right to select them himself, but the methods used varied widely.\^22

The Registration Association's Secretary, Moses Alexander,\^23 also sought to induce constitutionalists to subdivide properties and sell the bare minimum for a ratepayer's qualification to reliable men. Such an attempt at Brighton, Higinbotham's narrowly-held constituency, was disallowed on a technicality; after the test claim had been dismissed, no less than 93 more were withdrawn. Next day, the Kew Revision Court made a similar decision, but referred the case to Mr. Justice Barry who decided that the claim was just.\^24

\^22. *Age*, 17 and 18 July 1866.
\^23. A commercial agent whose name appears frequently in conservative political organisation, but of whom little is known. Something of his business activities appears in Alexander v. Jones. (*Argus*, 5-8 March 1869.)
\^24. *Argus*, 17 and 18 July 1867, 3 August 1867.
This method, however, was rare. Registration associations were expensive, partly because of the use of professional agents and partly because the complexity of the law called for the employment of counsel at the Revision Courts, especially when, as in 1867, the radicals formed counter-organisations.25 Having wasted large sums on the Free Trade League in a period of bad trade, Melbourne constitutionalists rapidly closed their purses.26 Secondly, many constitutionalists disapproved of Alexander's activities. Although Robert Murray Smith, a man of integrity and one of the Brighton and Kew subdividers, defended his actions on English radical precedents,27 he forgot that manhood suffrage was, at least in theory, established in Victoria, so that what had been in England virtually a means of extending the franchise, in Victoria seemed tantamount to restriction. Even The Argus disapproved of such

25. Age, 20 June 1866; as C.E. Jones and Burtt were associated with it, very likely it had Government support, since they were McCulloch's two chief organisers. Soon its counsel were facing V.R.A. counsel (Age, 17 July 1866) in the revision courts, but it seems to have been a short-lived and purely defensive organisation.
27. Argus, 6 August 1867.
activities as improper, and likely to alienate more votes than it created.\textsuperscript{28}

The National Registration Society of 1878\textsuperscript{29} was set up to combat roll-stuffing rather than to engage in it, after the success of West Melbourne radicals in exploiting the possibilities of the general list. It was not difficult to obtain electors' rights by impersonation or inventing fictitious names. Registrars were required to check qualifications and put a series of questions to prevent fraud,\textsuperscript{30} but boredom and low pay made many lax, and the large, shifting population of the urban constituencies where these practices were most common made such scrupulous attention to the law impossible even for the most zealous. On polling day, the rights, and any which could be acquired for a drink or some other price, could be handed to safe men. Alternatively, 'dummies' could be hired, in which case, it was alleged, the first was supplied with a right, collected a ballot-paper, pocketed it, put a similar but blank sheet in the box, and gave the paper to the dummy-master, who marked it.

\textsuperscript{28} Argus, 5 August 1867.
\textsuperscript{29} For its other activities, see below, pp.
\textsuperscript{30} 27 Vic. No. 168, s.16.
The next dummy collected his paper, pocketed it, voted with the first, and so till rights and dummies were exhausted. 31

It was also possible to impersonate those who, being on the ratepayers' list, were not required to produce an elector's right as evidence of identity and entitlement, 32 and who had died, left the district, or not yet polled. This was safer, of course, with obscure men and in urban areas. If a name appeared twice, or if a division had more than one polling booth, it was possible for its owner to poll more than once, or to be impersonated. 33 The only check on these practices was certain ineffectual questions which officers conducting the poll could, and at the request of a candidate's scrutineer must, put to those seeking to vote. 34

31. Age, 8 November 1867.
32. The frequency of reminders on election day to those on the general lists not to forget their elector's rights suggests that some always did.
33. During the Emerald Hill by-election of June 1866, the following message fell into the wrong hands. (Argus, 18 June 1868.)
''Andrew Brown and William Edward Cross, two coloured men, has (sic) not yet voted - could be polled, I think, with safety. --- One is in India, and the other at sea.''
34. 27 Vic., No. 168, s. 98.
The normal organisation for such activities was the temporary election committee. Although set up for one election only, virtually the same committees often reappeared at subsequent elections, especially if the seat had not changed hands for some time, or if elections were frequent. Sometimes they were formed from the friends of a candidate standing of his own volition, sometimes men of similar outlook would form a committee to bring forward a candidate or candidates, or to decide which of those standing to support; such groups were often the members of an already existing political organisation acting under another name, partly because they hoped to cast their net wider, partly because of the distinction between a promotional and an electoral organisation. Committees of this sort, however, were rare outside larger constituencies and times of political excitement. Often they would invite candidates to address the committee, which then voted, openly or by ballot.

35. The description which follows is derived from too many small scraps of routine election-time information for detailed references to be useful; election advertisements are particularly helpful. For examples of the more advanced methods, see c.5, s.2, below.
to decide whom to support. The candidate might be pledged, verbally or in writing, to a programme or a party, or even to resign on request.36

To avoid the accusation of being hole and corner meetings dictating to the electorate, such committees usually had candidates endorsed by public meeting. This was also one method of demonstrating to an uncertain candidate that he stood a good chance; the other was the requisition, signed by as many electors as possible. Those who signed had made an act of affirmation which was likely to increase their zeal; despite complaints by beaten candidates that pledges had been broken, promises of support, whether verbal or written, were regarded seriously enough to make the Collingwood radical committee of 1865-6 devote much time and effort to persuading electors to withhold pledges until it could examine the candidates and make recommendations. The requisition also identified a pool of workers and votes, and, if published, could be the means of impressing other voters, whether friendly, hostile or undecided, with the size and influence of one's support.

36. E.g. *Argus*, 8 January 1868, 1 February 1871; *Age*, 14 April 1874; *Ballarat Courier*, 31 January 1871, 22 February 1871, 6 and 9 March 1871.
Requisitionists formed the nucleus of the General Committee. The functions of this unwieldy body, which grew during the campaign, were necessarily exercised by a series of smaller bodies, an Executive Committee with sometimes a separate Finance Committee, supported by local sub-committees in electoral divisions, wards, or even streets in the towns, while in the country the major town (often a separate electorate) was occupied by the central committee, with sub-committees in smaller centres.37

In constituencies with more than one member, there was an especial incentive for organisation. In these, electors had as many votes as there were to be members, but could give them only one each; it was possible to favour one man, however, by voting for him and nobody else, an operation known as plumping. The multitude of influences at work on the voters ensured some plumping, together with split voting for candidates of different persuasions. Consequently, whenever an election was being managed

by something more than a series of individual committees, it was advantageous to keep the number of its candidates down to the number of seats, to avoid splitting the votes of its supporters, while selecting candidates who would attract split votes from other groups by appealing to religious, national, personal or other loyalties. It was also possible for a strong minority to run fewer candidates than the number of seats, persuading their supporters to plump for them, and seeking split votes from the other side. So successful were these tactics that it was very common for constituencies to have men on both sides of the House. To be at their most effective, however, these manoeuvres called for considerable voting discipline, and careful organisation.

38. The operation of plumping and split voting is explained in some detail in Argus, 27 February 1880.

39. This could be an advantage as far as seeking public works went. Ararat, for example, had one of its members, McLellan, in the Macpherson Cabinet, and the other, Wilson, in its successor, at a time when it was agitating for a railway. (Below, c.4, s.2.)
IV. Background to the Major Organisations. ¹

These encouragements, however, were short-lived. Election campaigns and registration seasons were brief, and often excited only desultory interest. Nor did organisations produced by these routine stimuli cover wide areas. The Loyal Liberal Reform Association of 1868 and the National Reform and Protection League of 1877-83, however, spread all over the colony, on waves of political excitement which made people read newspapers more eagerly, attend public meetings and sign petitions more readily, demand more drama, more news, more meetings. These the radicals were eager to supply.

The most obvious reason for excitement was economic distress, which coincided with the periods of organisation. The post-goldrushes depression saw the outburst associated with the Land Convention, and later the first two constitutional crises; the depression of the late 'seventies saw the third. The recessions of 1870-71 and 1874-5 were accompanied by minor sputters. Political excitement did not

¹ Much of the evidence for this section is to be found in later chapters; detailed references will therefore be left till later.
follow mechanically from economic difficulties, however. In the first place, the prolonged depression after 1857 illustrated the principle that discontent arises, not from miserable conditions, but from a contrast between expectations and reality, a frustration of hopes or a sudden fear of worse things to come. With the economic shock of April 1857, therefore, Victoria became ripe for the political outburst of that year; the explosion of 1865 came after the Council had obstructed measures to restore prosperity for some years, and had suddenly, by rejecting the Budget, threatened to dislocate the economy further. Between these outbursts, as the depression wore on, political excitement had worn out. By 1859 the Convention was dying; when the depression reached its nadir the following year, it was practically dead. Many, disappointed in the results of the early lands agitation, had turned to other consolations, the

3. It also came in mid-winter, when the employment of labourers and building workers was least certain.
Bible or, probably, the bottle. It would be surprising, however, if large numbers had not simply lowered their expectations.

In the second place, most popular outbursts followed some dramatic political event. Recessions usually affected Governments almost simultaneously with the working population, by reducing revenue; as large-scale retrenchment was difficult, this entailed increased taxation. Many governments were thus endangered, some defeated, but by itself this need not have caused much excitement. A sufficient number of the public had to feel, or be made to feel, that events in Parliament closely concerned them. Economic distress might achieve this, but even in 1857 there were other factors.

The defeat of O'Shanassy's first Ministry coincided with the start of the depression, although these events were unconnected, but the violence of the reaction which began at the ministerial elections and continued into the Convention, owed much to radical frustration at the abruptness of the defeat of 'the People's Ministry; and the fury of Irishmen.

5. In 1871, for example, the defeat of McCulloch passed almost unnoticed, like the resignation of the Kerferd Ministry in 1875.
seeing Duffy and O'Shanassy so defeated on grounds largely sectarian. 6

At the other extreme, the two great peaks of popular excitement during the Berry ascendancy, in 1875-6 and 1878, 7 were almost entirely political achievements. The resignation of the Kerferd Ministry in 1875 had been the result of another attempt to revise the taxation system, partly because of the recession, but partly, since Service began it in 1874 during a time of prosperity, as a matter of policy. Thereafter, the rationale of events was political, deriving from the bitter conflict of Berry and McCulloch, and Berry's arrival at mastery in an agitation which tied the title 'conservative' to McCulloch's coat tails. Berry provoked the 1877-8 crisis because he wanted a fight with the Council to excite public opinion against it, and so reform it. The depression began after the constitutional crisis; the great agitation began with the political coup of Black Wednesday, which may even have hastened the

7. The stonewall and the constitutional crises; considered in more detail below, c.6.
depression. Once this had set in agitation became easier at first; the people could be persuaded that the rich were deliberately sabotaging the economy to unnerve the people.

Anger and alarm made audiences suggestible, and memories and prejudices were confirmed by the suggestion. Later, however, the disillusionment and antagonisms aroused by the Government's failure to control the weather and the international economy made it almost impossible to continue the agitation.

As much depended on politics, much depended on who made the decisions, and what was his political position. Berry sought cause of quarrel in 1877-8, and used every means of agitation to excite and to maintain excitement. Duffy, in 1871 had equal cause for quarrel, but respected the gentlemanly ideal of politics too much to anticipate

8. According to The Argus' monthly reports on the state of trade, 1877 had been a rather dull year for trade; 1878 was one of the worst for some time. Its start coincided with Black Wednesday, in January 1878. (Argus, Summary for Europe, 23 January 1878.) Considering the exaggerated fears which this event aroused, it is more than likely that it should have temporarily destroyed business confidence.

9. Argus, 4 and 15 June 1878, 3 September 1878. And cf. Longmore's accusations that the banks were deliberately restricting credit to selectors to turn them against the Government. (St. Arnaud Mercury, 5 October 1878.)
Berry's methods.10 When Francis, his supplanter, was faced with the same brute obstruction by the Council, his distaste for agitation, and the presence in his Cabinet of the Council's former defenders, made him, although fighting the election on Reform, deliberately eschew the methods urged by the radicals.11 Berry, by contrast, was in 1877 the first unfettered radical Premier, and had learned his politics, not from John Stuart Mill, nor simply from parliamentary infighting, but by bawling himself hoarse from innumerable platforms.

Just as economic factors do not entirely explain the great periods of popular excitement, so economic interest is an inadequate explanation of the way the country then divided politically. One side claimed to represent the working classes, the miners, urban workers and farmers. Manufacturers generally supported this alliance, but as they were politically insignificant in numbers, organisation

10. Although he believed Berry had faced great provocation in 1875, Duffy disapproved of the stonewall, and urged electors, while returning opponents of McCulloch, not to elect just stone-wallers. (Argus, 17 March 1877.)

and representation in Parliament, and as so many were indistinguishable from working men, it gives a false impression to count them as a separate element of radical power. Against these, in general, were arrayed pastoralists and most of the commercial and professional communities. Despite their marked inferiority in seats, however, the constitutionalists were far from overwhelmed in votes. Like their opponents, they obtained support on local and personal grounds. They also benefited particularly

12. For their general unwillingness to take an active part in politics outside the House, see below, pp. 402 and 483-4. In 1866-8, manufacturers accounted for four M.L.A.s out of 141 (including those who did not serve for the whole Parliament) and in 1877-80 for 4 out of 98. (F.K. Crowley, Aspects of the Constitutional Conflicts Between the Two Houses of the Victorian Legislature, (Mel.M.A.) Appendix B; Parnaby, op.cit., p. 296.)

13. Deakin, 'Crisis in Victorian Politics', pp. 11-12. The areas where the parties' support mainly lay, and, where they can be found, the occupations of their leading local supporters, confirms this general impression.

14. E.g. Argus, 2 February 1866, shows that, although the Opposition had obtained only 20 seats out of 78, it had won 22, 904 votes to the Government's 28,428. The basis of calculation, taking the highest number of votes polled for each side in multiple constituencies and ignoring elections either uncontested or where all candidates stood for the same party, is reasonably fair, although on this occasion it somewhat under-represented the Government vote. Had registration and voting been compulsory, and had plural voting been abolished, the Government might have been further ahead, but as much of the 'Catholic vote' was concentrated among the lower classes, and this tended at that time to support the Opposition, the Constitutionalists might also have done well.
from plural voting, although not until 1880 do they seem to have taken much advantage of this. The considerable support they obtained on the gold-fields and the Melbourne maritime constituencies, where they had several safe seats, suggests a conflict between feelings that protection was robbing the needy miner and wharfie for the benefit of Collingwood, and that if free trade were favoured by squatters it must be bad for the working man. Those who took the former view had no reason to withdraw their support from men who had served well in the lands agitations, like McLellan of Ararat and Gillies of Ballarat, simply because they opposed McCulloch. Finally, the Southern Irish voted largely constitutionalist during the 1860s and early 'seventies, and again during the early 'eighties.

15. To organise the plural vote became more important when, under the 1876 Electoral Act, all polling was to take place on the same day. (Argus, 27 and 28 February 1880, Age, 3 March 1880.)

16. During the crises of the 'sixties, maritime Sandridge and Emerald Hill returned Constitutionalists; on the goldfields, they held one seat at the Ovens, Ararat, Ballarat East and Ballarat West, losing the last one by a narrow margin during the 1868 by-elections. The rest of their strength in the Assembly came from the Melbourne commercial centres and the upper-class suburb of St. Kilda (6 seats) and the Irish country strongholds. (4 seats, with a large influence elsewhere.)

17. The 'Catholic vote' was, of course, far from solid, and more noticeable in country than in town. (Below, c.3.)
Moreover, although the general alignment of forces approximated to a division between different occupational groups, its roots lay not so much in conflicts of current economic interest, although some undoubtedly existed, but rather, as had been suggested above, in the memory of past conflicts, and the fears, preconceptions, prejudices and psychological needs of anxious men. One group which, generally pro-McCulloch in 1865, was anti-Berry ten years later, namely the tea and sugar merchants, provides an instructive example. McCulloch's tariff reduced the duties on their commodities, and it has been suggested that this gave them an economic interest in its passage. Ignoring the question of the price-elasticity of demand for tea and sugar in Victoria during 1865, and how far they were aware of it, it is clear that assuming the tariff to affect consumption of their goods at all, it should have tended to increase it. If this is a full explanation, however, it is odd to find the same people opposing a Berry who proposed a further heavy reduction in tea and sugar.

18. Crowley, op.cit., c.5; and cf. a curious meeting of tea and sugar merchants in support of the tariff, Argus, 16 May 1865.
duties, and to meet a revenue deficit by taxing, not all forms of wealth, as McCulloch and Service proposed, but only large freehold estates.

Two other explanations seem likely. The first is that the 1865 tariff did not alarm them sufficiently to overcome their political inertia and make them desert McCulloch for the Council. As, so far as it touched their trade, it could not but benefit them, they were disposed to believe it a revenue tariff. Their belief in the conventional wisdom of free trade, was not called into play. In 1875, however, they were used to supporting the 1872 coalition, now taken over by their old chief, McCulloch, and Berry's proposals were not sufficiently attractive to overcome this inertia.

The second explanation is suggested by the frequency with which not only McCullochites, but anti-McCullochites like Higinbotham, Duffy and Service disapproved of Berry's antics after his defeat as wanting moderation. To a successful businessman or professional, bred to gentlemanly politics, Berry and his supporters, who had long

19. Argus, 1 February 1876, 17 March 1877, 1 May 1877.
ranted indiscriminately against all merchants and others of the successful classes, and who now were setting the country and the Assembly in uproar, seemed a gang of adventuring maniacs, whereas McCulloch ten years before had led a Ministry of all the Talents. They reacted, in fact, not to a proposal but to the effect of their image of the proposer upon the attitudes they had previously acquired. Their attitudes in 1875 did not diverge markedly in fact from those of groups of similar status and background; they behaved, not just as tea and sugar merchants, but as members of a social class, which had not simply interests, but also its own myths and customs.

The same applied to members of the working classes. Although the plural form of the phrase indicates a significant difference between the homogeneity and cohesion of the groups it comprised then and now, it is significant that such a term existed. To some extent, no doubt, similarity of experience in the 'fifties provided a bond, but that experience had varied, and had been interpreted differently according to the difference of attitudes.

