Labour and politics in New South Wales, 1880-1900

Raymond A. Markey
University of Wollongong
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LABOUR AND POLITICS
IN NEW SOUTH WALES
1880-1900

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the award
of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

RAYMOND A. MARKEY, B.A.(Hons.), Dip.Ed.

Department of History,
1983
This thesis is my own work.

R.A. Markey.
for my mother and father.
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<td>AA Co.</td>
<td>Australian Agricultural Company.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALF</td>
<td>Australasian Labor Federation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMA</td>
<td>Amalgamated Miners' Association of Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASB</td>
<td>Active Service Brigade.</td>
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<td>ASE</td>
<td>Amalgamated Society of Engineers.</td>
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<td>ASL</td>
<td>Australian Socialist League.</td>
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<td>ASU</td>
<td>Amalgamated Shearers' Union.</td>
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<td>ATU</td>
<td>Australasian Typographical Union.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWU</td>
<td>Australian Workers' Union.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BHP</td>
<td>Broken Hill Proprietary.</td>
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<td>CRSN Co.</td>
<td>Clarence and Richmond Steam Navigation Company.</td>
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<td>FSA</td>
<td>Farmers' and Settlers' Association.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLU</td>
<td>General Labourers' Union.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISN Co.</td>
<td>Illawarra Steam Navigation Company.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEL</td>
<td>Labour Electoral League.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament.</td>
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<td>PLL</td>
<td>Political Labor League.</td>
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<td>PLP</td>
<td>Parliamentary Labor Party.</td>
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<td>QSS Co.</td>
<td>Queensland Steam Shipping Company.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>Sydney District Council of ALF.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDF</td>
<td>Social Democratic Federation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>STL</td>
<td>Single Tax League.</td>
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<td>TLC</td>
<td>Trades and Labour Council</td>
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REFERENCE ABBREVIATIONS

ANU - Australian National University.
AR - Annual Report.
cf. - compare with.
CPD - Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates.
HRDDM - Hunter River Miners' District Delegate Meeting Minutes.
ML - Mitchell Library.
n. - footnote.
NSWPD - New South Wales Parliamentary Debates.
NSWTA - New South Wales Typographical Association.
RCIRA - Reports under the Census and Industrial Returns Act, 1890.
RRCS - Report of the Royal Commission on Strikes, 1891.
SOA - Steamship Owners' Association of Australia.
SR - New South Wales Statistical Register.
SMH - Sydney Morning Herald.
VPLANSW - Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales.
A NOTE ON THE TERM 'LABO(U)R'

Contemporary spellings can be confusing. In general, I have used 'Labor' solely to refer to the Labor Party; and 'Labour' to refer to the labour movement as a whole, i.e. the Labor Party and the trade unions. However, the political organization established by the unions was usually referred to as the 'Labour Party' in its earliest years, 1890-4, and when referring specifically to that period I have remained faithful to contemporary usage.

The dropping of the 'u' from Labor's title reflects the urban unions' loss of control of the Party. ASU publications dropped the 'u' from all words normally ending '-our'. As it became the dominant force in the Party, its spelling, 'Labor', was adopted generally.
This thesis studies the motivation and nature of working class mobilization from which the New South Wales Labor Party emerged in the 1890s, and the nature of that Party. It concentrates, in particular, upon the relationship between trade unions and the Labor Party, and the relationship between the Party leadership and its rank and file. The thesis is divided into three parts.

Part I 'Social and Industrial Structure' considers the material basis of working class mobilization. It examines the working and living conditions of the basic groups within the working class: urban workers, rural workers, coal and metal miners, and transport workers (marine and railway). For all of these groups, working and living conditions commonly fell short of colonial expectations of prosperity during the great economic boom from the 1860s to 1890. In many cases, working and living conditions actually declined in the 1880s. Furthermore, the opportunities for social advancement to independence from wage earning, which had been a powerful aspect of colonial expectations, were declining for most of these groups by the end of the 1880s. These trends were the result of economic problems in major industries, of economic restructuring from primary industry and building towards more large-scale manufacturing industry, and of related changes in productive organisation and workforce structure.

Part II, 'Labour Organization', analyzes the organizational response of the working class. Trade unionism spread rapidly amongst semi and unskilled workers in the 1880s. It was also characterized
by a heightened degree of class consciousness and joint organization which saw the Trades and Labour Council develop class leadership. Closer, and more militant, organization also occurred amongst important employers' groups. On the union side, these changes have been associated with the 'new unionism' of the shearsers and miners. But it is argued here that the urban unions, especially the crafts, led in these developments, largely because of the changes in their work experience.

The decimation of the unions in the depression and great strikes of the 1890's, together with the hostile role of the state, hastened the unions' organization of the Labor Party. However, during 1892-5 the urban unions lost control of the Party to a coalition of utopian socialist intelligentsia and the Shearsers'Union (AWU), which delivered a large number of country Parliamentary seats to the Party. This new leadership marked a change in the participatory democratic and collectivist nature of working class organization, which had been evident in the nature of union government, the growth of co-operatives, and the spontaneous outgrowth of municipal political organization. The Labor Party moved towards a more centralized form of organization, which emphasized a moderate Parliamentary strategy.

This change was reflected in Labor policy and ideology, the subject of Part III. As the new leadership consolidated itself, the emphasis on a class-based Party, with a social democratic policy of political reform and industrial legislation, shifted towards a populist Party, despite a short-lived challenge by socialists. Labor's populism derived from an electoral strategy aimed at 'intermediate social strata' as well as the working class, and from the dominant role of the AWU in the Party. The significance of the AWU in this regard
was that it was dominated by small landholders. Populism, therefore, was mainly responsible for the 'Laborist' policy which emerged at the end of the 1890s, and which concentrated on arbitration, White Australia, land reform, and a limited state welfare apparatus. As an ideology, 'Laborism' assumed the neutrality of the state apparatus. With this ideological basis and policy, the Labor Party became the vehicle for the deliverance of the working class to a National Settlement between the classes in the new Commonwealth, after the most intensive class conflict Australia had ever experienced.
INTRODUCTION
The decade of the 1890s was one of those historical periods which shape the history of a country for many decades afterwards. This is true, in a sense, of any historical period. But the 1890s witnessed an unprecedented level of industrial strife after the rapid spread of trade unionism in the 1880s, a level of economic depression which has only been matched on one other occasion, in the 1930s, and a level of social and political experimentation which earned Australia a reputation as the 'social laboratory of the world'. In 1901 the Australian colonies federated. But the social, political and economic programme of the new Commonwealth - 'new protection', arbitration, the beginnings of a welfare state, and White Australia - was developed in the preceding two decades. One of the major actors in Australian politics since 1900, the Labor Party, was also established during the 1890s, and its role was central for the development of the new Commonwealth's political programme.

Nowhere was this more evident than in New South Wales. The Labor Party achieved its first political successes in New South Wales. The claims of Queensland apart, New South Wales led the other colonies in the consolidation of a Labor Party, and of a distinctive Labor policy. The New South Wales Labor Party provided the model for the Australian Labor Party (ALP), especially in its development of the pledge and caucus system. It also provided a disproportionately large number of members of the first Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, including its first federal leader, J.C. Watson, who became Australia's first Labor Prime Minister in 1904. Furthermore, it was in New South Wales that the Labor Party was first committed to arbitration, one of the main elements of the new
Commonwealth's political programme. The other elements of the programme had their political origins as much, or more, in other colonies. The 'new protection', which sought to grant workers some benefits from the tariff which protected local manufacturing, was a political by-product of Victoria's early beginning in manufacturing in Australia. But it was in New South Wales that the working class was first committed to the policies of the early Commonwealth, as an integrated programme, and it was the Labor Party which bound the working class to endorsing the programme.

The importance of this period in Australian labour history has hardly escaped historians. R. Gollan's Radical and Working Class Politics,¹ and R. Ward's The Australian Legend,² are the classical works on the period, although both cover a broader time span, as does B. Fitzpatrick in A Short History of the Australian Labor Movement.³ Notwithstanding some different emphases, these works, together with a number of studies less specifically concerned with the 1880s and 1890s,⁴ have provided a fairly consistent historical interpretation, which built on a much earlier Australian historiographical tradition.⁵ Broadly speaking, the classical interpretation of late nineteenth century Australia has told an optimistic story, of radical and working class achievement in building institutions - trade unions,

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4. For example, I. Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics. The Labour Movement in Eastern Australia, 1900-21, Melbourne, 1965, Chapter 1; R. Ward, Australia, Sydney (1965) 1967 revised edn., Chapters 4-5.  
5. Of which, the classic document is W.K. Hancock, Australia, London, 1930. See also V. Palmer, The Legend of the Nineties, Melbourne, 1954.
the Labor Party, arbitration, the beginnings of a welfare state —
which emerged as a result of the growth in workers' class consciousness
and militancy in the 1880s, and of the social and economic crisis of
the 1890s. Underlying these achievements was an Australian
nationalism, which, in the context of class struggle, was infused with
a radical and egalitarian content, because of its working class, and
especially rural working class, base.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Manning Clark and a number of
others criticised this interpretation. They argued, with some
justification, that the classical interpretation represented an Australian
variant of 'Whig' history, which viewed late nineteenth and early
twentieth century developments teleologically, as a linear movement
towards an egalitarian democracy. They also criticised the classical
interpretation's exclusion of the 'middle class' from any positive role
in the historical process at the time. Later, a 'New Left' critique
of the classical interpretation, led by H. McQueen in A New Britannia,
developed this argument further.

However, the New Left critique was much more fundamental. It
argued that Australian nationalism, and by association, the working
class, at the turn of the century, was neither radical nor egalitarian.

6. C.M.H. Clark, 'Re-writing Australian History', in T.A. Hungerford
(ed.), Australian Signpost, Melbourne, 1956; R.M. Crawford, An
Australian Perspective, Melbourne, 1960, p.6; A.W. Martin, 'The Whig
View of Australian History', seminar paper, Australian Association
for Cultural Freedom, August 1964; M. Roe, 'The Australian Legend',
Meanjin Quarterly, vol.21, no.3, pp.363-6. For an early reply to
the critics, see B. Fitzpatrick, 'The Origins of the People are not
in the Library', Meanjin Quarterly, vol.14, no.3, pp.350-61; and
'Counter-revolution in Australian Historiography?', ibid., vol.22,
no.2, pp.197-213.

7. H. McQueen, A New Britannia. An Argument Concerning the Social
See also L. Irving and B. Berzins, 'History and the New Left:
Beyond Radicalism', in R. Gordon (ed.), The Australian New Left:
Critical Essays and Strategy, Melbourne, 1970, pp.66-94; and
S. Macintyre, 'Radical History and Bourgeois Hegemony', Intervention,
no.2, November 1972.
McQueen took this to the ludicrously historicist extreme of arguing that no working class actually existed, in the Marxist sense, only a 'peculiarly Australian petit bourgeoisie'. But his accusation that former historians had underestimated the importance of racism in Australian working class nationalism has produced a lasting impact on Australian historiography.

The New Left critics wrote with an explicit political purpose. Frustrated by the traditional institutions of radical and working class politics, especially the Labor Party, they sought to explain their apparent lack of potential for radical social change. It is surprising, therefore, that they did not recognise the political purpose of the 'old left' historians. Writing at the end of the McCarthyite period, Gollan and his colleagues were attempting to expropriate the popular Australian radical tradition for the left. Hence, the political motivation of the first wave of critics of the classical interpretation, such as Coleman, was to save something of Australian nationalism for the right. Nevertheless, with the possible exception of Manning Clark's work, neither of the two schools critical of the classical interpretation have produced a body of history in their own right.

Until recently, the major extensions of the frontier of labour history have been in individual union histories. These include K. Buckley's *The Amalgamated Engineers in Australia, 1852-1920,*

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8. McQueen, op.cit., p.236; and 'Laborism and Socialism', in Gordon, op.cit., pp.54, 57, 59, 65.
9. For example, see McQueen, *A New Britannia,* pp.11-13; and the comments of an admirer of McQueen's, K. Rowley, in Arena, no.24, 1971, p.43: 'If his analysis of the ALP is correct, to make socialist strategy dependent upon the ALP is not to "risk corruption", but to commit suicide'.
J. Hagan's *Printers and Politics. A History of the Australian Printing Unions 1850-1950*, 12 Gollan's *The Coalminers of New South Wales. A History of the Union, 1860-1960*, 13 a number of studies primarily concerned with the twentieth century, 14 and a number of theses, such as those by W. Mitchell and J. Docherty on the wharf labourers and railwaymen. 15 These have inevitably qualified the classical interpretation, but in a piecemeal fashion only.

In fact, the classical interpretation has proved very resilient. N.B. Nairn's *Civilizing Capitalism. The Labor Movement in New South Wales, 1870-1900*, 16 is an unashamed restatement of the classical interpretation with only minor qualifications. J. Rickard, in *Class and Politics, New South Wales, Victoria and the Early Commonwealth, 1890-1910*, 17 breaks new ground by combining an examination of employers' political and industrial organization with a more traditional labour history. This began to correct an important omission in the classical interpretation, which usually attempted to study the working class in isolation from those with which it shared a class relationship. But in his synthesis of 'business history' with the classical interpretation, and its recent qualifications, Rickard still owes his basic framework to the classical interpretation itself.

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One of Rickard's major contributions to labour historiography on the turn of the century was to explicitly address himself to the nature of class, by attempting to delineate the nature of workers' class consciousness and its relationship with the nature of working class organization in the Labor Party. Most labour historiography of the period had previously operated upon much more implicit assumptions about the nature of class. Yet, it is a central issue for labour history, in general, and for the 1880s and 1890s in particular.

Concentrating on the issue of class clarifies a number of differences within the classical school. Gollan's and Fitzpatrick's analyses assume a fairly orthodox Marxist, or historical materialist, framework. Ward's work implies the same, although the level of analysis is essentially literary. Nairn's theoretical framework, on the other hand, is pluralist. He views trade unions as an organized interest group, rather than an aspect of class organization, and the Labor Party as a coalition of interest groups. Class, for Nairn, is a matter of the 'haves' versus the 'have-nots'; hence, he even implies that farmers are part of the working class. 18 Rickard invokes E.P. Thompson's 'culturalist' Marxist conception of class when examining the working class, but employs a Weberian status framework to deal with the 'middle class'. 19 But as one historian notes, he uses the two theories interchangeably as 'heuristic devices to be used when most appropriate', instead of as 'radically different methods of social analysis'. 20
generally, the theoretical differences between labour historians have confused the issue, when they are apparently analysing the same phenomena. This confusion largely exists because none of the historians surveyed have attempted to systematically examine the links between working class organization and ideology, on the one hand, and the social and economic environment which gave rise to these, on the other hand. Ideology, in their hands, assumes powers of self-propulsion. Despite Rickard's effort to sketch the physical separation of employer from worker at the turn of the century, his emphasis is on Thompsonesque class consciousness, rather than the material conditions of class. This is not so much of a problem for the individual trade union histories. Their institutional basis is not as theoretically demanding on the broad questions of class, and most have actually been able to, more or less, relate institutional developments to an important aspect of the socio-economic environment, the labour process. But for a general interpretation of the late nineteenth century, the lack of socio-economic analysis is a serious flaw. For a work, such as Radical and Working Class Politics, which attempts to use a historical materialist framework, it is extraordinary, more so because of the availability, from 1941, of Fitzpatrick's historical materialist work, The British Empire in Australia, 1834-1939.²¹ For all its faults, Fitzpatrick's work provided an extensive starting point for historical materialist analysis.

²¹. Melbourne (1941) 1969 edn. The one, notable, exception to these comments, which unfortunately is restricted to the 1880s, is E.C. Fry, 'The condition of the Urban Wage Earning Class in Australia in the 1880s', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, ANU, 1956. Note that Gollan himself criticises McQueen in the terms I have used, 'An Inquiry into the Australian Radical Tradition - McQueen's "New Britannia" ', Arena, no.24, 1971, pp.32-8.
Connell and Irving's Class Structure in Australian History\textsuperscript{22} aimed to overcome the weaknesses of labour historiography which have been discussed. Somewhat ambitiously, they sought to locate the historical process of class formation in a specific socio-economic environment (mode of production, they would say), and to delineate class relations. Too ambitiously perhaps, for they do not consistently describe changes in the mode of production in enough detail. Their chapter on the 1890s and early 1900s is one of the weakest in this regard. But this failure also relates to their theoretical apparatus. After considerable theoretical agony, they eventually adopt a Thompsonesque 'culturalist' framework to analyze class.\textsuperscript{23} Armed with this theoretical apparatus, 'hegemony', or the domination of ruling class culture and ideology, became Connell and Irving's major explanatory tool, at the expense of the mode of production.

Despite the differences within the classical tradition, and between it and its critics, virtually all of the historians discussed share a common methodology. This may be characterized as 'traditional labour history', which is distinguished by its focus on working class institutions and leadership, and its heavy use of literary and Parliamentary sources, and the records of central organizations, such as Labour Councils.\textsuperscript{24} But this methodology can only tell part of a story. In general accounts it also distorts an overall interpretation of events because of its tendency to take historical statements and actions at their face value; and its tendency to assume that 'the trade


\textsuperscript{23} ibid., pp.3-76.

\textsuperscript{24} For a more detailed critique of traditional labour history in Australia, see R. Markey, 'Revolutionaries and Reformists', Labour History, no.31, November 1976, pp.86-95.
unions' were a homogeneous bloc, and that union and Labor Party leadership and interests were basically similar. By a curious process of historiographical osmosis, the statement of a particular leader, or leadership, becomes 'the attitude of Labour'. Our own experience of modern society and politics should put us on guard against such assumptions. Although, by the late 1960s, a handful of institutional histories had qualified the general accounts of the labour movement and the working class, they have not been synthesized in a general account.

It would be unfair to Connell and Irving to classify their work as 'traditional labour history' in the sense I have defined. Nevertheless, they do not systematically examine the relationship between class or institutional leadership, and those they purport to represent. Their broad scope militated against this to an extent. But it is also a question of approach. The historian's most elementary tool is the question 'Why?'. When institutions, classes, and their leaders behave in certain ways - are, for example, subject to ruling class hegemony - the historian must still ask 'why'.

This thesis attempts to answer this question of the early Labor Party in three ways. First, it specifically locates trade unions in their wider environment of work and society. Secondly, it examines in detail the relationship between trade unions and the early Labor Party. Thirdly, it examines the relationship between Labor Party leadership and policies, on the one hand, and the Labor Party's and trade unions' rank and file membership, on the other hand. A fourth aim of the thesis is to consolidate the piecemeal qualifications of the broad historical interpretations of the period 1880-1900. The structure of this thesis is organized, in accordance with its aims,
into three parts: Part I, Social and Industrial Structure; Part II, Labour Organization; and Part III, Ideology and Policy.

The sources used also reflect these concerns. I have used the records of individual trade unions to a considerable extent, unlike other general interpretations of the period. But I have also employed, widely, more traditional sources, particularly Trades and Labour Council Minutes, the Report of the Royal Commission on Strikes, of 1891, and the Reports under the Census and Industrial Returns Act, of 1890. In re-reading these sources in the light of my methodology they have proved to hold a wealth of information for my purposes. Historians can not claim that they lacked the sources to answer the questions I pose here.

It is important at the outset to define terms. A lack of definition, consistently applied, has been a major cause of the confusion over the issue of class evident in comparing different labour historians of this period. 'Working class' here is used objectively, to describe those men and women who possessed nothing but their labour power, which they sold for a price on the market. But it is immediately obvious that, in a society which had experienced so much fluidity since the gold rushes, many did not really belong to a working class so defined, or the capitalist class (or 'ruling class' or 'bourgeoisie'). Semi-independent men on the land, or miners, who also worked for wages periodically to make ends meet, were declining, but their numbers were still significant in terms of the total workforce, and many moved in and out of independence from wage labour. Furthermore, subjectively, white collar workers were distanced from the remainder of the working class to a far greater extent than they are today, and saw themselves as being much closer to the capitalist class (and indeed, they often were). Consequently, if my terminology for these 'intermediate strata'
appears at times imprecise, it is because this reflects a socially imprecise, transitional situation. My purpose instead, has been to be precise about the relationship between these groups.

The importance of intermediate social strata and the dream of independence for small men produced an ideological phenomenon which I have called 'populism'. Gollan has recognised the influence of American populist literature in late nineteenth century Australian labour circles, but without tying this influence to any social base, and he can not therefore answer why such ideas took root. He only offers a circular explanation in terms of the influence of ideas.25

I have been led well beyond Gollan's notions of populism, to recognize it as a major social force within the labour movement, with a clearly definable social base, and clearly definable political and ideological consequences for the Labor Party as a whole. I argue that by 1900 the dominant social force within Labor was populism, and that the Party's behaviour cannot be understood without reference to that social base.

Since the populist phenomenon is so central to this thesis, I should clearly define my usage of the term, for it is particularly amorphous. Indeed, it is an amorphous reality as a recent conference in London discovered in trying to pin the beast down.26 It represents a series of ideological tendencies rather than an ideology in itself. Populism characterizes movements which idealize 'the people', asserting their welfare and capacity against those of society's corrupt ruling elites, who 'establish and maintain their power by conspiratorial

cunning'. Populism often suspects change, and idealizes small-scale enterprise, 'especially on the land. There is a tendency to emphasize particular causes rather than roots', and an emotional tone, often developing into an 'apocalyptic fantasy world'. It often exudes an ultra-moralism, but at the same time opposes the rulers' conformism. 'Monopolists', 'financiers', and 'money power', rather than a class, exploit 'the people'.

Two general points arise from this description. First, populism cuts across and confuses actual class divisions. Secondly, despite some of the amorphousness associated with the term, we can clearly identify the type of social base which spawns populist movements. It is always associated with 'small men', frequently peasants and farmers, or selectors, but sometimes with small urban men, with shopkeepers, clerks and craftsmen. The experience shared between these diverse intermediate strata, and between such historically diverse characters as Parisian sans culottes in the 1790s, United States farmers and Australian selectors in the 1890s, and even Nazi white collar workers in Germany in the 1930s, is their resistance to the emergence or extension of capitalist social relations, in the name of threatened pre-industrial values (or, in the case of Germany, the looking back from an industrial society to past pre-industrial ideals).

One further point emerges from this: populism in itself may swing to the political right or left, depending on the nature of other social formations. Important a force as it may be, populism is not an independent social variable. We must begin, therefore, by examining the social and industrial milieu in which it flourished in colonial New South Wales.

27. The quotations are from M. Roe, Kenealy and the Tichborne Case, Melbourne, 1974, pp.164-5.
PART 1

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION
Late nineteenth century colonial New South Wales was shifting from a predominantly pastoral/commercial society to a predominantly industrial/commercial society, or, from a pre-industrial to an industrial society. This occurred under circumstances of economic boom after the initial stimulus of the gold-rushes in the 1860s. The second half of the nineteenth century was characterized by rapid growth in production, volume of trade, capital formation, including a massive inflow of British capital, and rapid population increase from natural increase and immigration, which failed to relieve a relative shortage of labour. The highly profitable pastoral industry remained important as New South Wales' major earner of export income, and as the initial attraction for British capital. But in this way it underwrote British investment in, or released domestic capital for, other areas, such as the land, housing and mining booms of the 1880s. The public sector, which was the largest borrower of British capital, also embarked on a large-scale programme of public works in the 1880s. The growth in these economic sectors had widespread social effects.

Relative material prosperity was closely connected with the transitional nature of colonial society. Until recently, the consensus amongst Australian historians, particularly since N.G. Butlin's work, has been that British capital and a labour shortage contributed to high general levels of wages and colonial prosperity. Australia, therefore,


2. For example, Butlin, op.cit., pp.5, 390-8, 403-4 and passim; Sinclair, op.cit., pp.155-7; Rickard, op.cit., p.284.
was as much a partner, as a victim, of British imperialism. Australia benefitted from rising British living standards in the second half of the nineteenth century, which increased demand, and prices, for imported foodstuffs and raw materials for processing, notably wool which was crucial to the British economy. The colonies also provided an outlet for British investors seeking new opportunities as the British economy stagnated after 1873. British capital, in turn, financed almost half of Australia's imports, in capital goods, such as railway rolling stock, and in consumer goods, most of which were imported from Britain.

So persuasive has the colonial prosperity thesis been, that the New Left critique of the classical interpretation of the period resembled the austere British 'optimist' school of economic historians, who argued that the British working class did not suffer unduly in the industrial revolution. The New Left argued that the Australian working class was pampered out of revolutionary socialism by British capital, which cushioned them against the pains of early industrialization experienced elsewhere.

The most immediate indicator of prosperity and the transitional nature of society was the social fluidity between classes. Social mobility allowed individuals to move relatively easily and quickly, 'upwards', 'downwards', or 'sideways', within the social hierarchy:


5. For a review of the original British 'optimists', such as T.S. Ashton and J.H. Clapham, see E.J. Hobsbawm, Labouring Men, London, (1964) 1968, pp.64-125.

from wage-earner to small employer, or farmer; or from wage-earner to
gold-digger, and perhaps, to publican or merchant. However, this view
of colonial society must be subjected to strict qualification.

First, a relatively high degree of social mobility did not mean
that most people, or the 'average person', enjoyed upward social mobility,
but that enough people did for the phenomenon to be considered socially
significant. To this extent the 'Australian dream', the lure of the New
World, attracted large-scale immigration from Britain during 1850-90.
But although upwards social mobility was an important component of
colonial bourgeois ideology, recent studies have suggested that its
incidence was very limited. 7 'Sideways' social mobility, between
different wage-earning occupations, was much more common, but in many
respects was an index of economic insecurity.

Secondly, social fluidity meant that the population of social
classes was a relatively shifting one in comparison with feudal or
modern industrial capitalist societies, but not that class divisions
were absent. The dominant form of social and productive relations was
capitalist from at least the time of the 'pastoral ascendancy', in
1820-50. But prior to the development of industrial capitalist social
relations, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, New South
Wales was characterized by the pre-industrial, mercantilist phase of
capitalism which had also characterized Britain prior to the dominance
of industrial capital in the nineteenth century. Although New South
Wales formed an integral part of British capitalism at this time,

Development in a Nineteenth Century City', unpublished Ph.D. thesis,
Macquarie University, 1976, pp.91-130; G. Davison, 'The Dimensions of
Mobility in Nineteenth Century Australia', Australia 1888, no.2,
August 1979, pp.7-32.
internally, it was dominated by rural production, urban merchant
capital, and craft manufacture, with some productive activity, such as
subsistence farming, occurring outside capitalist productive relations.
By the end of the century most New South Wales breadwinners were wage-
earners, as shown by Table 1, although fewer than one might expect in a
modern industrial capitalist society, and with greater comparative
opportunity for independence from wage-earning. Nevertheless, the
fundamental relationship between wage-earner and employer was the same
as in modern capitalism. The history of the second half of the
nineteenth century is of the gradual extension of this relationship,
and of the emergence of a new urban financial and industrial ruling
class which displaced the earlier ascendancy of the pastoralists. 8
Table 1 understates this development because high unemployment in the
1890s inflated the number of 'self-employed'.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1891 Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>14.22</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>11.03</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>9.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>13.18</td>
<td>17.23</td>
<td>13.90</td>
<td>14.78</td>
<td>16.21</td>
<td>15.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Relatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>9.18</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage Earners</td>
<td>65.29</td>
<td>66.94</td>
<td>65.58</td>
<td>65.46</td>
<td>69.66</td>
<td>66.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Calculated from T. Coghlan, General Report on the Eleventh
Census of NSW, Sydney, 1894, pp.280,292-3 (hereafter NSW Census, 1891);
and G.H. Knibbs, Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, vol.1,
Statisticians Report (hereafter Commonwealth Census, 1911), Melbourne,
1917, pp.370-3.

of the development of the nineteenth century ruling class.
9. Figures on grades of occupation are not available from the Census
prior to 1891. See Appendix 1.
Apart from social mobility, the evidence for colonial prosperity rests largely upon aggregate statistics for wage rates, and housing costs. However, the usefulness of this evidence is severely limited. The statistics only refer to some aspects of material life, and not at all to the quality of life. Working conditions, for example, are difficult to reduce to figures. Statistics in themselves cannot show prosperity or immiseration without comparison with a statistical benchmark. In this case, British working class material conditions of life have usually been the benchmark. But this comparison only shows that Australian workers were more prosperous than the British, whose standard of living was grim indeed in the early days of the industrial revolution; hence, the term 'relative' material prosperity is used advisedly for Australia. The comparison takes no account of expectations, that is, the standards by which Australian workers judged their prosperity. Butlin's figures show that wage rates were slowly falling in the 1880s, with low points in 1882-3 and 1886, whereas previously they had generally risen. By these standards prosperity was declining in the 1880s.

There are also a number of more specific problems associated with the statistics mentioned. First, a number of historians have relied disproportionately upon Victorian evidence to generalize about Australia, but Victoria's growth rate exceeded that of New South Wales until the 1890s. Secondly, Butlin's 'book-keeping' only provides aggregate

11. For example, Butlin, Investment, p.5; Fry, op.cit., p.25.
14. For example, Fry, op.cit.; Rickard, op.cit.; Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics.
statistics, which are a poor indicator of actual living standards because of variations between different social groups. Wages and housing costs also varied geographically. Thirdly, wages statistics are unreliable for this period. The New South Wales Statistical Register published existing ranges of wage rates, with no indication of how many workers were located at different points in the ranges. Butlin merely averages the wage ranges. Fourthly, price statistics for the period, which are essential to determine real wages, are even more unreliable, and hide wide geographical variations. Fifthly, wage statistics relate to rates rather than earnings. In the 1880s and 1890s there is little reason to assume a close correlation between the two. To do so assumes continuous employment. But although high unemployment during the cyclical recessions of 1879-80 and 1886-7 was relatively shortlived, the 1891 and 1901 censuses indicate a constant pool of almost five per cent unemployed during relatively good times, and regular seasonal unemployment and underemployment were common features of the colonial economy. Few colonial workers experienced permanent employment in one establishment.

The end of the 1880s witnessed a number of economic changes which were widening the gap between material conditions and expectations for many. In manufacturing this was related to an increased level of technological change and productive re-organization. In the primary sector it became more difficult to fulfil the Australian dream of

15. Butlin also tends to concentrate on skilled workers, especially the highly-paid building and metal tradesmen, whereas the basis for his estimates for the unskilled, especially women, are often unclear. Domestic Product, pp.157-8.
16. Sinclair's confident assertions concerning prices are unshaken by these deficiencies, op.cit., p.145.
17. Calculated from NSW Census, 1891 and 1901, pp.280 and 650-1 respectively.
18. This is shown in Chapters 1-3 below. Sinclair typically dismisses the problem of unemployment, op.cit., pp.143-7.
independence from wage-earning, on the land, or as a miner. Some New South Wales industries, such as coal mining, the pastoral industry, and sections of manufacturing also failed to fully recover from the 1886-7 recession, before the full onset of economic depression in the 1890s.¹⁹

The 1890s depression completely removed the prosperity of the boom. In the absence of reliable statistics, Macarthy estimates overall unemployment at about 29 per cent²⁰ in 1892-4, but considerable occupational variation occurred. Money wages fell markedly, but as far as one can tell, prices actually fell faster initially. Nevertheless, some limited wage rises after 1896 were apparently negated by a sharp rise in the cost of living. Not until 1900-1 do real wages seem to have undergone a slight, brief improvement.²¹ Despite economic recovery from about 1900, the prosperity of the long boom, such as it had been, was not recovered in Australia until the 1940s.

These developments reflected fundamental economic changes which had commenced in the late 1880s, and intensified during the 1890s. The most immediate causes of the depression had been the bursting of the land boom, the bank crashes of 1892-3, rapidly falling world prices for wool and base metals from about 1890-1, and the virtual cessation of British capital inflow after the Baring crisis in Argentina. The onset of the long drought of 1894-1902 exacerbated these circumstances.²² But unlike other sectors, manufacturing recovered and expanded in the late 1890s. As Macarthy argues,²³ this represented a structural

¹⁹. These themes are also taken up in Chapters 1-3.
²¹. ibid., pp.74-8, 87-9, 94-8.
²². For a discussion of the causes of the depression, see Sinclair, op.cit., pp.147-52; Fitzpatrick, British Empire in Australia, pp.253-8.
²³. op.cit., pp.30, 46, 52-4.
re-allocation of resources from the primary sector and building industrial infrastructure, to manufacturing and servicing its products. The rural diversification which also occurred in the 1890s only represented a re-allocation of resources within the primary sector, from wool to wheat and agriculture.

The shift towards industrial capitalism was not sudden, for it built on earlier developments, and remained gradual until the 1940s. Nevertheless, it was clearly discernible at the end of the century, particularly in New South Wales, where manufacturing growth lagged behind Victoria until the late 1880s. By 1900, New South Wales manufacturing employment exceeded Victoria's in all areas except clothing. 24

The proportion of the workforce in different industrial classes, as shown in Table 2 below, partly hides the structural shift. For reasons which are spelt out at the beginning of Appendix 1, Census industrial classifications were not entirely reliable, and very difficult to validly compare between pre- and post-1891 Censuses.

The Primary sector's share of the workforce declined drastically between 1871-81, and then very slowly between 1881-1901, which indicates growing capital intensity, and in the 1890s, some re-allocation of resources to other sectors. In fact, the 1901 Census underestimates the extent of this re-allocation. Apart from dairying, the only other growth areas in the Primary sector were mining and 'other'. Both were

24. And even there, NSW employment was understated, for reasons discussed in Chapter 1. See Comparative Statement by Victorian Statist Respecting the Average Number of Hands Employed in Manufacturing, of Victoria and NSW, Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of NSW (hereafter VPLANSW), 1897, vol. 7, pp.3-4; Sinclair, op.cit., p.138; Turner, op.cit., p.5; and Table 6 in Appendix 1.
Table 2

Percentage Proportion of Breadwinners in Census Industrial Classes, NSW, 1871-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1871 % Persons</th>
<th>1881 % Persons</th>
<th>1891 % Persons</th>
<th>1901 % Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Professional</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>6.70</td>
<td>7.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Domestic</td>
<td>12.15</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td>12.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Commercial</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11.78</td>
<td>13.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Transport and Communication</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.36</td>
<td>7.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Industrial Total</td>
<td>26.69</td>
<td>33.88</td>
<td>28.99</td>
<td>25.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Building/ Construction</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td>6.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Manufacturing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21.03</td>
<td>19.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Primary Total</td>
<td>43.07</td>
<td>33.06</td>
<td>31.14</td>
<td>30.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Agriculture</td>
<td>25.08</td>
<td>21.06</td>
<td>15.58</td>
<td>13.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Pastoral</td>
<td>9.07</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>5.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Dairying</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Mining</td>
<td>8.92</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>6.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Others</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Indefinite</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Calculated from NSW Census, 1891 and 1901, pp.283-4, and 630 respectively. See Appendix 1, Table 1 for a more detailed breakdown, and for a discussion of the interpretative problems associated with using the Censuses.

inflated by the remaining urban unemployed who had migrated to the country in large numbers during the depression to become 'prospectors', or to seek casual labour and live off the land.25

The Industrial class experienced a marked reduction between 1881-1891. Insofar as these figures are comparable, they reflect the technological and productive re-organization in manufacturing of this period. The trend apparently continues to 1901.

25. Turner, op.cit., p.4. This phenomenon is discussed in Chapters 2 and 4.
However, the 1901 Census Industrial class underestimates the growth in the manufacturing workforce, because it includes building and construction, which had only partially recovered its former peak by 1901. Sub-divisions within census classes, particularly Industrial, are even more unreliable than divisions between classes. As far as one can tell, building and construction fell marginally less than the purely manufacturing component of Industrial. But the manufacturing component included building materials, which fell by 22.89 per cent between 1891-1901, the only manufacturing industry to show other than a marked increase.26

All of the minor Census classes increased their share of the workforce between 1881-1901: domestic slightly, between 1891-1901 after remaining stable between 1881-91; transport and communications slightly between 1891-1901, before which there are no figures separable from the Commercial class; and Commercial and Professional increased markedly. The increases in the last three classes, which, to a large extent service manufacturing, are consistent with trends elsewhere during the expansion of manufacturing. Subject to the foregoing qualifications, therefore, changes in the workforce confirm the structural shift identified.

The short-term exacerbation of the depression by the structural change was compensated by the early recovery and expansion of manufacturing from the mid-1890s. But the structural shift involved adverse long-term implications for wages and employment. Labour shifted from highly productive activity in primary industry and construction work into a much less efficient sector. In particular, the marginal productivity of unskilled labour in manufacturing was much lower than in the pastoral, mining and public sectors. In aggregate terms, skilled workers benefitted

26. Calculated from NSW Censuses, 1891 and 1901, pp.285–6, and 630, 634–5 respectively. See Appendix 1, Table 4.
disproportionately from the expansion of manufacturing. Whilst Macarthy has estimated that overall wages decreased as a proportion of national income after 1896, skilled wages actually increased between 1899–1901. But not all skills were in high demand. Productive re-organization sharply reduced demand for many skills, even as it created some newly skilled beneficiaries.

The following three chapters examine this context in detail. They identify two aspects of material working class existence, which, it is argued later, largely account for the extension of workers' organization and class consciousness in the late 1880s: first, the limitations to prosperity in the 1880s; and secondly, those sections of the working class which bore the brunt of productive re-organization, the closing-off of opportunities for social advancement, and economic crisis in major industries. The chapters are divided according to the various industrial sectors, and emphasise working, rather than living, conditions, because trade unions were the major organizational response of the working class to these changes, and were also the initial basis of working class political organization. The last chapter of this section, examines the role of the state because of its importance in the social and economic environment of the working class, and because when the working class organized politically, it was forced to come to terms with a state apparatus which had an exceptional role in a liberal democratic society for that time.

CHAPTER 1

URBAN INDUSTRY
The urban working class was the largest component of the working class as a whole, and its trade unions, particularly of the skilled, dominated the organized labour movement until the mid-1890s. By then however, its organized strength and material conditions had declined considerably. For important sections of the urban working class this decline was permanent. It was based on economic changes mainly connected with the structural shift to manufacturing. These had begun to have a serious impact from the late 1880s, with noticeable effect on urban working class politics. In order to appreciate the impact of these changes, an examination of the changing work and living environment of urban workers is required.

**Industrial Structure**

A growing majority of urban industrial activity was conducted in Sydney, the colony's commercial and administrative centre, although Newcastle was also developing as a manufacturing centre, and each country population centre required some manufacturing establishments to service the population. Sydney employed roughly 80,000 wage earners in manufacturing, building, transport, and retailing in 1891. About 37,000 of these were in manufacturing, and about 15,000 in building.

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2. Calculated from NSW Census, 1891, pp.663, 676-7, 683, 693. Fry's total estimate is 60-70,000 because he does not account for the fact that the Census Industrial class had a significantly larger than average proportion of wage-earners, and he does not count the unemployed, most of whom would have been ex-wage-earners, op.cit., pp.64-6, 71. See Table 3 below.
the two primary concerns of this chapter, since commercial employees played a minor role in organized labour at this time, and since transport workers are examined in Chapter 3. Sydney metropolitan manufacturing establishments were on a significantly larger scale than in New South Wales generally, as shown by Tables 1-2 and 4-5 below. The metropolitan proportion of factory employment grew from 57 - 64 per cent from 1881-1901 (after a pre-depression peak of 61 per cent), whilst its proportion of manufacturing establishments only grew from 33 - 42 per cent (again, after a pre-depression peak of 44 per cent). In comparison, Sydney's proportion of colonial population rose from 30 per cent in 1881, to 35 per cent in 1891, to 37 per cent in 1901.  

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Persons %</th>
<th>Establishments %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881-2</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-6</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from New South Wales Statistical Registers

3. Calculated from J.W. McCarty, 'Australian Capital Cities in the Nineteenth Century', in C.B. Schedvin & J.W. McCarty, Urbanization in Australia. The Nineteenth Century, Sydney, (1970) 1974, pp.21, 33; and NSW Census, 1901, p.630. 'Sydney' is generally used here to include the city and suburbs, but most official statistics excluded Granville, Auburn, and Rookwood municipalities (all of which were important and growing industrial sites) and Hunter's Hill.
Urban industry was directed primarily towards servicing the domestic population, rather than towards export production, or the significant production of capital goods. Consequently, its main sectors were: food, drink and tobacco; clothing; metals, machinery and vehicle construction; building; raw materials processing; and various service activities such as printing, furniture-making, and gas production. Urban industry was characterized by low capital/labour ratios, low productivity, relatively small industrial units, and (as shown in Table 3) a relatively large number of employers and self-employed, although the proportion of these groups was smaller than in the overall economy. As Coghlan wrote in 1900, 'the progress of manufacturing industry in Australia has been slow and fitful, even in the most advanced colonies...'.

