

Politics in  
EDEN-  
MONARO

The Personalities and  
The Campaigns

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D. W. Rawson

AND

Susan M. Holtzinger

## Politics in EDEN-MONARO

IN this survey of Australian political campaigns, and the personalities involved, the authors have provided all the facts essential to an understanding of Australian political life, and have examined them in detail.

Eden-Monaro is a key electorate in the making and unmaking of both State and Federal governments; it contains almost all the elements which make up the Australian political scene, so that the material here presented, and the authors' conclusions, are of considerable significance for all interested in politics—the practical politician, the student and the elector alike.

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11

POLITICS IN EDEN-MONARO

Department of Political Science

# POLITICS IN EDEN-MONARO

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D. W. RAWSON  
and  
SUSAN M. HOLTZINGER

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# THE ELECTORATE OF EDEN-MONARO

(See also detailed map on page 3)

## STATISTICAL SYNOPSIS

Total Population 86,014

### *Population distribution*

Living in 4 towns with population over 3,000 . . . . .	36,517
Living in 6 towns with population between 1,000 and 3,000 . . . . .	7,571
Living elsewhere in the electorate . . . . .	41,926

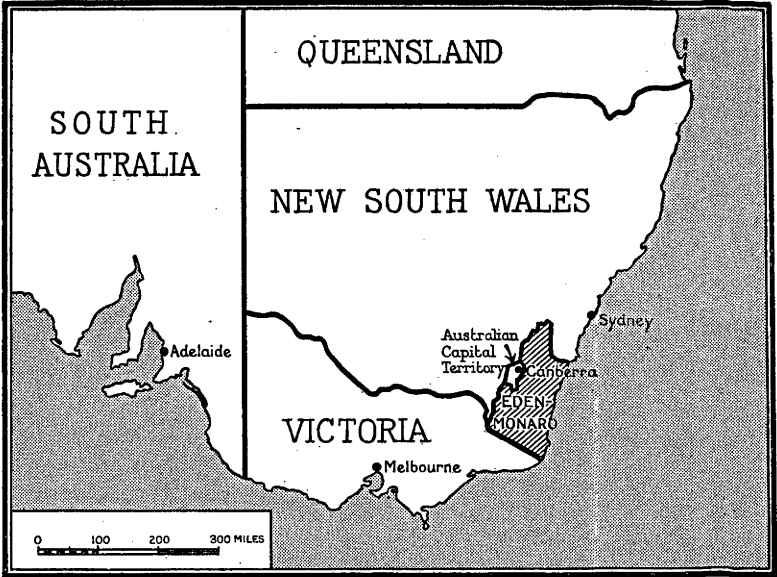
### *Religions (cf. Fig. III, page 8)*

Church of England . . . . .	36,048
Catholic and Roman Catholic . . . . .	27,054
Presbyterian . . . . .	6,892
Methodist . . . . .	5,427
Other Christian . . . . .	3,641
Non-Christian, indefinite, no religion and no reply . . . . .	6,952

Total Working Population 34,324

### *Employment Distribution (cf. Fig. II, page 7)*

Grazing . . . . .	5,281
Dairying . . . . .	1,744
Other Primary Industry . . . . .	1,949
Mining and Quarrying . . . . .	602
Manufacture . . . . .	3,578
Building and Construction . . . . .	7,385
Tertiary (including transport and communications, commercial, amusement and water supply) . . . . .	13,173
Inadequately defined . . . . .	612



SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA  
SHOWING THE FEDERAL ELECTORATE OF EDEN-MONARO

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Background

### THE ELECTORATE

Eden-Monaro is a large country electorate in the south-eastern corner of New South Wales. A mountain range, about thirty miles inland, divides it into two unequal sections—the coastal valleys, which are devoted almost entirely to dairying, and the more elevated and much drier Southern and Monaro Tablelands where the grazing of sheep for wool predominates. More than three-quarters of the people of the electorate live on the Tableland.<sup>1</sup>

The South Coast of New South Wales is an area of many grievances, and alleges neglect by State and, to a lesser extent, Federal governments. This is more than the common belief in country districts that they are subordinated to the cities: the South Coast considers itself the victim of discrimination in favour not only of Sydney, but of practically all the rest of the State. No member for Eden-Monaro can afford to ignore the chronic suspicion of the Coast that it is being neglected, particularly if he himself comes from the Tableland.

There is little contact between the Coast and the Tableland except in the far south, around the town of Eden. A part of Eden's contact with the rest of the State is through the railhead at Bombala, forty miles west on the Monaro Tableland. For the rest of the coast, and largely for Eden as well, the way in and out is the coast road (the Princes Highway) running south from Sydney and eventually into Victoria. The road is of vital importance in the absence of any railway serving the coast, and

<sup>1</sup> In this study, the Tableland section of Eden-Monaro is defined as the Southern Tablelands Division of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, excluding the municipality of Yass, and adding the Shire of Tallaganda. The Coastal section of the electorate is defined as the Municipality of Bega, and the Shires of Imlay, Mumbulla and Eurobodalla, together with approximately one-quarter of the Shire of Shoalhaven.

complaints about its carrying capacity and condition are among the stock grievances of the Coast against the State government.

The isolation of the Coast has been somewhat modified by the introduction of air services. There is a thrice-weekly service between Moruya and Sydney, and a new airfield is nearing completion at Merimbula. The construction of this airfield has been watched with relief and satisfaction by those in nearby districts, and delays in its completion have been greeted with corresponding exasperation.

Though dairying predominates all along the coast, the problems of dairy-farmers in the more distant districts are very different from those encountered further north. Dairy-farmers in New South Wales are divided into those who provide whole milk for the Sydney market and those who must sell most or all of their product to butter or cheese factories, or to other processing plants. The New South Wales Milk Board buys whole milk, at the generous price of 4s. 2d. per gallon, from dairy-farmers within what it has defined as 'the milk zone'. This zone includes the north-eastern corner of Eden-Monaro as far south as Bateman's Bay. The other dairy-farmers in Eden-Monaro sell their milk to butter factories at Moruya or Bega, or cheese factories at Bodalla, receiving less than half the price which the Milk Board pays its suppliers.

Dairying provides employment for 1400 people on the coast, while another 300 are employed in agriculture or mixed farming, usually including dairying. Grazing, fishing and forestry are the other important primary industries.

Along the coast is a series of small towns of which Bega, with 3500 people, is much the largest. Four others, Moruya, Eden, Narooma and Ulladulla, each have a population of more than 1000. Timber-mills, especially at Moruya, and the butter and cheese factories already mentioned, constitute the principal processing industries. In addition, the towns provide goods and organize transport, electricity and other services for the primary producers and for a large tourist trade.

The politics of the Coast, as one of our principal subjects, is better suited to a conclusion than to an introduction. However, it may be pointed out in advance that dairy-farmers in Australia for forty years have tended to be part of what might be called the dissident right. They have rarely been a source of

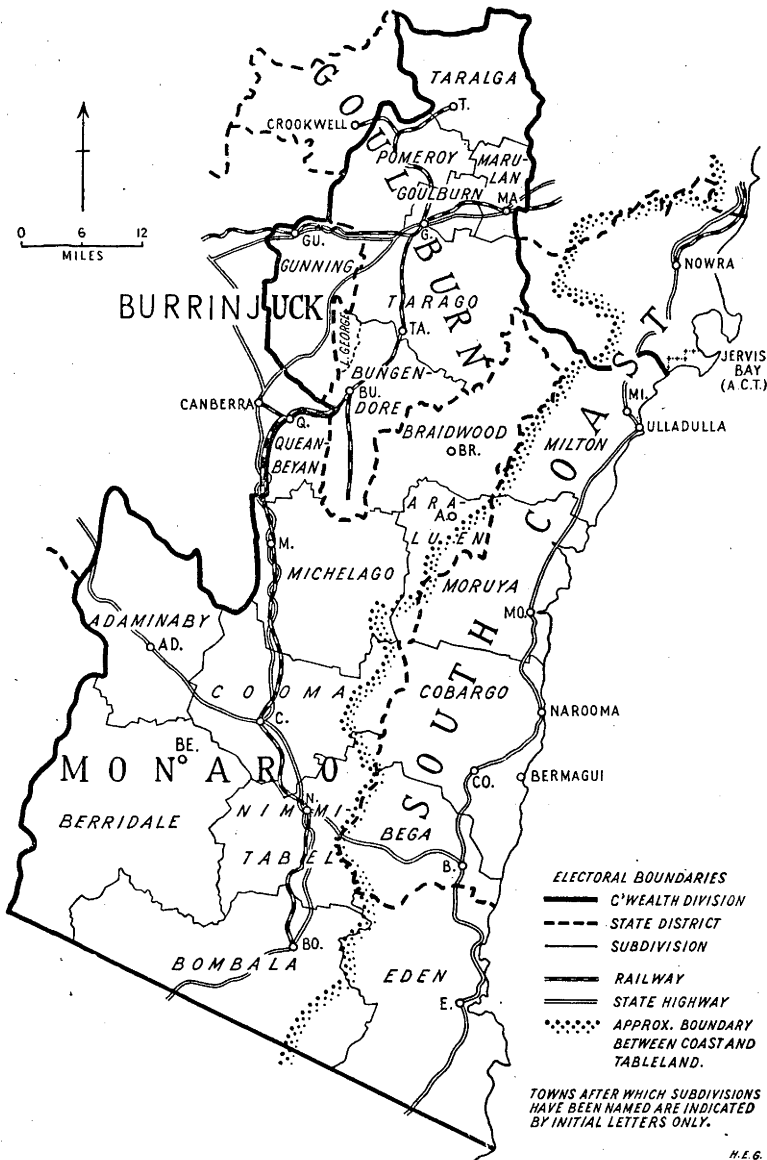


FIG. I: Commonwealth Electoral Division of Eden-Monaro.

support for the Labor Party, but they and their representatives have been a frequent source of trouble to the Liberal Party and its predecessors. In Victoria, they have been one of the largest elements in the Country Party, which has stood apart from both Labor and non-Labor parties, greatly to its own advantage. In New South Wales the Country Party fell into other hands, but the dairy-farmers, including those of the South Coast, have from time to time found other ways of expressing their political independence.

Dairy-farming has always been a marginal industry which has required a combination of long hours, hard work and heavy subsidies. The South Coast is by far the most prosperous dairying area in New South Wales outside the Milk Zone, but even here farmers' incomes are low. A survey covering the years 1950-3 showed an average family income of £1348 for dairy-farmers on the South Coast, compared with £997 for the whole of the State, excluding the Milk Zone.<sup>2</sup> This was certainly not an excessive return, since it included interest on the farmer's capital (48 per cent of the farms examined were debt-free), and in most cases the labour of his wife and children.<sup>3</sup>

The income of many dairy-farmers, even on the South Coast, remains smaller than the wages of many manual workers.<sup>4</sup> Much of the anti-Labor feeling in dairying electorates undoubtedly arises from sheer jealousy of the gains made by metropolitan trade unionists. On the other hand, especially in the past, the dairy-farmer has often been too close to actual poverty to follow the Liberal Party or its predecessors with much enthusiasm. While he will not support the Labor Party, he will often take a third choice if it is offered him.

On the assumption that farmers are less likely to vote Labor than farm workers, the low proportion of employees in dairying areas also tends to make them non-Labor strongholds. In the coastal Shire of Mumbulla, which has no large towns and is

<sup>2</sup> Published in the *Review of Marketing and Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Sept. 1955), and Vol. 24, No. 1 (March 1956).

<sup>3</sup> On this subject, the survey does not give separate figures for the South Coast, but throughout the State 64 per cent of dairy-farms were worked with the assistance of farmers' wives. Only 11 per cent used any hired labour.

<sup>4</sup> Ten of the farms studied on the South Coast returned family incomes of less than £1000 p.a., fourteen returned between £1000 and £2000, and five returned over £2000.

almost entirely devoted to dairying, 15 per cent of the population is self-employed and only 17 per cent are employees. In the adjoining Shire of Monaro, on the Tableland, which also has no large towns but where grazing replaces dairying, 10 per cent are self-employed and 23 per cent are employees. The difference is certainly one reason why the coastal shire always produces large non-Labor majorities, and the tableland shire usually shows Labor majorities.

To the west of Bega, the Dividing Range turns inland and runs north-east for seventy miles. Then it turns south again, forming the western boundary of Eden-Monaro until its junction with the Victorian border. This does not affect the division of the electorate into Coast and Tableland, for the Dividing Range passes unobtrusively across the Monaro, while a much higher and more rugged range separates the southernmost coastal section from the Tableland. Nevertheless, there is more contact here than further north, one result of which is that the coastal subdivision of Eden is part of the State electorate of Monaro, and not of South Coast. In the far south, from Eden to the Victorian border, the country becomes more rugged and sparsely populated, and dairying loses its absolute predominance. The grazing of sheep and beef cattle, forestry and timber processing and fishing are all important, though even here dairy-farming remains the largest single industry. The development of Eden as a deep-sea port, which has been strenuously but ineffectively urged for many years, would lead to very heavy goods traffic to and from Monaro, but at present sea transport to Eden, and to the South Coast generally is insignificant and dwindling.

On the Tableland the principal industry is grazing for wool, but there is more diversification. In the south-west there is the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric project, which has brought thousands of engineering, construction and administrative workers of all grades into the electorate, and has increased the population of the town of Cooma, which is the headquarters of the Snowy Mountains Authority, from 2500 to over 6000. Further north is Queanbeyan, with a population of 7500, many of whom work in the neighbouring Federal capital city of Canberra. At the northern end of the electorate is the city of Goulburn, the fourth largest in New South Wales, with a population

of 18,000. As well as being an important commercial and railway town with several large factories, Goulburn boasts a large mental hospital and a gaol, which together give employment to 400 people. All of these towns, together with Bombala in the extreme south, provide commercial and transport services for the pastoral country which surrounds them, as do dozens of smaller towns and townships scattered over the electorate. In addition, there is the mining town of Captain's Flat, which depends for its existence on the Lake George silver-lead mine. Parts of the Tableland have seen gold-rushes in the past, but today the only other form of mineral production is at the limestone quarries of Marulan, near Goulburn.

The Tableland may share the general country opinion that Sydney receives too much consideration at the expense of the rest of the State, but, unlike the Coast, it has few of its own peculiar regional grievances. It does not share the Coast's perennial problem of inadequate transport. Railway services are adequate and, by Australian standards, fast and comfortable. Sydney and Melbourne can be reached by air through Canberra, and more recently through Cooma also. Minor roads are generally in poor condition, but the principal highways are being improved. The Snowy Mountains scheme has brought additional prosperity to a large part of the electorate. Finally, and perhaps fundamentally, the well-being of the district is based not upon the economically vulnerable dairying industry, but on grazing for wool production, which has remained highly prosperous for many years.

At the time of the 1954 census, more than half the people of the Tableland (57 per cent) lived in towns with a population of 1000 or over, compared with 31 per cent of those on the Coast. Figure II shows the distribution of employment by industry in the two districts, and for all of New South Wales.

The people of the Coast differ from those of the Tableland in other respects than occupation. The Tableland population has been growing rapidly during the post-war period. Consequently, there is now a high proportion of European-born migrants, particularly in Goulburn, Queanbeyan and the area affected by the Snowy Mountains project. The 1954 census showed that 10 per cent of the population were born outside the British Commonwealth, compared to 5 per cent for the

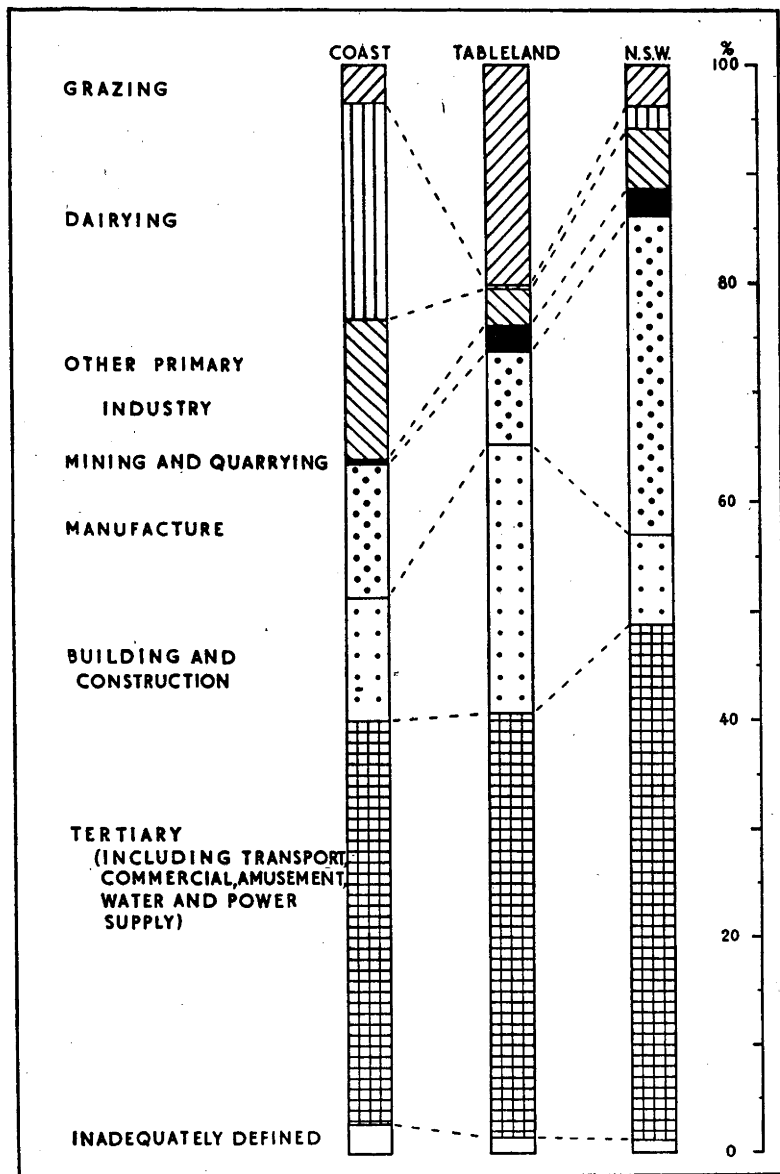


FIG. II: Distribution of Employment by Industry.

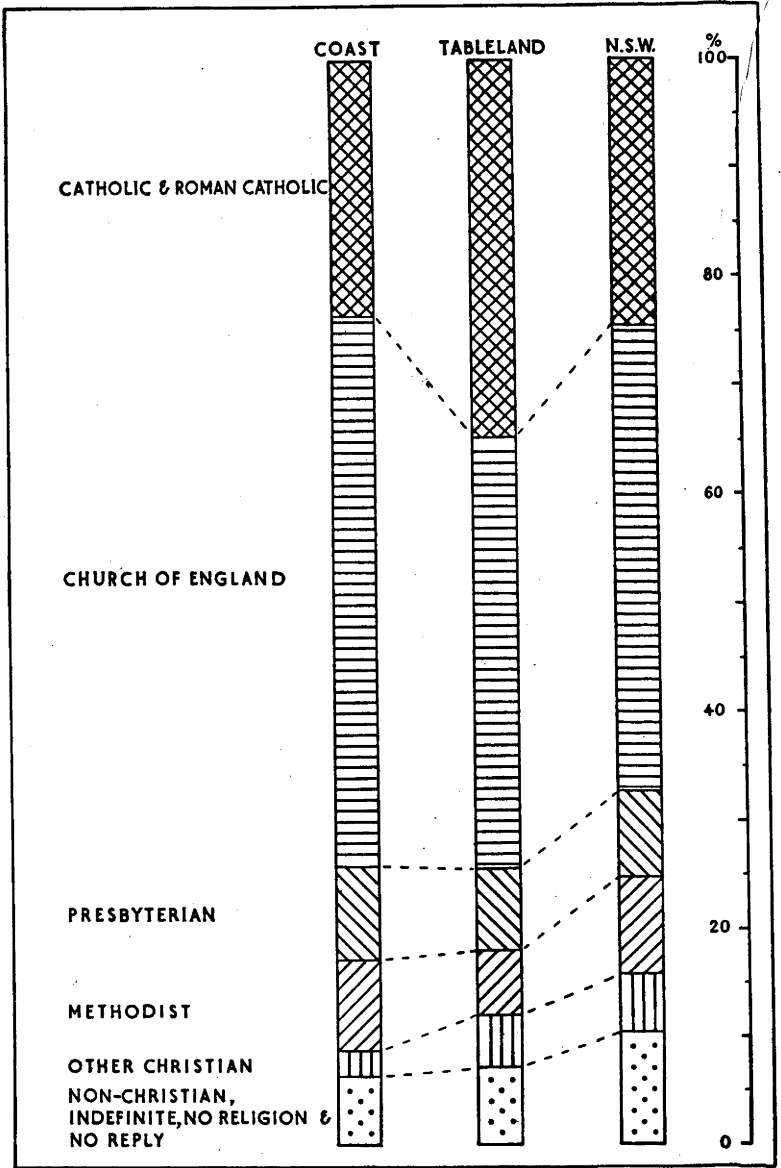


FIG. III: Distribution of Religions.

whole of New South Wales and less than 2 per cent in the coastal sections of Eden-Monaro. Very few of these were naturalized Australian citizens and therefore eligible to vote, though no doubt some became naturalized between the census and the elections of 1955-6.<sup>5</sup>

The coming of the migrants has accentuated another difference between Coast and Tableland—that of religion (see Figure III). Even in the 1947 census returns the Tableland showed an unusually high proportion of Catholics; in 1954 this had become much more marked, and the Catholic proportion was almost 10 per cent higher than for New South Wales as a whole.

The two sections of Eden-Monaro are not only dissimilar, but are becoming more so as the development of the Tableland continues to outstrip that of the Coast. The characteristics that distinguish the Tableland from the Coast—more grazing and less dairying, more townspeople and fewer farmers, more Catholics and fewer Protestants—are all ones that usually accompany a predisposition towards the Labor Party. One of the minor grievances of the principal newspaper on the Coast, the bi-weekly *Bega District News*, is that this strongly anti-Labor district has had to suffer a Labor representative in the Federal Parliament for the last thirteen years, thanks to 'the illogical electoral boundaries that link the coast with centres so far away as Goulburn and Queanbeyan'.<sup>6</sup>

Eden-Monaro contains one complete State electorate and parts of three others. The electorate of Monaro comprises the southern part of the Tableland and the coastal subdivision of Eden. The other four coastal subdivisions are part of the electorate of South Coast, which also extends northward beyond the boundaries of Eden-Monaro. The electorate of Goulburn covers the northern half of the Tableland, and in addition includes one subdivision not included in Eden-Monaro. In the north-west, Eden-Monaro also includes one small subdivision of the electorate of Burrinjuck.<sup>7</sup> Monaro and Burrinjuck have

<sup>5</sup> The census figures showed that 9.2 per cent of those on the Tableland were not British subjects, compared with 1.3 per cent on the Coast and 3.8 per cent throughout New South Wales.

<sup>6</sup> *Bega District News*, 1 June 1954.

<sup>7</sup> As only 1000 of its 20,000 electors are in Eden-Monaro, the Burrinjuck electorate has not been included in this study.

both been held by Labor since 1941: by J. W. Seiffert and W. F. Sheahan respectively. Goulburn has been held by Labor since 1935: by J. M. Tully until 1946, and subsequently by his son L. J. Tully. South Coast has been held by J. G. Beale since 1942, first as an independent and later as a Liberal. The Federal electorate of Eden-Monaro has been held for Labor by A. D. Fraser since 1943.

### THE VOTING RECORD

The present Federal seat of Eden-Monaro covers territory that, until the last twenty years, was traditionally non-Labor. But the Labor Party was never completely submerged, and there always existed a solid core of Labor support which, under favourable circumstances, has grown rapidly enough to give the party control not only of Eden-Monaro itself, but also of all but one of the State electorates it contains.

There has been a Federal seat of Eden-Monaro since Federation, and its members have usually held it for long periods. Austin (later Sir Austin) Chapman, who won the seat as a Free Trader in 1901, held it until his death in 1926. He was Postmaster-General in Reid's Free Trade ministry in 1905, followed his leader into the Fusion which produced the Liberal Party in 1908, and, with the rest of his party, became a Nationalist after the Liberal and conscriptionist Labor members merged in 1916. Though during his term the number of electors grew from 12,000 to 40,000, he was never in any danger of defeat, except in 1919, when his majority fell to 483. He was returned for the last time in 1925 with an almost two-to-one majority.

Chapman was succeeded by another Nationalist, J. A. Perkins, who had formerly represented the three-member State electorate of Goulburn under the proportional representation system introduced in New South Wales in 1918. Goulburn, which corresponded in size to Eden-Monaro, returned one Labor and two Nationalist members from 1920 until 1925, and one Nationalist and two Labor members from 1925 until 1927, when New South Wales reverted to single-member electorates. Under the new system, the big Goulburn electorate was cut up into the present electorates of Goulburn, Monaro and South Coast. At the first election which followed, in 1927, Goulburn

went to Labor, South Coast to the Nationalists (in each case to one of the members for the old three-member electorate) and Monaro to W. J. Hedges, the Country Party's first and only successful candidate in the area.

In 1929 Eden-Monaro itself swung to Labor—by 40 votes. This was one segment of the great swing that placed the Scullin government in office, but the dismal record of both Federal and State Labor governments, admittedly in wretchedly difficult circumstances, brought about an even more powerful reaction two years later. In December 1931 Perkins was re-elected for Eden-Monaro with a majority of 11,000 after the distribution of the preferences of a Country Party candidate, who polled 27 per cent of the votes. Six months later Labor lost its last foothold in the area when the State seat of Goulburn was won by the United Australia Party, which absorbed the Nationalist Party in 1931.

Labor regained Goulburn in 1935 but was too much weakened by dissension to make any further progress for the rest of the decade. By 1941 the worst of its internal troubles were over, and the U.A.P. in its turn was suffering from serious and growing disunity. However, the first fruits of Labor's revival in this area were won at the expense of the Country Party, which lost Monaro to Labor in 1941, at the election which returned the McKell Labor government in New South Wales. Two years later, when the next Federal election fell due, the U.A.P. was utterly disorganized and demoralized. Seven candidates contested Eden-Monaro including Perkins, who had U.A.P. endorsement; and D. Macarthur-Onslow, who was supported by a powerful non-Labor breakaway, the Liberal Democratic Party. Perkins was hopelessly defeated, finishing behind both the Labor and the Liberal Democratic nominees, and after the distribution of preferences Labor won the seat.

By 1946 the U.A.P. and some of its challengers, including the Liberal Democratic Party, had merged to form the Liberal Party of Australia, which endorsed Macarthur-Onslow for Eden-Monaro. The Country Party stood two candidates, who polled poorly, and there was also an Independent. The Labor majority was reduced to 174 votes, and there seemed every prospect of a Liberal victory at the next election. The Country Party agreed to withdraw from contests for Eden-Monaro, and

many of its leading members, including one of its candidates in 1946, transferred to the Liberal Party.

Before the next election, a redistribution reduced the number of electors from 51,000 to 38,000. The reduction was brought about by removing the north-eastern corner of the electorate, which helped to make up the new seat of Macarthur, and only this change in the boundaries made it possible for Labor to retain the seat in 1949. Even so, the Labor majority was only 689. This increased slightly to 742 in 1951, and more substantially to 1684 in 1954.

Only twice, in 1943 and 1953, has the Labor Senate team won a majority in Eden-Monaro. The following table shows the percentage of votes won by Labor candidates since 1943.

TABLE I  
LABOR VOTE IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS, 1943-55

	<i>Senate*</i> %	<i>Representatives</i> %
1943 . . . . .	50·3	48·9
1946 . . . . .	46·6	50·1
1949 . . . . .	44·3	50·9
1951 . . . . .	45·3	51·0
1953 (Senate election only) . . . . .	52·5	
1954 (Representatives only) . . . . .		52·1
1955 . . . . .	46·0	53·3

\* These figures allow for the estimated distribution of Communist and Independent preferences.

The Senate vote is difficult to interpret, as the proportion of informal votes is always very high, and many who cast a valid vote do so without any clear idea of which candidate or party they are benefiting. Nevertheless, these figures suggest that many Eden-Monaro electors have consistently voted Labor for the House of Representatives, but Liberal for the Senate.

The Labor Party has not been seriously troubled to retain the State seats of Monaro and Goulburn. Between 1941 and 1948 the South Coast electorate was held in succession by two Independents, the second of whom then joined the Liberal Party. Thus, between 1943 and 1948 the Liberals did not hold any of the four seats in Eden-Monaro, just as between 1932 and 1935 none was held by Labor. It is apparent even from this brief outline that during the last thirty years this area had shown

considerable political instability, which now appears to have been succeeded by Labor predominance. However, this predominance is still far from stable. In Eden-Monaro itself, the margin between the parties remains small, while in all the electorates the personal following of the sitting members has in the past been enough to determine the result.

### THE FEDERAL BACKGROUND

Between the elections of May 1954 and December 1955, the dominant factor in Federal politics had been the dispute in the Labor Party. From one aspect this was a struggle between supporters and opponents of the leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, Dr H. V. Evatt. The dispute had been gradually building up since the end of the war, but it did not reach a crisis until after the 1954 election.

Behind the dispute was the fact that an anti-Communist and anti-socialist faction, composed predominantly of Catholics, was gaining control of the party. This faction had first appeared during the war, when Communist influence in the trade unions was growing rapidly. It grew most rapidly in Melbourne, where an employee of Catholic Action, Mr B. A. Santamaria, organized anti-Communist groups in many trade unions, and soon spread to other States, notably New South Wales and Queensland. Partly because these groups needed assistance from the A.L.P. and partly because their members held quite distinctive political views of their own, the 'Movement', as it became known as early as 1945,<sup>8</sup> took an active part in the affairs of the Labor Party.

The A.L.P. welcomed these keen, well-organized anti-Communists as the most promising means of preventing the entire trade union movement from falling into Communist hands. The A.L.P. Industrial Groups, set up in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland soon after the war, were in many cases little more than the Movement's cells given official recognition by the party. A.L.P. executives, by expelling or threatening to expel members of the party who opposed the Industrial Group nominees at union elections, succeeded in making these contests

<sup>8</sup> The term was used in 'Catholic Action at Work', a pamphlet published by the Communist Party in 1945, which purported to reproduce 'Movement' documents.

a simple fight between Communists on the one hand and Industrial Groupers on the other. Both Labor and Liberal governments acceded to the Groupers' requests for tighter control over union ballots, and legislation was passed which both limited corrupt practices and encouraged more unionists to take part in the elections. Both of these factors worked in the Groupers' favour. In addition, a number of unsuccessful and politically-inspired strikes between 1949 and 1951 lost the Communists much support. Between 1950 and 1953, the Groupers won a number of dramatic victories, destroyed the Communists' hopes of gaining control of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and established themselves as one of the most powerful forces in Australian politics.

As the Movement grew it accumulated both friends and enemies. The friends included other anti-Communists, people who saw in the Movement's version of Catholic social policy the answer to the Labor Party's need for coherent and practical goals, simple careerists, and every possible combination of the three.

The Catholics who continued to form the core of the Industrial Groups, both in the trade unions and the A.L.P., were joined by many non-Catholics who had secular but equally compelling reasons for accepting the same political position. During the war, when socialism was in favour in Australian Labor circles, the Movement seemed to be running against the tide when it condemned the nationalization of industry, except as a last resort, and demanded instead an economy of independent small producers. At that time many A.L.P. members who were anti-Communist for reasons other than religious faith were at the same time militant socialists. But as the post-war period of permanent prosperity set in, this position became increasingly uncomfortable and embarrassing. Only a minority of the Labor Party sought nationalization on any large scale, and of these a smaller number still had any idea of how it was to be achieved or what purpose it was to serve. The popular reception of the Chifley Government's Bank Nationalization Act of 1947 suggested that extensive nationalization was not practical politics, and the invalidation of the Act by the High Court and Privy Council showed that there were formidable (though not necessarily insuperable) constitutional obstacles to such policies. The

party's subsequent history has been largely one of an attempt to find a systematic approach to present Australian society.

Only the Industrial Groupers offered any such systematic approach. They agreed with non-Labor politicians and employers that there was a substantial community of interest between all classes and that it was in the workers' interests that the existing economic system should function as efficiently as possible. For this reason they laid great stress on greater productivity in industry. On the other hand, they proposed social reforms that were not only genuinely radical but constitutionally practicable and for which it was quite possible to obtain the support of the electors. Such reforms were the decentralization of industry, discouragement of monopolies, a great expansion of co-operatives, and the extension of social services. The combination of such a policy with opposition to Communism made an appeal to many non-Catholics. By the time the Industrial Groups began to win their greatest victories in the trade unions, they were quite heterogeneous bodies in religion.

While winning friends in this way, the Groups were making enemies in others. Many who had welcomed them when the Communists were powerful and threatening and the Groupers seemed weak and unpopular began to reconsider their attitude when the position was reversed. The 'moderate' officials of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and some of its affiliated Trades and Labour Councils soon saw that their own positions might be threatened as effectively by Groupers as by Communists.

Another cause of growing hostility was the Groupers' un concealed hostility to large-scale nationalization and to the very term 'socialism'. It is true that the socialists had little idea of what they meant by socialism or how it was to be achieved, but they were at least certain that they could look for no support from the Groupers.

Equally important in arousing hostility was an illiberal streak in Grouper thought and action, which was perhaps hardly surprising in an organization that derived its social thinking from the Catholic Church and was engaged in a bitter struggle with the Communists. 'Like the Communist Party it exploited ruthlessly, but quite legitimately, every means of packing union meetings and electing chosen representatives to official

positions.’<sup>9</sup> During the controversy within the Labor Party over the Communist Party Dissolution Bill of 1950, most of the spokesmen for the Groups favoured the suppression of the Communist Party, and in the subsequent referendum campaign, they obeyed the party’s decision to oppose the granting of ‘powers to deal with Communists and Communism’ with an ill grace or not at all.

The Groupers’ attitudes on foreign policy also showed the effect of their undeviating hostility to Communism. They supported closer ties between Australia and the United States, General Macarthur and his policies during the Korean war, and continued Australian recognition of the Nationalist government of China. They denounced the terms under which fighting was ended in Korea and Indo-China and all real or imagined attempts to bring Australian foreign policy more into line with Britain’s and away from that of the United States. This, too, aroused some opposition against them.