20. Below, c.5, s.I.
formed in Britain; considerable diversity of experience had followed it. During the late 'seventies, a large number of native born members of the working classes, whose experience in their formative years had been very different from their fathers', was coming of age. Despite all their differences, however, these groups were linked by their social status.

The Council was the stronghold of high status; when it so dramatically blocked measures proposed by the Assembly, therefore, it not only increased political excitement and activity at all levels, but also affronted all men of low status so drastically that most of them, forgetting other differences, were driven together in support of the parliamentary party which was attacking the Council. That this group was dominated during the McCulloch, and to some extent during the Berry ascendancy, by men of high status, did not alter this, for they were the leaders of the House of the People. Berry and Longmore even spoke of themselves as if they were still members of the classes with which they identified themselves.

Perhaps a status component can be added to the reasons why certain groups supported the constitutionalists. Two of the most important, port-workers and the urban Irish, were generally of very low status, being labourers. It is therefore likely that sufficient numbers of them to be electorally important resented artisans and miners more than they did the rich. Storekeepers, then particularly numerous and given disproportionate influence by the automatic registration provisions, seem to have reacted to the need to choose between the men of high and of low status according to their own position in their area. It hardly mattered to a shopkeeper whether he obtained his supplies from home or foreign industries, and in the late 'seventies the land tax proposed by Berry should have been the least objectionable of all the proposals put forward. Modern example, however, suggests that some regarded themselves as middle class, and that during the constitutional crises, they voted accordingly.

Probably most shopmen in Collingwood, living and

22. These suggestions are necessarily no more than hypotheses based on the probabilities and the appearance of shopmen on the committees of one side or the other during the times of political polarisation. Any firmer and more detailed conclusions must await detailed research into the social history of different areas.
dealing exclusively with artisans, tended to vote radical, and their counterparts in St. Kilda, like those in Fitzroy, tended more towards the constitutionalists. In the provinces, shopkeepers were far more common among the local constitutionalist leadership, and more rare among the radical, than in Melbourne. It seems that in country towns their status, particularly in their own eyes, was higher than in the metropolis; even a St. Kilda shopkeeper might resent his inferiority to the important businessman, but in the country the great grazier lived out of town, so that commercial men who would have been small beer in Melbourne were among the local leaders. This is especially likely with country entrepreneurs who owned perhaps a substantial store, other town property, a number of selections and mining or other shares. In mining towns where there was a distinct working class quarter, no doubt many shopkeepers there would vote radical; in agricultural areas, where most of the working classes lived out of town, as mobile labour or small farmers, this effect would be much less likely, and for all the interdependence of farmers and shopkeepers, the differences arising from the desperate poverty and dependence of many farmers led to a good deal
of hostility, which had its political effect.\textsuperscript{23}

Finally, there was one group, politically very important, and of high status, especially in country towns, whose behaviour can hardly be explained in terms of economic interest, since they can hardly be said to have had any. Professional men, especially lawyers and doctors, seem generally to have supported their social peers; as men of education, were they not the very guardians of conventional wisdom? At the same time, they produced a large minority of radicals. This can be explained partly by the large number of Irish among the lawyers, bred to suspicion of any Protestant ascendancy and therefore of the Council. Others had taken to the law, often mixed with journalism or bookselling at some stage, as the career most open to intellectual talent, and their relatively humble origins no doubt coloured their later attitudes.\textsuperscript{24} It is also likely that all professional men laid greater emphasis on education in their criteria.

\textsuperscript{23} Below, pp.311-2.

\textsuperscript{24} E.g. J.J. Walsh and William Vale were booksellers turned lawyers, James Mirams a bookseller turned businessman, G.P. Smith and Alfred Deakin (although the latter was born in relatively easy circumstances) combined law and journalism at different stages.
for status; many of the wealthier classes were not well-educated, and probably some therefore tended to belittle education.

Without such Councillors, however, it is doubtful if anything like the constitutional crises would have occurred to group the fragmented society of Victoria, even temporarily, into two well-defined and bitterly antagonistic parties; and if this had not happened, it is unlikely that any widespread and powerful organisations could have developed. These also, however, derived strength from a continuity of experience among organisers which underlay the discontinuity of their organisations. Each constituency had its regular band of such men, who re-appeared in one organisation after another. Much the same people also kept re-appearing in promotional organisations; mostly these were from the local elites, but there was also an important body of unattached central organisers.


26. For the Collingwood men, see below, c. 5, ss. II and III.

27. Sometimes Melbourne men without strong local ties, like Walsh, Mirams and Yeomans; sometimes provincial M.L.A.s like Berry and Longmore.
Such local and central elites existed among constitutionalists, but were more apparent among their opponents, who made much greater use of promotional organisations. Constitutionalists generally organised only to meet a challenge; it is not surprising, therefore, considering their generally conservative position, that their associations had no programmes beyond defeating the enemies of order and restoring 'good government', leaving the country to be run quietly and economically by practical men. The only exception to this was their addiction to free trade, which it was not always opportune to agitate, since it stirred up the demagogues and so jeopardised the country's business. Even the first Free Trade League was necessarily not so much a promotional as a conservative association.

Radicals, by contrast, sought so many changes that their problem was what and how much to seek at once. The basis of their programmes was


29. E.g. Argus, 24 July 1868, 23 January 1871, 13 January 1876, 4 July 1879.
land-settlement, protection, shifting the burden of taxation further onto the rich, the extension of education, and perfecting political democracy, particularly by reforming the Council. There was also a strong undercurrent of sectional demands, like eight hours legislation, prevention of assisted or Chinese immigration, assistance to mining and improved working conditions. Naturally, different circumstances brought forward different parts of this programme, or clothed it in different sets of concrete proposals.

Any reforming group, unless politically omnipotent, must take especial care in deciding priorities, and avoid fatiguing the public by agitating too much at once. The radicals, however, were strong in the Assembly for limited periods only; these coincided with the constitutional crises and the insistent economic problems which accompanied them, and during the first it was not they who ran the Government. Consequently they followed the traditional promotional method of agitating very limited sections of their broad programmes, whichever parts seemed most practicable.
Limitation was difficult to achieve. Each measure had its partisans, who, suspicious that their allies might desert them once their own pet schemes had succeeded, insisted on adding to the programme. Even when this was successfully limited, speakers could hardly be restrained from bringing forward their own crotchets. The hope or semblance of power, however, produced comprehensive party programmes. This was so with the Loyal Liberal Reform Association in its later stages, and with the National Reform and Protection League. Being, not struggling promotional organisations but limbs of powerful governments, they had to propose measures, not just because they seemed desirable, or possible, but because their Government faced particular problems and, to maintain power, had to appeal to as many groups as possible.

When the promotional had become a party organisation, combining the propagandist functions of the former with those of the party headquarters, its problems greatly increased. Relationships with the Government, electors, branches and party became

30. Cf. Argus, 6 January 1871; Ballarat Courier, 27 November 1875.
complicated. The Loyal Liberal Reform Association did not survive long enough to do more than start to encounter these problems. The National Reform and Protection League, therefore, had little to guide it through the problems, and could do little more than suggest the answers, especially since it was simultaneously beset with the promotional organisation's old problem of mere survival. Excitement could not be maintained. Even if new sources of drama occurred, like Buckingham's instructions in 1868, or were manufactured, like Black Wednesday in 1878, people tired, and so did the protagonists, in whom tension was strongest and most unrelieved. Other matters demanded attention; what did Berry's second Reform Bill matter to a northern farmer facing another drought? Was victory possible, or compromise unacceptable? So excitement declined, propaganda lost its effectiveness, and there was more talk of a return to political quiet and 'practical legislation' than of a fight to the finish. Despite recurrent agitations, by-elections, social occasions, and even occasional participation
in local elections,\textsuperscript{31} there was a constant struggle against decay. Permanence came from the combination of a parliamentary party with a sectional organisation. Having other day-to-day functions, and being the spokesman for a large and increasing number of electors, this could continue despite fluctuations in political feeling, or the most catastrophic splits in the party.

Like the Australasian Reform League a generation before, the first Labour Party organisation\textsuperscript{32} elected a number of M.L.A.s, mostly metropolitan,\textsuperscript{33} who, although few, were remarkable for voting discipline and could attract a number of other radicals on certain questions. Both organisations disappeared soon after the elections;

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{31} Cf. Black Papers, 24 August 1867; Bendigo Advertiser, 14 August 1868; Argus, 12 August 1872; Age, 18 January 1876, 29 August 1878; Hamilton Spectator, 14 August 1877; and St. Arnaud Mercury, 30 June 1877, 7 and 11 July 1877, 1, 5 and 11 August 1877. Not all these refer, of course, to the activity of particular organisations; they suggest not a deliberate strategy of taking over local government in the interests of particular ways of running it, but rather the pursuit of personal ambition or an attack upon a class or political enemies.

\textsuperscript{32} The Progressive Political League of Victoria. Argus, 1, 2, 6 and 10 June 1891.

\textsuperscript{33} Australasian, 16 and 23 April 1892.
\end{flushleft}
both parliamentary groups soon split and became partly absorbed in a larger body. The parliamentary Labour Party, however, never disappeared as an organised group, and electoral organisations succeeded one another until one became permanent. The simplification of the old multiple social fissions simplified the task of the Labour Party, and the marked increase during the 'eighties in the industrial population and the power and cohesion of unionism made the alliance much stronger than it could have been before; the crucial step, however, was the formation of an alliance with a permanent body representing a large section of the community.

Radicals had sought this earlier, and their organisations' appeals had been mostly sectional, but although many prominent unionists supported them or joined their organisations, nothing had become of their approaches to Trades Hall, individual unions, or the short-lived Manufacturers' Associations. Intervention by sectional organisations in the interests of a party was generally condemned in

34. Gollan, op. cit., c.5 and 6.
35. E.g. Argus, 10 May 1870, 8 October 1875.
democratic theory and in all parts of the community. Not only was politics concerned with the national interest and other high matters into which selfish and sectional motives should not intrude, but nobody wanted to alienate one parliamentary group when concessions might have to be sought from it later; still less, split an organisation set up for other purposes. Members wishing to start or support a political society could do so. Middle class radicals were continually forming radical associations, and working men were often busy in these or in others which, although any might join, were run by working men primarily for the benefit, through political action, of working men. During political crises, moreover, parties tended to appear in Parliament which could reasonably claim to represent the working man.

36. *Argus*, 25 November 1882. "--- a House containing groups of Catholic clauses men, bulwarks of Protestantism, enthusiastic Bible in state schools delegates, publicans' members, rigid supporters of local option, and representatives of the rival claims of the Mudford and the Peg Leg deviations of the Bung Bung to Dong Dong Railway. --- Amid such struggling interests and collective egotisms, what chance would there by for the representation of the general interests of the country and for liberal attention to the legislative and administrative requirements of the community at large?"

37. Below, c.5, s.II.
Finally, it was difficult enough already to maintain a sectional organisation; only the Chamber of Commerce achieved permanence with ease before 1880. Although unionism and particular unions persisted, their history was full of organisations which had split, collapsed or survived only with a struggle. Why look for new difficulties?

Around 1880, while unionism was beginning to extend among the unskilled, and Trades Hall to expand its functions, came the first signs of strong sectional organisation among farmers, in a movement which sought direct representation at once.38 Indeed, it was largely exasperation at the failure of politicians to comprehend or alleviate the sufferings of the new agricultural areas, in a community which regarded itself as entitled to Government assistance, which led to its formation. As one of the mainstays of the radicalism of the goldfields generation, the miners, died out, the other two, farmers and urban workers, both expanding in numbers and self-consciousness, were moving apart, and towards their own political parties. Long before

38. Below, c.4, ss. VI and VII.
that, political Catholics, with varying degrees of support from their Church, were beginning their long career as an organised political force which, in alliance or isolation, could never be forgotten.

For all its distinctive problems and pride in its achievements, the first generation remained to a degree expatriates whose attitudes had been formed originally on the other side of the earth. Just as their new land was insensibly encroaching on their old patriotisms, however, so it was encroaching on the structure of their politics. They might think of it in terms of British models, but even before their sons had begun to assume their inheritance, the new country and the new society were gently asserting themselves.
CHAPTER 3:

THE SOUTHERN IRISH
I. The Irish Ascendancy, (1856-1863).

From the 1860s, one fifth of the Victorian male population was Catholic, mostly Southern Irish. Their distribution was even enough to make them potentially influential in most constituencies but not so even as to be a crippling disability. Their heaviest concentrations were in the Belfast-Warrnambool area, half-way along the west coast, and a south-central region bounded roughly by a line joining Melbourne, Kilmore, Kyneton, Ballarat and Geelong. In a northeasterly extension of this region, along the Sydney road to the area between the Rivers Goulburn and Ovens, they were an important part of the sparse population. 1

Their social concentration was even more marked. Although Irishmen could be found in all occupations, the stereotype was a labourer in the towns and a farmer or labourer in the country; the policeman and the publican were minority types. 2 The rough coincidence of social status with nationality and religion made the Southern Irish particularly homogeneous; geographical concentration reinforced their homogeneity. Sometimes status brought them into alliance with the rest of the lower classes.

1. Census of Victoria, 1861, 1871, 1881; Religions of the People.
2. V.P.D., Vol. 26, p. 1088; Advocate, 7 March 68.
sometimes their views on education allied them with the wealthy, or, with their nationality, put them on their own. Rarely, however, could they forget that on all three counts they were half feared, half despised, an inferior class.

The Melbourne artisans ignored and perhaps despised the unskilled who were outside their unions and radical associations. The percentage of Catholics was particularly low in the two leading working class constituencies, Ballarat West and Collingwood, which in 1871 showed respectively 19.53% and 18.85%. Racial may therefore have been added to social prejudice. Artisans with Irish names do appear in these areas, but some were Protestants, nor does acceptance of individuals from a despised group prevent a general prejudice. In the countryside prosperous Irish farmers were more likely to be envied, but modern example suggests that envy may have confirmed prejudice. The "Catholic vote", in fact, was always much more apparent in country areas, probably because of the lower density of rural population, the higher

3. Census of Victoria, 1871; Part 4. I am grateful to Professor O. McDonagh, who had worked out the percentages, for letting me use his figures. Anti-Catholicism was particularly vocal on Ballarat, but according to The Argus, 3 Oct. 69, Orangemen and anti-Catholics were numerous in Collingwood.
Irish percentage in their main country than in their urban centres, and the greater stability of farming life, all of which kept their contacts with other nations, religions and attitudes to a minimum.

One thing, however, urban and rural Irish had in common: the memory of ancient and modern wrongs. Even when emigration and reforms had begun to ease conditions and remove grievances in the real Ireland, their dreaming country was the Ireland of the famine. National feeling, augmented by distance, was nourished by private news of hardship and public news of distress and violence; it was treasured in homes, in Hibernian associations, in churches and schools, and was lovingly passed on to the next generation. As with all who have strong memories and traditions of oppression and inferior status, improvements in their situation still left them expecting insult, oppression and grievance. Unfortunately, they did not have far to look.

When John Gavan Duffy complained, "the majority of the people do not sufficiently realize --- that Catholics are essentially a part of the community ---" 5

4. The five most Catholic constituencies showed the following percentages in 1871: Kilmore, 52.75; Dalhousie, 39.77; Villiers and Heytesbury, 38.26; West Melbourne 33.54; East Melbourne, 33.26. (Census, 1871, Part 4.)

he hardly exaggerated. All Protestant churches contributed to the army of bigots. If the worst were Irish Presbyterians; perhaps the most numerous were Methodists. Second only to Catholicism among the religions of the lower classes, its evangelical fervour made it especially suspicious of popery. To the bigots, Catholicism was and always had been a persecuting faith, forcibly depriving men of the right to read the Scriptures and worship according to their conscience. The lesson which Catholics drew about Protestantism from the history of Ireland, they drew about Catholicism from the history of England and the Continent. The contemporary Italians and the Irish provided dreadful examples of the effects of Catholicism on society; keeping men ignorant of learning sacred and profane, it imperilled their souls and retarded their prosperity. Crime, squalor, drunkenness, damnation and Catholicism were constant companions.

6. On Ballarat, for example, it was largely Methodist. Lay preachers like Henry Bell, John James and Richard Hain who led radicalism and anti-Catholicism.

7. Victorian Banner, 9 Feb 81, 6 May 82.
The Irish were also notoriously seditious. This affronted the national feeling of English and Scots of all classes, but particularly of the rich. Seeing themselves as guardians of the British constitution, law, and traditions against the mob, they were equally on guard against the Southern Irish. Demagogues and priests, what was there to choose between them? Political necessity and similarity of views on education might dictate soft words and temporary alliance, but both sides played with one hand under the table. After Catholics had saved the Constitutional Party from annihilation at the 1868 elections, some of the upper classes, facing a bitter no popery campaign by their opponents, grumbled at the damage done to their cause by their Catholic saviours. Well might the Advocate ask, "Why does The Age comment upon the fact of the Catholics voting with you more than the Methodists or Independents? Because he (sic) knows you have imbided prejudices which are easily alarmed."

Many Protestants, of course, were not bigots, nor did all Catholics seek insult in their neighbours' every word and gesture, but prejudice was widespread.

8. Advocate, 7 March 68.
and those who were free from it were offset by those for whom it was an obsession. These had their stronghold in the Loyal Orange Institution of Victoria. The ideal Orangeman described in its rules expressed the love for God and man which Jesus had shown in his life; the real Orangeman was begotten by an inhuman theology on human intolerance. Their greatest weakness, however, was their reputation as fomentors of sectarian strife. To the moderately prejudiced, abhorrence of bigotry emphasises their moderation. To the moderately religious or the irreligious, the soul was not worth fighting about. To others proud of their new society, the feuds of the old were misplaced. To many Englishmen and Scots, perhaps, the Orange movement was objectionable because it was Irish.