Table 3

Percentage of Grades of Occupation of Total Breadwinners in Census Industrial Class
New South Wales, 1891-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Self-Employed</th>
<th>Unpaid Relatives</th>
<th>Wage Earners</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M*</td>
<td>F*</td>
<td>P*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>23.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Class</td>
<td>14.22</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>13.18</td>
<td>17.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Breadwinners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>7.79</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>21.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Class</td>
<td>11.03</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>9.84</td>
<td>14.78</td>
<td>16.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Breadwinners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* M - Males
F - Females
P - Persons

Source: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1891 and 1901, pp.282-3, 292-3; and 650-1 respectively. See Appendix 1, Tables 1, and 8.
Table 4

Number of Manufacturing Establishments and Hands Employed
New South Wales and Metropolitan District, 1881-1901*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year†</th>
<th>Metropolitan</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of</td>
<td>No. of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishments</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881-2</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>15626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882-3</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>16998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-4</td>
<td>1039</td>
<td>17753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884-5</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>19855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-6</td>
<td>1169</td>
<td>20103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886-7</td>
<td>1386</td>
<td>22026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887-8</td>
<td>1346</td>
<td>21110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-9</td>
<td>1324</td>
<td>22334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889-90</td>
<td>1143</td>
<td>21509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1</td>
<td>1124</td>
<td>24342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>21729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>20443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>22012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>21801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>23134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>1149</td>
<td>23928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>1209</td>
<td>25309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>1212</td>
<td>26996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1338</td>
<td>29893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1415</td>
<td>32315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New South Wales Statistical Register, 1892-1901.

*These figures underestimate factory employment mainly because, until 1896, factories not using machinery were only included if they employed five hands or more. From 1896 this was reduced to four hands. Consequently, the figures show a disproportionate jump in 1896. Nevertheless, the long-term trends are not affected by the accuracy of the absolute figures. See Appendix 1, Table 3.

†The statistical year was 1 April - 31 March, until 1892 when it followed the calendar year.
Nevertheless, the rate of growth of manufacturing from 1861-90 (8.4 per cent per annum) was second only to railways, and ahead of the rapidly growing construction and pastoral industries (6.7 per cent per annum each). In the 1880s this growth rate dropped back to fourth place, but it remained ahead of Gross Domestic Product and the pastoral industry. In the 1890s manufacturing investment remained attractive, despite a reduction in colonial capital formation as a whole. Its unit investment remained low, and falling wages benefitted its labour intensity. The eventual recovery of prices, the cessation of British capital inflow, and some extension of protective tariffs, also combined to aid import replacement. Growth in residential building was also significant enough to offset economic downturns in 1878, 1882 and 1885, but during the 1890s building declined drastically.  

From 1881-1901 the manufacturing workforce increased by 112 per cent. In the 1880s the workforce grew by 48 per cent. This growth rate dropped to 43 per cent in the 1890s, but this figure is impressive given the loss of over 7,000 from the workforce during the trough of the depression, in 1891-4. Table 4 shows the growth in the manufacturing workforce.

Tables 4 and 5 also reveal the increase in factory size in New South Wales and Sydney. In New South Wales as a whole the average factory size almost doubled between 1881-1901, although it was not an even growth. In New South Wales the number of establishments declined from 1887, and only grew again from 1894. In the late 1880s, and until 1892, when the manufacturing workforce continued to increase, this trend revealed a marked increase in scale of industry. But during the depression the workforce fell more quickly than the number of establishments in

5. Butlin, Investment, pp.16-24, 47, 203.
Table 5

Average Hands per Factory,
Sydney and New South Wales, 1881-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Metropolitan</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881-2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>10.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882-3</td>
<td>18.65</td>
<td>10.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-4</td>
<td>18.92</td>
<td>10.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884-5</td>
<td>19.56</td>
<td>11.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-6</td>
<td>19.92</td>
<td>11.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886-7</td>
<td>17.97</td>
<td>12.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887-8</td>
<td>17.99</td>
<td>12.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-9</td>
<td>19.53</td>
<td>14.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889-90</td>
<td>21.87</td>
<td>15.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1</td>
<td>24.96</td>
<td>16.65 (17.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>25.78</td>
<td>18.03 (19.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>29.14</td>
<td>17.32 (18.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>24.91</td>
<td>15.15 (16.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>28.41</td>
<td>17.64 (19.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>23.80</td>
<td>17.02 (17.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>26.10</td>
<td>18.20 (19.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>26.41</td>
<td>18.50 (20.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>28.23</td>
<td>19.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>28.90</td>
<td>19.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>29.91</td>
<td>19.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from Statistical Register, 1892-1901.

The calculation from 1890-1 is based upon the 1896 definition of a factory, i.e., minimum four hands, rather than five, where such figures are available. The bracketed figures represent a calculation on the old, pre-1896 definition, of minimum five hands.

1893, and in 1894 and 1896. The workforce grew more slowly than the number of establishments. In Sydney the average size of factories actually fell from 1886-8, then continued to grow markedly, even during the early years of the depression, until a marked drop in 1894. A recovery in 1895 was followed by a further reduction in size, until it began to increase again from 1897. These trends suggest that during economic downturns, in the 1886-7 recession, and in 1894, unemployed tradesmen attempted to establish independent enterprises, as they did at the beginning of economic recovery after 1895. However, in the long-term, the increase in scale is a clear
trend, suggesting a decrease in opportunities to establish independent enterprises, and a greater concentration of workers under individual factory roofs. Small owner-builders and sub-contractors were very important in building, but even here the small man declined in importance from the late 1880s.6

During the 1880s the relative importance of different manufacturing sectors as employers of labour did not change greatly. Of the major sectors, building materials' proportion of the manufacturing workforce was steady at about 20 per cent from 1881-6, after which it fell slightly; food and drink remained at about 20 per cent; and metals and machinery rose steadily from 20 - 25 per cent. The most marked change occurred in clothing and textiles, whose proportion of the workforce fell from 33 - 20 per cent.7

The more pronounced changes of the 1890s represented a significant restructuring of the manufacturing workforce. Building, and building materials (and wood working, which is not easily separable from the latter) are the only industries whose workforce (markedly) decreased. The workforce of all other manufacturing industries significantly increased, absolutely, and as a proportion of the total manufacturing workforce. Food and drink increased by 34 per cent (or 14 per cent of the total increase in the manufacturing workforce), metals and machinery by 26 per cent (or 16 per cent of the total increase), and clothing by a remarkable 87 per cent (or 37 per cent of the total increase).

manufacturing increase).\

The scale of enterprise also varied between these major sectors. During the 1880s, the average number of hands and average value of capital equipment per factory rose most significantly in building materials, and food, drink and tobacco. In the more labour intensive clothing and textiles sector, the average number of hands and average value of capital equipment per factory actually declined in the 1880s and 1890s, even though it was the largest growth area.

However, the scale of enterprise varied considerably within these sectors. For example, one large Sydney boot factory employed 300 in 1891, even though small clothing workshops were more common. Although official statistics are a poor guide in this area, factory growth in clothing was balanced by a complementary growth in outwork, whereby employees worked in very small groups under sub-contractors, or at home, feeding the factories with semi-finished material, or 'finishing' factory work. Breweries were largely responsible for the overall increase in scale in food, drink and tobacco. Tobacco factories were also large employers, but not very capital intensive, and small

8. Calculated from Statistical Register, 1901, pp.650-2. For details, based on the Statistical Register and Census, see Appendix 1, Tables 4 and 5.
10. RCIRA, 1891, nos. 1-4, 7, 9, pp.1080, 1083-4, 1086-7, 1092, 1095-6, 1102, 1108-10 (only three of the ten Reports were on industries other than clothing); P. Strong (Tailors' Union President), Report of the Royal Commission on Strikes (hereafter, RRCS), 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.257-61. The Statistical Register, 1901, pp.636-9, 650-3, shows the very low level of capitalization in this sector, although, as Linge points out (op. cit., p.473), statistics on investment were non-existent before 1886, and far from adequate even after 1886.
11. See sources in n.10. RCIRA, 1891, no.1 (Tailoring), pp.1083-4, states that most work was done outside the factories. The incidence of outwork is discussed in more detail below, in relation to female labour.
12. Tobacco factories were the subject of RCIRA, 1891, no.8, pp.1106-7.
employers, such as bakers, were more common in this sector.

Overall, New South Wales indices for scale and capitalization were boosted by the metals and machinery sector. The average number of employees and value of capital equipment per establishment in metals and machinery grew more slowly than in building materials and food during the 1880s. Nevertheless, this sector started from a higher level of scale than the others, and was the only sector in which capital intensity steadily increased. 13

As Buckley comments, metals and machinery was 'less an industry than a heterogeneous group of trades'. 14 For the purposes of this thesis, it included specialized engineering workshops, manufacture of mining, factory, and agricultural machinery, manufacture of wire, ship building and repair, vehicle construction, construction of railway rolling stock, large government railway workshops at Eveleigh and Newcastle, production of cast iron fittings for houses, and a sheetmetal trade which overlapped with other industries, such as the expanding trade in canned meat in the 1880s. 15 Larger ships and railway locomotives were usually imported in New South Wales. Opportunities for local manufacture of large items were too limited and varied to allow much economy of scale, and high costs were involved in fitting workshops for specialized work. Together with a costly skilled workforce, these factors usually prevented New South Wales firms from competing with

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15. General comments on this section of the industry are based on a perusal of the Tinsmiths' and Sheet Ironworkers' Trade Society Minutes of Meetings, for 1882-1900.
the British for valuable locomotive contracts. Consequently, small workshops characterized the industry because of its dependence on repair work, and the larger firms' sub-contracting of specialized sections of large orders.

Nevertheless, Sydney had some large-scale firms in metals and machinery. In 1880 the five largest had a combined employment capacity exceeding 2,000. About thirty medium firms, and a host of small establishments, kept the average number of employees at 26 in 1880. This average fell to 19 in 1885, which reflected the increase in the number of small, low-capital enterprises during favourable economic periods, although large firms also expanded at these times. But, apart from the worst depression years, the average number of employees in metals and engineering establishments expanded rapidly during the 1890s, to 46 in 1901, as shown in Table 6. This figure was as high as 62 in shipbuilding, but only ten in vehicle construction.

Printing provided another example of the diversity of scale within some industries. It was divided between a few large newspapers and jobbing offices, and many small firms whose numbers increased in good economic periods. Although newspapers remained the major employers, the industry expanded greatly from 1860-90. Metropolitan dailies' size and circulation expanded with commercial growth. The extension of transport and communications aided their extra-metropolitan circulation, although this ultimately undercut the parallel spread of local newspapers. The jobbing trade also expanded, with the growth of specialized periodicals, advertising, packaging and popular literature. 16

23.

Table 6

Employment and Factory Size in
Metals and Machinery Industrial Sector, New South Wales
Selected Years, 1890-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Metals/Engineering Average No.of hands</th>
<th>Shipbuilding Average No.of hands</th>
<th>Coaches/Wagons Average No.of hands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Works</td>
<td>No. of Hands</td>
<td>No. of Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>10236</td>
<td>34.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>6686</td>
<td>31.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>7745</td>
<td>29.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>10234</td>
<td>37.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>13831</td>
<td>45.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Register.

the worst years of the depression in 1892-4, the workforce expanded
by about 25 per cent in the 1890s. 17

The urban industrial structure, therefore, was characterized by
combined, but uneven, growth. Manufacturing, predominantly
in Sydney, experienced rapid growth, absolutely and in scale, from
1881-1901. This did not markedly alter the overall nature of urban
industry, although the distribution of resources between different
sectors within urban industry did change more significantly. Craft-
based industry remained important, but a growing number of large scale
enterprises brought larger numbers of workers together under the one
roof in some sectors. Some of the most important examples are analyzed
in terms of scale in Table 7 below. Gas works, sugar refineries,
breweries, and woollen mills, in particular, achieved greatly increased
productivity in the 1890s because of increased capitalization, even

17. To reach about 5150 in 1901. See Appendix 1, Tables 4 and 5,
which show slightly varying figures between the Censuses and
Statistical Registers.
Table 7
Employment and Factory Size in Principal Factories, New South Wales
Selected Years, 1885-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>1885-6</th>
<th>1887-8</th>
<th>1888-9</th>
<th>1889-90</th>
<th>1890-1</th>
<th>1893</th>
<th>1895</th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>Hands</td>
<td>Works</td>
<td>Hands</td>
<td>Works</td>
<td>Hands</td>
<td>Works</td>
<td>Hands</td>
<td>Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiling down*</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>7.56</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>6.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brickworks</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>3617</td>
<td>8.06</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>2230</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>2124</td>
<td>9.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breweries</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>10.72</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>10.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour Mills</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasworks</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>20.20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>24.44</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>31.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw Mills</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>3783</td>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>3254</td>
<td>10.11</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>3616</td>
<td>11.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap and Candles</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>6.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>41.75</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>28.78</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>31.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollen Mills</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>53.83</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>34.40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>35.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boots/Shoes</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2105</td>
<td>32.38</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2273</td>
<td>37.88</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2045</td>
<td>35.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Not inclusive of pastoral stations
†Includes those with less than 5 hands for the first time
§Distribution workers included earlier. New estimate in brackets.

Source: Statistical Register, 1895, 1901.
as their workforces also increased. Yet, the more labour intensive industries, such as clothing, expanded rapidly. The working experience of the urban working class, therefore, was diverse.

However, the growth and changes in the industrial structure which have been sketched, entailed changes in the nature of work across most sections of industry. Some of these changes were reflected in the workforce structure. This is now examined in detail, together with general working conditions, before examining the more marked changes in the work experiences of urban industry.

**Workforce Structure**

The urban workforce was structured hierarchically, on the bases of skill, occupation, sex, and age. The top of the hierarchy was occupied by skilled workers in the traditional crafts. The greatest concentration of these craftsmen was in the building and metal industries: stonemasons, carpenters, plasterers, and painters; engineers, boilermakers, blacksmiths, ironmoulders, and tinsmiths. Printers, saddlers, and coopers were also important craftsmen.18

Traditional crafts were themselves organized on a hierarchical basis: master craftsmen, down through journeymen, and apprentices, to the very bottom, 'inferior men', who had not entered the trade through apprenticeship. A hierarchy also existed amongst different crafts, within industries such as building and furniture making,19 and across industries, with printers, stonemasons, and engineers occupying the top positions. Newer skills, such as in sheetmetal work (which was largely absorbed by the tinsmiths), did not enjoy the status of

18. Table 8 in Appendix 1 lists the membership of principal crafts in 1901.
19. RCIRA, 1891, Report no.10, pp.1111-8 provides a detailed account of the complex division of labour in the furniture trade.
more traditional crafts.  

Beneath the skilled was a heterogeneous mass of workers with varying degrees of skill. It is impossible to accurately distinguish the various grades of 'semi-skilled' workers between 'skilled' and 'unskilled'. The terminology is quite arbitrary, depending not so much upon the actual degree of skill possessed by a particular grade of workers, as upon their strategic bargaining power, and their consequent ability to exert control over the labour process and extract concessions from employers. For example, building labourers, though 'unskilled', occupied a higher position in the workforce hierarchy than other unskilled labour, because of their close association with the building crafts and their ability to restrict entry to the job. Unskilled factory and construction workers occupied the lowest point in the workforce hierarchy.

The ratio of skilled to semi or unskilled varied between industries. In metals and machinery the skilled accounted for about two thirds of the entire workforce. There was only a small number of unskilled, but from the 1880s the proportion of semi-skilled machinists and others grew, especially in the agricultural implement and machinery sections of the industry. In building, an intermediate strata of semi-skilled

20. The material bases of these observations are examined in later sections of this chapter. In general the workforce hierarchy, and the attitudes associated with it, are encountered not so much at this or that particular point, but in the entire modus operandi, and assumptions of groups of workers, evident in a perusal of, for example, union rules (listed in the Bibliography), and other records. Even labour historians have paid little attention to the question, although we catch glimpses of the hierarchy in Turner, op.cit., pp.XIV, and 6; and Fry, op.cit., pp.14, 516; and less fleeting observations in Hagan, op.cit., Chapter 1; and J. Hagan and C.Fisher, 'Piece-work and Some of Its Consequences in the Printing and Coal Mining Industries in Australia, 1850-1930', Labour History, no.25, November 1973, p.27.

21. For an excellent British case study of this phenomenon, see Hobsbawm, op.cit., pp.158-78.

22. Amalgamated Society of Engineers' submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.140; Buckley, op.cit., pp.13, 22-3.
was non-existent. At the other extreme, the food and clothing industries employed mainly semi or unskilled labour. However, within their 'unskilled' factory workforces, a hierarchy also existed, with women and juveniles occupying the lowest positions.23

Table 8 shows the rapid increase in the female workforce, absolutely and proportionally from 1881-1901. The figures actually underestimate this growth. The 1901 Census did not count a number of women in the Primary sector who had been counted in 1891. Furthermore, only 60 per cent of all women were of normal working age, that is, 15-65 years, of whom over 30 per cent were breadwinners in 1891.24

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage increase of female workforce for past decade</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage increase of female population for past decade</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female workforce participation rate</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females as percentage of total workforce</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1901, p.630.

Table 9 shows that female employment in the Census Industrial class, which included manufacturing, was the major contributor to the consistency of high overall female employment growth. Females were

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23. This was clear in the clothing trade, for example, RCIRA, 1891, nos.1-4, 7, 9, pp.1081-6, 1087, 1089-90, 1092-3, 1094-6, 1097, 1102, 1109-1110; in laundries, ibid., no.6, p.1100; and in the furniture trade, ibid., no.10, pp.1112-3, 1115.
Table 9

Percentage Proportion of Males and Females in the Workforce
by Census Industrial Classification, New South Wales, 1871-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th></th>
<th>1881</th>
<th></th>
<th>1891</th>
<th></th>
<th>1901</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>7.80</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>45.38</td>
<td>12.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>45.49</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Total</td>
<td>13.49</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.78</td>
<td>7.63</td>
<td>14.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Commercial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.29</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>11.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Transport and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>7.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.49</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>7.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Total</td>
<td>28.79</td>
<td>16.85</td>
<td>26.69</td>
<td></td>
<td>37.04</td>
<td>18.79</td>
<td>33.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Building/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21.29</td>
<td>19.91</td>
<td>21.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>47.53</td>
<td>22.07</td>
<td>43.07</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.58</td>
<td>16.20</td>
<td>33.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.27</td>
<td>13.54</td>
<td>31.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>37.26</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>30.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1891 and 1901, pp.283-4; and 630 respectively. See Appendix 1 concerning the statistical problems associated with the accuracy of the 1871 and 1881 Censuses.
also largely responsible for the maintenance of the Industrial class, and especially its manufacturing component, as proportions of the total workforce. Virtually all women in the Industrial class were employed in manufacturing. The proportion of the female workforce employed in Industrial, and in manufacturing, rose steadily in the 1880s and 1890s, although the male proportions fell. In the 1880s, female growth in this class was at the expense of Domestic employment, which had traditionally been the major area of female employment, as well as the Commercial and Primary classes. In the 1890s, as female Domestic and Commercial employment recovered, the continued growth in female manufacturing employment was entirely at the expense of Primary employment, although the 1901 Census did underestimate the latter.

A high proportion of female manufacturing employment was in Sydney, where its rate of growth was also very high. Table 10 shows the growth of the female workforce as a proportion of total Sydney employment in manufacturing.

Table 10
Percentage of Female Employment in Metropolitan Manufacturing, 1881-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Statistical Register</th>
<th>Linge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881-2</td>
<td>12.25</td>
<td>19.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1</td>
<td>13.24</td>
<td>20.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>22.69</td>
<td>22.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>23.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Statistical Register, and Linge, op.cit., p.741.

Statistical Register figures grossly underestimate female entry

into the Sydney and New South Wales manufacturing workforce in general, and in particular from 1886-1896, and tend to overestimate the rate of growth of this entry between 1896-1901. This is partly because of the exclusion of establishments not employing machinery and employing less than five hands from 1886-1896. Prior to 1886, and after 1896 the minimum size of establishments included in the statistics was four.  

Even then, however, a large proportion of the female workforce in clothing was excluded, because of the large numbers of outworkers, usually female, in the industry. According to the 1891 Census, almost 16,900 New South Wales women were employed in clothing, of whom over 4,100 were 'self-employed', a classification which would include many outworkers. Linge estimates another 6,000 were employed 'in tiny workrooms in private houses or in association with shops trading in women's apparel...'. Most of these were employed in Sydney. Of the remaining 6,800, which may be presumed to have worked in small workshops and factories, however, only about 2,000 appear in the 1891 Statistical Register. The only logical explanation for this discrepancy lies in the highly seasonal nature of clothing manufacture. Statistical Registers only included 'average' numbers of hands per establishment per annum. For this reason Linge's estimates have also been used in Table 10 to calculate a more accurate percentage of female employment in metropolitan manufacturing, but these figures still exclude...
The overall growth in female employment was concentrated in a very small number of industries, shown in Table 11: apart from clothing, these were food, drink and tobacco, printing and bookbinding, furniture-making, and paper bag and box manufacture. With the exception of woollen cloth, all of these industries revealed a phenomenal growth rate in female employment in the 1880s and 1890s, with only a temporary downturn during the trough of the depression, 1892-5.

The trend is even more marked when females are viewed as a proportion of the workforce in these industries, in Table 12. Although furniture-making showed a proportional decline, all of the other industries showed an increase, including woollen cloth, where the decline in absolute numbers because of greater mechanization affected males more severely than females. In most cases, the proportional increase was near equal to, or exceeded, the overall growth rate for the female proportion of the manufacturing workforce. It is also clear that the high growth rate in the clothing sector in the 1890s was almost entirely dependent on the entry of women to the workforce.

Prior to 1891, the statistics on child and juvenile labour are insufficient to warrant confident assertions. However, there are indications of an increase. For example, trade unionists claimed that the number of juveniles had increased in clothing, and this assertion is consistent with the importance of outwork and later trends. From


30. P. Strong (Tailors'), and Miss Powell (Tailoresses' Union), RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.258, 277-8 respectively.
Table 11
Female Employment in Manufactories and Works 1882-1901, New South Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>1882-3</th>
<th>1883-4</th>
<th>1884-5</th>
<th>1885-6</th>
<th>1886-7</th>
<th>1887-8</th>
<th>1888-9</th>
<th>1889-90</th>
<th>1890-1</th>
<th>1892</th>
<th>1893</th>
<th>1894</th>
<th>1895</th>
<th>1896</th>
<th>1897</th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1899</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>% inc./decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condiments, coffee,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spices</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>167</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerated waters etc.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biscuits</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boots</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>1047</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td>133.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing*</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>1139</td>
<td>1162</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1712</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>2315</td>
<td>2224</td>
<td>2070†</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>1156</td>
<td>1503</td>
<td>4158</td>
<td>4365</td>
<td>4922</td>
<td>5191</td>
<td>6321</td>
<td>6889</td>
<td>126.2†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confectionery</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>561.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29†</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>197.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hats/Caps</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>760.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jam &amp; Fruit Canning</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1650.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing &amp; Bookbinding</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>747.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Paper Bags/Boxes</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>119</td>
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<td>138</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>3400.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>397.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollen cloth</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>-39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>276.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2065</td>
<td>2384</td>
<td>2404</td>
<td>3420</td>
<td>3374</td>
<td>3686</td>
<td>4265</td>
<td>4264</td>
<td>4553</td>
<td>2970</td>
<td>2506</td>
<td>3222</td>
<td>3846</td>
<td>6932</td>
<td>7106</td>
<td>7845</td>
<td>8583</td>
<td>10263</td>
<td>11674</td>
<td>465.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...contd.
Table 11 (cont'd)

Source: Statistical Register, 1893, p.506; 1895, p.627; 1898, p.575; 1901, p.652.

*From 1849-90 this included slop (the largest component by far) which had been the only item counted, as well as oilskins. Figures for tailoring, dressmaking and millinery were included from 1896, and for shirts from 1892.
†Figures from Reports under Census and Industrial Returns Act, 1891, in brackets.
§Adjusted to exclude additions to statistical base in 1892 and 1896. But growth from 1896-1901 alone was 65.7 per cent.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>1883-4</th>
<th>1886-7</th>
<th>1890-1</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1893</th>
<th>1895</th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>Proportional Increase - %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>2.43*</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing and Bookbinding</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>10.79</td>
<td>7.53</td>
<td>7.71</td>
<td>10.73</td>
<td>13.65</td>
<td></td>
<td>+9.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>57.09</td>
<td>59.86</td>
<td>76.72*</td>
<td>80.61</td>
<td>84.58</td>
<td>77.72</td>
<td>80.29</td>
<td></td>
<td>+23.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jam &amp; Fruit Canning</td>
<td>18.18</td>
<td>30.23</td>
<td>22.84</td>
<td>12.22</td>
<td>18.72</td>
<td>17.68</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td></td>
<td>+3.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>12.45</td>
<td>20.48</td>
<td>25.37</td>
<td>24.21</td>
<td>25.89</td>
<td>20.82</td>
<td>41.55</td>
<td></td>
<td>+29.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollen Mills</td>
<td>30.11</td>
<td>42.86</td>
<td>39.35</td>
<td>29.06</td>
<td>27.69</td>
<td>29.88</td>
<td>30.77</td>
<td></td>
<td>+0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Manufacturing</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>15.09</td>
<td>10.05</td>
<td>13.50</td>
<td>14.94</td>
<td>17.65</td>
<td></td>
<td>+10.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from Statistical Register, 1893, 1895, 1898, 1901, and Table A1.3 in Appendix 1.

*Bracketed figure based on Reports under Census and Industrial Returns Act.
†Includes tailoring, dressmaking and millinery after 1896.
1891-1901, when more reliable statistics are available, workers under the age of twenty did show a slight increase, even though the proportion of that section of the population slightly decreased. Coghlan claimed in 1891 that there were 'not more than 1500 children of thirteen years and under who were employed in the whole country'.\footnote{This is almost certainly over-optimistic. In some trades, such as brickmaking and tobacco 'twisting', the men hired boys, often their sons, as assistants, and these did not appear in factory returns because they were not employed directly by the factory manager or owner.\footnote{The Public Instruction Act theoretically prevented employment of children under fourteen, but clothing unionists claimed, with some justification, it seems, that this merely led to the falsification of ages in many cases.\footnote{Nevertheless, Table 13 shows that child labour, under 15 years, was a small and declining proportion of the workforce in all Census classes of occupation between 1891-1901, except in the 'Commercial' class, which included many small family-based shops. Consequently, the increase in employment of those under twenty years between 1891-1901, which is shown in Table 14, was in the 15-20 (juvenile) age group. Table 14 also shows that this increase was concentrated in the Census Industrial classification, even though the highest proportion of juveniles was in the Domestic class. The only other class to show an increase, rather than a decrease, in the proportion of labour under}}
Table 13

Children under 15 years in Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1891 Males</th>
<th>1891 Females</th>
<th>1891 Persons</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>1901 Females</th>
<th>1901 Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% Workforce</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% Workforce</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% Workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2387</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>2926</td>
<td>5.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>2049</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(includes Transport &amp; Communications)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>2411</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3031</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>3434</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>4109</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8612</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>3825</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>12437</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1891 Males</th>
<th>1891 Females</th>
<th>1891 Persons</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>1901 Females</th>
<th>1901 Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% Workforce</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% Workforce</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% Workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>2288</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>2319</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>2425</td>
<td>11.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(includes Transport &amp; Communications)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>2127</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2823</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4035</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>4141</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9142</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>2785</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>11927</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1891, pp.281, 285; and 1901, pp.650-91.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Work-</td>
<td>Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>2191</td>
<td>10.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>2744</td>
<td>15.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>8898</td>
<td>16.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Communication</td>
<td>3897</td>
<td>13.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>17710</td>
<td>14.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>21112</td>
<td>15.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Total</td>
<td>56890</td>
<td>14.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Juvenile</td>
<td>279819</td>
<td>44.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

twenty years of age, was Commercial. The most significant increase in
the Industrial class occurred in the clothing industry, which also had
the largest number of workers under 15 years. Other major
concentrations of juvenile labour occurred in building materials, metals
and machinery, furniture-making, and printing. But these industries
differed markedly in the sexual composition of their juvenile labour
forces. Building materials and metals and machinery entail almost
exclusively male occupations, whereas in printing, furniture-making,
and clothing, even where more males were employed overall, the juvenile
proportion of the female workforce was much higher than that for males.
There was, therefore, a high correlation of female and juvenile labour
in the latter industries.

The difference between the two groups of industries was related
to the broader workforce structure. Formal apprenticeships, usually
for at least four to five years, had been the traditional form of juvenile
employment, which predominated in metals and machinery and building
materials. However, in the clothing, printing, and furniture-
making industries the growth in juvenile, especially female juvenile,
labour reflected the growth of an unskilled workforce. Although these
juveniles were frequently called 'learners', 'finishers', or even
'apprentices', this did not indicate an indentured apprenticeship,
or even, necessarily, the learning of trade skills. These names simply
designated less experienced workers, or those confined to the lowest-
paid jobs, and in some factories juvenile 'learners' comprised a majority

34. 912 in 1901, of whom 604 were female. The other major groups of
under-15 year olds were in printing (225), metals/engineering etc.
(317), building materials (183), food (224), building (285), and
'imperfectly defined labourers' (234). NSW Census, 1901, pp.674-87.
35. See Table 9 in Appendix 1 for these details.
36. See Fry, op.cit., pp.371-83; Buckley, op.cit., pp.89-90; Hagan,
Printers and Politics, pp.16-17, 39-40.
of the workforce. The term of these 'apprenticeships' was commonly up to two years, but varied at the employers' discretion. Since these juveniles did not become acquainted with practices in a whole trade, many were condemned to remain 'improvers' as adults. 37

Wages

Broadly speaking, the level of wage differentials indicated the workforce hierarchy. Within the craft hierarchy, standard wage rates in the 1880s varied between 8/- and 12/- per day. Printing, building and metal tradesmen were usually the highest paid workers. 38 During the 1890s depression skilled wages rarely dropped below 8/- in building and metals, although some tradesmen's wages fell below 7/- . 39 Generally, however, the margin above unskilled wages, of 50-80 per cent, was maintained or improved, as skilled wages recovered in the late 1890s. 40

37. RCIRA, 1891, nos.1-4, 7, 9, pp.1085, 1087, 1092, 1094-5, 1102, 1108; Miss Powell and P. Strong, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.258, 277-8; Gordon, op.cit., pp.102-3.

38. These comments are more concerned to indicate the range of wage levels, than actual wages or earnings. It is beyond the immediate purpose of this chapter to attempt to provide detailed wage statistics, even if that were possible. For this limited purpose the Statistical Register wages series have been supplemented by trade union sources, evidence at the RRCS, 1891, the RCIRA, 1891, and some secondary sources, especially Buckley, op.cit.; Hagan, Printers and Politics; W.J. Hargreaves, History of the Federated Moulders' (Metals) Union of Australia, 1858-1958, Sydney, n.d. (1958?); Macarthy, op.cit., pp.75, 78; and Fry, op.cit., Part 3, Chs. 1-2.

39. For example: Bakers, 6/8 in 1890-2 (NSW Operative Bakers' Society, Minutes, 27 September 1890, and 3 May 1892); and Saddlers, whose wage range was 6/4 - 9/- in 1890-1 (Saddle, Harness, Collarmakers and Bridlecutters' Union of NSW, Rules as submitted to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.151). Country rates were usually lower.

40. The Worker (organ of the Australian Workers' Union), 1900-1, regularly published lists showing the improvement in skilled wages. One other indication was the lists of Government minimum rates for public works from 1894-5 (for example, see T.A. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia (Oxford, 1918), Melbourne, 1969, vol.4, pp.2027, 2041, 2046), although it is likely that these rates were more favourable than elsewhere. Note the Boot Trade Union's complaint over Coghlan's alleged over-estimate of average wages in The Wealth and Progress of NSW (the NSW Yearbook), 1899-1900, Boot Trade Union of NSW, Minutes, 30 April 1901. The general estimate of the skilled margin above unskilled wages is based on Fry, op.cit., pp.328-9; and Connell and Irving, op.cit., p.130.
But 'standard' wage rates, as defined by the unions, were not gained by all workers in most trades. The greatest problem with the Statistical Register's lists of wages is that they rely largely on union 'standard' wages, with the top end of the scale often representing aspiration rather than achievement. It seems highly likely that non-unionized workers frequently did not receive 'the standard', and outside the building and metal trades they often represented a significant proportion of the workforce. For example, whilst compositors in metropolitan dailies received two to three times the wages of building tradesmen, those in weakly-unionized jobbing offices were often lower-paid than unskilled labourers.

Furthermore, tradesmen's earnings could as easily be reduced by many uncontrollable variables, as for the unskilled. For example, if wet weather prevented outdoor work, no compensation was received. Building workers were also particularly susceptible to sub-contractors' insolvency or abscondence without payment of wages. Piece-payment increased the number of uncontrollable variables which could affect earnings, such as failure of equipment. It was usual in brick-making and printing, common for tinsmiths, saddlers, and coopers, and even had one stronghold in the metal industry, at Hudson's.

41. These problems were compounded when, from 1897, the Statistical Register merely published the 'average' rate within the range, with no reference to its actual incidence.
42. See Hagan, Printers and Politics, pp.39-40, 60-1, 75, 114-5. Other examples are commonly referred to in union minutes, for example, Confectioners' Minutes, 5 March, 16 April, 13 October 1890, 7 January 1891.
43. See Fry, op.cit., pp.313-4, 316-8; and re wet weather, NSW Operative Stonemasons' Society, Sydney Lodge, Minutes, 11 May 1890.
Piecwages were essentially a calculated conversion of time-wages. However, they operated to the advantage of the employer in a number of ways, all of which seem to have been clearly perceived by unionists in the nineteenth century, although some, such as printers, were able to do well by piece work. First, the quality of labour is controlled by the work itself. If the goods produced are imperfect, the piece price is not paid. Secondly, work intensity is controlled by the work process. A worker is only paid if he or she produces so much. Thirdly, the need for supervision is reduced. Fourthly, work intensity under piecework has a natural tendency to increase because it is in the worker's interest. Fifthly, for the same reasons, piecework provides an inducement for the extension of working hours. But sixthly, there is a tendency for earnings to equalize despite extension of hours and increases in work intensity, because under these circumstances a fall in piece prices follows. This causes even stronger pressure on the extent (hours) and intensity of labour. Finally, piecework encourages independence and competition amongst labourers, counteracting the influence of unionism. Hagan and Fisher note this effect amongst printers, and the other effects will be encountered in subsequent discussions of factory and outwork. The furniture trade provides a very clear example of the tendency for piece-rates to decline. During

45. The RCIRA, 1891, emphasized this point, especially no.1 (Tailoring), p.1085.
46. For example, the statement by the Ironmoulders' Secretary in 1884, Hargreaves, op.cit., pp.27-8. Most unions consistently opposed the introduction of piecework.
48. These tendencies in piecework were clearly elaborated by K. Marx, Capital, Moscow, 1974 reprint, vol.1, pp.516-23.
49. 'Piecework and Some of Its Consequences', op.cit., pp.24-7, 33.
the 1880s when prices for one line produced by turners dropped by 67 per cent, piece-rates fell by 85 per cent.  

Whatever the limitations to tradesmen's earnings, semi or unskilled wages were usually lower and more varied. Building labourers were relatively well-paid in the 1880s, at 7/- to 8/- per day. But generally, although it is impossible to estimate from available statistics, it is unlikely that a high proportion of the unskilled received the union standard of 7/-, since relatively few were unionized. In the 1890s depression, when most unskilled unions collapsed, this standard became total myth.

Factory work included a great range of earnings in its own hierarchical system of labour. In the boot trade wages were relatively high. A minority earned as much as some tradesmen, but the lowest-paid workers were in this sector, the prevalence of piecework meant a greater variation of earnings than elsewhere, and outworkers usually purchased material themselves. 30/- to 40/- per week were good earnings for factory work. But women often earned in a week what other workers earned in a day. Wages for 'learners' varied from nothing to a few shillings per week, and the high proportion of girls in this category helped force female wages down generally. Once their 'term' was

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50. Calculated from RCIRA, 1891, no.10, p.1115.
51. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1440, 1447. It was claimed that some still received this rate during the depression. Trades and Labour Council (hereafter TLC) Minutes, 22 November 1894.
52. See Macarthy, op.cit., pp.33, 39, 41, 48-9, 51, who assumes that all unskilled received the 'standard' in the 1880s.
53. RCIRA, 1891; P. Strong (Tailors') and Miss Powell (Tailoresses') RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.257-60, 278; Gordon, op.cit., pp.107-8; Women's Silk-Growing Co-operative and Industrial Association of NSW Ltd., Objects, Sydney, 1894.
completed, employers commonly replaced one 'learner' with another. Actual earnings could also be reduced by a system of fines which operated in some factories. At one laundry, women received a 2/- 'bonus' if they worked a full week, but if one day was lost, were docked 4/8, that is, a loss of 6/8, or almost half of weekly earnings. Together, therefore, female and juvenile labour accounted for a large and growing low-wage sector in manufacturing. The shift of female labour from domestic to factory work seems to have been motivated more by the latter's greater freedom than by better wages. Low wages for women could be justified because most were expected in due course to marry and their position in the workforce, therefore, was only considered temporary, or their income only considered supplementary to their husbands'. Low wages for women also allowed higher wage margins for relatively scarce, skilled (male) labour in manufacturing.

Cheap female and juvenile labour were important for the process of early capital accumulation. Being subject to price and quality

54. Australian Workman (organ of the TLC, and hereafter AW), 17, 24 and 31 January 1891; TLC Minutes, 30 November, and 7 December 1893; Walsh, op.cit., pp.14-15. See also sources in n.53. RCIRA, 1891, nos.1 (Tailoring) and 3 (Millinery), pp.1085 and 1092 respectively, note the depressing effect on wages of a high proportion of juvenile labour.
55. RCIRA, 1891, no.6 (Laundries), p.1100; TLC Minutes, 30 November and 7 December 1893. RCIRA no.1 suggested that fines were not common in tailoring, but admitted the difficulty in substantiating this generalization.
56. Note May Hickman's lecture on this problem at Leigh House (Socialist League headquarters), AW, 1 May 1897. (Hickman was a leader of the Womanhood Suffrage Leagues which are discussed in Chapter 8 below). See Fry, op.cit., p.41; B. Kingston, My Wife, My Daughter, and Poor Mary Ann, Women & Work in Australia, Melbourne, 1975, pp.62-3; and for an example of a Government inspector's belief in this regard, Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.159.
competition from overseas, local manufacturers had to force wages and overhead costs down. Before the downward movement of unskilled wages in the nineties, the easiest method was by sub-contracting. Wages then, of course, had to be forced down further to allow for subcontractors' profits. Outwork had the added advantage of allowing evasion of industrial legislation, and since it was paid by the piece, of imposing discipline and work-loads without direct supervision.

Although the data for estimating the rate of surplus value derived from this kind of labour is very limited, the evidence which does exist suggests that it was very high. For example, women outworkers who made uniform trousers for the government, which paid 20/- to 35/- each, received 10d - 1/3 each. It was largely in outwork where this scale of profit was made. Retail establishments which also manufactured their own clothing, and even factories, did not yield as high a rate of profit. Consequently, labour intensity in small sub-contracting establishments, or in outwork, was often important to maximize returns. For example, in a small market the high level of capitalization necessary for woollen mills yielded only small returns. The proprietors compensated for this by working the mills in conjunction with clothing factories and outworkers.

Traditionally, it has been argued that high colonial wage rates were a product of labour scarcity. If wages were not as high as often assumed, therefore, we may also question the pervasiveness of labour...

58. See Sinclair, *op.cit.*, p.134; Butlin, *Investment*, pp.25-6; J. Norton (ed.), *The History of Capital and Labour*, Sydney, 1888, p.84. Food, tobacco and clothing were particularly susceptible to import competition. Specific cases are recorded in RCIRA, 1891, nos.1 (Tailoring), and 8-10 (Tobacco, Boot Trade, Furniture Trade), pp.1081-2, 1106-7, 1110-1, 1114-5.

59. RCIRA, 1891, nos. 2 (Dressmaking), and 4 (Whitework), pp.1089-90, 1095; Gordon, *op.cit.*, p.103; and other sources in n.s 53-4.

60. RCIRA, 1891, no.5, p.1098.
scarcity. Butlin's evidence for labour scarcity actually relates to rural, rather than urban, labour. Apart from the level of wages, it is clear that earnings were often subject to uncertainty for urban workers, even the skilled. The greatest contributor to this uncertainty was unemployment.

Unemployment and Underemployment

Prolonged unemployment was rare until the 1890s. Nevertheless, hardship occurred during recessions in 1878-9 and 1886-7, when large numbers of urban and rural unemployed gathered in Sydney. Accurate long-term statistics do not exist. But a number of sources suggest that whilst high levels of unemployment were usually short-lived prior to the 1890s, temporary unemployment and underemployment were often a way of life.

Insecurity of employment was implanted in the structure of nineteenth century industry. Many workers, for example in building, were employed on a job basis, with no guarantee that they would be immediately re-employed upon completion of one job. 'Between-jobs' unemployment, therefore, was a common experience. So, too, was seasonal unemployment, because of the service nature of urban industry. Manufacturing and building contracted in the winter months. Many factory hands were laid off for between six weeks and six months after

63. Apart from the sources mentioned below, this is a theme in Fisher, op.cit., Part 2, Chapter 2. It is also suggested in the evidence of unionists in the Progress Report, and Second Progress Report, of the Select Committee on Assisted Immigration, op.cit., and 1880-1, vol. 3, pp.275-94. Cf Fry, op.cit., pp.342-64, which is based on Victorian evidence.
peak periods immediately prior to winter and Christmas. This was particularly common in the clothing industry, where one of the attractions of an outwork system was its automatic adjustment of labour supply to demand. 64

In this area, the increased entry of women into the manufacturing workforce was important in developing a reserve army of labour. In the first instance, this exacerbated the oversupply of labour which held down unskilled (male and female) wages generally, in the late nineties and early 1900s. Secondly, female labour suited the seasonality of manufacturing production. In slack periods, unemployed and underemployed women were not as noticeable as unemployed male labour, because women were assumed to have a family to fall back on. 65

Sectional unemployment or underemployment also occurred because of varied circumstances in individual industries. For example, underemployment was a problem for less skilled printers in the 1880s, because of the small employers' practice of replacing boys as soon as they were 'out of their time', with fresh, cheap labour. 66 In woollen cloth manufacture, a gradual decline in the number of mills as capitalization increased, meant the displacement of over 50 per cent of the workforce in the eighties. 67 This increased labour supply for other factory and outwork, upon which those employers relied for a satisfactory rate of profit, and exacerbated job competition in that area of high underemployment.