It was quite common to welcome the growing strength of the Industrial Groups for one reason, and simultaneously to fear it for another: to welcome their successes in union ballots, for example, but to fear their effect on Labor foreign policy. Lacking any comprehensive political programme of their own, most Labor leaders fluctuated in their attitude to the Groups between half-hearted support and half-hearted alarm. Evatt himself exhibited the most spectacular changes of front. After having been largely responsible for the defeat of the 1951 referendum, in which he had to fight the apathy and downright sabotage of Industrial Group supporters in and out of parliament, he supported them vigorously during 1952 and 1953. He not only applauded and demanded support for their activities in the trade unions,<sup>10</sup> but joined them in playing down nationalization as a Labor objective.<sup>11</sup> Before the 1954 Federal election he

<sup>9</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 October 1934 (henceforth referred to as *S.M.H.*)

<sup>10</sup> ‘I regard these successes not as Industrial Group victories, but as Labor Party victories’ (*Age*, 7 August 1953).

<sup>11</sup> Evatt told the Federal Conference of the A.L.P. in January 1953, ‘The lie of all-out socialization has been killed by the decision of the Labor Conference of 1951 declaring that the policy of Labor on either socialization or social control was that government intervention by such means was to be sought only so far as was necessary to prevent exploitation of the people or social injustice’. It should be added that this was undoubtedly the correct interpretation of the party’s objective.

personally sought the support of Santamaria even, according to Santamaria, seeking his advice on the content of the Labor policy speech.<sup>12</sup>

However, the Industrial Group supporters were wise enough not to accept Evatt as one of themselves. His failure to win the 1954 election was followed by murmurings against his leadership, though there were no serious attempts to depose him.

Matters were brought to a head by the Royal Commission on Espionage, which was established just before the election but did not begin its inquiries in any detail until two months later. Evatt became convinced first, that the Commission was being used as a political weapon against himself and the Labor Party and, even more seriously, that the allegations of Soviet espionage which it had been established to probe were supported only by forged and manufactured evidence, for which the government's security agents were in some measure responsible. Evatt developed these views before the Commission itself, appearing as counsel for two of his staff who had been mentioned before the inquiry.

To the Groupers' parliamentary representatives, who were not capable of subtle distinctions on such a subject, this looked like the cardinal sin of defending Communists, and their lack of enthusiasm for Evatt became a positive determination to bring him down. Before they could act, however, Evatt seized the initiative with a striking piece of political virtuosity, and denounced the 'disloyalty' of the Groupers' leading representatives in the Federal parliament. This attack was soon broadened to include the entire Movement-Industrial Group structure. The Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, and to some extent the party at large, became divided into two factions—those who, whatever they thought of Santamaria and his parliamentary associates, thought that the first task was to remove Evatt as leader and those who, whatever they thought of Evatt, first wanted to cripple the Industrial Groupers. Many party members, in and out of parliament, who had little liking for either Evatt or the Groupers, had to make a difficult choice, and prominent among those was Allan Fraser, the member for

<sup>12</sup> *S.M.H.*, 25 April 1956. Evatt, however (*S.M.H.*, 26 April 1956), described this statement as 'misleading'.

Eden-Monaro. From this time, for better or worse, Fraser was known as an opponent of Evatt.

The later involved history of the Labor dispute does not concern us, except as general background. The Federal Executive and Federal Conference of the A.L.P. carried on Evatt's campaign against the Groupers, and removed them from control of the party in Victoria. This was followed by the formation of a new party composed of the Group supporters which, after a prolonged attempt to win recognition as the Victorian branch of the A.L.P., accepted the inevitable and called itself the Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist). Branches of the new party were set up in Tasmania and, just before the Federal election, in South Australia and Western Australia. The Federal A.L.P. Conference withdrew party recognition from the Industrial Groups, though they continued to function without party sponsorship. A half-hearted attempt by the Federal Executive to encourage the removal of the existing New South Wales executive, which supported the Industrial Groups, was rebuffed by a special State conference of the party in August 1955.

The dispute, and the Royal Commission which had provoked it, dominated the two sessions of the Federal Parliament held during 1955. The seven Victorian M.P.'s who supported the Anti-Communist Labor Party kept up a constant attack on Evatt and the Labor Party, alleging Communist sympathies going back to the time of the Anti-Communist referendum of 1951. Evatt and his supporters defended themselves vigorously, if not particularly skilfully, and poured abuse on the break-aways. The monthly surveys of Australian Public Opinion Polls showed an alarming decline in Labor popularity, and when internal troubles forced the Victorian Labor government led by John Cain to face an election in May, it was heavily defeated. The only consolation for the Labor Party was that the Anti-Communists suffered still more heavily.

Meanwhile, the Government's pleasant somnolence was disturbed by the realization that Australia's trade position was rapidly deteriorating and that a renewed burst of inflation was likely. The Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, in his budget speech, and the Prime Minister, in a special economic statement six weeks later, sounded a warning note, and Menzies, in particular, hinted at government action which might later be required to

meet the threatened crisis. It was coming to look as though the Government would be forced not only to act but to act in a way that would inevitably lose some popular support. The Government had need of all its popularity for, some time before June 1956, it had to face a Senate election in which, to retain control of the Senate, it would have to win majorities in all States.

Fortunately for the Government, the Royal Commission on Espionage issued its report at the end of August. The Commissioners held that, during the period up to 1949, Communists ('in which term', they said without a blush, 'we include Communist sympathizers') had made information available to the Soviet Embassy.<sup>13</sup> Evatt, speaking on the report in Parliament, attacked both the conduct and the findings of the Commission. For most of his listeners, however, Evatt's arguments were overshadowed by his disclosure that he had written to the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr Molotov, seeking an official Soviet view on the authenticity of the documents on which the Commission's findings were based. Evatt's criticism of the Commission were turned against him, and his action in writing to Molotov was criticized as highly naïve; the parliamentary, newspaper and public debates on these matters confirmed the Government's decision to hold an election while the Labor Party was weak and unpopular and before economic difficulties became serious. On 26 October, the day after he had replied to Evatt on the Royal Commission report, Menzies announced that an election would be held for both Houses on 10 December.

### THE STATE BACKGROUND

During this time the politics of the State of New South Wales were of subordinate interest—an uneasy *obbligato* on the strident themes of Canberra. The biggest query was whether the A.L.P. split, which had begun in the Federal field and rapidly spread to Victoria, would affect New South Wales. This was avoided and the A.L.P. in New South Wales remained at least nominally united during both election campaigns.

This was a remarkable achievement, considering the long-term history of the Party. It could be argued that only chronic disunity had prevented the Labor Party from dominating New

<sup>13</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on Espionage* (Sydney, 1955), pp. 294-302.

South Wales politics almost since Federation. From 1916, when the conscription crisis brought the first period of Labor government to an end, schism followed schism continually until 1941. In that period of twenty-five years there were no less than seven distinct and serious splits. There were eleven State elections during the same period, and rival Labor parties had contested five of them. It was not surprising, then, that Labor governments were in office for only six of these years.

But in 1941 Labor was returned to power, and this time serious disunity did not follow. A left-centre faction, made up predominantly of trade union officials, retained control of the party machine until 1952. The series of Labor governments led successively by W. J. McKell, J. J. McGirr and J. J. Cahill, won a record majority in 1944, held their ground well in 1947, very narrowly escaped defeat in 1950, and then were returned with a majority which exceeded even that of 1944 at the election of 1953.

At all of these elections, Federal and State issues intermingled. Between 1941 and 1949 Federal and State politics followed parallel courses. Disunity in the New South Wales Labor Party had kept the A.L.P. in opposition in both Canberra and Sydney until 1941, and the restoration of harmony was followed by the almost simultaneous formation of Labor State and Federal governments. The record State Labor majority of 1944 was partly a reflection of the landslide that had confirmed the Federal Labor government in office during the previous year. Both governments then gradually lost popularity, but the State government retained enough support to escape by a narrow margin the defeat that overtook the Federal Labor government in 1949. By the time of the next State election, in 1953, politics had undergone another rapid transformation. The Menzies government had lost favour because of its deflationary financial measures, and popular resentment, unable to affect the government directly, was carried over into the field of State politics, with the result that within a period of six months two Liberal and Country Party governments were defeated, and two Labor governments, including the Cahill government in New South Wales, were returned with increased majorities.

This period of financial stringency brought to a head the disagreement between Commonwealth and State governments

over the allocation of loan and taxation revenue which has become a permanent feature of Australian politics. The States were left with ambitious public works projects, many of which are still incomplete. The State governments, irrespective of party, now blamed the Commonwealth for any deficiency in the services for which they were responsible, on the ground that only the Commonwealth could raise the money required.

Shortly after the 1953 election, the Cahill government tried to introduce absolute preference in employment for trade unionists or, as it was immediately and not inaccurately dubbed, compulsory unionism. This produced a storm of opposition, which did not die out completely until the 1956 election. The legislation itself was not a success. There were threats of legal action to challenge the validity of the legislation, particularly in regard to Federally-regulated employment, and the Government, probably alarmed at the vehemence of the campaign against it, did not attempt to enforce the new measure. At about the same time, the Government also lost favour because of allegations of corruption affecting the Labor-controlled city council, and more particularly because of a special Act which sought to force any journal publishing such allegations to disclose the source of its information. Much publicity was also given to a number of appointments of powerful A.L.P. officials to positions on various public authorities.

These issues were still very much alive when the 1954 Federal election showed that the non-Labor parties had regained much of their former strength, and when the Labor Party dispute broke out soon afterwards, compulsory unionism was alleged to have been forced on the Government by the Group-controlled trade unions, presumably as a means of increasing their own revenues and political influence.<sup>14</sup>

In February 1955 the Government attempted another contentious piece of legislation—the Obscene and Indecent Publications Act, which aroused a new storm of hostility. This bill, too, was sometimes attributed to the influence of the Industrial Groups with their predominantly Catholic leadership. Once it

<sup>14</sup> The suggestion was made by newspaper correspondents Alan Reid (*Sun-Herald* 15 November 1953), and 'Onlooker' (*Sun-Herald* 1 November 1953) and by a prominent opponent of the Groups, J. P. Ormonde (*Sun*, Sydney, 24 June 1953).

was passed, Cahill and his ministers concentrated on avoiding a recurrence of the chronic disunity that had reduced the Labor Party almost to impotence between the wars.

This was a difficult, but not an impossible task. The powers of State governments are in practice so limited, and the area of common ground between the parties so extensive, that State politicians are rarely sufficiently moved by ideological disputes to jeopardize their own or their party's electoral prospects. The Labor government of Victoria broke up during the dispute, but Victoria had been the original centre of the Movement, and when the dispute began there were already ready-made and embittered factions among the State politicians which inevitably flew apart under the additional strain. There were no equivalent factions in New South Wales, unless the term 'faction' can be applied to Mr Clive Evatt, the younger brother of the Federal Labor leader, who had been removed from the State Cabinet in 1954. As the dispute progressed, Clive Evatt became more and more critical of the Cahill government, but the Government and the party executive resisted the temptation to discipline him, for fear of precipitating more trouble. The Premier's efforts to maintain unity were assisted by the success of the Industrial Group supporters in retaining control of the A.L.P. executive, for the narrow margin by which they succeeded made them as anxious as he to see a period of peace.

All of these manoeuvres within the Labor Party distracted attention from the difficulties of the Opposition. The Country Party plodded on under the ageing Colonel Bruxner, its leader for twenty-three years, never disunited and rarely noteworthy for any other reason. The Liberal Party, on the other hand, passed through a series of disputes which gave it three leaders within thirteen months.

In August 1954 Mr Vernon Treatt, the Sydney lawyer who had led the party since 1943, was replaced by a Sydney business man, Colonel Murray Robson. Robson, unlike Treatt, could not be accused of lacking vigour—Labor back-benchers, not notable for timidity themselves, protested that he was no gentleman—but he antagonized both his parliamentary colleagues and the leaders of the Liberal machine, and after a year was replaced by a fellow business man, Mr P. H. Morton. Morton's principal qualification at the time was that he had so far kept

out of the dispute. The Liberal Party's disagreements were largely founded on irreconcilable attitudes to the Country Party. In the short run, the co-operation of the Country Party was required if Labor was to be defeated; however, the dominant Liberal faction believed that, while working with the Country Party against the Government, the Liberal Party should aim at its eventual elimination. The immediate issue was whether Liberal candidates should stand in four seats which Labor had won from the Country Party in 1953. Robson had opposed the nomination of Liberal candidates. He was reported as saying, immediately after his defeat: 'The writing was on the wall for me from the moment I supported a pact with the Country Party in order to defeat Labor at the next election.'<sup>15</sup>

A State election was due early in 1956, and its precise date was the occasion of a little battle of tactics between the Premier and the Prime Minister. In mid-October Cahill announced that the State election would be brought forward several months to 3 December. Thus it would be over before the Federal election campaign was likely to begin. In explaining this decision, Cahill said:

If the State election is postponed until next year there is a possibility that the election periods for the Senate and the State could clash. To avoid the confusion that could arise, it has been decided to hold the State elections approximately three months before the expiration of the period of the present parliament.<sup>16</sup>

Menzies countered by announcing Federal elections on 10 December so that the two campaigns would be conducted concurrently. The New South Wales election was thereupon postponed to the new year. This, said Cahill, was partly because of technical difficulties in the printing of electoral rolls and the provision of ballot boxes. In addition:

The Government is satisfied that it would be impossible for the electors to obtain a clear picture of the issues involved if the elections in both the Federal and State spheres were to coincide.<sup>17</sup>

Morton pointed out that the Labor Party had been willing

<sup>15</sup> *Northern Daily Leader*, Tamworth, 21 September 1955.

<sup>16</sup> *New South Wales Parliamentary Debates*, 12 October 1955, p. 934.

<sup>17</sup> *New South Wales Parliamentary Debates*, 27 October 1955, p. 1410.

enough to take advantage of the confusion of State and Federal issues in 1953:

The Premier said that in the public interest he wants to avoid confusion between State and Federal issues. What happened at the last election? The Premier stumped the State of New South Wales fighting a State election on Federal issues.<sup>18</sup>

The closing stages of the parliament produced little of general importance, except a bill to restore periodical adjustment of the basic wage to workers under the awards of the State Industrial Commission, which, following the lead of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, had suspended the adjustment of the basic wage in 1953. As prices continued to rise, Labor governments in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania had restored adjustments to State awards, and New South Wales now followed suit. One other bill, though not of great importance in itself, had particular relevance to the dairy-farming districts, including the coastal section of Eden-Monaro. It increased the legal limit on the production of margarine from 2500 to 9000 tons per year. Parliament finally rose in mid-November, and political interest was now concentrated on the imminent Federal election.

#### THE SITTING MEMBERS

Each of the sitting members within the Eden-Monaro area (A. D. Fraser, J. W. Seiffert, L. J. Tully and J. G. Beale) has built up his own personal relationship with his electors. Tully and Beale not only built up a personal following, but succeeded to one, for each represented an electorate formerly held by his father. All the members except Fraser had grown up in or near the present electorate of Eden-Monaro. None of the electorates could be regarded as a safe Labor seat, but the three Labor members had not only won these seats but had held them, whether the popularity of the A.L.P. rose or fell. Beale, on the South Coast, held what appeared to be a solid Liberal seat, but this only emphasized his personal triumph in originally winning it as an Independent.

Though strikingly dissimilar in appearance and manner, the four had much in common in background and occupation.

<sup>18</sup> *New South Wales Parliamentary Debates*, 27 October 1955, p. 1410.

Surprisingly, since three were Labor members, not one had been a manual worker; even more surprisingly, considering their electorates, none had ever been a farmer or grazier. Fraser was a journalist, Beale an engineer, Seiffert a civil servant and Tully a lawyer. Yet each established a personal hold on a seat in which the dominant values were those of the dairy-farmer or the grazier on the one hand and the manual worker on the other.

All these men had held office for long enough to leave their own impression on the political life of their electorates. Politics in the country lacks many of the elements that make for rigidity in voting, and the influence of the individual, especially if he has the prestige and the facilities that are enjoyed by a member of parliament, is correspondingly greater. Class consciousness, the basis of the Australian party system, is probably weaker than in the cities, and is certainly confused and rendered less effective by other loyalties and sentiments—above all, by the solidarity of the country against the city.

Those voters in country electorates whose political behaviour is little affected by class consciousness are free to be influenced by other considerations. One of these is their opinion of the candidates from whom they are required to choose a member; another is a hard-headed calculation of the material gains which they and their district are likely to receive by making a particular choice. This may make a country electorate unstable in its political allegiance, as more or less popular candidates come forward or as the parties compete in the offering of benefits.

The local member, particularly in the State parliament, is the normal channel through which government benefits of any kind are obtained, and his personal popularity rests largely on his ability to keep a steady flow of public money coming into his electorate. Once he has established his reputation as a 'roads and bridges' member he may retain his seat even when his colleagues are being defeated in what appear to be safer seats for his party.

Largely through this process, the Eden-Monaro seats have come to be the personal political preserves of the sitting members. In the south are the spheres of influence of Beale and Seiffert, very firmly held because in each case the personal

popularity of the members reinforces the general political preference of the district, rather than having to counteract it. To the north is the stamping-ground of Tully, also firmly held though not with the same massive majorities, and the whole area is the sphere of influence of Fraser, least securely held of all, partly because its size prevents that personal attention to which the others owe their invulnerability.

*Allan Duncan Fraser* (Eden-Monaro). In 1955, when he faced the electors of Eden-Monaro for the sixth time, Fraser was 54 years old. He was at the height of his career, in the sense that he was more widely and more favourably known than ever before, and had every prospect of further advancement in politics if he could continue to hold his seat. He had already left his mark on Eden-Monaro, and the electorate had left its mark on him. He looked all of his age, his once-reddish hair was almost completely grey, and he had been seriously ill during the preceding year. Though a man of considerable charm, he often had an air of tension, and even of conscious self-control.

Politics had been Fraser's business all his working life. He had become a journalist on leaving school, and political journalism was his trade until, at the age of 41, he successfully contested Eden-Monaro. He had worked for newspapers in Tasmania, Victoria, and New South Wales, and for a year on the cables staff of the *London Times*. He was, and remains, a journalist of high calibre and standing, active in the affairs of the Australian Journalists' Association, and a former chairman of the parliamentary press gallery, which represents journalists involved in federal parliamentary work in their dealings with parliament. He was, on this record, rather too successful a journalist and successful along too orthodox lines to be expected to make the transition to a professional politician in middle-age.

However, Fraser's participation in Labor politics, though not spectacular, went back almost as far as his practice of journalism. He joined the A.L.P. in 1928, shortly before going to Canberra for the first time to work on the parliamentary staff of the *Sydney Sun*. In 1938, he went to Sydney to become private secretary to R. J. Heffron, M.L.A., and publicity officer to the section of the Labor Party that followed Heffron. Since this was his only period of professional political activity before

entering parliament, it is worth looking briefly at the political environment in which he worked.<sup>19</sup>

The Heffron or Industrialist Labor Party was a break-away from the official Labor Party in New South Wales, which was dominated by its State Parliamentary Leader, J. T. Lang, and its primary object was the removal of Lang and his supporters from control of the A.L.P. As always, the motives that brought the would-be reformers together were very mixed. The party drew most of its support from trade union officials, who found that Lang and his associates had not only taken away their power in the A.L.P. but threatened to gain control of purely industrial organizations, such as the Sydney Trades and Labor Council. The same group of officials had given Lang almost dictatorial power over the party in 1927, because they thought he would conform to their wishes. Now these powers were being used against themselves, and they sought Lang's removal to restore their own position in the party.

The Communists were also deeply involved in the Heffron Labor Party. Signs of serious dissension between Lang and other Labor leaders had appeared in 1935, just as the Communist Party of Australia began, as part of the international Communist movement's United Front campaign, to look around for possible allies within the Labor Party. Though Communists were nominally barred from membership of Heffron's party, many were admitted and some occupied important positions by concealing their membership of the Communist Party. Lang had been consistently opposed to the Communists, and by supporting Heffron they hoped not only to defeat one of their principal opponents but also to gain a strong voice within the A.L.P.

Another motive for opposing Lang, and this was ultimately the decisive one, was that Labor could not win elections in New South Wales under his leadership. The hectic period of the second Lang government of 1930-2, when he became associated in the public mind with highly unorthodox financial proposals, lost him for ever the middle-class support without which the Labor Party cannot govern. After being heavily defeated in

<sup>19</sup> This summary of events in the New South Wales Labor Party is based on a fuller account in D. W. Rawson, 'The Organization of the Australian Labor Party, 1916-1941' (unpublished thesis, University of Melbourne).

Federal and State elections in 1931 and 1932, the A.L.P. made very slow progress towards recovery during the next seven years.

The final motive, and the one which it is reasonable to assume had the greatest effect on Fraser, was the belief that Labor was failing to regain popular favour because the party was controlled by an oligarchy with a number of corrupt and unhealthy features. There were many complaints: that selection ballots were interfered with in the interests of Lang's supporters; that the Labor members of the State Parliament were ignored, and dared not protest for fear of losing their seats; that business enterprises begun by the party, including the newspaper *Labor Daily*, were conducted for the benefit of Lang's associates. To Heffron's supporters the remedy seemed deceptively simple: a new spirit could be infused into the party by cleaning up various abuses; there would be a new era in Labor policy (though except for support of collective security in place of Lang's isolationist approach to foreign affairs there was little agreement on what changes of policy would be introduced); and Labor would recapture public confidence.

Fraser shared these hopes; they caused him to give up an established and well-paid position for one which was neither. He had no fixed salary. When the money was there, he was paid. He had the satisfaction of seeing the group for which he had made considerable sacrifices reach its immediate goal. Lang was defeated (to be replaced not by the rebel Heffron but by the safe McKell), and the Heffron party—idealists, Communists and all—took over control of the A.L.P. in New South Wales. With Heffron now only a private member of the State parliament, Fraser took a step back towards his old profession, and became news editor of the *Labor Daily*, now called the *Daily News*.

The following year was a period of confusion and disillusionment for many of those who had expected spectacular results from the defeat of Lang. The Communists and their supporters, now holding the principal offices in the New South Wales Labor Party, did not conceal their suspicion of Australia's participation in World War II, which begun just as they gained control. Lang left the party, taking many of the rank and file with him. The *Daily News*, always under-capitalized, and fatally weak-

ened by the faction fight between the Lang and Heffron parties, drifted on until the middle of 1940, when it was first bought and then absorbed by the *Daily Telegraph*. Shortly before this final collapse, Fraser had left the paper to join *Truth* and the *Daily Mirror* and had returned to live in Canberra.

This experience did not destroy his faith in the Labor Party nor his belief that Labor policies required much more careful and systematic formulation than had been given to them so far. From about the time he left the *Daily News* the affairs of the Labor Party in New South Wales began at last to show their long-predicted improvement. The federal executive removed the Communists and their supporters from control, and the party made substantial gains in both State and Federal politics. A State Labor government, with McKell as Premier, was formed in May 1941, while later in the same year the disintegration of the non-Labor parties allowed John Curtin to form a Federal Labor government. It was this government that came up for re-election in 1943, when Fraser first stood for Eden-Monaro.

Seven candidates contested the ballot of A.L.P. and trade-union members that selected the Labor candidate. Though there were some from Cooma, Goulburn, and Queanbeyan, the real contest was between the two candidates who lived outside the electorate—Fraser, from Canberra, and Mrs Jessie Street, from Sydney. Fraser had an easy victory, defeating Mrs Street in the final count by 147 votes to 78. The size of Fraser's majority was largely due to the support of members of the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen in Goulburn, after Fraser had won their secretary over to his side. Many a selection ballot has been won and lost by the personal influence of a union official, though changes in the constitution of the A.L.P. now make this impossible in New South Wales.

It is not necessary to follow Fraser's parliamentary career in any detail, except to point out that almost from the first he had a reputation for an independent outlook, and a preparedness to criticize his own party when he considered criticism was required. During the period of the Curtin and Chifley Labor governments, from his election until 1949, he remained one of the most promising Labor back-benchers without ever being a

serious contender for Cabinet rank. However, after the defeat of the Chifley government, he was elected to the executive of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, the equivalent of being elected to Cabinet while Labor was in Opposition. Later he became chairman of the party's committee on social services, and so its foremost authority on what became the principal issue at the 1954 Federal election.

As antagonism between the A.L.P. Industrial Groups and their opponents gradually developed, Fraser's position, though not internally inconsistent, became more and more ambivalent in terms of the dispute. Himself a Presbyterian, he had no sectarian reason for supporting the Groupers, but found much common ground with them for other reasons. He was opposed to Communist influence among the trade unions and to any Communist attempt to gain a foothold in the Labor Party. He was impressed by the need for the A.L.P. to find a coherent and practical policy which would avoid the constitutional barriers to nationalization and have some prospect of gaining popular support, and the Groupers had gone farthest towards formulating such a policy. Finally, he held a doubtful seat, which no Labor candidate who lost a substantial proportion of his Catholic following could hope to hold.

On the other hand, he was a devoted champion of civil liberty, and the illiberal aspects of the Groupers' anti-Communism repelled him. He was an energetic critic of the Communist Party Dissolution Bill, and was active in opposing the Government's proposals in the subsequent referendum. In foreign affairs, also, he opposed the Groupers and favoured, in principle, negotiated settlements with the Communist powers.

Between the 1951 and 1954 Federal elections, when the struggle between the A.L.P. factions was generally thought of in terms of the Anti-Communist referendum, Fraser was usually regarded as an opponent of the Groupers and as inclining towards the Left of the Labor Party, though there was little to support the latter belief except his attachment to civil liberties and his attempts to bring some system into the jumble of *ad hoc* proposals which passed for Labor policy. Nevertheless, when Evatt's charges against the groupers obliged the Federal Labor politicians to take sides, Fraser was one of Evatt's principal opponents. It was generally reported that, if a move to replace

Evatt by A. A. Calwell, M.H.R., had succeeded, Fraser would have become deputy-leader.<sup>20</sup>

Without attempting to weigh the factors that caused Fraser to take this stand, it is clear that the conduct of the 1954 election campaign played a big part. Fraser was not only the Party's leading authority on social services, but had calculated the cost of extended social service benefits, and had pointed out to his less cautious and less scrupulous colleagues that the party could not afford to promise more without deciding where the money was to be obtained. Evatt, in the course of his policy speech, promised that a Labor government would abolish the means test for social service payments within three years. This was not only a more ambitious scheme than the party had ever proposed before but was made without consulting Fraser or the committee of which he was chairman. Whether or not, as several newspapers claimed and as Evatt himself later conceded, Labor's failure to win a majority was due to its failure to show that it could finance its proposals, the way in which they were announced was calculated to make Fraser critical of Evatt's leadership.

The A.L.P. dispute, after the failure of the attempt to remove Evatt, ran its course, and Fraser's position was strengthened by the failure of Evatt's supporters to gain control of the A.L.P. executive in New South Wales. It was this executive which unanimously re-endorsed him as Labor candidate for Eden-Monaro in August 1955.

Just at this time Fraser returned to the limelight. In July the Federal parliament, for the first time, took action against a breach of its privileges. A Sydney contractor, Raymond Fitzpatrick, and a journalist employed by him, Frank Browne, were found by the Privilege Committee of the House of Representatives to have made allegations against a New South Wales Labor member for which they had no evidence and for the sole purpose of preventing him from making covert allegations of corruption against Fitzpatrick. The House, on the motion of the Prime Minister, ordered that the two men be imprisoned for

<sup>20</sup> For example, in the *Courier-Mail* (14 October 1954) and the *Mercury* (16 October 1954). Fraser's own response to these reports was guarded: 'I was nominated for a position in the party on a previous occasion and to assume that I might be nominated again might be a natural guess to make. As for a wider opportunity, I will neither chase it nor reject it' (*Age*, 18 October 1954).

three months. Fraser was one of eleven Labor members who voted against the decision, though he had earlier supported an amendment by Evatt that 'a substantial fine' be imposed. The session ended immediately following the decision, but during the recess Fraser announced that when parliament resumed he would move for the release of Browne and Fitzpatrick. This he proceeded to do, though supported only by his brother, J. R. Fraser, the Labor member for the A.C.T.<sup>21</sup> The Frasers acted in violation of a decision of the Labor caucus that no member of the party should take further action on the matter. Evatt reported the breach to the Federal and New South Wales executives of the party, as he was obliged to do under the party's rules. The New South Wales executive subsequently dismissed the complaint against Fraser, holding that except on matters covered by the A.L.P. platform, caucus had no right to control the actions of its members. The Federal executive also took no action against the Frasers.<sup>22</sup> More was to be heard of the Browne-Fitzpatrick case and its sequel during the Eden-Monaro campaign.

Since his first success in Eden-Monaro, Fraser had worked hard to maintain and extend his popularity. He was scrupulous in his attention to applications for assistance from his constituents. Most of the applications that come to Federal politicians concern health and social service questions, and for some years soldier settlement also brought many requests for assistance, advice and information. Most members merely acknowledge such letters, and pass them on to the department concerned; Fraser contacted the departmental officers personally, and saw any reasonable application at least part of the way to success.

Prompt and attentive response to personal requests of this kind can win many votes, not only from the applicants themselves but from those who hear of their experience. Furthermore, though most voters never have cause to approach their member personally, they still like to meet him and to judge his calibre at first hand—hence the endless round of local functions which is an important and time-consuming part of the member's duties. Fraser was not a gregarious or convivial man, but

<sup>21</sup> The debate on Fraser's motion can be found in *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, 31 August 1955, pp. 207-30.

<sup>22</sup> *Age*, 3 and 4 November 1955.

he made himself well known over most of his huge electorate. He was to be seen at convent balls at Bungendore, railwaymen's picnics at Goulburn, pensioners' parties at Queanbeyan and local shows everywhere. There were some complaints from the more distant parts of the electorate, and particularly from the Coast, that they did not see enough of their Federal member, but this is a criticism which no member for an electorate of this size could hope to avoid.

Some of Fraser's supporters made the rather different criticism that, while he was a conscientious attender at local gatherings, he did not mix sufficiently and make himself widely known. This is probable enough, for Fraser has not the temperament to mix readily with strangers.

Usually, a Federal politician has little opportunity to benefit his electorate by securing the construction of public works. Eden-Monaro does indeed contain the greatest public works project in Australian history, the Snowy Mountains scheme, but this is on a scale that places it far outside the usual run of improvements for which the local member can claim the credit. Road and railway construction, the building of schools and hospitals, and power and water supply are State responsibilities and there is little in this direction which the Federal member can hope to accomplish. However, during the past three years Fraser has obtained much of the credit for two projects on the Coast which did come under Federal authority: the building of an airport at Merimbula for the Department of Civil Aviation, and the opening of 2BA, the Australian Broadcasting Commission's radio station at Bega. Both of these will alleviate the isolation of which the Coast is so painfully conscious, and Fraser's part in pressing for their completion was freely acknowledged even by his political opponents.<sup>23</sup>

Since entering parliament, Fraser has made use of his journalistic training and abilities in two very different ways. Between 1947 and 1949 he founded and directed the *Australian Observer*, a Labor and socialist fortnightly journal modelled on the *New Statesman and Nation*. His entry into this field, which

<sup>23</sup> For example, in a double-barrelled editorial comment in the *Bega District News* (18 May 1954) just before the 1954 election: 'In all fairness to him, this district, though it did not see much of him in three years, has always been able to rely on his capacity to put the local point of view on a campaign for improved amenities for this part of his electorate.'

commercially has always been singularly unrewarding, showed the persistence of his enthusiasm for social reform. Continued losses brought the *Observer* to an end after a creditable career of two years, after which Fraser was a frequent contributor to its successor, the monthly *Voice*, during its five years of publication.

Fraser's other journalistic venture is a series of fifteen-minute radio talks called 'Your Member Speaks', broadcast free of charge by the four commercial radio stations in the electorate.<sup>24</sup> This session is a model of its kind, and appears to have a wide audience. Though the talks are usually partisan, in the sense of supporting the Labor Party and criticizing its opponents, they have that air of painstaking objectivity which makes Fraser at his best a brilliant radio propagandist.

To sum up, Fraser was an impressive and, in most respects, an attractive personality, but lacked facility in winning popularity. He came from Canberra, outside the electorate, and he had no connection with the land. But by hard work and a consistent display of integrity (if that phrase can be used without implying insincerity) he had won a personal following, though one which was still weaker than those of his more fortunately placed State colleagues.

*John Wesley Seiffert* (Monaro). At the time of the 1956 State election Seiffert was 52 years old and had already held Monaro for fourteen years. His term of office was the longest among the Eden-Monaro members. He was first elected in 1941, at the election that returned Labor to power in New South Wales after nine years in opposition. When he first won the seat, it appeared to be at best a marginal seat for the Labor Party: though Labor had had an easy victory throughout the State, Seiffert's majority was only 940.

With surprising speed, this marginal seat was transformed into a Labor stronghold, or rather into Seiffert's stronghold. He was re-elected unopposed in 1944, his majority rose to 4600 in 1947, when most majorities fell below the level of 1941; he had a comfortable win in difficult circumstances in 1950; and he won a crushing victory with a more than two-to-one majority in 1953. Even when allowance is made for changes in the electorate, principally the growth of the Labor-voting town of

<sup>24</sup> One of these stations, 2GN Goulburn, has begun broadcasting the series only since the 1955 election.

Queanbeyan, and for the calibre of his opponents, the personal element in Seiffert's majorities is almost certainly greater than in Fraser's, Tully's or Beale's. He has been described as 'the only Labor man capable, through an almost unique personal following, of holding the otherwise blue-ribbon non-Labor seat of Monaro which has been his for more than a decade'—an exaggerated but substantially correct tribute.<sup>25</sup>

Seiffert was born in Goulburn, and lived there all his life until his election. In his youth he was more prominent as an amateur sportsman than for any political interests, holding Australian records for cycling. In 1931 he settled down, apparently permanently, in Goulburn as a member of the State public service, in the Department of Prisons. He joined the Labor Party at about the same time, and became interested in civic affairs, being elected to the Goulburn municipal council. The State seat of Goulburn was already held for Labor by J. M. Tully, but the adjoining seat of Monaro offered some prospect of success. The original electorate of Monaro, as defined in 1927, would have been a more hopeful prospect, but a redistribution in 1939 removed Captain's Flat, which could be relied on to show a clear margin of 700 Labor votes, from Monaro to Goulburn.

Coming from outside the electorate, Seiffert was at a disadvantage in seeking election, though he was known throughout the area for his sporting and civic as well as his political activities. After winning the seat, he moved to Queanbeyan where he still has a house, though he spends most of his time in Sydney.