Lacking numbers and reputation, it depended on organisation and local leadership. These made it particularly successful on Ballarat. William "Bogus" Clarke, a Southern Irish Protestant and


10. Argus, 8 Feb 68; Victorian Banner, 29 April 82.
Grand Master during the late 'sixties, a bitter man possessing every political skill except the ability to compromise, lived nearby; lay preachers and Nonconformist miners provided his officers and army; the power of Catholicism in Ballarat East was a standing provocation. Elsewhere, however, the Institution was just another minor vote; although its activities were complained of, none attributed to it great electoral power. The arrangements for deciding whom to support at local and parliamentary elections, as set out in the rules, look impressive. No Orangeman was to pledge his vote until the Grand Master had considered the fitness and chances of each candidate, and obtained pledges on matters interesting the Institution. Lodge decisions bound all members. How far the rules were obeyed, however, is uncertain. The frequent exhortations of the Orange papers in the 1880s suggest that

the Institution was not particularly well organised. The 1883 election saw a determined although hastily-organised effort, but next year Grand Lodge was again considering setting up election machinery.

Protestant clergymen, except for the few in the Orange movement, took little part in politics, however exercised about education, State Aid to religion and Catholicism. To most Protestants religion must be kept out of politics, because it aroused extreme bitterness, and on questions about which few cared. Zealots of both sides early exploited this feeling. After the 1872 Education Act, Protestants used it against Catholic attempts to obtain an education grant, while Catholics urged concession partly to take religion out of politics.

The Catholic Church and its apologists, however, believed that on education and the relationship of Church and State, religion and politics must not be separated. "At times," as the Advocate pointed out, "the trustee of a vote is obliged, on moral grounds, to vote in a particular way; if, from corrupt motives,

13. Argus, 6 Feb 83; Victorian Standard, 9 Dec 84.
14. V.P.D., Vol. 37, pp. 27 and 31.
he is inclined otherwise, it is the duty of his pastor to warn him that it would be unrighteous." 15

In any other Church these views would have been ineffective. The position of the Catholic priest, however, was exceptional. For Protestants, a minister was a godly man selected by state or congregation to direct their worship and inform their lives. Their personality might make a few very influential, but, if necessary, ministers could be dispensed with. The Catholic priest fulfilled the same functions, but was also Christ's local representative, who exercised, under God, powers of granting or withholding absolution. A Protestant could find salvation in another church, in a sect founded by himself, or, in theory, without any church at all. For the Catholic, there was no salvation outside the Church; on any question which it declared within its province and on which it announced its firm decision, appalling spiritual consequences would follow disobedience. 16

15. Advocate, 22 Feb 68.

16. I am grateful to Mr John Moloney, formerly of the University of the Propaganda, for correcting my understanding of these and other points.
The second difference was national. Bishop Goold, who held the see of Melbourne from 1848 to 1886, obtained his priests from his native Ireland, where Catholicism was the religion of an oppressed nation and a desperate, half-savage peasantry. As the Irish gentry differed from their tenants in almost every social attribute, rarely saw them and were blamed by them for every misfortune, the priests, often peasants themselves, became the leaders of their villages in secular as in religious matters, and the universal agents of nationalism.

The lay equivalent was the overcrowded legal profession, the impoverished intelligentsia of a distressed and exploited province. If the priests were the hands and feet of nationalism, the lawyers in Dublin were its brain and voice, the lawyers on circuit its nervous system. Relatively large numbers of these had come to Victoria, to find that, as in Ireland, the land was occupied by a largely Protestant class, small but strongly entrenched in the political system, while large numbers were in

great distress or fleeing the country. If this had appalled them in Ireland, how much more in so new and hopeful a country? As religion, nationalism, and economic and social frustration had put them on the side of the Irish lower classes and given them political experience, they soon became prominent among the Victorian democracy.

In Parliament Catholics were disproportionately few. Up to the 1868 election, the maximum had been eight, in an Assembly comprising 78 members. Thereafter, not even the Past Grand Master of the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society could count more than ten in any Parliament until 1877, and 16 out of 86 until 1883. At that election, the number was appreciably reduced. From 1856, however, the Catholics had provided two dominant personalities. In the old Council and the new Assembly John O'Shanassy was already the popular leader, when in 1856 Charles Gavan Duffy, formerly a leader of the Tenant League, editor of "Nation", a prisoner of the English and for three years a leading Irish M.P., arrived in Melbourne. Welcomed hysterically by the Victorian Irish, who, like their fellows in New South Wales, subscribed liberally from scanty funds to give him the necessary property qualifications, he was soon persuaded to stand for

19. Advocate, 1 Feb 68; Victorian Banner, 19 Nov 81.
the first Parliament, the Irish stronghold of Villiers and Heytesbury elected him. He and O'Shanassy dominated the Opposition, and when the latter became Chief Secretary in 1857 and 1858, the former became Minister of Lands. After the first O'Shanassy Ministry's defeat immediately on meeting Parliament, in a debate full of religious and racial prejudice, Irishmen were particularly prominent in the radical uproar outside. A Land Convention was formed, modelled on the Irish Tenant League, to face an unrepresentative Assembly with a representative one. It was led by two Irish intellectuals, Moses Wilson Gray and J.J. Walsh. Duffy's later assertion that it began with his suggestion to Wilson Gray may be doubted, but he is unlikely to have been mistaken, that he was in contact with the Convention, and gave it some assistance with money and influence. The organisation's establishment also owed something to an existing Irish network, since the organisers' initial contacts included, as well as the Chairman of goldfields reform meetings,

20. For a fuller sketch of Duffy's career and character up to his election in 1856, see G. Serle, op. cit., pp. 249-51.
the local Secretaries of the Duffy Qualification Fund.23

The Southern Irish minority, therefore, seemed to be taking over popular politics. By then, however, a fatal breach had been made between Duffy and O'Shanassy. Only in vanity and ambition were they similar. O'Shanassy was the son of a Tipperary peasant, an O'Connellite, increasingly conservative and jealous of his educated colleague, an Ulster Catholic who had allied with Protestants and opposed O'Connell, who had simply to land in Victoria to achieve the eminence which O'Shanassy had reached only after long hard work.24 Indeed, it was very likely jealousy of the radical Duffy, as much as his recently-acquired squatting interests, which drove O'Shanassy into conservatism. The politics of past and present, and the clash of personalities,25 led Duffy to resign from the second O'Shanassy Ministry just before the election. The quarrel dismayed and divided the Irish. Even the Church was involved, Bishop Goold, whose O'Connellite sympathies had led him to boycott Duffy's reception

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in 1856, supporting O'Shanassy. Duffy, relieved that it had not imperilled his re-election, was not surprised that afterwards his committee men urged reconciliation. "To our people in Australia", they said, "it will be as fatal as the quarrel of Flood and Grattan,"

The elections annihilated the Government. Refusing to join Nicholson's Government as being too conservative, Duffy agreed to lead the major part of the Opposition, the mining and Convention men. After Nicholson's defeat, however, O'Shanassy, with some few allies, held the balance. He had his revenge by refusing to support a radical government which included Duffy. The radicals accepted his terms; Duffy was furious. Soon, with a characteristic mixture of reverence for law, political irresponsibility and self-seeking, he assailed the Government over its use of doubtful administrative powers to promote land settlement, and helped defeat it, despite the loss of its conservative members. He then confirmed his isolation

by refusing to join the "Committee of the Opposition" to which he was elected, because it included O'Shanassy. 29

Bishop Quinn of Brisbane rescued him. 30

"It was not merely a question of local politics, he said. Irish Catholics had fair play and fair recognition nowhere on earth so unreservedly as in Australia, and if this quarrel continued it would divide them into two parties in every town and settlement on the continent."

On the basis of Irish unity and land settlement, therefore, the last O'Shanassy Government was formed. Four ministers out of ten were Irish. In the key posts, O'Shanassy and Duffy were again Chief Secretary and Minister of Lands, while an Irish Protestant, Richard Ireland, was Attorney-General. 31 The Irish, and especially the Catholic predominance, seemed to have been re-asserted. Now, however, it was in opposition to the Healesite radicals; the split between Duffyites and O'Shanassites might be healed, but it is unlikely that the poor Irish were happy at having to choose between an Irish Government

31. Charles MacMahon, Minister without Portfolio, was the fourth.
and a democratic Opposition. At first, however, the Government also could be regarded as democratic, while Duffy's Land Act was being put through, nor can the opposition have placated the Irish by passing against the Government a Common Schools Act intended to end denominational education.

Unfortunately for Duffy, his Act was a catastrophic failure. His reputation as the only Victorian legislator with Westminster experience was irretrievably ruined. On his amending Bill to increase squatters' rents, resented by O'Shanassy and half the Cabinet, the Ministry was defeated by the defection of several of its conservative supporters. In coalition with the democrats, these formed the first McCulloch Ministry. The Irish ascendancy was over.

II. The McCulloch Ascendancy and the Catholic Vote (1863-1870).

The 1864 election confirmed the decision of Parliament. Duffy, finally estranged from O'Shanassy, left for three years in Europe. O'Shanassy's following was now pitifully small. Land reform, and therefore, very likely, many Catholic votes, had been taken over by the new Government. This was predominantly Scots and English, with only two Irishmen, one a Wesleyan,¹ the other, Higinbotham, an anti-clerical Protestant, brought up in the Church of Ireland.

As the tariff crisis alienated the more conservative Government supporters and attracted the radical Opposition, its supporters in the country probably included an increasing number of Methodists; as it had defeated the Irish Government, it was opposed by many Catholics and supported by the Orangemen.² After the crisis, therefore, with the Land Act and the tariff out of the way, all was ready for an attack on the education problem, which

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1. J.F. Sullivan, Minister of Mines, buried in the Wesleyan section of the Melbourne General Cemetery. *(Argus, 7 Feb 76)*

2. *Advocate*, 1 Feb 68; *Argus*, 27 Jan 66.
entailed a clash with the Catholic Church. This was to provide the Southern Irish, conscious of a separate existence and fearful of renewed discrimination, with the grievance necessary to make them, although divided over politics and personalities, a separate political force.

Before 1862, education had been controlled by two state-subsidised boards, one for denominational and one for national schools. The National Board, in financial difficulties, told Haines, Treasurer in the last O'Shanassy Government, that it must dismiss teachers unless it received more funds. Haines' refusal was apparently construed as an attack on the national system by the Chief Secretary. The Act which Heales forced on O'Shanassy dissolved the Denominational Board, leaving its property in the hands of local trustees, and transferred the property of the National Board to a new Board of Education. This was to administer the education vote, but was forbidden to help build or maintain any school not vested in it, and which did not meet minimum requirements; religious instruction was not mentioned, although in practice the ministers were allowed to teach in school buildings outside school hours.
The denominational schools, it was hoped, would soon be vested in the new Board, and the dual system would disappear.  

Protestants virtually stopped building schools; most were now provided by the Board, a few by Catholics.  

Their number, however, was inadequate. Denominational rivalries were now fought out inside the Board itself, composed of representatives of the five leading denominations. Many denominational schools continued separate from the public system; scarce resources were wasted by the Board's lack of power to compel the amalgamation of unnecessary numbers of small schools. The system needed money and reorganisation; Governments struggling to balance budgets could not increase the education vote, even had the land question not been so explosive. But for the interest taken in education by Higinbotham, in fact, it is unlikely that the Commission of 1866-7 would have been set up. The impetus was his, and his was the final report.

This proposed the complete withdrawal of support from denominational schools; education was to be compulsory, and only non-denominational religious instruction was to be given in state schools. Higinbotham's power compelled the government to grant his Bill every facility, but McCulloch's canniness prompted him to avoid making it a Government measure. Had he not done so, his Ministry might have come to a sudden end. The second reading was abandoned, when defeat was clearly inevitable.

Protestants were horrified at the idea of non-denominational religious instruction, more than at the end of Government aid for their few schools. Catholic objections went deeper. All churches agreed that training in basic skills was not enough; right attitudes must also be fostered. Otherwise, the souls of the young would soon be in peril and their bodies in gaol. Without religious instruction, morality would collapse, the State would decay. It must be denominational, otherwise the right of parents to bring up their children in their own faith would be infringed. Nor should it be left to

teachers, who must inevitably introduce their own denominational views, if Christians, and might be deists, spiritualists or atheists. Where the Catholics differed was in holding that godfearing men could not be produced by a system which separated religious from secular instruction. As religion must permeate life, so it must permeate education. 8

To Higinbotham and his like this strengthened their exasperation with priestcraft and denominationalism, which divided men and citizens, and which, by diverting all attempts to reform the education system into squabbles over theological trivialities, deprived children of skills which would help them lead useful and prosperous lives, and of the mental training which would enable them to choose between, or reject altogether, the dogmas which the priests clamoured to thrust down their throats. Their main opponent, the Catholic Church, they regarded as the most obscurantist of all. Higinbotham, kindliest and most generous of fanatics, had as little patience with his Catholic compatriots as with the Upper House. 9

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8. Advocate, 22 Feb 68.
Meanwhile, Duffy had landed in Melbourne in circumstances very different from those of his triumphal entry into a new life ten years before. Whereas in 1856 he was the obvious man to lead the radicals and unlock the lands, these roles had now been assumed by Higinbotham and Grant respectively. Had he remained in Victoria during the constitutional crisis his popular sympathies might have swept him into McCulloch's accommodating harbour; in Europe he had apparently heard only the version of Victorian affairs supplied to the Press by conservative sources. He had heard of the violence the radicals had done to the constitution, their backsliding from free trade, and the swindles perpetrated at the Lands Office under Grant's arbitrary, if well-intentioned rule. Higinbotham, chief violator of the constitution, soon revealed himself as the most dangerous enemy of the Church, Grant, having committed the venial sin of occupying the Lands Office for which Duffy yearned as his compatriots yearned for the land itself, had made it mortal by succeeding where Duffy had failed, by making his reputation where Duffy's had been lost. As for Grant's chief, McCulloch was to Duffy not the
man who had fought the enemies of the people and drawn not back, but the wealthy squatter-merchant who had deserted the Irish Ministry to prevent Duffy from raising squatting rents.  

The Irish were still divided. O'Shanassay was now permanently estranged, his political power was destroyed utterly, and before the 1866 election he had left for Europe. As for the popular leaders of the Irish ascendancy, "An old agitator," Duffy recalled later,  

"assured me that this apathy over the administration of the Land Act arose from the death or insolvency of most of the early agitators, who had been ruined by neglecting their own affairs. Many of them were Irishmen, and their zeal was abated, since the Duffy and O'Shanassay quarrel."  

In 1856, Duffy had landed, acclaimed by his countrymen, in a hopeful, prosperous new land, from a country where they were oppressed and his career had ended in honourable defeat; ten years older, he arrived quietly in a colony gripped by economic depression, where his countrymen were divided, powerless, facing an attack on their Church from the most powerful man in Victoria, and which he had left after a defeat which was humiliating and

ludicrous.

However, he still had the loyalty of a large number of his co-religionists, and was the only politician who could hope to lead them against Higinbotham. O'Shanassy was still in Ireland; the Bishop was in Rome. The Superior of the Jesuits therefore consulted Duffy and together they called a meeting at St. Francis' Church, attended by delegates from all over the colony. This meeting established a committee to watch the Education Bill, arrange deputations and draw up petitions for local adoption.12

Much more important than the part played by the deputations and petitions in the defeat of Higinbotham's Bill was the part they played in creating the legend of the Catholic vote. It was already a commonplace that to be an Irish Catholic was useful in many constituencies, and in some, essential. Few objected to this. Soon, however, it was commonly alleged that the priesthood, with or without central instructions, and working in co-operation with politicians, was issuing voting instructions to Catholics, and enforcing compliance by the threat

of spiritual penalties. To Protestants and secularists, especially when they believed the vote was being worked against them, this was a monstrous infringement of individual freedom. Preventing the proper expression of public opinion, it undermined representative government. Stirring up sectarian feeling, it poisoned political and social life with the irrelevant rancours of the old world.

"The right of every man to be free in his choice of religion and politics is higher than any mere 'issue' upon which any Ministry goes to the country, and priest, or minister, or Grand Master, or head centre, or any other person or thing that encroaches upon that sacred right should be peremptorily condemned by every man who values his rights and desires the welfare of his country. The bloody records of Ireland stand out in scarlet warnings against the introduction of theological fanaticism into politics." 13

So said the Ballarat Star.

"The priest," retorted The Advocate,

"looks on the Supreme Being as the Author and Guardian of Society; he is fully persuaded that without sound political ideas society must speedily go to ruin, and he therefore feels it his duty to interest himself, or, as it is said, to interfere, in political affairs." 14

Two quite irreconcilable views of man and

society were in conflict, and that not in the study, but in the heat of a violent political battle, reinforced by national feeling and social prejudice.

It is hardly surprising that during the political excitement of the Berry ascendency, the power of the Catholic vote was blamed by the vanquished; this enabled them to claim that they had been defeated not by a change in public opinion, but by a conspiracy. The victors, sharing their views about the Irish and the place of religion in politics, denied either that they had received Irish support, or that they had obtained it through the influence of the priests and a corrupt bargain over education. Well might "Timotheus" liken the use made of the Catholic vote in political explanation to the use made of comets in explaining other things. "For the benefit of those politicians, who must have mysteries, who would darkly explain the perfectly explicable, Providence has given the Catholic vote."  

It is clear that Catholicism, for all the numbers of its nominal adherents, the reinforcements of nationalism and concentration, and the powerful

16. Argus, 8 May 82.
organisation of the Church, was politically relatively ineffectual. It could not prevent the introduction of secular education in 1872, nor obtain state aid thereafter. Lack of potential voting strength was partly to blame. Although numerous, Catholics were only a fifth of the population; although sufficiently concentrated and united to control five or six seats and to influence several others,\textsuperscript{17} they could never elect a fifth of the Assembly.

Probably much less than one fifth of votes case were Catholic. Of those eligible to register, an unusually high percentage presumably suffered from the relative disfranchisement of the labourer. Of those registered an unusually high proportion would have been general list electors, and therefore an unusually low proportion of the Irish enrolled would have voted. The effects of the registration system would have been less marked in the country, however, since Irish farmers were necessarily ratepayers.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Under the 1859-76 distribution, Kilmore, Kyneton Boroughs, Dalhousie, and the second seats at Ballarat East and Villiers and Heytesbury; the 1876 redistribution added Belfast.