64. RCIRA, 1891, nos.1-10, pp.1082-3, 1090, 1092, 1095, 1100, 1102, 1114-5. In laundries, employees often only worked 2-3 days per week (ibid., no.6, p.1100); Fry, op.cit., p.324.
65. This assumption was explicit in RCIRA, 1891, no.1 (Tailoring), p.1083.
66. C. Jones (Secretary of NSW Typographical Union, hereafter referred to as the Printers' Union), RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.247.
67. RCIRA, 1891, no.5, p.1097.
The building industry was extremely sensitive to economic fluctuations. In 1879, the Stonemasons' Union claimed that 300 of its 500 members were unemployed. Building boomed in 1880-4. But even in 1883 the Trades and Labour Council claimed that some tradesmen, especially carpenters, had suffered from immigrant competition on the labour market, to the extent that some employers had been able to reduce wages by 10 - 15 per cent. From 1885-6 an increasing number of building tradesmen were unemployed or underemployed. Government spending cuts and the end of the land boom in 1888 negated a building recovery in that year, and a further recovery during 1889-90 was short-lived.

Unemployment amongst metal tradesmen fluctuated somewhat separately to building, but because of its dependence on so many other industries, the metals industry was also extremely susceptible to seasonal fluctuations. Short term Government contracts particularly influenced labour requirements. Recessions occurred in 1878-80, 1884 (mainly in can production), and 1886-7, but engineering employment indices based on the Amalgamated Society of Engineers tend to under-estimate short-term unemployment, and to exclude the more vulnerable, less skilled, non-ASE members. In 1879 the ASE claimed that, whilst only a few of its members were affected, 30 per cent of all engineers were unemployed.

69. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 24 August, and 31 October 1883. This was also a constant theme of unionists before the Select Committee on Assisted Immigration, op.cit. Coghlan notes some building unemployment in 1882-4, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1440-3; and Sinclair, op.cit., p.142.
71. Buckley, op.cit., pp.21-2; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 18 July 1884, 4 June and 30 December 1886, 11 December 1887.
48.

The TLC even claimed some engineering unemployment in the good year of 1883. From 1884 tinsmiths suffered considerable unemployment, because of high prices forcing the closure of some meat preservation works. From 1885 a downturn spread throughout the industry. In 1886 private enterprise employment may have fallen by up to 50 per cent in Sydney, although the large railway workshops were unaffected. The workforce at Mort's, the largest establishment, fell from 1500 to 400. During the late 1880s the industry generally stagnated and was subject to sectional fluctuations. Tinsmiths' employment improved early in 1887, as did ironmoulders' later that year, but by then tinsmiths' unemployment had risen again. ASE members' employment improved from 1888-90, but in 1890-1 exceeded 4 per cent again.

The building and metals industries suggest that by 1890 a number of skilled workers had been experiencing employment insecurity from 1885 or so. There are indications of similar experiences elsewhere. For example, bakers' unemployment rose dramatically from 1888-90, when some were only working one or two nights per week. Union officials also claimed that there were 'a great many' unemployed tailoresses in

73. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 31 October 1883; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, p.1441.
75. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 19 September 1885, 19 July 1886; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1445-8; Buckley, op.cit., p.50; Linge, op.cit., p.473; Hargreaves, op.cit., p.30.
76. J.R. Talbot (President of Ironmoulders' Society), RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.214; Tinsmiths' submission to ibid., Literary Appendix, p.139; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 20 May, 18 November, 2 December 1887, 21 September 1888, 28 June 1889, 11 and 25 July, and 21 December 1890; Buckley, op.cit., pp.50, 316; Hargreaves, op.cit., p.30.
77. Bakers' Minutes, 13 October 1888, 25 May 1889, February-June 1890 passim, especially 15 and 22 May 1890. By 28 August 1890 over 200, or 50 per cent, of union members were unemployed.
In Sydney as a whole during 1885 unemployment was 'considerable',
according to Coghlan. In 1886, at the 'beginning' of the recession,
a deputation to the Premier claimed to represent 2500-3000 unemployed.
A total of 5000 were employed on relief works at various times during
that year, although some of these were rural unemployed who had
migrated to Sydney. This figure rose to 5,700 the following year.
Although many of these were recent immigrants, the rapid turnover of
those employed on relief works suggests a much higher figure for total
unemployment. Relief workers were predominantly unskilled (at this
time a slowing down in public works accounted for a large proportion)
but Coghlan noted 'some acute distress' amongst many of the skilled.
Because relief wages were below their union rates, tradesmen would
usually not work on relief, and their union benefits supported this stand.

In 1888, despite a coal strike, the end of the land boom, and public
works cutbacks, the unemployed's presence in Sydney decreased, as a
number took advantage of a rural labour shortage. But in 1889 the situation
deteriorated, as indicated by the almost threefold increase, of over 40,000
in the number of charity recipients. Although some improvement in

78. P. Strong, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.259.
    provides a running account of unemployment in the late 1880s, upon
    which the following two paragraphs are largely based.
80. A number of official returns at this time indicate significant
    unemployment: Relief of the Poor of Sydney during Centennial Week,
    VPLANSW, 1887-8, vol.8, p.1031; The Unemployed, ibid., 1888-9,
    vol.3, p.1003; Return of Applicants for Work, May 1887 to June 1888,
    ibid., 1888-9, vol.3, p.1085. Returns from the Casual Labour Board,
    which was established in 1886 to oversee relief works, are more
    important, but like the earlier sources, only provide a partial guide
to the extent of unemployment: Return on Operation of Casual Labour
    Bureau, VPLANSW, 1887-8, vol.8, p.1027; Operations of Casual Labour
    Board, ibid., 1888-9, vol.3, pp.1077-89; Reports on Operations of the
    Casual Labour Board, ibid., pp.1091-1271. Statistically, none of these
    returns are very helpful, for they give no indication of the length of
time each applicant relied on relief work, and little indication of
    skilled unemployment. The Board was not intended to provide widespread
    relief for the unemployed, and was itself condemned by a Parliamentary
    enquiry for irregularities in its operations, Reports on Operations
    of the Casual Labour Board, including Report of the Inquiry Board,
    ibid., 1889, vol.6, pp.575-1275.
employment occurred during 1889-90, the 1890 Maritime Strike was defeated largely because of unemployment. Table 15 below shows that whilst total unemployment reached 4.66 per cent in 1891, it reached 7.58 per cent in the Census Industrial class.

All of these indications are prior to the full onset of depression in 1892. 14,000 registered with the new Government Labour Bureau in the first six months of that year. 7,000 remained registered in mid-1893, but this represented only a small proportion of total unemployment. Despite migration to the country, and the Labour Bureau's unpopularity, it had 13,575 new registrations in 1894, a 10 per cent increase on the previous year. In early 1895, the unions claimed that there were 26,000 unemployed in Sydney.

Although unrepresentative, union records bear testimony to the impact of unemployment. A TLC survey at the end of 1893 saw the Tailors' claim 30 per cent unemployment; the United Furniture Trade, 100 unemployed; the Ironworkers' Assistants', 300; the Quarrymen, 150; and the Shipwrights', 300, out of a total membership of 400, of whom only 25 were financial. Short-time was common for many who remained employed. The Tobacco Workers were all working half-time from 1892, the tiny Saddlers' Union had fifty unemployed, but sixty working half-time in 1893; and the Bookbinders' also had a number of members...
Glassmakers worked one week in three in 1895. All unions suffered, skilled and unskilled alike. After the collapse of the building industry, the Stonemasons' had fifty members fully employed, one hundred partially employed, and five hundred totally unemployed, in 1895. Unemployment amongst metal tradesmen, already over 9 per cent in 1891, rose to 15 per cent over 1892-5. In some sections of the trade it was higher.

Improvements in employment from 1896 were gradual and uneven. In 1896, 2,500, and in 1897, 1,600 men remained on relief work, and charitable institutions were still very busy. Conditions continued to improve over 1898-1900. Building partially revived from 1898, and engineering unemployment fell from 7 to 1.4 per cent, as the industry expanded to take advantage of the new West Australian market for mining machinery and the Government's commitment to preference for local

82. TLC Minutes, 25 February, 28 April, and 29 December 1892; 12, 19 and 26 October 1893; 22 February, 7 April 1894; 20 June 1895; 30 January 1896. Individual unions' records also bear testimony to the impact of unemployment, e.g.: Coopers' Minutes, 16 December 1892; Bakers' Minutes, 19 April and 29 October 1892, 25 March 1893; and for printers, Hagan, Printers and Politics, pp.112ff. The absence of many union records for the 1890s is itself an indication of the unions' dire straits. Fear of revealing their weakness prevented some, such as the Ironmoulders' and Coopers', from responding to the TLC's 1893 survey.

83. Amalgamated Glass Bottle Makers' Trade Protection Society of Australia, Sydney Branch (hereafter Glassmakers' Society), Minutes, 15 July 1895.

84. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 10 July and 9 October 1893, 15 January 1894, 11 February 1895. Also TLC Minutes, 9 July 1892 (builders' labourers), and 15 September 1892 (plasterers).

85. TLC Minutes, 29 December 1892 (boilermakers), and 22 February 1894 (ASE); Ti.smiths' Minutes, 2 September, and 14 October 1892, 9 June 1893, 12 January 1894, 8 February and 26 July 1895; Buckley, op.cit., p.316.

Table 15
New South Wales Unemployment in the Census Years of 1891 and 1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Total Workforce</th>
<th>% Industrial Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1891</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>7.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>6.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Persons</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>7.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1901</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>7.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Persons</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>6.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Calculated from New South Wales Census 1891, pp.282-3, 292-3, and 1901, pp.650-1.

However, the official estimate of only 400 unemployed in Sydney in 1898 seems grossly over-optimistic, given the influx from drought-stricken rural areas, and the persistence of a total unemployment rate in 1901 of 4.52 per cent. As Table 15 shows, unemployment in the Census Industrial class remained markedly higher, at 6.83 per cent.

Table 15 also reveals one aspect of the unevenness of unemployment. In both 1891 and 1901 the female rate of unemployment was significantly lower than for males. Although neither year is indicative of the worst depression years, this suggests employers' preference for cheap female labour and the downwards pressure on all wages, in a context of over-supply of unskilled labour.

Even though the skilled benefitted most from economic improvement, some remained in distress. Half of the Bakers' Union's membership in

1898, one fifth of the Printers' Union in 1898 (100), and one third each of the Stonemasons' and Tinsmiths' in 1900, remained unemployed. Table 16 lists some of the other principal areas of unemployment in 1901. As Coghlan commented: 'the period closed without a complete return of that prosperity which the community had been for seven or eight years patiently expecting'.

The severity of unemployment during the 1890s depression comes as no surprise. More surprising, however, was the extent of employment insecurity prior to then, in the prosperous boom years of the 1880s. This suggests that the traditional optimistic account of that period requires severe qualification. An examination of working and living conditions of that period confirms this need.

Working Conditions

The number of working hours per day, the physical work environment, and industrial health and safety are the three major indicators of the state of working conditions. Historians have commonly identified the allegedly widespread occurrence of the eight hour day, or forty-eight hour week, as an indicator of prosperity in the 1880s. However,
### Table 16

**Significant Unemployed Occupations at 1901 Census**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No. Unemployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakers</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brickmakers</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinsmiths</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Founders</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmiths</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonemasons</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricklayers</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasterers</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers and Gasfitters</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Labourers</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory Engineers</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarrymen</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic servants</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressmakers</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


much of their evidence is based upon Victoria, where unions had achieved the great 'boon' to the working class earlier and more extensively than in New South Wales, and upon contemporary sources such as the New South Wales Immigration Office or the socialist, W.G. Higgs, who had their own reasons for exaggerating the incidence of the eight hour day.

In New South Wales during the 1880s ten or twelve hour working days were common, five and a half to six days per week (55 to 72 hours per week). Tradesmen were more likely to enjoy a nine to ten hour day.

But the eight hour 'boon' was mainly limited to the building and metal

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96. Australian Information for British Journalists, VPLANSW, 1883-4, vol.6, p.104.

97. AW, 21 February 1891.
trades, and was not necessarily uniform there. Shipwrights also gained it in 1872, gas stokers and sawmillers in the early 1880s, and lithographers, confectioners and farriers claimed it by 1890. In the furniture trade only an unrepresentative few worked less than 9-10 hours. Curriers (1881), butchers (1883), coopers, coachmakers and tinsmiths (1884) were involved in disputes over eight hours, but their outcome is uncertain. Only the coachmakers and curriers are likely to have established eight hours throughout their trade. Frequently, country tradesmen also gained the 'boon' later than their city brothers.

The large number of disputes over the issue indicated that it was a primary union objective, but also, that employers strongly resisted it. Bakers in 1884, for example, were unsuccessful in shortening hours, and in 1886 brickmakers were only successful after a long strike. Success was often only temporary.


100. Fry, op. cit., p.242.

101. Sydney Lithographic Society, NSW Journeymen Confectioners' Society, NSW Journeymen Farriers' Association, submissions to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, pp.146, 148, 151. However, these were tiny unions of 60-90 members.

102. RCIRA, 1891, no.10, pp.1111-8.

103. Fry, op. cit., pp.242, 244, implies that they were successful, but the following sources imply that butchers and coopers were not: Hargreaves, op. cit., p.26; Norton, op. cit., p.45; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 31 August and 8 November 1883; Stonemasons' Central Committee Minutes, 15 November 1883. See below for tinsmiths.


105. Norton, op. cit., pp.70, 113. Like butchers, bakers commonly worked a 70-90 hour week.
and recessions provided employers with an opportunity to increase hours. For example, mill-owners repudiated a recent eight hour agreement in 1890, and saddlers, who had claimed an eight hour day in 1882, were working 50 to 54 hours per week by 1891. After a long strike in 1890, the Bakers' finally imposed an eight hour day in some shops, but by 1893 they were struggling to maintain it.

The achievement of eight hours was often at the expense of reduced wages, loss of meal breaks, or an intensification of work, although wages could be increased by overtime payments. In piecework, shorter hours always implied reduced earnings. For tinsmiths, coopers, saddlers and printers, the co-existence of piece and time payment militated against the consolidation of eight hours throughout the trade. In the large newspaper offices, where piecework predominated, the most skilled printers usually only worked eight hours, and it became the union standard. But in the small jobbing offices, less skilled labour worked long hours to earn a living from low rates. Some had gained an eight hour day in these offices, for time-payment was more common there, but many worked twelve hours with few breaks.

Unions, therefore, were often unrealistic when they claimed an

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106 Fry, op.cit., p.243.
107 SMH, 5 October 1882; Saddlers' submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.151.
108 Bakers' Minutes, 4, 2, 18 and 24 February, 1, 4 and 11 March, 15 May, 28 August, 13 and 27 September 1890; 9 January, 8 October, and 26 November 1892; 24 and 29 April 1893.
109 For example, Bakers' Minutes, 4 March 1890, 3 May and 8 October 1892; Buckley, op.cit., pp.48-9; Fry, op.cit., pp.259-60, 287.
110 Tinsmiths' Minutes, 8 June 1883, 25 January, and 21 November 1884, 15 January and 4 June 1886; Coopers' Minutes, 1887-91 passim; Saddlers' submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.151. Even in the iron trades, a nine hour day went with piecework at Hagan and Fisher, 'Piecework and Some of Its Consequences', op.cit., pp.26, 33; Hagan, Printers and Politics, pp.39-40, 44.
eight hour day standard. Only some of their members might have achieved it,\textsuperscript{112} or, as in the case of the printers, union membership only represented an elite minority of trade employees.\textsuperscript{113} The annual Eight Hour Day became a symbol of union virility, evoking recognition from fellow workers.\textsuperscript{114} Consequently, participation in the annual Eight Hours Demonstration was a poor guide to its incidence. Some unions participated before gaining the 'boon', as a statement of intention, and commitment to a major labour principle.\textsuperscript{115}

Apart from butchers and bakers, hours were longest among unskilled factory and outworkers, although variations were considerable. Factory workers were better off than outworkers; some even had a forty-eight hour week. For example, factory bootmakers had the shortest, most regular hours in 1891, but piecework tended to make an eight-hour day purely nominal even there. Fifty-five or sixty hour weeks were more common, especially in tobacco factories, clothing, and laundries.

Estimates provided by employers for government inspectors were not

\textsuperscript{112} The Tinsmiths', for example, claimed this standard in their submission to the RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.139. The Bakers' and Coopers' also claimed the eight hours 'standard'. The Confectioners' claim was also dubious, for their campaign for the 'boon' had only begun in early 1890, and despite support from the Master Confectioners, at least one major firm resisted union demands. Confectioners' Minutes, 8 January, 20 April, 11 and 25 June, 1890, 18 March 1891.

\textsuperscript{113} Hagan, Printers and Politics, pp.60-1, 75. The NSW Typographical Association Rules and Scale of Charges, 1885, claimed the eight hours standard. Note that during the Bakers' drive for eight hours there was a high proportion of non-unionists in the trade.

\textsuperscript{114} Note SMH description of procession, 2 October 1883. See Norton, \textit{op.cit.}, p.47 for a brief history of the Eight Hour Day, and an example of the mystique surrounding it. All unions expended considerable money and effort on their elaborate banners for Eight Hour Day processions, and at the head of the Stonemasons' Amended Rules, 1891, in Rules and Contribution Book, was emblazoned 'inaugurated the Eight Hours System of Labour in NSW, October, 1855'. The Government proclaimed Eight Hour Day a public holiday in 1885.

\textsuperscript{115} Cf. Fry, \textit{op.cit.}, p.242, who implies that participation in the procession was an indication of achievement.
always reliable, and the practice of 'finishing' work at home often
disguised the length of hours. Overtime could be expected by employers,
and needed by employees to make up 'average' wages. Higher overtime
rates were almost unknown in factories. In some laundries 15 to 20
hours overtime (on top of 60) were required in peak seasons. Low rates
forced outworkers to work anything up to 80 hours per week. Some male
workers were claimed to work long hours for only a few days, to relax
for the rest of the week, but lower wage rates denied women this
opportunity. 116

Conditions generally were poor in factories, and often atrocious
in outwork, where many 'assistants' might be crammed into tiny rooms.
Tradesmen employed indoors experienced conditions similar to unskilled
factory hands. Despite the lack of provision of shelter against the
weather, building tradesmen at least had the advantage of working in
the open.

As early as 1876, a Government inquiry noted the long hours and
unhealthy conditions for workers (including children under 15) in
Sydney's clothing and tobacco factories. Incredibly, the Report
considered that overcrowding in factories was relieved by outwork, but
did not investigate outwork conditions. 117 In the eighties, poor
ventilation, lack of sanitation and poor safety measures characterized
the growing factory system. 'Good' employers, usually with a larger
capital outlay on plant, were a small minority. Their incidence was

116. BTCRA, 1891, nos. 1-10, pp.1083, 1088, 1092, 1094, 1097, 1100, 1102,
1105, 1109, 1111, 1114-6; Gordon, op. cit., pp.101-9; AV, 17, 21, 24,
and 31 January 1891; TLC Minutes, 30 November and 7 December 1893;
P. Strong (Tailors') and Miss Powell (Tailoresses'), RRCs, 1891,
117. Progress Report from the Select Committee on Employment of Children,
VPLANSW, 1875-6, vol.6, pp.871-931; and Report from the Select
Committee on the Employment of Children, ibid., 1876-7, vol.5,
pp.861-8.
greater in bootmaking, where 12 out of 60 factories were of 'admirable' standard, but generally these and tobacco establishments were only marginally better than the worst clothing factories. By 1891 only one clothing factory had been built as such in Sydney. The remainder were converted flour mills, lofts, sheds or roofed-in passages. 118

Workplace accidents were poorly recorded. Nevertheless, it seems that loss of fingers, amputations and fractures were everyday occurrences. Lift failures and steam boiler explosions became more serious causes of injury as the use of machinery increased. Without compensation, even minor, temporary disability represented severe loss of income. The unskilled were more likely to be using dangerous machinery, and juveniles were disproportionately accident-prone. But accidents had a high incidence in a range of industries, especially outdoors: brickmaking, building, saw-milling, brewing, engineering, printing, in stores, and in quarries. 119

Disease caused by working conditions is also difficult to quantify. But long hours, working from an early age in cramped conditions, sitting or standing with little variation of posture or movement, undoubtedly

118. Sources as in n.116; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.2090-5; and Hagan, Printers and Politics, p.27, re poor conditions in printing. Also, Dr. Renwick's speech in support of a Factory Act, NSW Parliamentary Debates (hereafter NSWPDe), 1885-6, vol.21, p.3403.

took its toll of factory and outworkers' health and longevity. Lack of ventilation in steamy laundries, and the fibre-filled air of clothing workshops must have caused lung complaints, from which stonemasons and quarrymen would also have suffered. 'Painters' colic', 'grocers' itch', the 'watchmaker's necrosis' and lead poisoning in the japanning trade, were only some of the hazards of particular occupations. The connection between disease and working conditions could not be clear unless statistical evidence was available. But usually these complaints were accepted as part of the everyday life of working people, and hence received little official attention. Although some doctors were 'discovering' industrial disease by the 1880s, more widespread interest was not aroused until the early years of the twentieth century.

Workshop conditions did not alter greatly in the 1890s, even after enactment of the 1896 Factory Act. Despite confirmation by the Government investigations of 1891 of very poor working conditions in the low wage clothing industry, official acknowledgement of this 'sweating' was very limited. Unlike other economic sectors which, historians have argued, were able to avoid excessive exploitation of labour because British capital inflow largely removed reliance on domestic capital formation, some sections of Australian manufacturing displayed the worst characteristics of overseas industrialization.

120. Cannon, op.cit., pp.269, 276, 279. For comments on laundries and clothing workshops, see n.116 above.
121. Even then, it was largely directed towards women and the attempt to preserve 'natural' biological functions and morality. See Report of the Royal Commission into the Conditions of Female and Juvenile Labour, including Minutes of Evidence, NSW Parliamentary Papers, 1911-12, vol.2.
122. This is discussed in Chapter 8.
123. For example: RGIRA, 1891, no.1 (Tailoring), p.1084; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.1835-6, 2088-9, 2097.
Clothing was the clearest example, and the industry with the highest growth rate in the 1890s. To a large extent, the viability of expansion in such a labour-intensive industry relied upon 'sweating'.

**Living Conditions**

An evaluation of colonial prosperity in the 1880s requires some examination of living conditions, although these are not the major concern of this thesis. Aggregate statistics show a high New South Wales per capita consumption of meat, butter, cheese, tea and beer in comparison with overseas. But although many contemporaries, and some historians, have described New South Wales as a 'workingman's paradise', partly on the basis of these figures, little is known about actual consumption patterns for these items amongst different sections of the population. More substantial evidence does exist, however, for the physical conditions of housing.

Butlin and Fry record that the average number of rooms, and building materials, in houses significantly improved in the 1870s and 1880s, particularly in Sydney, and that the level of working class home ownership was comparatively high. Many contemporaries agreed with this purely aggregate picture, but not always without reservation. R. Twopeny observed that: 'of the sanitary arrangements it is almost

125. This was virtually acknowledged officially in dressmaking and whitework, RCIRA, 1891, nos.2 and 4, pp.1089, 1095.
126. See Coghlan, The Seven Colonies of Australasia, 1892, pp.325ff.
impossible to speak too strongly; they are almost universally objectionable and disgusting'. Improvements were only gradually introduced. Sydney commenced building an underground sewerage system in 1880, but ten years later less than a quarter of its houses were connected. A higher proportion of houses were connected in the inner-city, where the working class was largely concentrated, but landlords frequently refused to connect their houses. Detailed official documentation, from the 1850s to 1900, revealed appalling overcrowding, lack of sanitation and decrepit housing for inner-city workers. Notwithstanding aggregate statistics, inner-city working class housing density rose in the 1880s and 1890s, as increased demand for inner-city commercial sites forced increasing numbers of inhabitants into a smaller number of dwellings. Yet, as Kelly observes, 'much of the housing of the 1850s, 1860s and 70s was sub-standard when new'. By the 1880s, when it was subjected to increased overcrowding it 'had become positively geriatric'. In the inner-city, therefore, working class living conditions actually declined in the 1880s and 1890s.

Nor did the spread of new suburban working class housing during the 1880s building boom necessarily mean improved housing. Despite some improvement in construction techniques early in the eighties, legal restraints on developers remained minimal. Twopeny considered that 'the majority of houses are built by speculators; which means that they are very badly built, run up in a tremendous hurry, constructed of the

cheapest and nastiest materials, with thin walls...'. He felt that the situation in this regard was worse than in London. It is likely that jerry-building became worse late in the eighties, as the building boom subsided and developers, especially the large numbers of small owner-builders, sought to reduce costs. Terrace-housing, which was particularly susceptible to jerry-building and slum conditions, spread rapidly in the late 1880s, predominantly, but not solely, on high-priced inner-city sites. Although detached cottages predominated in the new western and southern areas of working class settlement which followed the railway line, building standards were not necessarily higher. A high proportion of weatherboard houses appeared in these areas.

Furthermore, from the late 1880s, as a result of the rural economic crisis, the 'noxious' factory trades of tanning, boiling down, and wool scouring, rapidly expanded in the working class residential areas of Botany, Waterloo and Alexandria, and spread into new suburbs.

Declining living conditions were confirmed by death statistics. New South Wales statistics as a whole 'were low compared with Britain, but the death rate of Sydney was not dissimilar to that of many British cities, and in some years exceeded the rates for places like London and Birmingham'. Infant mortality rates in New South Wales increased in

133. op.cit., pp.33-4.
the 1880s, when the British trend was downwards, and in Sydney infant mortality exceeded that of London throughout the 1880s. Typhoid, tuberculosis, diptheria and scarlet fever were common diseases. In 1900 over one hundred inner-city residents died in an outbreak of bubonic plague. Only then, after years of public agitation over public health and housing, did the Government begin to act. 138

As living conditions declined, rents rose more quickly and steadily, especially in the inner-city, than other prices in the 1870s and 1880s, as far as one can tell. Rent fell by 25 per cent in the 1890s, but the inability of many to meet rent payments was suggested by the fact that many premises remained unoccupied in 1901. Such 'excess capacity', 139 qualifies the statistical picture of spacious housing.

Butlin argues that high rent, together with comparatively cheap construction costs, provided a strong inducement for home ownership. 140 But his optimism concerning home ownership is based primarily on cheaper country, rather than urban, construction costs, and on wage statistics which, we have already seen, inflated actual earnings. Owner-occupiers did account for a relatively high proportion of those who purchased cheaper homes, and working class membership of building societies in the 1880s was high. 141 But Jackson's study of inner-city and southern working class suburbs, based on rate assessments, reveals a low level of home ownership. 142 Membership of building societies may be a more accurate indication of aspirations than achievements. Evidence exists

138. See sources in n.130.
for declining owner-building, workers' heavy arrears in house repayments, and of foreclosures, even in the 1880s. Interest rates were high, loans were relatively short-term, and jerry-building possibly increased maintenance costs. In the 1890s it is likely that foreclosures on aspiring working class home owners increased.

It seems therefore, that the working class prosperity of the 1880s was more limited than many contemporaries and historians have realized, that it was declining from at least the mid-1880s, and that it was unevenly distributed. Tradesmen reaped more benefit from the boom than the unskilled, but they were a minority of the working class. Nor were they immune from any of the qualifications to prosperity already sketched. A number of the industrial changes of the 1880s were also eroding the skilled workers' more privileged position.

The Aristocracy of Labour, Social Mobility, and Productive Reorganization

Historians have commonly referred to tradesmen at this time as an 'aristocracy of labour'. In doing so, they have borrowed a concept used by British historians to distinguish a skilled group of the workforce, characterized by:

1. a high level and regularity of earnings;
2. relatively good prospects of social security, largely as a result of these earnings;

3) relatively favourable conditions of work, including 'respectful' treatment by foremen and masters, and a high degree of job control;
4) close relations, and some merging with, social strata immediately above them, the 'lower middle class', and a clear distinction between them and social strata immediately below, the unskilled, or 'labourers';
5) generally higher living standards than the rest of the workforce;
6) and good prospects for social advancement.

On most of these points, this chapter so far suggests the existence of a colonial labour aristocracy, concentrated especially in the building and metal trades. Some aspects of points 3 and 4 are examined in Chapter 5. But insofar as they relate to material conditions, most of the points listed may be generally applied to the skilled urban workforce. Tradesmen in traditional crafts had been particularly conscious of their distinction from 'labourers' and 'inferior men'. In the language of the 1880s, 'artisans' and 'labourers' were still often regarded as separate classes, as the following quotation from a Printers' Union official illustrates:

We deal with gentlemen as a rule...Our master printers are men that we know, and they are not so far away from us as employers are with unskilled labour.  

Hence, the 'working classes' remained common parlance in the 1880s.  

Nevertheless, this picture of a colonial labour aristocracy must be carefully qualified. Throughout the examination of urban working and living conditions in this chapter, the qualifications to the thesis

of colonial prosperity apply to the skilled as well as the unskilled, even if not quite equally. Indentured apprenticeship, by which the skilled controlled labour supply and maintained their monopoly on skill, was never as rigidly enforced as in Britain. Because of skilled labour shortages, the 'practical man', or 'bush carpenter', was common-place in some sectors of industry, especially in the country. Furthermore, colonial apprenticeships were often shorter than in Britain. As far as it is possible to estimate, unskilled colonial wages ranged from 50-80 per cent of skilled wages, but the unskilleds' relative position improved in the 1880s, whereas in Britain the proportion was only about 40-50 per cent, and declined from 1840-90. However, the last of the distinguishing characteristics of the labour aristocracy, social mobility, remains to be examined in detail.

Upward social mobility was part of normal expectations in the crafts for the low level of capitalization required to compete in Australian industry allowed many to become small employers. Engineers' movement into positions as small employers, managers or foremen has been well-documented. Printers also had opportunities to become small employers during the boom in their industry. As an indication of the frequency of social mobility in these trades, employers could retain union membership, although ASE foremen usually resigned from

148. For example, a number of tradesmen appear as residents in the Government investigations into Sydney slums, Fisher, 'An Accumulation of Misery', op.cit., p.25.
149. For example, evidence of J. Farr, a Redfern builder, Select Committee on Assisted Immigration, VPLANSW, 1880-1, vol.3, p.765. See Fry, op.cit., p.381.
151. See Fry. op.cit., p.372.
union office, and printing employers could only be honorary members. Social mobility was also common in the building trades, where very little capital was required, although employers did not as easily retain union membership there.

Whilst the opportunities for advancement were greatest in those trades, they also existed in others. For example, the Coopers' Union's President resigned in 1888 to become a foreman for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. Although a prominent journeyman baker was forced to resign from the union in 1890 upon becoming an employer, the Bakers' allowed managers to retain their membership. In fact, foremen members were used by the Bakers' to enforce union standards. Amongst the Tinsmiths', a number of union members resigned in the 1880s to establish businesses. Most left with the union's best wishes.

Frequently, these new businesses were established in the country, where industrial activity generally was on a smaller scale. The country had further advantages in that effective union jurisdiction rarely extended that far. Small employers were usually the worst from the unions' point of view. With benefits of scale denied by small

154. Sydney Typographical Society, Rules, 1853; NSW Typographical Association, Rules and Scales of Charges, 1881 and 1889; Barrier Typographical Society, Rules, 1899; NSW Pressmen and Stereotypers' Union no.1, Constitution and By-Laws, 1888 (honorary members cannot vote); Buckley, op.cit., pp.95-7.
155. F. Dixon, resigned from the Stonemasons' Presidency in 1870 because he was establishing his own business. Stonemasons' Central Committee Minutes, 22 July 1870. Foremen could not hold executive positions in the Stonemasons' union, Amended Rules, 1891, in Rules and Contribution Book. Master plumbers could remain members of their union but had to withdraw from meetings during discussion of industrial disputes, Operative Plumbers' Trade Society, Rules, 1862.
156. Coopers' Committee Minutes, 6 March 1888.
157. Bakers' Minutes, 31 May 1890; Committee Minutes, 8 December 1888, 4 March 1890, 17 January 1891.
158. Tinsmiths' Minutes, 17 August and 23 October 1885, 21 May 1886, 12 August 1887, 7 March 1890.
159. For example, Dixon in n.155.
plant expenditure, costs could only be reduced for competition by skimping on wages and conditions. In fact, the relative ease with which tradesmen could establish their own businesses often led to suicidal competition.\textsuperscript{160}

These tendencies indicate the insecurity of small masters. Their numbers multiplied in economic upswings, but during recessions they were often forced back into the paid workforce. This trend is evident in the economic downturn from 1887, when the number of establishments declined, although the workforce continued to increase.\textsuperscript{161} For printers, for example, the industry's expansion in the 1870s and 1880s was accompanied by a rash of failures amongst new newspapers and journals, particularly the small specialist ones.\textsuperscript{162} At any time, the small domestic market imposed limitations on the number of tradesmen who could establish independent businesses.

During the 1890s depression, the establishment of small businesses by tradesmen continued, particularly after economic improvements from 1896.\textsuperscript{163} But the persistent attempts to establish small proprietorships in the 1890s could be taken as an index of economic insecurity. For example, a number of men who set-up as master coopers in the depression were unemployed carpenters.\textsuperscript{164} Unemployed tradesmen had nothing to lose by establishing their own business. But the insecurity of

\textsuperscript{160} C. Jones (Printers' Secretary), RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.247; Hagon, Printers and Politics, pp.59ff.
\textsuperscript{161} See Table 4 above.
\textsuperscript{162} Jones, \textit{loc.cit.} Also note a failed businessman rejoining the Tinsmiths', Tinsmiths' Minutes, 18 June 1886; and similarly with the ASE, Lynch, \textit{loc.cit.}; Buckley, \textit{op.cit.}, p.22.
\textsuperscript{163} For example: Tinsmiths' Minutes, 7 February 1896 (one), 18 February 1898 (two); Bakers' Minutes, 25 February 1893 (President resigns to become a bread carter); Coopers' Minutes, 9 February and 12 October 1894.
\textsuperscript{164} Coopers' Minutes, 13 April 1894.
independence increased. TLC Secretary, J. Cochran, returned to the executive within a year, after resigning to start a country business. 165 In printing, the number of small proprietorships increased markedly in the initial stages of the depression, but the total value of production also dropped markedly, and the number of enterprises later declined. 166 An upsurge in the total number of manufacturing establishments in 1894 (of 26.7 per cent) was due largely to the formation of small businesses. Most disappeared in the next year, whilst the labour force increased. The number of workshops fluctuated between 1893-8, but the manufacturing workforce rose consistently from 1894, and the total value of plant dropped consistently from 1894-6, and then rose consistently from 1897. This seems to indicate persistent attempts, and failure, to establish small independent businesses, until 1897-8, when the overall scale of enterprise, and employment, began to increase more markedly. 167

In the 1890s, a severely contracted market limited opportunities for social mobility, but the loss of opportunity was more permanent than that. Increased capital requirements were partly responsible. For example, in building, the trend in the late 1880s to large-scale developers who bought large blocks for larger terrace rows, placed low-capital builders at a competitive disadvantage. 168 In brickmaking and baking the spread of costly new labour-saving machinery in the 1880s was forcing small proprietors out of business, although in brickmaking a new skilled worker, the 'setter', was created by the new process. 169 In 1891, according to J.R. Talbot, of the Ironmoulders' 165. He was originally a wharf-labourer. TLC Minutes, 26 August 1897, 11 August 1898. 166. Hagan, Printers and Politics, p.100. 167. See Table 4 above; Tables 3, 5 in Appendix 1; Statistical Register, 1901, p.625. 168. Butlin, Investment, pp.272-3; Kelly, 'Estate Sub-division in Paddington', op.cit., pp.63ff. 169. The SMH 31 July 1885, announced a demonstration of the new baking machinery. See Fisher, 'Life and Work in Sydney', pp.159, 164-5.
Society, the growing importance of machinery had militated against the establishment of viable independent businesses in the metal trades. Similar developments in printing in the 1880s also made it difficult for small proprietors to compete with firms employing labour saving machinery. Despite the depression, the overall value of factory plant and machinery, and the use of power, increased by over 30 per cent in the 1890s.

More generally, technological change was responsible for the erosion of the skilled workers' privileged position in a number of trades. Shipwrights, for example, 'once a very rich and powerful body', suffered considerable unemployment in the second half of the eighties as a smaller number of larger iron-hulled ships slowly began to replace small, wooden-hulled vessels. The Stonemasons' never recovered from the depression because of the replacement of stone by concrete and brick from the late 1880s, especially in public building. In the tobacco industry mechanization was also important in reducing labour costs, partly by replacement of skilled by less skilled labour.

In the metal trades technological change was slower. British technological developments took years to reach Australia, and in any case, did not greatly advance until 1890-1914. Australian employers favoured tariff protection rather than modernization, as a means of off-setting relatively high labour costs. Nevertheless, automatic or semi-automatic machine operators were employed in significant numbers from the 1880s. As lower-paid, semi-skilled workers, they were

170. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.214.
171. These developments are discussed on the following page.
174. To their horror, even the new Trades Hall used concrete in its facings, Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 7 August 1891.
175. RCIRA, 1891, no.8, p.1105.
potentially a threat to traditional ASE members. The use of a greater variety of metals in moulding at the end of the century meant an expansion of opportunities, but if traditional ironmoulders could not adapt to new processes, they suffered. During the late 1890s further technological changes allowed cost savings in engineering.

In can production in the mid-1880s mechanization made much more of an impact. New machinery had largely been responsible for the tinsmiths' recurring unemployment in the late 1880s. It displaced up to half the labour force in some workshops, replacing tinsmiths with cheaper, less skilled labour. Work-loads were also intensified by the machinery.

The printing industry was technologically similar to metals in the 1880s. Unlike Britain and the United States, technological progress remained negligible in Australian printing during the 1880s. still set by hand, and the introduction of some machinery to accelerate production actually increased demand for hand compositors. British publication of popular literature also denied local benefits of scale and specialization. However, with the development of bigger and faster presses, a whole new semi-skilled workforce of machine operators and maintainers had emerged in the metropolitan dailies, as well as a greatly expanded workforce in bookbinding and 'finishing' (including a number of women). These workers were not a direct threat to the compositors' position, but the industry's elite did not so completely control the workforce any more. Female compositors in some areas had also entered the trade at cheaper rates. The effect

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179. Tinsmiths' Minutes, 19 January, 26 March, 3 and 30 December 1886; 24 and 26 August 1887; Committee Minutes, 13 April 1886.
180. Hagan, Printers and Politics, pp.61, 82, 119, 204.
of the linotype machine was more spectacular. It eliminated over two-thirds of newspaper compositors over 1894-1900. Casual employment opportunities in smaller jobbing offices decreased as their labour supply was enlarged, and these offices themselves began introducing the linotype. Wages, in any case, were much lower. Tramping the countryside, gold-digging and emigration were the responses of many compositors, whereas those who remained employed became even further entrenched as an elite possessing 'the finer skills'. The new machine men themselves assumed an important strategic position in the industry. 181

However, the impact of machinery alone can be exaggerated for, as we noticed earlier, labour intensity continued to characterize Australian manufacturing. Labour-intensity, small-scale enterprise and reliance on protection were encouraged after 1901 with the national tariff. Such technological development as did occur in the 1880s was part of a wider productive re-organization in many trades, whereby skills were sub-divided into a number of specialized semi or unskilled job functions.

Productive re-organization was important in reducing labour costs, but this in itself was largely dependent on two other effects of productive re-organization: the breaking of the skilled workers' (limited) job control, in terms of speed and intensity of work; and the removal of the craftsmen's strategic monopoly of skill, so that labour became less scarce, more mobile, and more easily replaced in the event of industrial disputes. 182 Machinery facilitated this process, but in many cases was not necessary for it to occur. To the extent

181. ibid., pp.100ff., 113-4, 117.
182. See H. Braverman, Labour and Monopoly Capital, New York, 1974, for a theoretical exposition of this process in industrialization, which does, however, tend to overemphasize the role of machinery. See also Carter L. Goodrich, 'The Frontier of Control', in T. Clarke and L. Clements, Trade Unions Under Capitalism, Glasgow, 1977, pp.229-35.
that re-organization could occur without the introduction of machinery, labour intensity remained very attractive for employers.

In bootmaking, for example, the break-down of a skilled trade into a hierarchy of specialized job functions had begun prior to the eighties. But in that decade the process was extended and consolidated to the extent that a bootmaker, as such, no longer existed. The co-existence of day and piece rates of pay, and of male and female labour, added further dimensions to the hierarchy. 183 The boot trade had one of the most strongly developed hierarchies of this kind, but similar processes were at work elsewhere. In building, some crafts such as joinery and plastering, were being gradually transferred to factories in the 1880s. 184 The clothing industry was specialized in three overlapping dimensions: on a trade basis, according to the type of garment produced, by labour function within some trades, and sexually. The production process in clothing had always been well-suited to sub-division, but in the 1880s this was extended further. 185 In the upholstery section of the furniture trade, work had been 'minutely sub-divided' so that girls could replace relatively skilled needlewomen. In another section of the trade (mattress-making) changes in product design allowed the replacement of every five workers by a 'rough carpenter' and a boy guiding machinery. 186

Productive re-organization facilitated piecework, although in printing unskilled time-workers replaced skilled piece-workers. Building was already suitable for piecework, which spread in that industry during

183. RCIRA, 1891, no.9, pp.1109-10.
186. RCIRA, 1891, no.10, pp.1113-4.
the 1890s. For engineers and tinsmiths, piecework usually accompanied
the introduction of machinery. Piece-payment also spread further
in the furniture trade in the 1890s.