Seiffert, unlike Fraser, gives no impression of great intellectual ability. In public, he speaks forcefully and fluently enough but without any particular distinction. Liberal advertisements during the 1956 campaign called him a 'professional backbencher'. The description was intended to be disparaging, but it was accurate and would probably be accepted by Seiffert himself.

Two statements by his colleagues highlight the qualities that have enabled him to obtain such a firm hold on his seat. 'No man has more friends' said Fraser in 1950, when Seiffert was in trouble with the Labor Party executive, 'and no man deserves

<sup>25</sup> Alan Reid in the *Sun-Herald*, 4 April 1954.

more. These friends will stick to him.'<sup>26</sup> 'I accept the figures given by the honorable member', said J. J. Cahill in reply to a question by Seiffert in the Legislative Assembly in 1955, 'because it is well-known that he is active in promoting the development of his electorate.'<sup>27</sup>

In the course of his parliamentary career, Seiffert had to survive one major crisis. The story is worth telling for what it reveals, not only about Seiffert but about the Labor Party in Monaro.

Early in 1950 the Labor Party in New South Wales seemed to be heading towards disruption and disaster. In December 1949 the Federal Labor Government had been defeated. The State Labor government, then led by J. J. McGirr, had to face an election within a few months, and seemed likely to suffer a similar defeat. This danger seemed only to encourage the growth of internal dissent within the party. The dispute over the Industrial Groups and their sponsors was still well in the future; the troubles of 1950 were less easy to define, though the old struggle between trade union officials and politicians had its part in them.

The dispute became public in February, when four Labor M.L.A.'s were refused endorsement for the coming elections. The reason for this refusal was never made public, apparently for fear of legal action by the affected members, but it soon became known that the four members were accused of not following the party's ticket in the election of members of the Legislative Council.<sup>28</sup> Though the new Legislative Councillors were elected by secret ballot, there were various devices which made it possible for the Labor scrutineers to check on how each member of the party had voted.

The four members concerned were Seiffert, J. R. Heferen, from the country seat of Barwon, and two metropolitan members, F. Stanley and J. Geraghty. McGirr twice attempted to

<sup>26</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 February 1950 (*S.M.H.*).

<sup>27</sup> *N.S.W. Parliamentary Debates*, 20 October 1955, (No. 26), p. 1163.

<sup>28</sup> The Legislative Council of New South Wales is made up of 56 members who hold office for twelve years, sixteen retiring every three years. Legislative Councillors are elected by secret ballot by the members of the Legislative Assembly and the remaining members of the Council itself. Labor nominees for the Council are chosen by the executive, which insists that the State politicians follow strictly the ticket it draws up.

persuade the executive to reverse its decision, without success. After his second failure, he offered to resign as Premier and leader of the party, but eventually decided to retain both positions, which he continued to hold during the election and until his eventual retirement from politics in 1952. McGirr's threatened resignation coincided with a new burst of dissension, though it would have been hard to point to any ideological basis of disunity: a violent local faction fight broke out in the State electorate of Hartley; there were allegations of parliamentary corruption leading to a Royal Commission; and five more Labor members of the State parliament were defeated in selection ballots.

Seiffert's immediate reaction to the withdrawal of his endorsement was to announce: 'I am entirely in the hands of the A.L.P. branches in my electorate. I have every reason to believe they have complete confidence in me.' <sup>29</sup>

He had even more reason for believing so when the Monaro State Electorate Council of the A.L.P. met at Cooma, and, unanimously, refused to call for further nominations for the seat. The Council demanded that the central executive re-endorse Seiffert as the Labor candidate. The meeting was attended by one of the party's State vice-presidents, C. A. Anderson, who put the case for the executive but obtained no support, especially after refusing to divulge the grounds on which Seiffert's endorsement had been refused.

Whatever the original cause of the dispute between Seiffert and the executive, it began to take the form of one of the most fundamental conflicts in the New South Wales Labor Party—that between country interests and trade union officials. In supporting the executive's action at a meeting of the A.L.P. Industrial Groups, R. A. King, the secretary of the New South Wales Trades and Labor Council, said: 'The trade unions must still remain the backbone of the A.L.P. Some politicians have as much sympathy for the Labor movement as my boots. Unless we take a hold on the constitution, the party will disintegrate.' <sup>30</sup>

Seiffert was willing to meet his opponents on this issue. He announced that he would contest Monaro without A.L.P. endorsement, having been left no choice when 'the small city

<sup>29</sup> *S.M.H.*, 26 February 1950.

<sup>30</sup> *S.M.H.*, 20 March 1950.

group of trade union officials over-ride the wishes of the people of Monaro'. Reviewing his period in office, he commented that: 'During that time, I have had to make a strong stand against the sectional outlook of Trades Hall officials whose attitude more often than not has been one of complete neglect for the country viewpoint.'<sup>31</sup>

All four Labor politicians who had been refused endorsement by the executive stood as Independent Labor candidates. All but Seiffert were opposed by official Labor nominees, and so automatically expelled themselves from the A.L.P., if they had not already left it. The executive could find no suitable candidate to contest Monaro, so Seiffert had no official Labor opponent. When he succeeded in retaining his seat, he was in the anomalous position of being a member of the A.L.P. and a member of parliament but not a Labor member of parliament. One of the other members who had been refused endorsement was also re-elected, but, having stood against an endorsed Labor candidate, he was no longer a member of the A.L.P., and was eventually defeated by an official Labor candidate in 1953.

Between 1950 and 1953 Seiffert remained a member of the Labor Party, but an Independent Labor member of parliament. Throughout this period he invariably voted with the Government, which he thus helped to maintain in office. In 1953 he again nominated for selection as the Labor candidate for Monaro, and again his was the only nomination. By this time the original dispute had lost its force. There had been a change in the faction controlling the State A.L.P. executive. The A.L.P. branches in Monaro had consistently shown that they were behind Seiffert. He was endorsed, won the election easily, and again became a member of the parliamentary Labor Party.

Seiffert's principal political interest has continued to be the development of his own electorate, and he stressed his successes in this field during his campaign for re-election in 1956. Though, like other State members, he was not forced to commit himself on the A.L.P.'s current internal troubles, he was regarded as at least a potential opponent of the former State Executive and the Industrial Groups. If the New South Wales Labor Party had split during 1955, it is conceivable that Fraser and Seiffert would have chosen different sides.

<sup>31</sup> *S.M.H.*, 25 May 1950.

*Jack Gordon Beale* (South Coast). The only Liberal among the Eden-Monaro sitting members, Beale is also the only one who is not a full-time politician. To emphasize the fact, he listed his occupations on his nomination paper for the 1956 election as M.L.A., chartered engineer, primary producer and company director.

For over fifteen years the parliamentary representation of the south coast has been shared between two families—the Bates and the Beales. When the South Coast State electorate was formed after the abolition of proportional representation, it was won for the Nationalists by H. J. Bate, a dairy-farmer of Tilba, who held the seat, first for the Nationalists and later for the U.A.P., until 1941. In that year he was defeated by Rupert Beale, a publican of Kiama, whose family, like Bate's, had a long history on the coast. Beale stood as an Independent, and received the support of the Labor Party.

Rupert Beale died in November 1942, eighteen months after his election. His son, Jack Beale, stood as an independent candidate in the ensuing by-election and won the seat, his principal opponent being H. J. Bate. Though he was only 25 years old and had received his education in Sydney, he was well known in the electorate, both through his father and as a sportsman. Nevertheless, his success demonstrated the political independence of the South Coast as well as the decline of the U.A.P. Still as an Independent, Beale retained his seat at the general elections of 1944 and 1947. During this time he had no Labor opposition.

In 1948 Beale joined the Liberal Party 'because of the Communist, socialist and banking issues'.<sup>32</sup> At about the same time Henry Jefferson ('Jeff') Bate, son of the former member for South Coast, was given Liberal endorsement for the new Federal seat of Macarthur, which included the northern subdivisions of South Coast.<sup>33</sup> So the second generation of the Bates and the Beales became political associates in the area which their fathers had contested. In addition, they were personal friends, and have co-operated closely in their political activities. Beale now had to face Labor opposition, but was never seriously threatened. Bate was equally untroubled to hold Macarthur.

<sup>32</sup> According to statement in the *Bega District News*, 14 February 1956.

<sup>33</sup> 'Jeff' Bate had formerly held the State seat of Wollondilly, situated between the electorates of South Coast and Goulburn.

Beale has been a highly successful engineer and business man. His principal professional interest is in irrigation and water conservation, and he holds honorary positions in the Australian Irrigation Development Association and the Water Research Foundation. His success in business is directly related to his political activities, for only a member with an income much greater than his parliamentary salary could afford to conduct the campaigns which have helped to give him an apparently unshakeable hold on his electorate.

He has not been a prominent parliamentarian, though he has been at a disadvantage because his period in office coincided with the lean years of non-Labor State politics in New South Wales. He has taken part in debates infrequently, and then usually to stress some matter of concern to his own electors. However, he is anything but an apathetic politician. His activities among his constituents, in the local Liberal machine, and above all in the conduct of election campaigns, require a quite lavish expenditure of time and money. His campaigns, which he organizes himself, are meticulously planned. Advertisements of all kinds, tours of the electorate, press releases, how-to-vote cards, scrutineers—all are carefully planned well in advance. Time and trouble are of no consequence, and money of very little. Even in 1956, when a big majority was inevitable, the potential swinging voters were pursued indefatigably, so that the majority might be as overwhelming as care, enthusiasm and legitimately spent money could make it.

Beale is an able journalist and propagandist. In this he is perhaps the equal of Fraser, but his style is more forceful and less subtle. There is none of Fraser's carefully fashioned air of objectivity; he appeals bluntly to the sturdy prejudices of the people of the South Coast, especially their distrust of government and their pride in self-reliance. Unlike Fraser, he is careful to keep in touch with the day-to-day position of the dairying industry. Organizing ability and attention to detail are Beale's greatest political assets. His personal following is based on these qualities, much as Fraser's is based on attention to the grievances of his individual constituents, and Seiffert's on his record as an energetic 'roads and bridges' member.

The Liberal machine on the South Coast is too personalized an organization to be closely integrated with the State Liberal

Party, and pursues a semi-independent existence. Beale's membership of the Liberal Party, together with his own published statements, remove any doubt of his anti-socialism, while the autonomy of the machine which he and Bate control minimizes the danger of a new Rupert Beale who could win the seat by appealing to its suspicion of all parties. If a Liberal State Government held office and offended the Coast's sensitivity to slights and neglect, Beale might possibly be challenged by a strong Independent candidate. But no such move will succeed if it can be defeated by careful planning. A member who goes to great trouble in the hope of adding 500 to an already crushing majority would be a most formidable opponent if he were ever in danger of defeat.

*Laurence John Tully* (Goulburn). Tully, who has represented Goulburn since 1946, is the most recent addition to the Eden-Monaro members, but he inherited a family political tradition which is the oldest in the area. With one gap of three years, Goulburn has been represented by a member of the Tully family since 1925.

The Tullys have been settled in and around Goulburn for nearly a century, as small farmers and as townspeople. John Moran Tully, then a survey draughtsman in the State Public Service, was first returned for the old three-member Goulburn seat in 1925, and won the new and smaller Goulburn electorate when proportional representation was abolished shortly afterwards. He was Minister for Lands in the third Lang government and lost his seat in the landslide against Labor in 1932.

He regained Goulburn in 1935, and was re-elected by a narrow margin in 1938, a comfortable majority in 1941, and unopposed in 1944. From 1941 he again became Minister for Lands, this time under McKell. In 1946 he was appointed New South Wales Agent-General in London, and consequently retired from politics. The ballot to select a Labor candidate for Goulburn was won by his son, L. J. Tully, who defeated four other candidates in a poll of about 250.

Laurie Tully was then 29 years old. After attending Catholic schools in Sydney and Goulburn, he had worked as a clerk for the Fire Brigades Board while studying Law and Arts at the University of Sydney. After graduating, he joined the Air Force and was demobilized shortly before he first stood for Goulburn.

J. M. Tully had been a popular and respected member, and retired at a time when his personal following was at its peak. His son no doubt obtained some benefit from his father's popularity, both when seeking Labor endorsement and when facing the electors, but inherited prestige is a poor substitute for a reputation of one's own. It may be better than nothing for an inexperienced candidate who has yet to make his way, but if the opposition is strong he will not be secure until he has held office long enough to make an impression in his own right. Tully's history as member for Goulburn has been a series of variations on these propositions.

Though the elder Tully seemed to have gained a firm hold on the seat, his son scraped home by 478 at the by-election held in 1946. In part this reduction in the Labor majority showed the importance of J. M. Tully's personal following, in part it marked the appearance of an unusually strong non-Labor candidate, who was to contest the seat again in 1947 and in 1956. This was W. R. Bladwell, Goulburn's embodiment of the success story. He began his career in business as a butcher, then in 1936 he established Goulburn's second wool store. In six years, he was able to amalgamate the two wool firms while keeping control of the business in his own hands. By 1946 the Farmers and Graziers' Grain Assurance and Agency Co. had become one of the State's largest wool-selling organizations. As well as this spectacular business career, Bladwell was favoured by a cordial and unassuming manner and an undogmatic approach to politics. Faced with this formidable competition, the relatively unknown L. J. Tully was lucky to capture his father's old seat.

Once in office, however, the situation changed in Tully's favour. A sitting member has unrivalled opportunities to impress the electors with his ability and diligence; a defeated candidate can only await a new opportunity to advance the personal claims that have already proved insufficient, in the hope that the general climate of politics will become more favourable. At the next general election, only a year later, Tully's majority over Bladwell almost doubled. After his second defeat, Bladwell did not re-appear as a candidate until the 1956 campaign.

His replacement by less popular candidates, and Tully's assiduity as a local member, were reflected in the election results of 1950 and 1953. In New South Wales generally, the

fortunes of the Labor Party slumped between 1947 and 1950, but in Goulburn this trend was reversed, and Tully's majority rose to 1662. The process continued, this time aided by a swing to Labor, giving him a majority of 4086 in 1953.

Like Seiffert and Beale, Tully has a home in Sydney and keeps in contact with his electors by frequent visits. His parliamentary career has been relatively uneventful. He has never been involved in factional disputes. He is still under forty, after a decade in which he has firmly established himself in the electorate. When he and Bladwell again contested Goulburn in 1956, the factor of personal popularity was, at least, no longer overwhelmingly in Bladwell's favour.

## CHAPTER TWO

# The Parties

### PARTY MEMBERSHIP

A comparison of the two parties in Eden-Monaro reveals important similarities. In both, joining the party is a formal process; a particular document is completed and filed. If there is any doubt about who is a member and who is not, this is because of administrative carelessness and not because of the structure of the party. Each party has active supporters who do not hold membership tickets, but their role is limited to assisting at election campaigns.

The Labor Party branches are both fewer and smaller than those of the Liberal Party. They are also more active. It is important to consider how far these differences are typical of the parties, or at least of their country branches, and how far they are due to local and temporary factors.

The A.L.P. has fewer members than the Liberal Party throughout the electorate, but this disadvantage is much more marked in the Tableland seats, which it holds with large majorities, than in the South Coast electorate, which no Labor candidate has ever appeared likely to win. On the Coast, the parties almost break even in membership, but the Liberals have an advantage of more than four to one on the Tableland. Both parties have fewest members where they have most voters.

This paradox suggests that factors other than support for the party and its candidates influence party membership. The most likely explanation of the inverse relation between party voters and party members is the effect of the selection of candidates on branch membership.

It is almost unknown for a sitting member of parliament holding a country seat to be defeated in a selection contest. Consequently, the firmer the party's hold on the seat, the fewer selection contests will occur. This is true whether such contests

take the form of a rank-and-file ballot in the A.L.P. or of a selection committee meeting in the Liberal Party. A selection, particularly in the Labor Party, is one of the few times when the ordinary member can feel, and rightly so, that he has a voice in the making of an important decision. Local branch officials, especially if they aspire for selection themselves, like to control the votes of substantial blocs of members. If there are no selections, this local empire-building loses most of its point. When either party obtains a firm hold on an electorate, its branch membership is reduced to those who will join without the incentive of a share in the process of selection.

All of the sitting members in Eden-Monaro were well entrenched in their seats. Short of a major schism within the party, there was no chance of any of the Labor members losing A.L.P. endorsement. Similarly, Beale was safely entrenched in South Coast. On the other hand, the Liberal branches on the Tableland had to select a State candidate and take part in the selection of a Federal candidate every few years. Moreover, it was at least possible that the Tableland seats could be won from Labor. Would-be candidates and their supporters therefore founded new branches and kept the membership of old ones as high as possible. While the Liberal branches grew, the Labor branches dwindled as the incentive of selection contests was removed. It would be too much to say that the position was reversed in the South Coast electorate, but there were at least some remarkable differences. Membership of the Liberal Party nowhere approached the boom figures reached in the Labor-voting towns of the Tableland. At the same time the proportion of A.L.P. members to Labor voters was much higher than on the Tableland.

It was often said by Labor supporters that membership has declined with prosperity and the fading of memories of large-scale unemployment. Even if membership figures for the past decade or so were available, the importance of this factor would be hard to decide: the effect of economic conditions upon the membership of both parties cannot be estimated without further studies in other electorates and at other times. Prosperity may have tended to reduce the membership of the A.L.P.; it could conceivably have tended either to increase or to reduce the membership of the Liberal Party. Our material does not

enable us to disentangle its effects from the stronger influence of the presence or absence of selection contests.

Selection contests may strongly influence the size of a branch; they need not decide whether or not a branch exists. The Tableland is dotted with small A.L.P. branches, some of them shortlived but relatively constant in number and membership. The Coast is similarly dotted with small Liberal branches whose members have equally little prospect of taking part in a state

TABLE II  
MEMBERSHIP OF PARTY BRANCHES IN EDEN-MONARO IN  
DECEMBER 1955\*

<i>Monaro State Electorate:</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Liberal</i>
Berridale . . . . .	—	64
Bombala . . . . .	—	61
Braidwood . . . . .	—	56
Candelo . . . . .	—	12
Cooma (including North Cooma) . . . . .	36	240
Dalgety . . . . .	—	34
Delegate . . . . .	26	—
Eaglehawk . . . . .	18	—
Jindabyne . . . . .	37	40
Queanbeyan . . . . .	22	171†
	— 139	— 678
<i>Goulburn State Electorate:</i>		
Bungendore . . . . .	34	104
Taralga . . . . .	—	32
Goulburn . . . . .	61	282†
	— 95	— 418
<i>South Coast State Electorate:</i>		
Bateman's Bay . . . . .	—	39
Bega . . . . .	120	81
Bermagui . . . . .	—	39
Bodalla . . . . .	—	22
Milton . . . . .	30	43
Moruya . . . . .	44	—
	— 194	— 224
<i>Burrinjuck State Electorate:</i>		
Gunning . . . . .	30	48
	— 30	— 48
Total . . . . .	458	1368

\* Information on the size of the Labor Party branches is from branch officials, and on the Liberal Party branches from the Divisional headquarters at Goulburn. Only operative Liberal branches have been included, i.e. those qualified to take part in the selection of candidates in 1955. In nearly all cases this meant that they held at least one meeting during 1955.

† Including women's branch.

selection. These are the residue who remain when the attractions of voting and influencing the votes of others in a selection contest are removed. At the other extreme are the big Liberal branches of the Tableland, which owe much of their size to selection strategy. Every inflated branch, of course, contains its minority of zealots who would remain if the influence of selections was removed; in fact it is often the zealots who maintain large nominal membership rolls, in order to ensure that the branch supports their views or policy.

It may well be asked what membership of a party means, when it is largely determined by such a consideration. Obviously it is something much less than the A.L.P. requires to give validity to its myth of a sovereign membership. The party itself realizes this danger as can be seen from its requirement that tickets should be issued only at a branch meeting. This requirement has largely been disregarded in the country, and in 1954 the party introduced a more easily enforced rule that only those who have attended at least 25 per cent of the meetings during the previous year can vote in selection ballots. It is still too early to see whether this strict requirement can be imposed satisfactorily on the loose organization of the country branches.

For the present, it seems probable that the presence or absence of selection contests is the principal influence on the size of both parties in country electorates. Whether there are selection contests or not, it is possible to form small branches, made up of relatively enthusiastic supporters of the party, the candidate, or both. These are the members who conduct the affairs of the branch and look after its routine activities, even if the prospect of taking part in the selection of candidates leads to a dramatic increase of the party's membership on paper. In Eden-Monaro the effective membership of both parties is considerably smaller than their nominal membership, though the difference is less marked in the Labor Party.

Even when we make allowance for the effect of frequent parliamentary selections, the Liberal branches still tend to be larger and less active than Labor branches. The realities of Labor Party organization in the country are far removed from the party's ideal of an active rank-and-file membership which ultimately controls the entire range of party activities, in and out of parliament, but the ideal retains some of its force. Even

though the secretary of a Labor Party branch may be prepared to ignore the party's rule and sign up members who never attend a branch meeting, he is not likely to see much point in doing so unless he thinks their votes will be useful in a future selection ballot. Members who never attend meetings are officially regarded as undesirable in the Labor Party, as they must be in any party that claims to be controlled by its rank and file. A big reserve of inactive and apathetic members who outnumber the active and interested members is a threat to this whole conception. Consequently, the minimum level of activity that is regarded as justifying the branch's existence is relatively high.

The importance of the ordinary member of the Liberal Party is a good deal less, even in the party's own view. The politicians are, in principle as well as in practice, less subject to control by the party machine. Even at a low level of organization, such as the Federal and State Electoral Conference, the principle of instructing delegates how to vote is frowned upon. Therefore, there are few practical dangers in a large but inactive membership. Nor does such a membership violate the party's traditions. The Liberal Party itself is only twelve years old, and its predecessors, the Nationalist and United Australia parties, placed even less stress on an active rank and file.

In the Labor Party it is not considered legitimate to belong to the party without attending branch meetings; in the Liberal Party it is accepted as a matter of course. This means that, in the absence of any considerations of selection strategy, the Liberal membership is recruited from a broad circle of supporters, many of whom are quite apathetic. It is legitimate for anyone who is prepared to make a formal declaration of support for the Liberal Party to become a member, on payment of a nominal fee. The Labor Party recruits its members from a smaller group of its more active supporters.

The assumption that Labor Party branches are not worth maintaining unless they show a certain minimum activity reduces their number, as well as their size. All over Eden-Monaro A.L.P. branches have collapsed and been disbanded because their officials have despaired of maintaining a level of activity which no Liberal branch in the same area would have

attempted to reach. If the secretary has to seek out members to collect their subscriptions, and if a series of monthly or quarterly branch meetings fail for want of a quorum, he is likely to lose heart and allow the branch to disappear. His Liberal counterpart would not expect that his members would attend meetings to collect their membership tickets nor, except at election times, would he attempt to hold more than one meeting per year. Several A.L.P. branches have ignored the rules, and conduct their affairs at a similar pace.

To analyse in any detail the membership of the two parties would require an intensive study of the individual branches not possible here. It is possible, however, to say something of their members' occupations, a factor that is generally supposed to be closely related to political allegiance.

A complete analysis of occupations has been possible in only eleven Liberal and six Labor branches, though these branches happen to be well distributed over the electorate and are probably fairly representative of the total membership. In addition, we know the occupations of the 100 men and women who held office in all the branches and who served as delegates to Liberal electorate conferences and selection committees, and who can fairly be regarded as the Liberal Party's activists in the electorate. Table III enables a comparison between the total membership of those branches of both parties for which we have information and the 100 'activists' from all branches of the Liberal Party.

TABLE III

OCCUPATIONS OF LABOUR BRANCH MEMBERS, LIBERAL BRANCH MEMBERS AND LIBERAL ACTIVISTS

	<i>194 Members of 6 Labor branches</i>	<i>461 Members of 11 Liberal branches</i>	<i>100 officials and delegates of 21 Liberal branches</i>
	%	%	%
Farmers . . . . .	2.5	11.3	22.1
Graziers . . . . .	5.5	19.5	25.8
Small business . . . . .	10.5	18.6	14.2
Salary-earners . . . . .	15.2	19.1	15.3
Managerial . . . . .	2.0	5.8	5.8
Wage-earners . . . . .	52.3	7.4	6.3
Professional . . . . .	1.7	11.1	7.3
Home duties . . . . .	6.3	7.2	3.2

The comparison illustrates one striking feature of the Liberal party in Eden-Monaro. Among the rank-and-file members—and, it would appear, among the Liberal voters—townspeople and primary producers are about equally represented. But among the activists the primary producers predominate; the graziers on the Tableland, the dairy-farmers on the Coast. The processes that have given them this predominance are probably quite subtle and intricate, but they can be indicated in broad outline. On the Coast, life in the towns is largely dependent upon and geared to the outlook of the dairy-farmers, whose political attitudes, if they cannot strictly be called Liberal, are at any rate strongly anti-Labor; within the Liberal Party the townspeople are the junior partners of the farmers. On the Tableland, the towns are both larger and less dependent, and usually show Labor majorities. Here there is a different reason for the relatively small proportion of townspeople among the Liberal activists. Living in Labor-voting communities, the small business men, in particular, are reluctant to be any more than passive subscribers to Liberal funds.

On both Coast and Tableland the primary producers have an additional practical advantage as delegates to selection committees and electorate conferences: they have more opportunity to make the long and time-consuming trips that are involved in so extensive an electorate. Here the graziers are at an advantage even over the dairy-farmers—an advantage which was very apparent at the meeting that selected the Liberal candidate for Eden-Monaro in 1955.

The other occupational group that has conspicuously fewer representatives among the activists than among the ordinary members is the housewives. Many women have a genuine interest in Liberal party affairs, and many more are enrolled by their male relatives as a gesture of family solidarity or to increase branch membership for selection purposes, but few of them hold even minor positions, except in the separate women's branches in Goulburn and Queanbeyan. The establishment of separate women's branches can be another device to obtain additional votes at selections.

Labor Party membership shows the expected predominance of wage-earners, with substantial minorities of salary-earners and small business men and a few farmers and graziers. The

A.L.P. in Eden-Monaro is very far from being merely a wage-earners' party, and though it is more difficult to distinguish active and inactive members than is the case in the Liberal Party, it seems that salary-earners and self-employed people are particularly prominent among the active and influential members of the party.

The Liberal Party seems to have failed to recruit wage-earners, if it ever wished to do so, and the Labor Party has had little more success among farmers and graziers and the professions. Only the small business men and the salary-earners are of approximately equal importance in both parties.

#### BRANCH ACTIVITIES

At the branch level it is almost a misnomer to speak of Liberal Party activity. Even large and important branches often hold only the annual meeting that is required if they are to have a voice in the selection of candidates. Some branches are called into being during an election campaign and are then allowed to lapse until the approach of the next election. Except in Goulburn, the Liberal branches do not even attempt to hold frequent meetings.

The A.L.P. branches, though not marked by any great enthusiasm, keep up a more consistent level of activity. Most of them meet monthly; several meet intermittently but average several meetings a year; a few meet only once a year, or even less frequently. The party's rules provide that branches must meet every three months, but the rule is not enforced in Eden-Monaro.

Labor Party branches in Eden-Monaro are in effect groups of working-class and lower middle-class men who are brought together by adherence to the A.L.P. but who are concerned principally with the problems of their own town or district. The difference in the composition of the Labor and Liberal branches is the clue to the difference in their activities. The Liberal branch members include a higher proportion of people who are active in community and civic organizations of all kinds: Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, the Country Women's Association, Pastures Protection Boards, the Primary Producers' Union, the Returned Servicemen's League. They may have little time

to devote to political activity, and if forced to make the choice would give up their work for the Liberal Party rather than their other community activities. An official of the Queanbeyan branch frankly stated: 'Most of our members are too busy with various community activities to devote much time to party affairs, and if we ask too much of them they will resign from the party because they can't spare the time.' Some of these organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce and Pastures Protection Boards, are not open to the sections of the community from which the Labor Party receives most of its votes. Others, like the R.S.L., are more broadly based but, for various reasons, have relatively few Labor supporters among their leaders and officials.

Under these circumstances, the Labor Party branches serve as a forum for the discussion of local problems, a function which it is not necessary for Liberal branches to perform. Membership of the Liberal Party is not understood to involve anything more than a general undertaking to support the party, particularly at election times. Even when a branch confines its inter-election activities to an annual meeting, few bother to attend.<sup>1</sup>

Though local issues are often discussed more fully than State or Federal politics at A.L.P. branch meetings, the party as such takes no part in municipal elections in Eden-Monaro. One of its members is Mayor of Queanbeyan, and others sit on the Goulburn and Cooma Municipal Councils, but they do not stand with party endorsement. The same is true of Liberal party members who have been elected to the Goulburn and Cooma Municipal Councils and to several Shire Councils.

#### PARTY FINANCE

Most of the money raised by the parties is paid to their central headquarters, and will not be disclosed by any local survey. However, nearly all of the money used in the Federal and State election campaigns in the Eden-Monaro area was raised locally, in addition to a considerable sum which is required to keep the local Liberal machine functioning between elections.

Neither party could finance any major part of its activities by

<sup>1</sup> For example, 18 of the 119 members of the Queanbeyan branch attended the annual meeting for 1955.

membership subscriptions alone. The minimum membership fee of the Liberal Party, 2s. 6d. per year, does not even cover mailing costs and other purely administrative expenses. The Labor Party's annual subscription, which varies from 4s. to 7s. 6d., is a more serious contribution to party finance, but the A.L.P., too, depends heavily on other contributions.

At the local level, Labor Party finance is wholly a problem of raising campaign funds. There are no considerable expenses between elections because there are no paid officials, though the secretary of each branch is entitled to a nominal honorarium of £2 per year. The Liberal Party has a full-time organizer in Eden-Monaro, and though his salary is paid from the party's central funds there are considerable administrative expenses to be met from local revenue. In addition, the party tries to maintain its local funds in a healthy condition so that election expenses can be met promptly, and campaigns can be planned in advance.

Prior to 1952 each of the three Liberal State Electorate Conferences in the area controlled its own finance and made annual donations to a central fund in Goulburn for Eden-Monaro as a whole. The then organizer introduced a bank-order system of finance, hitherto more characteristic of the Country Party. Members and supporters of the party were asked to sign a bank order authorizing their bankers to send an annual contribution to the divisional headquarters of the party at Goulburn. The State Electorate Conferences and the individual branches were left with small accounts of their own to cover running expenses.

While the rate of contributions to the divisional fund is not known, it is possible to make a guess at its growth over the last two years. After the Federal election of May 1954, the Eden-Monaro organization was in debt. Eighteen months later it was budgeting to spend over £3000 on the State and Federal election campaigns, while in the meantime other expenses may have been met from the fund. Finances were so healthy by the end of 1955 that it was not necessary to raise any additional funds during the Federal campaign. This suggests that several thousand pounds per year are currently available for expenditure in Eden-Monaro alone, in addition to a smaller amount which is passed on to the party headquarters in Sydney. This would mean an average contribution of two or three pounds per year

from each member of the party, though there are probably regular contributors to party funds who do not belong to any branch.

Permanent local finance on this scale has no equivalent in the Labor Party. Its principal source of finance between elections is the affiliation fees of trade unions, and these are paid to the State executive by the State officials of the unions concerned; none of this money passes through the lower ranks of the organization. The only permanent income of the branches comes from membership fees, and these are rarely sufficient to do more than cover routine expenses such as the hire of halls and newspaper advertisements for branch meetings, with perhaps some surplus which can be contributed to campaign funds at election times.

Labor campaigns are financed by special funds raised for the purpose immediately before and during each election. There may be, as in Eden-Monaro, a special campaign account, but any balance left after one campaign lies unused and unaugmented until the beginning of the next. Consequently, raising finance is not one of the party's permanent tasks, but a series of unconnected appeals at irregular intervals. Labor's fund-raising activities are therefore better left to be discussed as part of the particular campaigns of 1955 and 1956.

#### DIVISIONAL ORGANIZATION

The organizational framework of the two parties is almost identical. In each case the branches send delegates to State and Federal Electorate Committees—called Councils in the Labor Party and Conferences in the Liberal Party. The Federal Electorate Council or Conference is an organizational dead-end, being concerned only with internal divisional matters, and particularly, of course, with the conduct of Federal election campaigns. The State Electorate Councils or Conferences, however, send delegates to the State Conferences (and in the case of the Liberal Party, to the State Council) which in turn select the New South Wales representatives on the parties' Federal bodies. In each case, existing alongside this framework, there is a roughly parallel but less important hierarchy of women's organizations.

At the divisional level, the principal difference between the two parties in Eden-Monaro is the presence of a full-time Liberal

organizer. The Liberal Party has had a paid organizer in the area since its inception in 1945, and before that time the United Australia Party maintained a full-time representative. The cost of maintaining an organizer was estimated at £2500 a year in 1952, and presumably is now somewhat higher.

A loose and generally inactive organization very easily falls under the complete control of anyone who can devote all his time to the job. This danger is no doubt one reason why the organizers are paid by and responsible to party headquarters, and so remain under the eye of other full-time officials. A rapid succession of organizers in Eden-Monaro has minimized any danger of undue submergence of the amateurs who make up the rest of the organization, but this has also meant that, with one exception, no organizer has remained long enough in the job to become fully acquainted with its difficulties and possibilities. Four organizers have held the Eden-Monaro position since 1950, and all but one have held it for less than a year.

The exception was not one to give the party any confidence in longer terms of office. In 1951 Royce Beavis became organizer, and over the next two years built the Eden-Monaro Liberal organization, especially on the Tableland, into very much its present form. He created many new branches and popularized the bank-order system of finance. In 1954 Beavis stood for pre-selection for Eden-Monaro, and such was the impression that his vigour and ability had made on party members that he received the endorsement. This displeased party officials in Sydney, for it seemed to establish the precedent that an organizer could build up an organization which he could then use to gain pre-selection and to fight his campaign. Once Beavis had gained selection, the advantage which a professional organizer has over his amateur colleagues became obvious. Normally a Liberal candidate who is not a sitting member, being politically inexperienced, works under fairly close control by his campaign committee. However, no campaign committee could control an ambitious candidate who was also the party organizer and who was thoroughly familiar with the machine which he had himself largely formed. As a result, Beavis fought his campaign under virtually no control. It ended with his defeat. Beavis was no doubt aware that he was burning his bridges as a paid party employee. After the election he left the electorate

and did not reappear again until he unexpectedly announced that he would contest the 1955 election for Eden-Monaro as an Independent.