\textsuperscript{18} Above, pp. 135ff.
It is certainly clear from election results that even those who voted were far from united, and that their degree of unity varied. The effects of a disciplined, swinging vote of even ten percent would have been very obvious indeed. In constituencies with heavy concentrations of Catholics the variety of their voting behaviour is still more obvious. In Ballarat East, where little more than 25 percent of the total population was Catholic, they controlled the seat; yet in the eight other constituencies with a similar or greater proportion of Catholics under the 1859-1876 distribution, there was only one safe Catholic seat; the contrast is all the more marked after 1876.

The occupations followed by the Southern Irish also suggest that when there was a clear choice between radical and conservative candidates, most would have chosen the former, although a conservative Catholic would do better than a conservative Protestant. As the Irish leaders were outflanked on the left, however, radicalism and patriotism come into conflict. As Duffy and O'Shanassy drifted

19. The sign of the Catholic choice in polling figures is a heavy majority for one candidate in the Warrenheip Division, which contained Bungaree. See, for example, Brophy's divisional totals during the February 1880 election, when James and Russell were run by a joint committee of the L.O.I.V., the Reform League and the Education Act Defence League. Ballarat Courier, 29 and 30 January 80, 2 and 13 February 80, 1 March 80.
apart, a conflict of personal loyalties was added to the tension between Catholic liberals and conservatives. Indeed, without such a coincidence of tensions, it is difficult to see why the personal rift should have been regarded with such dismay. The separation of Duffy from the radicals must have added to the complexity of Irish emotions. The McCulloch Ministry no doubt attracted much democratic Irish support, especially once Duffy had left for Europe, but once more radicalism conflicted with resentment against the Anglo-Scots Ministry which had defeated O'Shanassy and was supported by the Orangemen. Now with Higinbotham's Education Bill, the democratic Ministry had affronted their religion.

To the Catholic clergy, all other political issues must give way to the education question. Many Protestant ministers agreed, but their laity clearly did not. *The Age* and the radicals claimed that this was also true of Catholics, but that clerical pressure forced a large minority to support the constitutionalists because they supported denominational education.²⁰

²⁰ V.P.D., Vol.29, p. 1489; *Age*, 11 Feb 68.
"Roman Catholic", understood to be Jeremiah Dwyer, an Irish McCullochite defeated at Villiers, wrote a series of letters to The Age, giving a detailed and plausible account of the priesthood's activities during the 1868 election.22 Dwyer had been fighting M'Donnell for the second seat, the other constitutionalist being safe for the first. He alleged that certain priests had canvassed for his opponent, heckled at his meetings, urged M'Donnell's return from the altar and allowed him to make a political speech to the congregation. One priest had turned several votes by informing Catholics that the Church was against Dwyer, and that to oppose it was a sin. Some, however, were not intimidated. One young Irishman cut short Father Parle's interruptions at a Dwyer meeting by quietly threatening to throw him out, and standing behind his chair for the rest of the meeting. When one old farmer remained adamant for Dwyer, however, his sons were alleged to have tied him to his bed during polling day so that his vote should not imperil his soul.

21. Advocate, 8 Feb 68.
22. Age, 28 Jan 68 to 8 Feb 68.
Although the priests concerned denied the threat of spiritual sanctions, and interpreted differently some of the events to which Dwyer referred, they admitted having worked in M'Donnell's interest. 23 More interesting is their account of the attempts made by Dwyer and his father to give the impression that they were well regarded by the priests. Dwyer tried to hold a political meeting in the Tower Hill churchyard, with his father giving translation in Erse; old Dwyer tried to be seen after Mass talking with Father Parle and shaking his hand. "I had fortunately heard of the intention ---" wrote the priest,

and sufficiently near for my people to hear me, I told him candidly that I would not shake hands with him; that I would not show any mark of recognition, as I understood my doing so would be used to deceive my people, and thereby secure their support for his son under false appearances."24

Similar stories might be multiplied from different times and places. Few lacked some element of doubt or exaggeration, but enough were admitted to show

23. Argus, 7 Feb 68.

24. Advocate, 15 Feb 68. (Letter signed "J.P.", clearly from the text, Fr. Parle.)
that such behaviour was fairly common. At no time, however, could enough cases be found to suggest that it was anything like universal; much depended on the strength of the local Catholic population, the views of the candidates and the political zeal of the priest and his superiors. The Archbishop, for example, took little interest in electioneering, while Michael O'Connor, Bishop of Ballarat from the see's creation in 1874, was an ardent politician and exhorted his priests to join in.

For the moment, however, it was not the priests who took the lead, but Duffy. After the Education Bill's defeat, he contested the Dalhousie by-election, was elected for the second safest Catholic seat in Victoria, and retained it easily during the general election which soon followed. Although brief his first tenure of the seat had important consequences. O'Shanassy returned in time to contest the election, but Duffy had acquired a strong lead by following his work in the agitation against the Education Bill by becoming the Catholics' leading spokesman in Parliament; O'Shanassy would be led by nobody, least of all by Duffy. As Fellows had resigned from the Council to lead the Constitutionalists in the Assembly, O'Shanassy took his place in the Council, where experience and determination soon
gave him the lead. The full consequences will appear later.

The election had strong anti-Catholic undertones. When a lunatic Fenian shot Prince Alfred in Sydney, the Government's supporters seized on it to relieve them of their earlier embarrassment over an affray at Protestant Hall in November, and to imply that for all the Constitutionalists might say about Higinbotham's views on Downing Street, it was not the Government which had commerce with the seditious and murdering Irish. In Grenville, where one of the Opposition candidates, an English Protestant, was unfortunate enough to be called Pope, his running-mate was a locally well-known Presbyterian Scot. The leading Orangemen (including Presbyterian ministers) in Scarsdale, Piggoreet, Durham and Napoleon's, put it about that he was a Catholic, out to replace McCulloch with O'Shanassy; lay preachers spread the tale throughout the electorate; at Liston, a Northern Irishlander declared that he had seen Montgomery

25. Argus, 28 Nov 67. The Orange contribution to welcoming Prince Alfred was an illuminated sign of William III; some Orangemen defended it against Catholic mockery by shooting three mockers.
canvassing Catholic electors arm-in-arm with a priest. 26

The Age nosed out priestly activities; 27

Dwyer's letters, its main case, appeared just after
the first batch of elections. It produced no
evidence, however, of priestly central direction,
beyond Dwyer's assertion that Father Parle had told
his congregation that he had been instructed to oppose
Dwyer by the Vicar-General; 28 Father Parle, who
considering what he was prepared to admit openly,
had no reason to lie, denied it, conceding only that
he knew of the Vicar-General's views from the Press. 29

Duffy's activities were not confined to Dalhousie.
Nor, apparently, were they entirely in favour of the
Opposition, since he used his influence in Kilmore
and Normanby to eject his old enemies Ireland and
Levey, the Attorney-General and whip of the last
O'Shanassy Government, although at Kilmore he was
obliged to accept Larry Burke, an ignorant
O'Shanassite farmer. As Dwyer, after his defeat

26. Advocate, 15 Feb 68.
27. Age, 23, 25, 27, 28 and 30 Jan 68;
14, 17, 21, 27-9 Feb 68.
28. Age, 28 Jan 68.
29. Advocate, 15 Feb 68.
at Villiers, was standing for Kilmore in the third batch, Duffy took the opportunity to assail him for his famous letters. At Richmond, a little later, Duffy and the priests were much in evidence on the side of Harcourt, a prominent Wesleyan but a denominationalist.30

Just before the third batch voted, according to a letter to The Age31 Duffy addressed "about 150 low Hibernians", apparently electors of North Melbourne, pointing out that the Ministry was supported by the Orangemen and blaming the Protestant Hall shootings upon the feelings aroused by Higinbotham and Dr. Cairns, the keeper of McCulloch's conscience at Scots Church. Several priests and laymen spoke in support, Father England of North Melbourne pointing out "that it would be the worse for them if they did not consult him before voting." Duffy denied the construction put upon some of his words but tacitly accepted the general account.32 He is also known to have had electoral dealings with Father England in 1877, and to have made a practice of using whatever electoral influence he possessed in the

30. Age, 25 Jan 68, 21 Feb 68; Geelong Advertiser 20 Feb 68.
31. Age, 12 Feb 68.
32. Age, 18 Feb 68.
interest of his friends; he is therefore likely to have made the most of that influence in 1868, when he identified McCulloch with the squatters and Higinbotham with anti-Catholicism.

Of eighteen Constitutionalists elected seven were Catholics. The exploitation of prejudice continued. Just before St. Patrick's Day, placards appeared all over Melbourne, inviting Irishmen to a "Fenian Funeral" in memory of those lately executed by the English. The Government called out the police and the military on the day, but otherwise nothing unusual happened. Nobody ever demonstrated who was behind the hoax, but Duffy was probably right that it was the work of his squatting opponents. The posters had been put up by one Eugene Ducrow, lately a house-servant of Ettershank, a leading political squatter, when the succession to McCulloch had not

33. Age, 16 May 77; Pearson Papers. Duffy to Pearson, 12 March 77.

34. Duffy, O'Grady, Bourke, M'Kenna, Walsh, Hanna, M'Donnell.

35. Advocate, 4 April 68.

been settled, but Duffy, than whom there was nobody
the squatters more feared and detested, was a
likely candidate for a Ministry, perhaps the
Chief Secretaryship.

Once the Sladen Ministry had been formed,
close-fought ministerial elections were certain,
and another dissolution was possible; moreover,
although Duffy had been excluded from the Government,
the number of safe Constitutionalist seats was so
small that Sladen had included O'Grady of South
Bourke and M'Donnell and Bayles, both of Villiers.
Gillies, the Minister of Lands, was contesting that
fruitful Orangery Ballarat West, against C.E. Jones,
the Orange representative and a muckraker of genius.
Jones' speeches were full of anti-Catholic asides
and innuendoes; a series of pamphlets in Welsh, and
a swarm of local preachers, swore the Presbyterian
Gillies a papist. In South Bourke, Crews, another
Orangeman, stood against O'Grady, who was placarded
as a secret Fenian leader. Like Jones, Crews

38. Ballarat Star, 19 May 68 (Jones' speech, and
correspondence); Advocate, 30 May 68.
39. Ballarat Star, 28 May 68 (Citing Herald)
was victorious. During the rest of the Ministry's brief career, Jones and the Orangemen in particular lost no opportunity of making loud and, apparently, unfounded accusations that Gillies and O'Grady were favouring Catholics unduly in the administration of their Departments.40

After McCulloch's return to office the cry had served its turn; with the increasing isolation of Higinbotham, and a Chief Secretary who had a quiet way with sleeping dogs, the education question dropped out of sight. Duffy had now moved away from the Constitutionalists because of the unconstitutionality of Sladen's retaining office against a hostile majority.41 He remained opposed to McCulloch, however, particularly over his Land Bill, and was therefore able to move closer to the new radical opposition, with which his sympathies lay on practically everything except education.

When McCulloch had made the appointments which led to his defeat in 1869, therefore, Duffy was in a position to benefit. He helped Byrne frame his motion of no confidence; Byrne then sought

40. Advocate, 13 and 27 June 68.
41. Duffy, op.cit., Vol.2, p. 297. Duffy is citing his diary; one also suspects personal and sectional pique at being omitted from the Ministry.
his help in forming the new Government, and asked him to be Chief Secretary, but as a working majority was possible only if concessions were made to the McCullochites, it was agreed that the Ministry should be made up from the rebels only. The price of Duffy's support for a Government led by a squatter was that the ten year renewal of the squatting tenure which McCulloch's Land Bill proposed and which many radicals and Duffy himself had opposed, should be deleted. Five Ministers, according to Duffy, guaranteed this; two were defeated at the ministerial elections, two broke their words.\(^{42}\) When the vote of no confidence in Macpherson was moved on March 1870, the abstentions of Duffy and all the Constitutionalist Catholics except Larry Burke, the O'Shanassite, and Hanna, the semi-independent, felled the Government. Having attacked McCulloch from the start, broken with the Constitutionaists, and now helped destroy a Government which marked the re-emergence of the radicals from the McCullochite fold, Duffy had again isolated himself from all but his handful of Catholics.

III. The Education Act and After (1870-1875)

Throughout 1870, as McCulloch replaced Macpherson and sat out the Parliament, the education question might be heard ticking, but it was not due to explode yet. Under Macpherson, Higinbotham's demand for secular education, in the Debate on the Address, had been defeated easily. McCulloch's address at the ministerial elections alluded to the question in terms which, like many of his statements, gave hope to either side but anxiety to neither. Bishop Goold's lenten pastoral for 1870 hardly mentioned the subject. When he returned from Rome at the end of January 1871, however, the welcoming address and his reply were a call to arms. McCulloch had made a secular Education Bill his main election plank.

It is not strange therefore to find some allusions to local Catholic activity at the elections; it is strange to find so few. Least of all is there any sign of a centrally directed campaign. Having

1. V.P.D., Vol. 10, p. 73.
2. Argus, 12 April 70; Advocate, 16 April 70.
3. Advocate, 5 March 70; 28 Jan 71.
called for vigorous opposition to the Bill, Goold, as usual, took no further part in politics. The Advocate called half-heartedly for organisation, in alliance with Protestant denominationalists, but nothing seems to have been done. Very likely, as Gaunson said, Duffy was obliged to work quietly, for fear of a sectarian cry, "Which will ye have? McCulloch or Duffy?" Electors then, as now, were not greatly concerned with education and as there was nothing like the former Fenian scare against the Catholics, McCulloch needed to discover some kind of Catholic plot to make education a vital issue. The Catholics had only to lie low. It is also likely that they did not feel their education system to be in danger, since the election did not conglomerate sound education, but disintegrated into a series of half-hearted dog-fights over a variety of issues, mirroring the disintegration of parties in Parliament.

McCulloch retained power for a time, in an amorphous Assembly. Duffy, still isolated, thought of the Speakership. From that political sterilisation


5. Ararat Advertiser, 28 Feb 71.
he was saved for a season by a riding accident. Then a political accident thrust the Premiership upon him. Now the radicals had shelved their zeal for education, and, since they adhered to their demand that the revenue deficit should be met entirely by increased duties, now that Duffy had the authority of Mill, Bright and Carlyle to abandon free trade and follow his radical heart, he revived the former unity of his two peoples, the Southern Irish and the radicals.

Seeing the future in a bright glow, he mistook the final sunset of his career for its second dawn, and proclaimed a vision of Victoria as the Garden of the Hesperides, to be realised by the great party he imagined he led. Seeing from the Upper House the enemy whom he had helped to raise standing higher than he, O'Shanassy was possessed by a blind jealousy, and determined to use his ascendancy in the Council to break Duffy's projects one by one. Seeing Duffy and Grant at the head of affairs, the

6. Advocate, 29 April 71.
9. Black Papers, Niel Black to Gladstone, 4 Aug 71; Advocate, 1 Aug 71 (citing Kyneton Guardian)
thick-skulled aristocracy of Victoria lent O'Shanassy its aid.

By his success in passing the new tariff, and his failure to pass anything else or effectively to lead the Assembly, Duffy gradually lost his parliamentary following. Through the alliance of the McCullochite rump with the Constitutionalists, he speedily lost office. As his triumphal tour during the recess had suggested that his support had grown in the country while it diminished in the Assembly, they determined to use Duffy the papist to deface the image of Duffy the radical. Nor was this entirely a cynical exploitation of popular prejudice: many of his opponents had a genuine zeal for education, and probably most of them shared the prejudice they sought to exploit.

The first motion of no confidence was moved on the grounds that the Governor's Speech ignored education; when it failed by two votes, a second declared that Duffy had shown undue partiality to friends and fellow countrymen in the use of patronage. This was passed by five votes; one of those who defected, Thomas Bent, later became the patronage manipulator for Sir Bryan O'Loghlen, Duffy's
successor as leader of the radical Irish. Another was Larry Bourke, betraying his Church and his nation at the behest of John O'Shanassy. 10

It is unlikely that O'Shanassy foresaw the consequences. Previous Parliaments had disagreed on education for ten years; this had rejected the Chief Secretary who had sought to win an election on it, and easily defeated Casey's motion to deny aid to new denominational schools. 11 The Constitutionalists and many of the new MLAs, on whom Francis depended, opposed secular education; denominationalists were still stronger in the Upper House. If the Ministry produced its promised Education Bill, there was reason to hope that the Church would not suffer, might even benefit; the Attorney-General, who was to introduce the Bill, announced himself willing to consider subsidising denominational schools. 12 Further reassurance came from the Duffyites, who alleged that Francis and Langton, representing the conservative rich,

cared more for office than education, and were as
divided on this as all previous governments. 13

The elections promised to be close. So slender
had been Francis' majority that the defeat of a
couple of ministers would have toppled the Ministry;
so encouraging had been the demonstrations of
popular support 14 for Duffy that it seemed possible.
If the Ministry could be defeated, there was every
chance of obtaining the elections which Duffy had
been denied, and which he seemed likely to win.
Then Goold issued a pastoral admonition, saying
"He who commits himself by his vote to such a scheme
(of secular education) places himself at once in
opposition to the Church and conscience." 15
There was an immediate outcry against "endeavouring
to control the hustings from the altar". 16
Had Goold been a political bishop he would have
expected this; being a quiet, industrious priest
he had laid himself open to denunciation as a

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15. Argus, 24 June 72.
16. Argus, 26 June 72.
scheming prelate. Expecting a close game, the Government, supported by the Orangemen, played it hard. Duffy lost the elections, his chance of defeating the Government, his leadership of the radicals, and the hope of realising his visions. Worst of all, no two individuals were so much to blame as the leading Catholic layman and the head of the Catholic Church in Victoria.