The simultaneous increase of juvenile labour in unskilled
manufacturing and the breakdown of the apprenticeship system were closely
linked with productive re-organization. Although apprenticeship had
never been as strictly enforced in Australia as in Britain, some form
of indentures, whereby a juvenile was bound to an employer for a fixed
number of years in order to acquire trade skills, was practiced in many
Australian trades. In many cases, tradesmen's sons were apprenticed.

Some trades also recruited most, or all, of their labour force from
skilled British immigrants. Most of the building trades, for example,
relied on immigrants.

The skilled metal trades had practiced one of the strongest systems
of apprenticeship, although many engineers were also British immigrants.
A seven year apprenticeship had been usual in most of these trades, and the
nature of the work prevented employment of a large number of youths.
Nevertheless, a shorter apprenticeship, of five years, became more
common in the 1880s, often without indentures. By 1891 the ASE was

187. T. Bavister (Bricklayers' Union), RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence,
p.218; Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 18 August 1890;
Macarthy, op.cit., p.104.
For Tinsmiths', see n.179 above.
189. RCIRA, 1891, no.10; Macarthy, op.cit., p.104. Piecework was also
extended into the skilled sections of the boot trade in the 1880s
and 1890s, RCIRA, no.9; Boot Trade Union Minutes, 29 May 1900.
190. For example: Coopers' Minutes, 3 October 1893; Confectioners'
submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.148; Fry, op.cit.,
pp.374, 376.
191. J. Grant (Stonemasons' Secretary), RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence,
p.244. There was also a high proportion of immigrants amongst
engineers, K. Buckley, 'Emigration and the Engineers, 1851-87',
Labour History, no.15, November 1968, pp.36-7.
complaining about an increased number of boys, especially in Government railway workshops. Many unapprenticed youths were employed in coach building, and few were apprenticed in the rolling mills. 192

Elsewhere, the breakdown in apprenticeship was further advanced. Prior to the spread of factory and outwork, tailoring had required a seven year apprenticeship. This had been reduced to three years, and by the 1880s 'apprentices' were rarely indentured at all. Similarly, in bootmaking, a four year apprenticeship had disappeared by the 1880s. 193 In the furniture, cigar-making and sheet metal trades, unapprenticed boys were introduced to the workforce as a direct result of productive re-organization. 194 Although apprenticeship was not so formal in bricklaying, that union also complained of an increase of 'improvers' during the eighties, as did the Confectioners' in the 1890s. 195 In printing, the original apprenticeship term of seven years had not been enforced for some time by the 1880s. Metropolitan dailies usually apprenticed youths for five years. But in country newspapers and jobbing offices, where there had been a large increase in juvenile labour during the 1870s and 1880s, there was little pretence of apprenticeship. Cheap typesetting had expanded in those twenty years, and the work in these small offices was usually so plain that youths could quickly

193. RCIRA, 1891, nos.l and 9, and no.8 on the tobacco industry for similar developments; Boot Trade Union submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.149; Fry, op.cit., pp.376, 382-5.
194. RCIRA, 1891, no.10, p.1114; Fry, op.cit., p.374; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 28 March 1883, 26 March and 9 April 1886, 20 April 1894.
195. Bavister, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.216-7; Grant (Stonemasons'), ibid., p.244; P. Dow (President, Master Builders' Association), ibid., p.225; Confectioners' Minutes, 1 August 1890, 18 August and 20 November 1891.
acquire the necessary skills. 196

Unapprenticed juvenile labour usually never learned the full range of skills associated with a trade. Instead they remained in one specialized area. Even with apprentices, unions claimed that it was becoming increasingly common for employers to only teach a section of the trade. Consequently, even as adults, they could never hope to gain a full tradesman's wages, and like factory 'improvers', were forced to rely on casual work. In industries such as printing and metals, a clear hierarchical distinction existed between them, and the fully skilled working in the 'quality' section of the trade. But as the productive process was sub-divided, they became a threat to the old craft. 197

Productive re-organization, together with the fact that it was the low-skill, low-wage industries of food and clothing which experienced the greatest growth in employment from the 1890s, meant that skills displaced by technological change were not compensated by a corresponding growth of new skills in other areas of manufacturing. It seems likely, therefore, that, as the position of important sections of the skilled workforce declined in the 1880s, because of economic downturn and productive re-organization, the contracting differential between skilled and unskilled wages in the 1880s did not indicate an improvement for the unskilled. This chapter suggests that the level of material prosperity in the 1880s, for skilled or unskilled urban workers, warrants a good deal less optimism than many contemporaries or historians have believed.

197. Talbot, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.215; Bavister, ibid., pp.216-7; Grant, ibid., p.244. Even in clothing there remained a distinction between machine work and 'first class hand work', Strong, ibid., p.261; RCIRA, 1891, nos.1-4, 7, pp.1081, 1087, 1092, 1094, 1102. See also Hagan, Printers and Politics, pp.39-40.
The limited, and, indeed, declining, level of prosperity experienced by urban workers, particularly the skilled, was an important motivation for their major contribution to labour organization and ideology, which are examined in Parts II and III. Limited and declining opportunities for these workers gave them much in common with the workers more traditionally associated with labour radicalism, the miners and shearmen, who are examined in Chapter 2.
CHAPTER 2

THE PRIMARY SECTOR
Primary industry still occupied the largest proportion of the colonial population in 1901, and from the 1880s it underwent widespread changes which were of significance for society as a whole. Table 1 shows its significance as an occupier of breadwinners. It continued to surpass its nearest rival in this regard, the Census Industrial class, even though its proportion of breadwinners steadily declined in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Primary industry contained some of the largest employers of labour in the colony, mainly in mining. It also bred some of the colony's largest trade unions, which played a major role in the organized labour movement.

Yet, as Table 2 shows, the primary sector's employment of wage earners was lower than that of the Census Industrial class, and proportionally, the lowest of any Census class. This was partly due to the primary sector's comparatively high capital intensity. But more importantly, primary industry had the highest proportion of employers and unpaid assistants (usually relatives) of any Census class, and a larger than average proportion of self-employed. This largely reflected the importance of small farmers, or smallholders, in primary industry. The 'unlocking of the lands' to this group had been a central political issue since the 1850s. In the 1890s it remained so, even, indeed especially, for the Labor Party.

These observations indicate the wide diversity of primary industry, which is also evident in Tables 1 and 2. It included the two extremes

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1. For full details, comparing all Census classes, see Appendix 1, Table 2.
2. For full details, comparing all Census classes, see Appendix 1, Table 1.
Table 1

Breadwinners in Primary Industry by Census, 1881-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1881 Males</th>
<th>1881 Females</th>
<th>1881 Persons</th>
<th>1891 Males</th>
<th>1891 Females</th>
<th>1891 Persons</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>1901 Females</th>
<th>1901 Persons</th>
<th>% Increase 1891-1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>60365</td>
<td>6520</td>
<td>66885</td>
<td>66483</td>
<td>7022</td>
<td>73505</td>
<td>75884</td>
<td>1735</td>
<td>77619</td>
<td>5.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral</td>
<td>17333</td>
<td>2385</td>
<td>19718</td>
<td>27212</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>27546</td>
<td>31312</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>31907</td>
<td>15.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy farming</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4996</td>
<td>4758</td>
<td>9754</td>
<td>15850</td>
<td>2285</td>
<td>18135</td>
<td>85.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capture, preservation, destruction wild animals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>10.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>1238</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1241</td>
<td>56.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1653</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1653</td>
<td>2431</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2432</td>
<td>47.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water conservation/supply</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>2170</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2172</td>
<td>14.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines, quarries, minerals</td>
<td>18393</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18393</td>
<td>30936</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30937</td>
<td>38378</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38382</td>
<td>24.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Primary</td>
<td>96091</td>
<td>8905</td>
<td>104996</td>
<td>134846</td>
<td>12118</td>
<td>146964</td>
<td>168212</td>
<td>4642</td>
<td>172854</td>
<td>17.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Primary class as proportion of all breadwinners 36.58% 16.20% 33.06% 35.27% 13.54% 31.14% 37.26% 4.09% 30.60% -0.54

N.B. The number of women in agriculture and dairying varies with the time of year. In 1901 an extra 2500 women were employed in agriculture and 10,000 in dairying, and partly in domestic duties. The majority of these were farmers' relatives. These were mostly counted as breadwinners prior to 1901, but not in that year. This accounts for the unusually large drop in the Primary proportion of female breadwinners in 1901.

Source: New South Wales Census, 1901, pp.630, 635.
Table 2

Percentage of Breadwinners in Grades of Occupation in Primary Industry, by Census, 1891-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1891</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1901</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>Unpaid Assistants</td>
<td>Wage-earners</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>Unpaid Assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Primary Class</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1891, pp.293, 299; and 1901, pp.688-9.
of industrial structure: small farming and large concentrations of labour in mining. The pastoral and mining industries were much more capital intensive than other primary industries and contained the largest employers, but agriculture occupied more breadwinners. Mining also contained a very small number of employers compared with other primary industries, even though it also contained a large proportion of self-employed, indicating large numbers of prospectors and 'fossickers'. Finally, the economic circumstances of the different primary industries followed quite different paths. For all these reasons it is necessary to examine the different industries separately.

Some diversification of resources occurred within the primary sector from 1880-1900. Wheat, dairy, beef and agricultural production expanded in the 1880s, aided by railway development and Government irrigation and research. Wheat acreage also increased. Despite the effects of drought, expansion in these areas continued for most of the 1890s, largely at the expense of the pastoral industry, which declined. Agricultural yields per acre declined somewhat in the late 1890s, but overall productivity increased, largely because of new technology which allowed extension of cultivation into previously unsuitable regions. By 1900 agricultural production represented a higher proportion of Gross Domestic Product than pastoral production. In employment terms, dairy-farming and mining showed the most important growth from 1881-1900, as shown in Table 1.

However, since trade unionism only appeared in the pastoral and mining industries, these are the major concerns of this thesis. The

3. Statistical Register, 1901, pp.495, 526-33, 572, 577-84, 593, 600, 605.
5. For a general description of rural diversification, see Fitzpatrick, British Empire in Australia, pp.144-57, 169-77.
pastoral industry overlapped with agriculture and beef production because of the common practice of mixed farming and grazing. As rural industry diversified in the 1890s, this phenomenon became more prevalent, especially amongst smallholders. Their relationship to the means of production was ambiguous because they frequently took temporary work as wage-earners. But this group played a major role in the industrial and political organization of labour. Consequently, this chapter examines the position of smallholders within the context of the pastoral industry, which was a major area of their activity. Mining is sub-divided into two quite distinct industries: coal and precious metals.

Smallholders and the Pastoral Industry

Prior to the 1880s, the wool industry was highly profitable and highly productive because of high prices from overseas buyers in relation to land and labour costs. Consequently, the industry expanded very rapidly, with New South Wales sheep numbers growing from 6,000,000 to 61,800,000 from 1860-91.  

During the 1880s, however, the industry became crisis-ridden, and profitability dropped markedly. Falling wool prices were largely responsible, but there were a number of other contributors, fundamental to the industry's structure.

High investment in fencing and station facilities reduced costs and compensated for rural labour shortages. But some of this investment

7. Except where otherwise indicated, the following general account of the wool industry's fortunes, over the next two pages or so, is drawn largely from Butlin, Investment, pp.71-84, 90-1, 111-80, 433-41; A. Barnard, The Australian Wool Market, 1840-1900, Melbourne, 1958, pp.3-18, 33-8, 96-103, 181-206; and evidence from pastoralists, particularly A. Wilson in the RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.49. The Statistical Register provides a record of wool price movements.
8. These sometimes included station 'factories' and tradesmen. See Bean, On the Wool Track, p.54; and R.H.B. Kearns, Broken Hill, 1883-93, Broken Hill, 1975, p.44.
entered non-productive, 'homestead assets', and the industry's rising organic composition of capital led to declining returns. Pastoral expansion in the 1880s also relied mainly on utilization of less efficient land in the west. With lower sheep numbers per acre, dry western lands required higher capital outlay on water facilities, and on fencing larger holdings, transport costs rose, and there was a greater collection of dust in fleeces. Despite yield improvements on eastern stations, overall productivity declined, as lambing rates fell, average stock life increased and the general quality of sheep deteriorated.

Increased stocking rates and a rabbit plague exacerbated pasture deterioration caused by drought in the 1880s. Pastures then became susceptible to soil erosion, particularly because of land clearance, which the Lands Department, for a time, prescribed as a conditional 'improvement' for some pastoral leases. The combination of these factors had devastating effect in the great drought from 1894-1902. Whole areas of the west became a desert of hard dirt or clay, which did not recover for decades. Rabbit-proof fencing also became a significant cost factor in some areas.

Land legislation in 1884 increased pastoral costs further in the Western Division of New South Wales. Half the squatter's leasehold became liable to resumption for small homestead lessees. The remaining half, secured under a twenty-one year lease, was subject to increased rent, which, by 1890, had become an important item of pastoral costs.

and Government revenue. Previously, rents had been very low, but they were now assessed primarily on the land's sheep-carrying capacity. This was not always related intimately to the number of sheep actually held, and considerable discretion was left to the officials doing the appraisement. But to the extent that rent was calculated according to the number of sheep carried, squatters were affected in their least efficient area, for increased production had largely been achieved by increased sheep numbers, rather than by increased fleece sizes.

Apart from overestimating pastoral profitability, the failure of Government policy to settle large numbers of small landholders left large areas of resumed land unlet. It then became over-run with scrub, rabbits, and kangaroos. Some devaluation of rent in 1895, together with recognition of improvements effected on resumed land, and the allowance of continued occupation until land was actually needed for closer settlement, failed to fundamentally alter the situation. 11

By then, in any case, it was too late. The major benefactors would have been the banks and pastoral finance companies, which had been the major source of pastoral capitalization and expansion. During the eighties pastoral mortgages had increased threefold. 12 Local store-keepers also carried smaller short-term loans, often conditional upon them acting as wool or wheat buying agents, which, it was claimed, allowed them to fleece farmers. 13 By 1890, with the general crisis in

13. The Shearers' Union emphasized this role of the store-keepers'. For example: The Hummer (organ of the Shearers' Wagga Wagga Branch), 16 February 1892. See also 'Steele Rudd' (A.H. Davis), On Our Selection, Sydney, 1899, p.13.
the industry, many pastoralists could not keep abreast of mortgage repayments. Loans were increasingly directed towards tiding pastoralists over this situation, with the ever-optimistic assumptions that prices would recover and droughts break. Because of the highly illiquid nature of pastoral assets, and their frequent over-valuation, the banks and pastoral companies could not easily extricate themselves from this situation, although they had become more cautious in the late 1880s.

The crisis came to a head in 1891-2 as wool prices slumped drastically and the bursting of the urban land boom subjected the financial institutions themselves to severe strains. Falling stock prices, at the same time, also affected pastoralists' income, and the valuations of leasehold stations, which were based on stock values. Previously rare, foreclosures on defaulting mortgagers became common after 1892, together with bank supervision of many stations in an effort to reduce costs. Although large Western landowners were most vulnerable, the entire pastoral industry, including small and large landholders alike, was affected by the 1890s crisis.

Small landholders, however, had other problems peculiar to themselves. From the time of Robertson's 1861 Land Act, legislation achieved little success in breaking up squatters' large holdings and cheaply settling large numbers of smallholders, or 'selectors', or even in encouraging agriculture. Smallholders were concentrated on poor land in the Eastern Division of the colony, and in the Riverina, New England and Monaro districts of the Central Division, where most practised small grazing and mixed farming. But even in these limited

pockets, smallholders' acreage was far less significant than their
numbers. Nor do aggregate numbers reveal the rapid turnover in land
ownership amongst selectors. This occurred partly because of the
squatters' practice of 'dummying', whereby their pliable agents
selected land in their own names, to quickly 'sell' it to the squatters,
who, consequently, took much of the land intended for genuine small
selectors. As a result, 'turmoil and warfare' characterized squatter/
selector relations in much of the Central Division. But, more generally,
independence on the land was insecure, despite high hopes and the
apparent ease of selection. This was particularly the case as
selectors were squeezed further west into more marginal land. By the
1880s, the majority of original selectors had withdrawn from the
Riverina and Monaro districts. In the Riverina especially, the growth
of a medium-sized grazier class was also often at the expense of the
small selector. Smallholders' numbers continued to decline in the
1880s, notwithstanding legislation intended to aid closer settlement,
in 1884 and 1889. Drought, rabbits, and the pastoral crisis all
affected smallholders severely. 'Created to be crushed' was Robert's
epitaph for them. 15

Not until 1895 did legislation effectively increase eastern
smallholdings and the acreage under cultivation. With urban

15. For example, see G.J. Butland (ed.), Letters from Grenfell. From
a NSW Goldminer in the 1870s, (T. Cottome), Sydney, 1971, pp.77-81.
16. Roberts, op.cit., p.310. This paragraph is based upon ibid.,
pp.236-46, 309-10; Reeves, op.cit., vol.1, pp.231-9, 245-8;
Fitzpatrick, British Empire in Australia, pp.137-44; Buxton, op.cit.,
Chapter 6, and pp.288-9, who records moderate prosperity for those
selectors, and medium-sized graziers, who did remain in the
Riverina. The Statistical Register, 1901, pp.433 and 436 provides
details of the various Land Acts and the extent of 'conditional
purchases' under which most selectors gained land in the 1880s.
unemployment and pastoral decline, a number of schemes for closer settlement arose, some receiving Government support. This aided rural diversification, but did not amount to a large scale move towards closer settlement. Most of the 1890s land settlement schemes failed, and much of the diversification derived from a shift to mixed farming by existing landowners, large and small. ¹⁷

The selectors' position remained far from secure. As cultivation spread into less fertile areas of lower rainfall, yields also declined and crops were less reliable. The long 1890s drought exacerbated this trend, at a time when prices for many agricultural products were falling. From this time share farming, whereby the farmer paid a proportion of receipts to an absentee landlord, became more common. Although rental for 'homestead selection' after 1894 was light, banks would not accept this leasehold property as security because it was legislatively immune from foreclosure. ¹⁸ Lack of capital had always been a problem for smallholders, especially because financiers preferred large landholders, who could gain loans for freehold purchases at the expense of selectors' conditional purchases of land. But in the 1890s lack of capital became a bigger drawback for smallholders as

¹⁷. The Statistical Register, 1901, pp.434, 438, 440, 459 and 466-7, provides details and statistics on 'homestead selection', and the area under cultivation. See Roberts, op.cit., pp.310-2, 350-9; Reeves, op.cit., vol.1, pp.299-320. See Chapter 11 for a discussion of the political importance of these developments.

¹⁸. The Statistical Register, 1901, p.495, records the value of crops in the late 1890s. See B.D. Graham, The Formation of the Australian Country Parties, Canberra 1966, pp.11-13, 31-8, 59-62. 'Steele Rudd', op.cit., passim also provides a literary account of selector hardship at this time.
farming became more mechanized.\textsuperscript{19}

Because of its capital intensity, the pastoral industry required only a relatively small workforce. Fencing had eliminated shepherds and only required a small number of boundary riders, although large stations employed their own bush carpenters, carters, wool scourers, and others. Rural labour shortages had occurred mainly in construction of station facilities, which required large inputs of unskilled labour.\textsuperscript{20}

Nevertheless, for a few months of the year, shearing required a much larger workforce, of at least 25,000 in the 1880s.\textsuperscript{21} Most shearing occurred between August and December, beginning early in the west and moving coastwards and southward to Victoria. A smaller movement also occurred between Queensland and north-west New South Wales. Seasonal uniformity and workforce migration were determined partly by climate, but also offered advantages in optimising availability of labour and

\textsuperscript{19} The Hummer, 6 February 1892, gives a lurid account of the difficulties selectors experienced without some original capital. The level of capitalization in agriculture and dairying was slightly exaggerated in official statistics because of their inclusion of central treatment factories, for dairy products, for example, which expanded rapidly in the 1890s at the expense of farm treatment of produce. This indicates an increase in cash outlays for farmers, and the ready availability of labour for new and larger treatment works also indicates selectors' habit of working outside the farm for wages. Statistical Register, 1901, p.605. The Report and Minutes of Evidence of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of Crown Tenants in the Western Division of NSW, also contains considerable evidence of selectors' hardship in the 1890s, VPLAN\textsuperscript{NSW}, 1901, vol.4.

\textsuperscript{20} Butlin, Investment, pp.58, 75, 107, 305; Bean, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.25-6, 29-30, 54-5.

\textsuperscript{21} Because it was a part-time occupation, no reliable statistics exist for the size of the shearing workforce. However, at its peak, the Shearers' Union claimed a membership of 25,000, and as I show in Chapter 5, there is good reason to believe that the union exaggerated its coverage of the workforce. Amalgamated Shearers' Union. Report of 6th Annual Conference, Sydney, February 1892, p.12. Hereafter the union is referred to as the ASU, or AWU after 1894, when it amalgamated with the General Labourers' Union (GLU) to become the Australian Workers' Union. Annual Reports are abbreviated to AR.
The shearing workforce, unskilled 'rouseabouts' or shed hands, as well as shearers, was varied in origin. Bushworkers, who may have been boundary riders, cattle drovers, fencers, well-sinkers, or prospectors at other times of the year, metal miners, urban folk, and New Zealanders, all 'came out' for the season. However, the largest single group of shearers was small landholders and their sons earning extra cash to keep the homestead going. Their exact numbers are difficult to determine statistically, but more impressionistic evidence overwhelmingly suggests their importance in the workforce.

Evidence for the following description of the nature of the labour force and the shearing season is derived mainly from the evidence of the five sheepowners, and the AWU President, W.G. Spence, in RRCS, 1891; the union officials' evidence (Spence and McDonnell) in the Transcript of Proceedings before the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, June 1907, A. Wilke versus Pastoralists' Federal Council and others, pp.45-66, and 143-5; ASU Annual Conference Reports; the conference reports and reports of the proceedings of the Pastoralists' Federal Council, 1890-1900; and J.A. Merritt, 'W.G. Spence and the 1890 Maritime Strike', Historical Studies, vol.15, No.60, April 1973, pp.594-6.

Union membership lists provide an indication. For example: ASU Moree Branch, List of Members Financial for 1892; AWU Wagga Wagga Branch Members' Roll, 1895.

Apart from scattered references in sources cited in notes 22-3 and 25, there are a number of indications of the importance of miners in the shearing workforce. The ASU and the Amalgamated Miners' Association had reciprocal transfer arrangements for members, AWU New and Amended Rules, Albury, 1895; AWU 12th AR, Sydney, February 1898, p.7. Some shearsers requested more mining news in the AWU journal, The Worker, AWU 14th AR, Sydney, January 1900, p.7. Spence and Temple, the two main organizers of the ASU, both had mining backgrounds in Victoria. See also W.G. Spence, Australia's Awakening, Thirty Years in the Life of an Australian Agitator, Sydney, 1909, pp.46-8; and W.C. Spence, History of the AWU, Sydney, (1911) 1961, pp.16, 33.

Union officials and pastoralists could agree on this point: evidence of W. Abbott, T. Halloran, A. Wilson and W. Spence, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.27, 48-9, 61, 65-7, 77 especially. Also Worker, 23 December 1893; General Labourers' Union, Report of First Annual Conference, February 1891, Adelaide, p.14 (hereafter GLU 1st AR, etc.). ASU By Laws, 1890-1 are also suggestive of the importance of smallholders. Members were allowed to shear with a sheepowner or his sons in their own shed, without the latter being union members, provided they had not shorn in other sheds.
estimates that selectors and their sons comprised 35 per cent of the total workforce, but their presence was concentrated in particular areas. They shore most sheep in the east, and a high proportion in the New South Wales Central Division. In the west, itinerant, landless bushworkers predominated, as they did in Queensland, where the opportunity for smallholding was as limited as in western New South Wales. But, literary evidence also suggests that many of these men aspired to independence on the land. By the end of the century, the image of the hard-working, hard-playing shearer who gambled or drank his season's pay in one sitting, was being replaced by an image of a sober, well-read man who saved the bulk of his pay to send back to the homestead, or towards a block of his own land.

Together with urban shearers, selectors were largely responsible for the 'out-in' workforce migration, corresponding with the season's movement. Victorians beginning in the Riverina, and eastern selectors in the Central Division, shore their way home. Some selectors simply shore when the season reached their district. Far-western itinerants, on the other hand, tended to move north and south across the Queensland border region, rather than eastwards.

Despite occasional brief shortages, a labour supply for shearing was generally plentiful, aided by the seasonal nature of so many

26. Merritt, op.cit., p.595. Cf. Turner, op.cit., p.4, where pastoral workers were described as a 'rural proletariat' who 'were not in the main aspiring landowners'.
28. The GLU Membership Book, 1891, shows a higher proportion of labourers from Victoria than NSW. Most witnesses at the Strikes Commission mention a small number of itinerants who shore for up to nine months of the year, by starting in the warmer areas, in Queensland and western NSW. Note complaints of Queensland Shearers' Union (QSU) that the ASU poached on their membership in south-west Queensland, ASU 4th AR, Bourke, February 1890, pp.22-4. See Bean, op.cit., pp.81-4 re shearers' travelling and the growing popularity of bicycles at the turn of the century.
colonial occupations. But labour supply did vary geographically. Fewer shearsers travelled to the west, where pastoralists could least afford delays because of heavy indebtedness, transport arrangements and the possibility of grass seeds impregnating fleeces. The Shearers' Union was usually able to capitalize on this weakness, gaining its demands quickly under threat of strike action.

High piece rates encouraged labour supply. A good shearer could reputedly earn in a week 'three to four times as much as an urban or rural labourer'. After an unsuccessful attempt by pastoralists to reduce rates in 1885-6, standard wage rates had generally risen by over 14 per cent from 1886, largely because of the new Shearers' Union. Wages then became a significant factor in rising pastoral costs, at the same time as wool prices were falling. This largely explains the growing resistance to the union from the late 1880s, culminating in the formation of the Pastoralists' Union and the large confrontations of 1890, 1891 and 1894. In New South Wales, pastoralists began to

29. For example, W. Abbott in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.67; Merritt, op.cit., p.597.
31. Spence, Wilson and Halloran in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.27, 50, 78; Spence, History of the AWU, pp.11, 15, 106, and Australia's Awakening, pp.43, 47; F.S. Piggin, 'NSW Pastoralists and the Strikes of 1890 and 1891', Historical Studies, vol.14, no.56, April 1971, pp.547-8. The figure of 14 per cent is based upon a rise in standard shearing rates from 17/6 to 31 per 100 sheep shorn.
organize industrially well before most other employers. Direct bank supervision in the 1890s was also partly responsible for a tougher stand over wages, and in 1894, standard shearing rates were reduced by 10 per cent, but often more in practice. Non-shearing shed-hands, who were responsible for collecting the fleeces, sweeping and general labouring, received much less than shearers: no more than 25/- per week, plus rations, for most of the 1890s, which was less than many of the urban unskilled.

The shearer could demand relatively high wage rates because he was a highly skilled worker, the 'aristocrat' of the bushworkers. To become a competent shearer, although no formal apprenticeship existed, normally required at least two seasons' experience, often gained by 'barrowing', the practice whereby 'learners' were allowed to shea during the experienced shearers' 'smoko' break. The shearer

32. Piggin, op.cit., pp.549-60, rejects this interpretation of the motives of pastoralists in forming the Pastoralists' Union (PU), but his argument is unconvincing, as Merritt shows on some points, op.cit., p.606. Generally, Piggin underestimates the hard-line pastoralists' presence in the early PU, overestimates the membership of the PU, and overestimates the importance of the moderates as sheep owners. His own evidence suggests that he is not entirely unaware of these qualifications to his argument. Apart from Merritt, these observations are based upon an analysis of the Pastoralists' Union of NSW List of Members, 23 March 1890; the Secretary's Report in the Pastoralists' Union of NSW Annual Report, 10 July 1891; and the PU's annual listing of members and their sheep holdings, in the ANU Archives of Business and Labour (E256/1625). The large number of strikes conducted by the ASU over wages, prior to 1890, certainly suggests strong resistance from pastoralists. Spence in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.27; History of the AWU, pp.11, 20-33; and Australia's Awakening, p.55.

33. Standard wage rates for shearers and shed hands are listed after 1894 in the AWU Rules of 1894 and 1901; AWU 10th AR, Ballarat, February 1896, p.9; and Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.1, p.2021; and for the whole period in Spence, History of the AWU, pp.11, 15, 21, 36, 64, 77, 80-1, 90-3.

34. Idriess, op.cit., p.196. Cf. Turner, op.cit., p.4, who claims that the shearing workforce was homogeneous.

was responsible for keeping his shears in good working order, and required a high degree of co-ordination to simultaneously watch sheep in the pen, control the sheep being shorn, and make a 'clean sweep' with his shears. Inexperienced men were immediately identifiable by the 'tomahawking' of the fleece, and the regularity of the call for 'tar', which was applied to cuts on the sheep's body. For these reasons, the pastoralist was usually reluctant to allow inexperienced men to shear. Some were tempted to do so during the depression, when the rural labour market was flooded with urban unemployed and they sought to reduce wages, but it was mainly the unskilled shed hands who suffered from this influx.

However, as shearers' bargaining power forced up wages in the late 1880s, shearing machinery became attractive to pastoralists whose overall financial position deteriorated. A steam-driven shearing machine was successfully introduced at Walgett in 1885, and by 1888 a number of larger western stations were installing the equipment. These events coincided with the formation of the Shearers' Union, in 1886, and its drive to increase wages. Machine shearing was quicker than blade shearing, if only marginally less arduous. Consequently, lower rates were paid for machine shearing. But its main advantages for pastoralists were the safe removal of more wool from the sheep.

36. H. Lowcock (station manager) in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.82; Bean, op.cit., pp.91-2.
37. Even union membership reflected this, with a higher proportion of urban addresses than previously in the GLU Membership Book, 1893; Annual Report of General Labourers' Union, Bourke Branch, 31 December 1893, p.1. (Branch reports are hereafter cited as, for example, ASU, or GLU, or AWU Bourke Branch AR). Because fewer skills were required, there was always a higher proportion of urban men amongst the shed hands, according to Wilson, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.48.
and the possibility of using less skilled labour. Fears associated with the consequences for the Shearers' Union may have motivated the claim by W.G. Spence, its President, that the introduction of machinery in industry generally had 'greatly reduced employment', and if its benefits were spread evenly throughout society, would only require a two hour working day. But shearing machinery was only slowly adopted by pastoralists in the late 1880s and 1890s, because of shortage of capital and because of fears that the early machinery would rapidly become obsolete. It was not introduced to most sheds until the early 1900s. The Shearers' Union did not bother to attempt to standardise separate wage rates for machine shearing until 1894, although, at that stage, it is not likely to have been very successful given the union's weakness.

Even prior to the 1890s depression, shearing rates were not always as high as the union standard, especially in the east and the Riverina. By 1889 the union had gained agreements with employers in the Bourke, Riverina and Young and Lachlan districts, but not in Victoria or the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales. Even in those areas with

38. Abbott and Wilson, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.49, 62. See Blainey, A Land Half Won, p.267; Buxton, op.cit., p.251; R.H.B. Kearns, Broken Hill, 1894-1914, Broken Hill, 1974, p.17. The Daily Telegraph, September 1888 (Mitchell Library Press Cuttings, vol.136), has a letter from a pastoralist listing the number of NSW sheds which had fitted machinery. Because of labour shortages, western sheds seem to have been the quickest to introduce machinery.

39. Lecture at Bourke, 1889, reprinted in ASU 4th AR, Bourke, February 1890, p.61; and ibid., pp.4-5.

40. Abbott and Wilson, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.49, 62. Fitzpatrick's claim that the machinery had become 'the vogue' by 1890 is misleading, British Empire in Australia, p.136.

41. Bean, op.cit., pp.89-90, 90.

42. AWU Rules, 1894. The ASU did, however, mention some special terms for machine sheds, concerning rest breaks etc., By-Laws, 1890-1.
agreements, not all employers were included. Indeed, a majority of sheep were probably owned by those pastoralists who remained outside union agreements, and union coverage of the industry was probably exaggerated. The union's weakness in this regard, the prospect of endless skirmishes with a large number of employers, clear signs of growing resistance to the union, and of the weakness of pastoralist groups who accepted agreements with the union, lay behind Spence's machinations, leading up to the 1890 Maritime Strike. By gaining the Wharf Labourers' Union's agreement to refuse to load non-union wool in Sydney, the pastoralists could be by-passed.

A number of unpredictable variables could also reduce earnings. High earnings required continuity of employment for the entire season. But competition for jobs in large stations was intense, it was difficult to ensure a continuous run of sheds, and unpaid travelling time between sheds had to be allowed for, particularly in the west. A £1 deposit booked a stand in a shed, but was forfeited for non-appearance. Whilst it was practical to book the first stand,

43. President's Report, General Meeting of Amalgamated Shearers' Union, Ballarat, 16 April 1887, pp.4-5; ASU 3rd AR, Wagga Wagga, February 1889, pp.7-10, 22-5, 48-9; ASU 4th AR, February 1890, pp.7-9, 17-20; The Shearers' Record (early journal of the ASU), June-August 1888; Spence, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.27-9, 33-4; Spence, History of the AWU, pp.24-33.

44. See Merritt, op.cit., pp.597-601. Piggin, loc.cit., does not appreciate these points in his assessment. See also sources in n.43 above. The union officials' reports to the 1889 and 1890 conferences were a good deal more optimistic than the situation warranted. Spence's later account in his History of the AWU is more realistic.

45. These are summarized by Justice O'Connor in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court in 1907, and quoted in Spence, History of the AWU, pp.11-4; by Spence, Australia's Awakening, pp.43, 46; and by Merritt, op.cit., pp.595-6. Also the evidence in RRCS 1891, cited in n.22.

46. Note the fourth object of the General Rules of the ASU of Australasia, Ballarat, 1887: 'to make such arrangements as will prevent undue loss of time travelling to sheds...'.

47. The union enforced the £1 deposit in the 1890s, ASU 7th AR, Melbourne, February 1893, p.23. It also forbade engagement of more than one shed before shearing commenced, on the grounds of 'justice' to the employer, and that fellow workers could be denied work if some booked large numbers of stands in advance. ASU Rules, 1887, no.47; AWU Rules, 1894-1900, no.119 (in 1894). On the same grounds, of sharing work, Wagga Branch, however, opposed the £1 deposit, ASU Wagga 6th AR.
the possibility of delays made it risky to book ahead, for a slow flow of sheep, slow colleagues, or rain were all possibilities beyond the shearer's control, and severe fines under the Master and Servants' Act prevented him from leaving a shed before the end of shearing. Wet sheep were slower and more difficult to shear, and were believed to poison the shearer and induce rheumatism. Consequently, the men refused to handle wet sheep, even though it meant loss of earnings whilst they waited for them to dry. Large sheep, or sand impregnated fleeces, common in the west, also reduced earnings. 48

Shearers normally paid for their own rations and hired their own cook, whose expertise was usually quite basic. 49 Rations became more expensive the further one moved west. Exorbitant prices could be charged for rations by employers who operated the only store in isolated areas. Sometimes, bushworkers were paid in store credit instead of cash, forcing the men to spend their pay on exorbitantly priced goods ('truck'). Alternatively, cheques were sometimes made payable in large towns, hundreds of miles from the station. 50

48. See Bean, op.cit., pp.92-5; Austin, op.cit., p.55. Employers were also reluctant to shear wet sheep because of risk of fleece damage, or fire by combustion once the wool was baled, Abbott, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.65. However, dismissals over wet sheep frequently occurred, for example, ASU Scone AR, 31 December 1893; ASU Moree AR, 31 December 1894; ASU Scone AR, 31 December 1895. Note the union concern to develop a portable testing device for wetness, ASU 8th AR, Sydney, February 1894, p.38 ('Austral Wet Wool Tester'); AWU 9th AR, Albury, February 1895, pp.18, 21.

49. See Bean, op.cit., pp.85-8. The union imposed strict conditions on cooks, who were expected to enrol: Rules 1887, no.44; By-Laws, 1890-2; Rules, 1894, no.7, and 1900-1, nos.124-5; ASU 7th AR, February 1893, p.30. It was also claimed that shed hands wages of 7/- per day were reduced to 3/6 when the cost of living was accounted for, even though their rations were provided by pastoralists, GLU 5th AR, Sydney, February 1894, p.8.

50. ASU General Meeting, 16 April 1887, p.4; ASU 10th AR, February 1896, p.9; Spence, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.28; and History of the AWU, pp.10-11; AW, 3 July 1897; Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, pp.206-7. In isolated areas it was difficult to distinguish between 'truck' and high prices due to transport costs. Employers denied the practice of 'truck', RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.62, 78; but the fact that its abolition was a specific object of the union suggests its prevalence, ASU Rules 1887 (Objects, rules 61-2) and AWU Rules, 1894 (Object 4). See Bean, op.cit., pp.54-5.
Severe fines could be imposed as a result of incompetent work. Work agreements, especially prior to the establishment of the union, allowed a pastoralist to refuse payment for sheep considered improperly shorn. Reputedly, some squatters refused payment for a whole penful of sheep if they found one badly shorn. Whilst Spence, the union President, may have exaggerated the incidence of these tactics, the work agreements gave employers almost unlimited power to act in this way. These agreements gave the pastoralist full control of hours, smoko-breaks, and general shed discipline. Disciplinary provisions not only included fines for late starts, but also fines or discharge for swearing, drinking or 'rowdiness'. Payment was withheld until completion of shearing, which gave the pastoralist an advantage in imposing discipline. Discharge for incompetence, drunkenness or other breaches of agreement, meant that payment for all previously shorn sheep could be forfeited, even if competently done. Discharge before completion of shearing at the very least meant a reduced rate for all previously shorn sheep. Spence claimed that it was common practice to reduce wages by fabricating a reason for discharge immediately prior to the completion of shearing.51

Under all these circumstances, despite high potential earnings, the shearer could often be struggling to meet the cost of his rations as he travelled from shed to shed. Yet there were few other material compensations. Apart from the imposition of rigid work-discipline, the work itself was extremely arduous. Rheumatic complaints were common after years of standing, bent over sheep on the floor, for long hours in low, iron-roofed sheds where the temperature soared in summer.52

51. Spence, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.28; History of the AWU, pp.5-10; ASU General Meeting, 16 April 1887; AWU 10th AR, February 1896, p.9. Abbott, Wilson and R. Webb (also a grazier) denied this 'radding' of course, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.49, 64, 101.
52. See Bean, op.cit., pp.89-92, 96-100; Spence, _Australia's Awakening_, p.145; Idriess, op.cit., p.196.
Shearers' accommodation was often atrocious. Some pastoralists provided model conditions, but the cost of providing good accommodation which would only be used for a few weeks of the year, did not encourage investment in this area. Spence gave a vivid description of shearers' huts as crudely built, poorly ventilated and weatherproofed, with board beds, earth floors, unseparated cooking and sleeping quarters, poor drainage, and inadequate sanitary provision. Union reports record a number of instances of sickness and death from typhoid, and even poisoning from rabbit baits or sheep dip, directly attributable to working and living conditions. Boundary riders' quarters were no better, despite the more permanent nature of their job, but they generally lived alone or with a partner. It was the presence of large numbers of shearers and shed hands which intensified poor conditions. These conditions did not begin to improve until the 1900s. Under the circumstances of the 1890s, there was little incentive for their improvement.

It is clear from this description of the pastoral industry that the lot of the pastoral worker and smallholder was never a particularly prosperous one. But from the late 1880s, the situation was one of declining fortunes, for pastoralist, smallholder and pastoral worker alike, and consequently, of pressure towards intensified conflict between these groups. Falling wool prices, rising costs, and therefore, falling profitability and inability to meet increased financial commitments, together with drought, highlighted the structural crisis

54. ASU General Meeting, 16 April 1887, p.4. AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1898, pp.6-8; AWU 14th AR, January 1900, pp.5, 22-5; Spence, *History of the AWU*, p.26. In 1900 the Pastoralists' Union President, Dangar, was, surprisingly, recommended as one of the few who provided good accommodation.
of the pastoral industry and placed enormous downwards pressures on the wages and conditions which pastoralists could offer labour. Simultaneously, pastoral labour sought improved wages and conditions. In the 1890s these actually declined. Unemployment hit shearsers hard, and shed hands even harder because, as pastoralists reduced costs, they were more easily dispensed with than shearsers. Although their fears were not entirely warranted in the short-term, the threat of masses of urban unemployed and of shearing machinery, weighed heavily in the minds of the shearsers' leaders under these circumstances. For the smallholders the dream of independence on the land, always insecure, receded further in the 1880s, for much the same reasons as the pastoralists were squeezed, and the settlement schemes of the 1890s provided, at best, a temporary respite from this trend.