Beavis has had two successors as organizer. The present incumbent was appointed only a few months before the Federal election.

In the South Coast electorate the Liberal machine has its own local characteristics. It has a very popular Liberal State member, while its northern subdivisions, in the Federal electorate of Macarthur, also have an equally popular Liberal Federal member. Consequently, they are not always sympathetic towards the efforts of their colleagues on the Tableland to spread the faith *in partibus infidelium*, especially when they are required to share the expense. South Coast Liberals, like South Coast people in general, often feel they are neglected. They blame either the party headquarters in Sydney or the Eden-Monaro divisional organization, centred far away in Goulburn. The divisional organizer rarely visits the Coast, since the Liberal vote in these subdivisions is already very high. The local Liberals claim that by spending more time in the area, the organizer could greatly increase the amount of money raised on the Coast and so relieve Beale of part of his financial burden. On the other hand, they are not interested in raising money that will be sent to Goulburn and pass out of their hands. The Coastal branches were always doubtful of the pooling of divisional funds introduced under Beavis, and have sometimes alleged that they suffer from discrimination in its expenditure.

#### THE SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

The effect of contests for the selection of candidates on party membership has already been argued. It remains to examine the procedures of selection in operation.

In the Labor Party the selection of candidates is normally by means of a secret ballot of rank-and-file members. In this way the member is given a real say in an important decision. However, the importance of selection ballots should not be exaggerated.

Firstly, it is quite common for the Central Executive to make the selections itself, instead of allowing the State Electoral Con-

ferences to conduct ballots. This is usually because an election has been announced unexpectedly, but it may also be because the executive suspects that a candidate has improperly enrolled his supporters in the branches for the purpose of strengthening his position. Country members of the A.L.P. rarely make much use of this right to select their candidate. Ideological considerations are weak, personal loyalty is strong. Consequently, it is rare for a sitting member holding a country seat to be challenged in a selection ballot, and almost unknown for him to be defeated. The defeat of five State politicians holding metropolitan seats in the selection ballots of 1950 has no parallel in the country. It can safely be predicted that there will be few, if any, selection ballots for Eden-Monaro or for the State seats of Monaro and Goulburn unless the sitting Labor members die, retire, or lose their seats.

Selection ballots are quite common in country seats that are held by the non-Labor parties but that the A.L.P. has some chance of winning. However, in South Coast, the other State electorate with which we are concerned, there have been no ballots of recent years because there has been no competition for the distinction of being defeated by Beale and of losing time and money in the process.

Even when ballots are held, few members have bothered to vote. The ballot by which Fraser gained selection in 1943 was quite keenly contested, but only 200 voted, of whom many were unionists who were not members of the A.L.P., and who would be ineligible to vote under existing rules. If a recent rule that restricts voting to those who have attended 25 per cent of the meetings held during the previous year is strictly applied, the number of voters in any future ballot held within the Eden-Monaro area will probably be very small indeed.

Liberal selection methods vary between city and country. In metropolitan electorates the candidates are chosen by committees made up of 30 delegates chosen by the local Electorate Conference and 20 chosen by the State Council or State Executive. In country electorates this external influence on selections is not present. Selection committees are made up of delegates from party branches in the electorate that have demonstrated they are alive by holding their annual meeting for the current year. A branch with less than 100 members can appoint three

delegates, while larger branches can send additional delegates up to a maximum of six. In Eden-Monaro in 1955, 22 branches elected a total of 71 delegates to the selection committee which was to choose a candidate to oppose Fraser, but only 50 delegates from 15 branches actually attended.

Before they are interviewed by the selection committee, prospective candidates must be approved by a credentials committee appointed by the Electorate Conference concerned. This body can refuse to accept any nomination, but its principal purpose is to collect information about the candidates for the benefit of the selection committee. Each candidate is required to fill in a form giving his background in some detail.<sup>2</sup> The credentials committee, having satisfied itself that all candidates are in fact members of the party, has copies of this form duplicated for distribution among delegates to the selection committee.

The procedure of the committee follows a prescribed course. Each candidate speaks for eight minutes on a subject of his own choosing. Naturally enough, the subject is usually his own suitability for endorsement. He is then questioned by members of the committee who, having heard all the candidates, select one by secret preferential ballot. The State Executive has the power to refuse endorsement to any candidate, but has never done so.

Two Liberal candidates were chosen by this method for the 1955-6 campaigns in Eden-Monaro: for Eden-Monaro itself, and for the State seat of Monaro. In South Coast Beale was not challenged for endorsement; in Goulburn there was only one candidate for Liberal endorsement, who was therefore endorsed

<sup>2</sup> Copy of the form which each candidate is required to answer when lodging his nomination for Liberal pre-selection with the credentials committee:

Name	Address
Age	Marital Status (State whether previously divorced, separated, etc.)
Educational qualifications	
Occupation	How long so occupied
Previous occupation	
Professional and business experience	
War Service, defence and patriotic activities	
Liberal Party activities (state branch of which you are a financial member)	
Previous political experience	
Local government or other public activities	
Special associations in the electorate	
Names of persons furnishing references (not more than three, if any)	

automatically. The selection of these two candidates illustrates the working of the system.

Of the fifty delegates who attended the meeting to choose a candidate for Eden-Monaro, nineteen were graziers, nine were farmers, eight were salaried employees, four were small business men, three were wage-earners, two were professional people and three were housewives.<sup>3</sup>

The proportion of graziers would not have been so high if all the delegates had attended the meeting, but several South Coast branches, most of whose delegates were farmers, were not represented. All the nineteen graziers chosen as delegates took part in the selection; sixteen farmers were delegates but only nine attended.

Such was the selection committee, and this is the choice they were offered:

*James Butler.* Butler, aged 43, was a publican from Bungendore, who had formerly been employed as a clerk in the shipping industry. He was educated in England, up to the Intermediate standard, and later studied accountancy. Butler was engaged in a number of civic activities in Bungendore, and had been a member of the A.I.F. from 1943 until his discharge in 1946. He had a good grasp of political affairs, and was a smooth public speaker. But apparently he gave an impression that he was speaking at the group, not to them, and appeared too self-confident—at least this was the impression of some of the members at the meeting. Possibly his occupation was also a disadvantage—certainly it is an unusual one among Liberal politicians.

*Alexander Clifford McDonald.* McDonald, aged 40, was employed in the administration section of the Snowy Mountains Authority at Cooma. He has his Intermediate certificate and had taken courses in accounting, administration and diesel engineering. During World War II he served with the A.I.F. McDonald was the only candidate with previous political experience, having contested the seat of Barton as an Independent in 1946. His public activities included membership of the Cooma Ambulance Committee and the ex-servicemen's club. He was also a Justice of the Peace.

<sup>3</sup> The committee included other women besides the three housewives, but where possible they have been listed under their husband's occupation.

McDonald believed government today to be primarily concerned with administration, for which, as a trained and experienced administrator, he had the necessary qualifications. His approach, however, does not appear to have won him the necessary supporters.

*Angus Conrad McKay.* McKay, aged 52, was a veterinarian from the A.C.T. He was well known in the Monaro area, especially among the graziers. However, he was not known to the salaried delegates from Cooma nor to many of the South Coast delegates. McKay received his B.V.Sc. from Sydney University, and prior to entering private practice he was employed by the Commonwealth Government. Like other candidates, he served with the A.I.F. during the war. He was not an impressive speaker.

*Cecil Mark Flanagan.* Flanagan was the youngest of the nominees. He was 32 at the time of the pre-selection and had only recently purchased his property near Berridale. He was born and raised in the area and before the war he had worked on his father's grazing property. Flanagan was educated in the electorate, having attended a small public school near Berridale and, later, St Patrick's College in Goulburn. During the war he served with the Army Intelligence Corps and the R.A.A.F. After his discharge he became active in the R.S.L. and is one of its State councillors. He was also a member of the Agricultural Advisory Council for New South Wales. Prior to the pre-selection Flanagan had taken a great interest in Liberal Party affairs, and was one of the more vocal delegates at various State and Federal conferences. Many delegates to the pre-selection committee recognized him because of his previous activities in the party.

Although Flanagan was not a gifted speaker, he had an air of sincerity which generally impressed his audience. He was fairly well acquainted with political issues of the day, and could answer questions with ease. This was an important asset. Furthermore, Flanagan had received a letter of reference from a former Liberal candidate, A. G. Keyes, who had made a good showing against Fraser in 1951 and who was known to most of the delegates at the meeting. This endorsement was probably a great help to Flanagan.

*David Kierston Ramsay.* Ramsay, aged 44, was a bank officer

from Goulburn. He had been in the service of the bank since completing his Leaving Certificate. During the war he served five years with the R.A.A.F. His public activities included presidency of the Goulburn Public School Parents and Citizens' Association, and membership on the Committee for the Advancement of Education.

Again it appears that Ramsay was an unimpressive speaker. Also he was probably the least-known candidate.

*James Alexander Ryrie.* Ryrie, aged 43, was the only candidate who could lay claim to wealth. He inherited a rich property from his father, and came from a famous squatting family on the Monaro. Ryrie received his education at the best schools in Sydney and later at Oxford. For some years he was employed by the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company in Fiji as a junior overseer. During the war he served with the A.I.F. in New Guinea. Many of the delegates who knew Ryrie were impressed with his sincerity when he addressed them, but he had not prepared himself to answer questions. His greatest handicap was his social and financial position in the community: inherited wealth is too much of an affront to the traditional virtues of egalitarianism and self-reliance to be a political asset. In Eden-Monaro the candidate who has become wealthy may be able to boast of his success; the man who was born wealthy will have to conceal it. Ryrie had no obvious advantages to compensate for this disability.

The selection was won by Flanagan; by what margin, of course, we do not know. It was generally believed among Labor supporters that Flanagan had been selected in the belief that, with the A.L.P. dispute still unsettled, a Catholic Liberal candidate would win many Labor votes from his co-religionists. There is no evidence that this was an important factor in the selection. If it played an important part, then our failure to detect it must be due to a quite uncharacteristic disingenuousness among local Liberal leaders, who were otherwise frank and co-operative in the extreme. Flanagan was selected because, on the day, he made the most favourable impression on the delegates as a prospective parliamentary candidate and possible Federal member.

The selection for the State seat of Monaro had been held several months previously, in June 1955. The candidates were

E. C. Smith, a grazier of Braidwood, and R. C. Corby and A. C. McDonald, both public servants employed by the Snowy Mountains Authority at Cooma. The selection went to Smith. At this meeting five branches were represented, plus one defunct branch whose delegate was given special permission to vote. A total of twenty people were on this committee—eleven graziers, seven salaried employees, one manager and one small business man.

TABLE IV

BRANCHES WHICH WERE REPRESENTED AT THE SELECTION COMMITTEES

<i>Federal selection—Eden-Monaro</i>			
Berridale . . . . .	3	Goulburn General . . . . .	4
Bodalla . . . . .	3	Goulburn Women's . . . . .	4
Braidwood . . . . .	3	Jindabyne . . . . .	3
Bungendore . . . . .	4	Queanbeyan . . . . .	4
Candelo . . . . .	3	Queanbeyan Women's . . . . .	4
Cooma . . . . .	4	Central Tilba . . . . .	3
North Cooma . . . . .	3	Dalgety . . . . .	3
<i>State pre-selection—Monaro</i>			
Cooma . . . . .	6	Braidwood . . . . .	2
Queanbeyan . . . . .	5	Berridale . . . . .	1
Queanbeyan Women's . . . . .	5	Michelago . . . . .	1

## EFFECT OF THE A.L.P. DISPUTE IN EDEN-MONARO

The contest for control of the A.L.P. in New South Wales between 1954 and 1956 had more widespread ramifications than many previous disputes, probably because of its religious content. Wherever there was hostility between Catholics and non-Catholics within the A.L.P., the ground was prepared for the dispute to spread. This is not to suggest that in Eden-Monaro or elsewhere the factions were clearly divided along the lines of religion. There were numerous exceptions on both sides, but the religious element in the dispute undoubtedly increased both its bitterness and the rapidity with which it spread even to such relatively isolated parts of the machine as Eden-Monaro. Even then, however, most of the branches were more concerned with the effect of the dispute on the approaching elections than on gaining any factional triumph.

Before the dispute finally broke out in October 1954, it would have been hard to speak of any branch as favouring either side. The possible exceptions were Cooma, which some time previ-

ously had come under the influence of Industrial Group supporters, and Eaglehawk, which was made up largely of members of the Australian Workers' Union who opposed the Groups and their influence on the A.L.P.

Fraser's position in the dispute was, as we have seen, an ambivalent one. However, he had supported the removal of Evatt, and this was enough to arouse the suspicion of the more enthusiastic anti-Groupers. By early 1955 the Eaglehawk branch had ceased to function, its leaders being reluctant to work in support of Fraser. Though their personal antagonism towards Fraser was largely overcome, they played very little part in the Federal campaign in December. They showed more interest in the State campaign three months later, presumably because State politics had remained virtually unaffected by the dispute.

The other casualty among the Labor branches was Bungendore, which temporarily ceased to function after a series of meetings had ended in acrimonious arguments and bad feeling. Bungendore branch, as such, did nothing in either election campaign, though individual party members worked in support of Fraser, and later of Tully.

These two branches, which were most affected by the split, were not among the most active in the electorate. The three branches which were most consistently active, Goulburn, Queanbeyan and Cooma, all contained supporters of both sides, but their main concern was with retaining the Labor-held seats.

Meanwhile, the Central Executive, which had been marked down for destruction by the anti-Groupers, was seeking support among the branches. In March 1955 a conference of branch representatives from the Eden-Monaro area was held at Goulburn, at which the State president of the A.L.P., James Shortell, stated the Executive's case. At this time the outcome of the dispute in Victoria was still in the balance, to be determined by the Federal Conference of the Party, which was to meet in Hobart in two weeks time. Only three branches sent delegates to this conference. Shortell criticized the action which had been taken to unseat the State Executive in Victoria, which supported the Industrial Groups. However, he undertook to accept whatever decisions the coming Federal Conference might make.

The Executive sent a justification of its position (entitled 'Labor Nails the "Rebel" Lies') to every branch in New South

Wales. The 'Rebels' also circularized the branches seeking support.

In September 1955 the Industrial Groupers were confirmed in control by a very narrow margin at a special conference of the New South Wales Labor Party, held under the supervision of the Federal officers. The three delegates from Eden-Monaro must have taken part in the elections that produced this result. Whichever way their votes were cast, it is safe to assume that their principal concern was to stabilize the party and retrieve its electoral prospects.

The conference was quickly followed by another flare-up of the dispute. The anti-Group team was reported to have been leading in the State-wide ballot of party members to select a team of Senate candidates for the coming Federal election. The executive annulled the ballot, claiming that the anti-Groupers had broken the party's rules by issuing misleading how-to-vote tickets, and named a compromise team of its own, comprising one anti-Group and two Group supporters. This action was criticized in many places, including a meeting of the Monaro State Electorate Council, but the Federal Executive declined to intervene further in New South Wales, for the Federal government was now awaiting the moment when it could most profit by the disunity of the Labor Party to hold an election. When Evatt's speech on the Royal Commission on Espionage provided this opportunity, the general reaction in Eden-Monaro was that, whether Evatt's charges were true or false, it was regrettable that his action had doomed the party to a hopeless fight. In fact, whether Evatt was right or wrong seemed almost irrelevant. Once again, the country branches showed their preoccupation with electoral success.

If the country branches look with alarm on factional disputes because they jeopardize election prospects, it is not surprising that little was heard of local troubles during the Federal campaign itself. In the city, where faction fights are taken more seriously, there were reports of deliberate sabotage of the Labor campaign, but there was nothing of this in Eden-Monaro. The party's supporters, though perhaps reduced in numbers by those who had been discouraged or exasperated by the course the dispute had taken, all supported Fraser's return unreservedly.

With a State election due to follow the Federal campaign there was further reason for such local factional antagonism as had existed to subside. The Labor Party returned to the House of Representatives united, through the elimination of its Anti-Communist Labor opponents, but chastened by a heavy defeat. The State politicians had succeeded in avoiding entanglement in the dispute, and the Federal results showed the need for outward unity at least, if the State Labor government were to survive. The disrupted Eaglehawk branch, which had taken no part in the Federal campaign, returned to life of its own accord before the State election. If there was to be any further disturbance within the local party machine, it would have to be in response to some new development outside the electorate.

## CHAPTER III

# The Federal Campaign

### THE CONTEXT

Though there were four political interests represented in the Eden-Monaro campaign, the contest was effectively one between the Liberal and Labor parties. The former Liberal candidate, Royce Beavis, stood as an Independent, but his campaign was limited to two radio broadcasts and a few newspaper advertisements. It is safe to assume that few electors knew there was a third candidate until they saw his name on the ballot paper. The Communist Party's concern with Eden-Monaro was confined to the Senate vote, and its campaign was even more limited than Beavis's. Both major parties ignored the Independent and Communist campaigns.

The election in Eden-Monaro was in many respects remarkably self-contained, but it was naturally influenced by the broader struggle going on throughout Australia. Most of the issues—though not, perhaps, the most important ones—some of the propaganda, and some of the money came from outside the electorate.

Evatt gave his policy speech in the Sydney suburb of Hurstville on 9 November.<sup>1</sup> Its most prominent theme was the need for increases in social service payments, principally pensions and child endowment. Asserting that current economic difficulties were due principally to excessive private investment and profit margins, Evatt proposed an excess profits tax which would provide most of the money required for the social service increases.

The remainder, except for a small amount from the proposed re-introduction of the land tax, was to be obtained by reducing defence expenditure. This provided a connecting link with another of Evatt's major themes, foreign policy. He implied that

<sup>1</sup> This summary of Evatt's speech is based on reports in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age*, 10 November 1955.

the relaxation of international tension was already apparent, and could be hastened by changes in Australian policies and attitudes. Australian forces should be withdrawn from Malaya, where their presence only helped to delay an eventual negotiated settlement. Hostility could be reduced, and at the same time Australia's trading position improved, by seeking trade with all countries, including those with Communist governments, and by supporting their admission to the United Nations.

In addition, Evatt made a particular bid for the support of various groups of primary producers, some of which were well represented in Eden-Monaro. Dairy-farmers were guaranteed the cost price, as assessed annually, for all butter and cheese produced. The graziers were less dependent on government policy, but they were told that a Labor government would strengthen the wool market by encouraging the entry of China and the re-entry of the Soviet Union as buyers. In the event of wool prices falling below the cost of production, the imposition of a minimum export price would be considered.

Menzies's policy speech,<sup>2</sup> delivered in Melbourne a week later, was of a very different type. It was almost entirely an appeal for support on the basis of the Government's past record. Though he discussed economic difficulties in general terms, he made no specific proposals for the future beyond saying that, if the import restrictions his government had already imposed proved to be inadequate, he would not hesitate to take stronger action. In foreign policy, too, his emphasis was upon the Government's record, principally its policy of securing powerful allies (presumably the United States), and the negotiation of the A.N.Z.U.S. and S.E.A.T.O. agreements.

Menzies attacked Evatt for his part in the whole Petrov affair, particularly his supposed willingness to reject 'the evidence of witnesses called in Australia and the findings of three Australian judges on the mere say-so of the nation whose agents have been found guilty of systematic spying'.

Menzies then made what was to be a major point of the Liberal campaign:

Now all this could be laughed at, were it not that the Evatt

<sup>2</sup> Published as *Federal Election 1955—Joint Policy Speech*, by the Federal Secretariat of the Liberal Party of Australia.

Labor Party is asking you to vote us out and to put Dr Evatt in. I need not elaborate the point. I very much prefer that elections should be fought on objective political issues. But if behind these issues you are offered a new national leadership of the quality which emerges from the Petrov debate, it is my duty to remind you of that issue and to recall to you that policies can never be entirely separated from the character and quality of the man who puts them forward and, who, if successful, will administer them.

Both of these speeches were re-broadcast by national and commercial radio stations in Eden-Monaro. In addition, four hours of radio time on the national stations were occupied by other election broadcasts relayed from Sydney. Those who read the metropolitan newspapers were of course informed of the principal speeches of the party leaders during the campaign, and could read advertisements intended for general consumption. Otherwise the Eden-Monaro electors' contact with the election was solely through the local campaigns.

These campaigns were themselves influenced by assistance, advice or pressure from party headquarters. The Liberal Party's New South Wales headquarters, with a large and able staff and full-time representatives in the field, tries to fight its elections systematically. Its officials know, or think they know, which seats can be won and so justify a special expenditure of time and money, and which seats are so firmly committed to one side or the other that a lesser effort will suffice. Probably Liberal headquarters would have been surprised to see the party win Eden-Monaro, though some officials at least were not without hope. In any case, the importance of the Senate vote justified a hard-fought campaign. With a full-time organizer on the spot, this did not require much direct intervention from Sydney. However, headquarters spent about £200 on advertising in the Eden-Monaro newspapers.

There is an organizational anomaly in the conduct of the Labor Party's Federal campaigns which in 1955 led to a good deal of confusion in Eden-Monaro and elsewhere. In 1940 the then Federal leader, John Curtin, established a fund for propaganda purposes. Contrary to the party's tradition, this fund was to be solely under the control of politicians—trustees elected by the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party. Neither the Federal Executive nor the State Executives had any control over it. By

its nature it was a semi-secret fund which published no accounts of either contributions or expenditure.

Under this system, the men who organized the campaigns were no longer the men who financed them. The State party officials still arranged meetings and authorized advertisements, but the Federal Parliamentary leader effectively controlled the money which paid for them. When and where there was suspicion and hostility between the Federal leader and the State officials, as in New South Wales in 1955, the system could not work effectively.

During the campaign Evatt delegated control of the fund to L. J. Haylen, M.H.R., the member for Parkes and one of his parliamentary supporters. A new and, in this field, inexperienced advertising agency was employed to prepare and distribute advertising copy. There was little liaison with the New South Wales executive officers, whose own organizing record was not impressive. In this confusion, the campaign was well advanced before Fraser was finally informed that no money from the Federal fund would be spent in Eden-Monaro, and that he would have to finance all Labor propaganda from within the electorate.

With the prevailing uncertainty and suspicion, it was inevitable that this decision, which also applied to other electorates, should be followed by rumours of discrimination against candidates who had opposed Evatt. There is no evidence that this was so; Evatt's supporters fared no better than his critics. Presumably the Federal fund was so low that it was no longer possible to finance local propaganda even in marginal electorates.

#### ORGANIZING THE CAMPAIGNS

The principal difference between Labor and Liberal organization was in the role of the candidate. The Labor campaign was organized and directed by Fraser himself; the Liberal campaign was organized by a committee of party members. The difference was due rather to Fraser's position as sitting member than to any characteristics of the parties as such. In both parties, the sitting member controls his own campaigns.

At the meeting of the Federal Electorate Council before the campaign began, Fraser had himself formally elected as

campaign director, and his secretary as campaign treasurer. The Labor Party had no paid organizers in the electorate, but it had the services of the two Labor State members. Tully in Goulburn and Seiffert in Monaro kept some form of activity going on within their own electorates, as well as accompanying Fraser when he appeared in their territory. This left a gap in South Coast, where the Labor Party was weakest and persistent campaigning most necessary. Here Fraser had to depend entirely on part-time and amateur help. The limited Labor campaign, which concentrated on press and radio advertising, did not require much local effort. Branch officials in Goulburn, Cooma, and Bega saw to the placing of newspaper advertisements. Labor supporters, who were usually officials of branches where branches existed, helped organize public meetings, though Fraser often had to organize publicity for these meetings himself. Fraser broke new ground by leaving most of his newspaper advertising and all of his shorter radio announcements in the hands of Hansen-Rubensohn Pty Ltd, a Sydney advertising agency with long experience of handling Labor election campaigns. Some £300, or nearly half the total Labor campaign expenditure, was spent in this way.

The campaign in Goulburn had some measure of autonomy, which Fraser did not attempt to restrict. Goulburn was the only place where the party hired campaign rooms. It was also the only place where leaflets were printed, except for one case on the South Coast where a leaflet was used to advertise a meeting. From Goulburn and Cooma, and from Fraser's office in Canberra, bundles of how-to-vote cards and copies of the electoral roll were distributed to A.L.P. members and supporters who had agreed to see that the polling booths were manned or, at least, that the cards were available to voters.

The Labor campaign in Eden-Monaro was fought with very little interference or assistance from outside. Except for State-wide radio propaganda, advertisements in the Sydney press, and five outside speakers who came into the electorate at Fraser's invitation or their own, his campaign was fought in isolation from the rest of the State.

The Liberal campaign was also conducted almost in isolation, though some advertisements in local papers were inserted by party headquarters. The Liberals had the benefit of two paid

workers: the regular organizer who remained centred at Goulburn, and a temporary organizer at Bega. Control of the campaign was in the hands of a special committee elected at the time of Flanagan's selection as candidate. The committee consisted of P. J. Osborne, a grazier of Bungendore, J. Butler and R. C. Corby whom we have already encountered as candidates for selection, W. B. Holloway, a plumber in business in Goulburn, and R. B. Douglas, a bank manager of Queanbeyan. Each member of the committee concentrated on his own district. Osborne and W. Schnabel, the permanent organizer, were responsible for the co-ordination of the campaign.

Outside speakers were allocated to Eden-Monaro by party headquarters. A pool of speakers is available for this purpose during campaigns, and requests from campaign committees for particular speakers are met where possible. Except when the Prime Minister is speaking, it is then the responsibility of the campaign committee to arrange meetings.

The Eden-Monaro committee also controlled newspaper and radio advertising, the candidate's public meetings, and the printing and distribution of leaflets and how-to-vote cards.

## FINANCE

During the campaign itself, the provision of finance presented a very different problem for each party. The Liberals merely had to spend money; their divisional fund was already in existence. The Labor Party, having no fund of this kind, had to raise money while the campaign was in progress; in fact, commitments were often accepted before there was money to meet them. When the campaign began, there was already £160 in the Labor campaign fund, a surplus from the 1954 election. Even a minimal campaign required that several hundred pounds should be raised within the electorate.

In the event, about £600 was raised. Of this sum, about £150 came in individual donations from supporters, all but one of whom lived either within Eden-Monaro or in Canberra. There was one donation of £20, several of £10 10s. each and the remainder ranged from £5 to 10s. The rest of the money came in small donations, averaging three or four shillings, which were collected by trade union officials and other

supporters scattered over the electorate, armed with subscription lists.

There is no legal limit on the size of funds which may be collected for political purposes. However, the Commonwealth Electoral Act seeks to impose narrow limits on campaign expenditure. According to the Act:

A candidate shall not, in respect of any candidature, incur or authorize electoral expenses exceeding in the aggregate—

- (a) in the case of a Senate election—Five Hundred Pounds; or
- (b) in the case of a House of Representatives election—Two Hundred and fifty pounds.

Any hope that this refers only to the candidate's own contribution is carefully dispelled in a later clause:

'Electoral Expenses' includes all expenses incurred by or on behalf of or in the interests of any candidate at or in connexion with any election, excepting only the purchasing of electoral rolls, and the personal and reasonable living and travelling expenses of the candidate.<sup>3</sup>

The present restriction was imposed in 1946, before which permissible expenditure was limited to £100 for the House of Representatives and £250 for the Senate. Even in 1946, £250 was hardly adequate for a campaign in a country electorate by the relatively parsimonious standards of the Labor Party, and was much below the usual expenditure of non-Labor candidates. No doubt the hope of the Chifley Labor government, which introduced the amending legislation in 1946, was to bring about something approaching parity between the parties by forcing non-Labor candidates to reduce their expenditure approximately to the Labor level. Whether it ever had such an effect is to be doubted. At any rate, long before the Federal election of 1955, it had become quite impossible for either side to conduct an effective campaign for £250, or even for twice that amount, and the restriction was disregarded. It became, as the former limitation had been before 1946, a minor nuisance for candidates and campaign directors and for authors and commentators. For the law, though too restrictive to be observed, remains too much in force to be flouted openly. As a result, it is difficult to discuss election expenditure without a profusion of subjunctives and other circumlocutory devices.

<sup>3</sup> Commonwealth Electoral Act, 1918-1949, Sections 145 and 147.

For the above reasons, we cannot disclose in detail the precise estimates which we have formed for expenditure in the interests of Labor and Liberal candidates, but we can say with confidence that at the divisional level the Liberal Party had a decisive advantage. On those items that are comparable the Liberals' expenditure was 50 per cent higher on radio advertising, 43 per cent higher on newspaper advertising, and 10 per cent higher on printing and stationery.

Any more complete estimate of campaign expenditure would underline the Liberal Party's advantage, since a considerable sum was spent in Eden-Monaro by Liberal headquarters, while any expense involved in hiring halls for meetings was met by the local branches concerned. On both sides, the candidates and the visiting speakers paid their own expenses.

#### NEWSPAPERS

All the local newspapers carried election advertisements, and, with one minor exception, printed advertisements for both Fraser and Flanagan. The *Goulburn Evening Post* and the *Bega District News* gave a good coverage of election meetings and the *Cooma-Monaro Express* gave lengthy reports of a few. The weeklies printed summaries of speeches given in their own localities, usually from hand-outs supplied by the candidates themselves. The Goulburn and Bega papers strictly separated news and editorial comment. In the others, comment was either lacking altogether or was inserted at the whim of the editors.

In sheer volume of advertising, the Liberal Party had a decided advantage. The following table gives the amount of newspaper space, in square inches, used by each party for advertising purposes. This includes direct propaganda, advertisements for meetings, and advice to intending postal voters.

This table needs little comment. It shows the Liberals' concentration on the South Coast through the *Bega District News*. There were no Labor advertisements in the Braidwood papers, whose proprietor has a long-standing disagreement with Fraser. The Liberal Party advertised heavily in the *Canberra Times*, which is read by some Eden-Monaro voters in Queanbeyan and other parts of the electorate adjacent to the A.C.T.—an expense that seems hard to justify, unless cost was not an important

TABLE V

POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS IN EDEN-MONARO NEWSPAPERS—FEDERAL ELECTION, 1955

	<i>Liberal</i> sq. in.	<i>Labor</i> sq. in.
<i>Goulburn Evening Post</i> (daily) . . . . .	225	133
<i>Bega District News</i> (bi-weekly) . . . . .	344	176
<i>Cooma-Monaro Express</i> (bi-weekly) . . . . .	192	142
<i>Queanbeyan Age</i> (bi-weekly) . . . . .	153	110
<i>Bombala Times</i> (weekly) . . . . .	69	40
<i>Moruya Examiner</i> (weekly) . . . . .	63	30
<i>Braidwood Review</i> and <i>Braidwood Despatch</i> (both weekly) . . . . .	40	—
<i>Canberra Times</i> (daily—published outside the electorate) . . . . .	197	—
Total . . . . .	<u>1283</u>	<u>631</u>

consideration. Of the 204 Queanbeyan electors interviewed before the Federal poll, only twenty saw the *Canberra Times* regularly, and a further twelve read it occasionally.

The *Goulburn Evening Post* and *Bega District News* supported the Liberal Party in editorials, though both confined their criticism to Evatt and to Labor policy in general, and made no reference to Fraser. Editorial preference seemed to have no effect on news coverage, which was of a high standard in these two papers and satisfactory throughout the electorate. Only in the Braidwood papers was there obvious use of the news columns to benefit either candidate.

## RADIO

Thanks to the records required by the Australian Broadcasting Control Board, it is possible to be quite precise on the amount of radio propaganda put out by each party. Table VI (p. 75) sets out the political material broadcast by the three national and four commercial stations during the campaign.

The Liberals' advantage in purchased radio time was overwhelming—even greater than their generally higher level of expenditure would suggest. This could be either because of a conviction of the greater efficacy of radio advertising or because their expenditure in other fields, especially newspaper advertising, had already reached saturation point.

The quality of the broadcasts on both sides naturally varied,

TABLE VI

POLITICAL BROADCASTS IN EDEN-MONARO  
FEDERAL ELECTION, 1955

	Talks (in minutes)	Announcements (number of announcements)			
		25 words	50 words	100 words	1 minute
<i>National Stations:*</i>					
Labor . . .	240				
Liberal . . .	185				
Country Party .	45				
<i>Commercial Stations:</i>					
Labor . . .	370†	43	21	—	58
Liberal . . .	1090	203	543	65	11
Country Party‡	30	—	26	—	—
Independent .	60	13	—	—	—

\* These were all speeches of party leaders intended for a national audience, and had no particular relevance to Eden-Monaro.

† Including 60 minutes sponsored by the Miners' Federation.

‡ All Country Party broadcasts were from 2CA Canberra, which is heard in the electorate of Hume, which the Country Party succeeded in winning from Labor.

but the technical standard of the Labor broadcasts was both higher and more even. They were all the work of highly-skilled professionals. All the Labor talks were written and delivered by Fraser himself, and the shorter announcements were prepared and produced by Hansen-Rubensohn Pty Ltd, often on the basis of Fraser's suggestions. Flanagan's broadcast speeches were not of Fraser's standard, while some of the shorter talks were all too obviously the work of enthusiastic amateurs.

For the duration of the campaign, the three stations that had been broadcasting Fraser's weekly session 'Your Member Speaks', free of charge, allowed him to purchase the same time for campaign addresses. He was thus able to exploit the popularity which the session had gained.

## MEETINGS

The Labor Party held about forty meetings of all kinds during the campaign; the Liberal Party about twenty-five. Only five Labor and four Liberal meetings were held in halls; most were

held in the streets, while several Labor meetings were held during meal breaks at factories and other work-places.

Incomparably the best attended and most publicized meeting was that addressed by the Prime Minister in the recreation hall at the Snowy Mountains Authority's East Camp, Cooma. This was Menzies's only speech in a New South Wales country electorate, and Fraser pardonably interpreted it as showing a particular desire to remove him from parliament. In fact, however, proximity to Canberra seems to have been as important a reason for Menzies's choice of Cooma. About 670 people attended the meeting, at which Menzies was well received and heard in silence, though there were many Labor supporters present. Menzies followed the lines of his policy speech, adding a little local colour by emphasizing his government's continued support of the Snowy Mountains scheme. He stressed the importance of winning a Senate majority in New South Wales.

Senator Spooner, Minister for National Development, spoke at Queanbeyan and Goulburn late in the campaign. All the other supporting speakers spoke only on the South Coast. They were Sir Eric Harrison, Vice-President of the Executive Council, W. C. Wentworth, M.H.R., Howard Neale, M.H.R., and J. G. Beale, M.L.A. This concentration on South Coast, where the Liberal Party was already strong, to the neglect of Goulburn and other hostile areas, was one of the curious features of the Liberal campaign.