O'Shanassay incurred the price for his rancour, the Bishop for his error, and the Catholics of Victoria were shortly obliged to meet the bill. The 1872 Education Act, for all the Attorney-General's election speech, denied all assistance to new denominational schools. The subsidy to existing ones was to cease on New Year's Day 1874, except when there was no State school, in which case the Minister might continue the subsidy until there was, but not beyond January 1878. The Constitutionalists in the Assembly had abandoned denominational education; The Council, fearing Duffy and scorning the Irish, followed their lead, and not O'Shanassy's. So Victoria began to construct one of the essentials of modern life

17. Argus, 21 June 72.
and social justice, founded upon idealism, prudent statementship, political necessity, bigotry and racial prejudice, an egalitarian system effectively denying the equality of one fifth of the population.

Not for three years, however, was there any determined Catholic attempt to alter the new system. While the Bill was before Parliament, the Church organised petitions and deputations; seemingly adequate in 1867, they were now ineffectual. Not that the secularists were much more active: Education Leagues, with strong Orange connections, appeared in some radical centres, but apart from a few public meetings, petitions, deputations and pamphlets they did little, and soon disappeared. Apart from occasional local rumblings, the education question then slept quietly through three years and a general election.

Whether the Church had hoped to defeat the Bill in the Assembly is not certain. In the second reading, once Duffy had declared their objections


the Catholics took little part. At the start of the committee stage, Duffy briefly stated\textsuperscript{22} that the second reading majority made amendments pointless. According to \textit{The Age}, the clergy had held a meeting with its MLAs just after the second reading which so decided because the Bill's nature was so pitchy that nothing but defilement could come from further contact.\textsuperscript{23} In the Upper House, O'Shanassy's determined attack was unsuccessful. Clearly, amendment was impossible during that Parliament.

For three years, the Coalition's majority remained unshakeable; even after the revolt over the 1874 Reform Bill, and the retirement of the leaders, the party insisted on the Government's reconstruction and retention of office. Meanwhile, the Catholics had lost their spokesman. Powerless, Duffy had left for Europe before the general election.\textsuperscript{24} O'Shanassy, now able to enter the Assembly without indignity, tried to persuade his faithful Larry Burke to relinquish Kilmore. His refusal did not

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{V.P.D.}, Vol. 15, p. 1776.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Age}, 17 Oct 72.

\textsuperscript{24} In Ireland, too, he now found himself politically out of place, and declined strong offers to support him for Parliament. Duffy, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 347-351, 359-60.
prevent O'Shanassy's candidature. Duffy's vengeful supporters ran one of their number, Thomas Hunt, and lost no chance to inform local farmers of O'Shanassy's lawsuit against a family of selectors he had tried to keep off one of his Riverina stations. Hunt was elected, O'Shanassy defeated, by the one constituency with an Irish majority. As for the clergy, the continuation of State aid allowed them to bide their time. Goold, busily extending the Catholic education system, showed no interest in political agitation. The clergy may also have shared the view which O'Shanassy condemned in 1877, that if the State system were let alone, its cost and other defects would discredit it. He seems, however, to have been referring to laymen, about whose attitudes much of the argument hinged between 1877 and 1881.

Berry's Minister of Education pointed out during the 1877 Education debate that if Catholic

27. Ibid., p. 1094.
children were one fifth of those of school age, they numbered 65,000, of whom only 13,500 attended Catholic schools. This demonstrated that the Church could not maintain its schools and the laity did not support them; it therefore suggested that when all grants to denominational schools ceased at the end of 1877, practically all Catholic children would enter State schools and the clerical agitation would disappear. As for the 18,626 who signed 53 Catholic petitions before the House, it was clear that considering how well-organised the Church was and how influential the priests were, very few Catholics cared about denominational education. As in all other churches only priests and fanatics really wanted it; only the hold of priestcraft made that Church appear exceptional.

O'Shanassy and John Gavan Duffy replied that although some eight or ten thousand Catholic children - no more - attended State schools in country areas where no Catholic schools was available, the Church's expanding system should soon absorb all its children.

28. Ibid., p. 1087.
29. Ibid., p. 1229.
New Catholic schools reduced attendances at State schools, sometimes so drastically that the latter closed. The Catholic system would not collapse if deprived of State assistance, but justice demanded that those whose consciences forbade them to use the State system should have part of their taxes devoted to their system of education. 30

On at least one point the anti-clericals were wrong: the Catholic system survived and expanded. Whether they were right that it would not have done so but for the priests, is pointless to inquire; the priests existed, and large numbers of Catholics followed them. It is incredible that so many should have done so unwillingly, and under spiritual coercion, without this becoming obvious. A priesthood which has to use such means to get its way has clearly lost its authority, which was not the case in Victoria. The Church contained many "bad Catholics", some in high places, like Casey, a Cabinet Minister in 1872. No attempt to coerce such men was made, and they would readily have

30. Ibid., pp. 1105 ff.
publicised attempts to coerce others. Not even --- The Age could find more than the occasional doubtful case.

Probably most Irish, like the poor and ignorant of whatever religion, cared little for education at whoever's hands, and resented its being compulsory. Nor are they likely to have weighed well the arguments on either side. If their priests and lay leaders, respected men who knew about education, said the State system should be boycotted, what more natural than for all but nominal Catholics to obey wherever possible? Even if they doubted the priests' case, or could not afford the fees at Church schools, one thing was plain; their nation and its religion were once more under attack.

It does not follow, however, that all Catholics who opposed the Act would vote as the Church directed. Rarely was there a clear choice between a candidate or party supporting their case and one opposing it; although there was some disagreement in all parties, none dared promise redress. The most politic way for a Catholic to vote in the
interest of his Church was therefore something over which there could be a legitimate difference of opinion with the priest; at Creswick in 1880 lay pressure actually forced the priests to switch support from the Radical to the Corner candidates. Any attempt to exert spiritual pressure was therefore likely to be resisted by Catholics, as well as incensing Protestants.

During 1875, the situation suddenly changed. The next five years saw a determined effort to obtain redress, and by 1880 the Catholics vote was one of the most frequently discussed of all political forces.

IV. The Campaign of 1875-80.

In December 1874, Goold returned from another stay in Europe. Since his last visit, anti-clericalism had not abated in Italy, but had taken control in the France of the radical republic and the Germany of the Kulturkampf. The world-wide Church was engaged in a world-wide struggle. With him, Goold, now Archbishop, had brought bishops from Ireland for the two new dioceses of Sandhurst and Ballarat. In Michael O'Connor, destined for the latter, the Church obtained at last a vigorous politician in high clerical office.

In February, the clergy began their attack. Dean Slattery preached a fiery political sermon at Geelong.1 O'Connor's first pastoral2 called on his diocese to organise for political action. Goold busied himself with teacher training, and a subscription drive was begun in Melbourne; some suburban schools were soon able to abolish fees, and rapidly to increase their intake of pupils.3 Later in the month The Argus reported that an agitation

1. Age, 16 Feb 75.
2. Age, 17 Feb 75.
3. Age, 28 Jan 75, 16 Feb 75.
was being prepared, and great efforts were being
made to withdraw Catholic children from State
schools. 4

Electoral action soon followed. In the April
by-election for the Southwest Province, Belcher,
a Protestant denominationalist, a friend of
O'Shanassy and well-regarded by Slattery, 5 owed
victory at least partly to the Catholic vote. 6

O'Connor told his congregation the following Sun-
day,

"---every seat in future will be contested by
the Church in favour of a change in the Edu-
cation Act. Every Catholic has to get on the
roll, and an organisation would be formed
throughout the colony to achieve the object
of the Church---" 7

The following month he could claim another success 8
when Catholic votes helped Graunson win the Ararat by-
election. As usual, increased Catholic activity pro-
vided a Protestant reaction. In Ballarat, an Education
League was set up, spreading rapidly in the vicinity

4. Argus, 24 Feb 75.
5. Diary of G.F. Belcher, Victoria State Library,
Private Collection; 28 October 73, 2 December 73.
6. Belcher, Diary. 11 August 75. And see the
Warrenheip polling figures, Argus, 10 April 75.
7. Argus, 13 April 75.
8. Argus, 20 April 75, 20 May 75.
to Ararat and Sandhurst. The new Liberal League in Geelong put defence of the Act at the head of its programme. In Goold's area things were different. He let the Catholic Education Committee call a meeting of delegates from all parts of the archdiocese, which adopted a petition calling for payment by results to Catholic schools to be put on the Estimates. He left the lead to laymen, however, and stayed outside the meeting until the petition had been adopted. Lay and clerical speakers emphasised that the movement was begun by laymen. When Goold did enter the room, he said frankly that he expected the petition to achieve nothing.

Within a month, however, the political situation had changed. On August 7th Berry replaced Kerferd. Although the Ministry was largely secularist, and the Minister of Education, Munro, was an Orangeman, Berry himself had been Duffy's

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9. *Argus*, 24 April 75; 6, 7 and 31 May 75; 9, 10 and 22 June 75; 13 and 20 July 75.

10. *Age*, 18 May 75.

11. *Age*, 9 July 75.

Treasurer and had opposed the second reading of the Education Act, whose authors were now in Opposition. His Government left education on an open question.\textsuperscript{13} Perhaps because his hopes were rising, O'Connor, after some months of inactivity, suddenly held a large public meeting at Ballarat, addressed by O'Grady and John Duffy, two of Berry's supporters and the organisers of the Melbourne petition. The Ballarat Catholic Education Committee now decided to set up a standing organisation, with Committees throughout the diocese, to agitate for a Government grant and collect subscriptions for Catholic schools.\textsuperscript{14}

Any hopes were soon deceived. Berry's Government fell in mid-October, and the men of 1872 returned to power, led by the patron of the 1870 Education Bill. Not until Berry's electoral triumph in 1877 could the Catholics hope for concessions. It was then alleged by \textit{The Argus}\textsuperscript{15} that one reason for the landslide was the Catholic vote. The radical legend of 1868 was now furthered

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Argus}, 10 Feb 76.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Argus}, 21 and 23 Sept 75; 6 Oct 75.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Argus}, 10-19 May 1877, produced a number of such allegations.
by their opponents. By 1880, it was alleged that the Catholic vote had much to do with Berry's defeat in February and Service's in July, and that O'Shanasssy and the clergy intended to fell every Government until the Church had its way. Some general doubts about the cohesion of this vote have been expressed already; it remains to consider its behaviour and nature during 1877-80.

Berry's relationship with the Church during the last McCulloch Ministry was not close. Shortly after his defeat, apparently seeking Higinbotham support, he announced his adhesion to the Act, and denied any compact with the Catholics. The Advocate turned against him. During his stonewall for a dissolution, an Argus correspondent alleged, Catholic "wire-pullers" were inciting their countrymen to support his demand, while priests urged Catholics to register, and set up committees everywhere.16 However, as Catholic electoral preparations had began well before Kerferd resigned, and as the Melbourne radicals always included a number of Catholics, this looks like nothing more than Argus propaganda.

16. Argus, 10 and 26 Feb 76.
No doubt Slattery supported Berry's man at Warrnambool against McCulloch in the Ministerial elections; but as *The Argus* itself reported the Catholic vote in the Ballarat West election went to Joseph Jones, the Minister of Railways and a Welsh denominationalist, the successful Berryite candidate being a leader of the local Education League.

During the next by-election, at Geelong, Slattery told the congregation to support Hoare, the McCullochite, because he was a Catholic and supported the cause. In January, Jones was handsomely re-elected at Villiers, the Kordit polling figures suggest that the Catholic vote went to his opponent, O'Shanassy.

Up to the 1877 election campaign, therefore, Catholic votes were apparently still going to candidates, not parties. During the election, there was no Catholic organisation and no centrally directed campaign. The few references to Catholic

17. *Argus*, 10 Feb 76.


19. *Age*, 28 March 76.

20. *Daily Telegraph*, 28 Jan 76. Villiers was not safe for the Catholics in a by-election for one seat; O'Shanassy may also have met some Duffyite opposition, since that had been Duffy's first constituency.
activity concern only the efforts of O'Connor and his Dean to ensure O'Shanassy's election for the new safe Catholic seat of Belfast. The Advocate's sympathies lay with the Opposition Corner. The Bishops' lenten pastorals gave education surprisingly little space: their only mention of politics came in O'Connor's brief exhortation to bombard the new legislature with petitions. After the election, The Advocate actually complained of the lack of Catholic organisation.

Nor is there any sign of alliance between Berry's organisation or party and the Catholics. Of Berryite M.L.A.'s, only Brophy, Dwyer and J.T. Smith supported the Church's claims. Smith who virtually owned one of the seats for West Bourke, had always been a denominationalist, and the other two were Catholics elected for Catholic strongholds. Brophy, in fact, was elected against an official radical candidate.

21. Hamilton Spectator, 22 Feb 77; Advocate, 17 and 24 Feb 77, 2 June 77.

22. Ararat Advertiser, 8 Oct 78.

23. Ballarat Courier, 12 April 77.
For the N.R.P.L. to have made an alliance would have been impossible, since, as The Advocate had previously pointed out, maintenance of the Act was one of its aims, and its leadership was largely secularist. The Advocate agreed, however, that Catholics generally had opposed McCulloch. This is intrinsically likely, since Catholics generally were of low status, and since it meant a vote against the party of the Act.

After the election, Duffy, who had begun the postscript to his political life by being re-elected for North Gippsland in 1876, became Speaker. McCulloch had offered his support, doubtless to reduce the power of his opponents; when Berry offered Duffy the pick of offices except the highest, he said he preferred the Chair to being second after having been first. Berry gladly agreed. O'Shanassy therefore became once more the lay leader of Catholicism, and led its attempt

25. Advocate, 2 June 77.
to seize the last chance of continuing State aid beyond January 1878. Petitions poured in. The Vicar-General of Ballarat wrote to country M.L.A.'s enclosing a copy of the petition, and stating that the Catholics who had supported them now expected their support during the Estimates debate. When O'Shanassy introduced the petitions, however, it was made clear that Catholics had nothing to hope from either side. O'Shanassy might manoeuvre, O'Connor try to organise votes; profited nothing.

During the constitutional crisis O'Shanassy supported the Council. At the West Melbourne by-elections he used his influence among his fellow-countrymen in favour of Francis, one of the fathers of the Act, against his co-religionist O'Loghlen. The result demonstrated that O'Shanassy could not command the allegiance of the urban Irish.

27. *Argus*, 13 Sept 77.
30. *Argus*, 5 Feb 78.
Nor did he succeed in his attempt to gain advantages for his Church from his political actions. Although he reached some sort of understanding with an official of the National Registration Society, this was denounced by James Service, a bitter anti-clerical and now leader of the Opposition.

At the same time, O'Shanassay had diminished his chances of concessions from the Government. When he introduced a Bill to amend the Education Act in September 1878, the Government accused him of introducing it during the Reform Bill debates simply to embarrass them. Major Smith said outright that "--- no political party which attempts to touch the foundations Education Act can expect to live long afterwards", The other side was no less adamant; Service in a remark long to be recalled against him stigmatised the Catholic grievance as "--- not a question of conscience, but a question of cash, and of cash only."

32. V.P.D., Vol. 29, p. 1490
33. Ibid., p. 1966.
The Bill, postponed daily and given virtually no time by the Government, failed to reach a division on the second reading.

For the following six months, the Catholics were as quiet as any other political group, while Berry was in England and Parliament in recess. For the rest of the year they prepared for the general election. When it came, a constitutionalist supporter sent a telegram to the Opposition's Central Committee, asking if the Archbishop was on their side. "God knows", was the reply, "we don't."

The evidence suggests, in fact, that the Catholic vote did not go uniformly to either side. At Geelong the local Catholic Association voted to support the three Constitutionalists; Andrews, the most popular of these ran Berry a close second. At West Bourke, the Catholics helped win both seats for the Constitutionalists. On the other hand, Service was faced with Catholic opposition at Maldon. The two heads of the Corner, Munro

34. Mount Alexander Mail, 4 March 80.
35. Age, 8 and 9 March 80.
37. Argus, 3 March 80.
and Casey, were both opposed by the Catholics, presumably because they had put maintenance of the Education Act second only to reform in their organisation's programme.\(^38\) How far this was responsible for Munro's unexpected defeat is not known, but the local priest, The Age and The Argus all agreed that Catholic opposition had been a major cause of Casey's defeat.\(^39\) In East Melbourne, the Catholic Association selected one from either side; at Ararat, it supported the Radical Mayor, Tobin; in both cases, the Radicals selected were Catholics.\(^40\)

It seems, therefore, that O'Connor was right and the Catholic Education Defence Association, a series of unconnected branches, which he had begun in 1879 mostly in his diocese but also in Melbourne, had no party affiliations.\(^41\) The meeting which founded branches to cover East and West Melbourne and Carlton believed this,

\(^{38}\) Argus, 1 Jan 80.

\(^{39}\) Age, 1 March 80, Argus, 3 March 80, Mount Alexander Mail, 16 March 80.

\(^{40}\) Argus, 21 Feb 80; Ararat Advertiser, 27 Feb 80.

\(^{41}\) Argus, 21 July 79.
determining to pledge candidates on the education question and to ignore all other issues, electing men who would support Sir John O'Shanassy, "the great champion of the faith", in his efforts to obtain redress of their grievances. As O'Shanassy was now opposed to Berry, this may, of course, have meant that the general tendency was against the Radical Party. Certainly some Catholics believed that Berry had owed them something for their support in 1877, and now wanted their revenge upon them.