The massive reduction in sheep numbers which occurred during the 1890s as a result of drought and economic crisis, actually aided the industry's recovery. Inefficient strains were culled, and the land was used less intensively. Some shearsers went to the West Australian gold fields, and from 1897 some improvement in employment occurred. But reduction in flocks, together with a drastic downturn in rural construction, upon which many pastoral workers relied for work in the

56. Hence the early unemployment amongst shed hands. Halloran, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.79-80; ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.48. Later reports show the devastating effects of unemployment: ASU Wagga 8th AR, 31 December 1894, p.1; AWU 10th AR, February 1896, p.21. 57. GLU 5th AR, February 1894, pp.3-4; AWU Goulburn AR, 31 December 1894 ('slums of the city' providing 'scab labour'). 58. The number of slaughtered sheep, the export of canned mutton, and boiling down for tallow, increased dramatically in the 1890s. Statistical Register, 1901, pp.593, 595; S. Fisher, 'The Pastoral Interest and Sydney's Public Health', Historical Studies, vol.20, no.78, April 1982, pp.73-89. 59. AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1895, p.10. 60. AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1897, p.3; AWU 12th AR, February 1898. However, the ruining of the harvest in 1898, by drought, counteracted the improvement, Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.2038ff.
off-season, meant a long-term loss of employment opportunities. For these shearers who aspired to independence on the land by way of their high wages in the season, the dream became more elusive than ever.

Metal Mining and Broken Hill

The gold-rushes of the 1850s and 1860s, in Victoria, and then New South Wales, had founded the second most persistent Australian dream of an avenue to independence from wage-earning. Few of the original diggers achieved great riches, or even abstemious long-term independence from wage-earning. But, as with the lure of the land, the dream lived-on, in new gold rushes in the eastern Australian colonies until the 1890s, although New South Wales witnessed the last of its gold fever in the 1870s. These rushes tended to coincide with economic recessions. The 1890s gold rush in Western Australia, which surpassed the production of the 1850s, attracted large numbers of the eastern unemployed and stimulated trade throughout the colonies.

However, the importance of mining did not end with gold. Cobar, in western New South Wales, produced copper, and together with Queensland and Tasmania, New South Wales was the largest world source of tin from 1873-82. New South Wales also became a major producer of silver and lead with the development of the Broken Hill mines in the late 1880s. Between 1881-91 the proportion of the New South Wales

61. The NSW Census 1901, pp.760ff., only recorded 290 unemployed shearers, but since shearing was only a part-time occupation, it is likely that many more who had lost shearing employment opportunities were listed under other occupations. The Census listed 2134 farm and station labourers and 203 drovers as unemployed. Some literary evidence suggests that many pastoral workers turned to scrub-cutting for sheep feed during the drought, but the work and pay were atrocious. I am indebted to Dr. J. Merritt of the Australian National University for this information.

mining workforce in gold mines fell from almost two thirds to about one half, as shown in Table 3.

Metal mining employed a large, but fluctuating, migratory workforce. The seasonality of most colonial employment was particularly suited to providing the manpower for recurring gold or tin rushes, and mining skills were readily transferable from one metal to another. At any time in the late nineteenth century, a large proportion of the working class had mining experience. The importance of miners in the shearing workforce has already been noted. Outback fossickers, many of them unemployed urban workers, multiplied in the 1890s depression, largely accounting for the slight growth of the primary, in relation to the industrial, workforce, and for the proportional growth of the goldmining workforce in relation to that for all mining. Mining's long term social impact, therefore, was also enormous. The early goldfields were the formative environment for working class racial attitudes (especially towards the Chinese) which remained politically important in 1900, and for the radical democratic tradition of the early Eureka Stockade, which embraced the ideal of independence for the small man, on the land or elsewhere.

But independent diggers gradually became wage earners employed

63. Apart from Table 3, this is indicated in the rapid growth in the number of alluvial, in comparison with reef, miners in the 1890s, shown in the Reports of the NSW Department of Mines in the VPLANSW. Alluvial gold miners increased from about 4000 in 1892, to 6500 in 1893, and 11000 in 1894, before dropping back to about 8000 in 1900. Reef miners numbered about 5000 in 1892, 6000 in 1894, and 10000 in 1896-1900.

Table 3
New South Wales Workforce Engaged in Metal Mining, 1881-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>Silver &amp; Silver-lead</th>
<th>Copper</th>
<th>Tin</th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>9056</td>
<td>NE#</td>
<td>1177</td>
<td>4530</td>
<td>14763</td>
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<td>9215</td>
<td>NE#</td>
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<td>15723</td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>6750</td>
<td>NE#</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>4100</td>
<td>12763</td>
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<td>11235</td>
</tr>
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<td>1297</td>
<td>622</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6587</td>
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<td>1234</td>
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<td>500</td>
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<td>6298</td>
<td>2964</td>
<td>1428</td>
<td>22754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Register, and Wealth and Progress of NSW.

*Excludes a small number of iron-miners, i.e. less than 200.
NE# No estimate available.
by companies with the capital equipment necessary to work the lodes, once the easily extracted alluvial metal had been won in the initial rushes. Company mining was dominant in New South Wales by the 1870s, although the process of conversion of independent diggers into wage earners, or proletarianization, occurred unevenly. In copper mining the extraction process required a relatively high level of capitalization from the beginning. On the other hand, as late as the 1880s, some men eked out an existence on low-grade gold claims, or by 'fossicking', occasionally earning extra cash working for mining companies or on pastoral stations, and still hoping to establish themselves on the land. New rushes, such as that at the Palmer River (Queensland) in the 1870s, briefly renewed opportunities. Even within the process of productive re-organization, some opportunities for the small man persisted. Some goldminers' knowledge of the mines enhanced the possibility of speculative gains on the share market, although more so in Victoria than New South Wales. Furthermore, payment by contract encouraged competition and an illusion of independence which made some metal miners' position as wage earners ambiguous, until day wages became more common in the 1880s.

However, by the late 1880s the conversion of miners into

65. Butland, op.cit., pp.3-11, 27, 38-41, 47-51, 75, 83, 101; Blainey, The Rush That Never Ended, pp.60, 134, 294. The growth in company mining is indicated in the expansion of reef, in comparison with alluvial, gold mining in the 1870s and 1880s, as shown in Department of Mines Reports and the Wealth and Progress of NSW. By the end of the 1870s the value of quartz reef gold won exceeded that for alluvial, although the reef workforce did not exceed that for alluvial mining until 1891.


67. However, contract earnings were not secure and the system could be used to the miners' disadvantage by setting unrealistically high base rates of extraction, Spence, Australia's Awakening, pp.19-20; and Review of the First Ten Years' History of the Creswick Branch, No.3, AMA of Australasia, Creswick, 1888, pp.3, 7-8.
proletarians was nearing completion. New finds entered the large-scale company stage immediately. Whereas previously, British capital had not directly entered Australian mining, a contraction of investment opportunities, improved communications, allowing up-to-date information on speculative ventures, and the incredible richness of new fields, brought a strong response from British investors to underwrite the new large-scale operations. Company mining even dominated the new West Australian gold fields within a few years of the 1890s. 68

In New South Wales, the extraction of silver, lead, and later, zinc, at Broken Hill marked the new era of social and industrial relations in mining. From the late 1870s silver mining had occupied a number of independent miners and small companies at 'the Barrier', near the western border with South Australia. 69 But this activity was totally eclipsed soon after Broken Hill operations commenced in 1885. These operations, on a scale never before witnessed in Australia, were characterized by the extraordinary richness of the mines, an extremely high level of capitalization in colonial terms, astronomical profits, and heavy share speculation, especially in Melbourne and London. British capital poured into Australian mining for the first time in Broken Hill, and whilst local control was maintained, a majority of shares were British-owned by 1906. Broken Hill's population grew from 6000 to 26700 from 1887-99. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP), which dominated three lesser companies, and established its headquarters in Melbourne, soon became Australia's industrial giant, as, early in

the twentieth century it expanded into steel, coal, chemicals, and shipping. 70

Technological investment was high, especially since complete separation of the silver, lead and zinc in the sulphide ore proved difficult until the development of the 'flotation' process in the early 1900s. Expensive American managers, engineers, and metallurgical experts brought a technical sophistication to Australian mining which had previously been unknown. Smelters were established first at Broken Hill, and then, after the establishment of a rail link, at Port Pirie in South Australia, to greatly reduce transport costs for coal. Costs were further reduced by concentrating mills which halved the mass of transportable ore from Broken Hill. Heavy technical expenditure was also required to correct underground subsidence, the 'creep', caused by the extent of underground diggings and a scarcity of local timber for supports. By 1900 mining equipment was highly mechanized, with pneumatic drills, spraying water jets to settle the dust, replacing hammers wielded by hand. 71

Broken Hill's workforce was the third largest in New South Wales, after the railways and coal mines, although it fluctuated considerably. At its peak in the early 1890s, it was about 7000, but in 1894 it fell to less than 4000. In 1894 about 600 of these workers were employed in the smelters, and another 900 worked as unskilled underground labourers, or teamsters, engine-drivers, tradesmen and labourers.


71 Blainey, Rise of Broken Hill, pp.25, 51-7, 62-77, 100-2; Kearns, Broken Hill 1883-93, pp.17, 20, 26, 30, 37, 39, 43, 47; and Broken Hill 1894-1914, pp.4, 8, 11, 13, 18, 30, 35.
above ground. The remainder were miners. Table 4 shows the rapid growth of the silver mining workforce in the Albert Mining District in the late 1880s to 1892, and the fluctuations in its size thereafter. Almost all of this workforce was employed at Broken Hill, and BHP's proportion varied between 75 per cent in the early 1890s, to 95 per cent of the total workforce at the end of the 1890s. The only exception to this trend was in 1896-7, when BHP's workforce continued to decline and unemployed miners seem to have turned to silver fossicking and re-working the old mines around Silverton. These workforce fluctuations largely reflect the fortunes of the mining companies. Speculation in Broken Hill shares continued strongly in the early 1890s, with only slight market fluctuations. But from 1892 world silver and lead prices fell markedly, until stabilizing at a lower level in 1894. This price fall coincided with the financial crisis, and increasing problems in extracting the metals from the ore. Low prices and processing difficulties, therefore, led to greatly decreased operations from 1894-8. BHP also responded by increasing productivity and cutting costs, through new technology, reduction of labour costs, and intensification of workloads.

72. Fitzpatrick, British Empire in Australia, p.246; Kearns, Broken Hill 1883-93, p.36; Silverton's 1891 Alphabetical Directory, reprinted in Kearns, Silvertown, pp.37-8, lists a large number of teamsters and carriers also. The Barrier Ranges Amalgamated Engine-drivers' and Firemen's Association claimed a membership of 320 in 1891, RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.141.

73. Mines Department Reports do not always separate BHP employees. These comments are based on scattered references in Blainey, Rise of Broken Hill, p.96; G. Dale, The Industrial History of Broken Hill, Melbourne, 1918, p.25; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, p.1454; Kearns, Broken Hill 1883-93, p.51, and Broken Hill 1894-1914, pp.18, 31; Fitzpatrick, British Empire in Australia, p.246.

Table 4

Workforce Engaged in Silver and Silver-lead Mining in Albert Mining District in New South Wales*
Selected years, 1889-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>5400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>7300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>4300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>4297</td>
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<tr>
<td>1896</td>
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<td>6003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>7252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>7400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>5610</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Broken Hill was the only major mining centre in the Albert Mining District. These figures include surface hands.

Source: Statistical Register.

By the 1890 agreement between management and the miners' union, contract work was abolished in favour of day wages of 10/-, and a forty-six hour week. Tradesmen received about the same wages, labourers about 8/4, and boys, 7/-.

These were high compared with urban unskilled rates. However, in 1892, as part of its cost-reduction and productivity programme, BHP reneged on the 1890 agreement, re-introducing contract 'stoping' to bring average miners' daily earnings down to 9/- (although a very proficient miner could earn 12/6).

75. Dale, op.cit., pp.17-19; Kearns, Broken Hill, 1883-93, p.41; Barrier Ranges Smelters', Concentrators' and Surface Hands' Union submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.141.
Labourers' wages were reduced to 7/6. These company actions provoked one of the largest and bitterest strikes in the colony in the 1890s, ending in the miners' complete rout.  

Six years of high unemployment followed the strike, although, with contract stoping successfully introduced, BHP's production briefly increased. BHP's hand was strengthened in 1892 by the downturn in world prices, which meant that it had little to lose from an interruption to production and, no doubt, intended shedding labour in any case. Some indication of unemployment at this time may be gained from Table 4. However, it underestimates the extent of unemployment because a number of 1892 strikebreakers permanently replaced the original miners. Many unemployed left Broken Hill in the 1890s, aided by the New South Wales Government Labour Bureau's provision of rail passes to South Australia. Table 4 also overestimates the extent of recovery of employment in 1897-8, for the same reasons already discussed.

However, labour turnover was always high at Broken Hill. Even in 1897 it surpassed 100 per cent. Some were dismissed for incompetence or disregard of safety regulations, for inexperienced men often posed as experienced miners to gain the higher wages. But most left voluntarily. The nomadic nature of the workforce is confirmed by the high proportion of young, unmarried males in Broken Hill. Australia's long history of mining provided Broken Hill with a large pool of experienced labour. Many shearers from the surrounding pastoral

77. Kennedy, op.cit., p.71.
79. The NSW Census, 1901, pp.760ff., still listed 445 unemployed silver miners, which included surface hands.
country also drifted in and out of mining, especially during droughts (for example in 1888). High wages attracted men seeking to accumulate savings over a short period.

But life and work in Broken Hill did not encourage long term employment there, and were a large liability against high wages. Working underground had the advantage of being relatively cool in a region with high summer temperatures, but it was physically testing work, wielding a hammer against a sharp steel to dig holes in the rock for explosives, and then breaking up piles of rock for shipment to the surface. BHP also operated an open cut mine, employing 300 - 400 in 1892, and a much higher proportion of the workforce, 500, in 1894. Work there was particularly onerous, with full exposure to the sun, and the cut's deep sides blocked any breezes. Its advantage for BHP was that it required no scarce timber for supports. One further advantage was the higher degree of direct supervision which it allowed. Although underground miners enjoyed considerably more independence, American managers were generally disposed to greater workforce supervision and discipline than had been practised in Australian mining prior to Broken Hill.

Broken Hill mining was also more hazardous than other mining, as Table 5 shows. Rock falls were a constant danger because of the extent of mining at the Barrier, and the huge quantities of timber supports were highly inflammable. In 1895, for example, nine men died in a rock slide, and in 1897 three died of fumes from fire. Few survived falls down the deep mine shafts. Even the open-cut had dangerously steep sides, to which the men were often roped. Blainey emphasizes that the

80. Blainey, Rise of Broken Hill, pp.96-7, 111-3; Kennedy, op.cit., p.83. See n.24 above re shearsers as miners.
Table 5

Serious Injuries and Fatalities in Silver-Mining in New South Wales*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Serious Injuries</th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
<th>Rate per 1000 employed</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silver Mining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>18</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1900</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Register.

*Since virtually all silver miners in the colony were employed at Broken Hill, these accidents occurred almost exclusively there.

Men themselves were often careless of safety precautions, particularly when they might slow work, and therefore reduce earnings under contract stoping. He notes that BHP management was more safety-conscious than others, but concedes that it greatly underestimated dangers from ground subsidence, and in the early years considered safety to be the miners' responsibility. More importantly, however, the rate of accidents, 83

especially those involving fatalities, sharply increased after 1892-3. It seems more than coincidental that this occurred simultaneously with BHP's attempts to reduce costs and its introduction of contract stoping in the same period. Nevertheless, a Royal Commission held in 1897 blamed neither men nor management for the increased number of serious injuries and fatalities of recent years. It recommended greater safety efforts, but did not accept union arguments for stricter employers' liability, an increase in the number of mining inspectors and their powers, and the establishment of a tri-partite board to investigate all accidents. Immediately afterwards, the rate of serious injuries and fatalities climbed still higher.

Ignorance at first contributed to the extent of lead poisoning at the Barrier, although BHP half-heartedly warned miners to take some safeguards in the 1880s. The human body easily absorbed lead from underground dust, and water shortage prevented the use of water to settle the dust until the late 1890s. In the 1890s awareness of the dangers grew, but under the industrial circumstances of 1892-3, a Board of Inquiry's recommendations had little effect. Provision of wholesome drinking water, and baths to remove dust from miners' bodies, were the two major recommendations of the Board's Report, which the company representative refused to sign, for they would have greatly added to the costs which BHP was then attempting to reduce. Water collected from iron roofs was

85. Report of Board appointed to inquire into the prevalence and prevention of lead poisoning at the Broken Hill silver-lead mines, VPLANSW, 1892-3, vol.4, pp.1241-1393.
also contaminated by dust from the smelters, and in the late 1890s, magnetic treatment plants increased the danger for men working in them because of the amount of dust produced in the process. One plant, employing 150 men, had 127 cases of lead poisoning in two years. Smelter dust was largely responsible for the very high infant mortality rate suffered in Broken Hill and the lack of livestock. Lead poisoning declined after 1895 when legislation enforced precautions, but the shifting of the smelters to the coast was probably the major factor in this improvement. 86

Apart from the lung complaints which Broken Hill men also shared with all miners, life generally was harsh in this most outback of all New South Wales towns. Heat, dust and water shortages were part of every day life. Houses were make-shift affairs, given a nomadic workforce and low life expectancy, and often constructed from iron. Many lived in boarding houses. Water shortage, by limiting sanitation and hygiene, led to recurring epidemics of typhoid and enteric fever. As prostitution became a flourishing trade in a predominantly nomadic population of single men, venereal disease also became rife. 87 Alcohol was possibly a healthier compensation for the severity of life, since Broken Hill water was so contaminated for much of this period, but its use also led to the highest number of convictions for drunkenness outside Sydney. 88 These stark realities of the Barrier, the health risks and high prices 89 probably shattered many dreams of quick savings on high wages. Together with the new era in industrial relations which Broken

86. See Blainey, Rise of Broken Hill, pp.86-90; Kennedy, op.cit., pp.62-3; Kearns, Broken Hill 1883-93, pp.17, 47, 59.
88. Kearns, Broken Hill 1894-1914, p.18.
89. Blainey, Rise of Broken Hill, pp.112ff.
Hill marked, these liabilities explain the tensions between management and employers, and the militancy of the early miners' union, which is examined in later chapters.

Coal Mining

Coal mining had never known the period of independent small man operations which had characterized early metal mining. Indeed, it produced the earliest large concentrations of labour in the colony. High capital requirements and relatively large optimum productive units encouraged the development of an oligopolistic company structure, with a small number of large companies controlling the bulk of the Newcastle coal trade. These included the Australian Agricultural (AA) Company, which had been the largest until the 1880s, J. and A. Brown, Newcastle Wallsend, and Waratah Coal Mining, some of which had London headquarters. The Newcastle coalfields were the largest in New South Wales, enjoying a flourishing export trade based on the requirements of British shipping for return cargo, as well as a large market throughout the Australian colonies. South coast and western coalfields, around Lithgow, developed later than those in the north and were smaller operations, particularly in the west.

Coal was an integral part of industrial growth in New South Wales. Demand for coal increased as the population and manufacturing expanded, and even metal mining relied on coal for smelting. But coal's three biggest customers were the railways, shipping and gas manufacturers. The western mines were almost entirely dependent on railway consumption. 90

This dependence on coal made the economy particularly sensitive to coalfields industrial strife. For example, in 1890, when coalminers joined the Maritime Strike, urban industry and homes were severely

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affected by coal shortages, and the railways were forced to burn wood. Coalminers, therefore, enjoyed a strategic bargaining position in this regard, and were often sought after as allies by other unions.

Coal demand was also volatile because of interdependence with the rest of the economy. The industry was highly susceptible to economic downturns, and seasonal fluctuations. Shipping and gas manufacturers' requirements, for example, varied seasonally. Consequently, coal prices were unstable, immediately reflecting the general level of economic activity. The industry suffered in this way partly because it could not economically stockpile coal. Extra handling doubled costs and broke the coal into 'small coal' for which the market was limited. In order to strengthen prices by limiting supply, employers may sometimes have deliberately provoked strikes, although they ran the risk of temporarily losing markets by doing so.

Under these circumstances, northern producers developed an early cartel to limit production and, therefore, maintain prices. The Northern Coal Sales Association, operated from 1873-80 by apportioning a limited production between each producer. Those who exceeded their 'permissible vend' compensated those who failed to reach theirs. However, because productive capacity exceeded demand, competitive tensions were always present, and encouraged by some consumers.  

92. Two of the most important supportive actions by miners occurred in the maritima striking of 1878 and 1885, discussed in Chapter 11.
94. For example, see Ross, op.cit., pp.39, 78; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, p.1437; vol.4, pp.2030-1, 2038.
95. Except where otherwise indicated, this paragraph is largely based on Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.13-15.
96. Note the early comment that 'the power to produce coal is more than double the demand', Coalminers' Mutual Protective Association of the Hunter River District Delegate Meeting Minutes (hereafter HRDDM Minutes), 18 August 1879.
97. For example, the Victorian railways, Ross, op.cit., p.88.
number of small producers who remained outside the Vend consistently undercut the prevailing prices. The high, stable profits which resulted from the Vend also attracted new companies, leading to intensified competition and the breakdown of the cartel. In 1881 a Vend was re-formed, but it was never as successful as that of the 1870s. It was split asunder in 1893 under pressure of increased productive capacity and competition, at a time when demand decreased due to the depression. Southern operators also formed an association in 1886. But it was not able to prevent declining prices and profitability in the late 1880s, and actually contributed to this by consistently undercutting northern prices, which was possible because of more easily workable coal and lower wages.

Opposition to the miners' union, the earliest mass union of the semi-skilled in New South Wales, also led to closer employers' organization at an early stage. Even this form of unity was fragile because of the high level of competition. In a dispute involving all employers, concession of union demands by one might facilitate a temporary cornering of the market. However, a combined anti-union front preceded the initial northern Vend, and each re-formation of it. From 1885 a Newcastle employers' association paralleled the Vend organization, and the Vend itself paid for lost production of those

98. Lambton Colliery remained outside the Vend much of the time from the late 1870s. HRDDM Minutes, 4 January and 19 July 1877, 4 April 1878, 10 March and 19 August 1879; Conference of Miners' Representatives Minutes, 9 May, 13 June, 3 October, 8 November 1878, and 19 April and 3 May 1879; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1434-5.


100. Evidence of J.B. Nicholson (Secretary, southern miners' union) and C.J. Byrnes (Chairman, Southern Collieries Association) in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.2, 8.


102. Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.14-15, 17, 45, 71. The Southern Collieries Association was also formed initially to fight the local union, Byrnes, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.7.
members whose employees struck.  

Since coalfields strikes also affected shipowners seriously, opposition to the unions brought early co-operation between these two groups of employers. Coal not only fuelled domestic shipping, but also, as one shipper claimed, was 'far and away the largest trade on the coast'.

A number of shipping companies owned coal mines, and some of the coal companies with London headquarters were linked with British shipping interests. Coal and shipping firms led an aggressive employer organization against the strikers in 1890.

The miners' union encouraged employers' organization in the Vend. It was in its interests to help maintain a high price for coal, since the 'hewing rate', paid to the miner per ton of coal won, was dependent upon the price of coal, and the Vend helped maintain district uniformity in wage rates. The establishment of the first Vend, therefore, coincided with a district agreement with the union, tying the hewing rate to the selling price of coal on a sliding scale. In this way the period of miners' greatest prosperity coincided with the period of the Vend's

105. Rickard, op.cit., p.22. The proprietor of the Wallsend Colliery, Osbourne, was also a member of the Steamship Owners' Association in the early 1890s, Steamship Owners' Association Executive Committee Minutes, 1893-4. Two Royal Commissions of 1906 revealed close links between ship and coalowners although, largely because shippers had an interest in low coal prices, their interests were not always identical with coalowners. One coal producer, Browns, resolutely fought shipping influence in the industry. See J. Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, Melbourne, 1976, pp.190-2, 199-200, 208-14, 230-1; and Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.11, 15-16, for early collusion.
greatest strength, in the 1870s. The union was the staunchest policeman of the 'permissible Vend'. It withdrew labour wherever it was exceeded, and disciplined its own members, such as those at Lambton and other lodges in the late 1870s, who co-operated with their employers in exceeding the Vend.  

More than any other union at the time, the miners' strategy in this regard illustrates the essentially defensive range of activities available to a union. By successfully tying piece payment to selling price, the employers' rate of surplus value was never challenged. Under the circumstances, however, the miners' union had little choice of strategy. Unrestricted price-cutting competition between coal suppliers invariably led to falling wage rates. Moreover, restrictions on individual companies' output shared employment.

Chronic underemployment characterized the industry throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The 'eight day fortnight' was not uncommon from the late 1870s, and shorter fortnights of five or six working days often occurred.  

A large workforce was required for periods of high demand, but given the Vend's basis of limiting

107. For example, HRDDM Minutes, 18 September 1877, 22 March 1878, 21 January, 18 February, 7 March, 15 April, 3, 15 and 26 July, 7 August, 25 September and 11 November 1879; Executive Committee Minutes, 16 September 1879. See also sources in n.98 above.

108. Taking Coghlan's estimate of 370 tons output per miner per annum, with his estimate of earnings and the hewing price, average annual working time per miner in the 1870s may be calculated at only 146 days. In 1880 Coghlan claimed that a 5 and 3/4 day fortnight became the average. Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1189, 1429, 1439. Short time was also common in the south, Nicholson, in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.1-2.
supply, even in the 'golden seventies' underemployment persisted.\footnote{109} It was exacerbated by the miners' encouragement of their British brothers to emigrate in the 1870s and 1880s.\footnote{110} In the 1890s the coalfields workforce contracted by about 17 per cent, as shown in Table 6. This represented only about half the general rate of unemployment in the depression. But the situation was undoubtedly worse than this.\footnote{111} As Table 7 shows, average working time in the 1890s was very short.\footnote{112}

The employment situation partly structured the industrial strategies of both sides. Prior to, or during, strikes, employers commonly recruited extra labour in the colonies or Britain.\footnote{113} On the other hand, the miners' union restricted output by allocation of a daily 'darg', or limit on coal produced, to each miner.\footnote{114} This aided the maintenance of the Vend, and prevented employers from stockpiling prior to a strike, as well as sharing employment.

\footnote{109} In 1876-7, union attempts to share employment indicate that one-sixth of the workforce, and up to one half in some pits, was surplus. HRDDM Minutes, 6 and 12 January 1876, 22 March and 26 June 1877. From 1878-80, underemployment became more acute as the union attempted to preserve the Vend by 'lying back', ibid., 3 and 29 January, and 8 November 1878, 21 January, 7 and 20 March, 3 April, 15 and 25 July, 18 August, and 9, 16 and 25 September 1879, 24 January, 12 and 28 February, and 1 May 1880. Conference of Miners' Representatives Minutes, 3 May and 6 September 1879. The situation was similar on the highly productive western fields: Vale of Clwydd Lodge (hereafter VCL) Minutes, 15 December 1878, 5, 11, 24 and 25 February, 10 March and 30 December 1879, 7 January 1880.

\footnote{110} Ross, op.cit., p.35.


\footnote{112} In the west some employed miners were only working half time: Zig Zag Lodge Number One Minutes, 24 August 1897. Government Labour Bureau Reports only show the fully unemployed.

\footnote{113} HRDDM Minutes, 1 July 1875, 22 March and 26 June 1877, 20 March 1879; Hunter River Miners' Convention Minutes, 1879; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, p.1450 (1888).

Table 6

New South Wales Coal Mining Workforce, 1880-1901*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Northern Underground</th>
<th>Northern Total</th>
<th>Southern Underground</th>
<th>Southern Total</th>
<th>Western Underground</th>
<th>Western Total</th>
<th>New South Wales Underground</th>
<th>New South Wales Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
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<td>3679</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3851</td>
<td>4651</td>
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<td>627</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>3557</td>
<td>4297</td>
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<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>2830</td>
<td>3475</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>3649</td>
<td>4587</td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>3436</td>
<td>4184</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>4407</td>
<td>5481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>4400</td>
<td>5380</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>1348</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>5627</td>
<td>7097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>5217</td>
<td>6287</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>1313</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>6539</td>
<td>7998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>5736</td>
<td>6873</td>
<td>1244</td>
<td>1676</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>7622</td>
<td>9301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>6216</td>
<td>7659</td>
<td>1598</td>
<td>2065</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>8349</td>
<td>10277</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>6345</td>
<td>7874</td>
<td>1434</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>8311</td>
<td>10469</td>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>6732</td>
<td>8309</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>504</td>
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<td>1479</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>305</td>
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<td>10028</td>
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<td>1895</td>
<td>5605</td>
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<td>1506</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>7538</td>
<td>9233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>5925</td>
<td>7229</td>
<td>1556</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>7831</td>
<td>9626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>6247</td>
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<td>1586</td>
<td>2053</td>
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<td>424</td>
<td>8192</td>
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<td>7815</td>
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<td>2109</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>8217</td>
<td>10339</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
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<td>1946</td>
<td>2499</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>9644</td>
<td>12191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Statistical Register, and Wealth and Progress of NSW.

*Every second years' figures are given, except where there is a change in the trend, or an unusually large variation.
Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Working Days per Fortnight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>6-6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>9-10.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>9.5-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>8-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>7.5-8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from Macarthy’s estimates of hewing rates, shift rates and earnings for the 1890s, *op.cit.*, p.145.

For this reason, output per member of the workforce was quite low in the late nineteenth century. Coghlan estimated per capita output at 370 tons per annum in the 1870s, \(^{115}\) or 2.5 tons per day. Table 8 shows that it was not until the mid-1890s that it consistently surpassed 400 tons per annum, and this increase in productivity slowed improvements in employment then. This average figure hides a much higher level of productivity in western mines, \(^{116}\) but they were too small to significantly affect the average. Although productivity was usually

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116. Of between 505 and 890 tons p.a. in the 1880s, *Wealth and Progress of NSW.*
Table 8

Coalminers' Productivity Measured in Tons per capita per annum, 1880-1902*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tons per capita p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>406</td>
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<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>361</td>
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<td>1887</td>
<td>365</td>
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<td>1888</td>
<td>344</td>
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<td>1889</td>
<td>356</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>292</td>
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<td>1891</td>
<td>373</td>
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<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>359</td>
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<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>327</td>
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<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>402</td>
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<td>1895</td>
<td>414</td>
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<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>423</td>
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<td>1897</td>
<td>455</td>
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<td>1898</td>
<td>459</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>445</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wealth and Progress of NSW.

*These figures include the entire workforce.
much higher than in British mines, the second most productive in the world, the figures shown in Table 8 were well below capacity, and indicate a serious decline in productivity in the late 1880s.

However, these productivity figures are calculated on the basis of the entire workforce, which included an increased number of surface, or 'off-hand' men in the late 1870s, when the division of labour was extended. 'Wheelers' supervised haulage of coal skips to the surface, 'trappers' supervised ventilation doors, a host of labourers were employed in surface handling, and a number of tradesmen and labourers were employed in construction and maintenance. Under piecework, specialization of labour was to the miners' advantage. However, the increase in the workforce on day wages disadvantaged employers' profit levels when prices fluctuated, especially since much of the day labour was connected with 'non-productive' safety provisions. A number of disputes in the late 1870s arose out of the union's attempts to relieve miners of responsibility for wheeling skips and other jobs.

In material respects the relationship between miner and surface labourer resembled that between the urban 'aristocracy of labour' and the urban unskilled. At their best miners' earnings could equal those for tradesmen. Labourers' wages, based on time payment, were much lower, varying between 5/6 and 7/- per day in the 1890s. Miners were much more likely to be members of the self-help organizations, such as Friendly and Co-operative Societies, which flourished in the coalfields, and labourers seem to have been disproportionately represented amongst

117. For example, comparable British figures were 303 tons in 1888, and 330 in 1890. Wealth and Progress of NSW, 1888-9 and 1890-1, pp.97 and 37 respectively.
119. For example, HRDDM Minutes, 4 April 1878; VCL Minutes, 21 August and 15 December 1878, 27 September 1880.
120. Macarthy, op.cit., p.145.
the very poor. 121

However, miners’ earnings varied enormously, because of underemployment and fluctuations in the hewing rate. The ratio of hewing rate to selling price remained fairly constant throughout the late nineteenth century, except that the hewing rate began to fall, proportionally, over 1897-9.122 But fluctuations in the selling price also meant great variation in hewing rates, and changes in the number of days worked could offset changes in the hewing rate. For example, earnings rose despite a falling hewing rate in 1880-1, 1894-5, and 1897, because of an increase in days worked per fortnight. On the other hand, earnings fell in 1881-2, despite a rise in the hewing rate, because of a fall in days worked. In 1879-80, and the 1890s, average earnings fell to well below £2 per week, 123 which was much less than for tradesmen.

Considerable caution is required in estimating miners’ earnings because of the great number of variables and liabilities to which they were subject. Miners paid for the maintenance of their tools, blasting powder and tallow required on the job.124 Under a contract system they were also responsible for payment of juvenile assistants, usually their

122. See Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, p.239. This table is for northern prices only.
124. Which McEwen estimated as costing 3/- per week in 1881, and 2/10 in 1892, 'Newcastle Coal-Mining District', p.75. Also Nicholson, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.2; HRDDM Minutes, 4 October 1877. It was sometimes claimed that the company charged exorbitantly for sharpening of picks, for example: VCL Minutes, 19 and 29 January 1880.
sons, and 'checkweighmen', who checked the pit owners' weighing of each miners' output.\textsuperscript{125} The companies' method of weighing coal was often a point of conflict because of variations to the 'standard weight' of a ton and the width of screens separating 'small coal', for which there was little or no payment.\textsuperscript{126} Standard hewing rates only applied to good quality coal,\textsuperscript{127} and when the Vend was in force. Some miners, mainly working for producers outside the Vend, always received less than the district rate.\textsuperscript{128} Southern and western coalfields rates varied more than in the north because of the weakness of cartels and district agreements. Southern rates were generally lower than in the north because of softer, more easily-workable coal. This was the basis for southern undercutting of northern prices, which encouraged strong opposition to unionism, for fear it would raise the hewing rate.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{125} For example: HRDDM Minutes, 12 February 1880 (10d per miner per fortnight for checkweighmen); Lithgow Lodge Minutes, 29 June 1886; Zig Zag Lodge Minutes, 29 April 1898. See Ross, op.cit., p.31.

\textsuperscript{126} For example: HRDDM Minutes, 25 October 1875, 4 January, 18 September and 4 October 1877, 3 January 1878; VCL Minutes, 27 November 1878, January 1879, 5 and 20 February, 30 June, and 12 November 1879, 15 March and 4 May 1880; Lithgow Lodge Minutes, 15 and 25 May and 5 June 1886; Zig Zag Lodge Minutes, 22 January 1898. Note also object 4 of the AMA No.2 Colonial District, NSW, Hunter River, Rules, February 1887: 'To secure true weight from employers'.

\textsuperscript{127} There were frequent disputes over special rates for 'small coal'. For example: Hunter River Conference of Miners' Representatives Minutes, 9 May 1878; HRDDM Minutes, 24 January and 28 February 1880, 2 January 1893; VCL Minutes, 30 February, 30 May and 9 June 1879.

\textsuperscript{128} For example: HRDDM Minutes, 1 December 1874 (Four Mile Creek), 3 January 1878 (Ferndale), 15 October 1878, 2 January 1879 (Ferndale), 22 March 1879 (Raspberry Gully). New Lambton paid a higher rate at one stage, \textit{ibid.}, 15 May 1880. But even Vend members sometimes paid a lower rate, for example: HRDDM Minutes, 11 February 1875 (AA Company), 14 and 25 October 1875, 12 January 1876 (South Waratah), 1 March 1877 (Greta), 21 December 1878 (Browns' at Minmi).

\textsuperscript{129} Evidence of Nicholson and J. Cook (western miners' union Secretary) in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.1 and 208 respectively. Day wages on shift work were also common in the west, Zig Zag Lodge Minutes, 3 May 1897, 24 January 1899.
The work process itself subjected earnings to considerable variation under a system of piece payment. The thickness, height, inclination, purity and texture of a seam affected the ease with which a miner could bring the coal down with his pick. Texture also determined how easily it would break into small coal. Water, gas, weak roofing and coal dust made work more dangerous as well as difficult. Miners' responsibility for baling water and erection of timber roof supports also restricted the amount of coal they could produce. The practice of 'cavilling', or regular balloting for positions on the coalface, shared the best positions amongst the miners. In the context of a fixed sliding scale for the hewing rate, the miners' union concentrated on 'consideration money' to compensate for difficult conditions. On their part, however, the employers relied on adjustments to 'consideration money' to reduce costs. Under all these circumstances, therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that many literary sources indicate a considerable degree of poverty amongst miners.

131. District agreements included general provisions concerning these variables, for example: HRDDM Minutes, 21 November 1874, 3 June 1875, 2 January 1893, for the agreements of those years. But because of variations between pits, local agreements covered details, for example: ibid., 11 July 1878.
132. Northern miners' records show that the frequency of disputes over 'consideration money' increased in the late 1870s, under pressure of falling prices as the Vend collapsed. Northern union records from the 1880s do not survive, but those for the western miners' union show that these disputes continued at a high frequency in the 1880s and 1890s. In the south employers launched a concerted assault on 'consideration money' from 1886-90, leading to a number of major strikes, Nicholson and Byrnes, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.1 and 7 respectively.
133. McEwen, 'Newcastle Coal-Mining District', pp.76-9, 82.
Home ownership provides some indication of the level of miners' prosperity. In the 1870s, the Reverend J.D. Lang had noticed with surprise that 'not a few (miners)...have comfortable homes of their own erected on allotments they have sought for that purpose'. In 1878, Police Inspector Thorpe reported that many miners had secured freeholds for residences by buying from colliery proprietors and the Government. In 1907, the Town Clerk of Plattsburg (near Wallsend) also claimed that 'nearly all' miners in the municipality had their 'own little homes', where they commonly maintained vegetable gardens.

However, if not condescending, these observations are a little misleading, for even though they tend to be confirmed by the strength of local building societies, they confuse a number of different forms of home-occupation. In some areas, notably Adamstown and Hamilton, freeholders were predominant, but elsewhere, many miners rented houses from their employer, especially the AA Company. Between one fifth and one quarter of the northern miners squatted rent free on 'commonage', which was Crown land, upon which they built their own houses. In Merewether, most miners built their own homes upon land owned by E.C. Merewether, for which they only paid rent on the land. Minmi miners also rented the land they occupied from the company (Browns').

136. Report and Minutes of Evidence of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Works on the Proposed Tramway between Wallsend and West Wallsend, VPLANSW, 1907, Session 4, vol.1, p.36. The Clerk, Thomas Abel, had resided in the district for over 40 years, had been Town Clerk from about 1879, and was a long-time director of a local building society.
137. This was especially common on the south coast, Ross, op.cit., p.39.
138. This paragraph is based upon McEwen 'Newcastle Coal-Mining District', pp.83-8.
The squatters and those who rented land only, account for an unusually high level of owner-occupation of houses in the northern coalfields. Housing costs were also cheap for these miners: squatters paid no rent, and land rent in Merewether was purely nominal.

But this gives little indication of actual housing standards. With a high proportion of houses built by miners themselves, many were rough structures, often of bark and slab, or, as in Minmi, of undressed timber and iron, with starkly limited sanitary arrangements. Described as 'typical' of miners' homes in the 1890s, the Minmi houses were valued at £20 - £80. But in the late 1880s the average cost of construction of a standard four-roomed weatherboard house in New South Wales was about £160 - £300. Furthermore, rental of either homes or land from employers gave them a decided advantage during strikes, when they frequently attempted to evict miners.

Even the relative prosperity enjoyed by some miners did not compensate for the sheer drudgery and danger which characterized the work process. Darkness and dampness were a liability against health, and fibrosis and silicosis were common occupational diseases for miners. Falling roofs, explosives, machinery, insufficient ventilation, gas, coal dust and water were ever-present sources of danger, producing

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140. SMH, 13 May 1896. See Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.32-3, 41-2, 93.
142. J.W. Turner, op.cit., pp.4-5; Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.38, 41, 92-3. Merewether was an AA Company superintendent who evicted miners from company houses during a dispute in 1862.
129.

a constant fearful expectancy in mining communities. During the 1880s the annual death rate averaged 3.4 per thousand employed in New South Wales mines; higher than the notoriously dangerous British mines. In 1887, this rate reached 11.8 when eighty-one miners were killed by an explosion at Bulli. In the 1890s this death rate dropped below two per thousand, but as Table 9 shows, it still surpassed two in 1896 and 1898, when a series of gas explosions killed about thirty miners.

Mining, of course, was more dangerous than surface work. Table 9 shows that the accident rate per thousand miners was much higher than for the workforce as a whole, for almost all of the fatalities and accidents recorded occurred underground. Apart from fatalities, many miners were injured and maimed each year, and in the 1890s, despite a falling death rate, the rate of serious injury significantly increased. Table 9 actually underestimates the level of accidents because of common under-reporting of 'minor' accidents involving loss of sight, burns and breakages of limbs.