Fraser's supporting speakers were distributed more evenly around the electorate. On the Coast he appeared with W. F. Sheahan, the State Attorney-General, and Allan Manning, a young and personable member of the New South Wales A.L.P. Executive. In Goulburn he appeared with E. J. Harrison, M.H.R., Gordon Anderson, M.H.R., E. J. Ward, M.H.R., and Tully. In the last week of the campaign he went south to Monaro with Anderson and Seiffert, leaving Tully and W. E. O'Connor, M.H.R., in Goulburn to fight a rearguard action against an expected burst of Liberal activity which hardly materialized.

Factory and work-place meetings occupied much of Fraser's time in and around Goulburn. He and his supporters spoke during meal breaks at two textile factories, a wool store, two

general hospitals, the mental hospital at Kenmore, and two railway depots. A Labor candidate has no trouble in holding such meetings. If he is not well known, he can be introduced by a union representative on the job, and can be sure of a sympathetic hearing. A Liberal candidate usually feels that he is treading on hostile ground. If he has himself introduced by the manager or proprietor, this may make it more difficult for him to overcome the antagonism of most of his audience. If he speaks during working hours he will probably be heard apathetically; if he speaks during a meal break he may not be listened to at all. Many trade unionists vote Liberal, but the factory is not a place where they are prepared to demonstrate their political nonconformity.

Flanagan addressed only one work-place meeting, and this was at a timber mill where work was stopped for the occasion. However, he visited other factories and talked informally to groups of employees.

In general, Labor meetings appear to have drawn the larger audiences. Approximate attendances at places where both parties held meetings were:

TABLE VII

APPROXIMATE ATTENDANCES AT PLACES WHERE BOTH PARTIES HELD  
ELECTION MEETINGS

	<i>Liberal</i>	<i>Labor</i>
Cooma . . . . .	670	50
Queanbeyan . . . . .	50	50
Adaminaby . . . . .	8	20
Bega . . . . .	30	50
Eden . . . . .	16	40
Cobargo . . . . .	16	32
Moruya . . . . .	22	46
Goulburn . . . . .	150	150

#### OTHER PROPAGANDA

A large item in the proposed Liberal budget was for postages, the corresponding figure on the Labor side being very much smaller. This reflects an important difference in campaign tactics. The Liberal Party sends some kind of leaflet or manifesto by post to the presumed head of every household, whose names are laboriously gathered from the electoral roll. When

the Labor Party uses leaflets at all, it has them distributed by hand by supporters or schoolboys. The Liberals used a local leaflet which concentrated on Flanagan and a leaflet for general circulation published in Sydney. When it became clear that no propaganda would be available from Sydney, members of the Goulburn A.L.P. branch began to produce a leaflet of their own, but its appearance was delayed and it played no part in the campaign. Consequently, the only Labor leaflet used was a single page announcing Fraser's street meetings in Ulladulla and Milton, on the Coast, together with a few slogans.

It would require an intensive analysis to decide the effectiveness of the Liberal practice of sending leaflets through the post. It is expensive, not only because of mailing costs, but because the addressing of some 10,000 envelopes is in itself a considerable task. The argument in its favour, of course, is that the voter is likely to consider a personally addressed communication whereas he would throw away unread an unwrapped leaflet found in his letter box.

With compulsory and preferential voting, the how-to-vote card becomes one of the most important documents in the campaign. Many of the voters are unaware of the candidates for the House of Representatives until they reach the polling booth; it is safe to assume that most do not know the Senate candidates. The Liberals' concern with the Senate result in 1955 made it more necessary than ever to see that the polling booths were manned. On each side, the task of providing volunteers to distribute cards outside the booths was primarily one for the party branches, but it seems to have been more effectively co-ordinated and supervised by Fraser than by the Liberal campaign committee. As a result, though both parties covered the larger booths adequately, there were fewer gaps on the Labor side among the smaller booths, at least in the northern half of the electorate. The general distribution of the cards did not prevent an informal vote of nearly 13 per cent for the Senate and 5 per cent for the House of Representatives. The manning of polling booths has some importance apart from the assistance it provides for ignorant voters, since it is one of the few occasions when the public sees party members at work, and gains its own impression—favourable or otherwise—of the local representatives of each party.

THE ISSUES<sup>4</sup>

Each party put forward its own mixture of policy and personal argument. The principal policy issues were the general record of the Federal government, the level of social service payments, foreign policy and defence, and Communism. These were supplemented by two conflicting attempts to present the campaign in personal terms. The Liberals treated the effective personal choice as one between Menzies and Evatt; the Labor Party emphasized the choice between Fraser and his opponents.

This was the obvious course for both sides. It is safe to assume that Menzies was in fact a more popular figure than Evatt among undecided voters in such an electorate as Eden-Monaro; it is even more likely that Fraser had a great personal advantage over his almost unknown Liberal opponent. The Labor campaign was fought in the belief that the party was facing a reverse on a scale that could easily lose Eden-Monaro. Anything which emphasized the local and personal aspects of the campaign would be to Fraser's advantage. If the choice could be presented as one for or against Fraser, as well as for or against the Labor Party, the widespread belief that the government would be returned with an increased majority might even be turned to his advantage. Undecided voters would feel that they could safely vote for Fraser because of his qualities as a local member without running the risk of helping to elect a Labor government.

Fraser's first election broadcast was almost wholly an appeal for support on personal and non-partisan grounds, and this theme continued throughout his campaign. Six one-minute announcements prepared for him by Hansen-Rubensohn Pty Ltd did not include a single reference to the Labor Party or to its policy. In fact, there were times when these seemed almost to be dismissed as irrelevant.

In this election, the wise voter will choose the MAN, regardless of side issues. In Eden-Monaro, for instance, the choice will undoubtedly be Allan Fraser.

On December 10 our vote should be ONE Allan Fraser for Eden-Monaro and ONE Jim Fraser for Canberra. This election

<sup>4</sup> A few of the statements on which this section is based appeared in the local press, and could have been documented. This has not been done, however, since notes taken by the authors at meetings, and tape recordings of broadcast speeches are much more important sources.

is very different to any other. It is an election in which *loyalty* should count more than all the side issues which are being dragged in. Allan Fraser has never wavered in his loyalty to the people of his electorate.

Too many issues are being brought into politics which should never be brought into politics at all. These should be ignored. As far as Eden-Monaro is concerned, there is only one question for the elector to ask: 'Has Allan Fraser given this electorate fair and active service in his 12 years as our member?'

The only personal reason given for voting for Fraser was his record as member for Eden-Monaro. Flanagan was naturally unable to make any comparable claims. His leaflets were able to point to three qualifications that might be expected to go down well in the electorate, and that Fraser lacked: Flanagan was a 'small farmer'; he had lived in the electorate all his life; and he was an ex-serviceman. To judge from the subsequent State campaigns, these are qualifications which may help an unknown candidate trying to win a seat, but are hardly worth mentioning for a sitting member. They are completely overshadowed in importance by his past political record.

Both local Liberal propaganda and advertisements inserted from Sydney stressed the implicit choice between Menzies and Evatt. The theme of 'Menzies the Builder or Evatt the Wrecker' appeared constantly. Evatt's letter to Molotov was frequently mentioned, the suggestion usually being that it showed a serious lack of judgment on his part, and the split in the Labor Party was cited as evidence that he was unable to lead even his own supporters. The Labor campaign made no attempt to defend Evatt, and Fraser hardly mentioned him except for passing references to his policy speech.

For obvious reasons, the Labor campaign's preoccupation with Fraser's virtues was less marked in Fraser's own speeches. Except for defending his own stand in the Browne-Fitzpatrick case, Fraser concentrated on issues of policy. The most prominent of these was the level of social service payments, especially pensions and child endowment. Fraser wholeheartedly supported the social service proposals in Evatt's policy speech, and claimed, as chairman of the party's social services committee, to be largely responsible for them. There was, nevertheless, an important difference between Evatt's version of the proposals and Fraser's. Evatt proposed to restore the value of pensions and

other social services to the 1949 level and to provide the necessary finance by a reduction in defence expenditure and an excess profits tax. Fraser mentioned no new tax; in fact he asserted that the increase could be made without any additional taxation by cutting defence expenditure and ceasing to finance Commonwealth public works from revenue. His argument was that the money to restore social service rates was already being collected, but was being improperly diverted to public works, which should have been financed by loans. Any inability to borrow sufficient money for this purpose was the fault of the government itself and was no excuse for penalizing the recipients of social services.

In defence of the government's social service record, Liberal speakers pointed to new benefits introduced since 1949, denied any substantial fall in the value of pensions, and claimed that any further increases would require either the inflationary use of bank credit or higher taxation. Where Fraser sought to isolate the question of social service rates, the Liberals tried to treat it as part of a general discussion of prosperity and standards of living. The prosperity of Australia under non-Labor government was a major theme in Liberal propaganda, as it was throughout Australia.

Here the Labor counter was to point to groups whose position was allegedly worsening: those on or near the basic wage, which had not been adjusted since 1953; those who had not benefited by the partial increase in marginal rates of pay in the same year; small business men who were supposed to be in difficulties because of credit restrictions; farmers whose incomes had declined because of the government's failure to develop new markets for primary produce. This latter point provided the connecting link with another of the campaign issues—foreign policy.

Fraser's peculiar position among the contending ideological groups in the A.L.P. has already been mentioned. Though he had opposed Evatt, and had some sympathy with the faction associated with the Industrial Groups in domestic matters, he had never supported the results of their extreme anti-communism in foreign affairs. He accepted the trends in Labor foreign policy of which Evatt now became the chief exponent, and which included recognition of the Communist government

of China, widespread trade with Communist as well as other countries, and a suspicion that Australia's inevitably close relations with the United States had come to mean the blanket acceptance of American policies. These trends in policy were put forward by Labor speakers in Eden-Monaro—most of them by Fraser himself.

The Liberal reply was that Australia could survive only with strong friends. By entering into the A.N.Z.U.S. and S.E.A.T.O. agreements, Australia had done something to secure her position, and the Menzies government would continue to follow the same course. Labor foreign policies would leave Australia exposed to attack. The recognition of the Communist government of China could only aid Australia's potential enemies.

Communism as an election issue in Eden-Monaro was an exotic introduced by W. C. Wentworth and Sir Eric Harrison. Though local Liberals raised 'the Molotov letter', there were few serious suggestions that the Labor Party or Evatt, let alone Fraser, were pro-Communist in any strict sense. Harrison and Wentworth, at meetings on the South Coast, argued that Evatt was under Communist influence and that his actions over a long period showed that he was sympathetic to the Communists. Wentworth extended the argument to Fraser by pointing out that he had been a Vice-President of the Australian Council for Civil Liberties, which Wentworth described as a Communist-front organization. Fraser was sufficiently alarmed by this development to publish, during the last week of the campaign, a series of newspaper advertisements in which he denounced Communism as a philosophy which must be fatal to democratic rights and which could only be fought by presenting better ideas, as well as by establishing stable prosperity.

The Labor Party's socialization objective received a brief airing. The disagreement followed the usual lines, with Flanagan seeking to imply that the A.L.P. sought government ownership of all business, and Fraser restricting the possible use of nationalization to monopolies that were injurious to the public and to competitive private enterprise.

It cannot be said that either side offered the electors a coherent and balanced group of policies. There was no serious attempt to define the country's economic difficulties and to argue the best means of overcoming them. The Liberals gener-

ally referred to past prosperity under Liberal governments; the Labor Party cryptically implied that any crisis was very largely of the government's own making. On the other hand, foreign policy and the related subject of defence expenditure were seriously and quite fully argued by both sides, at a higher level than in most electorates.

### THE INDEPENDENT CAMPAIGN

The decision of Royce Beavis, the former Liberal Party organizer, to contest Eden-Monaro meant that for the first time since 1946 the contest would not be a simple one between Liberal and Labor candidates. After the 1954 election, Beavis had given up political work, and had turned to the selling of mutual trust investments in Sydney. Why he decided to re-contest Eden-Monaro, under circumstances that offered him so much less prospect of success than in 1954, remains uncertain.

Supporters of both parties argued that Beavis's candidacy was a Machiavellian tactic of their opponents. A few Liberals firmly believed that the Labor Party was surreptitiously backing Beavis in the hope of splitting the Liberal vote. In Labor circles it was held, rather more plausibly, that Beavis had been encouraged to stand by the Liberals, in the belief that he would obtain the votes of Liberal supporters who would not vote for a Catholic but whose preferences, if they followed Beavis's advice, would ultimately benefit Flanagan.

In reality, it seems that Beavis received no assistance or encouragement from either party, at any rate within the Eden-Monaro electorate. Any possibility of Labor support was immediately dispelled by Beavis's campaign, which was almost entirely directed against Fraser. One small incident shows that the Liberals also declined any co-operation. During the 1954 campaign Beavis had newspaper matts made of his photograph for propaganda purposes, and these, though strictly the property of the Liberal Party, were left in the files of the *Goulburn Evening Post* and forgotten. Beavis instructed the paper to use these matts in his advertisements, and some photographs of Beavis in fact appeared in the *Post*. On being thus reminded of the existence of the matts, the local Liberal headquarters

demanded that they be returned, and refused Beavis permission to use them.

Why should Beavis have contested the seat on his own initiative? No independent candidate had any serious chance of winning Eden-Monaro. In 1943 four Independents together had polled only 8 per cent of the votes cast. Possibly the answer is one of personality. Beavis enjoyed experimenting with new ideas, as he had done, with mixed results, as Liberal organizer. Having lost the 1954 election after an intensive campaign, he decided that such techniques were of little value. One good editorial in a local paper, or a letter to the editor, or possibly a feature article might have more effect than many advertisements. He believed he was popular in the electorate, and could expect a large personal vote. His own justification for standing was that the government was sure of a majority, but would need to face effective opposition in the House. The divided Labor Party was incapable of providing this opposition, which must therefore come from an Independent such as himself. While the argument appears far fetched, and may not have been taken entirely seriously by Beavis himself, it was in keeping with his mercurial and ambitious personality.

His campaign could not have been an expensive one. He gave a twenty-minute radio broadcast over three stations, and inserted a total of twelve advertisements in the local papers. Three of these included advice to give Flanagan his second preference votes. Having no organization, Beavis distributed no how-to-vote cards.

As well as his paid advertisements, Beavis sent letters and news hand-outs to the local press. He held no meetings, and at no stage appeared publicly anywhere in the electorate.

The two main themes of his campaign were the need for a non-party voice in parliament and attacks upon Fraser. One of his advertisements will serve as an illustration of the latter theme:

Attention Labor voters! Strong Buildings cannot be Built on Shattered Foundations. The Member for Eden-Monaro—Mr A. D. Fraser—by a selfish desire to further his own position has played no small part in putting the Labor Party in its present position. Some twelve months ago, after asking Dr Evatt to help him win Eden-Monaro, he saw fit to show disloyalty to his leader by contesting his leadership. Why not help Labor

get well again by removing the troublemakers? Australia needs strong opposition in parliament. A vote for Fraser is a vote for disunity. Good men are ready to rebuild if they are given the chance. The chance they need is a crushing defeat of the EVATT FRASER DISUNITY ELEMENT. VOTE INDEPENDENT.<sup>5</sup>

His policy, which was always expressed in general terms, differed little from that of the Liberal Party. However, Beavis refrained from mentioning his former employers and their present champion, Flanagan. While he reminded the voters that he had contested the seat in 1954, he did not mention that on that occasion he had had Liberal endorsement. His first press hand-out began ambiguously: 'Royce Beavis who figured in a close finish with Allan Fraser at the last Federal elections, has announced that he will again contest Eden-Monaro as an independent candidate.'<sup>6</sup> Beavis throughout tried to present himself as the 'natural contender' against Fraser; perhaps as the only man who could unseat him. It was true, by the standards of most electorates, that Beavis and Fraser had fought out a close contest in 1954; it might even have been true that Beavis, as he claimed, 'gave Fraser a fright' on that occasion; and it would have been too much to expect Beavis to add that Fraser's 1954 majority of 1846 was the largest by which he had ever held the seat up to that time.

Beavis's total was 2113 or 5·3 per cent of the formal votes, and he lost his deposit. His belief in his personal following had not been entirely illusory. His most recent predecessor as an independent candidate for Eden-Monaro had polled only 411 votes in 1946—and in a closer contest his second preference votes would have been decisive. However, the swing to Fraser was such that he was denied even this share of deciding the result.

Beavis's votes were distributed evenly over the electorate. In all but six of the 21 subdivisions he obtained something between 4 per cent and 6 per cent of the formal votes. Both the subdivisions where he was relatively weak and those where he was relatively strong were widely scattered. His highest share of the vote was 8·1 per cent in the coastal subdivision of Milton, and his lowest, 3·2 per cent, in the subdivision of Bungendore; in the Goulburn State electorate.

As Beavis's preferences were not distributed, we cannot be

<sup>5</sup> *Goulburn Evening Post*, 27 November 1955.

<sup>6</sup> *Bombala Times*, 20 November 1955.

sure how strongly they favoured the Liberal candidate, or how the result might have differed if he had not stood. For purposes of analysis in a later chapter, it will be assumed that 80 per cent of his second preference favoured Flanagan, and 20 per cent favoured Fraser. It should be remembered that this means that support for Fraser will be slightly under-estimated.

#### THE RESULTS AND THE AFTERMATH

Counting of votes for the House of Representatives was not finalized for over a week and several seats, including Evatt's, remained doubtful to the end, but it was clear almost from the first returns that the Government had been re-elected with an increased majority. Before counting ceased on the night of the election it was also clear, to those who were interested, that Eden-Monaro had defied the prevailing swing against Labor, and that Fraser would hold the seat with a record majority, though still quite a modest one. The reports of Labor scrutineers, later confirmed by the official figures, showed a remarkably uniform movement of about 2 per cent of the votes to Fraser since the 1954 election. In 1954 he had polled 20,824 to Beavis's 19,149. In 1955 he polled 21,007 to Flanagan's 16,609 and Beavis's 2113—an absolute majority of 2285.

On the evening of Sunday, 11 December, with seven-eighths of the votes counted and an absolute majority of 2000 on the board, Fraser had the pleasant task of giving an election commentary over three Eden-Monaro radio stations. While insisting that he was principally concerned to summarize the results of the election, he naturally referred to his own striking victory, expressing his 'deepest appreciation of this marked expression of confidence'. He gave a brief review of the results of the election, and outlined the position in the remaining doubtful seats. He avoided any expression of opinion on the causes of Labor's defeat, saying that this would be inappropriate in an election commentary. Of the Labor members who had lost their seats or were still in danger, only P. J. Clarey, who then seemed likely to lose the Victorian seat of Bendigo on the preferences of an Anti-Communist candidate, received praise or commiseration. The others, including Evatt, were mentioned without comment.

The result was, of course, a triumph and a relief for Fraser, who had never doubted that he was facing a difficult fight and more than once had expected defeat. Such a comfortable majority not only removed the immediate threat of defeat but suggested that after a twelve-year period during which his majorities had been measured in hundreds, he might at last have gained a firm hold on the seat. He might well conclude that only the most violent of political swings or the disintegration of the Labor party could bring about his defeat.

Of the 57 Labor and Anti-Communist Labor members of the 'old' House of Representatives, 15 were defeated. Nearly all of the remainder were returned with reduced majorities, except for those who benefited by a redistribution. Only two, Fraser, and L. H. Barnard in Tasmania, improved on their 1954 figures.

If the Eden-Monaro result was a triumph for Fraser, correspondingly it was a disaster for his opponents. Flanagan's candidacy was a failure. It was not a fiasco or a spectacular failure, but a decisive, unambiguous reverse. Beavis's failure, though more obvious, is harder to assess, since we do not know precisely what he hoped to gain from his campaign, but his principal aim—the removal of Fraser—had come to nothing. After the election, Beavis once more disappeared from Eden-Monaro. Flanagan attended the declaration of the poll, in Goulburn on 23 December, where he congratulated Fraser, and hoped that he would have the opportunity to contest the electorate again.

With the election over and the paralysing preoccupation of each member with his own salvation lifted, the depleted Labor Party could again safely consider the question of its own leadership. For the week after the election, Evatt's opponents faced an exciting prospect. Evatt was in the greatest danger of losing his seat. On the other hand Calwell and Fraser, the two most senior and most able members of the party who had declared against Evatt during the dispute, had gained what were, under the circumstances, personal triumphs in their own electorates. If Evatt lost his seat his failure as a leader would be generally admitted, and his former supporters would be comforted. In these circumstances, Calwell and Fraser could have risen almost automatically to the leadership of the party.

On 18 December the count in Barton was completed; Evatt

retained his seat by 226 votes in a poll of 40,000. It was no longer a question of anyone merely rising to the leadership; any contender was faced with the much more formidable task of removing Evatt.

Neither Calwell nor Fraser had the positive support which this would have required. Calwell did not attempt to challenge Evatt, and was well content to retain his position as deputy-leader. In the absence of other contenders, Fraser contested the leadership against Evatt when the officers of the Parliamentary Labor Party were elected prior to the new parliamentary session. He polled 20 votes to Evatt's 58—the latter's most convincing triumph since the A.L.P. dispute began. The result had an ironic parallel with that in Eden-Monaro. It is hard to see how any Liberal candidate could have polled fewer votes than Flanagan; similarly it is hard to see how any member of caucus who had stood against Evatt could have polled fewer votes than Fraser. Fraser's failure against Evatt was as striking as his success in his own electorate.

This was on 10 February 1956. Seven days earlier Cahill had announced that the New South Wales election would be held on 3 March, and attention was abruptly transferred to State politics.

### THE COMMUNIST CAMPAIGN

Eden-Monaro is not a promising field for the activities of the Communist Party. Communist voters in Australia are highly concentrated in the manufacturing suburbs of the larger capital cities and on the New South Wales coalfields. Captain's Flat, the only mining town in Eden-Monaro, is also the only place in which there is much overt Communist activity, and Captain's Flat lives its own life, having little effect on the politics of the rest of the electorate.

The Communist Party has attempted to win support in the country for many years, though with little success. It tries to attract both the rural wage-earners and the smaller and less prosperous farmers. For nearly thirty years, the Communists have tried to gain a foothold in the Australian Workers' Union, the principal union of bush workers. They have fought a long battle with the closed circle of officials who control this huge

organization, and who responded by amending the union's rules to make it impossible for Communists to hold office. Despite this provision, opponents of the ruling bloc gained control of the New South Wales branch in 1942, but were promptly turned out of office by the Union's federal executive. Since then the Communists have been unable to do more than organize small local centres of resistance within the A.W.U. One such centre, though not controlled by Communists alone, is at Captain's Flat.

The perennial antagonism between the Communists and the A.W.U. leaders subsided temporarily during the A.L.P. dispute when both found themselves on the same side in opposition to the A.L.P. Industrial Groups.

Other trade unions are poorly organized over most of Eden-Monaro. Construction workers on the Snowy Mountains scheme are unionized, as are the railway-workers of Goulburn, but the Communist Party is not strong in either place.

The Communist Party has always claimed to be the true representative of the smaller farmers, and its campaigns on their behalf have been stepped up considerably in recent years. The party conducts radio sessions on a number of country stations (including 2GN Goulburn), aimed primarily at gaining the support of farmers. Their most consistent themes are closer settlement, cheap credit and more extensive State works, especially improved transport and electricity and water supply. Communist policy has favoured the retention and extension of 'organized marketing' under boards chosen primarily by producers, but with some representation of consumers. Generally the party has opposed any reduction in the price of primary products, as received by the farmer; in fact it currently points out that farmers' incomes are falling, whereas profits in secondary industry and finance have been rising rapidly. It is implied that, by unspecified action to reduce the returns to 'middlemen', prices for the consumer can be lowered while at the same time returns to the farmer are maintained or increased. All of this bears a striking similarity to the principal themes of Country Party propaganda, especially in Victoria. In fact, in its approach to the farmers, the Communist Party takes up the traditional positions of agrarian radicalism, best exemplified in Australia by the Victorian Country Party. References

to collective farming and similar alarming innovations are avoided.

As far as can be seen, this approach to the farmers has had little result, even by the very modest standards of Communist support in the capital cities. The few Communist candidates who contest country electorates (with the exception of mining electorates) poll very poorly, and most of their support comes from the country towns. The farmers' hostility to the Communist Party was shown most clearly at the anti-Communist referendum of 1951, when the large majority for 'No' in New South Wales came from the metropolitan and mining areas. The country electorates showed a substantial majority for 'Yes'.

The Communist Party is understandably reluctant to disclose the size and distribution of its membership. There is a branch of the party at Captain's Flat, and it is reasonable to suppose that there are also branches in some of the larger towns. The Captain's Flat branch is evidently not a large one, since there were only 61 voters for the Communist Senate team in 1955, of whom members of the party were probably a minority. The Communists of Captain's Flat have given their party some trouble in the past, for the miners have a tradition of extreme militancy and have been as unwilling to accept counsels of moderation from the Communist Party as from any other source. Nevertheless, the party has at least emerged from the hectic industrial history of Captain's Flat with a branch of its own, whereas A.L.P. organization never recovered from a bitter strike in 1948.

The Communist Party's scattered forces in Eden-Monaro are held together by periodic visits from a full-time party organizer, by the distribution of the bi-weekly paper, *Tribune*, and the monthly *Communist Review*, and presumably also by other contacts between the branches and the party headquarters in Sydney.

The Communists' direct interest in the campaign in Eden-Monaro was confined to the Senate. Their propaganda did not specifically advise a vote for Fraser in the House of Representatives election, merely urging that Labor candidates should be given second preference after Communist candidates, to 'avoid any leakage of votes from the Labor movement'. Some of the Captain's Flat Communists declared that they would not vote for any Labor candidate whom they regarded as associated

with the Industrial Groups, but there is no reason to doubt that most members and supporters of the Communist Party voted for Fraser.

The Communist Party campaign in Eden-Monaro virtually consisted of six five-minute talks from 2GN Goulburn and the distribution of a leaflet urging support for the Communist Senate team.<sup>7</sup> Only a minority of the voters is within radio range of 2GN, and probably only a much smaller minority ever saw the leaflet. The radio talks were divided between the General Secretary of the party, L. L. Sharkey, and the leader of the Communist Senate team, J. Healy, the General Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation. Healy's talks had no particular country application. Indeed, as was perhaps natural, if they concentrated on any theme it was on shipping and sea transport. Sharkey's talks, on the other hand, were in part aimed to appeal to farmers. In almost the first paragraph of Sharkey's first talk, the farmers received a commiserating reference: 'Today, we have an unstable economy, dismissals are taking place, jobs are threatened, farm incomes are falling and the small man everywhere is feeling the pinch.' Sharkey's policy proposals were divided into two groups, headed 'for workers' and 'for farmers'. In the former category came higher wages, equal pay for the sexes, industrial conciliation in place of arbitration, Federal price control and 'full freedom for trade unions to conduct their own affairs'. Farmers were offered price guarantees and the extension of orderly marketing, cheap credit, public works, closer settlement and increased social services.

The Communist approach to foreign policy was usually put forward in general terms: 'The Communist Party fights for peace, for peaceful co-existence between nations and countries with different social systems. International problems must be settled by negotiations, not by means of atomic weapons.' There were, however, such specific proposals as the restoration of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, the recognition of the Communist government of China and the withdrawal of Australian troops from Malaya.

Sharkey gave a familiar explanation of the relations between

<sup>7</sup> The Communist Party also sought to advertise over 2XL, but the station refused to handle its advertisements.

the Communist Party and the Labor Party, suitably modified in the light of the dispute within the A.L.P.:

The Communist Party differs in principle from the A.L.P. It bases itself on the principles of socialism as taught by Karl Marx. The Labor Party is a party of reform. . . . The Communist Party also fights for reforms, for improvements in living standards here and now. As the Labor Party is a party of reforms, and both appeal to the people, there is often unity on such questions as a 'No' vote in the referendum, on the question of margins for skilled work and numerous other reforms. Both are opposed to the domestic and foreign policies of the present government. Our Party will have the responsibilities in the campaign in arousing the people to their interests contained in a denial of a further term for Menzies and to end the treacherous role of the Groupers, who support Menzies while claiming to be 'Labor'.

The last sentence appears to refer only to the candidates of the Anti-Communist Labor Party and not to those Labor candidates, including Fraser, who were regarded, with varying degrees of accuracy, as being on the side of the Groups.

It is obviously impossible, within the scope of any such broad survey as this, to discuss the organization of a small and semi-secret body such as the Communist Party, or to account for the support it receives. In recent Federal elections 'support' has accounted for only a fraction of the votes given to Communist Senate candidates in New South Wales. At every Senate election since 1951, the Communist team has had the good fortune to appear first on the long and complicated Senate ballot paper. As a result, the real significance of the Communist vote is not that it shows the extent of support for the party, but that it serves as an index of political ignorance and apathy.

It is certain that very many of the 108,000 electors of New South Wales who voted for the Communist Senate team did so not because of any conviction or preference, but simply because of the team's advantageous position on the ballot paper. The Communist Party advises its supporters to give their second preferences to the Labor Party, and in other elections 80 per cent or more of Communist voters have done so; but this time about 70 per cent gave their second preferences to the Liberal candidates. Why? Because the Liberal team appeared next to the Communist team on the ballot paper. No doubt some

genuine Communist voters gave the Liberals their second preferences by accident or design, but the distribution of preferences suggests that many thousands of voters merely filled in the ballot paper from left to right, neither knowing nor caring for whom they were voting.

This conclusion is strengthened by the Eden-Monaro figures. The Communist Senate vote was just over 2000, or 5.5 per cent—an increase of 1 per cent over the figure for 1953. The Communist vote within each subdivision bears very little relation to the political allegiance of the district, but a good deal more to the proportion of informal voters.<sup>8</sup> In Eden-Monaro the Communist vote and the informal vote are both indices of apathy—as long as the Communist team heads the ballot paper. Goulburn and Queanbeyan, the two principal Labor centres, showed smaller Communist votes than the Liberal strongholds of Bega and Cobargo. If the principal factor in determining the size of the Communist vote was apathy, it is possible that the very absence of anything that could be described as a Communist campaign over most of the electorate strengthened rather than weakened its vote. If more people had been able to identify the Communist candidates, probably fewer would have voted for them.

The fascinating proposition that, to gain votes in Eden-Monaro, the Communist Party should conceal its existence as much as possible, is true only while it continues to draw first position on the ballot paper. The last time it faced the electors without this advantage, in 1949, the Communist Party polled only 246 votes in Eden-Monaro, 84 of which were in the recognized Labor subdivisions of Queanbeyan, Bungendore and Goulburn.

The Communist Party has made little impression in Eden-Monaro except at isolated points. Though it polled well for the Senate, this was a fortuitous result which bore little relation either to the party's policy and objectives, or to its election campaign. While the present system of Senate elections remains, it will be possible for the Communists, or any other minor party which has its share or more of good luck, to make an impressive showing. It is possible that the Communist Party will ultimately win some foothold in the country towns

<sup>8</sup> See Table VIII.

and even among the farmers, but whether there is any present basis for such a foothold is very doubtful.

The following table shows how the Communist vote varied with the number of informal votes rather than with support for the Labor Party. 'Labor' subdivisions are those in which Fraser gained a majority in the 1955 House of Representatives election.

TABLE VIII

	<i>Communist votes %</i>	<i>Informal votes %</i>
<i>Labor Subdivisions:</i>		
Araluen . . . . .	6.0	6.0
Berridale . . . . .	3.5	4.2
Bombala . . . . .	6.4	6.7
Cooma . . . . .	4.1	4.9
Eden . . . . .	5.8	6.3
Queanbeyan . . . . .	4.5	4.7
Bungendore . . . . .	7.2	7.4
Goulburn . . . . .	4.0	8.2
Moruya . . . . .	7.0	9.2
Gunning . . . . .	4.2	4.2
<i>Liberal Subdivisions:</i>		
Michelago . . . . .	2.8	4.4
Pomeroy . . . . .	5.5	6.0
Tarago . . . . .	5.1	5.6
Taralga . . . . .	5.6	7.2
Bega . . . . .	5.4	6.0
Cobargo . . . . .	5.9	7.0
Milton . . . . .	5.7	7.1

## CHAPTER FOUR

# The State Campaign

### THE CONTEXT

When the New South Wales election had been postponed from 3 December 1955 until early in the new year, its precise date had been left indefinite. Cahill announced during January that, unless 'something unforeseen' happened, the election would be on 25 April.<sup>1</sup> At this time, it was expected that the Commonwealth government would enforce further reductions in State loan expenditure because of the increasing difficulty in raising loan money. Instead, the Commonwealth government told the States that loan works could proceed at the rate agreed upon during the previous year, and that any failure to raise loans in sufficient amounts would be made good out of Commonwealth revenue.<sup>2</sup> This meant that, while the perennial question of the adequacy of Commonwealth financial assistance to the States remained alive, it was not possible for the State government to use any further deterioration in its financial position as argument against the Federal government and, by implication, against the Liberal and Country parties.

Immediately after the decision on loan money, Cahill announced that the State election would be held on 3 March—seven weeks earlier than he had previously suggested. While the date was no doubt fixed partly with a view to the tactical convenience of the Labor Party, it did not appear to give either side any important advantage. According to Morton, 'an election on March 3 suits the Opposition right down to the ground', though Bruxner complained that the campaign would be too short to allow candidates to cover rural electorates adequately.<sup>3</sup>

The campaign that followed was fought predominantly on State issues, and there was less overt intrusion of Federal politics than for many years. This was not because Federal politics

<sup>1</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 January 1956.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 February 1956.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 February 1956.

were quiescent, for there had just been a substantial swing to the non-Labor parties in the Federal election. It was rather that, for once, the trends in State and Federal politics were in the same direction and of the same strength, though impelled by very different causes. Labor had lost popularity in the Federal field because of distrust of Evatt and his leadership. Simultaneously, Labor had lost popularity in the State field by the accumulation of grievances over fifteen years of office. This time, there was little point in the Labor Party introducing Federal issues, because the Federal government had just demonstrated its popularity. There was also little point in the non-Labor parties trying to fight the election on Federal issues, because there were State issues of equal potency waiting to be used. Both sides made some use of arguments which more properly concerned Federal politics, but the election was fought substantially on the record of the State Labor government during the preceding years.