Both O'Shanassy and O'Connor claimed that the Catholic vote had felled the Government; O'Connor threatened that it would go on felling Governments until justice was obtained. When Service was beaten in July, their claims became more credible; for once, all leaders were unanimous that the Catholic vote had gone to Berry. Service alleged that he had counted on a majority of seven to nine, assuming Catholic support; Berry claimed that he

42. Argus, 22 July 79.
43. Ibid.
44. V.P.D., Vol. 37, p. 25; Age, 17 March 80.
At Ballarat East, Brophy received the Catholic vote as he had done since 1877. In Villiers and Heytesbury, the safe Protestant conservative seat was retained by William Anderson with virtually the same number of votes as in February; Joseph Jones, who on that occasion had defeated the unpopular Melbourne Catholic Jeremiah Dwyer by 90 votes, now lost to James Toohey, a popular local Catholic, by 18.48

In the few seats which Service lost, the margins were generally so small in relation to the total of votes cast that any number of factors might be blamed.49 Only at Geelong, where Service lost three seats altogether, is it certain that Catholics changed sides. There is no reason, however, to suppose that anything more than local influences were at work. In West Bourke, Cameron, Deakin's running-mate of February, was replaced by O'Loghlen,

48. Polling figures for 1877-80 appeared on 12 May 77, 29 February 80, and 24 July 80, and for a few days afterwards.

49. As all are multiple constituencies, the first figures in each case show the number of votes by which the highest Constitutionalist was defeated. Figures in brackets indicate the sum of the highest votes on each side. Villiers, 18 (2735); Fitzroy, 50 (2,691); Richmond, 57 (4,479); West Bourke, 101 (3,648); Geelong, 136 (3,106); Mandurang, 246 (5,450).
who probably attracted many Catholic votes. In Geelong where the only surviving Catholic Association was kept alive by Slattery, comparison of the voting figures for February and the August ministerial election, when the Association is known to have opposed Berry, with the figures for July, when he is believed to have had its support, suggests that Slattery could control perhaps 120 votes, out of a total poll of around 3,250, and that these had been enough to decide whether a popular Constitutionalist should run Berry a close second, or should be relegated to fourth place.

Whereas some Catholic revulsion from Berry in February can be explained, it is difficult to see why Service should have met a similar fate in July. It was equally clear on both occasions that if the Constitutionists won he would be Premier, and that he and his leading colleagues would concede nothing. During his brief Ministry, the question had not even arisen. The only possible explanations

50. A. Deakin, op.cit., p. 57.
therefore would be that the Catholic vote followed O'Shanassy when, out of political pique, he switched to Berry in July, or that as O'Connor had claimed, the Catholic vote was to change sides continually until justice was done. It is unlikely that O'Connor was advancing this as deliberate policy, nor did he ever repeat the suggestion; moreover, when he said it he had no reason to expect the sudden July dissolution. It is more likely that, like O'Shanassy, he meant that the Catholic vote would swing of its own accord. O'Shanassy, ignored by the Constitutionalists after February, presumably changed sides for his own sake and that of his Church. That O'Connor should have changed sides when his political expert did so is perfectly understandable.

During July, the Bishop did what he could without organisation and at short notice. Father Fennelly of Creswick and Dean Geoghegan, supporting opponents of Berry, had to visit him during the election, and at least the former to discuss the election.52

52. Age, 10 July 80, 5 Aug 80.
The *Argus* correspondent in Beaufort alleged that a leading local Catholic had assured him that a telegram had been read to the congregation there, urging it to support Longmore. A correspondent from Avoca wrote that Father Meade had told him the Catholic vote in Kara Kara could not be given to Anderson because a telegram from Dean Moore of Ballarat had informed him of a compact between Berry and O'Shanassy. Father Meade replied that he had said nothing about any high level agreement, but had said simply that he could not support Anderson because the Education Act was more important. He did not deny the telegram, and as neither candidate offered concessions, it is difficult to see why he should have supported one rather than the other unless under instructions.

However important the Catholic vote was, it did not advance the Catholic cause. Although badly needing extra support in the Assembly, Berry dared not agree to O'Shanassy's minimum terms,

55. *Argus*, 27 July 80.
on which apparently the hierarchy were happy to let him negotiate as plenipotentiary. He and his allies could only manoeuvre for a toehold in authority and wait for something to turn up, without much hope that it would. Now O'Shanassy had failed to obtain even that toehold.

56. *Argus*, 23 July 80 - 3 August 80.
During the Reform struggles in Victoria, renewed distress had led to agitation, terrorism and coercion in Ireland, and systematic obstruction in Westminster. This tempest now rustled the leaves in Victoria.

In January 1881, a meeting to acclaim Parnell and open subscriptions for his Land League was held in Melbourne. It was addressed by a number of radicals and Irish, representatives of two minorities which, as their power declined, now huddled together. The situation in Ireland reminded the former of their heroic period; they saw in the struggles of the peasantry their own fight against the great estates, and in Parnell's obstruction the stonewall they had erected against McCulloch. To the latter, conscious of being second-class citizens, the events in Ireland were a reminder of the power and determination of their people. Most of the speakers pointed to parallels between Ireland and Victoria. Longmore, described by another as "the Parnell of the South", reminded his listeners that "Had this continent not

1. Age, 19 Jan 81.
been so large the people of Victoria would now be in the same position as Irishmen." In the 1860s, memories of Ireland had been appealed to in the interests of Victoria; now Victorian experience was appealed to in the interests of Ireland. Another change was mentioned by a speaker who "regretted that the Duffys and O'Shanassys, who professed so much for Irishmen, did not attend the meeting. These men professed a great deal, but they were not worthy of being called Irishmen. (Cheers.)" Duffy, the nationalist of the fifties, had already returned to Europe for the last time; his son, although able, lacked his father's prestige. Duffy's old enemy, the nationalist of an earlier period still, was soon to be brought in sorrow and defeat to his grave, by his own people.

Other meetings, with the same overtones, were held up country. In some places, branches of the Irish Land League were formed. In the middle of the year, an emissary of Parnell arrived; attended around the country by Irish M.L.A.'s, he addressed meetings of Irish organisations and of the general
public, and collected funds. Warned of his coming sometime before, Orangemen were appalled. The Grand Lodge decided to found a newspaper, the *Victorian Banner*, which appeared in April. A public meeting, addressed mostly by the Orange clergy, was held late in May to sympathise with the suffering Irish and to subscribe towards the relief of the Land League's victims. The first meeting was howled down by Catholics; the second was more successful. The *Banner* querulously demanded to know what politicians who courted the Orange vote intended to do about the flaunting of popery and sedition.

A week later, its sorrow was changed to rejoicing. The Reform Bill had been passed, and political peace and practical legislation must ensue. Best of all "There will be no more

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3. *Victorian Banner*, 2 April 81, 3 Sept 81.
4. *Argus*, 31 May 81, 7 June 81.
secret intrigues between the leaders of the Roman Catholic party and the leaders of the popular parties, based on the barter of political support for a surrender of the people's most precious possession. 6 The Banner was right, but a week later its leader-writer must have despaired. O'Loghlen had become Premier; his programme included a Royal Commission to examine defects in the education system and consider the "alleged grievances" of the Catholics.

There was one consolation; O'Shanassy had been excluded from the Government. Once more, the leading liberal Catholic was at odds with his leading conservative compatriot. O'Loghlen's motives can only be guessed at. He dared not give his Cabinet too Catholic an air. On questions other than education, he had little in common with O'Shanassy and may have disliked him for helping destroy Duffy, a family friend, a fellow-radical and probably his political patron. 7

6. Victorian Banner, 13 June 1881.
7. Duffy, op.cit., p. 306; Age, 16 May 1877 (Advts.)
having returned to the centre of politics and helped destroy four Governments, playing a part which had been considerable and appeared greater than it was, had seen O'Loghlen, with no following in the Assembly, the electorate or the Church, having been in politics for only three years, snatch the fruits from his hand. Alfred Deakin, meeting O'Shanassy a little afterwards, had a railway station meal spiced by O'Shanassy's account of the Government's formation.

"O'Loghlen sent for me", he said, his great form shaking and his deep voice rolling around the refreshment room to the amazement of the passengers: "He sent for me as he was obliged to and offered me ... offered me ..." — this almost in a roar as he flung himself round in his chair, turning his back upon me as he concluded speechless with indignation, mortification and despair yet with a fine ring of contemptuous satire under all - "He offered me — a seat directly behind him!" 8

In setting up the Education Commission, Sir Bryan succeeded when Sir John had failed. During his negotiations with Berry in July, this had been one of the concessions which would have allowed O'Shanassy to join the Government, when it was

clear that State aid was too much to ask. According to both Irish leaders, Berry had promised the Commission, and then backed down, which was why he had been opposed at the ministerial elections, and why, once the Reform Bill was passed, O'Loghlen had moved the successful motion of no confidence. Berry had denied any compact, although he had referred the proposal to caucus. It had been rejected, but not all radicals opposed it. Mirams, dissatisfied with other aspects of the education system, had tried to use it, while still Secretary of the N.R.P.L., to detach Catholics from Sir John. At the East Melbourne by-election, where Catholics formed about a third of the population and the Opposition candidate was a Catholic, he had tried to exploit the incipient sympathy between Irish and Radicals, and Irish annoyance at O'Shanassy's absence from the Parnellite agitation, by emphasising the parallels between

Victoria and Ireland, and suggesting that had not O'Shanassay's ambition made him demand high office as well, an education commission would have been agreed to by the Government. 12 In the next by-election, at North Melbourne, The Age took a similar line. 13

During the Reform negotiations, however, Berry's party had lost its left wing. Now O'Loghlen was Premier, its only hope of office lay in coalition with the more liberal Constitutionalists. The lack of significant policy differences, although making this possible, also made it difficult for Berry to show his recent opponents, who still regarded him as an unprincipled agitator, why they should cease to maintain the Government. When Ramsay moved to impose safeguards on the proposed Royal Commission, therefore, Berry promptly sought alliance in defence of the Education Act. 14 The attempt failed, but gradually an anti-Catholic coalition appeared more likely. O'Shanassay's bragging about the Catholic vote 15 helped. Soon

12. Age, 4 February 81.
13. Age, 4 April 81.
three of Berry's lieutenants, Munro, Pearson and Patterson, were denouncing Catholic intrigues. Some remarks in the party room by Patterson, after several speeches calling for a Protestant Party, induced the Berryite Catholics to help save the Government from defeat on its tariff policy. They were expelled from the party.

The Orange Institution and the Banner supported Patterson. Education Act Defence Leagues appeared once again. Parliament was drifting their way; Constitutionalists grew more discontented with O'Loghlen. At the same time, three groups of Irishmen, in Sydney, Dublin and Melbourne, thrust propaganda advantages on them. At the end of 1881, Michael Fitzpatrick, formerly Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, was refused Catholic burial because he had supported secular education.

Early the following May, news of the Phoenix Park murders reached Melbourne. The effects of this crime on public and parliamentary opinion, despite

16. V.P.D., Vol. 34, pp.28-31, 32-34, 610.
17. Argus, 9 December 81, 22 May 82.
18. Victorian Banner, 18 March 82.
expressions of horror by O'Loghlen and the Land League in Victoria, appeared when five Victorian M.L.A.s signed an address to the Lord Mayor of Dublin on the Grattan Centenary. Normally its sentiments would have aroused little interest. Prejudice and politics, however, produced an outcry. As the signatories, all Catholics except Longmore, were all Constitutionalists or left wingers, Berry's party could clamour against the Catholics and appeal to that loyalty on which Constitutionalists had always prided themselves. At Ballarat, Major Smith and other local M.L.A.s, with the leaders of the latest Education League, preached up their national and religious prejudices before three thousand people—by then an unusually large number for a political meeting—who needed little persuading. Smith championed one of the Orangemen's favourite little grievances, announcing, shortly before the recess, that he would seek amendment of the Illegal Assemblies and Party Processions Act, to allow the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne

20. Argus, 9 May 82. The news arrived 5 May 82.
21. Argus, 1 June 82.
22. Argus, 17 June 82.
23. Argus, 28 November 82.
to be celebrated as well as St. Patrick's Day.

The sudden dissolution of 1883 deprived him of the opportunity. The Berryites and the Constitutionalists, who had promptly deserted the Chief Secretary, were not alone in setting up electoral organisations. A sub-committee of the Loyal Institution drew up the Orange platform, contacted candidates to ascertain their views, published a list of authorised candidates, and wrote to all members and other loyal electors. 24

Practically no Catholic activity was reported. It was hopeless to seek concessions while bigotry was rampant, and impolitic while the Education Commission was still sitting. The Ministry was doomed, yet how could Catholics desert it for either major party, and what would be gained? If O'Connor had intended to overthrow Governments until his Church had its way, he could no longer do so once O'Loghlen was in power. Finally, Catholics were once more divided. O'Shanassy seems to have retained clerical support in Belfast, 25 but he was objectionable to O'Loghelenites and

24. Argus, 6 and 17 February 83;
Victorian Banner, 3 March 83.
Nationalists - especially, perhaps, to the young. He was defeated by a younger Catholic, in the most Catholic constituency of Victoria. Within a year he was dead.

Elsewhere, the Irish were crushed. Three signatories of the Grattan Address, Brophy, O'Callaghan and Longmore, were defeated, Brophy in what was normally a Catholic seat, Longmore in a constituency where he had been unassailable for twenty years. The other two, Toohey and John Duffy, only narrowly retained what had always been safe Catholic seats. The Ministry was defeated; O'Loghlen's personal defeat deprived the Irish of their new leader at the same time as they rejected the old. The Service-Berry Coalition then made it impossible for the Catholic vote to balance between the parties. The campaign for State aid, hopeless from the start and fed on shadows for eleven years, now lost all excuse for hope.
CHAPTER 4:

COUNTRY

POLITICS
I. The Rural Situation.

There was little disagreement at this time about broad principles of land legislation. Few but pastoralists defended the creation of large estates and a social system based upon them; even they had no objection in principle to small, independent settlement, provided it was on somebody else's run. The last attempt to make auction the basis of land alienation, after the fiasco of Duffy's Land Act, was the Council's resolution, after rejecting the 1864 Land Bill,

That this House is of opinion that the state is entitled to the best price for the sale or use of all public lands, and that such price can only be ascertained by public auction.

This attempt failed when the elections of that year, to Council as well as to Assembly, went overwhelmingly against them. Settlement, it was finally decided, was more important than immediate income from land, although it was reasonably argued that settlement would bring the Treasury the greater long term profit.

1. Vic. Hansard, Vol. 10, p. 312. Although these sentiments appealed to reactionaries, their proposer, T.T. A'Beckett, a liberal lawyer, was more concerned to avoid a repetition of the disasters of the 1862 Land Act; to assist settlement, he proposed that payment should be on terms. (Ibid., pp. 267-70.)

Great disagreement remained, however, about terms of settlement - areas, prices, terms of payment, tenures, safeguards against dummying - let alone about the degree to which concessions should be made to pastoralists to obtain the argument of the Council. The end, however, was generally agreed; a host of small freeholders. There had been some support for "the leasing system", in which the Crown retained the freehold and therefore a permanent source of revenue and control over land-use, but very little. The idea survived among urban intellectuals, and gained ground during the 'seventies, but its advocates were few, and not in power. Graham Berry, who dominated Victorian radicalism for the decade after 1875, expressed the general view when he said that Englishmen had an inherent desire for


4. V.P.D., Vol. 17, p. 2062. Nor were intellectuals necessarily leasers; e.g. Wrixon (V.P.D., Vol. 17, p. 1774) - "There is a magic about the ownership of property which turns lazy men into industrious men---"
freehold. The onus of persuasion lay on the leasers.\textsuperscript{5} By that time, moreover, the land system evolved during the 'sixties was rapidly covering the northern plains and filling Gippsland forests with settlers.\textsuperscript{6} By the time leasehold ideas had obtained greater currency in colonies like New South Wales, where there was more land, and earlier legislation had been less successful, very little leasable Crown land remained in Victoria, except in the northwestern mallee scrub, which nobody wanted as freehold and where the leasing system was therefore applied in 1884.

There was surprisingly little romanticising of the small freehold. For large numbers in the 'sixties, indeed, farming was not an ideal but the only alternative to unemployment. For others, it was probably little more than a speculation from

\textsuperscript{5} There was even some objection to the system of probationary leases or licences on the grounds that it would provide incentives to exhaust the soil and then abandon it, and that it would produce a steady pressure for the remission of rents. \textit{Vic. Hansard}, Vol. 11, pp. 63-4. And see the debate on Higinbotham's amendment to the Land Bill, \textit{V.P.D.}, Vol. 17, pp. 2049-66.

the beginning. No doubt some thought in terms of continuing the independence of the diggings, but it was not the poetic, but the stern and commercial independence of what an early Kyneton petition called "an enterprising and hardy yeomanry".

It was also a subtly different independence from the digger's, even where successful. It offered little prospect of a fortune followed by idleness: it fled the domination of men for the tyranny of beasts and fields and the market, it fled the company of men for the waste places. Had those who clamoured for land known how hard it would be for the successful, how many would fail, they might have been less eager. Even in the well-watered areas, relatively close to markets, which were first settled, life was hard enough. But these areas were the squatters' strongholds; although farming areas survived and even flourished there, particularly in the midwest coastal areas and near


9. A good deal of the Western District settlement was by private tenants, M. Kiddle, Men of Yesterday, pp. 412-4.
major towns, the great agricultural expansion, during the 'seventies, took place in remote areas with either too little rain and timber, or too much.

Long after settlement, isolation and hardship distinguished the lives of farmers. In the major towns where civic necessities were early provided for, large sums were spent on embellishments, while the country went short of schools, churches, water, communications, welfare facilities, and in the private sector, housing and the bright lights which enabled all but the destitute to feel occasionally that they were men of the world and stood at its centre. The country was a hard place, and farming a hard trade even for those on good land. Many were ignorant of agriculture, or had experience unsuited to their surroundings; most lacked capital. Even those with money and experience might be destroyed by low prices, bad seasons, disease in crops or animals, or having too many small children during the crucial first years of settlement.

The natural source of help was the Government. It was Government policy to encourage settlement, and the provision of many facilities was a Government responsibility; as landlord the government decided conditions of tenure and acquisition, and as transport authority it decided not only what facilities should be provided, but also what prices should be charged. First necessity, then habit, forced farmers and other rural groups to organise to put pressure on the Government.

Rarely at this time did farmers regard independence as their prime virtue. Industry and usefulness were what gave them claims upon the rest of the community. Emphasis on the independence of the farmer came later, as an expression of anti-metropolitan sentiment. Melbourne was the home of the ignorant legislator, the remote and supercilious public servant; it was the great wen where the tax-eaters lived. During the drought of 1878-80, the new Exhibition Building in Melbourne became the symbol of metropolitan lavishness and self-indulgence.11

11. V.P.D., Vol. 30, p. 543; Argus, 9 October 1879.
Resentment of the rich never disappeared from these antipathies, but towards 1880 an anti-worker component was added. Exploitation of farmers by harvest workers early became a legend in the country, and a feeling developed that townsmen generally despised farmers. Farmers' Unions were needed, urged J. M. Chanter in 1879 "that it may be the means in future that the farmers of Victoria are not the clodhoppers they are supposed to be". Yet it was the townsman who had all things given to him. "The farmer who didn't believe in the eight hours system, worked ten, or twelve, or fourteen, and was glad to rest afterwards. If he went to see a neighbour his road lay through the bush, over logs and ditches, and his visits were like those of the angels, few and far between." Yet the farmers were not only underprivileged, they were also particularly valuable citizens.