Piecework actually placed earnings and safety in competition with each other. Nevertheless, from the beginning, the union struggled


145. For example: potential earning time was 'wasted' in building roof supports. In the west miners were also responsible for digging air shafts at some mines. VCL Minutes, 30 December 1878. See Hagan and Fisher, 'Piecework and Some of Its Consequences', op.cit., pp.20-1.
Table 9

Serious Injuries and Fatalities in New South Wales Coal Mines 1881-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Non-fatal serious injuries</th>
<th>Non-fatal Fatalities</th>
<th>Total work force</th>
<th>Underground men only</th>
<th>Total work force</th>
<th>Underground men only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Per annum average for 1880s 39.8 24.6 5.4 6.7 3.4 4.2

Per annum average for 1890s 66.3 15.9 6.5 8.0 1.6 2.0

Per annum average 1881-1901 53.7 20.1 6.1 7.5 2.3 2.8

Source: Statistical Register.
to establish reasonable safety standards, but coalowners resisted safety legislation because it involved a significant capital outlay. In at least some of the major mining disasters of the 1880s and 1890s, management was clearly negligent.

The ever-present danger of the mines, which potentially affected a large proportion of miners and their dependents, was one of a number of forces which welded a strong sense of coalfields community. Geographical isolation, and the uniqueness of the work process bred a mutual curiosity and suspicion between miners and 'strangers', to the extent that the pit village was characterized by an 'almost paranoic remoteness and isolation'. A highly specialized occupational language further reduced communication with outsiders.

146. For example, the western miners' disputes over ventilation and provision of ladders in air shafts: VCL Minutes, 16 December 1878, 22 January and 27 February 1879, 16 June 1881. Note the Hunter River Coalminers' Mutual Protective Association Rules, Newcastle 1870: Lodges shall 'see that the health and lives of their fellow workmen are to the utmost protected'. Similarly, the Illawarra Coalminers' Mutual Protective Association Rules, Wollongong, 1886. The Ventilation of Coal Mines - Correspondence and Reports, VPLANSW, 1887, 2nd Session, vol.4, pp.213-71, reports action by the Examiner of Coal Mines after a number of miners' complaints about inadequate ventilation. Other examples appear in Chapter 8. Miners' union representatives appeared at the major inquiries in n.143.


148. See A. Walker, Coaltown: A Social Survey of Cessnock, NSW, Melbourne, 1945, pp.6-7, 39, 50-3, re the effect of the omniscient possibility of danger on the community in the early 1940s, and for the suggestion that fatigue and fear of danger were unstated causes of strikes.


150. Some examples of this language, 'darg' and 'cavil', have already been noted. Union records are a wealth of other specialized terms.
homogeneity of a workforce connected exclusively with one industry produced an overriding community rhythm of work and non-work. 'Rituals of mutuality' were enmeshed in work and non-work activities, such as traditional May Day celebrations and the rhythmic community holiday ritual associated with fortnightly Pay Day. Those involved in service industries were economically and socially dependent upon the miners. Trading high points occurred in the miners' 'pay week', lows in the 'off-week'. Shopkeepers also suffered when miners struck or were unemployed and, as a corollary, miners received strong community support, in generous credit and other ways, during these periods. The Newcastle Morning Herald was also affected by community organicism, in displaying an unusual sympathy for miners' struggles. Newcastle juries, and even magistrates, were uncomfortably sympathetic to arrested strikers. This necessitated the transportation of many court cases to Sydney or appropriate country towns so that justice might be done to these unruly men.

Community partly rested upon tradition, which was strengthened by the unchanging nature of the work process, basically since the beginning of coal mining in New South Wales. 'Customs and practice' was an important means for miners to exert control over working conditions. Despite chronic underemployment, sons regularly followed their fathers

151. The fortnightly Pay Day was enshrined in union rules.
153. Its proprietor, James Fletcher, had also been a union leader. Collan, Coal Miners of NSW, p.81.
156. Union rules always stress this, but each pit had its individual 'custom and practice'.

into the pits, and usually married within their home village, even though most moved on to other villages as the perimeter of pits continually expanded.\textsuperscript{157} The large-scale emigration of coalminers to the West Australian goldfields in the 1890s\textsuperscript{158} was a rare occurrence caused by the exceptionally depressed state of the industry.

The continuity of community was also strengthened by the close links maintained with Britain. A higher proportion of coalminers were British immigrants than in the community as a whole. Union leaders were usually of British mining stock, and the unions maintained contact with their British counterparts.\textsuperscript{159} The influence is also evident in religion, and place names, such as Vale of Clwydd, Newcastle, and Northumberland. But as these names also indicate, the different coalfields communities of Britain maintained their separation in New South Wales, particularly in the north and west, where northern British and Welsh miners, respectively, predominated. In many respects, the Australian mining communities were an extension of those in Britain.\textsuperscript{160}

A strong class perspective pervaded these aspects of community. Most mine-owners were outsiders, living in Sydney or London. Local mine managers, who were as likely to be British immigrants as their

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{157} McEwen, 'Newcastle Coal-Mining District', pp.337-69, 375-8.
\item\textsuperscript{158} Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, p.2039.
\item\textsuperscript{159} Union records refer to a number of British contacts, for example, the warning not to emigrate during recession, HRDDM Minutes, 20 March 1879. Immigrants with British union clearances could join the colonial union without paying an entrance fee, AMA Colonial District Number 2, New South Wales, Hunter River, Rules, 1887.
\item\textsuperscript{160} Most of these points in this paragraph and the beginning of the next, are based upon Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.2-3, 18; Ross, op.cit., pp.16, 18, 49; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1475, 1834; McEwen, 'Newcastle Coal-Mining District', p.264. See E.A. Rymer, The Martyrdom of the Mine, 1898, in History Workshop Journal, vols. 1 and 2, pp.220-44, and 148-70 respectively. Walker, op.cit., pp.3, 86, noted the continuance of strong British links in the 1940s.
\end{itemize}
men, kept close contact with their counterparts at 'home', and with their methods. Patterns of behaviour learned by both miners and managers in Britain, were retained in New South Wales. In this sense, the intense class conflict of the British coalfields was transported to New South Wales coalfields. Local conditions, if not as bad as in Britain, were sufficient basis for the bitterness and militancy which characterized industrial relations in both countries.

In many of these tendencies, coal mining differed from the other sections of primary industry which we have examined. Industrial capitalist class divisions, and class conflict, had characterized coal mining since its beginning, whereas metal miners, and pastoral workers who aspired to independence on the land, were more gradually converted to wage earners 'pure and simple'. Nevertheless, there were similarities in the alignment of class relations. By 1890 there was little difference between the position of coal and Broken Hill metal miners. All three industries faced crises in the late 1880s or early 1890s: coal mining and the pastoral industry had structural problems associated, respectively, with excess capacity and declining returns on capital, and declining productivity for both; and BHP at Broken Hill suffered from the downturn in world metal prices and technological problems in the early 1890s. From the late 1880s, as these employers became more hard-pressed economically, they were forced into stronger resistance of union attempts to better, or even defend, their members' working conditions. On the other hand, workers in all three industries experienced a decline from past opportunities and prosperity: a decline from the prosperous years of the Vend in the 1870s, in the case of coal miners, a disappearance of the days of the independent digger for metal miners, a contraction of opportunities for independence on the land,
and a contraction in shearing employment because of reduced flocks
and machinery, in the case of shearsers. Much of this former
opportunity or prosperity was mythical. But myth is often an important
ingredient in social conflict.

In the 1890s, a sense of lost opportunities played a major role
in the nature of labour organization and ideology. It tended to unite
not only workers in urban and primary industry, but also those in the
transport sector, which are the subject of Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3

TRANSPORT
The growth of industrial societies, such as that which was emerging in New South Wales in the late nineteenth century, depended to a large extent upon the development of transport and communications. In the Australian colonies, subject as they were to the 'tyranny of distance', transport was particularly important in moulding the nature of other economic activity. The extension of the transport system, the development of new modes of transport and the modernization of old, were some of the more visible signs of colonial industrial growth. By the 1880s the transport sector was also responsible for some of the largest concentrations of capital and labour in New South Wales, from which emerged some of the largest trade unions.

Nevertheless, there was considerable structural diversity within the transport industry, as Table 1 shows. Whilst transport and communications had the highest proportion of wage earners of any Census class, and a low proportion of employers, it also had a higher proportion of self-employed than the Census Industrial class in 1891.\(^1\) Table 2 shows the broad divisions between different transport sectors as employers of labour. Apart from the major employers of labour in maritime transport and the railways, which were concentrated in Sydney, transport industry in 1901 included almost 8,000 draymen and teamsters, many of whom operated in the country, over 2,000 cab and omnibus operators, and over 2,000 breadwinners in river and harbour transport, as well as some 300 or so 'Afghan' camel drivers.\(^4\) Most cab-drivers were working proprietors

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2. For full comparative details see Appendix 1, Table 1.
3. NSW Census, 1901, pp.672, 686. The 1891 Census did not break down the transport workforce in as much detail as this. Note that the Sydney Trolley and Draymen's Union claimed 1221 members in 1891 in its submission to the RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.138.
Table 1
Percentage Grades of Occupation in Transport and Communications, 1891-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1891 Males</th>
<th>1891 Females</th>
<th>1891 Persons</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>1901 Females</th>
<th>1901 Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting and unpaid</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage Earner</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>83.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1891, pp.293, 296; and 1901, pp.672-5.
Table 2

Breadwinners in Transport and Communications, 1891-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1891 Males</th>
<th>1891 Females</th>
<th>1891 Total</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>1901 Females</th>
<th>1901 Total</th>
<th>% Increase Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Railway traffic (not construction)</td>
<td>7114</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>7257</td>
<td>9493</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>9731</td>
<td>34.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road traffic (incl. tramways)</td>
<td>12256</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12280</td>
<td>13050</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13106</td>
<td>6.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea and river traffic</td>
<td>10456</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10513</td>
<td>15318</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>15425</td>
<td>46.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal service</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>2128</td>
<td>2644</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>3161</td>
<td>48.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegraph and telephone</td>
<td>1598</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>12.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couriers</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>-41.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34208</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>34708</td>
<td>42822</td>
<td>1045</td>
<td>43867</td>
<td>26.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New South Wales Census, 1901, p.634.
or lessees. A high proportion of teamsters were also self-employed, for only a small amount of capital was required to purchase a team of bullocks, which could more easily traverse the rough outback country than horses.

However, from 1891-1901 the proportion of self-employed amongst transport and communications breadwinners fell below that for the Census Industrial class. This partly reflected the effects of the depression. As with other forms of economic independence, the position of independent teamsters had always been insecure. Most were paid by contract, subject to the safe arrival of goods in an agreed time. But any number of natural mishaps, such as floods in the country, could ruin the best made plans and even destroy the teamsters' capital, his bullocks or horses.

Long-term structural changes in the transport industry were also gradually and permanently eroding the position of independent men.

By the late 1880s the independent teamsters' margin for profit, and hence his economic security, was declining because of an increasingly competitive situation. Railways were a major factor in this, providing quicker, and often cheaper, transport as they rapidly spread throughout the colony. Therefore, whilst the railways could never penetrate the isolated areas which bullock teams could reach, they were responsible

5. This nature of cab-drivers is implicit in contemporary references to them. See Fry, op.cit., p.62, re Melbourne cab-drivers.
6. The submissions of various country Carriers' Unions to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, pp.137-8, show that most of their members were independent men, or contract workers. They claimed about 1,000 members. Their main objects were to gain 'fair and equitable' cartage prices, and union subscriptions were partially payable upon a commission basis, according to cartage prices. The Riverina carriers were organized as a co-operative business, with the object of providing 'means for the profitable investment of savings'. The Silverton Alphabetical Directory of Householders, reproduced in Kearns, Silverton, pp.37-8, lists a large number of carriers and teamsters. See Bean, op.cit., pp.v-vi, 9ff, 128-31; Ward, op.cit., pp.3, 74, 100, 104-6.
7. See Bean, op.cit., pp.124ff; and the Carriers' Unions' submissions cited in n.6 above.
for pushing teamsters further into the outback fringes of settlement. As roads improved, quicker horse transport also began to replace bullock-teams. But the capital cost of horse teams, including replacements over long distances, was at least three times that of a bullock-team. Furthermore, camels, which were faster than bullocks, and could travel much longer distances without food or water, had a competitive edge over bullock or horse teams in difficult terrain in the outback, particularly since their 'Afghan' and Indian drivers were paid very low wages. By the late 1880s fierce competition developed around Broken Hill between these two modes of transport, and between river transport and the railways with which the camels or bullocks linked. However, the combination of more reliable railway competition, Government irrigation works, and the great drought in the 1890s, combined to aid in the decline of river transport, which, like the bullock teams, had once played an important role in opening up western areas for grazing. In Sydney independent cab-drivers also suffered damaging competition from omnibuses, trams, and trains from the late 1880s.

8. Bean, op.cit., pp.127-8; M. Cannon, Australia in the Victorian Age, vol.2, Life in the Country, Melbourne, 1976, pp.91-4; Ward, op.cit., pp.195, 210. Until the opening of the Silverton rail link in 1888 all goods were transported to Broken Hill by bullock or horse-drawn wagon. Cobb & Co. also opened a Broken Hill branch in 1892. Kearns, Silverton, pp.17, 23; and Broken Hill 1883-93, p.45. In the 1870s when Goulburn was the terminus for the southern railway line, it had 60-70 carriers. But when the line was extended, their numbers were greatly reduced. Wyatt, History of Goulburn, p.169.

9. AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1898, p.4.

10. Kearns, Broken Hill 1883-93, pp.24, 59; and Broken Hill 1894-1914, p.32.


However, important as these developments were in confirming the trends towards declining opportunities for small independent men, and loss of rural employment, this chapter concentrates on the two major employers of labour in transport, where wage earners 'pure and simple' had always formed virtually all of the workforce: maritime transport and the railways.

**Maritime Transport**

As an island continent, with most settlement concentrated on the coast, and with colonial economies dependent on trade, Australia always had a flourishing maritime industry. By its nature it attracted large-scale capital investment and one of the earliest large-scale concentrations of labour in the colonies, accounting for over one third of all breadwinners in transport and communications in 1901, as Table 2 shows. Its growth rate in terms of employment was the highest of all transport industries at the end of the nineteenth century, and far higher than that for industry or the population as a whole. Maritime transport was also the source of some of New South Wales's largest and earliest trade unions of semi and unskilled labour, which played an important role in the urban labour movement. In Sydney, the maritime unions were the largest of all.

Colonial shipping was divided into three fairly distinct trades: overseas, intercolonial and intra-colonial. British firms dominated the overseas trade, and since their crews also originated mainly from overseas, overseas shipping is not a major concern of this thesis. Local firms dominated the domestic shipping trades, but British capital was also important in these. Amongst the larger intercolonial companies,

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13. Total population increased by 20.5 per cent, total workforce by 19.7 per cent, and total Census Industrial class by 7.2 per cent, from 1891 to 1901. NSW Census, 1901, pp.630, 634-5. Table 2 includes river traffic with maritime employees, but the former contributed a small and declining proportion of this total.
for example, it dominated the Queensland Steam Shipping Company (QSS Co.), and when that Company absorbed the Sydney-based Australasian Steam Navigation Company (ASN Co.), in 1887, British capital also dominated the resultant new Australasian United Steam Navigation Company (AUSN Co.). Although local investment occurred in all three companies, largely through Burns, Philp and Company, all the directors of the QSS Co. and AUSN Co. resided in London. After the absorption of the ASN Co. all of the major intercolonial firms were based outside New South Wales, even though Sydney was a major shipping centre and much of the maritime workforce was based there. 14 Victorian, and to a lesser extent, South Australian, shipping firms dominated the intercolonial trade, and when the Steamship Owners' Association of Australasia was formed it was dominated by the Victorian Steamship Owners' Association. 15 However, because of lesser facilities and capacities in non-metropolitan ports, together with the more specialized nature of local trade, and the increasingly larger size of intercolonial vessels, the intra-colonial trade remained largely separate from the intercolonial, with the possible exception of the Sydney-Newcastle run. In New South Wales the more important local firms included the Hunter River New Steam Navigation Company (HRNSN Co.), the Clarence and Richmond Steam Navigation Company (CRSN Co.), and the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company (ISN Co.). 16

15. There are two obvious indications of this. Firstly, the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Steamship Owners' Association of Australasia (SOA) are recorded in the Victorian Steamship Owners' Association Minute Book, even though the SOA was based in Sydney. Secondly, a perusal of these Minutes shows that the SOA always consulted the Victorian Association before taking important action of any kind. The Victorian Association, on the other hand, showed considerable independence. It was also more militant.
By the mid-1880s, local firms complained of falling profitability attributed mainly to overseas competition, as well as rising wages and labour disputes. However, Henning shows that, despite short-term liquidity problems over 1885-6, and a slower rate of growth in shipping trade for the late 1880s, profitability actually remained fairly stable, until a fall over 1890-92. Sinking funds, often exceeding depreciation requirements, sometimes disguised profitability, but some companies recorded very high profit levels, and continuing orders for new ships, until 1890, revealed shipowners' optimism. To the extent that some shipping firms were suffering financially by the late 1880s, notably those in the Victorian intra-colonial trade, this seems to have resulted from local overcompetition, leading to a series of price-cutting wars, rather than from overseas competition or labour disputes. The amalgamation of the QSS Co. and the ASN Co. represented a move towards

17. Conference between SOA and maritime unions, SMH, 30 July, 5 and 28 August 1884; Special Report of the Conference between the Steamship Owners' Association of Australasia and the Federated Seamen's Union of Australasia and the Stewards' and Cooks' Union of Australia (Federated) on the Subject of the Proposed Reduction of Wages, Sydney, September 1886 (hereafter, SRC, 1886), pp.19, 49, 90–1 and passim. Evidence of J. Burns (of Burns, Philp and Co.) and F.J. Thomas (Manager, HRNSN Co.) in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.129, 190. There were also some earlier complaints of this kind, for example, SMH, 11 November 1882.

18. Note union awareness of the role of sinking funds, T.M. Davis (Seamen's Union Secretary) in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.200.

19. Henning, op.cit. Much of Henning's argument is based on Burns' evidence in RRCS, 1891, which he finds quite unreliable. Captain F.H. Trouten, one of the Commissioners, and a former ASN Co. manager, himself doubted Burns' evidence, although he had used similar arguments in 1884, as the SOA's main negotiator with the unions. The SRC, 1886, pp.45, 71, 146–7, 177, 205 and 211 reveals high profit levels for many companies, and p.247, the poor position of Victorian firms. Overcompetition was implicit in the references to price cutting in ibid., pp.158–9, 252–3, and explicit during the 1884 conference. See also Bach, op.cit., pp.194–200. After complaints from one shipowner re overseas competition in the 1890s, the SOA itself discovered by investigation of statistics that this could not be sustained. SOA Committee Minutes, 7 and 21 November 1893.
rationalization for a section of the industry. But despite the growth of a favourable attitude towards co-operation and collusion, and the maritime unions' support for shipping combines to prevent competition and thereby preserve wage levels, agreements between shipowners remained limited. An 1889 scheme for the formation of a single shipping combine would have required the 'mothballing' of up to a third of existing fleets, if it had received support. Failure to overcome intensive competition was presented publicly as commitment to the virtue of free enterprise against monopoly. 21

Overcompetition was exacerbated by technological change. In the 1880s the trend was towards bigger, faster iron-hulled ships with more mechanical equipment. These ships, therefore, became more expensive. But because of intensive competition, it was necessary to equip fleets with the most modern, and particularly, fastest ships available. Consequently, as competition became more intense, shipping capacity actually rose faster than the volume of trade in the late 1880s. 22

Technological change also affected the nature of the workforce. The proportional size of the seagoing workforce had been reduced, not only by the relatively recent change from sail to steam-powered vessels, but by the continuous development of larger, more efficiently driven, and increasingly mechanized ships with steam windlasses, capstans and steering gear, ballast and bilge pumps, and a range of other equipment. 23

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21. SRC, 1886, pp.223, 251-4, 260-1; Henning, op.cit., pp.580-4, 593. The RRCS, 1891, Appendix M, p.33, summarizes the 1889 scheme. Interestingly, it was proposed by a smaller firm, the HRNSN Co., whose management differed from that of other companies over a number of issues.
22. The Statistical Register records the growing number of larger ships, that is, 500 tons or more. Other sources for these general observations are cited in n.s 23-30 below.
One shipowner, James Burns (of Burns, Philp and Co.) claimed in 1891 that ships twice the size of older steamers only needed the same size crew. Union leaders also claimed that crew sizes had been reduced by 20 – 25 per cent in the 1880s. Steam winches and cranes had also reduced labour requirements on the wharves, and the greater coal burning efficiency of new ships reduced labour demand for coal lumpers who loaded the coal on ships.

However, these same developments greatly expanded demand for marine engineers, and for the level of skill which was required of them. Larger ships commonly carried three or even four engineers in the 1880s, whereas one or two were more common engineering complements previously. Apart from becoming larger and more widely applied, machinery had also become more complicated. Whereas marine engineers had previously had an auxiliary role, requiring minimal qualifications in the days of sail, they now required increasingly formalized qualifications, involving an apprenticeship and a series of written and oral examinations.

In terms of workforce requirements Burns probably exaggerated the effect of new technology. Other shipowners certainly disagreed with his assessment. As much as anything, a reduction in the proportional size of the workforce in the late 1880s seems to have been due to

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24. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.130.
25. Davis and S. Smith (Seamen's President), ibid., pp.201-2, 294-5.
26. G. Herbert (Coal Lumpers' Union secretary), ibid., p.6; C. Fisher, 'Technological Change and the Unions', op.cit.
27. As much as anything the increase was also the result of union bargaining with shipowners. The number of engineers carried by a ship varied in a ratio according to tonnage, horsepower, and distance sailed. The major increases gained by the union occurred in 1882-3 after a brief campaign. Australasian Institute of Marine Engineers - Sydney District (hereafter AIME), Minutes, 12 and 23 May 1881, 20 February and 17 April 1882, 3 September 1883; Committee Minutes, 30 October 1883, 9 June and 26 July 1884.
29. For example, Thomas, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.193.
shipowners' efforts to lower costs by increasing labour intensity, simply through increasing workloads, regardless of new machinery. Unionists claimed that this was the case on the wharves, and that the stewarding workforce on passenger ships, which remained relatively unaffected by technological change, had been reduced by 50 per cent in the late 1880s. An increase in juvenile labour tends to confirm the same interpretation. New technology's greatest direct effect appears to have been in deskilling the maritime workforce. Despite mechanization, the work remained very labour intensive.

About half of Sydney's total transport workforce, of 13,090 in 1891, was employed in the maritime industry, although the intercolonial nature of shipping makes it difficult to divide the workforce between colonies and ports. In 1891 at least 2,000 seamen sailed from Sydney, and about 3,000 men laboured on the wharves. Newcastle wharves employed

30. Herbert, R. McKillop (Wharf Labourers' ex-President), and J. Armstrong (Stewards' and Cooks' Union ex-Secretary), ibid., pp.6, 11, and 160-1, respectively.
31. SMH, 30 July 1884.
32. NSW Census, 1891, p.683. Although ship-owners were predominantly outside NSW, a high proportion of the Australian maritime workforce was Sydney-based.
33. Ibid. There may have been more, depending on how residence was defined. Norton, op.cit., p.75, claimed that the NSW union had a membership of 4,000 in 1888. This is probably exaggerated, but the Federated Seamen's Union claimed 3,000 members in 1891, apparently, but not clearly, for NSW. RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.142. Butlin, Australian Domestic Product, p.179, certainly underestimates all seamen, including those on river-boats, in Australia in 1901, at 2789.
34. It is difficult to estimate their numbers because of the casual nature of the work. The NSW Census, 1891, p.683, only lists 1,600, but my figure, based on evidence from employers and unionists, includes coal lumpers, an allowance for casually unemployed wharf labourers, and the fact that the unions did not have 100 per cent coverage of employees. Total membership claimed by the Wharf Labourers' and Coal Lumpers' unions was 2,763. Evidence of McKillop, R. Garn (stevedore), and F.J. Brennan (TLC) in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.13, 16 and 93 respectively; and Literary Appendix, pp.150-1.
over 200. About 600 marine stewards and cooks were Sydney-based, together with about 200 marine officers and over 300 marine engineers. However, since only about one third of all marine engineers were at sea at any one time, most still relied on shore employment to a large extent. Table 3 shows the total New South Wales maritime workforce in 1901.

A strong hierarchical division of labour operated in this workforce. At sea it was reinforced by the need, as employers and authorities saw it, for strict discipline. Supported by the law, ships' officers had almost total authority over seamen, and, as one wharf labourer claimed, 'their social position is considered a few grades higher than ours'. Similarly, amongst marine stewards and cooks, a parallel hierarchy ran downwards, from Chief Steward and Chief Cook, to scullerymen and female stewardesses, on large ships. Marine engineers, who organized as a

35. The Newcastle Wharf Labourers' Union claimed 100 members, and the Newcastle Crane Employees' Union, 98, RRCs, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.150.
36. The Federated Stewards' and Cooks' Union - NSW Branch, claimed 500 members, ibid., p.142, but did not cover all employees.
37. The Marine Officers' Association claimed 183 members for NSW, ibid., p.142, but did not enrol masters. By 1901 there were 403 masters and officers on all Australian coastal steamships, Butlin, Australian Domestic Product, p.179.
38. C. Fisher, 'Technological Change and the Unions', op.cit., p.30, lists almost one third of AIME Australasian membership as being ashore in 1890, but this figure does not include those temporarily ashore. Butlin, Australian Domestic Product, p.179, cites only 332 ships' berths in Australia for marine engineers, which leads him to grossly under-estimate the number of engineers. Buckley, op.cit., p.114, cites a total AIME membership of 900 in 1890, and T. Hay (AIME Secretary) claimed 95 per cent union coverage of all engineers, RRCs, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.241. In 1880 only 150 engineers sailed from Sydney, Sydney Association of Marine Engineers (later AIME), Committee Minutes, 9 June and 23 December 1880. These minutes, however, show a rapid increase in numbers during 1882-4.
39. The NSW Census, 1891, does not provide the same detailed breakdown as that of 1901.
40. McKillop, RRCs, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.11. The disciplinary provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.
41. Federated Stewards' and Cooks' Union - NSW Branch, Rules, 1887, and 1901.
### Table 3

**New South Wales Workforce in Sea and River Transport**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ferries</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipmaster, officer, seamen (merchant service)</td>
<td>4372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer, stoker, coal-trimmer (steamers, merchant service)</td>
<td>2409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steward, stewardess</td>
<td>1520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wharf labourer, lumper</td>
<td>4930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boatman</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 1901</strong></td>
<td>15425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 1891</strong></td>
<td>10513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *New South Wales Census 1901*, pp.672, 686

'professional body', rather than a trade union, were more self-consciously an elite than their shore colleagues in the manufacturing workforce. The position of marine engineers, who were subject to a graded system of classification, increasingly paralleled that of ships' officers as technological change increased their importance. The size of ships added a further dimension to this workforce hierarchy. Chief officers, engineers and stewards on small ships occupied positions on the hierarchy well below that for similar officers on large ships.

Wharf labour was also divided hierarchically, on the basis of skill and sheer strength. For example, 'deep sea men' required greater skill than labourers on coastal vessels in stowing large volumes of cargo for the long voyages of overseas ships. 'Lumpers', whose work, carrying

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42. Hay, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.240.
43. C. Fisher, 'Technological Change and the Unions', *op.cit.*, pp.36-9.
coal to the ships, was dirty and heavy, occupied the bottom position in the hierarchy. The scale of wage rates reflected this hierarchy. A further hierarchical dimension existed between the small number of permanent, or 'constant' hands, and masses of casual labourers. A dependable labour supply was required for speedy unloading of cargo, to minimise docking charges and spoiling of perishables. But because of the great variations in volume of trade, it was uneconomical for stevedores to employ any more than a small pool of 'constants'.

However, despite these divisions, and an element of cosmopolitanism on the waterfront, a good deal of homogeneity existed amongst the workforce. Most wharf labourers were former seamen, accepting lower earnings for the benefits of a more regular home life. Some wharf labourers went to sea in winter, when waterfront employment contracted. Many were also British seamen, attracted by higher local wages.

From the mid-1880s, maritime wages generally improved. Ships' engineers relied on the strategic importance of their skills to gain a rise in 1883, although they did not gain the eight hour day as early

45. The Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union Revised Rules, 1900.
46. Herbert, McKillop, T. Napier (stevedore), J. Doyle (stevedore), and Burns in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.4, 8, 21, 58-9 and 122 respectively; Mitchell, op.cit., p.10.
47. Herbert, McKillop, A. Lenehan (stevedore), and Armstrong in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.3-4, 8, 116 and 161 respectively. Some of these witnesses suggest that up to a third of Sydney's wharf labourers were Scandinavian, obviously ex-seamen. Seamen's shore work was frequent enough for their union to allow reduced subscriptions for those who worked ashore for over six months, SMH, 1 August 1884. Note correspondence links with British, New Zealand and South African Unions, AW, 1 May and 12 June 1897. The New Zealand Union was affiliated to the loose federation of port unions, the Federated Seamen's Union of Australasia, at this time.
as other sections of maritime labour. In 1884 seamen and stewards and cooks also gained significant rises. Basic rates for wharf labour remained constant in the 1880s. But special payments for heavy or bagged cargo, or for overtime, improved earnings. Stevedores at the Strikes Commission in 1891 claimed that average earnings on the wharves were £2 to £2/5/- per week. Overtime payments depended on the establishment of an eight hour day, which wharf labour theoretically gained early in 1890. Seamen also claimed the eight hour day from 1884. With overtime payments, employers claimed that the 'average' seaman earned £8/15/- per month.

Domestic wages were well above those for seamen on overseas vessels, which placed local shipowners at a competitive disadvantage to the extent that overseas companies were encroaching on the coastal trade. The purpose of the 1886 Conference with the unions called by the shipowners, where they emphasized overseas competition, was obviously to gain acceptance of lower wages. Unfortunately for the shipowners, however,

48. AIME Minutes, 5 March, 7 May, 6 August and 24 September 1883. This followed successful resistance of wage reductions earlier, ibid., 18 and 25 June 1880, 10 January 1881. In 1890, when the Maritime Strike commenced, the AIME had been negotiating for a further rise since 1889. Hay claimed, quite falsely, that they had not gained a rise for ten years, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.237-40. See C. Fisher, 'Technological Change and the Unions', op.cit., pp.30-1.

49. SMH, 30 July, 5 and 28 August 1884; Burns and Armstrong in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.131 and 160 respectively. Stewards' and Cooks' increases had been up to 50 per cent in some cases.

50. McKillop, Garn, Doyle, Lenehan, Burns, and Napier in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.8-10, 14-15, 19, 58, 116, and 121 respectively. Wharf labourers had sought the eight hour day since 1875, Fry, op.cit., pp.240-1. Wharf labourers had failed earlier in an attempt to raise basic piece rates, SMH, 11 November and 7 December 1882; McKillop, op.cit., p.11. Special wage rates for certain cargoes are listed in Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union, Rules, 1900; and Newcastle Wharf Labourers' Union Rules, 1901.

51. SMH, 30 July, 5 and 28 August 1884; 14-15 April 1885.

52. Letter from 'Australian Owner' to SMH, 8 August 1884; and from a Captain Webber, Manager of PMS Company (Glasgow), ibid., 14 April 1885.
the unions were unimpressed by the foreign competition argument, although they supported the exclusion of foreign companies from the coastal trade.  

Labour costs, therefore, continued to rise as local shipowners became increasingly competitive amongst themselves. Under these circumstances, a spate of new demands from 1889 from all sections of maritime labour provided the final impetus for a united opposition to the unions in 1890.

Shipowners' co-operation in anti-union activity preceded price and market co-operation, especially because employers desired flexibility in labour costs in order to maintain profits during their own price-cutting wars. But such intensive competition also limited the degree of co-operation. In 1878 a Steamship Owners' Association of Australasia (SOA) was formed, and based in Sydney, surprisingly, because most large shipowners were based outside New South Wales. However, substantial unity was not achieved until 1884. Even then, despite increasing irritation with union demands, competitive tendencies proved difficult to overcome. Schemes for closer anti-union co-operation over 1889-90 received limited initial support. But by the end of July 1890, shipowners had achieved organization as a 'compact body', and the SOA's

55. The connection between price-cutting and the desire to lower wages came across very clearly at the SOA/union conference of 1884, SMH, 30 July, 5 and 8 August 1884; in the letter from 'Australian Owner', ibid., 28 August 1884; and in Thomas' evidence in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.190-1. He had also stressed the anti-union advantages of the 1889 cartel scheme. Also, Lenehan in ibid., p.119.
56. Shipowners' evidence at the RRCS, 1891, traces these developments, if obscurely at times. See Henning, op.cit., pp.585, 590-1; Fitzpatrick, 'Seamen's Union', Chapter 2, pp.9-11.
chairman, W.C. Willis, believed that 'never before has such an opportunity to test the relative strength of labour and capital arisen'.

At a meeting of all shipowners at Albury during 23-25 August, a joint policy of resistance to the unions was agreed upon, and advertisements for 'free labour' appeared on the wharves prior to the Maritime Strike.

It was largely under SOA leadership that employers entered the contest of which Willis had spoken, soon afterwards, in the Maritime Strike.

By the end of the 1890s, shipowners' anti-union organization had been further strengthened. This in turn aided shipowners to overcome their earlier commitment to complete *laissez-faire* competition, with the result that shipping income rose despite the decline in trade in the 1890s.

The marine officers provided the spark for the 1890 Maritime Strike and the emergence of more complete unity among shipowners. In 1890 they sought wage increases, and in Sydney and Melbourne, the Marine Officers' Association affiliated with the Trades and Labour Council, and the Trades Hall Council. The marine officers' wage demands came on top of new demands from all other sections of maritime labour. For this reason alone, their action was intensely irritating to shipowners. But the issue of affiliation with Labour Councils by 'officers and gentlemen' was far more worrying to shipowners. Ships' officers were the owners' representatives in front of the seamen, and the hub for a ship's discipline and hierarchical organization of labour. Their affiliation, side by side with seamen's unions, in Labour Councils, seemed to shipowners to completely undermine their authority and primary loyalty to the shipowner. This issue was of paramount importance as shipowners

57. *Silver Age* (Broken Hill), 29 July 1890.
58. Burns, M.Killop, in *RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence*, pp.11, 125; Fitzpatrick, 'Seamen's Union', Chapter 3, p.2.
moved towards a united resistance to maritime unions' demands. On the issue of wages, the shipowners showed some signs of sympathy for the officers' demands, although their offers were not to the Marine Officers' Association, which they did not recognise, and which did not include captains, but to the newly formed Mercantile Marine Service Association. The latter organization, which had few members and was supported by shipowners in its formation, seems to have represented an attempt to wean officers away from their own union.  

The officers' position was extremely ambiguous. There is little doubt that they did regard themselves as gentlemen, or that they alienated other seagoing employees as a result. T. Davis, of the Seamen's Union, thought poorly of them as unionists, and although seamen and wharf-labourers walked off their jobs in support of marine officers in the Maritime Strike, both Davis and W. Murphy of the Marine Officers' Association noted their reluctance to do so. J. Armstrong of the Stewards' and Cooks' Union virulently opposed the Marine Officers' affiliation with other maritime unions, because 'the officers always treated us as if we were dogs, and never held out the hand of friendship, but it was different when they saw they could make use of us'. Part of the problem to which Armstrong referred had its origins in the system of parallel workforce hierarchies on ships: he spoke of the jealousy caused because chief stewards did not have equal rank with chief officers.

61. G.R. Bradley (Marine Officers' Association, Victorian Secretary), W.A. Murphy (Marine Officers' Secretary), and Thomas, in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.165-7, 169-2, 184-6, 193; Henning, op.cit., pp.587, 590; Rickard, op.cit., pp.17-21. Note that Bradley and Murphy felt that if ships' captains had been enrolled many other officers would not have joined the union. Note shipowners' earlier attempt, in 1885, to establish a 'tame-cat' union for officers, Fitzpatrick, 'Seamen's Union', Chapter 3, p.7.
62. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.185, 200.
63. ibid., p.164.
Similar jealousies existed between engineers and officers.  

The developments of the 1880s had intensified these conflicts and eroded the position of officers. Wage rises for all sections of maritime labour except the officers had reduced their relativities. Marine engineers' wages were higher than officers' by the end of the eighties, and with overtime, after the introduction of an eight hour day, even seamen could earn more. Yet, their special position had a number of liabilities for officers, with few compensations. They paid for their own uniforms, were sometimes expected to contribute to the cost of lost or damaged cargo, and did not always receive a shore allowance between runs. Except on 'easy runs', officers worked long hours. One claimed an average of eighteen at a time, that he had done shifts of forty-eight hours, and that men at the wheel often fell asleep as a result of long hours. Accommodation was also a major complaint, particularly since officers did not receive as much shore leave as seamen. Furthermore, as the size of crews had been reduced in the 1880s, officers claimed that they were increasingly expected to perform manual labour.

For all this, the officers' biggest complaint was that they had 'no definite standing', and that engineers now commanded more respect. This had been a result of the technological change which increased the status and bargaining position of engineers. In a number of clashes with officers concerning their respective authority during the 1880s, engineers had eventually gained shipowners' support, such that, in many respects, they had become the officers' equals, or even their betters. Even abuse from wharf labourers had become more common.

64. Hay, ibid., p.240.  
65. McKillop, Bradley, Murphy, Thomas, Hay in ibid., pp.11, 167-71,187-8,240.  
66. Bradley and Murphy, ibid.  
67. For example, AIME Minutes, 14, 19, 23 February, and 5 March 1883. C. Fisher, 'Technological Change and the Unions', op.cit., pp.36-9, cites a number of other examples.
according to one officer. Under all these circumstances it is not surprising that the officers turned to trade unionism. Shipowners themselves had allowed the position of their own representatives, and the material basis of their loyalty, to be seriously undermined.

In recognition of this situation shipowners gave their officers a substantial increase in wages after the 1890 strike, whereas wages for other sections of maritime labour soon came under downwards pressure. It is interesting in this regard to follow the fortunes of marine engineers after they refused to join the Maritime Strike, on the grounds that they were a 'professional organization' rather than a trade union. Certain grades of engineers also received wage rises in 1890-1, together with some improved conditions. But in 1893 the engineers' loyalty to their masters was rewarded with a 10 - 15 per cent wage reduction, although they gained a further increase in the number of engineers carried by some ships. The formulation of this demand, in association with acquiescence over the wage reduction, was a clever tactic on the engineers' part, for it had greater long-term impact on their position, actually increasing employment opportunities in the depression, and the SOA was unwilling to confront them if they accepted the wage cut. During the depression the other unions were powerless to combat a general assault on wages and conditions, because of unemployment and the employers' recruitment of readily available workers.

68. Bradley, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.171.
69. See sources in n.61.
70. The bottom limit for carrying a fourth engineer was reduced from 500 to 200 tons. SOA Committee Minutes, 27 September, 3, 6, 10, 16, 18, 19 and 24 October 1893; SOA Chairman's Report on Engineers' Conference on Wages, 21 October 1893, and Memorandum of Agreement, 19 October 1893. The Victorian SOA soon wanted to jettison this agreement, but the SOA feared the consequences. Engineers were, however, unsuccessful in gaining a wage rise in 1896. SOA Committee Minutes, 26 July, 8, 15, 19 August, 28 November 1895, 6 February and 12 August 1896. See C. Fisher, 'Technological Change and the Unions', op.cit., p.31; Buckley, op.cit., p.122.
'free labour', especially on the wharves, but also on ships. About a third of the Stewards' and Cooks' Union membership, and most union wharf labourers, failed to regain employment after the 1890 strike. Officially, wharf labourers' rates remained the same, but varied in practice, and overtime payments were lost as hours were lengthened. Stewards and cooks suffered wage cuts in 1891, and seamen lost almost 30 per cent of their wages in 1893. Improvements in maritime wages were very gradual as New South Wales emerged from the depression.

Seamen's wages failed to reach pre-1893 levels even after rises in late 1896 and 1900, and only 'deep sea men' participated in the wage gains on the wharves from 1900-2.

The maritime unions' gains in the 1880s had been transitory, but they had also been limited, except perhaps for the marine engineers. For example, the nature of sea duty made rigid adherence to an eight-hour day impractical.

71. There were even a number of non-union seamen sailing after 1890. SOA Committee Minutes, 22 November 1894, 7 February 1895; McKillop, Napier, Brennan, Burns, Armstrong and Davis, in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.12-13, 20, 23, 90, 126, 131, 165, 203; and Appendix to Evidence, p.7; and press cutting in Literary Appendix, p.8; Worker, 1 November 1890; TLC Minutes, 31 August and 7 September 1893; Fitzpatrick, 'Seamen's Union', Chapter 3, pp.11-14, 17, 22-6; Mitchell, op.cit., p.84.

72. TLC Minutes, 19 December 1891, 19 May, 23 June, and 7 July 1892; Mitchell, op.cit., p.101.

73. Armstrong, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.160.

74. TLC Minutes, 22 and 29 June, 7 September 1893; Fitzpatrick, 'Seamen's Union', Chapter 3, pp.19-26. Note that the officers would not support the seamen in industrial action on this occasion.

75. Statistical Registers, 1898 and 1901, pp.121 and 130, respectively. Fitzpatrick, 'Seamen's Union', Chapter 4, p.9; Butlin, Australian Domestic Product, p.180. Seamen sought rises from late 1895, but some who did so were quickly dismissed. After considerable resistance they gained a rise because of improvements in the labour market. SOA Committee Minutes, 26 November 1895, 12 and 29 August, 16 September, 15, 16, 27 and 29 October 1896.

hour day unlikely for seamen. Stewards and cooks had not gained the 'boon'. Their hours varied according to the run, but were usually very long. Some worked eighteen, and even in port, sometimes twelve, hours per day. Nor was the official reduction from ten to eight hours for wharf labourers fully established in 1890. The unevenness of shipping movements produced alternating bursts of intense activity and then inactivity, which made an eight hour day difficult to enforce, particularly when the men were only employed casually.