To gain control of the Legislative Assembly, the Opposition needed to win twelve of the 56 seats which the government had held since the last election in 1953. Attempts were made to calculate whether this would be achieved if the voting at the Federal election was repeated. If only those who voted for Labor's Senate team in December voted for the Labor candidates in March, then the Cahill government would almost certainly be defeated; but in many seats (including Eden-Monaro) the personal popularity of the Labor candidates had pushed the Labor vote for the House of Representatives well above that for the Senate, and personal popularity might be even more significant in a State election. Also, the factious Liberal Party and the undistinguished Country Party would not be able to present as impressive a facade to the State electors as the Menzies government had been able to show during the Federal election campaign.

To win twelve new seats in a house of 94 is a formidable achievement, even when the pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other. Did the non-Labor parties really expect to defeat the government? Probably their harder heads did not, though what is said with the hindsight of defeat may be no more reliable than the calculated over-optimism that accompanies the campaign. Before the election, Morton spoke of the

likelihood of winning sixteen seats, while Cahill said that the government would not only hold all its gains of the boom Labor year of 1953, but would win two extra seats.<sup>4</sup> Such statements, even at the time, could only be regarded as grossly over-optimistic. It appears that the real expectations of Liberal Party leaders were limited to a gain of eight or nine seats, while it was hoped that wins by Independent candidates in other seats might leave the parliament unworkable, and lead to a new election. None of the party leaders seriously expected any seat in the Eden-Monaro area to change hands, with the possible exception of Goulburn.

The defeat of Robson as Liberal leader had been a victory for those who favoured a more aggressive policy of Liberal Party expansion in the country, at the expense of the Country Party. Liberal candidates were nominated for the seats which Labor had won from the Country Party in 1953 and in which Robson had sought to avoid three-cornered contests. As a result, relations between the two non-Labor parties were less than cordial, though both realized that, if the Labor government was defeated, it would have to be replaced by a Liberal-Country Party coalition. The Country Party was not able to make any effective retaliation, since there were no seats formerly held by the Liberal Party which it had any prospect of winning. Its only reply was to stand a candidate in Monaro, though it had withdrawn from this area in favour of the Liberals in 1948, and its organization had almost completely disappeared.

While relying principally on State issues, the Liberal Party was quite ready to take advantage of the popularity of the Federal government, and particularly of the Prime Minister. Menzies addressed several Sydney meetings and made radio broadcasts. Evatt spoke at the opening of the Labor campaign, but made no other appearance. Labor members of the Federal parliament, including Fraser, spoke within their own electorates in support of the Labor candidates, but in general the Federal Labor Party kept out, or was kept out, of the campaign.

The factions within the Labor Party in New South Wales, though still unreconciled, pulled themselves into the semblance of unity. The party executive put aside for the time any thought

<sup>4</sup> *S.M.H.*, 27 February 1956.

of disciplining the intractable Clive Evatt. Supporters and opponents of the Industrial Groups came together to provide adequate finance for the campaign. Since all campaign funds passed through the hands of the State leaders of the Party, who were also responsible for the general organization of the campaign, there was none of the confusion and suspicion that surrounded the collection and distribution of Labor funds during the Federal election.

The policy speeches of the party leaders covered a wider range of subjects. Cahill, unlike Menzies, not only defended his government's record but put forward a number of detailed policies for the future.<sup>5</sup> Among these were greater attention to housing, improvements in public transport, the building of new hospitals and schools, and the encouragement of decentralization, both by governmental projects and assistance to private industry. The State government's financial dependence on the Federal government, and the alleged inadequacy of Federal grants to New South Wales, were again prominent. Menzies's subsequent appearances in the campaign were largely devoted to answering these complaints.

Morton's policy, apart from its general undertaking to 'clean up the mess' and 'put business back in government', approached the same problems, usually with different results.<sup>6</sup> Morton welcomed the Commonwealth's proposal to earmark 20 per cent of the money granted to the States for home-building for co-operative housing societies. Subsidies to hospitals would be increased to enable fees, recently raised, to be reduced. Compulsory unionism would be abandoned, the Obscene Publications Act would be reviewed, and the control of the transport system reformed.

The Liberal campaign was based at least as much on allegations that the State government had become tyrannical, and implications that it had become corrupt, as on proposed changes in policy. One of the Liberal proposals was for a 'Bill of Rights', which was to have the dual function of protecting personal and civil freedoms (against measures such as compulsory unionism), and the capital of investors (against the attacks of socialist-minded governments). However, Morton's policy contained

<sup>5</sup> *S.M.H.*, 14 February 1956.

<sup>6</sup> *S.M.H.*, 15 February 1956.

enough specific proposals for the Labor Party to take up the cry of 'wild promises' which their opponents had used against Evatt during the Federal campaign.

Bruxner's policy was similar to Morton's, though almost solely concerned with country problems. Its principal themes were the improvement of transport and electricity supply and the provision of more schools and houses in country districts.

Both Cahill and Morton gave 'country policy' speeches. There was very little difference in principle between the two. Both promised to maintain the settlement of ex-servicemen on the land, minimize transport costs and speed development of water and electricity supply schemes.<sup>7</sup> One of the few significant differences concerned the cost at which land should be acquired for soldier settlement. Both Labor and Liberal parties favoured making land available to the settler at a cost that gave him 'every chance of success'. To the Government, this meant acquiring land at a lower figure than its present market value; to the Opposition, both Liberal and Country Party, it meant paying the full market price for land and then writing down its cost to the settler, the government bearing the loss.

The Sydney press was much more partisan than during the Federal campaign. All daily papers except the *Daily Mirror* not only urged the defeat of the government in editorials, but denounced its shortcomings in unsigned articles. The news columns were frequently used for overt propaganda, especially by the *Sun*.

This was the general character of the election, though everywhere it was modified by local and personal variations. In Sydney, there was the variation provided by Frank Browne who, having completed his term of imprisonment for contempt of the House of Representatives, appeared at the head of an Australian Party, denouncing bureaucracy, the Liberal Party, the Labor Party, and the coloured races. The Communists nominated 28 candidates, principally in Sydney and the coal-mining electorates. The Eden-Monaro electorates lacked these exotic intrusions, but the conflict between the major parties produced its own variations.

<sup>7</sup> Cahill's country policy speech was delivered at Dubbo, and Morton's at Goulburn. This suggests that the Liberal Party was not without hope of winning Goulburn. *S.M.H.*, 16 and 18 February 1956.

## THE CANDIDATES

The three sitting members and Bladwell, who contested Goulburn against Tully, have already been introduced. There were three other candidates, two of whom were standing for the first time.

Allan Beaton, Beale's Labor opponent in South Coast, was an estate agent from Shellharbour, near Kiama. He came from the northern section of South Coast, which is now in the Federal electorate of Macarthur. However, his home had been included in the old Eden-Monaro electorate before 1948, and during that time he had taken an active part in Fraser's election campaigns. Though always prominent in A.L.P. affairs in his district, this was the first time he had contested a parliamentary election. He was a sanguine personality, good-humouredly aggressive in politics, and had little of Fraser's air of discretion.

Ernest Charles Smith, the Liberal candidate for Monaro, was a grazier from the Braidwood district, and had contested the previous election in 1953. Like Flanagan, though a much older man, Smith had many qualities which might have been expected to appeal to a country electorate. After his discharge from the A.I.F. after World War I, he had taken up a Crown lease on the property which he now owns and had made good through his own efforts. He had also served for many years on his shire council. But he lacked the enthusiasm, drive and organizing ability necessary to overcome the general apathy of country electors. In his public appearances he gave the impression that his campaign was a chore which had to be done rather than an opportunity to crusade for Liberal principles.

The remaining candidate was Frederick von Nida, who stood for Monaro as a Country Party candidate. Von Nida's entry was almost as curious as Beavis's in the Federal campaign. He was a former Country Party organizer who had become a dairy-farmer at Moss Vale, well outside the electorate. No Country Party candidate had stood in the Eden-Monaro area since 1946, and it is doubtful whether the Country Party would have tried to regain a foothold had it not been for friction with the Liberal Party, and resentment over its decision to contest the four seats that had been held by the Country Party before 1953. Even then, the Country Party did not show any great interest in von

Nida's campaign. Some local press advertisements were inserted by the party's headquarters, but in other respects von Nida was turned loose in Monaro with official Country Party support and presumably some financial backing and left to do as well as he could.

This was an unwise decision from every viewpoint. Any return to Monaro should have been preceded by an attempt to resurrect Country Party branches and accompanied by vigorous assistance from headquarters. The Country Party campaign, which failed completely, was a great deal worse than no campaign at all, for it set the seal on the party's disappearance from the area.

#### ORGANIZATION

The organization of the State campaigns was, in general, a more efficient repetition of the Federal pattern; more efficient because the electorates were smaller and the candidates, each of whom was well known in at least a part of his electorate, were able to obtain more assistance from friends and supporters.

Beale's campaign in South Coast was undoubtedly the best organized, thanks to the very detailed planning of Beale himself. Not only was the electorate very effectively (and expensively) covered by press and radio propaganda, but the minor details were scrupulously attended to. All the hospitals were contacted and reminded of the procedure by which patients could vote. Beale not only followed the usual Liberal practice of posting a leaflet (in the form of a circular letter) to the head of every household, but posted an additional circular to all of those in the electorate with whom he had some personal acquaintance, and a further circular to known Liberal supporters seeking funds.

Beale's attention to detail, and the independence of the South Coast Liberal machine, were both illustrated by the printing of his how-to-vote cards. It is the usual practice for how-to-vote cards to be printed within the electorate, even if this involves additional cost, in order to avoid offending local patriotism. Beale carried this a stage further, and divided his order for how-to-vote cards between five printeries scattered along the coast. A sample how-to-vote card had been sent from Liberal

headquarters to all candidates, with the suggestion that they should adhere to its size and layout. The cards printed for Monaro and Goulburn followed this pattern, but Beale's cards were substantially different, including a picture of the candidate and giving greater prominence to his name, and less to that of the party.

An attempt was made to keep the branches in touch with the course of the campaign by sending them copies of propaganda and other information as it was issued. This time there was no paid Liberal organizer on the Coast, since the party was concentrating on the Monaro and Goulburn seats. For local work, and especially seeing to the distribution of how-to-vote cards, Beale relied on fourteen 'sub-divisional organizers'. With one exception (who lived in a town where there was no branch), all of these were members of the party and usually branch officials.

Bladwell's reappearance as Liberal candidate for Goulburn meant that the Liberal campaign would very largely depend upon his personal popularity. Under these circumstances, he was virtually left to run his own campaign, and the Liberal organizer moved south to Queanbeyan, to assist the campaign in Monaro.

There was a great deal of enthusiasm in the Liberal campaign in Goulburn, and this was primarily due to the personality of Bladwell, who was able to keep up the morale of his workers, and keep them active and on the job. He appeared to be enjoying the campaign, and his workers entered into the spirit of the game. He continually held closed party meetings to plan the campaign and keep the workers busy, and in return the supporters devoted much more of their time and energy to the campaign than is usual in a country electorate. Bladwell organized a house-to-house canvass in Goulburn, and sent squads of volunteers around campaigning for him. He even took his supporters into the Labor stronghold of Captain's Flat for house-to-house canvass work. The Goulburn Liberals also made use of selective leaflets, usually summaries of sections of Morton's policy speech. These were posted to those whose occupations they concerned: doctors received the section on health; teachers that on education.

Organization of the Liberal campaign was most difficult in Monaro, where there was neither a sitting member nor a well-

known candidate. The usual mailing of leaflets to the electors was organized from Queanbeyan, while there was another centre of workers at Cooma. Except for the distribution of how-to-vote cards, the campaign directly involved only the small groups of party members who saw to the insertion of propaganda, and arranged on occasional meeting.

The Labor campaigns were generally less energetic and involved fewer workers than their Liberal counterparts. Shortage of money in South Coast, shortage of both money and labour in Goulburn, and the scattered population of Monaro meant that all three Labor campaigns were largely confined to the candidate's own tours of the electorates, plus press and radio propaganda. Manning of the polling booths was adequate and, at least in the Tableland electorates, was probably carried out more thoroughly than by the Liberals.

One further note on organization concerns the unhappy story of the Country Party's intervention in Monaro. The Country Party as an organization had long since disappeared. Many of its former members had joined the Liberal Party, and others had dropped out of political activity. There was thus little chance of von Nida finding enough supporters to distribute how-to-vote cards. He was on good terms with some of the Liberal branch officials, and apparently believed that they were agreeable to distributing his cards along with their own, so that the Liberal booth workers would distribute both Liberal and Country Party cards. The scheme was not carried out, and the cards remained at the printery of the *Cooma-Monaro Express* until after the election. As a result, von Nida's party affiliation must have been unknown to the majority of electors. This no doubt accentuated the low Country Party poll, though even the distribution of the cards could hardly have prevented a fiasco.

#### CAMPAIGN FINANCE

For the State election, both parties were forced to raise funds during the campaign itself; the Eden-Monaro divisional fund, which had been at least the basis of the Liberal Federal campaign, was intended only to supplement other sources of finance for the State election. The Labor Party, as before, had to raise practically all its money in the few months before the election.

The distribution of money from the Liberals' divisional fund was the occasion of another minor flare-up between Coast and Tableland. The South Coast Liberals originally budgeted for an expenditure of £1200, on the assumption that Monaro, South Coast and Goulburn would receive equal contributions from the divisional fund. The Eden-Monaro Federal Electorate Conference, however, decided to give £400 each to Goulburn and Monaro and only £200 to South Coast. The justification for this was the usual one that South Coast was already a Liberal stronghold, and it might well have been queried why Beale and his supporters should think it necessary to conduct so expensive a campaign against weak opposition.

As the South Coast Liberals were unwilling to reduce their expenditure, a heavier burden was placed on Liberal supporters in the electorate and on the candidate himself. Appeals for funds were circulated, stressing that, as opposed to 'the "stand and deliver" methods of our opponents' the Liberal Party 'relies entirely on the voluntary subscriptions of its members and supporters'. The particularism of the Coast was well in evidence. 'We know you are with us in the fight, not only for Coastal interests, but against wicked influences which seek to destroy our Australian way of life.'

Approximate expenditure, as planned, was:

Letters to supporters and to the electors (including postage) . . . . .	£	270
Newspaper advertising . . . . .		300
Radio advertising . . . . .		300
Theatre slides . . . . .		55
Local organizers and committee rooms . . . . .		100
Secretarial . . . . .		50
Other expenses . . . . .		125
Total . . . . .	£	<u>1200</u>

If Liberal expenditure in South Coast seems unnecessarily high, Labor expenditure in Goulburn, the only other campaign for which we have detailed information, seems remarkably low. Actual expenses were:

Leaflets and how-to-vote cards . . . . .	£	10
Newspaper advertising . . . . .		71
Radio . . . . .		27
Campaign rooms . . . . .		10
Other expenses . . . . .		15
Total . . . . .	£	<u>133</u>

The figures are not directly comparable, since Goulburn electorate contains only two newspapers and one radio station compared with the three radio stations and eight newspapers used by Beale. On the other hand, of the two members Tully was facing much the more serious challenge. The Labor campaign in South Coast does not appear to have cost more than £300, while Bladwell's campaign in Goulburn must have been many times as expensive as Tully's. It included £400 from the Eden-Monaro fund, quite apart from contributions by supporters and by the candidate.

The contribution of the Federal fund also fixes the minimum Liberal expenditure in Monaro. It is obvious, from the volume of newspaper and radio advertising alone, that expenditure was very much more than this. From the same source it is clear that the Labor campaign in Monaro was a relatively expensive one. The figures are probably somewhere in the region of £800 for Smith's campaign and £400 for Seiffert's.

It appears that to conduct a comprehensive campaign in a scattered electorate such as Monaro or South Coast requires a minimum expenditure of several hundred pounds, and that a campaign which is adequate by Liberal Party standards will not cost much less than £1000. A large part of this can be met from the divisional fund, but if this has been depleted by a Federal election there will remain a large amount which in effect has to be raised by the candidate. As the party's principal backers will already be making substantial contributions to the divisional fund, the candidate himself is likely to be left with a considerable share of the burden. All the Liberal candidates in 1956 could well afford to pay a large share of the expenses. Under these circumstances, there is always the possibility that the ability to make such a contribution will be an advantage, though perhaps an unrecognized one, for the candidate seeking selection.

## RADIO

Radio advertising for the State election followed the pattern that had been set by the Federal campaign three months earlier. The national stations rebroadcast long speeches by the party leaders, with scrupulous equality between government and

opposition. The commercial stations broadcast similar material, but in a more haphazard way. Some of them charged the parties for the time used, others gave it free. As a result the Labor party was at some disadvantage. All of these broadcasts were aimed at the New South Wales electors as a whole, or at least at all the country electors, and had no special relevance to the campaigns in Eden-Monaro.

TABLE IX

## POLITICAL BROADCASTS IN THE EDEN-MONARO AREA STATE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, 1956

## A. State-Wide Relays:

	Talks (in minutes)		
	Liberal	Labor	Country Party
National stations (Canberra and Bega) . . . . .	90	180	90
Commercial stations (Canberra, Cooma, Bega and Goulburn)	240	185	45

## B. Local Broadcasts:

	Talks (in minutes)	Announcements (number of announcements)		
		25 words	50 words	1 minute
Goulburn (2 GN)				
Liberal . . . . .	390	8	115	—
Labor . . . . .	112	—	27	6
Monaro (2CA, 2XL)				
Liberal . . . . .	406	198	170	26
Labor . . . . .	65	6	53	12
Country Party . . . . .	50	16	81	—
South Coast (2CA, 2BE)*				
Liberal . . . . .	170	109	127	39
Labor . . . . .	47	—	17	6
Country Party . . . . .	35	—	—	—

\* The candidates for South Coast also advertised over 2WL Wollongong, which is not normally audible in Eden-Monaro. All of the Labor propaganda listed in this section came over 2BE. As well as using 2BE, Beale used 2CA, which is audible along the coast between Milton and Moruya, for a total of 54 announcements.

In local radio propaganda, the Liberal Party again enjoyed an overwhelming advantage. The combined Liberal and Country Party campaigns occupied about four times as much radio time as the Labor campaigns. Labor's disadvantage was most marked in Monaro, where Seiffert's use of the radio was less than one-sixth of Smith's.

Though Tully was a pleasant radio speaker, none of the Labor candidates had Fraser's broadcasting ability. Seiffert's declamatory style could be modified to the requirements of the Legislative Assembly or of a street meeting, but it could not be adjusted to the intimacy of broadcasting. This may have been one reason why Seiffert made little use of radio. On the other hand, Smith's more serious defects as a speaker did not prevent him making many radio broadcasts, and the Liberal campaign in Monaro ran up a total of seven hours of speechmaking over 2XL Cooma and 2CA Canberra—more than during the Federal campaign.

Of the seven candidates, Beale undoubtedly made the most effective use of the radio. Like Fraser, whose radio propaganda had shown superiority in everything but quantity during the Federal campaign, Beale had the advantage of his own skill as a journalist and propagandist. Also like Fraser, he was conducting his own campaign, and could plan his broadcasts, and even his short announcements, to fit his pre-determined pattern.

## NEWSPAPERS

The use of newspaper advertising showed wide variations between the electorates. While Liberal propaganda retained a big overall advantage, at least in quantity, these variations, and the entry of all party headquarters into the field of local newspaper advertising, make any further generalization difficult. The amount of space occupied by political advertisements in the three electorates is set out below. Advertisements authorized by party headquarters in Sydney are distinguished from those authorized locally.

Though these figures are not an accurate guide either to the expense or to the effect of newspaper advertising by each party, they do illustrate some features of the campaigns. They show how heavily von Nida, who had virtually no local organization,

TABLE X

SPACE OCCUPIED BY POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS: STATE ELECTION, 1956  
(in square inches)

	<i>Liberal</i>		<i>Labor</i>		<i>Country Party</i>	
	<i>Sydney</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Sydney</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Sydney</i>	<i>Local</i>
<b>Monaro:</b>						
<i>Bega District News</i> . . . .	36	101	—	200	—	—
<i>Cooma-Monaro Express</i> . . .	168	155	350	170	210	53
<i>Eden-Magnet-Voice</i> . . . .	—	84	—	94	54	—
<i>Braidwood Review and Braidwood Despatch</i> . . . .	96	216	—	150	54	—
<i>Bombala Times</i> . . . . .	—	99	—	165	100	20
<i>Queanbeyan Age</i> . . . . .	130	142	120	140	112	40
<b>Total</b> . . . . .	430	797	470	919	530	113
<b>Goulburn:</b>						
<i>Goulburn Evening Post</i> . . .	288	220	248	116		
<i>Braidwood Review and Braidwood Despatch</i> . . . .	—	44	—	—		
<b>Total</b> . . . . .	288	264	248	116		
<b>South Coast:</b>						
<i>Bega District News</i> . . . .	136	124	—	60		
<i>Moruya Examiner</i> . . . . .	20	48	—	24		
<i>Milton-Ulladulla Times</i> . .	40	56	—	44		
<b>Total</b> . . . . .	196	228	—	128		

had to depend on the Country Party headquarters in Sydney for his newspaper advertising. They show how the Labor Party headquarters abandoned South Coast, presumably as a hopeless proposition. They also show Seiffert's concentration on the newspapers, and his success in obtaining for Monaro a big share of the A.L.P. advertising authorized by party headquarters.

The *Goulburn Evening Post* and the *Bega District News* again took the Liberal side in editorials. In Goulburn, where both candidates were men of personal standing and popularity, the *Post* justified its advice by supporting aspects of Liberal policy, but at Bega the *District News* did not hesitate to declare for

Beale personally, as well as for the Liberal Party. In its news columns, the Bega paper also featured Beale, but this may have been merely because he was more efficient in providing hand-outs for the use of the local papers.

None of the other papers showed any overt political preference, though the *Cooma-Monaro Express* sometimes allowed its support of Seiffert to show. The Braidwood papers, which had provided the only instances of definite hostility during the Federal campaign, now resumed their neutrality. Their proprietor's antipathy to Fraser was personal rather than political, and it did not extend to Seiffert. The amount of space given to election news was generally greater than during the Federal campaign. This may be an indication of greater interest in State politics among editors or readers; on the other hand, it may have been simply because, with three campaigns running simultaneously, each centre had a greater number of political meetings, which provide most of the political news in the local press.

## THE ISSUES

It goes almost without saying that the general state-wide themes of the campaign were to be found in all the Eden-Monaro electorates. Everywhere Labor speakers defended the record of the Labor government, and ascribed any deficiencies to Federal parsimony. Everywhere Liberal speakers called for the defeat of the government on the grounds of waste, sluggishness and attempted despotism. However, each electorate had its own variations, depending on local needs and circumstances and the inclinations of the candidates and their supporters.

### (i) *The Candidates*

One issue, which necessarily took a different form in each electorate, was the personal merits of the rival candidates. Personal qualities count for a good deal in all country politics, and particularly in State politics where the electorates are small, ideologies are blurred, and the work of the politician brings him into closer contact with his individual constituents. Faced with popular sitting members, the challenging candidates had either to stress their own merits, or, more dangerously, to attempt

to undermine the favourable reputation which the sitting members enjoyed.

The only attempt to belittle the importance of personal qualities was made by Morton in Goulburn, after the conclusion of his Country Policy speech, when he said that some thought that their local Labor member was a 'nice bloke'. So he was, in all probability, but the real issue was who was to form a government. If they did not like the Cahill government, then they most vote for Bladwell. Personalities did not matter.

But Morton's Goulburn adherents knew better. They were convinced that personalities mattered a great deal, and throughout the campaign Bladwell's talents and achievements were given great prominence. Advertisements and his own press statements referred to his spectacular business success and to his part in various civic activities. Most would-be politicians have to be content with promising their district future benefits, should they be elected. To some extent, the Liberals were able to show Bladwell as already a public benefactor. The business he had established now gave employment to 200 people. It was pointed out that Bladwell had extensive family connexions in the district and that he had been born in Goulburn, while his relatively modest family background was probably an advantage, emphasizing that he had won success by his own efforts. The Liberals pointed out that, despite this change in his circumstances, he had remained in Goulburn. Their principal slogan was 'Be loyal to the man who has been loyal to the Goulburn district.'

Somewhat similar claims were made on behalf of Tully. He too had extensive local connexions—'a descendant of a well-known family which has been settled on the land in the Goulburn district for over 100 years'. Though he had not risen rapidly from obscurity to wealth and prominence, he could point to certain achievements, won by his own efforts. His propaganda usually listed his university degrees, while some of his leaflets pointed out that these had been gained as a night student. His ex-service background presumably gave him some advantage over Bladwell. The name of J. M. Tully was invoked from time to time, and Tully senior took part in his son's campaign.

But Labor propaganda naturally laid most stress on Tully's

record as member for the electorate over the previous ten years. Particular stress was laid upon his availability to constituents who required advice or assistance. The first sentence of his initial open letter to his electors, which was distributed in pamphlet form, read:

As your Parliamentary representative during the past ten years, I have loyally worked for all constituents, irrespective of their political opinions, and have been constantly available for personal interview throughout the electorate.

The same document also stated: 'In personal matters, I have given ready assistance to many thousands of people in this electorate.' 'Personal contact and interviews' was the first of 'Tully's pledges' listed in newspaper advertisements, while his most common slogan was 'personal service for ten years'.

This stress on personal availability was given a twist against Bladwell and against Liberal candidates in general. According to Tully:

It is common practice amongst Liberal Party members to maintain a party office in their electorates so that most local and personal matters are dealt with by clerks and the member is left free to pursue his business career. This is so in the electorate of the Liberal Party leader, Mr Morton, who, of course, at the same time, is managing director of a large State-wide firm. The Liberal candidate in Goulburn has made it perfectly clear that he intends to follow this practice and continue his business career. I would ask the electors to remember my ten years personal contact with them in this regard.

Bladwell was, by any standards, an exceptional figure in Goulburn, and one of the leading men in the electorate. No such claim could be made on behalf of Smith, in Monaro. In fact, Smith was shown with pride as an ordinary man, whom any elector could approach on equal terms. He introduced himself in his policy speech as 'Ernie Smith', and was referred to as such in many of his advertisements. He was shown as having all the standard rural virtues, perhaps on a more generous scale than his neighbours but still as a simple Monaro farmer, with no pretension to outstanding abilities but a record of hard work, patriotism and public service.

YOU HAVE SEEN THE LIBERAL POLICY  
CONSIDER THE MAN!

He is a **SIMPLE MAN**, who typifies the average decent Australian.

He is a **RETURNED SOLDIER** who fought with our own 7th Light Horse in Palestine in 1914-18.

He is a **SELF-MADE man**, who inherited nothing, and who set to, after the Great War, to make his way in the world. He succeeded so well that he hands on a valuable farm to his son.

He is a **FAMILY MAN**, with two sons and five daughters.

He is a **REASONABLE MAN**, who has served on the Tallaganda Shire Council for 16 years, unselfishly giving his time and labour for Australia.

He is a **PLAIN-SPEAKING AND HONEST MAN**, who can be relied upon to support that which deserves support, and to decry the dishonest proposals which today are so common.

VOTE FOR A MAN WITH QUALITIES LIKE THESE  
SEND ERNIE SMITH TO PARLIAMENT!

There was some ambiguity as to whether, if elected, Smith would devote all his time to his political duties. His only reference to the subject, in his broadcast speech, implied that he would do so, but his difficulty in expressing himself, even on paper, left his meaning a little obscure. It is hard to know exactly what meaning to attach to a sentence like: 'I assure you that I will devote *all* my time and energy to expedite, firstly, the reconstruction and sealing of the Monaro highway.' Possibly the reference above to handing his farm on to his son meant that he was prepared for semi-retirement from farming if elected.

The meagre Country Party campaign included a personal recommendation of von Nida by Bruxner:

My colleagues and I are very glad indeed that our old friend Mr von Nida is a Country Party candidate for the Monaro seat, which, for so many years, was one of our strongholds and which we feel should still be held by one of our men.

Mr von Nida was an organizer for the Country Party for some years and a very efficient one into the bargain, making friends wherever he went because of his personality and approach.

He gave up this work to go onto the land, and has made a great success of his dairy farm, but he feels he should do some-

thing in public life. We could not find a man who knows more about country conditions, both in the towns and the rural side. . . .

Seiffert's personal appeal, like Tully's, was based principally on his past record. In a press advertisement, which was also distributed in leaflet form, he repeated: '. . . the pledge I gave on the first occasion [he was elected] that is, if I am returned, my sole purpose will be to do what is best for the men, women and children of this important country constituency during the coming parliament.' Seiffert stressed that his long term in office gave him an advantage over any newcomer. This was an argument which Fraser had also used during the Federal campaign.

By frequent visits to as many centres of Monaro as possible, by personal contact, correspondence and through the press, I have fully acquainted myself with both the overall and individual problems of the electorate. In all sincerity, I have tried to be a good member, and in seeking once again the approbation of the electorate, I can only say—'If I am returned as your representative in the elections of 1956, I will continue to serve you fearlessly and honestly, irrespective of class, creed or political opinion.'<sup>8</sup>

Seiffert's campaign also stressed that he was a full-time member of parliament. Advertisements drew attention to the fact that:

Jack Seiffert devotes the whole of his time and energy to your representation. Has no other interests or shares in any company, firm or undertaking. ENTERPRISING! VIGOROUS! FEARLESS!

The electorate in which personal qualities played the largest part in the campaign was South Coast. Here the sitting member was a Liberal, and it was the Labor candidate who was throwing out a not very hopeful challenge. The Labor case was less that Beaton would be a good member than that Beale was a bad one. This was the only electorate in the Eden-Monaro area in which the sitting member received any serious criticism.

The basis of Beaton's case was the usual belief of Labor candidates that politics should be a full-time occupation. According to Beaton:

Mr Beale's private affairs as an engineer are keeping him far

<sup>8</sup> *Cooma-Monaro-Express*, 10 February 1956. This statement apparently much impressed Mr Roger Nott, the sitting Labor member for Liverpool Plains, in the north-west of the State, who reprinted it as his own final appeal to the electors, with the name of his own seat substituted for Monaro.

too occupied to attend to his duties as elected representative of the people. . . . Even more important than Mr Beale's failure to appear in the electorate at regular intervals and care for the needs of the electors is his continual absence from Parliament House. Since the 1947 sessions of Parliament until October of last year Mr Beale has been absent from 33% of the divisions of the House. He has been absent from duty for at least a third of the time that he was paid to be present. I feel that a member of parliament is paid adequate salary to carry out his duties as a full time job, which in truth they are, and I give my pledge that on being elected I will not engage in any other business outside my Parliamentary duties.<sup>9</sup>

The elaboration of these points constituted practically the whole of Beaton's campaign. Beale replied that: 'Constituents in most parts of my 6000 square mile electorate who have been unfortunate enough to suffer in fires, floods and droughts know that I am always quickly on the spot in time of need.' Those who had obtained amenities through his intervention knew that he had 'worked untiringly in their interests, both in the electorate and at the seat of the State Government in Sydney'. So far from being continually absent from Parliament, 'the only divisions I have missed have been during the time of important crises on the South Coast, such as fires, floods, droughts and meetings on vital public matters, or on account of illness'.

Beale defended his non-parliamentary activities, and by implication denied that parliamentary work was or should be a full-time occupation:

My electors know that I am a consulting engineer, have interests in primary and secondary industries and hold the honorary position of president of the Australian Irrigation Development Association and Chairman of the Water Research Foundation of Australia—and I am proud of this, because I believe that all should be encouraged to develop their talents to the full in a system of free enterprise. It is generally recognized that I bring some valuable knowledge and experience to bear on State affairs. In respect to my interest in the electorate may I point out that my people know that I have never failed to devote all the time and energy necessary to do my job in the best interests of the South Coast, the State and Australia, and I challenge any individual or organization to prove otherwise!

Beale himself made no counter charges against Beaton, but

<sup>9</sup> *Moruya Examiner*, 24 February 1956.

the *Bega District News* responded to the Labor charges with a warmth that was too much for the editor's grammar:

A colourless business history, instead of being a recommendation for the Labor representative, will cause the elector who likes his representative to have a full knowledge of the business world and to possess administrative ability rather than one who mouths starry-eyed platitudes about being free to serve the people because of no other commitments. A schoolboy could submit the same lack of qualifications. But what would the toughies of Macquarie Street do to him—and, of course, Mr Beaton?

Beale made little attempt to enlist support on personal grounds, though most of his advertisements listed his engineering qualifications and spoke of him as 'your friend and member'.

Three general conclusions emerge from these various attempts to win electoral support on grounds of personal qualities. Two are very obvious. First, for a sitting member, a record of diligence and approachability is recognized as the most important personal asset. Second, success in life, in almost any field, will always be given due prominence, especially if gained without prior advantages. Other personal factors, such as farming experience, a war record, or long connexion with the district will usually be mentioned where possible, but a candidate can lack most or all of these qualities and still conduct a campaign which is based very largely on his personal merits. Because such a candidate as Smith, in Monaro, or Flanagan, in the Federal campaign, possesses most of the accepted rural virtues, it does not follow that he can make a stronger personal appeal than his rivals. A conscientious sitting member, even without these virtues, holds a stronger position. Seiffert and Beale, like Fraser in Federal politics, varied very widely from the stereotype of the ideal country candidate. Neither had been a farmer nor had served in either world war. Yet, of all the candidates, they appear to have enjoyed the greatest support on personal grounds. While it is of some advantage for a candidate to be able to point to some association with the land or the district, or to military service, these qualities do not guarantee a large personal following, nor does their absence indicate a small personal following. Unfortunately, the Eden-Monaro electorates cannot help us decide whether an ex-serviceman and a farmer, once having

gained a seat, would continue to stress these characteristics in subsequent campaigns, or whether, like the Eden-Monaro members, he would rely on his record in office.

(ii) '*Roads and Bridges*'

Local development is usually a much more prominent issue in State than in Federal campaign. Most State government activities involve the provision of services which are necessarily local in character. The Federal government may introduce a nation-wide medical benefits scheme, but it is the State government which must build and subsidize hospitals at Cooma or Bega or Goulburn. The Federal government provides a substantial part of the money required for home building or road construction, but it is the State government that decides where the money will be spent. In general, the Federal member deals with politics either at the level of the nation or at the level of the individual constituent who approaches him for assistance in some personal problem, usually involving social services or repatriation. The State member is often dealing with politics at the district level, concerned with such questions as whether this township will have a new school, or that town a water supply, and his success will be judged largely on whether he obtains for his own electorate its share (and more if possible) of the services provided by the State government.