12. Rochester Express, 27 June 1879.
13. Hamilton Spectator, 4 October 1879.
"Farmers were fighting for themselves but they were also fighting for the whole community, for they supplied the public with the necessaries of life and were the bone and sinew of the whole community." Further expenditure in the country was essential; Melbourne was parasitic on the countryside, and the Melbourne workers, favoured by a fiscal policy increasingly regarded as imposed on the country to suit Melbourne interests, were parasitic on the rest of the nation. Government action to assist them, like the relief-works undertaken in 1878-80, was simply a form of handout to idlers and extortioners for whom there was ample work up-country. That the work should be provided by the Government, in a colony where "the Government stroke" was synonymous with well-paid unemployment, made it all the worse.

Urban workers, therefore, were pauperised, and had lost that self-reliant industry which was, to the farmer, one of the most obvious characteristics of his daily life, a hardship which he came to wear as a badge of honour. The public investment in

14. Ibid.. Note that these two quotations, from a meeting in Villiers and Heytesbury, came from a long-established farming area, much better provided for by Nature and man than the northern wheatbelt.

15. Argus, 29 September 1880; 9 October 1879; Rochester Express, 28 May 1880.
rural areas for which he clamoured was not a handout, not an extravagance; it was essential for the development of the industry on which Victoria's future depended, essential to supply her most productive citizens not with the life of ease enjoyed by the Melbourne mob, but with those aids to a reasonably civilised existence which were generally acknowledged to lie within the province of the Government, and with which the towns had long been adequately supplied.

The idea of the independence of the farmer in Victoria, therefore, came from the circumstances of his daily life and from the just contrast which he drew between the relative hardships of urban and rural life, rather than from some Jeffersonian or Marie Antoinettish myth. Least of all did it derive from his becoming 'bourgeois', any more than his demands for government can be called socialistic, with or without doctrines. The farmer cannot be assimilated to categories derived

16. Argus, 15 July 1879; Ararat Advertiser, 26 September 1879; Hamilton Spectator, 4 October 1879.

17. Hamilton Spectator, 6 March 1867. "It was said that Government railways did not pay. Well, supposing they did not? Did anyone enquire whether the post-offices paid? (Cheers.) Post-offices were established for the public convenience and for facilitating the operations of commerce." Another speaker expressed the common claim that the Government received more from the area in taxation than it spent there, and that the country was subsidising the mining towns.
from urban experience and urban myths. The twentieth century developments of the Welfare State and the rapidly increasing importance of wheat exports to the economy added new standard arguments, but the basis of the farmer's claim to special consideration remained his economic importance and the feeling that he was undervalued and underprivileged - as, indeed, he was.

These sentiments, however, were only beginning to affect politics towards 1880, and even then were still modified by attitudes left over from the earlier period, when the problem was to establish a farming population against natural and human opposition. In this earlier period, the Government's aspect as landlord tended to overshadow its function as development authority, while their experience as townsmen or diggers tended to overshadow in the minds of settlers their new needs as farmers. Unfortunately, for all the Government's willingness to assist settlement, its actions suffered from three grave shortcomings. The first was legislative delay. The crisis of 1865-8 delayed amendment of the Land Act until 1869; those of 1877-81 limited further
amendment of that Act to the interim legislation of 1878. Even at other times, it was not easy to produce Land Bills which would pass both Houses. In the early 'seventies the rejection of further amendments became an annual event. Rejected Bills on fencing, impounding and mining on private property, lay strewn in the wake of legislation.

The second shortcoming was legislative ignorance. Not until 1877 had any Minister of Lands had full-time experience of farming,¹⁸ even then Longmore's experience was a distant memory largely irrelevant to the problems of the new areas. The Assembly never contained more than a handful of farmers.¹⁹ Matters vitally affecting a farmer's prosperity or survival were therefore the work of townsmen whose goodwill was no substitute for knowledge.

The third shortcoming was administrative. The conversion of large areas of unsurveyed sheepruns into a mass of small farms in face of great natural

¹⁸. Grant and Casey were lawyers, Macpherson was a squatter-lawyer, Gillies an ex-digger of independent means. Before 1864, there had been a military engineer, a lawyer-journalist-politician, (Duffy), a merchant, a doctor, a journalist and a coachbuilder.

difficulties and determined opposition from men commanding money and influence, needed large numbers of skilful and honest men, skilfully organised and led. Such were in heavy demand and short supply. A parliamentary and public opinion which regarded civil servants as loafers made it difficult to obtain adequate establishments; its insistence on the patronage system limited the value of supernumerary appointments. Nor was proper advantage taken of the limited experience of large-scale organisation then available. The speed at which the Lands Office expanded during the 'sixties left little time to adapt a structure designed to handle survey and auction to functions entirely different and extremely complicated. Nor was Grant, under whom the expansion took place, suited to handle such problems; not until the Department fell to 'King' Casey was it remodelled. Even thereafter complaints of official errors and delays never ceased.

Although the dispersal of settlement, poor communications and lack of leisure, therefore, made rural political action particularly difficult, these shortcomings and the extent of rural needs provided a special stimulus lacking in the towns. Many demands could be successfully presented by deputations or through M.P.s, but if the groups concerned were large enough or if their demands were especially urgent, or opposed by the Minister or other groups, they could lead to organisations which, although short-lived, often compared well with metropolitan associations.
II. Development and Organisation: Railway Leagues.

Most development demands were small and local, and could be handled by statutory local authorities or, on a smaller scale, by Farmers', Selectors' or Progress Associations. There was, however, one great exception. The most important aspect of national development for which the Government took responsibility was communications, and above all, railways, the fastest, most reliable, most up-to-date method of moving men and goods then available. During the development of the main system, each region not yet connected to it fought for priority; each area within the region fought to be on the route. In Parliament, railway bills were among the most contentious, while railway concessions provided one of the most useful routine methods of influencing votes in the House and the electorate. In the constituencies, the Railway Leagues were among the most extensive and active political organisations. In national and metropolitan politics they had few rivals until 1877; until 1879, they provided country areas and conservative groups with their most valuable organisational experience.
The agitations for the Western Railway between 1867 and 1871, while not covering the whole history of even one set of leagues, illustrate the methods and problems of this form of organisation, the strength of local and regional feeling, and the relationship of railway and national politics.

Railway Leagues began, usually after hopes had been raised by Ministerial changes or imminent Railway Bills, with meetings of citizens or Councillors of a substantial country town; either way, the initiative came from commercial leaders and professionals, big farmers or squatters, the men who ran Councils, Agricultural Associations, Hospitals, Mechanics' Institutes and conservative politics. This had its advantages, not offset by the class suspicions which hampered these people in political organisation for conservative purposes.

Money, obtained occasionally by subscription, usually by donation from committees, canvasses and those Councils which did not consider it ultra vires, was not normally a serious problem.¹ However,

¹. Hamilton Spectator, 7 March 1868, 9 April 1870.
difficulties could arise, as the Hamilton League found when only enforced inactivity during the Darling Grant crisis enabled it to stay solvent.\(^2\)

As all political organisations found, initial income was difficult to sustain, and expenditure was heavy. Apart from publications, office-rent and expenses paid to deputations, the extent and poor communications of the areas to be covered and the especial importance of personal contact among conservative groups, made the heavy expense of a paid secretary difficult to avoid. Hamilton's was paid £300 a year, and a local collector was given 5% commission and 6d. for every petition signature. Geelong paid its travelling secretary a guinea a day and a pound expenses, spending another pound a week on a correspondence secretary in Geelong.\(^3\)

The other advantage of the nature of the leadership was the important contacts, social, commercial and local governmental, which it

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2. *Hamilton Spectator*, 5 and 12 October 1867, 16 and 23 November 1867.

3. *Hamilton Spectator*, 22 April 1867, 4 May 1867; *Geelong Advertiser*, 12 and 21 April 1870.
provided in the region and in Melbourne. These were used to expand the organisation once the base had been established; branches were created in its sphere of influence after meetings called by delegates from the base, supported by the most influential locals they could muster, and any locally-influential representatives of other branches they could induce to attend. Other centres were then contacted in the same way, and if favourable, organised. The committees collected statistics, money, and petition signatures, and provided yet more contacts and influence in Parliament.

The organisation completed, a strong deputation visited the Ministry, with all the M.P.s it could command. The secretary commonly preceded it, to consult the Melbourne committee, lobby, augment the deputation, and even have private audience with the Minister; he might also remain afterwards, watching Parliament and other deputations. If time had

4. Hamilton Spectator, 13 April 1867, 21 March 1868.
5. Hamilton Spectator, 10 and 13 April 1867.
6. Hamilton Spectator, 24 August 1867, 14 and 21 September 1867.
permitted their assembly, the deputation presented statistics more remarkable for their quantity than for their impartiality, and addressed the Minister at unmerciful length. The position of this gentleman, naturally anxious to avoid offending the important electors and M.P.s now before him or waiting with a counter-deputation, was very difficult. The decision was hard technically, balancing population, development, trade with neighbouring colonies, cost and income. He was harassed in Parliament by petitions, motions for surveys, even Select Committees; politics distracted him, its influence fluctuating with the composition of Cabinet and party. The usual reply to a deputation, therefore, was conciliatory but noncommittal; the oracle was examined anxiously by the League and if considered favourable, might be published with the statistics. 7

Leagues also had their problems. Leaders were so busy in other fields, civic and personal, that although their occupations might allow them flexible timetables, the time available for any single activity was limited. Geelong cut its committee from 22 to 7 because few attended regularly, and

7. Ararat Advertiser, 15 March 1870.
time was wasted explaining to those who had missed
previous meetings; even then only two or three
were consistently active.\textsuperscript{8} Sometimes deputations
were difficult to muster; statistics were collected
and marshalled very slowly. The burden on the
secretary, busy with organisation, correspondence and
travelling through areas without railways and often
without good roads, was therefore increased; the
tendency of conservative groups to overburden paid
officials is also apparent. The secretary's
calibre was therefore especially important, and
his relations with the committee were delicate.
Cameron, at Hamilton, had to resign because he was
slipshod with correspondence and money. Geelong's
corresponding secretary had to go for letting
 correspondence accumulate.\textsuperscript{9} Most illuminating
of all, however, is the history of F.H. Nixon's
period as Geelong's travelling secretary.

A Hamilton editor in 1867, he was already
practised in agitation, and one of the local league's
most vigorous campaigners.\textsuperscript{10} By 1870, having

\begin{footnotes}
\item[8.] Geelong Advertiser, 29 June 1870.
\item[9.] Hamilton Spectator, 6, 10 and 13 July 1867.
\item[10.] Hamilton Spectator, 10 April 1867.
\end{footnotes}
moved to Geelong, he was engaged by its league. J.H. Connor, M.L.A., accompanied him to provide introductions to eastern magnates; as he later vouched, Nixon did excellent work. His subsequent performance at the Hamilton meeting, however, was lamentable; his speech, normally forceful and telling, shone only by comparison with those of delegates Prime and Rea. Before the wealthy squatters of the Colac Committee, Rea bitterly attacked Nixon, suggesting he had been drunk before the meeting, and complaining of being ignored. Moreover, Nixon had been a bad choice socially - "We found he had been an editor there and was not respected."

Nixon told Geelong Committee that he had arrived at Hamilton exhausted but hopeful, knowing many of its citizens were careless of the exact route, and the leaders of the Hamilton Western Railway Extension League were away on a deputation.

11. *Geelong Advertiser*, 1 July 1870.
He expected a strong delegation from Geelong and other eastern committees; indeed, his whole strategy had been to convert Hamilton by the display of eastern strength and unity, and in several reports he had emphasised the need for strong representation. He even postponed the meeting at the Mortlake Committee's request, so that its delegates could attend. They did not appear, but the Hamilton W.R.E.L. delegation returned with encouraging accounts of their interview with the Chief Secretary, McCulloch. Then no Geelong delegates appeared, nor were Prime and Rea on the expected coach. In despair and exhaustion, Nixon locked himself in his room with instructions not to be disturbed, and worked on his speech. Prime and Rea then arrived, and hearing that Nixon was in no state to be disturbed, concluded charitably that he was drunk. When he emerged, he was too deep in misery and too busy canvassing support to see them; they went to the meeting ignorant of his intentions, unprepared to speak, and furious.

Several of the committee found Nixon's explanation unsatisfactory; Buckland accused him of trying to blame the results of his own shortcomings on Prime and Rea, about whom he had expressed himself with impolitic bitterness. Rather than be dismissed, he resigned. The gentlemen of Geelong and
Colac had vindicated themselves in their own eyes, but as the *Geelong Advertiser* had for some time shown inadequate esteem for them, they resolved that the new Executive's meetings should be private. As the *Advertiser* rightly pointed out, what their cause needed was publicity.\(^{15}\) They promised press handouts, and occasionally reported to the general committee, but the handouts did not appear,\(^{16}\) and at general committee meetings the gentlemen of Geelong made self-congratulatory speeches, assuring their peers that all was well. The only reference to Nixon, who had been an editor and was not respected, was the brief statement that he had resigned following the investigation of his incompetence.\(^{17}\)

Regional and national politics posed more serious problems. The area to be united must be the largest possible, to strengthen case and influence; outside the immediate area, however, conflicting localisms appeared. When the W.R.E.L. was trying to force the Government to accelerate its 1867 loan, it even allied with another region, represented by the Northeastern Railway League, but this, once satisfied that the Bill would be introduced speedily and its line was the one

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to be constructed, abandoned the deputation to which it had invited the W.R.E.L.\textsuperscript{18} Similar problems occurred within the region. As Hamilton was almost certain to be the terminus, its first concern was to obtain agreement to the Western Railway in principle. The Borough Council therefore circulated a questionnaire to other Councils to discover their views; naturally, they supported different routes.\textsuperscript{19} Nor was there any reply—perhaps no questionnaires had been sent there—from the Geelong area, prospering in its agitation for the 'Black' line from Geelong to Hamilton via Colac, Mortlake and Penshurst, in favour of which the Select Committee obtained by J.H. Connor, M.L.A. had lately pronounced.\textsuperscript{20} Hamilton, less certain of Geelong's success against the Northern Line and seeing no hope of uniting the region behind its proposal, set aside the question of the precise route, optimistically writing into the League's constitution\textsuperscript{21} that a conference should later decide

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Hamilton Spectator}, 2 September 1868.
\item \textit{Hamilton Spectator}, 13 February 1868.
\item \textit{Hamilton Spectator}, 20 April 1867.
\end{enumerate}
the route objectively. Organising the Hamilton area was not difficult, but organising the east was. Camperdown and Colac resolved for the black line; Connor then invited Hamilton's assistance, to ensure Parliament's endorsement of the Select Committee's report; from parochialism or just calculation of his chances, they replied that he should join them, as their constitution forbade them to join him.22

The Hamilton League then turned to organising the north, hoping eastern opposition would there by an advantage, but the crucial Ararat meeting,23 although an anti-railway party was defeated, resolved to support extension only through Ararat. Organisation of the area began, assuming Hamilton's agreement; the League's Executive now favoured the Ararat proposal, but the Committee refused by a narrow majority to alter its strategy.24 This, the political turmoil over the Darling Grant, the social turmoil over Prince Alfred's visit, and lack of money, halted the League's efforts for some time.

22. Hamilton Spectator, 12, 19 and 22 June 1867.
23. Hamilton Spectator, 17 August 1867.
24. Hamilton Spectator, 7 September 1867.
Its initial failures should have made the line south from Hamilton to Portland, on the coast, the most attractive proposition. Not only was it short, but part of it had already been built in the 'fifties before the Government had abandoned it in favour of lines from Melbourne to the goldfields. Although therefore cheap to build, which should have improved its chances of an early start, and offering the cheapest route to Melbourne, it was never favoured in Hamilton. Portland could muster only two M.L.A.s for a start, but the political aspect was rarely mentioned or implied. Parochial considerations were more important. The time, effort and money which had gone into the League had created a psychological vested interest in its policies, as the decision against co-operation with Ararat had shown; Laidlaw now dismissed co-operation with Portland on the grounds that "... the functions of the League would cease because it was bound to advocate a line eastward from Hamilton or westward from Melbourne." Secondly, the frequency with which railways were advocated as modern and progressive, especially if any

25. The second was for Normanby, Portland's hinterland constituency.

26. Hamilton Spectator, 12 September 1867.
opposition were encountered, suggests that the trunk line to Melbourne had become a symbol of the importance of the town one had helped create and where one was a considerable citizen. Thirdly, Portland and Hamilton were rivals for the leadership of the western end of the Western District, eyeing each other as if they were Geelong and Ballarat, if not England and France.

In Portland, the directors of the company which, having failed to raise enough capital, now wanted the Government to complete the line, were willing to court Melbourne merchants, but refused to go 'begging' to Hamilton. Not until their position in Melbourne was established with merchants and Ministry did they approach their rivals. These, however, suspected them of plotting to destroy Hamilton by stopping short at Branxholme or by making Coleraine, to the west, their real terminus, with a mere branch line to Hamilton. The Portland proposal was therefore rejected by a public meeting.

27. Hamilton Spectator, 31 July 1867 (Vale's letter), 17 August 1867.
29. Hamilton Spectator, 12 September 1868.
and the Portland ambassadors began to organise the Hamilton area against Hamilton. Merino agreed, and a meeting of W.R.E.L. pastoralists at Coleraine having decided against supporting Portland yet, a Coleraine farmers' meeting was organised to vote that the proposal suited it very well. 30 Telegrams that a shipload of Ministers favourable to the line would visit the west, possibly helped. Next month C.E. Jones, Minister of Railways, inspected the line, and found it good; the Hamilton League, although urging the direct line, admitted it was not bad. 31 Then scandal forced Jones' resignation; later, it caused the House to expel him and the Member for Portland. The Portland line was dead.