Despite wage increases in the late 1880s, earnings were reduced by a number of factors. For example, payment for breakages was often expected of stewards and cooks. 'Perquisites', or tips, which had been an important part of stewards' income, were officially forbidden on most ships in the late 1880s. Burns claimed that this rule was honoured more in the breach than in observance, but one unionist stated that 'the class of people' taking advantage of cheaper fares due to price-cutting were not disposed to tipping. Accommodation close to the waterfront was necessary because of the short notice for casual employment on the wharves, and even on ships, but it was also expensive.

77. Thomas, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.192-3. This is confirmed by the Seamen's 1890 demand for sea watches to be counted in units of eight hours, Fitzpatrick, 'Seamen's Union', Chapter 2, p.11. NSW Seamen's Union Rules, 1884, concede eight hours 'where practicable'.

78. Burns and Armstrong, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.130 and 160 respectively. Stewards and cooks did not gain an eight hour day until the early 1900s. Federated Stewards' and Cooks' Union of Australasia, Rules, 1887 and 1906.

79. McKillop and Lenehan, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.14 and 116 respectively. Newcastle wharf labourers had not even gained an official eight hour day. TLC Minutes, 23 March 1891; Mitchell, op.cit., p.117. The official eight hour day was 7.00am to 5.00pm, with two mealbreaks. Wharf Labourers' submission to RRCS, 1891, Appendix to Evidence, p.5.

80. Burns and Armstrong, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.130, and 160-3 respectively; AW, 8 May 1897. Armstrong also claimed that many shipowners paid 10/- per month less than the rates they quoted.
accounting for up to half of seamen's wages, according to unionists.

If seamen earning overtime money and fully-employed wharf labourers often earned more than other 'unskilled' labourers, they needed to in order to pay rents which were claimed to range from 13/- to £2 per week on the waterfront.\(^\text{81}\) When waterfront activity contracted in winter, wharf labourers' wages fell to about 25/- to 30/- per week, if employment could be gained at all. Even during the busy months, breakdowns, inclement weather, and waiting for ship arrivals, cut into earnings.\(^\text{82}\)

Most wharf jobs only lasted two to three days, and seamen were frequently unemployed between runs. One wharf labourers' representative estimated that a reserve labour force of one-fifth of the total (or 600 men) existed above normal labour requirements. Another claimed that only half the workforce was employed at any one time in the late 1880s. This largely explains the ease with which the SOA gained non-union labour to break the Maritime Strike. Deserters from overseas ships also intensified job competition.\(^\text{83}\) Even the marine engineers experienced some unemployment in 1880 and 1884-5.\(^\text{84}\)

Seamen also experienced a number of hardships at sea, for which even high earnings could not completely compensate. Discipline could be harsh, and it was claimed that 'crimping', or press-ganging, still occurred occasionally.\(^\text{85}\) Food and accommodation at sea were often

\(^{81}\) Davis, McKillop, Herbert, and Lenehan, in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.4, 9, 117 and 201. Lenehan denied that maritime labourers needed to live close to the waterfront, but quoted their residence in Balmain and North Sydney as exceptions!

\(^{82}\) McKillop, Doyle and Lenehan, ibid., pp.9, 59 and 116 respectively.

\(^{83}\) McKillop, Herbert, and Brennan, ibid., pp.4, 8-9, 93 respectively. In this context McKillop claimed that the aim of establishing an eight hour day was to share employment, ibid., p.14. See n.71 above, also.

\(^{84}\) Mainly amongst juniors, AIME Minutes, 25 June 1880, 1 December 1884, 2 February 1885.

\(^{85}\) McKillop, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.8; Norton, op.cit., p.75.
More generally, seamen were often isolated from the comforts of family and friends for long periods.

The work process itself was hard and heavy for maritime labour, despite the effects of technological change. Indeed, there are indications that workloads intensified in the 1880s as shipowners attempted to reduce labour costs beyond the savings directly attributable to new technology. The long bursts of work on the wharves, of sometimes 20 to 30 hours at a time, with no protection from the weather, took toll of human strength. If a labourer was young, strong, willing and lucky in the lottery of casual labour, he could earn very good money. But the strength associated with age added to the insecurity built into a system of casual labour. Employers relied more than usual on strong young labourers, with no obligations to older workers.

Maritime labour was also dangerous. Wharf labourers experienced a high accident rate, which even led some employers to insure their men against disablement. Table 4 shows that, despite improvements in shipping in the 1880s, wrecks and disasters claimed more lives in the late 1880s and the 1890s than did coal mining. A Parliamentary Select Committee of Inquiry in 1886-7 revealed frequent unseaworthiness of ships, tampering with Plimsoll lines, and inadequate life-saving equipment. The last two findings are not necessarily inconsistent

86. Smith, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.204-5; SMH, 16 April 1885.
87. See n.s 29-31 above.
88. Herbert, McKillop, Napier, Garn, and Davis in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.6, 9-10, 15, 19, 201, 205; TLC Minutes, 23 March 1891; Mitchell, op.cit., pp.12, 117, 163-8. McKillop claimed that sometimes men died on the job because of the strain involved, although Garn and Napier emphasized the men's 'slackness'.
89. This was an unusual practice at the time. Napier, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.18, 20; Fry, op.cit., pp.113-4.
90. Norton, op.cit., p.75; Mitchell, op.cit., p.6; AW, 23 March 1895; Smith, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.204-5. The Seamen's Union's special provisions for members suffering accidents are an indication of the dangers faced, Rules, 1884. Even marine engineers were not immune, C. Fisher, 'Technological Change and the Unions', op.cit., p.39.
Table 4

Wrecks and Disasters to Shipping in New South Wales Jurisdiction
1881-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Under 100 tons</th>
<th>100-200 tons</th>
<th>200-300 tons</th>
<th>300-400 tons</th>
<th>400-500 tons</th>
<th>Over 500 tons</th>
<th>Total Lives Lost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>111</td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>1894</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*not ascertained

Source: Statistical Register.
with higher technology and newer ships. It is noteworthy that by far the most frequent shipping disasters occurred with the smaller vessels, that is under 200 tons, usually plying the intra-colonial trade. These vessels might be expected to be the older, less seaworthy ones. But the second most frequent rate of disasters occurred amongst ships over 500 tons, that is the larger, more modern vessels. This may confirm the trend of shipowners attempting to reduce costs on new vessels by increasing labour's workloads, overloading with cargo, and providing inadequate lifesaving equipment, to the extent of endangering safety.

The circumstances of maritime labour allow some understanding of the militancy traditionally associated with its unions. In the 1880s, union attempts to improve working conditions intensified as shipowners suffered increasingly from competition between themselves. As employers conceded union demands they sought new methods for reducing labour costs which tended to undercut the unions' gains. By 1890, they also sought to forestall further union demands.

The Railways

The late 1870s and 1880s witnessed a phenomenal growth in railways in New South Wales. Construction of railways was the main activity of the Government's large public works programme, for which it borrowed so heavily from London in this period. By 1890 New South Wales had established a basic rail system covering most population centres and areas of industrial or agricultural activity. As Table 5 shows, by 1890 the permanent railway workforce (excluding navvies), which had almost doubled in the 1880s, was slightly larger than that for maritime transport, which had begun at a much earlier stage of the colony's development. A year later, when railway employment had fallen slightly,
it accounted for 4.5 per cent of the total male employees in New South Wales. During the 1880s, the railways also became the source of one of the largest of the new unions of semi and unskilled labour, and of one of the more important new 'craft' unions, the Engine-Drivers' Association.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>6268</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>10942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>7483</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>10638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>8045</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>9694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>8743</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>9135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>9933</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>9229</td>
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<td>9756</td>
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<td>11279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>11827</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>11744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>13119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Registers

Such rapid expansion created managerial difficulties for the railways in the 1880s. Political interference especially hindered efficient and publicly accountable management whilst the railways were administered under a normal Department of State. Accusations of political favouritism in employment and promotion were frequent. The 'railway vote' also became important for politicians because of concentrations

92. Calculated from Table 5 and NSW Census, 1891, p.292.
93. Note that the 1891 and 1901 figures are far higher than those in the NSW Census of those two years, shown in Table 2. I cannot explain such a large discrepancy, of about 3,000 in each case, except to speculate that many railway employers were in either isolated areas, or away from home, on the nights of the Census. This is confirmed by the fact that most of the discrepancy occurs in the listing of fettlers and locomotive employees.
of railway labour, including navvies, in particular electorates, and because of constituents' demands for extension of railway services to their regions. This became an important consideration in the formation of governments and their maintenance of Parliamentary support in the 1880s. Partly for these reasons, New South Wales created an independent public corporation managed by three Commissioners, in 1888. In so legislating, the Government created the earliest example in New South Wales of the bureaucratic hierarchies of labour which gradually became more characteristic of large-scale public and private enterprise in the twentieth century.

Two major dimensions of labour division operated within the railways, and are partially illustrated in Table 6. First, three administrative divisions of locomotive, traffic and permanent way, existed. The locomotive branch consisted of enginemen and cleaners, and the tradesmen and labourers in the large railway workshops, where rolling stock was maintained. The number of enginemen increased from 394 in 1880, to 1260 by 1891. Workshop employment reached 2600 in 1890. The traffic branch consisted of all station staff: station masters, porters, signalmen and shunters. The permanent way branch comprised fettlers who maintained the rail lines.

Further hierarchies functioned within all these branches, particularly in the locomotive branch, where enginemen occupied the

96. The following two paragraphs are based on Docherty, op.cit., pp.6-9, 20, 35-6, 59.
most elite position, followed by tradesmen. Enginemen began work in the railways as cleaners. After a time they became eligible for promotion to third class fireman, a position which was quite skilled. Generally, after four years, a fireman became eligible for promotion to engineman, of which there were also a number of grades. It took up to ten years to become an engineman. The second major division existed between salaried and wages staff. The former, including station masters, clerks, foremen, engineers and surveyors, accounted for a status-conscious 10 per cent of the workforce. Furthermore, despite the large concentrations of labour in urban workshops, much of the workforce, particularly in the permanent way, was geographically divided in small groups throughout the country. 97

It is not difficult to ascertain reasons for the popularity of

97. ibid., pp.36, 46.
railway employment. Although a number of country porters were only employed seasonally, most employees experienced a security of employment which was unusual elsewhere, as well as the opportunity for promotion. They also enjoyed a number of fringe benefits, such as free rail passes and paid annual holidays, which were usually unobtainable in other occupations. Consequently, entry to the railway workforce, but particularly to the locomotive workforce, was intensely competitive. Skilled enginemen were well-paid by colonial standards, earning 11/- to 15/- per day. There was also considerable prestige in the job itself. Some engine-drivers wore suits and bowler hats to their cabins (despite temperatures of up to 130°F), and for most of the day were independent of direct supervision. Firemen were also well-paid, at 8/- to 10/- per day, which placed them on a level with workshop tradesmen. Although cleaners' wages were only 5/- to 6/6 per day, the unskilled labourer's standard of 7/- per day was also more of a reality in Government service than in much private enterprise.

Nevertheless, railway workers had their genuine dissatisfactions. Some, notably the fettlers, had gained the eight hour day by the 1880s. But it was not as widespread, even here, as often believed. Most traffic and locomotive employees worked at least a ten hour day.

The imposition of a highly disciplined work process created a number of tensions. As Docherty notes, 'time-keeping permeated all...aspects' of railway employment. Breaches of an elaborate system of regulations made employees subject to fines, jeopardised promotion prospects, or,
if serious enough (for example, insubordination or drunkenness), could lead to dismissal. Traffic and locomotive men were particularly closely supervised.\(^{103}\) A promotion system itself imposed strong controls over work-behaviour, based on workers' self-interest. Promotion was not automatic and was always competitive. In the early 1880s, promotion irregularities and complaints over the tyranny of railway officers had become common.\(^{104}\)

Isolation also produced tensions and hardship. Fettlers were geographically isolated in small groups in the country. Guards, shunters, signalmen and enginemen on the other hand, were isolated from family and peer groups by irregular shift work.\(^{105}\)

Even the position of the elite enginemen had drawbacks. Hours were long, commonly fifty to sixty per week, but their irregularity was the major imposition.\(^{106}\) Regular sleeping habits were difficult to achieve, and 'short time', between spells of driving, was often not paid, even if it was spent away from home, and was not long enough even for enginemen to leave the station. Furthermore, the engineman's position was insecure. In periods of slow railway activity, which occurred seasonally, junior drivers were frequently demoted to fireman, until traffic increased. Maintenance of his position also depended on regular tests for sight and hearing.\(^{107}\) These were important because

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103. ibid., pp.38, 49-50.
104. W.F. Schey (Secretary of all-grades railway union 1886-92, and Labor MP in the 1890s), 'The NSW Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association', in Norton, op.cit., pp.84, 108-9; Docherty, op.cit., pp.45-6, 48, 50.
107. Docherty, op.cit., pp.9-12, 16-17, 109. See n.111 also.
of the high degree of responsibility shouldered by enginemen. But 
this responsibility could generate enormous strain. Disciplined 
personal habits, especially sobriety, were essential. Their 
occupation was relatively hazardous, especially under the circumstances 
of their sleeping habits, and accidents could have disastrous 
consequences, for which they might be held responsible. Enginemen 
were likely to be involved in a high proportion of the accidents shown 
in Table 7, although some other railway occupations, notably shunting, 
were also dangerous. The railways denied responsibility for an 
overwhelming majority of these accidents.

Working conditions fluctuated in the 1880s. They appear to have 
declined in the early 1880s, as rapid growth in services outstripped 
growth in the workforce, particularly in the skilled workforce. For 
example, as late as 1886 enginemen complained of a marked increase in 
overtime, with some working seventeen to twenty-one hour shifts. 
However, after the early 1880s, working conditions generally improved 
until after the mid-1880s, when wages and conditions were subject to 
an assault by the Government, presumably at first, in response to 
recession. In 1886 employees were forced to pay half fare for travel

108. The Engine-drivers' Union itself placed great emphasis on sobriety. For example, Minutes, 4 June 1889, 27 March and 2 July 1890.

109. Docherty, op.cit., pp.11, 23, 26. These issues received considerable 

110. This is clear from the division of accidents into those the result 
of circumstances beyond the victims' control, and those due to 

111. The Minutes Book of the Locomotive Engine-drivers, Firemen and Cleaners' Association holds copies of petitions drawn up over June-
July 1886, complaining about the level of overtime. Also complaints 
re wage reductions: Engine-drivers' Minutes, 13 April, 10 May, and 
12 June 1883.
Table 7

Accidents on Railways, 1884-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employees Killed/Injured</th>
<th>Total Killed/Injured**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>11 20</td>
<td>23 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>20 25</td>
<td>41 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>12 18</td>
<td>30 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>16 17</td>
<td>38 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>nr* nr*</td>
<td>nr* nr*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>38 16</td>
<td>31 74</td>
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<td>1890</td>
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<td>18 181</td>
<td>36 255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>13 328</td>
<td>46 441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**including passengers and trespassers
*no returns

Source: Statistical Register
to work, which amounted to a significant wage reduction. Although this affected only a small proportion of the workforce (4 per cent), promotions were more seriously affected. The workforce increased rapidly again over 1888-90, but not without fluctuations. Further retrenchments occurred in 1889, before a large increase in 1890. Generally, the slowing down of the rate of expansion after the mid-1880s created some uncertainty about prospects.

The 1888 New South Wales railway legislation requires placement within this context. Upon his appointment as Chief Commissioner, E.C. Eddy, set about a 'rationalization' of the railways. This involved improvements to services, and improvements to the permanent way, which had been allowed to run down as the railways concentrated on expansion. But it also involved reduction of costs, at a time when the Government was reducing expenditure in a number of areas. From 1888 enginemen's short-time, and overtime increased, wages were reduced, workloads increased, piecework was introduced into the workshops, some workers were retrenched, and some porters replaced with cheap, juvenile labour. It seems likely that these developments would have continued even if the depression had not occurred.

During the 1890s the number of retrenchments increased and most employees' gains of the early to mid-1880s were eroded. Railway

113. See Table 5 above. Also, Railway Employees Discharged, VPLANSW, 1885-6, vol.7, pp.495-6; Railways - Employees Dismissed, ibid., 1887, Second Session, vol.4, p.696; Schey, op.cit., p.110; Engine-drivers' Minutes, 22 September 1887.
114. Engine-drivers' Minutes, 28 June and 30 July 1888.
115. See Table 5; and see n.117.
116. Engine-drivers' Minutes, 18 February, 12 March, and 20 June 1889, 14 and 19 January, and 5 November 1890; TLC Minutes, 11 September 1890, 19 March 1891.
employment fell from the 1890 peak to 9135 in 1894. Enginemen were hit hardest, perhaps because their total wages bill was a high proportion of total costs. Their numbers fell from 1260 to 777, and their workloads increased significantly. Demotions were also common in the 1890s. Although railway workshop employees usually maintained their pre-depression wage rates, many only worked three-quarter time.

Nevertheless, the railways remained the most secure area of employment in the 1890s. At 17 per cent, railway unemployment was only a little over half that for the general workforce. Railway employment also recovered more quickly than elsewhere, gradually from 1895, and then gathering pace, until in 1901 the 1890 peak had been surpassed.

To some extent railway workers' relative security explains the limited role which they played in the wider labour movement. It is difficult to imagine two more unalike forms of unionism than those produced by militant maritime workers, and those by railwaymen, intent on securing promotion. Nevertheless, whilst the railway unions did not play as important a role in the labour movement as the maritime unions, directly, their situation did force an early consideration of issues which faced all unions in the 1890s. For example, as public employees, railwaymen were placed in a difficult position for application of the normal sanctions of collective bargaining, such as strikes. This made

117. Engine-drivers' Minutes, 31 October, 15, 16 and 19 December 1892; Railway Employees - Dismissals during past four years, VPLANSW, 1892-3, v.1.6, pp.581-2; Salaries and Wages of Employees in Railway and Tramway Department, ibid., pp.583-9; Docherty, op.cit., pp.90-115. However, note contemporary middle class approval of Eddy's 'rationalizations', Gould, op.cit., pp.163ff.

118. Buckley, op.cit., p.125. This observation tends to invalidate Macarthy's estimates of railway earnings, based on wage rates, op.cit., p.143.

119. See Tables 5 and 6.
them favour arbitration at an early stage. But their position also forced railwaymen to come to terms with politics at an early stage. Collective bargaining for them involved political lobbying. These issues are discussed fully in later chapters. However, they also raise the further issue of the role of the colonial state in labour relations. This is the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF THE STATE
For the purposes of this thesis the state in capitalist society is defined as an institution which maintains the domination of one class over others. Defined in this broad sense, the state institution includes, among its major agencies, Parliament, the courts, police, military, schools, public service bodies, statutory authorities, and the 'welfare' apparatus. Objectively, these agencies of the state possess a unity and internal logic determined by the over-riding function of the state as a whole, although they may not always further that function in a rational or efficient manner. These agencies may also be grouped according to their function within the state institution. The major overlapping groups are the repressive agencies of the state (courts, police, military), the 'legitimizing' agencies of the state (schools, the electoral system), the integrative agencies of the state (welfare systems, developmental roles, 'social policy', the state as an employer), and the executive, which, in late nineteenth century New South Wales, resided in the Parliamentary Government. This interpretation of the state is no more susceptible of ultimate 'proof' than any other definition, but it is useful, as an analytical tool, in identifying the complexities of the role of the state.

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It departs from the two traditional interpretations of the state: that of the pluralists, and that of the Marxists. Briefly, the pluralist tradition has interpreted the capitalist state as a co-ordinator of conflicting social elites and interest groups of varying power, but with none so powerful that it dominates the others. The state's function in this context is seen as an arbitrator between these groups, in the interests of society as a whole. The Marxist tradition, on the other hand, essentially interprets the state as 'a capitalist machine', and its executive as 'but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie', or ruling class. This interpretation has tended to emphasize the state's repressive function.

Neither tradition has convincingly or thoroughly analyzed the historical role of the state in capitalism. Recent writers have illustrated the extent to which the state is supportive of capitalism, and yet, has been able to incorporate oppositional forces, including trade unions and labour parties. In the liberal capitalist democracies of the west the state has usually been able to do this without recourse to overt repression. In analyzing this phenomenon, modern writers have emphasized the integrative and 'legitimizing' functions of the state, particularly in the maintenance of a ruling 'hegemony'. Hegemony, in this sense, refers to the ideological dominance of the ruling class, such that its way of life and thought,

4. See n.1.
and its interests, inform social concepts of reality which are diffused throughout the institutions, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and group relations of society. A 'hegemonic situation' exists if ruling class values apparently transcend 'purely' class interests in this way.

The second aspect of the capitalist state which has attracted the attention of recent writers is its 'relative autonomy'. Whilst these writers remain within the Marxist tradition, in that they view the capitalist state as 'primarily and initially the guardian and protector of the economic interests which are dominant', they assert that it does not do this as a direct handmaiden of the ruling class, but by way of its own logical unity with the social system of which it is part. This occurs because the ruling class itself is divided into factions whose interests are not always complementary, for example, pastoralists, manufacturers, and financiers, in nineteenth century New South Wales. For this reason it may even be necessary for the state to act against the interests of some ruling class factions, in order to maintain the domination of the class as a whole. The state's relative autonomy performs an important legitimizing function by protecting its appearance as a neutral social umpire. But above all, it illustrates that only at the related levels of the institution of private productive property (the basis of capitalism), and of the authority of capitalists as employers,

6. Marx, of course, was not unaware of this concept, although he did not employ the modern terminology. See K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works, Moscow, (1969) 1977, vol.1, pp.47, 63-9, 79-80 (Chapter 1 of The Germany Ideology), 162 (Wage Labour and Capital).
is there complete, long-term unanimity in the ruling class. Other issues, such as attempts to lower labour costs during economic crises produce, at best, a short-term unanimity within the ruling class.

The broad definition of the state which is employed here acknowledges the state's hegemonic function and its relative autonomy. It is also useful in explaining a number of aspects of the state's role in late nineteenth century New South Wales. From the late 1880s, as labour mobilized industrially and politically, and as a number of important groups of employers faced economic crisis, employers perceived a threat to their authority in the workplace, and even, in some cases, to the institution of private property. Under these circumstances the state's repressive nature revealed itself in a more open and sustained fashion than ever before. The integrative and legitimizing agencies of the state were not as fully developed as in its modern version. Nevertheless, the development of the state's role in these areas was the major political issue of the 1890s. The political settlement which was reached between the Australian colonies, and between the classes, in the federation of 1901, laid the foundations for the expansion of the modern Australian state in its integrative and legitimizing functions.

It is clear that no section of the labour movement interpreted the state in the manner defined here. But Labour's experience of the state was crucial for the nature of its own organization, and for the development of the policies examined in Part III. Consequently, this chapter consists of a conceptual examination of three of the major areas of state activity which influenced Labour's political thought in the 1890s.

Public Works and Public Employment

This section examines the state in its related roles as an employer and an agent for economic development. In the 1880s the Government
became the largest employer of labour in New South Wales. In the railways the Government directly employed the greatest single concentration of labour in the colony, as we have seen. But in labour-intensive public works, the state employed many more, usually through contractors until the late 1890s. At the turn of the century, the New South Wales Public Works Minister, Edward O'Sullivan, could describe his department as 'the largest industrial organization in the southern world', employing about 20,000. As Table 1 shows, railway construction alone employed almost 10,000 at its peak in the 1880s, and by 1901 this peak had been surpassed after the recovery of construction activity. But although railway construction was the major item of public works, the state was also engaged in programmes for public building construction, communications development, development of roads and bridges, and provision of urban utilities, such as sewerage, port facilities, and rural facilities, such as irrigation, all of which entailed massive public borrowing from London. Largely as a result of these activities, the colonial state had always played a developmental and regulatory role far in advance of the laissez-faire state of early nineteenth century Britain, and in many respects, in advance of the 'collectivist' British state of the later nineteenth century.

9. The Statistical Register provides an annual account of all public works. See Butlin, Investment, pp.292-8, 323-33 re railways.
10. This terminology is employed by A.V. Dicey when he sketches the more interventionist nature of the British state at this time, Lectures on Law and Public Opinion in England During the Nineteenth Century, London, (1905) 1962 edn., esp. pp.259-302.
Table 1

Employees on New South Wales Railway Construction
1883-1891, and 1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Number of Employees*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>7278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>9163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>9810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>7470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>3671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>1606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>10439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NSW Census, 1891, p.310; and 1901, p.686

*Given the nature of the work, there was considerable variation of these numbers during the year. The figures can only be taken as approximate, and the 1901 Census did not attempt to estimate the number of navvies for previous years.

The economic importance of the state’s role cannot be overestimated. Fluctuations in the public sector flowed throughout the economy very quickly. For example, Government loan expenditure on public works, shown in Table 2, and the general trends of the economy, coincided very closely in the 1880s. The peak of the boom, and of Government loan expenditure, coincided in about 1885. During the 1886-7 recession Government loan expenditure on public works fell by about 50 per cent. By 1888 this alone accounted for the unemployment of about 15,000 labourers. Loan expenditure recovered very slightly in that year, only to fall again in 1889, and did not fully recover until 1891, when a new peak was reached. In the economy as a whole from 1888 performance was also sluggish, and did not amount to a full recovery.

from recession, as we noted with unemployment levels in Chapter 1. Recovery of loan expenditure in 1891-2 cushioned employment levels somewhat from the depression, which was already widespread in the private sector. When loan expenditure again fell after 1892, this cushioning effect was removed, and the economy plunged into full depression from that time. Not until the late 1890s was this close relationship broken, when the economy began to recover, but loan expenditure recovered only slightly.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Loan Expenditure on Public Works $,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>2397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>2833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>3266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>3675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>3896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>3766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>2076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>2300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>4750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>3015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>1477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>1653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>2741</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Register
Such a major economic and developmental role for the state was complementary to capitalist development, if not always free enterprise, despite the term 'colonial socialism' which has come to be used to describe it, and despite the fact that some colonials saw the extension of the state as the encroachment of socialism. Government developmental programmes provided the capital superstructure for industrial growth in the nineteenth century. For example, the development of transport and communications networks, especially railways, allowed economic utilization of new rural areas, and allowed perishable goods to reach their markets more quickly. Intercolonial trade in manufactured goods also benefitted to some extent. Even in provision of social utilities, such as sewerage, a large building industry was a clear beneficiary, especially since most of the work was contracted out.

In none of these cases was private enterprise directly edged out by the state. Private enterprise never expressed much interest in provision of urban utilities, with the possible exception of gas production, which remained in private hands in Sydney. Private enterprise involvement in the early provision of railways was very brief. With the great distances of New South Wales, railways outside the capital

13. See Fitzpatrick, British Empire in Australia, p.157; Connell and Irving, op.cit., p.112; Buxton, op.cit., pp.180-209 passim; Butlin, Investment, pp.292-3; and for a description of the benefits to shipowners of state expenditure on harbour facilities, Cannon, Life in the Cities, p.184.
cities could never have simultaneously provided a profit for private entrepreneurs and a cheap, accessible service for marketable goods, even when one allows for the obvious cases of railway construction in areas of low return. More to the point perhaps, the returns on private railway investment could never match those in the highly profitable pastoral and mining industries in the 1870s and 1880s. Instead, a common pattern emerged whereby private enterprise petitioned Parliament, directly or indirectly through political contacts, for state provision of a rail link, a road or bridge, or port facilities, which were required in order to generate profits in entrepreneurial activity, but upon which entrepreneurs were often unwilling to make an outlay themselves.

Private enterprise also gained from provision of supplies and equipment for state services, and from public works contracts. Butlin estimates that this flow-on to private enterprise only accounted for 10 per cent of all railway orders, but this came out of a very large pie. For the reasons examined in Chapter 1, the metals and engineering industry could not achieve the economies of scale necessary to regularly produce complex equipment, such as locomotives, on a competitive basis. But local orders increased in the 1880s, with preferential treatment from Government, and orders for less complex rolling stock were predominantly local. Butlin also under-estimates the importance of maintenance work for

local industry. As an indication of how dependent on Government local engineering was, the 1886-7 downturn in the industry resulted almost entirely from delays in Government contracts.¹⁷ The metals and engineering industry also benefitted indirectly from the agricultural expansion facilitated by railways, in the form of increased demand for agricultural implements.

Butlin contests the supportive nature of state activity by suggesting that it 'poached' on the supply of capital and labour which might otherwise have been available for private enterprise.¹⁸ The argument is weakest concerning the supply of capital. State capital mainly derived from large-scale borrowing in London, whereas urban manufacturing industry largely relied on domestic capital formation. If the state had not borrowed overseas, it may well have required a higher income from taxes, which would have interfered with this private formation of capital to a greater extent, even if the state had been less ambitious in its public works programme. In fact, capital supply was rarely scarce in New South Wales prior to the 1890s, particularly in the profitable pastoral and mining industries, for by the late nineteenth century, the British investor experienced difficulty in finding enough outlets. The largest capital inflow at the peak of the 1880s boom was invested speculatively, in the urban land boom and the Melbourne share boom. The type of capital attracted by public and private spheres also differed. That for the colonial Governments' gilt-edged securities was long-term, derived from the orthodox heart of the British money-market, compared with the increasingly speculative nature of capital entering mining and land in the late 1880s.¹⁹

¹⁷ Linge, op. cit., p. 473.
¹⁹ ibid., pp.334-51.
The argument concerning labour supply is more substantial. Country employers in particular complained that Government activity exacerbated labour shortages, and that as a result wages were maintained at a high level. State activity helped maintain wage levels at least insofar as its absence may have allowed the development of a reserve army of labour (assuming immigration would have remained as attractive under these circumstances). Nevertheless, this effect lacked consistency.

Rural and public works labour requirements were seasonal, and it seems that public works were planned to accommodate rural requirements to some extent. Pastoral labour was sometimes under-utilized, and because of immigrant reluctance to leave the city, labour shortages would have been a problem in the countryside anyway. By attracting labour into the country, developmental works may even have increased its availability when those works were completed. A recent study of the navvies on the northern New South Wales rail line suggests that this work was a net attraction of labour for the colony, since much of its workforce consisted of immigrants from other colonies or Britain. Insofar as the state did contribute to labour shortages, it encouraged capitalization and higher productivity in the pastoral industry. On the other hand, it did attempt to compensate by conducting assisted immigration programmes throughout the 1870s and 1880s.

Of course, employers complained that the assisted immigration schemes were inadequate, and Butlin shows that public works were not always developed in an optimum manner. For example, intercolonial

20. ibid.,pp.82, 97, 115-6, 159, 176.
competition with provision of railways was sometimes wasteful, and railways sometimes competed unnecessarily with established modes of transport, such as shipping and river transport. But these arguments concern the efficiency with which the state supported capitalist economic development. There is nothing in them to suggest that this was not the state's basic function.

The state's role as an employer was also consistent with this function in that it adopted capitalist productive relations in the workplace. This was clearest in public works where the Government absolved itself of direct responsibility for workplace conditions by contracting-out most work. Most public works were in the country. Life for construction workers in isolated, primitive, largely male camps was harsh. During the 1880s there was little evidence of the state acting as a leader in improved wages and conditions for these employees, although it was sometimes accused of doing so. Wages were determined by the operation of the labour market as it affected private contractors. Consequently, building tradesmen's wages were similar to those received elsewhere, and unskilled wages were often around the 'standard' 7/- per day. If more unskilled labourers on public works received this than elsewhere, this was mainly a function of the difficulties in attracting labour into isolated country areas for hard work under rugged conditions. In the New England area in the early 1880s, some navvies gained 9 to 10/- per day. But contractors' rates were lower than the 7/- standard in less isolated areas, such as on the Newcastle-Sydney line. In the early 1880s some railway contractors

25. Macarthy, op.cit.; pp.51,237. Fry, op.cit.; p. 242 shows that some navvies worked an eight hour day, but that it was far from universal.
26. SMH, 19 and 20 October 1882, 1 February 1883.
successfully lowered wages during an influx of assisted immigrants
to the colony.\textsuperscript{27} By the end of the 1880s, a number of unionists
complained of receiving less than 'standard' rates from contractors.\textsuperscript{28}

Contract work was wide-open for abuses. Contractors' profits
were sometimes excessive, but unequal and uncertain. When a
contractor lost on his job, he might default in payment to workmen and
creditors. Some contractors increased profits with shoddy work or
material, or by decreasing wages through a system of truck. Even if
wages were good some contractors saddled their employees with very
heavy workloads: 'only the strongest men had any chance of being
taken on by a Government contractor'. Furthermore, 'all the
objections to contracting applied with double force to sub-
contracting',\textsuperscript{29} which was very common in public works, Government
denials notwithstanding. Piece-work was more common under sub-
contracting. Sometimes it was possible for a contractor to gain a
handsome profit whilst the sub-contractor lost and the workers
remained unpaid.\textsuperscript{30} Public works employment was also on a fairly casual
level. Most projects were relatively short-term, and even though there
was always a number of works in operation during the 1880s, continuity
of employment could not be guaranteed.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{27} Rowe, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.33,40-1.
\textsuperscript{28} For example, Wilkinson (Bricklayers'), RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence,
p.218. Also Stonemasons' and Quarrymen, TLC Minutes, 11 February and
27 November 1890, 5 March 1891,27 January 1892. Intercolonial
Trades Union Congress, 1889, Sutcliffe, \textit{op.cit.}, p.69.
\textsuperscript{29} Reeves, \textit{op.cit.}, vol. 2, p.233.
\textsuperscript{30} A number of unionists voiced criticisms similar to those of Reeves
in this paragraph, for example: Wilkinson, Strong (Tailors'), and
Bavister (Bricklayers') in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.218,
258, 278-9; TLC Minutes 27 August and 24 September 1891; TLC
Surplus Labour Committee Report, TLC Minutes, 2 November 1893.
\textsuperscript{31} Many of the navvies attracted to the northern railway work in the
1880s had been unemployed after working on other railway lines in
NSW or other colonies, Rowe, \textit{op.cit.}, p.41.
During the depression, from 1892, although direct Government employment was not greatly affected, the rapid decline in public works was one of the greatest single contributions to unemployment. Whilst some public works contracts continued in the 1890s, Macarthy shows that wages in this area fell more rapidly than in the private sector, although they varied considerably. With reduced public expenditure, contracts became increasingly competitive, and since labour was the greatest cost factor, this produced a strong downwards pressure on wages and conditions of work. General contractors' wages were 4-5/- per day, but for very irregular work. Unions claimed that men employed for contracts through the Government Labour Bureau were offered very low wage rates. Some were said to be working for as little as 1/10, 2/- or 3/- per day, nor did wages in this area rise in the third quarter of the 1890s, when prices and some skilled wages partially recovered.

From the mid 1890s the Government intervened to improve public works wages. At the end of 1894 the Government directed contractors to pay locally current wage rates and to observe 'customary (that is, eight) hours'. Although it is not clear how this was ever intended to be enforced strictly, the Government also published a scale of rates applicable to various grades of labour. The scale was intended

33. TLC Minutes, 13 and 24 April, 5, 12 and 19 May, 15 December, 1892. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 14 March 1892.
to enforce minimum rates, but the danger for unions was that they could effectively become maximums, except for those skills which were in high demand. For skilled workers especially, the scale seems to have been generally adhered to. The unions policed the system very closely.  

But to the extent that the Government scale of wages was adhered to, this is likely, more than anything, to have been a result of labour market conditions, which, for skilled workers, improved from about this time. Its effect was less certain for the unskilled for whom considerable variations persisted. Their unions were virtually non-existent and many did not come under the classifications contained in the Government scale. The *Australian Workman* noted a further disadvantage: some employers discharged slower hands when the minimum rates were enforced. Still faced with intensive competition, it is likely that contractors attempted to increase workloads. Furthermore, the old anomalies, such as truck, were not removed by Government regulation.

Direct Government employment, or 'day-labour', was considered a more certain gain by the unions in the 1890s, particularly as they organized politically and anticipated the possibility of directly influencing public works employment in this way. In 1894 the Sydney City Council was congratulated by unions for abolishing sub-contracting and paying standard rates, although the gain does not seem to have been totally secure. In 1897 the Post Master General began to replace

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36. SDC Minutes, 13 September and 22 November 1894, 14 February 1895; AW, 23 March 1895; Sydney Labour Council, *Secretary's Half-Yearly Report*, 31 December 1900. Note that the minimum rate was sometimes below the union standard, Hargreaves, *op.cit.*, p.36.
38. AW, 22 May 1897.
39. SDC Minutes, 22 October and 3 December 1896; AWU Central Branch (Orange) Committee Minutes, 13 July 1900.
40. TLC Minutes, 8 February, 15 March, and 12 April, 1894; SDC Minutes, 30 June 1895.
The establishment of the Lyne Government in 1899, with O'Sullivan as a very sympathetic Public Works Minister, led to the greatest improvement in conditions. Government regulation was extended with 7/- per day fixed as the minimum unskilled wage, and an eight hour day more systematically enforced. Classification of workers according to the official wage scale was determined by Government supervisors, sub-contracting required Government approval, and this did not discharge the contractor from responsibility for payment of standard wages. More importantly, at the end of 1901, O'Sullivan announced that day-labour would supersede all contract work, on the grounds that the new system encouraged better quality work, and allowed design modifications without extra cost, as well as saving on litigation and claims for extra payments. Government leadership in improving wage levels became a realistic possibility from this time.

However, day-labour was not a guarantee against poor conditions and wages. This was clearly shown in the 1890s in a number of cases. For example, industrial disputes occurred at the Cook's River and Shea's Creek land reclamation works over poor conditions and wages. Public enterprises were expected to operate on a commercial basis. The clearest examples of this occurred when the Government attempted to exempt its own printing office from the conditions of the 1896 Factory Act, and during the 'rationalization' of the railways service.

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41. For union congratulations on this move: SDC Minutes, 1 July 1897; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1897, p.5.
42. Reeves, op.cit., vol. 2, pp.239-42.
43. TLC Minutes, 29 March and 5 April 1894. A number of Government employees in the 1880s had unsuccessfully sought the eight hour day, for example, dredge men and railway porters, SMH, 26 January 1883.
44. See Chapter 8, and Hagan, Printers and Politics, pp.75-6, 123.
from the late 1880s, as discussed in the previous chapter. Railway employment was more secure and offered more fringe benefits than employment in the private sector, but wage rates, and increasingly, conditions in the 1890s, were based on those offered elsewhere, with a conscious managerial effort to integrate public employment with the general labour market. Indeed, the concept of public accountability in public employment made it difficult for Government to do anything else. For these reasons, even Labor Governments later found it difficult to resist the pressures towards minimizing the impact of state employment as a leader in wages and conditions. More than anything, this trend confirms the objective function of the state as an institution of integration and reproduction of the conditions of capitalism.

State Welfare

In the nineteenth century 'welfare', or 'charity' as it was often referred to then, was conceived in terms of financial aid or provision of food and shelter to clearly definable groups of the poor. 'Charities' were usually organized on a private basis. However, from about the time of federation, the Australian state began to formulate more overt 'social policy' which laid the foundations for the development of the 'welfare state'. This involved more direct intervention by the state to provide services and incomes, or 'public support systems', to a widening range of less privileged social groups. Recent work in this area argues forcibly that, far from simply redistributing social wealth from the rich to the poor, the modern welfare state has perpetuated inequalities in wealth between social classes, and has been an important agency of social control and legitimization for the
capitalist state. 45

However, these aspects of the state were discernable prior to the emergence of the modern 'welfare state'. A low commitment to welfare policy on the part of the state does not mean the absence of a social policy, in the sense that this implies a prescriptive social vision, or ideology. The most laissez-faire society explicitly rests upon a social policy which assumes that the unfettered market mechanism is the best means of promoting economic growth, which, in turn, eliminates the need for state welfare activity, because of its stimulation of employment opportunities and aggregate social wealth. But the state in nineteenth century New South Wales was not laissez-faire. It actively promoted economic growth. More directly, as far as welfare policy was concerned, it regulated the self-help social insurance organizations of the working class, subsidized and regulated private 'charities', and provided some direct welfare measures, usually in the form of relief works for the unemployed. 48 Furthermore, much of the politics of the 1890s was concerned with the establishment of ground rules for the development of the welfare state, which was commenced in earnest after the federation of the colonies in 1901. The labour movement played a central role in these developments.

46. Their role is discussed in Chapter 10.
47. The Statistical Register lists the colony's principal charities and the extent of Government aid to them.
48. Coghlan provides a serial account of Government relief works in Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1442-55. The Statistical Register shows how much the Government spent annually on the works. Note, even in the 'good' year of 1884, the instigation of relief works followed deputations from the unemployed, SMH, 3 May 1884.
Welfare policy in the late nineteenth century was directed towards 'mopping-up' the residual social casualties of a free-market situation, rather than redistributing income in the manner claimed by the modern welfare state. Government rations and shelter were only occasionally provided in periods of distress in Sydney, usually when immediate instigation of relief works was impracticable. Direct welfare payments were anathema to Free Traders and Protectionists alike. Even relief works were liable to criticism for encouraging 'idleness'. The widely accepted economic intervention of the state was intended to aid, rather than replace, self-help. In the boom conditions prior to the 1890s, destitution could easily be attributed to lack of industry, thereby relieving Government of any responsibility for a systematic programme of social welfare. Brief recessions required only ad hoc state welfare activity. Private organizations also commonly expressed the British workhouse concern to avoid becoming 'too desirable, lest it should encourage idleness and pauperism'. Even a liberal humanist such as Coghlan implicitly accepted a distinction between the 'deserving poor' and the 'idle'.