Here again, the sitting member, provided his record is reasonably impressive, has an advantage over his opponents. He can obtain credit for past successes, as well as make promises for the future. Of course, if the development of State works in his electorate has been unsatisfactory, possibly through no fault of his, he is also more vulnerable to attack than are his challengers.

In Monaro and Goulburn the campaigns had a strong local flavour. In Goulburn, Tully claimed credit for the variety of State-financed projects undertaken during his term of office, principally hospital and school construction and houses built for the New South Wales Housing Commission. In attacking the local record of the State government, the Liberal Party was in a delicate position. Not only had the city of Goulburn been growing quite rapidly during the past ten years, but to assert too vigorously that it was stagnating was not only repugnant to the local Liberals themselves but might offend other civic-

proud townspeople. In the event, it was not until after the election was over that Bladwell gave his opinion that Goulburn had lost ground in recent years, compared to similar towns in other parts of the State.

One Liberal speaker from outside the electorate, Evelyn Darby, M.L.A., had no inhibitions against claiming during the campaign that Goulburn had no reason for self-satisfaction:

The fact is that we are in a situation where there is stagnation in this city and district. . . . Surely your own member of Parliament should have had the foresight, enthusiasm and intelligence to realize that he was not doing his job when he could see that the population was not increasing and that there was unemployment. . . . If I was Mr Tully, I would resign from the Labor Party and join the Liberals, because his party has let your town down to blazes.<sup>10</sup>

These remarks were connected with a possible check to Goulburn's expansion which came into the news just as the campaign began. For many years Goulburn had been an important railway town. Among other advantages, it was a convenient place for the changing of locomotive crews. With the rapid introduction of diesel traction, trains were becoming faster and the work of the crews less tiring. The Railway Department made preliminary enquiries whether the Locomotive Enginememen's Union would agree to locomotive crews driving longer distances, so that a crew coming from Sydney, instead of leaving the train at Goulburn would continue further, probably to Yass, another fifty miles down the line. Though the proposal was rejected by the union, it aroused the fear that Goulburn would gradually lose its importance for the railways with the disappearance of steam locomotives. Darby's proposal to correct this trend was the removal of the big railway workshops at Chullora, in Sydney, to Goulburn and other country centres. By this and other measures of decentralization he claimed that the population could be increased from 20,000 to 50,000. Though he ascribed this prediction to Bladwell, the local Liberals did not join in this extravagant prophecy. Bladwell's promises for the electorate were on a more modest scale, ranging from support for the building of an aerodrome to the completion of a hall in the nearby town of Taralga. In addition, he gave a local

<sup>10</sup> *Goulburn Evening Post*, 27 February 1956.

application to some general policies, such as increased hospital subsidies and more finance for housing co-operatives.

Most of Tully's proposals for the future differed from these only in degree, or in precise location. Bladwell suggested a sewerage scheme for the people of Crookwell, while Tully offered them instead a sealed road from Goulburn. Both proposed a water supply for the town of Marulan, Bladwell favoured a gymnasium at the local high school while Tully, more daring, offered a new base hospital. Not only were Tully's suggestions on the whole likely to prove more expensive, but they were boldly headed 'Tully's pledges for the next three years', whereas Bladwell's were expressed more cautiously.

Even in these proposals for local benefit, party ideologies had some part. Both candidates promised to increase the rate of house construction, but for Tully this was to be done by the Housing Commission whereas Bladwell looked instead to the co-operative building societies. They agreed that soldier settlement should be speeded up (doubled in the Goulburn district, according to Tully), but disagreed on the conditions under which land should be acquired for subdivision.

Emphasis on local projects, both past and promised, reached its height in Seiffert's campaign in Monaro. According to one of his most widely used advertisements, 'Monaro has progressed more in the past 15 years than in the previous 50 years under Liberal-Country Party governments'. This was probably true, though principally because of the Snowy Mountains project, for which Federal governments, both Labor and non-Labor, were largely responsible. Local projects were heavily stressed; almost every town was reminded that it owed some recent amenity to the State government. There was most to show in the rapidly growing town of Cooma, which had a new hospital, a new high school and a new diesel train service to Sydney. Eden and Candelo, on the Coast, had just obtained a new water supply. Maternity hospitals (which might more properly have been described as maternity wings of existing hospitals) had been opened at Queanbeyan and Bombala. Even a nurse's home at the little coastal town of Pambula was worth listing. Four other towns were reminded that work had been begun to give them a water supply. It was true that work on these undertakings had come to a halt through lack of finance, but this could always

be blamed on the Federal government, while Seiffert argued that even over-ambitious planning was evidence of a keen interest in the development of the electorate. In addition to new projects in particular towns, Seiffert also drew attention to soldier settlement and the extension of electricity supply, in which the government had assisted by subsidizing county councils and by providing a high-tension power line from Canberra to Cooma.

Seiffert's proposals for the future also stressed particular amenities for particular towns. The larger towns were offered more Housing Commission homes. Three others were offered subsidies for the construction of sewerage schemes. Existing water supply schemes should be completed and new ones commenced. There should be government subsidies for the building of swimming pools. In almost every case, from the building of an intermediate high school at Bombala to the provision of steam-heated cars on the Cooma mail train, it was made quite clear which town or district would derive the benefit. There was hardly an important centre of population to which Seiffert did not offer something.

The most elaborate of Seiffert's proposals was for an all-weather highway from the Tableland to Eden, which could then be developed as a deep-sea port.

Eden's greatness and development is not going to come from up the coast or down the coast [he said at a meeting at Eden].

The future development of Twofold Bay as a deep-sea port must come, and will come, from Monaro and the inland. . . . It is a tragedy that Southern Monaro, so close to Twofold Bay, has to rail the whole of its wool production to the seaboard in Sydney, an average of from 300 to 350 miles, when the same area is only an average of from 75 to 100 miles from Twofold Bay. It is going to be a colossal task to bring such a scheme to fruition but I am going to tackle the objective with all the vigour and logic I can bring to bear on the subject.

Unlike Tully in Goulburn, Seiffert avoided any firm undertaking to accomplish all or any of these proposals during a definite period.

This stress on local works was not to be found in the Liberal and Country Party campaigns. Both concentrated on arguing that a change of government would be in the interests of country

people and of the State generally, leaving implicit the conclusion that it would therefore be good for the people of Monaro. Von Nida denounced the conditions of roads in the electorate—'the most shocking in the State'.<sup>11</sup> Smith, in his policy speech, referred to Monaro as 'a most important electorate' because of its primary production and potential tourist trade. Some Liberal advertisements, supporting the restoration of hospital subsidies, were headed 'Citizens of Cooma', 'Citizens of Braidwood and District' or 'Citizens of Eden and District', and began: 'Do you realize that only a privileged few can afford to have a private room at your hospital? That when you are ill it is a luxury to go to hospital?' There were apparently no other attempts to give local colour to the non-Labor campaigns in Monaro.

Local issues were least prominent in South Coast. The Labor campaign, as we have seen, was based almost solely on Beale's alleged shortcomings as a member, but it mentioned no particular cases of mismanagement or neglect. Beale's propaganda was also largely personal, but though it featured such slogans as 'Jack Beale Gets Results', 'His Record Proves His Worth' and 'Give Him a Mandate to Carry On', it was vague on both past achievements and future intentions. As a Liberal member, Beale faced a serious difficulty in discussing government projects in his electorate. If nothing had been done, it might seem to be a reflection on his diligence as a member. If much had been done, the Labor government was presumably entitled to some of the credit. He made an effort to overcome this difficulty in his only published reference to his record, made in reply to Beaton's charges.

I am able to point to spectacular results in my electorate, particularly as I am an Opposition member. Nothing was given or came easily, yet from one end of the electorate to the other there are achievements in new and augmented water supplies, schools, school buses, roads, road transport, hospitals, ambulance services, electricity, primary and secondary industries, and so on.

Probably the principal factor in determining how much a sitting member stresses government works in his electorate is his own attitude to this part of his parliamentary duties. Seiffert's activities as a member of parliament were concerned

<sup>11</sup> *Bombala Times*, 24 February 1956.

almost wholly with the development of his own electorate. His strongest arguments for re-election, and for the return of a Labor government, were that it was in the interests of his constituents as residents of Monaro. Neither Tully nor Beale was so intensely pre-occupied with local development, and their campaigns were somewhat broader in consequence.

(iii) *City versus Country*

The need for local development was usually combined with suspicion of Sydney and allegations that the country people were being neglected. Even in Goulburn, where at least 80 per cent of the voters lived in towns, Tully thought it worth while to say that, while he himself was a townsman, his family had been 'on the land' for many years. Nevertheless, while the attitude that the farmer and the grazier were the 'real' countrymen remained strong, the townspeople, who outnumbered them in Goulburn and Monaro, had their own interests to serve. All the candidates stood for 'the country' as against 'the city', but whether they stressed the towns or the farms varied according to the electorate and the candidate's personal background and, to some extent, according to his party.

In Goulburn, despite Tully's invocation of his farming relatives, the emphasis was all on the towns. Both sides referred to soldier settlement, but almost in passing. Developing 'the country' meant to them above all the establishment of new industries in the city of Goulburn. Each side declared that it was the true ally of industrial decentralization and that its rival was dominated by metropolitan cliques with metropolitan interests. The Labor campaign mentioned the industries already established in Goulburn, 'fostered by Labor's active policy of decentralization'. The Liberals promised a Ministry of Decentralization, and the reduction of power and freight charges, while Bladwell's successful business was cited as 'a practical contribution to decentralization'.

The centralized Liberal campaign, from Sydney, almost ignored Goulburn, but Labor newspaper advertisements sponsored from Sydney laid more stress upon the farmers and their needs than did local Labor publicity. They also stressed that not only were there fourteen Labor members who held country electorates, but that most of these, including seven Cabinet

ministers, were 'experienced and practical men of the land'.<sup>12</sup> This distinction was hardly worth making in a predominantly urban electorate such as Goulburn.

Country sectionalism, as an election issue, was most fully argued in Monaro. In its attempt to make a comeback in the area, the Country Party had to try to gain the support of all who felt that the electorate, or the country generally, was suffering because the government was concerned only with Sydney. Advertisements sent from Sydney and Bruxner's speech in support of von Nida all claimed that both the country towns and the rural areas could expect most from a Country Party member. Because there was no Country Party organization, von Nida was heavily dependent on propaganda from the party headquarters, so that his campaign had insufficient local colour. Instances of delay in public works were quoted, but they came from the spiritual home of the New South Wales Country Party in the north of the State, and it was left to von Nida, in his few speeches, to supplement them with local illustrations. More seriously, Country Party propaganda showed little real interest in the decentralization of secondary industry, which was essential if the country towns were to obtain their share of the State's growing population. The Country Party's appeal was primarily to the farmers and graziers. Many of the things they required—transport, electricity, hospitals and the like—would also benefit the towns, which could also be expected to benefit from greater incomes in the pockets of the farmers who provided most of their custom; but they were offered such benefits because, and to the extent that, they were required for the 'man on the land'.

The Liberal campaign in Monaro referred to the need for more amenities in country towns, but it too had a bias towards the primary producer. This was because Smith himself was a farmer, rather than because the party in general neglected the towns. Smith's policy speech recognized only two ways in which the electorate could progress. The most important was the maintenance and expansion of primary production which could be assisted by greater subsidies for rural electricity extensions and cheaper transport. Secondly, the district could develop by encouraging its tourist trade. The Liberal adver-

<sup>12</sup> *Goulburn Evening Post*, 24 February 1956.

tisements sent from Sydney were designed to appeal solely to the primary producers.

This emphasis on rural interests was strange in an electorate in which half the voters lived in five towns. Moreover, the two largest of these towns, Queanbeyan and Cooma, were no longer primarily commercial centres for the surrounding graziers and their employees. Their present prosperity and future expectations were based not upon the fortunes of the primary producers but on the growth of Canberra in one case and the Snowy Mountains project in the other. Ultimately, they hoped for the development of secondary industry.

Seiffert's appeal to sectionalism was entirely to the sectionalism of the townspeople. His advertisements headed 'What did the Liberal-Country Party Governments ever do for the Country?', were really concerned to ask rhetorically what they had ever done for the country towns. The first few paragraphs of these advertisements illustrate Seiffert's argument, which he also put forward at public meetings:

Large PUBLIC WORKS and INDUSTRIES in COUNTRY AREAS bring workers to those areas. WORKERS don't support the Liberal or Country Parties—therefore, do you think for one moment that Liberal Party Candidates would choose to commit POLITICAL SUICIDE?

The HUGE SNOWY MOUNTAINS HYDRO-ELECTRIC UNDERTAKING would never have been commenced by anti-LABOR Governments.

This great NATIONAL project of such vital importance to the whole NATION is also of incalculable value to the MONARO District—WORKERS, BUSINESS PEOPLE and the WHOLE COMMUNITY benefits from the spending power created by the commencement of this undertaking.

As an argument, it had its weaknesses. As Fraser had already pointed out, the advent of the Snowy scheme had actually weakened the Labor Party in the area by bringing an influx of white-collar workers. Nevertheless, it did show an interest in the towns, and treated them as having a future in their own right as well as remaining service centres for the benefit of the rural population. Two short passages highlight this difference of emphasis. According to Smith's policy speech:

It is absolutely essential to the economy of Australia to encourage people who are at present *on the land* to stay there. The

drift to the cities may be best arrested by providing the opportunity for them to share in this service [electricity] with the more thickly populated areas.

An advertisement for Seiffert, after listing his policy, concluded: 'These are the things that will build up the Country—Keep the young people *in their home town* and spread prosperity.'

Beale's campaign in South Coast stressed the clash of interests between primary producers and Sydney, and identified the Liberal Party with the former:

The Cahill government has a vested interest in centralization. It derives its political power from a hard core of Labor seats in the inner-Sydney city area. Inside Labor caucus, where policy is determined, the city and coalfield members are 80% of the voting strength. Country policy has no chance. It is rural suicide for a country dweller to vote for the Cahill government. On the other hand, a Liberal vote is good business for the country. By way of illustration, two thirds of the Menzies government is representative of rural and provincial electorates.

For Beale, 'the country' meant above all the farmers. This was a much safer assumption than in Monaro, for the coastal towns are small, stable in population, and almost wholly concerned with supplying the wants of the farming population.

#### (iv) *Socialization*

After fifteen years of Labor government, it required a very keen nose to detect the Socialist tiger in State politics. But Beale spoke of the government as committed to socialism, in the sense of public ownership of industry. To him the government was 'the Cahill Socialist Government'; Beaton ('my Socialist opponent') was challenged to deny three extraordinary propositions:

1. He has signed a pledge to work for 'the socialization of industry, production, distribution and exchange', i.e. government ownership of land and property and conscription of Labor.
2. He is pledged to vote in Parliament as the majority may decide at a Caucus meeting, i.e. vote as directed by the Trades Hall Junta (a body outside parliament), even when this is against the interests of his electorate.
3. He supports the Federal Leader of his Party, Dr Evatt, in all his pro-Communist utterances and Communist-inspired foreign policy.

The only other candidate who attempted to use socialization as an issue in itself was von Nida, who published a reproduction of the pledge signed by all Labor parliamentary candidates. The two most important sections of this pledge were an undertaking to vote as determined by a majority of caucus in all matters included in the party's platform and 'to actively support and advocate at all times the Party's objective—the Socialization of Industry, Production, Distribution and Exchange'. 'Don't Go Wrong—Vote for Von', exhorted the advertisement, 'Every Labor Parliamentary Candidate is a Socialist'.<sup>13</sup>

For the remaining candidates, the acceptance or rejection of socialism was hardly an issue, but some related propositions were. For example, Smith urged the construction of highways by contract, instead of by day labour employed by the Department of Main Roads. All the Liberal candidates favoured the granting of freehold tenure to soldier settlers, instead of the perpetual leasehold favoured by the Government. Finally, one of the clauses of Morton's proposed Bill of Rights was to prevent the nationalization of particular industries without a referendum or the approval of the owners.

The Bill of Rights was frequently mentioned in all electorates, but usually in propaganda from Sydney. Apart from being mildly ridiculed by Seiffert and by J. J. Maloney, M.L.C., speaking in support of Tully, it attracted little local attention.

## THE RESULTS

In December, the overall result of the Federal election caused little surprise, but the Eden-Monaro result, with its swing in favour of Fraser, was unexpected. In the State election, this position was reversed. The fate of the Cahill government was not finally known for almost a week, and though the government was eventually found to have a comfortable majority of five after electing a Speaker, the vital seats were retained by majorities of a few hundred. For some days it appeared certain that the Labor government, if returned at all, would have to depend on the support of independents. The seats included in Eden-Monaro, however, produced no surprises. All showed

<sup>13</sup> *Cooma-Monaro Express*, 2 March 1956.

swings in favour of the Liberal Party, but not of sufficient strength to endanger Seiffert or Tully. Even the strength of the swings could have been roughly predicted from a knowledge of the candidates and the campaigns they conducted.

The closest result was in Goulburn, where Tully defeated Bladwell by 942 votes. The final figures were:

Tully . . . . .	8666
Bladwell . . . . .	7724
Informal . . . . .	97

Tully's majority in 1953 had been 4086. His share of the formal votes fell from 62.6 per cent to 52.9 per cent, one of the biggest swings against a sitting member anywhere in the State. He had faced a popular opponent, whose followers had fought an enthusiastic campaign, and the general swing against Labor was given added momentum.

Seiffert's majority in Monaro was less drastically reduced, no doubt because the opposition was less formidable. In 1953, when Smith had been his only opponent, he had had a majority of 4090. In 1956 he had an absolute majority of 2490 over Smith and von Nida. The Country Party's attempt to regain a foothold in Monaro failed completely. The final figures were:

Seiffert . . . . .	8709
Smith . . . . .	5604
von Nida . . . . .	613
Informal . . . . .	161

The Labor vote in Monaro fell from 65.7 per cent to 58.4 per cent—the smallest swing in the three electorates. Nevertheless, this was a very substantial decline, considering the popularity of the sitting member and his relatively unknown opponents.

The Country Party vote is almost too small to analyse. However, it was least unimpressive in Cooma, where there remained a group of old Country Party supporters, survivors from the pre-Seiffert era, and in rural booths around Eden. If the disputed how-to-vote cards had been available, von Nida might have made a better showing, but the difference would not have been significant. His intervention proved only that the Country Party in Monaro was dead.

In South Coast, Beale's majority was 6379, compared with 3398 in 1953. His share of the formal votes increased from 60.8

per cent to 68·5 per cent. In the four subdivisions of his electorate which are part of Eden-Monaro the increase was from 57·8 per cent to 66·5 per cent.

The overall figures for the Eden-Monaro area in the State election showed a Labour majority of 50·4 per cent of the formal votes. For the first time, the State Labor candidates polled fewer votes than Fraser.

This time, there was no aftermath—or at least no obvious or immediate one. If a Liberal and Country Party government had been elected, Beale would probably have been a contender for the ministry. When it became clear that Labor had been returned, the State caucus re-elected in its entirety the ministry that had held office before the election. If any new ministers had been elected, Tully and Seiffert would not have been among them.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Election in Queanbeyan

### THE PEOPLE OF QUEANBEYAN

Queanbeyan was established, and passed its first eighty years, as a commercial centre for the surrounding pastoral district. It still serves this purpose, but for nearly forty years it has been greatly influenced by the rapidly growing Federal capital city of Canberra, only eight miles to the west. The people of Queanbeyan have played a big part in building Canberra, and in supplying it with goods and with labour, both manual and semi-professional. Certainly Queanbeyan would not have approached its present population of 7200 but for the proximity of Canberra.<sup>1</sup>

Since the war Canberra has far surpassed Queanbeyan in size. However, Queanbeyan is in no present danger of becoming a suburb of its larger neighbour. Canberra has not been able to provide for the commercial requirements of its own citizens, still less to usurp Queanbeyan's role as centre for the pastoral districts to the north, south and west. In fact, many Canberra people shop in Queanbeyan because of the inadequacy of shopping facilities in Canberra. Canberra is not, of course, in Eden-Monaro. The railway line from Goulburn to Cooma forms the boundary between the electorate (and the State of New South Wales) and the Australian Capital Territory, though there is constant coming and going across this boundary.

The largest and most regular of these movements is by those who work in Canberra but live in Queanbeyan, and who make the trip daily in each direction by private car or by a regular bus service. It used to be said that the Commonwealth government's less exalted employees were relegated to Queanbeyan, leaving Canberra to the public service. Of recent years, the

<sup>1</sup> Fuller treatment of Queanbeyan and of its relations with Canberra may be found in H. W. H. King 'The Canberra-Queanbeyan Symbiosis', *Geographical Review*, Vol. XLVI, No. 1, 1954, and in Dr King's unpublished thesis, 'The Urban Hierarchy of the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales'.

acute shortage of housing in Canberra has led to a much more heterogeneous body crossing the border every morning and evening. Journalists, public servants and others have sometimes found it possible to buy or rent a house in Queanbeyan when none was available to them in Canberra. It has been estimated that 1000 people make the daily journey—nearly half the total work force of Queanbeyan. Among the public servants who do so are the president and secretary of the Queanbeyan branch of the Labor Party. The president of the A.C.T. Trades and Labor Council, the central organization of the trade unions in Canberra, is another Queanbeyan resident.

The growth of Canberra has brought an unusual proportion of building workers and public servants into Queanbeyan, and so has made what was already a town with strong Labor tendencies into a Labor stronghold. Most country towns produce Labor majorities, and particularly those which, like Queanbeyan, serve a district in which large-scale grazing predominates. If Canberra had never been built, Queanbeyan, like Yass, Bombala and other substantial towns serving extensive pastoral districts, would probably give considerable majorities to Labor candidates, but the size of these majorities would have been smaller.

The population of Queanbeyan increased by almost a third between the census of 1947 and that of 1954. This was a much greater rate of growth than for any other municipality in the electorate except for Cooma, which almost trebled in size. All the towns showed some substantial increase, but Queanbeyan's very rapid growth was a corollary of the still more rapid growth of Canberra, which grew from 17,000 to 31,000 during the same period. Though both have become much larger, Queanbeyan still fills the role of general maid-of-all-work to Canberra, and its larger population in 1954 was divided, according to industry, very much the same as its smaller population of 1947.

In other respects, however, Queanbeyan '54 was very far from being Queanbeyan '47 writ large. In religion, the proportion of Anglicans and Protestants fell considerably, while the Catholic and Orthodox proportions increased. Even in 1947, over 30 per cent of the people of Queanbeyan were Catholics; by 1954 the proportion had grown to 41 per cent, compared with 27 per cent for the whole of New South Wales. During the

same period, followers of the Greek Orthodox Church had increased from 23 to 248. The proportion of Anglicans fell from 42 per cent to 37 per cent while the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, never numerically strong in Queanbeyan, also failed to keep up with the increased population.

It is generally believed that a substantial majority of Catholics vote for the Labour Party, and this is to some extent confirmed by our own work in Queanbeyan. But before this increase in the Catholic population is regarded as a Labor windfall, allowance must be made for the non-British migrants, firstly because they cannot vote until naturalized, and secondly because there is another popular impression, this time less substantiated, that when they become eligible to vote they tend to be non-Labor supporters.

In 1954, 26 per cent of the people of Queanbeyan had been born in Europe. This was more than double the State average, and much higher than in any other town in Eden-Monaro, except Cooma. How many of these 1800 people are eligible to vote can only be conjectured. Nearly two-thirds of Queanbeyan residents who were born outside Australia (including those from Commonwealth countries who can vote after three months' residence in Australia) had been in Australia more than the five years required for naturalization. Naturalization is not obligatory, so that probably no more than 400 people of European birth living in Queanbeyan are eligible to vote.

Two hundred Queanbeyan electors were interviewed during the week which preceded each election.<sup>2</sup> They were asked questions relating to their past voting record and present voting intentions, their occupation and their religion, their opinion of the work of the sitting members and their exposure to press, radio and other propaganda.

Even such small-scale polls as these were conducted under some difficulties, and their results must be used with discretion. Neither was carried out under circumstances which would wholly have satisfied a statistician. They were conducted under quite different principles, the first (Federal) poll using a 'systematic' sample, chosen by taking every fifteenth name from the electoral roll for the Queanbeyan subdivision, and the second a sample which was stratified according to past voting

<sup>2</sup> The two interview schedules followed are printed as an Appendix.

record and the age distribution of the population of Queanbeyan. The change was made because experience showed that, with a small staff of interviewers, it was impossible to contact all of the 'systematic' sample. Since only one week could be allowed for interviewing, this meant that substitutes had to be used on a scale which detracted from the validity of the sample. Perhaps for this reason, though more probably for another, the Federal poll failed to suggest that, in Queanbeyan as elsewhere, there would be a swing towards Fraser, and in fact suggested that the Liberals would gain ground. Despite this error, which was not a fatal one since prediction of the result was not one of the purposes of the poll, the sample appeared to be reasonably representative of the people of Queanbeyan.

For the second (State) poll, the town was divided into sections, and the interviewers visited every second house. As the sample grew in size, the distribution of ages among those interviewed and the proportion who claimed to have voted Labor in the Federal election were compared with the known figures for the whole of the Queanbeyan population, so that any bias in these respects could be corrected by further interviewing. Those interviewed seemed to represent the town's voters adequately, except that the proportion of women was too high, especially among the Liberal voters. This arose from our inability to conduct sufficient interviews in the evening or the week-end, which were the only times when most men could be found at home.

Although prediction of the results was not a purpose of either poll, their success or failure in this respect may be a guide to their reliability for other purposes. In the Federal poll, 60·6 per cent of our sample said they intended to vote Labor, 37·4 per cent Liberal and 2 per cent Independent. In the event, 63·5 per cent of the Queanbeyan voters voted Labor, 33·7 per cent Liberal and 2·8 per cent Independent. The State poll resulted in a more accurate prediction. Of the sample, 68·5 per cent intended to vote Labor and 31·5 per cent Liberal; no one interviewed intended to support the Country Party candidate. The actual Queanbeyan result was Labor 68·1 per cent, Liberal 29·8 per cent and Country Party 2·1 per cent.

The circumstances under which the polls were carried out

means that their results are not quantifiable in any strict sense. They should be regarded simply as structured interviews with a large number of electors who were chosen without any pre-determined bias, and this summary of the results should be regarded as an impressionistic condensation of their answers. Though these answers are summarized in statistical form, this is intended merely to enable the reader to see for himself how much evidence lies behind our generalizations. It does not mean that we regard our results as necessarily, or even probably, highly accurate. We make no broader claim than to have summarized how 200 people in Queanbeyan felt about certain aspects of each campaign.

### RELIGION AND VOTING

There are some variations between the two polls on the relation between religion and political allegiance, but the general outline is clear. Large majorities of the Catholics and Anglicans interviewed on each occasion intended to vote Labor. Methodists were about equally divided and Presbyterians tended to vote Liberal.

TABLE XI

PROPORTION OF LABOR VOTERS IN THE FOUR MAJOR DENOMINATIONS

	<i>C. of E.</i> %	<i>Catholic</i> %	<i>Methodist</i> %	<i>Presbyterian</i> %
Federal Poll . . . . .	60.7	73.7	40.9	11.5
State Poll . . . . .	65.0	80.8	54.5	46.2

These figures do little more than suggest that the religious denominations have the same political characteristics as they are shown to have by surveys conducted by Australian Public Opinion Polls showed throughout Australia,<sup>3</sup> though all the denominations in Queanbeyan contain a high proportion of Labor voters. It would be more valuable to know what effect the Labor Party dispute, with its strong religious flavour, had on Queanbeyan Catholics, and how members of the various denominations reacted to the Liberals' unusual step of putting

<sup>3</sup> Results of the surveys carried out before the Federal Elections of 1946, 1949, and 1951 are printed in L. C. Webb, *Communism and Democracy in Australia* (Melbourne, 1954), p. 98.

forward a Catholic candidate. Here we can only point to some inconclusive results. In the Federal poll, one of the sample intended changing his vote from Liberal to Labor, and five from Labor to Liberal. Four of the latter group were Catholics, and all gave the same reason for changing sides—the leadership of the Labor Party by Dr Evatt. On the other hand, the one voter who intended to swing in the other direction was also a Catholic, her reason being personal support for Fraser.

It will be seen from this that our interviews suggested a swing to the Liberal Party. It is quite possible that this misleading result appeared because the people we interviewed were not a representative sample, but it could also be due to another unavoidable danger in opinion polling—the unwillingness of people being interviewed to give answers which they think are out of favour, or likely to shock or embarrass the interviewer. In Eden-Monaro and in Australia generally, to vote against a candidate solely because of his religion, though commonly defended in private, is publicly regarded as somewhat disreputable. To do so is to be 'sectarian', a word which is invariably used with a derogatory implication. Yet there is no doubt that religious beliefs are important in Australian politics, and are as important among Liberal supporters as among other Australians. The number of Catholics who have succeeded in becoming Liberal members of parliament is very small—proportionately much smaller than the number of Catholic Liberal voters. Since it is unfashionable to admit to such prejudices, opposition to Flanagan on religious grounds was probably more widespread than our necessarily superficial interviews suggested. Only one of our Federal sample gave Flanagan's religion as her chief reason for voting against him, and she intended to vote for the Independent, not for the Labor candidate. But it is possible that others who normally voted Liberal and whose only objection to Flanagan was that he was a Catholic, were unwilling to admit that they intended to vote for Fraser, since their reason for doing so was one which is usually frowned upon in public.

Religion was less important in the State campaign. The A.L.P. dispute hardly affected State politics, and none of the candidates was a Catholic. Four Catholics who had voted for Labor at the state election of 1953 said they had voted Liberal

in the Federal election in December 1955, but so did five Anglicans. Three of the Anglicans and two of the Catholics intended to revert to voting Labor in the coming State election.

The most that can be said is that the interviews held before the Federal poll suggested that on that occasion Catholics were more likely to turn against the Labor Party than non-Catholics, and that the interviews before the State poll do not controvert this, though neither do they provide any clear corroboration. In the Federal survey, the proportion of Catholics who 'didn't know' how they intended to vote was much higher than in any other denomination, whereas before the State election this doubtful distinction passed to the Anglicans. Was this fortuitous, or were Catholics uncertain how they should vote in the Federal election because of the dispute in the Labor Party? Like our subjects, we 'don't know'. But Fraser could not have increased his majority in Queanbeyan unless a large majority of those Catholics who had voted Labor in the past had continued to do so.

#### THE VOTERS' JUSTIFICATIONS

Immediately after answering 'which candidate will you probably vote for at this election', those interviewed were asked, 'What will be your CHIEF reason for voting that way?' Strictly interpreted, the question asked them to explain why they intended to vote for a particular candidate, not why they intended to support a party. Few people interpreted the question in this way, but the wording of the two questions may have predisposed others to answer in terms of the personal qualities of the candidates.

Tables XII and XIII show the reasons given by both sides at both elections. Labor and Liberal voters claimed to be influenced by very different issues. The most popular reasons for voting Labor were class affiliation and the virtues of the sitting Labor members, but no one said they would vote Liberal for class reasons or because they disapproved of the sitting members, and only one because he approved of the Liberal candidate. Before the Federal election, a quarter of the intending Liberal voters gave the record of the Federal government as their principal justification, but only one intending Labor voter gave

TABLE XII

THE VOTERS' JUSTIFICATIONS, FEDERAL ELECTIONS—DECEMBER 1955

	Men	Women	Total
<i>Reasons for voting Labor:</i>			
Pro-Fraser . . . . .	15	14	29
Always Labor . . . . .	14	11	25
Because a worker or wage-earner . . . . .	10	11	21
Follows husband or family . . . . .	—	8	8
Labor policy (generally) . . . . .	3	2	5
Labor best for all . . . . .	1	2	3
Other reasons . . . . .	—	3	3
Total . . . . .	<u>43</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>94</u>
<i>Reasons for Voting Liberal:</i>			
Government's record . . . . .	6	5	11
Policy (generally) . . . . .	6	3	9
Anti-Evatt . . . . .	4	4	8
Always Liberal . . . . .	4	2	6
Labor disunity . . . . .	3	1	4
Follow husband . . . . .	—	4	4
Anti-Communist . . . . .	2	2	4
Pro-Menzies . . . . .	1	2	3
Other reasons . . . . .	5	3	8
Don't know . . . . .	6	3	9
Total . . . . .	<u>37</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>66</u>

TABLE XIII

THE VOTERS' JUSTIFICATIONS, STATE ELECTIONS—March 1956

	Men	Women	Total
<i>Reasons for voting Labor:</i>			
Pro-Seiffert . . . . .	13	21	34
Always Labor . . . . .	8	12	20
Because a worker or wage-earner . . . . .	18	23	41
Follow husband or family . . . . .	—	20	20
Other reasons . . . . .	2	3	5
Don't know . . . . .	3	5	8
Total . . . . .	<u>44</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>128</u>
<i>Reasons for voting Liberal:</i>			
Always Liberal . . . . .	5	10	15
State government's bad record . . . . .	2	2	4
Need for change . . . . .	3	5	8
Follow husband or family . . . . .	—	5	5
Federal government's good record . . . . .	3	2	5
Other reasons . . . . .	2	6	8
Don't know . . . . .	6	9	15
Total . . . . .	<u>21</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>60</u>

the government's record as his chief reason for voting Labor. A number of Liberal voters mentioned admiration for Menzies or dislike of Evatt, but no one said he intended to vote Labor because he supported Evatt or disliked Menzies. Justifications common to both sides were the influence of husband or family and frankly-confessed political habit.

Figures such as these prove little about the importance of these issues in determining the result. If Fraser or Seiffert had not stood, if Evatt had not been leader of the Labor Party, or if the Labor Party had not been disunited, most of the people who mentioned these factors would no doubt have found another reason for voting the same way. In many cases the answer given to the interviewer was that which was thought most likely to create a favourable impression, while even those who attempted to give a 'true' answer may have had insufficient knowledge of their own motives to do so.

Nevertheless, some general conclusions are possible. For example, we cannot ignore the large proportion of Labor voters who gave Fraser's or Seiffert's candidature as their chief justification. It also seems fair to conclude that, since Evatt was frequently mentioned during the Federal survey as a reason for voting Liberal, but never as a reason for voting Labor, his leadership was an electoral liability to the Labor Party in Queanbeyan. Since Fraser was known to be opposed to Evatt, support for Fraser would tend to be accompanied by lack of enthusiasm for Evatt.