The League, encircled with frustration, disappeared. Then Macpherson, Hamilton's M.L.A., became Chief Secretary. The prospects for the Western Line therefore became more hopeful, although Longmore, representing Ripon and Hampden, in the Geelong sphere of influence, was Minister of Railways. Camperdown urged the black line on.

30. Hamilton Spectator, 2, 9 and 23 September 1868.
31. Hamilton Spectator, 21 October 1868.
Longmore, its M.L.A., and co-operation on Hamilton, but a month later the W.R.E.L., reorganised, opted for the line through Ararat, with which its business contacts were closer, and which had been more co-operative in 1867. The Ararat Borough Council, to which it wrote, made no decision. Councillor Collings, coach agent, "... hoped the Council would see through the designs of Hamilton which could only be injurious to this district"; Councillor Grano voiced a common fear of property-owners and tradesmen, pointing to the decline of property-values and trade in Geelong and Castlemaine after their railways arrived; both suggested that any railway to that area would by-pass declining Ararat for flourishing Stawell.33

A public meeting, however, almost unanimously favoured the line, and organisation of the area began. A month later, Parliament voted for a survey of the line, on the motion of Wilson, an Ararat M.L.A. The next question was should the Ararat railway join the existing lines at Ballarat, following the 'pink' line, or at Castlemaine,

32. Ararat Advertiser, 12 October 1869.
33. Ararat Advertiser, 12 November 1869; Hamilton Spectator, 17 August 1867.
34. Ararat Advertiser, 26 November 1869.
35. V.P.D., Vol. 9, p. 2741.
the 'blue'? Hamilton left this to Ararat; as the trade of Ararat and the mining and agricultural centres to its northwest went through Ballarat, the former route was selected. However, some in Ballarat feared losing its advantages as terminus for the western trade; letters were therefore sent to the Ballarat Councils suggesting that the pink line would bring Ballarat advantages, the blue line only disadvantages.36

Before Ballarat could be won over, however, a deputation from the Ararat, Hamilton and Horsham areas visited Macpherson shortly before the new session was to begin, hoping to have their railway included in the Governor's Speech.37 The reply was considered encouraging, but left the route undecided. Ministerial changes, however, were increasing tension within the Cabinet. Reeves, the Minister for Public Works, and Byrne, the Treasurer, had been defeated at the ministerial by-elections. McLellan, Ararat's second M.L.A. replaced Reeves, but Byrne was replaced by Berry

36. Ararat Advertiser, 18 January 1870.
37. Hamilton Spectator, 5 February and 5 March 1870.
Then the Ministry fell; although it lost the Chief Secretary, the W.R.E.L.'s position in the Government greatly improved. Macpherson became Minister of Lands, Ararat's Wilson became Minister of Railways, and Ballarat provided the Minister of Justice; Geelong and its area were unrepresented. All were re-elected; Wilson all but promised an Ararat deputation the line they wanted.41 In Ballarat the Councils decided to support the League, objectors now feeling that a Western Line being inevitable, any benefits should accrue to Ballarat. A public meeting heard Hamilton and Ararat delegates state the advantages to Ballarat, locals cry defiance to Geelong, and inaugurated a branch.42

Geelong, meanwhile, had organised its area, and obtained Government assurances that the question remained open; it had captured Butters, re-elected by Portland, and Attorney-General Wrixon, on whose votes the Hamilton Spectator had counted in assessing parliamentary chances.43 Hamilton, however,

41. Ararat Advertiser, 22 April 1870.
42. Ballarat Courier, 23 March 1870, 13 June 1870.
43. Geelong Advertiser, 19 May 1870, 2 June 1870, Hamilton Spectator, 11 May 1870.
remained unconverted by Nixon, and cashiering him, with other problems, hampered Geelong's activity.

Then agitation for the blue line resumed; the Geelong Advertiser urged alliance with its advocates, to break Hamilton's 'unnatural' alliance with Ararat, which should be connected with Castlemaine, Hamilton being served by the black line. An indignation meeting in Ballarat proposed a deputation to show Geelong that the blue line would be the worst for Geelong; the Advertiser replied,

"These uneasy centres of the fluctuating interest of gold mining are constantly looking abroad for something to annex ... The savings of Melbourne, Geelong, and other districts, have for years been devoted to the aggrandizement of Ballarat"; unscrupulous prospectuses had drained Geelong of capital.44

Its statistics ready at last, Geelong sent a deputation to McCulloch to learn that he awaited the Engineer-in-Chief's report.45

44. Geelong Advertiser, 23 and 27 August 1870; 5 September 1870; Ballarat Courier, 2 September 1870.
45. Geelong Advertiser, 20 September 1870.
public late in December, it pronounced for the pink line of grounds of cost and profitability. Meanwhile, however, the Government had agreed to Gillies' request for a survey of the blue, and it was too late to introduce a Railway Bill before the dissolution.

During the election several attempts were made to commit McCulloch. He told a blue line deputation that it was immaterial which way the Ararat line went. To a letter from J.B. Hughes, a prominent W.R.E.L. pastoralist, he replied that he adhered to his answer to the July deputation, interpreting it, to Geelong's consternation, that the first line should go to Hamilton via Ararat, although not choosing between Ballarat and Castlemaine. Macpherson, calling the railway 'the question of questions', told Hamilton that political considerations alone prevented the Government from pronouncing for the pink; that he would not so

46. Geelong Advertiser, 17 December 1870.

47. Hamilton Spectator, 18 January 1871;


49. Ararat Advertiser, 27 January 1871.

50. Hamilton Spectator, 4 February 1871.
cynically bribe the electors; and that 'his position as a Minister of the Crown was identical with their interests, and it was for their benefit to return a member of the Government ...' Hughes followed with an attack on the other candidate, who, on the same day, based his candidature on Macpherson's failure to serve the interests of Dundas and offered to retire if the Ministry would make the pink line a matter of confidence; he also alluded briefly to trivia like the Education Bill on which the Government fought the election.

At Ararat, Wilson said of "the one question of paramount importance", that "... the Government were going to bring the railway to Ararat. If they rejected it, they rejected the scheme of railway communication, other places would be glad to receive it." He also offered some of the advantages of a terminus, proposing the normal broad gauge from Ballarat, with a narrow gauge extension to Hamilton.

51. Ararat Advertiser, 21 February 1871.
After the election, the Government, otherwise engaged, said nothing. Despite some petitioning and attempts to talk opponents round, weary expectation marked the contestants.\textsuperscript{52} In this situation, the Ministry fell. Bipartisan Ararat exchanged Wilson for McLellan in the Cabinet, Geelong regained Berry, proprietor of the \textit{Advertiser}, as Treasurer, and Longmore resumed as Minister of Railways, remarking\textsuperscript{53} that Hamilton must wait, since he was not building lines for the benefit of squatters.

So all was again uncertain. Another six years were to elapse before the railway reached Hamilton.

\textsuperscript{52} Hamilton Spectator, 18 March 1871.

\textsuperscript{53} Hamilton Spectator, 1 July 1871.
III. Land Tenure and Organisation: Land Law Leagues.

In representations to the Government as landlord the lead was taken by farmers, not magnates; townsmen involved came from the lower ranks, or were also farmers. This activity, however, produced no major organisations. The normal beginning was for a number of people to discover that their conditions of tenure were onerous, or to feel that as changes in law or administrative policy had given other groups more favourable terms, their conditions should be improved. Ministers were usually anxious to help, and not solely on political grounds. Grant and Casey, who held office for eight years altogether, were genuinely zealous for settlement. Even they, however, were not omnipotent. The revenue had to be considered. The law was not easy to change, and even the wide ministerial discretion it allowed was not infinitely elastic. Moreover, the conditions of tenure which the poor settler found most onerous were often those imposed to prevent dummying.
Yet the farmers usually had their way eventually. The views of men as popular and formidable as Grant and Casey were difficult for Cabinets to ignore, and a large, increasing number of votes was involved. Moreover, settlement was something in which practically everyone in the Assembly believed. For constitutionalists, it was only by outbidding their opponents on land reform that they could alter their image as the rich man's party. To land reformers who had supported O'Shanassy, or left McCulloch over the tariff crisis, the desire to savour popularity again reinforced political calculation. Their more conservative colleagues may have believed in a natural tendency among farmers towards free trade and conservatism. The Council presented a more formidable problem, but popular pressure and judicious concession over the pastoral tenure allowed bargains to be struck in 1865 and 1869.¹

The incentive to organise was therefore usually short-lived. Moreover, farmers were divided by the variety of tenures. In 1867, when the most

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persistent movement began, many were freeholders or private tenants. Some held under the 1862 Act. The 1865 Act, as administered, provided two very different tenures. Grant intended selectors under clause 12 to occupy 640 acre blocks under licence for three years, proving their bona fides by residence and specified improvements; the land was then to be auctioned, with a valuation for improvements added to the usual upset price of £1 per acre. Considerable amounts were selected under this clause, in the Western District and around mining centres. Despite all precautions however, numbers of dummies were successful. Soon other selectors were selling to the squatters, having taken up the land as a speculation or found the conditions too onerous in a hard season.

Grant therefore used his powers to expand clause 42. This had been intended to allow the occupation under annual licence, and at a rent slightly above that of clause 12, of 20 acre plots

4. Black Papers, Black to Gladstone, 18 June 1867.
near goldfields. If not auriferous, they were eventually to be auctioned, the upset price varying with local land-values. As the Crown could allow, refuse or revoke such licenses, dummying became much more difficult. As the plots were small and could be selected before survey, and conditions were relatively easy, clause 42 selection became very popular when Grant decreed that four licenses could be held by one person. This feature of the Act had been much criticised, particularly, but not entirely, by the radicals upon whom McCulloch came increasingly to depend during 1865. It was, in fact, a regression from the 1862 Act which had allowed gradual purchase at a fixed price, as a reluctant compromise with the Council and the need for revenue. The 1865-6 crisis engrossed parliamentary and public attention; the new farmers were busy with their farms, many doubtless believing that the Government of Grant and Higinbotham would never turn them off because


they could not fulfil the statutory conditions, nor allow them to be dispossessed at auction. By February 1867, however, the crisis had long been over; the lateness of the season when selection began in 1865 had allowed little return that year, and the 1866-7 harvest had been disappointing; rents and improvements had depleted resources. A meeting of clause 12 selectors was now held at O'Callaghan's Hotel, in Ararat, formed a committee, held a public meeting, and issued a circular urging all selectors to adopt the Ararat petition\(^8\) for the right of pre-emption and for rents to count towards purchase. There was some response, but meetings were few and small, and some proposed different remedies, or concessions for clause 42 selectors.\(^9\) Early in May, representatives from Ararat, Ballarat, Hamilton, the Loddon and Murray areas, held an ill-attended conference. Grant, although sympathetic, reminded them of revenue difficulties and that they were already obtaining the land cheaply. The conference therefore decided on a Land Reform

\(^8\) Ararat Advertiser, 8 March 1867.

\(^9\) Ararat Advertiser, 15 and 29 March 1867.
Three months later, another small meeting was held in Ararat to which clause 42 settlers were invited. O'Callaghan lamely explained that their co-operation had not been sought before to avoid embarrassing the Government, but as a new Land Bill was expected after the recess, all should make their views known. One speaker unkindly suggested that O'Callaghan was seeking to use clause 42 men as catspaws, knowing that Grant had lately announced that he was considering improvements in their tenure.

Eventually, however, a clause 42 committee was appointed to confer with the existing committee. Unfortunately the news that Sir Charles Darling would quit the Colonial Service had reached Victoria shortly before the meeting; within three weeks, the Council had rejected the Budget and the Government had resigned. Despite McCulloch's return to office late in August, a general election seemed likely. From unpreparedness, impotence and its desire not to embarrass the Government, the Association did nothing

10. Ararat Advertiser, 1 May 1867.
11. Ararat Advertiser, 30 July 1867.
until September, when it issued an address, urging all farmers to organise branches, to register, quiz candidates and vote together. Its aim was nothing less than "to watch over the interests of the farming classes"; its immediate objects were specific changes in tenure especially to secure for all the right of pre-emption at £1 per acre, to be paid gradually by an annual rent after three years' probation. Clause 12 men, in short, sought the easier terms of 1862, and clause 42 men, their tenure having been applied to the purpose of clause 12, wanted terms no less advantageous.

The manifesto apparently had some effect. Several meetings were held; some set up branches, others their own independent organisations. Grant still held out on the main points. During the election campaign, however, the Opposition, especially Duffy, stressed the land question, promising the reforms lately demanded, and seizing on evidence that the squatters' fear of Duffy was leading them to support the government. In January, therefore,

13. E.g. *Age*, 19 September 1867, 10 October 1867.
15. Above, p. 104.
Grant promised legislation to give them the right of pre-emption and to provide that rents paid after the probationary period would be allowed towards purchase.\(^{16}\) This emasculated the agitation, and put the Association, and especially O'Callaghan's candidature for Ararat, in a difficult situation. Anyone not bawling for the popular side without qualification was popularly suspected; the Opposition's support for his demands, and his being Duffy's co-religionist, made O'Callaghan suspect. Despite his previous praise for Grant, and his tardy announcement of support for the Government, the Ministry brought up an opponent from Ballarat,\(^{17}\) and O'Callaghan was defeated.

After the election, the crisis still delayed reform. The Sladen Ministry's lack of a majority, the urgency of the crisis and the defeat of its Lands Minister at the ministerial elections, made it powerless. Not until late August, after McCulloch's return to office, was legislation possible. Yet another meeting\(^ {18}\) was therefore held in Ararat,

\(^{16}\) **Argus**, 18 January 1868.

\(^{17}\) **Ararat Advertiser**, 1 November 1867, 24 and 31 January 1868.

\(^{18}\) **Ararat Advertiser**, 1 September 1868.
this time by a clause 42 opponent of O'Callaghan. As the names of his leading supporters had not appeared in the previous organisation, and this meeting, unlike O'Callaghan's, was crowded, he was probably right that selectors had previously held back for fear of embarrassing their Government. The same programme was adopted and a committee formed to spread the organisation.

Four days later, however, new regulations granted the first three points in the programme for clause 42 settlers; the maximum area was doubled, the operation of the clause extended to practically all areas, the rent was reduced to the clause 42 level. However, as everyone knew, any further changes needed legislation. A few branches of the Ararat League were therefore set up in the vicinity and towards Ballarat. As usual, meetings elsewhere, although having the same aims, lacked organisational connection. The Hamilton's Free Selectors' League, which from its area's close connections with Ararat might have been expected to co-operate, added to the usual


20. *Ararat Advertiser*, 11 and 18 September 1868; 6 October 1868.
demands, and circulated its proposals to all M.L.A.s. The Ararat League, meanwhile, held back its memorandum until the government's intentions were clear and called a Melbourne conference. The delegates, representing fourteen Western District selection centres, were unanimous on practically everything. Grant, however, declined to discuss deferred payments, or to reveal the Land Bill; his only definite undertakings were on clause 42, where he simply reiterated past promises. His main anxieties were the revenue and the need to delay alienation until selectors had proved their bona fides. The League awaited the Bill. It then expressed general satisfaction, although proposing numerous additions which it had never even mentioned before. Elsewhere, a mess of unconnected meetings produced a mess of unconnected amendments. The government naturally ignored them.

22. Age, 2 December 1868.
23. Age, 3 December 1868.
25. Age, 17 and 19 June 1869, 2 July 1869; Argus, 24 and 29 June 1869.
The Land Bill, further delayed by more pressing parliamentary business, a change of government, and Upper House amendments, eventually passed in December 1869. It gave selectors nearly everything the Ararat League had originally asked. Clearly, however, success owed little to effective agitation. Legislation was made necessary by the limitations on Grant's administrative powers and the expiry of the squatting tenure in 1870. If the Upper House was to be persuaded to accept the former, the renewal of the latter must be tied to it. Party politics and Grant's zeal did the rest.

For a decade, there was some agitation, but little organisation. Some groups were discontented with parts of the new tenures, but they were small. The only movement which might have come to anything was the discontent with Macpherson's administration of the Lands office, provoked into organised effort by the 1871 election.

Like 1867-9 movement, this was another scrappy

26. 33 Vic., No. 360.
27. Age, 30 November 1866 and 8 February 1867.
thing, mostly of isolated bodies, although some grouped themselves into local federations. 28 Several put test questions to candidates, 29 the one at Duck Ponds sought out its own candidate, 30 but for all the usual talk of colonywide organisation, nothing was done. Not until after the elections did the Clunes League call the usual ill-attended conference. 31 Macpherson, already forced to make concessions in his election speech, 32 seemed willing to meet all the deputation's demands. The League therefore waited a month. When it re-assembled, the Government had fallen. Its replacement by a Ministry in which Duffy was Chief Secretary and Grant Lands Minister was sufficient guarantee, and the League's last action was to applaud Grant's promised administrative reforms. 33 Once again farmers had their way through anything but forceful agitation. Farming votes, the parliamentary situation and governmental willingness to concede made both unnecessary.

28. Age, 2, 13, 30 and 31 December 1870; 13 and 23 January 1871; 2 February 1871.

29. Age, 8 and 13 February 1871.

30. Age, 27 January 1871.


32. Ararat Advertiser, 20 January 1871.

33. Age, 26 June 1871.
Under Casey's four-year rule, agitations were negligible. His reform of the Lands Office, his vigorous use of administrative and quasi-judicial powers and his attempts to amend the Land Act, removed some grievances and gave promise of removing others. Non-resident selectors, the most important of the small groups of malcontents, were catered for in his Bills, although he had some difficulty in finding equivalent safeguards against dummying; meanwhile, he proclaimed that genuine selectors unable to live on their selections had nothing to fear from him. Non-residents' agitation was therefore small-scale and local.

As for the population and politicians in general, it became a commonplace that Land Bill debates did not interest them.

34. *Age*, 19 December 1872, 7 January 1874, 25 February 1874.
35. *Age*, 16 June 1875.