A feature of the results is the prominence of class affiliation as a reason for voting Labor. A third of the Labor voters answered in these terms. This seems a high proportion for a country town, where class identification is usually thought to be weaker than in the larger cities.

Class-consciousness plays no overt part in making people vote Liberal, presumably because the Liberal Party does not admit, even in the partial and qualified manner of the Labor Party, that its strength is drawn primarily from a single social class and that its primary task is to protect the interests of that class. A more exhaustive examination would probably show a high proportion of Liberal voters who support the party because of a feeling that it is made up of 'people like us', but who would be reluctant to express the idea in terms of class.

## POPULARITY OF THE SITTING MEMBERS

Both Fraser and Seiffert were regarded by the press as unusually popular members, and Labor's success in holding Eden-Monaro and Monaro during 1949-50, when the party had lost many seats in both State and Federal parliaments, was attributed to this popularity. There is no doubt that Fraser and, to an even greater extent, Seiffert, had won personal popularity, without which neither could have retained his seat. It is more difficult to estimate how many voters who would otherwise have voted Liberal were swayed by these considerations.

Queanbeyan was Seiffert's 'home town', and it was Fraser's nearest equivalent to a 'home town' within the electorate. Both had the greatest opportunity to make themselves known there, and to pick up such electoral support as personal contact could obtain for them. Their Liberal opponents, in the elections of 1955 and 1956, were at a greater personal disadvantage in Queanbeyan than elsewhere. Flanagan, living eighty miles away and a newcomer to politics, was almost unknown in Queanbeyan before the Federal campaign began. Smith, though he had contested Monaro in 1953, was only slightly better known, for he lived fifty miles away and was not a memorable person. If being personally known and familiar figures around the district worked in favour of Fraser and Seiffert anywhere, it should have worked most strongly in Queanbeyan.

There is no doubt that they were both widely known. More than one-third of the voters interviewed said that they had met Fraser, and more than half claimed to have met Seiffert. But there seemed to be no connexion between knowing the members and voting for them. Among the people we interviewed, those who had met them were just as likely to vote against them as those who had not met them.

A personal following need not have much to do with becoming personally known in the electorate. A candidate may receive support on personal grounds from people who have never met him but who support him because of his reputation. On the other hand, it is easy to imagine a candidate who becomes less popular as he becomes better known.

A question in the interview schedules which was more closely related to voting intention asked 'What sort of a job do you think Mr Fraser [or Mr Seiffert, in the case of the State poll] has done as member for this district?' The results, divided according to voting intention, were:

TABLE XIV

	<i>Voting Intention:</i>			
	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Liberal</i>	<i>Inde- pendent</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<i>Opinion of Fraser's work:</i>				
Very good . . . . .	75	22	—	13
Good . . . . .	19	17	2	8
Satisfactory . . . . .	4	14	1	4
Not satisfactory . . . . .	—	4	—	—
Don't know . . . . .	1	9	—	5
Total . . . . .	<u>99</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>30</u>
<i>Opinion of Seiffert's work:</i>				
Very good . . . . .	61	14	—	4
Good . . . . .	36	16	—	—
Satisfactory . . . . .	12	12	—	7
Not satisfactory . . . . .	—	—	—	—
Don't know . . . . .	16	14	—	14
Total . . . . .	<u>125</u>	<u>56</u>	—	<u>25</u>

It is hard to determine the significance of such results when we cannot compare them with how voters in other electorates, or even in another part of Eden-Monaro, would reply to a similar question. However, it is safe to say that Queanbeyan has a high opinion of both its parliamentary representatives, and that this opinion is held by many Liberal voters. This is, of course, a very doubtful source of satisfaction for the Labor party. It is no doubt a tribute to Fraser and Seiffert that more than half of those who intended to vote Liberal believed them to have done 'good' or 'very good' work, but it did not prevent these voters from trying to bring about their defeat. Just as personal contact does not necessarily mean popularity, so popularity does not necessarily mean support at the polls. What we would really like to know is how many people who would otherwise have voted Liberal voted Labor because Fraser and Seiffert were the Labor candidates.

We can only draw a general conclusion from several un-

connected pieces of evidence. The qualities of Fraser and Seiffert were very common reasons for intending to vote Labor. Nevertheless, the voting history of Queanbeyan between 1941 and 1954 suggests that only Seiffert enjoyed a strong personal following in *Queanbeyan*. If Fraser also had such a following, it was not of the sort that wins votes. When Seiffert first won the Monaro seat in 1941, he had a majority of 67 per cent in Queanbeyan. He was returned unopposed in 1944, increased his majority in Queanbeyan to 73 per cent in 1947, held it at 70 per cent in 1950, and increased it again to 73 per cent in the boom Labor year of 1953. This looks like a typical example of a sitting member consolidating his position until, at least in his home town, he is almost independent of the broad movements of political opinion. Fraser's vote in Queanbeyan fluctuated widely. He began with a 67 per cent majority in 1943, increased it to 69 per cent in 1946, fell back to 67 per cent in 1949 (when the Federal Labor government was defeated), fell again to 62 per cent in 1951, and remained at that figure in 1954. This does not look like the record of a man who is drawing Liberal voters away from their traditional allegiance because of his personal qualities, though the picture was very different in other parts of the electorate.

It may be wrong to assume from this that Fraser's popularity in Queanbeyan was less than Seiffert's. It may be that, for a variety of reasons, the candidate matters less and the party more at Federal than at State elections, and that, while Fraser was as popular as Seiffert, the vote-gaining effect of his popularity was less. This is just one of the many unanswered questions on the difference between Federal and State politics. But it was heard several times around the Monaro electorate that, while neither is an effusive man, Seiffert has a casually friendly manner whereas Fraser, though polite and frequently charming, carries with him an air of tension and formality. This difference in personality is in Seiffert's favour.

The results of the 1955 and 1956 elections reversed the trend of the previous ten years. Fraser's majority in Queanbeyan increased while Seiffert's fell to its lowest level since 1941. Though Seiffert still polled more votes than Fraser, the gap between the two members narrowed considerably. This change was not confined to Queanbeyan, and cannot be seen in its

true perspective without considering the overall results. However, it seems that Fraser is only now after twelve years in office, 'breaking through' in Queanbeyan, and gaining that effective personal following which the more amiable, though less distinguished, Seiffert has enjoyed for many years.

## CHAPTER SIX

# Some Conclusions

### THE PATTERN OF VOTING

If the elections for the Senate and the House of Representatives are regarded as two separate polls—and the results justify treating them as such—the voters in Eden-Monaro made three distinct political decisions within three months—two on 10 December and the third on 3 March. It is not surprising that most of them voted for the same party on each occasion; what is remarkable is the number who changed sides once or even twice.

The shifting patterns of voting can be seen in some detail in Table XV, but some of the more notable shifts deserve special mention. In the South Coast subdivisions, 8 per cent more of the electors voted for Fraser than voted for the Labor Senate team, while Beaton's vote in the State election was even lower than the Labor Senate total. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to speak of the political complexion of the South Coast without qualification. Political allegiance varies to a most important extent not only from time to time, but under different circumstances at the same time. The popularity enjoyed by the Labor Party on 10 December 1955 varies according to whether it is measured in terms of the popularity of Allan Duncan Fraser or by the support shown for the relatively anonymous members of the Labor Senate team. If we include the State election too, we have yet another criterion of measurement.

There is nothing novel in pointing out that personal and local loyalties are an important influence on voting, but the size of these differences in three elections held within such a short period deserves some emphasis. In the South Coast subdivisions, the Labor vote was highest for the House of Representatives (45 per cent) and lowest for the Legislative Assembly (35 per cent). In Monaro the Labor vote ranged

TABLE XV

VOTING BY SUBDIVISIONS IN THE EDEN-MONARO AREA, 1955-6  
(Labor percentage of formal ordinary votes)\*

	Senate	House of Repre- sentatives	State
<i>Monaro State Electorate:</i>			
Adaminaby . . . . .	55·6	64·7	62·5
Araluen . . . . .	51·8	54·3	70·3
Berridale . . . . .	45·4	52·8	56·4
Bombala . . . . .	46·2	55·6	60·7
Braidwood . . . . .	42·2	51·0	53·2
Cooma . . . . .	48·3	56·9	56·2
Eden . . . . .	39·6	48·1	51·3
Michelago . . . . .	34·9	41·2	48·8
Nimmitabel . . . . .	41·2	51·4	54·3
Queanbeyan . . . . .	55·7	64·2	66·3
	<u>47·3</u>	<u>54·7</u>	<u>58·5</u>
<i>Goulburn State Electorate:</i>			
Bungendore . . . . .	66·7	71·6	68·0
Goulburn . . . . .	53·6	60·4	56·9
Marulan . . . . .	55·9	59·7	57·5
Pomeroy . . . . .	24·7	30·8	27·9
Tarago . . . . .	29·5	39·4	32·8
Taralga . . . . .	30·4	34·3	43·6
	<u>51·0</u>	<u>56·4</u>	<u>54·4</u>
<i>South Coast Electorate:</i>			
Bega . . . . .	33·0	40·4	28·5
Cobargo . . . . .	35·7	45·4	33·3
Milton . . . . .	40·6	49·7	35·6
Moruya . . . . .	47·0	54·8	40·3
	<u>38·3</u>	<u>45·0</u>	<u>33·5</u>
<i>Burrinjuck State Electorate:</i>			
Gunning . . . . .	45·3	52·4	50·4
Total† . . . . .	<u>46·4</u>	<u>54·0</u>	<u>50·8</u>

\* It has been assumed that two-thirds of the preferences of the Communist and ungrouped Senate candidates favoured the Liberal-Country Party team. This was approximately how they were distributed for N.S.W. as a whole. It has been further assumed that 80 per cent of Beavis's preferences in the House of Representatives election, which were never in fact distributed, favoured Flanagan. All votes for von Nida in the Monaro election has been assumed to be non-Labor votes.

† The Labor proportions of the total formal votes in the Federal elections (including absent and postal votes) were 46·0 per cent for the Senate and 54·2 per cent for the House of Representatives. As only portions of State electorates are included, the distribution of postal and 'electoral visitor' votes in the State election cannot be calculated.

between 59 per cent for the Legislative Assembly and 49 per cent for the Senate. In Goulburn the range was between 57 per cent for the House of Representatives and 46 per cent for the Senate.

If swinging voters are people who make a fresh decision on how they will vote in each election, and whose decisions vary in terms of party allegiance, they were present in Eden-Monaro in sufficient numbers to determine the result of every poll. But 'swinging' is hardly an appropriate adjective, since it suggests that the voter occupies a definite position at every point in time, though his position varies from one election to another. Many of those who voted for Fraser but for the Liberal Senate team were not swinging voters but ambivalent voters in terms of party loyalty. So were most of those who changed their allegiance for the State election.

Though the Senate vote is in some respects the best measure of party popularity, it must be handled with care because of the very large, and apparently increasing, proportion of informal votes. Since Labor voters are likely to have less familiarity with paper work of the quite elaborate kind required to mark a Senate ballot paper correctly, it is probable that the high proportion of informal votes for the Senate adversely affects the Labor Party. Nevertheless, the Senate figures suggest that, with the possible exception of Goulburn, no seat within the Eden-Monaro area could be held by Labor unless the Labor candidate had a considerable personal following.

The very large differences in party support between the three elections must be borne in mind when attempts are made to decide from which parts of the electorate each party drew its strength. How are we to describe a subdivision like Bombala, which recorded a 60 per cent vote for Seiffert, a 56 per cent vote for Fraser and a meagre 46 per cent for the Labor Senate team? Or Cobargo, which gave Fraser 45 per cent but the Senate team only 36 per cent, and Beaton 33 per cent? Any generalization from such a complicated series of voting patterns will necessarily be vague and subject to a good deal of qualification. For example, we can confirm the generally held view that the country towns tend to vote Labor, and the rural districts Liberal. The nine towns in the electorate at which more than 500 people voted show Labor majorities of 58 per

cent for the House of Representatives election and 55 per cent for the State election. At the other extreme, the booths at which less than 100 voted returned Liberal majorities of 58 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. But these figures are misleading summaries. One reason why Labor won substantial majorities in the larger towns is that most of these towns are on the Tableland, which is generally sympathetic to Labor. The coastal towns all showed Liberal majorities, usually very large ones. The town of Bega, with 3000 people, produced a Liberal majority of 61 per cent for the House of Representatives and 71 per cent for the Legislative Assembly. Though the rural booths on the Tableland showed Liberal majorities, they were relatively small ones. In other words, the rural districts of the Tableland were much more favourable to Labor than were the coastal towns.

It is possible to explain why rural areas on the Tableland contained fewer Liberal voters than rural areas on the Coast in terms of occupational differences, primarily the predominance of independent farmers on the Coast and of employees on the Tableland; the differences between voting in the towns cannot be explained so easily. It is true that the largest towns on the Tableland—Goulburn and Queanbeyan—have no equivalent on the Coast. They exist as industrial and service centres in their own right, and are almost independent of the surrounding countryside. But why should a town like Bombala, which exists only as a distributing centre for a grazing district, show large Labor majorities, while towns of similar size like Narooma and Milton, which fulfil the same functions for a dairying district, show large Liberal majorities? The townspeople in each case follow much the same occupations: there are store-keepers and shop assistants, professional men and postal workers, clerks and truck-drivers in very similar proportions. But the differences in voting behaviour show that, at least in country towns, occupation may be a poor guide to political preference.

The most likely explanation is that the towns tend to take their political colour from the surrounding country, though they tend to be rather more sympathetic to Labor. Unfortunately, to say this tells us nothing of the way this influence is exercised. It is not merely a matter of economic power because, if this

supposition is correct, the political leanings of much of the Monaro and South Tablelands owe more to station hands and postal linesmen than to graziers. The formation of political attitudes in particular districts has never been carefully studied, and no such attempt was possible in this survey. For the time, therefore, we must be content with the hypothesis that there is a tendency for small country towns, which have few professional people and only small business men, to vote Labor. Since the business men, in particular, are very sensitive to the opinions of the surrounding district, this is a tendency which is easily submerged. For example: the Coastal towns vote Liberal because their whole existence is bound up with the solidly anti-Labor dairy-farmers. On the Tableland, the rural districts are evenly divided politically, and the 'natural' tendency of the towns to vote Labor is free to assert itself. A country town that is primarily a commercial centre may be a political stronghold for either side, depending on the pressure exerted by its environs.

The political allegiance of the towns becomes further complicated when they become something more than commercial centres. There are several such towns on the Tableland. Goulburn has always been an important railway town, it draws much of its sustenance from other government institutions, and it has several secondary industries. Queanbeyan is more concerned with Canberra than with its pastoral hinterland; and the south-west of the electorate, particularly the town of Cooma, is affected by the Snowy Mountains project. Political allegiance then becomes a separate problem in each case.

In Goulburn and in Queanbeyan the particular factors that have made these towns something more than commercial centres have strengthened an existing tendency to vote Labor. Goulburn's gaol, its large hospitals, its big railway works and its textile mills have all increased the proportions of wage-earners and of trade unionists. The growth of Canberra has meant for Queanbeyan a growing population that includes a high proportion of building and construction workers—more potential Labor voters.

The principal political effect of the Snowy Mountains project has been to turn Cooma from a Labor stronghold to a marginal town. Before the advent of the Snowy Mountains Authority, Cooma was a commercial centre for a pastoral area, and

produced Labor majorities of 60 per cent or higher. Since 1947, its population has almost trebled and most of the newcomers have been administrative and clerical employees of the Authority. As a result, the Labor vote in the Cooma subdivision has fallen sharply. The 1955-6 results showed Labor majorities of 56 per cent for the House of Representatives and the Legislative Assembly and 48 per cent for the Senate.

The principal differences between the voting patterns of the three elections can be briefly summarized. Everywhere Fraser polled better than the Labor Senate team, the difference varying from 1 per cent in Araluen to 15 per cent in Bega. Except for Beaton in South Coast, the Labor State candidates also polled better than the Senate team. Seiffert continued to do better than Fraser in Monaro, though the difference was less than previously. However, Fraser had a larger majority in Goulburn than Tully.

These results are a warning against speaking of a candidate's personal following or personal popularity except in relation to his actual or potential opponents. It could be said that, until 1956, Tully appeared to have a larger personal following within his own electorate than Fraser, but it is impossible to say how much of this advantage he owed to the fact that he had had to face less impressive candidates. In 1955-6 Fraser faced weak opposition for Eden-Monaro, while Tully had to meet strong competition for Goulburn. The result was that his advantage over Fraser not only disappeared but was reversed. *In the circumstances of the two campaigns*, Fraser now had a larger personal following than Tully.

Within the Monaro electorate, Fraser and Seiffert had to face almost equally weak opposition, and Seiffert's ability to gain 2 per cent more of the votes than Fraser is therefore a measure of his greater popularity. However, it is not hard to imagine circumstances under which this advantage too could be reversed.

Both Federal and State elections were held in an atmosphere of diminished Labor popularity. Perhaps the most accurate measure of the fall in support for the Labor Party was in Monaro, where the Liberal and Labor candidates were the same as in 1953. Here the Labor vote fell from 62 per cent to 58 per cent. In Goulburn and in South Coast, the relative appeal of the Liberal candidates was stronger than in 1953, and the Labor

vote fell by 6 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. In Eden-Monaro, the personal advantage enjoyed by Fraser was so great that it outweighed the general swing against Labor, and made it possible for him to improve on his 1954 result. We can only speculate on the causes of this surprising result, but apparently it occurred not only because Fraser was a stronger candidate than in 1954 but because Flanagan was a weaker candidate than Beavis had been the previous year. Though he was not well known in the electorate, nor a man to make a strong impression on first acquaintance, it is our view that Flanagan's real 'weakness' was his religion. Fraser's added strength was due partly to his stand in the Browne-Fitzpatrick case and partly to the gradual aggregation of popularity which a conscientious member accumulates.

The Federal and State results give little opportunity to study the effect of local popularity in the candidates' home districts. In South Coast, neither of the candidates lived in the southern section of the electorate that forms part of Eden-Monaro. In Goulburn, both candidates were regarded as living in the city of Goulburn, though Tully had no home there. Useful comparisons can be made only in Eden-Monaro and in Monaro.

Though Fraser lived in Canberra, there are some reasons for regarding Queanbeyan as his home territory, and as we have seen he appears to have gained some personal following there. On the other hand, there is no evidence that Flanagan gained any significant advantage around his home town of Berridale. Fraser actually improved on his 1954 figures in the Berridale subdivision, raising his vote from 49 per cent to 51 per cent. It is possible that Flanagan gained some advantage in the little town of Berridale itself, but even this is doubtful, and less than 400 votes were involved.

Rather similar conclusions emerge from the Monaro results. Seiffert also polled well in his home town of Queanbeyan, but his principal opponent, Smith, polled no better in his home subdivision of Braidwood than elsewhere in the electorate. He obtained a big majority in the village of Nerriga, near his farm, but here there were only 78 voters.

Apparently there is no automatic process which gives a candidate an advantage in the district around his home, except perhaps over a very limited area indeed. In an electorate with

so scattered a population as Eden-Monaro, this may be worth little.

### THE ROLE OF PARTY ORGANIZATION

The people who may be regarded as taking part in politics in Eden-Monaro comprise two groups which overlap considerably, but which are nevertheless distinct. One is made up of the 1300 members of the Labor and Liberal parties; the other of those who take some part in election campaigns. Many of these do not belong to either party, just as there are many party members who are quite inactive during elections.

Because the Liberal Party is larger and looser, most of its active supporters are also party members. Despite attempts to build a party with a clearly defined membership, it remains difficult at times to distinguish between members and supporters. It is not difficult, in almost any part of Eden-Monaro, to find people who are genuinely uncertain whether or not they belong to the Liberal Party, while even party headquarters would find it hard to draw the line with any precision. The Liberal Party in Eden-Monaro shows the imprecision of membership and the effective control by small 'caucuses' which have been cited by Maurice Duverger as the inevitable result when a 'middle-class' Conservative or centre party tries to adopt the branch form of organization, to which it is fundamentally unsuited:

In most of the Conservative or Centre parties that have adopted it the branch system exists more in theory than in practice. Generally meetings are not very frequent. . . . Moreover, there is very little control over the enrolment of members, and no regular collection of subscriptions: so that there is no longer any certainty about who is a member of any particular branch, apart from its committee and a small nucleus of the faithful. This nucleus is often very small, for absenteeism flourishes on a grand scale: in fact a branch meeting is sometimes not very different from a caucus meeting, as far as the number of people present goes. Fundamentally the real basic element of the party is here the branch committee, which meets regularly and ensures the day-to-day functioning of the organization. . . . Party leaders generally deplore this state of affairs, without fully realizing that it is inevitable because it is inherent in the substructure of their groups. The middle class whether

it be upper, lower, or intermediate, is not fond of collective action; moreover it thinks (and here it is wrong) that its political education is adequate, and that it does not need the teaching given at branch meetings; it finds difficulty in recruiting from itself the devoted and lively spirits who might make meetings interesting: its customs and habits provide it with other distractions than these little political groups, which are on the other hand rather appreciated by the working class; it has other opportunities of affirming its social importance, and still retains a certain disdain of politics, whereas the mass of the people sees in politics a means of bettering its position. Rather different motives have similar results in the peasant classes, so that the branch system corresponds primarily to the working-class mentality. Naturally these remarks on social psychology are general and superficial in character; behaviour varies according to countries, races and traditions. Nevertheless, it seems that traces of this general tendency can be found everywhere.<sup>1</sup>

The functions of the branches in the Liberal machine are in fact performed by much smaller cliques of branch members who attend the rare meetings, appoint each other to various elective positions, and select parliamentary candidates. The ordinary members usually do little more than make an annual contribution to party funds and, by their mere existence, determine how many votes the cliques wield in the selection of candidates. They may also, of course, take a part in election campaigns, but for this it is not essential that they should be members of the party.

The Labor Party, according to Duverger, should be particularly suited to a method of organization by branches. The Labor branches in Eden-Monaro are indeed more active than their Liberal counterparts. They too have their cliques, but it is possible to see also a stratum of 'ordinary' members who attend at least occasional branch meetings and who take part in the election of various delegates and, when the need arises, of parliamentary candidates; who are, at any rate, something more than passive financial contributors and election-time helpers.

There is also justification for following Duverger in attributing this organizational dissimilarity to a difference in social origins. The social groups from which the Liberal Party in

<sup>1</sup> M. Duverger: *Political Parties* (London, Methuen, 1954; translated by B. and R. North), pp. 25-6.

Eden-Monaro is principally recruited here, in Duverger's phrase, 'other means of affirming [their] social importance', means which are less easily available to those who normally join the Labor Party.

But the differences in the activities of the party branches are not as clear cut as the theorist could wish: there are A.L.P. branches which go into a form of hibernation for months and even years at a time. It might be said that this is in itself almost a confirmation of Duverger's proposition, for the A.L.P. in Eden-Monaro, with its substantial sections of graziers and salary-earners, cannot be described without qualification as a working-class party. A more serious objection is that the high proportion of active members in the A.L.P. in Eden-Monaro is due to its small membership, which in turn results from the absence of selection contests. In an electorate in which both sides frequently had to choose parliamentary candidates, there would be much less difference between the parties. Each would have its coterie of active members and a much larger circle of members who remained almost completely inactive. But the Labor coterie would probably be more consistently active than the Liberal coterie, and the inactive Labor members, as well as contributing to party funds, would be periodically urged to vote in selection ballots.

Election campaigns can be and are fought where there are no party branches. The A.L.P. branches in Eden-Monaro would be quite inadequate both for raising the money and for distributing the propaganda which a campaign requires. Nevertheless, the branches serve as a handy basis on which a campaign can be built. A sitting member relies not upon the branches as such, but upon an informal network of his own supporters throughout the electorate, which naturally includes many branch members. Over a period in office he builds up a personal machine of his own for this purpose. But this machine, or a large part of it, would not make itself available to another candidate, especially a new contender who was little known in the electorate. In these circumstances, the party branches, with their more formal and institutional loyalty, may be of great assistance to an effective campaign.

An established sitting member, however, has no real need of party branches during elections. In a country electorate,

over most of which house-to-house canvassing is impracticable, the only work that needs to be carried out within each district is the collection of money and the organizing of an occasional meeting or the distribution of propaganda. Where there are no branches, and for the Labor Party this means over most of Eden-Monaro, other supporters can perform the same tasks, and perform them quite as efficiently. There are even occasions when an active branch can be a positive hindrance to the planning of a systematic campaign. In an urban electorate, where there is scope for more organized effort, the branches may be more necessary. This may well apply to Goulburn, within Eden-Monaro. It is hard to imagine how Bladwell's State campaign, with its emphasis on personal canvassing, could have been carried on without existing Liberal Party branches.

What other purposes can branches serve? They may give their members an opportunity to discuss political and local issues, especially in the Labor Party. But presumably their principal purpose, apart from their alleged value in fighting elections, is their place in the party machines, and their share in determining party activities and policy at the electorate, the State, and the Federal levels.

The control exercised by the party machine over its politicians is usually regarded as the chief functional difference between the Labor and Liberal parties. It is a difference which can easily be exaggerated but it is in any case no part of our study, for it is to be seen only at the State level. Labor State executives undoubtedly possess more power over State politicians than is enjoyed by their Liberal equivalents, but the difference does not extend to the level of the electorate. The relations between the candidate and the local machine depend not on the party to which he belongs but on whether or not he already holds the seat. Whether Liberal or Labor, the sitting member dominates the party organization in his own electorate, which is often little more than a group of his personal supporters. Where both State and Federal members are of the same party, the branches' ultimate loyalty is likely to be to the State member, who is usually better known to them. The issue need not arise if, like Bate and Beale on the South Coast, the State and Federal members are close political associates.

In this respect, the realities of party organization conform more to Liberal than to Labor ideals. Within his own electorate the sitting member is supreme, and he can sometimes make his position almost unchallengeable. If the local organizations abandoned him, his position would be jeopardized but, as the attempt to unseat Seiffert in 1950 proved, it is very difficult to separate the member from the organization which he has himself often built up and inspired, except at a time of general disintegration of the party.

The aspiring candidate, on the other hand, often occupies a very inferior place, even in the conduct of his own campaign. If anything, this subordination to a campaign committee is even more marked in the Liberal Party than in the Labor Party. This may be because Liberal campaigns are much more expensive, and expenses are largely drawn from a permanent fund. The local machine therefore has a greater responsibility for how the money is spent. The campaigns of Flanagan, for Eden-Monaro, and Smith, for Monaro, were strictly corporate ventures, in which the candidates themselves had quite a limited part. Bladwell, in Goulburn, had more control over his own campaign partly because of his greater experience and partly because he bore an unusually large share of the expenses.

Both parties not only have their headquarters in Sydney but obtain most of their support in metropolitan electorates and are more subject to the pressure of metropolitan interests. On each side there are intermittent complaints that the country is neglected. In Eden-Monaro it is a complaint which, in various forms, is particularly common among Labor Party members. In the Liberal Party it is often to be found in the guise of South Coast sectionalism.

The State party machines make some attempt to ensure that the country branches do not feel completely neglected, but these attempts have been largely, and perhaps necessarily, ineffective. The Liberal Party inflates country representation on its State Council and State Executive, and the Labor Party holds Country Conferences and Regional Conferences, but these gestures are insufficient to outweigh the disadvantages of distance and isolation and, in the case of the Labor Party, the dominant voice of the trade unions, nearly all of which have

metropolitan headquarters and metropolitan office-bearers. The Liberal Party faces essentially the same problem, though in less acute form, since it does not have to compensate for the additional metropolitan-bias built into the Labor machine by the affiliation of trade unions.

However, an effective process operates to ensure that country interests are not wholly neglected. The need of these city-based parties to win country seats ensures that, whoever is in power, the country will receive at least a substantial share of promises and performance. Leading the process, the country politicians will usually be able to prevent the complete neglect of country interests of which Seiffert complained in 1950.

In Eden-Monaro at least, the effective influence of the branches upwards towards the State executives is very limited. Influence downwards, from the executive towards the branches, is more consistent, especially in the Liberal Party. The presence of an organizer paid by headquarters establishes a permanent connexion and both finance and techniques are passed downward from headquarters for use in election campaigns. In the Labor Party, this process is less regular. Often, as in the Labor campaigns in Eden-Monaro and South Coast, neither money nor control nor even advice comes from outside the electorate, and the campaign is fought in isolation except for the echoes of the larger struggle that find their way in by way of radio and the metropolitan press.

Diagrammatic presentations of the parties, with their firm lines connecting each level of organization, often give a misleading impression of centralization and integration. In fact, the local organizations have a life of their own, and their connexions with the State machines are often tenuous. Though we have just stressed the connexions between the Liberal organization in Eden-Monaro and headquarters in Sydney, local organization enjoys a large measure of autonomy. At a lower level, the independence of the Liberal organization in South Coast, or, to put it as Liberal headquarters is prone to see it, the extent to which it has become a 'Bate-and-Beale' machine, is also remarkable. Relations between Labor branches in Eden-Monaro and the State machine have been, if anything, even looser.

This weakness of articulation within the parties has both

'democratic' and oligarchic implications. It means that the important work of selecting candidates is likely to be carried on without outside direction or influence. Because of the distribution of party strength, the selection of candidates has been almost confined to the Liberal Party and in every case, though branches have been formed, inflated and divided with an eye to selection prospects, the result has been a genuine local choice by the more active of party members.

The oligarchic effect of weak articulation is one which primarily affects policy. Party policy may be determined by politicians, by the central party machine, or by a combination of the two. The more feeble the connexion between the branches and the central machine, the weaker is branch influence on party policy, which is left in other hands; left to the politicians, the party officials, the trade union officials (in the case of the Labor Party) and the metropolitan branches, in descending order of importance. All of these, of course, may be subject to pressure and influence from outside the party.

This effective separation from the processes of policy-making seems to produce surprisingly little discontent among party members in Eden-Monaro. Labor Party officials justly point out that country representatives show little interest in such attempts as have been made to give them a greater voice. A conscious desire to help determine party policy is not an important reason for joining either party in Eden-Monaro. People join because they are in general agreement with the body of policy which has already been established, because of class consciousness (by which is meant no more than that they feel themselves socially akin to those who already dominate the party), or because they support a particular sitting member. They may also, especially in the Labor Party, join because they wish to discuss political questions, but they are often curiously indifferent whether it is even theoretically possible for their views to become part of party policy. The party gives them a means of self-expression; whether it is an effective means, in the sense of one which may ultimately determine public policy, often does not occur to them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Motions on policy questions are frequently discussed at length at meetings of the Labor Party's Federal Electorate Council, though this body has no power either to act upon its decisions in such matters or to refer them to a higher level for

It seems reasonable to suppose that this measure of local autonomy, with all that it involves, would be found in other rural electorates. If so, the major Australian parties are at once more democratic and more oligarchic, and above all less centralized, than their rule-books would suggest. If the pattern of Eden-Monaro is typical of party organization in the country, the parties effectively consist of scattered clusters of branches, each the bailiwick of a sitting member or the arena in which would-be candidates seek selection; sometimes interested in party policy and sometimes apathetic, but almost always ineffective in determining it; intermittently (in the Labor Party) or by a continuous process (in the Liberal Party) providing the bulk of the money that finances election campaigns in the area; giving their members, where necessary, an opportunity for self-expression in public affairs which may be valuable even when it cannot serve any immediate purpose; and linked to the State machines by ties which may vary between almost complete subjection and almost complete independence. Metropolitan party organization appears to follow a very different pattern, while naturally—and fortunately—internal party organization is only one influence on the working of the parliamentary system. Nevertheless, this material, drawn from a single electorate, may fill one gap and suggest how others may be filled. It can at least be predicted that neither the Labor nor the Liberal party will be found to follow a uniform pattern of activity, even within each State, nor are they likely to do so while they remain voluntary organizations, continually adapting themselves to diverse conditions of political circumstance and human material.

consideration. Such motions are often brought before the F.E.C. when it would have been quite possible to discuss them at a meeting of the State Electorate Council, from which they could be referred to the State conference of the party.

APPENDIX  
INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR QUEANBEYAN (Federal)

1. What is your occupation (or husband's occupation)?
2. Do you remember which party you voted for in the last Federal election?  
     Labor..... Liberal..... Don't know.....
3. You probably know there are three candidates standing for this seat: Fraser for the Labor Party; Flanagan for the Liberal Party; and Beavis, an independent. Have you ever met any of them?
4. Have you been at any election meetings during the campaign?  
     Which ones?
5. Have you heard any of the candidates speak over the air?
6. Have you heard any radio advertising for any of the candidates? Which ones?
7. Do you read the *Canberra Times*? Regularly or only occasionally?  
     Regularly..... Occasionally..... Never.....
8. And what about the *Queanbeyan Age*? Do you read it?  
     Regularly..... Occasionally..... Never.....
9. Judging by how you feel now, which candidate will you probably vote for at this election?  

Fraser .....	Labor .....
Flanagan .....	Liberal .....
Beavis .....	Independent.....
Don't know .....	Don't know .....
10. What will be your CHIEF reason for voting that way?
- 10a. (If different from last time.) Is there any particular reason why you mean to vote for a different party this time?
11. By how you feel now, how do you expect to vote at the next State election?
12. What sort of a job do you think Mr Fraser has done as Federal member for this district?  

Very good.....	Satisfactory .....
Good .....	Not satisfactory .....
13. Are you yourself a member of any political party?
14. What church do you belong to?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR QUEANBEYAN (State)

1. What is your occupation (or husband's occupation)?
2. Do you remember which party you voted for in the last Federal election?  
 Labor..... Liberal..... Don't know.....
3. You probably know there are three candidates standing for this seat: Seiffert for the Labor Party; Smith for the Liberal Party; and von Nida for the Country Party.  
 Have you met any of them?
4. Have you been at any election meetings during the campaign?  
 Which ones?
5. Have you heard any of the candidates speak over the air?
6. Have you heard any radio advertising for any of the candidates? Which ones?
7. Have you received any leaflets from any of the candidates?  
 Which ones?
8. Do you remember which party you voted for at the last State election?
9. Judging by how you feel now, which candidate will you probably vote for at this election?  

Seiffert .....	Labor .....
Smith .....	Liberal .....
von Nida .....	Country Party .....
Don't Know .....	Don't Know .....
10. What will be your CHIEF reason for voting that way?
11. What sort of a job do you think Mr Seiffert has done as State member for this district?  

Very good.....	Satisfactory .....
Good .....	Not satisfactory .....
12. What church do you belong to?

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