Under middle class initiative, the number of private welfare organizations increased during the depression, but their 'charity' entailed certain conditions. Self-help, 'thrift', and work discipline were strongly emphasized. This was particularly evident amongst some of the newer charitable associations for working women. For example, the Women's Silk-Growing Co-operative and Industrial Association Limited,

whose executive read like a newspaper's social column, was concerned with the plight of 'all classes of women' during the depression, but especially the fallen working gentry. It sought to direct women's labour into channels 'not already crowded by the stronger sex', and away from the unemployed demonstrations which became common in the 1890s. Despite homilies about 'co-operation', the Association was clearly run as a business enterprise. Profit was still paid to those who provided capital. There was certainly the appearance of 'profit sharing', but there was also a clear distinction between those who worked and those who did not. At one pound each, it is not likely that many women on 5 to 7/- per week held a great many shares. Wages were called profits, and if profits were low, wages were therefore reduced. Part-payment of wages was sometimes received in shares. The great advantage of the system, as the Association emphasised, was 'the solution of industrial problems, the shaking of hands between labour and capital'.51 Despite financial support from businessmen and the Government, nothing much seems to have come of the Association in the long term. Nevertheless, it was an important part of the bourgeois effort to strengthen the work ethic amongst women, as their proportion of the industrial workforce increased.

The other organizations which emerged in the 1890s were far more open in their encouragement of work discipline amongst a section of the population which, prior to the 1880s, was unused to the time-work-motion rigours of the factory. The Working and Factory Girls' Club was one of the

more successful groups organizing amongst women. With the motto 'Work is Worship' emblazoned over its city headquarters, the Club had the Governor as patron, and an executive composed of MPs, reverends and a number of bourgeois ladies. The Club provided shelter and food as well as instruction in religion, sewing, dressmaking, cooking, domestic service, self-help and thrift, to 'friendless and homeless girls'. Support came from a number of 'leading merchants and tradesmen.' In 1896 it reported that 'factory masters readily acknowledge its good influence on their employees, and frequently apply for girls to work in their factories.' The whole operation revolved around enforced 'thrift'. Most girls at the Home paid 10 to 12/- per week, although it is not clear how they could afford this given female wages at the time. Certainly, once there, it would have been impossible to save, in order to seek work independently. The inmates generally made their own clothes, and contributed to a Maternity and Sick Fund. 775 girls passed through the Club in five years, with many more attending night classes. Over 1895-97, 180 factory girls were placed in domestic service. The Club also had some influence in the drafting of the 1896 Factory Act. In 1895 the Club was pleased to announce that 'in spite of universal depression and many difficulties, there is much cause for thankfulness.' Not the least cause perhaps, was the steady flow of well-trained domestic help into the homes, and factory labour into the workshops of those who ran the Club. In 1897 the Club changed its name, to the Women's Employment Agency. 53

Traditional Government activity also increased in the depression, but welfare provisions fell far short of needs in the disastrous circumstances of the 1890s. Relief works only provided irregular employment for the small number of unemployed who were able to take advantage of them. Even if it had been willing, Government was unable to extend its role any further because of shortage of funds. The Government cut back on relief works in 1896, following mounting criticism of their wastefulness, and some economic improvement. But a year later it was forced to restore some projects as unemployment persisted, and short-term relief works were re-introduced until the end of the century.\textsuperscript{54}

Despite the changed circumstances of the 1890s then, Government relief remained completely at an \textit{ad hoc} level. The Reports of the Unemployed Advisory Board, appointed in 1899 to consider a rationalization of relief, failed to gain any political recognition.\textsuperscript{55}

Government relief works had always been motivated by contradictory pressures which diluted their effect. Whilst it would have been politically impossible to undertake major relief programmes, agitation by the unemployed, concentrated at the seat of Government, made it difficult for Governments not to at least make a gesture in that direction.\textsuperscript{56}

But with relief wages varying between 5-6/- per day, the unions and the unemployed viewed relief work as an attempt to undercut standard wage


\textsuperscript{55} Unemployed Advisory Board Reports and Correspondence, VPLANSW, 1900, vol. 6, pp.729-85.

\textsuperscript{56} For the importance of the unemployed as a political pressure group, see Fry, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.344-8.
levels. Usually, for reasons discussed in earlier chapters, it was the unskilled who were dependent on relief work. During the 1890s however, many skilled workers were also forced back onto it, with little recognition of their skills. Of course, the labour was entirely unskilled. But during the 1880s the Government also introduced piecework on two occasions, ostensibly to increase 'productivity', for many relief workers offered only a token labour effort for what they regarded as a right anyway. Torn between desires to provide relief and to force recipients to 'earn' it, the Government's policy amounted to one of cheap labour.

Yet, relief works usually were not very useful. Land reclamation was rarely related to potential land use, and during the 1890s many relief workers were employed shifting sand at Centennial Park. Whilst the urban unemployed were reluctant to migrate, most public works requirements were in the country.

Expediency, rather than a genuine concern for welfare, therefore, motivated the major Government response to unemployment. Free rail passes, and sometimes equipment, were provided to remove the unemployed to the country, where they had the doubtful opportunity of seeking work or prospecting for gold, but where their political impact was dissipated, and country employers were compensated for the previous effect of public works on their labour supply. A full scheme of urban public works would

57. See sources in n. 54; TLC Minutes, 29 March and 5 April 1894; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol. 3, pp.1442-55. This occurred in the 1880s too, however; for example, SMR, 3 May 1884. 58. 1884 and 1887. Return on Operation of Casual Labour Bureau, VPLANSW, 1887-8, vol. 8, p.1027; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol. 3, pp.1442-3, 1446-7.
have contradicted this policy. Indeed, official attitudes tended to classify those unemployed who did not migrate as not really destitute anyway, with only partial concessions to married men. However, when country and urban unemployment coincided, Government efforts were offset by the influx of country unemployed into the city.

During the 1890s the Government Labour Bureau became the agency for this repatriation programme. Established in 1892, ostensibly as an employment bureau, it played a minor role in providing urban employment, but shifted thousands of men to the country. Very quickly, the unions complained that the Bureau acted as an employers' agent for the recruitment of cheap, non-union labour. The strongest charge came from the AWU, especially after the Bureau had arranged transport to the country for 11,000 in 1894, the year of the shearer's strike.

Political pressure resulted in an early Parliamentary inquiry into the Bureau's operations. Predictably perhaps, the inquiry

59. Coghlan reflected these attitudes, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1446-9, and vol.4, pp.2041-2, 2045. Urban relief works were sometimes restricted to married men who could leave their home less easily than others.

60. Government Labour Bureau (GLB) First Annual Report, VPLANSW, 1892-3, vol.8, pp.957-61; GLB Report for year ending February 1896, ibid., 1896, vol.5, pp.729-40; GLB Report for year ending 30 June 1897, ibid., 1897, vol.1, pp.1037-64. In 1896 the GLB established country branches, mainly it would seem to prevent the flow of unemployed to the city. These branches were ineffective in securing country employment.

exonerated the Board of the unions' charges, although it did criticise it for the inadequacy of its scope of operation. The presence of a Labor Party majority on the Select Committee of Inquiry lends credence to the integrity of its findings. It is unlikely that a calculated conspiracy to break the unions existed between employers and the Bureau. Nevertheless, the effect of the Bureau's activities did tend in that direction. If a pastoralist whose workforce was on strike naturally applied for replacements, the Bureau naturally complied by sending a batch of unemployed, with possibly the best of intentions. But simply by increasing the supply of labour, wages and union resistance became more difficult to maintain. As with all other state activity, it is impossible to isolate it from a broader context.

Limited as a system of state welfare was, therefore, it already displayed many of the characteristics of social control which some writers have associated with the modern welfare state. But it did so with 'a human face'. Some legal controls over the working class were more explicit.

The State As A Repressive Apparatus

Labour historians in Australia have paid little attention to the systematic role of the law in relation to labour in the nineteenth century. To the extent that they have, the general consensus appears to be that labour organizations, if not the working class, were not

unduly hindered by the general body of the law in the colonies. 63

This is surprising, for in Britain there is a wide literature on the
repression of trade unions, especially in the early years of their
organization in the nineteenth century, and a growing historiography of
the use of the law as a broad means of social control and class rule. 64

Essentially, colonial law derived from Britain in these respects, by
direct enactment after 1850, and by way of the colonial status of New
South Wales in many cases, such that pre-1850 British law was usually
held applicable in Australia, unless otherwise enacted. Furthermore,
in New South Wales during the 1890s the full force of the state as a
repressive institution was hinted at for the first time, with dire
consequences for trade union organization, and considerable effect
on the political thinking of trade unionists.

There is considerable evidence that New South Wales law functioned
as a means of class rule in the nineteenth century. At an individual
level, firm conclusions concerning the role of the law cannot be reached
without a detailed examination of court records. Nevertheless, a
cursory examination of the ostensible occupations of persons received
into gaol, as provided by the Statistical Register, reveals that
working class persons were by far the most likely to be gaoled. The
most likely occupations in the 1890s, grouped in order of the frequency

63. Fry, op.cit., p. 481; Sutcliffe, op.cit., pp.76-7; Gollan,
Radical and Working Class Politics, p. 80.

64. For example: D. Hay, P. Linebaugh, J.G.Rule, E.P.Thompson, and
C. Winslow, Albion's Fatal Tree. Crime and Society in Eighteenth
Century England, Harmondsworth, (1975) 1977; E.P.Thompson,
Whigs and Hunters. The Origins of the Black Act, Harmondsworth,
(1975) 1977; H. Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism,
of their gaoling, are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 only allows the most general comparative statements concerning the effect of the law on individuals. The major concern of this thesis is the effect of the law on trade union organization. Detailed examination of court records is also required for confident assertions in this area. Nevertheless, enough evidence exists to warrant some general observations.

New South Wales law placed trade unions in an extremely uncertain position until 1881. Trade unions were not proscribed as illegal, but nor did they have legal status until the 1881 Trade Union Act, even though Britain had passed a Trade Union Act in 1871. Furthermore, prior to the 1871 Act, British law imposed strict penalties for 'molestation', 'obstruction', and related offences, which severely restricted traditional union activities, such as picketing during strikes. These penalties applied in New South Wales until 1881, and even after legalization of trade unions in Britain and New South Wales, some penalties of this kind remained, for example, for picketing, 'intimidation', 'molesting', and 'watching or besetting'.

Legal uncertainty did not seriously hinder the development of trade unions in New South Wales prior to 1881. In seeking legalization at this time the unions' primary objective seems to have been to gain the legal status necessary to recover funds from defaulting officials and members in arrears with subscriptions. Nevertheless, the more severe


66. See Chapter 10.
Table 3

Most Frequently Gaolled Persons in New South Wales
In the 1890s Grouped By Occupation and in Order of Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>First by a large majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamen</td>
<td>Second by a large majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firemen</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealers and Hawkers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book-keepers and Clerks</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bootmakers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmiths and Wheelwrights</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butchers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters and Joiners</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carters and Carriers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters and Signwriters</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers and Fitters</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grooms</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardeners</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailors</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stokers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinsmiths</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shearers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonemasons</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricklayers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drapers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jockeys</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agents and Auctioneers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolboys</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiters</td>
<td>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Register.
Occupations bracketed together experienced roughly the same frequency of gaoling.
penalties against 'intimidation' and related offences were invoked on occasions in New South Wales prior to 1881. Such penalties were invoked frequently enough to be of concern to the unions, and for the Wharf Labourers' Union to seek legal status by disguising itself as a friendly society. 67

A number of other pieces of legislation were also available to employers if they sought the support of the law against trade unions. Some of this law was much more straight-forward for this purpose, than the vaguer provisions concerning the unions' legal status. The most wide-ranging was the Master and Servants' Act, which was originally British legislation applied to the colony, for the purpose of enforcing the labour contract. The Act's very title carried the full implications of its class basis.

In New South Wales the original Act underwent numerous amendments in the first half of the nineteenth century, partly reflecting the harshness of a penal settlement, and most of which were motivated by the desire to more effectively control labour mobility, particularly in the country, where labour was scarcest. By the time of the 1864 Act many of the problems of interpretation of the legislation had been removed, its severity had been increased, and most types of employees were uniformly covered. The Act provided for up to three months gaol and confiscation of wages for misconduct, such as disobedience, or breach of contract, after summary trial before local Justices of the Peace, who were frequently employers. Breach of contract commonly arose out of

absconding, or desertion of a job before discharge by the employer, and all servants were compelled to receive a certificate of discharge before leaving an employer's service. Servants could also sue employers for unpaid wages and compensation for ill-usage under the Act, but these were civil proceedings, as opposed to criminal proceedings against servants, and do not seem to have been very often successful. The Act's main purpose was to make employment a bondage. In the 1880s and 1890s it was still enforced, although by then by magistrates, rather than Justices of the Peace. Nevertheless, magistrates were still often employers, especially in the country. 68

The Master and Servants' Act could be used against trade unions by interpreting strikes as breach of contract by desertion of duty, or as disobedience of an employer. Some historians have noted that the legislation was not consistently applied against unions by the 1880s. 69 But nevertheless, it was applied selectively, often as a last resort, so that its threat remained a concern for the unions. For example, in 1884, striking Bakers' leaders in Sydney were gaoled under the Act. 70

In the northern coalfields the Act had also been used to enforce agreements signed in Britain, whereby immigrant miners were committed to work for wages well below the local standard. 71 In the country the Act remained very much part of the normal machinery for labour supervision. During the rise of the Shearers' Union in the late 1880s

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69. For example, Connell and Irving, op.cit., pp.105-6; Fry, op.cit., p. 481.
71. For example, one miner receiving two months' gaol, SMH, 19 November 1883; Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, p. 43; J.W.Turner, loc.cit.
a number of strikers fell foul of the Act's provisions. In the 1890s, when relations between unions and employers reached crisis point in a series of major strikes, Master and Servants' legislation was used frequently. In 1890 many shearers, and some urban strikers, suffered imprisonment, fines and forfeiture of wages, and the shearers' experiences were repeated in 1891 and 1894. Table 4 shows a fairly high level of charges under the Act in 1887 and the late 1890s, although convictions bore an inverse relationship to the number of charges. In 1898, which saw the highest number of charges, only a little over 50 per cent of these led to convictions. By 1901 use of the Act had become minimal.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Charges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Registers. These are the only years in which these statistics were recorded in the Statistical Register.

Seamen were subjected to the special disciplinary provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, which gave ships' officers almost unlimited

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powers at sea, and severely curtailed the free movement of labour with harsh penalties for 'desertion'. One unionist commented in 1891 that its tendency was to 'enslave' the men. It certainly made striking at sea very difficult, since this could be interpreted as tantamount to mutiny. For example, as a result of an 1885 strike, three seamen were gaoled for two weeks for 'disorderly conduct' and questioning the captain's orders at sea, a light sentence under the circumstances. Legal proceedings were also instigated against striking marine officers on one occasion, even though they were in port at the time. In this case however, it was judged that the voyage was incomplete, and the men were forced to return to work until their final destination was reached. In 1893, even before the seamen's general strike had begun, sixty-six were arrested for 'refusing to obey the lawful commands of the master'; that is, for not accepting wage reductions. In 1897 the crew of the Jane Sprott was also imprisoned for three days for refusing to sail in an allegedly unseaworthy ship. As far as one can tell without a detailed examination of bench records, arrests for absence without leave, desertion, wilful disobedience on ship, or other clauses of the Merchant Shipping Act, increased markedly in the 1880s, and especially in 1896, when seamen sought restoration of pre-depression wages. Surprisingly, these charges remained high even in 1901, as Table 5 shows.

73. Smith, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p. 205.
74. SMH, 15 April 1885.
75. Bradley, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p. 165
77. AW, 31 July 1897.
### Table 5

**Seamen's Convictions for Work-Related Offences For Selected Years, 1887-1901**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Number Persons Convicted by Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent from ship without leave</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desertion from ship</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilful disobedience on ship</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other offences under Merchant Shipping Act*</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Register. These are the only years in which the Statistical Register recorded these statistics.

*A small proportion of these applied to employers.

Apart from specific regulation of labour, British common and statute law provided a number of means for proscribing labour organization, such as prosecution for conspiracy or intimidation. Contingent factors, such as expense, the relative industrial strength of employers' and employees' organizations, and the climate of public or legal opinion, merely influenced the choice of means towards this end. Whilst the Master and Servants' Act was probably applied more frequently than prosecutions for conspiracy in the 1850s and 1860s, the latter was preferred for actions against the Hunter miners in the 1870s. During an 1886 strike seven miners were also gaoled for intimidation. During the shearers' strikes over the next two years,

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78. For early prosecutions, see Sutcliffe, *op.cit.*, pp.30-1, 33n., 47; J.W. Turner, 'Miners and the Master and Servants' Act', *op.cit.*, pp.30-6; Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, p. 27; Buckley, *op.cit.*, p.54; Fry, *op.cit.*, p. 480. However, note conspiracy charges against striking bakers in 1853, and engineers in 1861, Norton, *op.cit.*, p. 113; Buckley, *op.cit.*, p. 48; Hargreaves, *op.cit.*, pp.8-9. See also Ross, *op.cit.*, pp.36-7, re miners planning industrial tactics in secret for fear of conspiracy charges.

there were a number of imprisonments for intimidation or obstruction of strikebreakers. These charges became more frequent during the large-scale strikes of the 1890s, as charges under the Master and Servants' Act declined slightly. In Queensland in 1891, the Shearers' Union executive received three years' gaol for conspiracy. At Broken Hill in 1892, the miners' leaders were imprisoned for seditious conspiracy, and numerous pickets were arrested for 'interfering with' strikebreakers. During the 1893 seamen's strike, 150 were arrested for picketing and assault. Hundreds of union shearers were imprisoned for intimidating strikebreakers in 1894, usually only for a few months. Seventy-four were also arrested near Wilcannia for participating in a strike camp which a judge later chose to classify as an 'unlawful assembly'.

In terms of the state's own rationale, much of this action was necessary for the protection of 'free labour', or property, from physical abuse. But other laws, relating to assault, property damage or riot, were available to combat violence. Violent industrial confrontations became much more common in the late 1880s and 1890s, as the long list of arrests under laws relating to violence indicates. For example, at the famous 'Brookong Station Riot', which occurred

80. ASU Moree AR, December 1888, p. 102; Spence, History of the AWU, pp. 28, 37, 41, which includes reference to two shearers gaol for one year for conspiracy.

81. Worker, 30 Ka> 1891, (re 1891 shearers' strike); Dale, op.cit., pp. 42, 45, 45, 64-5; Sutcliffe, op.cit., pp. 99, 103; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol. 3, p. 1533

82. Many of these received two months' gaol. Fitzpatrick, 'History of Seamen's Union', Chapter 3, p. 23.

83. Spence, History of the AWU, pp. 84, 88-9; ASU Young AR, 30 December 1894; ASU Bourke AR, 31 December 1894; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1895.
near Wagga Wagga on the property of a conservative MLC, when members of a shearers' strike camp attacked strikebreakers, ten strikers were charged with disturbing the peace and riot. Nine received gaol sentences of one to three years as a result. Assault and riot were common charges during the 1894 shearers' strike, with some of those convicted receiving sentences of up to five years' imprisonment. Eight men received up to seven years' gaol for their parts in the burning of the river boat Rodney, which had carried strikebreakers. Table 6 suggests that, where the information is readily available, feloniously killing or wounding sheep, cattle and other livestock, and setting fire to crops, may have been aspects of industrial relations in the late 1880s and 1890s. At Newcastle in 1895 some miners' leaders were imprisoned for use of explosives in blowing up a mine, and a number of pickets received short gaol sentences for 'riotous behavior in a public thoroughfare'. Although, in many of these cases, the charges were exaggerated or the result of employers' provocation, it is clear that the circumstances of open class warfare in the 1890s led to a far greater than normal level of violence in industrial relations.

85. AWU Young 7th AR, 31 December 1894; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.53; Spence, History of the AWU, pp.84,87-91; AWU AR's. 1897-8, and AWU Bourke AR's 1896-8 and 1900, and AW, 5 and 12 June 1897, refer to long term prisoners. See also sources in no. 83-above; and Mudie, op.cit., pp.223-5.
86. Note arrests of shearers for arson in 1891, ASU Cobar AR, 31 December 1891.
88. For example, see Dale, op.cit., pp.45, 58, 64, re Broken Hill in 1892.
Table 6

Some Charges for Offences Against Property with Violence
Selected Years, 1887-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Number of Charges by Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feloniously killing/wounding sheep, cattle &amp;c.</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting fire to crops</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Register. These are the only years in which the Statistical Register recorded these statistics.

In many of the examples discussed, charges relating to violence and charges for conspiracy, intimidation or breach of conduct arose out of the same situation. This suggests that the non-violent charges were directed against labour organization itself to a large extent. There was no need to charge a unionist with intimidation if he had committed an act of violence. Penalties for assault or riot were usually harsher. But if the evidence against a unionist was sketchy, the delightful vagueness of terms such as 'intimidation' or 'conspiracy' allowed considerable discretion on the part of judges and juries. At Broken Hill in 1892, a magistrate admitted that intimidation was only a technical offence, which he then used to imprison two men for three months.89 Dickey's admiration for the choice of proceedings against the miners' leadership in 1892 - seditious conspiracy under common law, rather than 'antiquated statutes'90 - misses the point entirely: it made conviction easier and provided harsher penalties.

89. Dale, op. cit., p.42.
The precedent for Government intervention in widespread industrial disturbances had been well established prior to 1890, particularly on the coalfields, where troops and cannon were sent during strikes in 1880, 1885 and 1888 (and 1890 and 1896). The ASU also claimed collusion between the railways and sheepowners in transporting strikebreakers to special destinations in 1888. However, during the 1890s, the state mobilized on an unprecedented scale. In 1890, 3,000 special constables were appointed in New South Wales, in addition to the procedural despatch of artillery to Newcastle. During the 1892 strike a special magistrate and large numbers of police were despatched to Broken Hill. Again, in 1894 police grouped in force in the country to protect strikebreaking shearers. For unionists, therefore, the class nature of the state's function became clearer than ever before, as shown by a number of statements during the 1890s.

The state's function was clearest in 1892 when it acted so energetically, ensuring the defeat of the miners' union. Police arrived in Broken Hill prior to any outbreak of violence. The later arrival of strikebreakers, lacking in numbers and mining skills, and never intended by employers to effectively operate the mines, provoked

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the violence anticipated by the despatch of troops. Special Police Magistrate Wittingdale Johnson also set about his task with gusto. Numerous unionists were arrested on charges across the entire range already discussed, including unlawful assemblage. Furthermore, the choice of far-away Deniliquin, with its smallholder population, as the site for the union leaders' trial, made their conviction more certain. On the other hand, the Government could not force the employers to arbitration, and Johnson turned a blind eye to instances of violence and the carrying of fire-arms by anti-unionists. Dickey's recent re-assessment of the 1892 strike argues the lack of collusion between mineowners and Government. But the very existence of the documents upon which he bases his argument, shows that they were in daily contact throughout the strike. If Johnson lacked a 'settled desire to victimize and repress the miners', he was also well-known for his anti-union views, which interpreted industrial strife as civil insurrection. Premier Dibbs of course, was also a shipowner and employer.

But the Opposition made it clear that it would have dealt as firmly with the strikers. The 1892 strike revealed, not a conscious conspiracy, but the structural integration of the state with capitalism. Even though the Government originally considered the

95. Dale, op.cit., pp.30,40-64.
96. The records consist largely of telegrams between mine-owners and Government. Reports and Papers re Broken Hill Strike 1892, NSW Colonial Secretary,NSW State Archives, 4/904. Dickey's argument, loc.cit., relies as much as anything upon the most circumspect language.
97. In 1893 a member of the Ironmoulder's Society sued the Lewisham Foundry proprietor for failing to pay the established minimum rate. In dismissing the suit, Johnson stated 'that a man these times should be glad to work for what he can get', Hargreaves, op.cit., p. 35.
employers' actions extreme, they shared a broad outlook which perceived the miners' activities as a threat to properly constituted authority and the property relations which they were bound to uphold. Premier Parkes revealed a similar outlook in 1890, when, even though he restrained the more militant employer-oriented faction in his Government, he perceived the widespread Maritime Strike as tantamount to 'revolution'. Government and employers were concerned with 'running the country' in the normal way.

The nature of the relationship between the state and capitalism had wide-ranging implications for labour organization and Labour's approach to the question of the state. The issues examined in this chapter required immediate attention when Labour organized politically. The manner in which Labour dealt with them is examined in Part III. In the meantime, however, it is necessary to examine the nature of Labour's organizations, which grappled with these questions.

PART II

LABOUR ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTION
Labour organization expanded rapidly in the 1880s and early 1890s in response to the social and economic changes sketched in Part I. In doing so it built upon strong existing forms of organization, in trade unions and in the working class communities, which were the product of the diverse social and economic experiences of different sections of the working class. Nevertheless, the nature of working class organization also changed. The formation and consolidation of the Labor Party represented a major development on previous organizational mores. Together with the expansion of trade union organization amongst a much wider spectrum of the working class, this represented a class mobilization in the context of economic change and crisis. The nature of Labour's industrial and political leadership also began to change and become more centralized. However, because of further changes in the nature of Labour organization after the early 1890s, the working class mobilization of the late 1880s, paradoxically, became the vehicle for a populist Labor Party with strong influence over the trade unions. These themes are examined in the following three chapters.
In Britain, trade unions were the earliest form of working class organization which attempted to protect wages and working conditions and exert countervailing workers' control over the labour process. New South Wales workers' organization followed British patterns in this regard, and in the nature and structure of trade unionism to a large extent, often under the direct influence of immigrant British unionists.  

Union organization involves a primary recognition of separate, but not necessarily completely opposing, interests between employer and employee. In itself, this falls short of class consciousness, even if it involves the articulation of class conflict. The sectional basis of unionism tends to produce a sectional consciousness amongst workers, although under some circumstances this may develop towards a broader class consciousness. The circumstances of the 1880s and 1890s produced a broader class consciousness amongst a wider cross-section of trade unionists than had existed previously. Simultaneously, the proportion of the workforce covered by trade union organization expanded dramatically.

During the 1870s trade unionism was mainly confined to three areas: the urban crafts, some of which had been organized since the 1840s, and which fostered a small number of semi-skilled unions, such as the United Labourers' Protective Society (builders' labourers); the northern coalminers, whose district union existed continuously

1. For example, the formation of the Australian branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) in 1852, Buckley, op.cit., p.l. For the high proportion of British-born unionists in the early Labor Party, see Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.61-4.
2. See L.J. Hume, 'The Labor Movement in NSW and Victoria, 1830-60', unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1950; and Appendix 2 for dates of formation of all unions mentioned.
3. United Labourers' Protective Society, submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.149.
from 1870, and maritime labour, whose wharf labourers and seamen had formed unions in the early 1870s. Unions at this time failed to grow in the continuous progression often implied by historians. From 1871-4 the total number of unions grew from sixteen to between thirty and forty. But from 1875-80 some of these collapsed due, it seems, to employer resistance, and then the 1879-80 recession. Organizational stirrings on the southern and western coalfields in the late 1870s soon subsided, and a railway enginemen's association formed in the early 1870s split into two regional associations, which had both collapsed by 1880.

However, from about the mid-1880s union organization spread rapidly. On the waterfront, the Sydney Coal Lumpers' Union was formed in 1881, the Balmain Labourers' Union, which enrolled men involved in ship maintenance and repair, was established in 1883, followed by the Federated Stewards' and Cooks' Union (marine) in 1884. By 1888 a Newcastle Wharf Labourers' Union was also securely organized. In the railways the Locomotive Engine-drivers' and Firemen's Association appeared in 1883, followed soon afterwards by a Guards' and Shunters' Union.

5. These figures are calculated from TLC Minutes for the 1870s. They differ somewhat from those of N.B. Nairn, 'The Role of the TLC in NSW, 1871-91', Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand. Selected Articles, Second Series, Melbourne, 1967, pp.158-9, where the impression gained is one of continuous growth.
6. Ross, op.cit., pp.27, 40-2. The western Vale of Clwydd Lodge Minutes from 1878-81 record its attempt to form a district union, but with only limited support from the Eskbank and Lithgow Valley Lodges; for example, Public Meeting Minutes, 7 September 1878. In 1881 the union and lodge 'dissolved in confusion', VCL Minutes, 18 July 1881.
7. Docherty, op.cit., p.16.
8. Newcastle Crane Employees' Union, Coal Lumpers' and Newcastle Wharf Labourers' submissions to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, pp.137, 150-1. See Mitchell, op.cit., pp.15ff; Fitzpatrick, 'History of the Seamen's Union', Chapters 1-2; and Appendix 2.
Association and a Signalmen's Union (1885). In 1886 the all-grades Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association was formed, after the failure of a similar organisation on the northern line in 1883. In 1886 the Victorian-based Amalgamated Miners' Association (AMA) began operations at Broken Hill. During 1885-6 the southern and western coal miners also formed district unions. From 1886 the Amalgamated Shearers' Union (ASU) enrolled men in all colonies with a pastoral industry except Queensland, where a separate Queensland Shearers' Union existed. In 1890 unskilled pastoral workers were organized in the General Labourers' Union (GLU), which amalgamated with the ASU in 1894, to become the Australian Workers' Union (AWU). In 1889 the Amalgamated Navvies' and General Labourers' Union was also established.

These new unions of the semi and unskilled workers were responsible for the greatest numerical expansion of organization, but union organization spread much further in the late 1880s. Gas stokers, clothing trade workers, brewery employees, and road transport workers, to name a few of the urban unskilled, also formed unions. Even the

10. See Kearns, *Silverton*, pp.18, 32; and *Broken Hill 1883-93*, pp.13, 16-17; Kennedy, *op.cit.*, pp.29-31.
11. Illawarra Coal Miners' Mutual Protective Association, Rules, Wollongong, 1886; Nicholson, (southern miners' Secretary), *RRCS*, 1891, *Precis of Evidence*, p.1. The Hartley District Miners' Mutual Protective Association (hereafter Western Miners') was formed at a general meeting of western miners, Lithgow Lodge Minutes, February 1886; Western Miners' Minutes, 9 February 1886.
12. Amalgamated Navvies' and General Labourers' Union (hereafter Navvies' Union) submission to *RRCS*, 1891, *Literary Appendix*, p.149. There were much earlier cases of local navvies' organization over wages and conditions, for example, on the northern line, *SMH*, 19-20 October 1882, 1 February 1883.
13. See Appendix 2. One of the largest new unskilled urban unions was the Trolly and Draymen's Union, submission to *RRCS*, 1891, *Literary Appendix*, p.138. The TLC Minutes, 1888-92, unmistakably show this extension of unionism in terms of new affiliations, and the increased number of delegates to which expanding unions became entitled.
membership of older skilled unions expanded at this time.

Specific threats to established wages and conditions, real or perceived, provided the momentum for organization of most of the new unions. This observation applies to the railway unions and the original formation of the AMA in Victoria in 1882, if not so clearly to its spread to Broken Hill. Shearers faced wage reductions in the Moree district in 1885, and in the west in 1886. Seamen’s and wharf labourers’ wages had also declined in relation to those of other labourers in the 1870s and early 1880s, prior to maritime labour’s closer union organization in the 1880s. However, spontaneous localized reactions to specific threats over wages and conditions had a long prior history in colonial industrial relations: from the 1830s for maritime labour, the 1850s for shearers, and at least the early 1880s for railwaymen. Something more was necessary for continuous and effective working class organization.

The 'habit of association' in working communities, with shared


16. The western pastoralists' advertisement of proposed wage reductions is in The Australasian, 3 April 1886. See Spence, History of the AWU, pp.11-16.

17. SMH, 11 November and 7 December 1882 (wharf labourers); McKillop, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.11; Fitzpatrick, 'History of the Seamen's Union', Chapter 1, pp.4,6; Mitchell, op.cit., pp.1-24.


19. T. Halloran (grazier), RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.79; letter to Shearers' Record, May 1888; Australian Worker, May 1911.

20. SMH, 25 April, 3 August 1882; Docherty, op.cit., p.47.

occupational experiences, and cultural values, as work and non-work experiences and associations merged, provided an important basis for union organization. The strength of mining communities, and the homogeneity of the maritime workforce, reinforced by geographical concentration of employment and residence, functioned in this way to contribute to the earliest examples of strong mass unionism in New South Wales. Isolation and a strong sense of community also provided a dynamic base for railway unionism.22

Even amongst the migratory shearing workforce, structural changes in the industry had encouraged the development of a working community. Increased flocks leading to higher sheep to stand ratios, and the westwards extension of pastoralism, meant an extended shearing season and longer periods of travel, so that larger groups of shearers stayed together for longer periods in the 1880s, moving as teams from station to station. By the 1880s it could take up to three months to finish shearing, or 'cut-out', at larger western stations.23 Shearers' accommodation kept them together after a day's work, and isolation, together with the physical endurance and skill required in shearing, generated a strong group ethos which Bean exalted as the 'shed democracy'.24 Shearers even developed a specialized occupational language.25 Because of shearers' mobility, and their work in other jobs in the off-season, their habits of association spilled over into

other rural work, to become one of the main bases for Ward's 'bush ethos' of egalitarian mateship. Rural construction work was also suited to the hiring of labour in gangs, possibly allowing continuity of shearers' groups. Whilst little is known about navvies' organization, the appearance of a union, spawned by the isolated, self-contained, but itinerant navvies' communities, undoubtedly owed much to this wider extension of a bush community. The same process was no doubt important in the appearance of country Carriers' Unions over 1887-90.

Large concentrations of labour on the waterfront and in mining facilitated the growth of a working community, and hence, of early mass unionism. The rise of railway unionism also followed the massive railways expansion from the late seventies. But craft unions depended upon the development of much smaller occupational communities, and initially the railway community had been diluted by expansion of the workforce. More importantly, large concentrations of labour not bound together by the mystique of a craft, brought a new perspective to working class community. The class dimension of the coal miners' community organism has already been noted. This dimension was intensified wherever large concentrations of labour, with a small number of employers, occurred. It typified the emergence of industrial capitalist social relations. These social relations had also spread, independently of labour concentration, into the crafts and the primary sector, where the opportunity for economic independence was disappearing.

Although the sectional contradictions of working communities,

27. See Telemachus, 'Navvies' Camps and Their Dangers', Argus, 20 May 1890; Rowe, op.cit.
28. Note submissions to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, pp.137-8. See Appendix 2 for a list of Carriers' Unions.
29. Docherty, op.cit., p.46.
internally and in relations between different working communities, persisted, the 1880s witnessed a working class mobilization, evident in the sheer extent of unionization, and its confidence and assertiveness. This is indicated in the manner in which new organizations begat new organizations. The rapid, excited development of unskilled urban unions, frequently lacking a stable base, was largely the result of example elsewhere. Existing organizations often directly influenced the formation of the new unions. For example, the Seamen's Union inspired the Stewards' and Cooks', and the Victorian railway unions inspired New South Wales railwaymen's organization. The formation of a miners' organization at the Barrier relied largely on the Victorian AMA's existence, whose leaders (Spence and Temple) also consolidated the ASU. The ASU, in turn, encouraged the organization of country carriers, and possibly, the navvies. In this regard the trade unionism of the 1880s represented a significant change from earlier, more sectional, unionism.

Membership

This change is most clearly expressed quantitatively. New South Wales' fifty or so unions of 1885, covering about 30,000 workers, grew into over one hundred by 1891, covering over 60,000 workers. This represented a membership density of about 21.5 per cent of the total workforce in 1891, probably the highest density in the world at that time.

Furthermore, whilst union estimates of their own membership commonly exceed the number of financial members, the gap between financial and non-financial members was unusually narrow at the end of the 1880s, as far as can be judged by union records.

30. SMH, 31 July 1884; Engine-drivers' Minutes, 12 October 1883; Docherty, op.cit., pp.17-49.
31. See Appendix 2.
32. ibid.
Nevertheless, the penetration of unionism varied greatly between different industries. Unionism amongst unskilled workers in urban manufacturing remained weak, despite expansion. The Gas Stokers' Protective Association achieved almost 100 per cent union density in gas production, but this was very unusual. One of the largest and strongest unions of semi-skilled workers in urban manufacturing, the Boot Trade Union only had a membership density of about 50 per cent in 1891, mainly amongst the more skilled 'makers' and 'finishers', and was powerless to enforce its own rules concerning apprenticeship or the 'closed shop', whereby all employees in an establishment are union members. The second largest clothing union, the Tailors', could only enforce a closed shop in the major firms, and had a membership density of a little over 50 per cent. But these densities were far higher than that for the entire workforce. Many other semi or unskilled unions, such as the Cutters' and Trimmers' (clothing), the Textile Workers', or the Bookbinders' and Paper-Rulers' Society, had tiny memberships, representing very low membership densities. The Storemen's Union membership of 200 in 1890-1, represented about a 10 per cent density.

33. The Gas Stokers' claimed 300 members in its submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.151, which was virtually all employed in that occupation. The Gas Stokers' Protective Association, Mortlake Branch Minutes reveal a rapid growth from June 1888-1892. There were also Sydney and North Shore branches.

34. G. Carton (shoemaker) in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.254-6. The union had between 1357 (submission to ibid., Literary Appendix, p.149) and 1750 members (RCIRA, 1891, no.9, p.1109). See Appendix 1, Table 5 for total number of bootmakers.

35. The union claimed 300 members (submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.147) out of about 562 males in the trade (RCIRA, 1891, no.1). Also P. Strong (Tailors') and Miss C. Powell (Tailoress') in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.258-61, and 277-8 respectively, who claimed that union activists were invariably sacked.

36. Submissions of these unions to ibid., Literary Appendix, p.147. See Appendix 2.

37. TLC Minutes, 22 October 1891.
Women were very poorly organized. The organizational problems which they shared with all unskilled labour, particularly in manufacturing – lack of the craft's strategic monopoly of skills which prevented easy replacement during strikes, a large number of employers, seasonality of employment, and piecework, which encouraged an individualism countering unionism – were compounded by the prevalence of outwork and the temporary nature of much female employment. Those unions which enrolled women, therefore, were significant achievements. A Tailoresses' Union had existed fitfully from the mid-1880s, and in 1891 a Female Employees' Union enrolled mainly laundry workers, barmaids and waitresses. Domestic workers seemed impossible to organize and received little attention from the union movement, although in the union stronghold of Broken Hill, a Domestic Workers' Union appeared in 1891.

The strongest areas of union organization were in mining, the railways, maritime transport, the pastoral industry and the urban crafts. Coalminers' unions, which were extensions of their community, enjoyed a membership density of virtually 100 per cent. The AMA at Broken Hill had a similar density from 1889, when the companies agreed to collect membership subscriptions on behalf of the union, until the union was crushed in the 1892 strike. The combined membership density of the two major railway unions in 1890 was almost twice as high as that for all unions in the total workforce (and much higher than for British

railway unions), despite strong employer opposition. Their position
did fluctuate, however. At its peak in 1887, the mass all-grades union's
members represented a density of 42.8 per cent. But this declined
to 32.2 per cent in 1898 (or 3812 members), because of sectional
divisions and the difficulty of achieving recognition as a bargaining
agent. The Engine-drivers' had a more cohesive base, but their member-
ship density also fluctuated. In 1883 the union represented 74 per
cent of engine-drivers, but after dissipation of the initial excitement
of organization, and an increase in the number of enginem en employed,
this fell to 50.6 per cent in 1888. After 1888 their position improved,
until by 1891 the Engine-drivers' represented 84 per cent of potential
membership (1050). Sea-going maritime unions, particularly the
Seamen's Union, had a very high membership density of 75 per cent or
more. The Wharf Labourers' Union also achieved a density of at least
90 per cent in 1890, but thereafter it declined rapidly because of
unemployment and the employers' determination to employ 'free labour'.

The ASU claimed a peak membership of 25,000 in 1891, but this was
almost certainly exaggerated, as was an earlier claim that 98 per cent
of New South Wales and Victorianshearing sheds were unionized. Precise

41. Schey, op.cit., pp.110-2; Docherty, op.cit., pp.18-21, 51-61. The
Engine-drivers' inclusion of cleaners after 1888 also boosted
membership. See Chapter 3 for the size of the workforce, and Appendix
2, from which these figures are calculated.

42. New South Wales Seamen had a membership of about 2000, and the
Federated Seamen's Union, about 3000; the Stewards' and Cooks' claimed
500 members; the Marine Officers', 183; the Marine Engineers' claimed
95 per cent coverage. Submissions to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix,
p.142; T. Hay (Marine Engineers'), and Spence, ibid., Precis of
Evidence, pp.28 and 241 respectively; Norton, op.cit., p.75. Note,
however, that the Stewards' and Cooks' had had 1200 members earlier,
SMH, 2 August 1884.

43. 2500 members in 1890, declining to 1690 in 1891, SMH, 6 February 1890;
Wharf Labourers' submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.150;
McKillop, ibid., Precis of Evidence, p.8. Note their huge contingent

44. ASU General Meeting, 16 April 1887; ASU 3rd AR, February 1890, p.4;
ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.12. The following comments are based on
a general survey of all ASU Annual Reports, 1886-1896.
Membership figures were provided irregularly by the ASU in the 1880s, and were often contradictory. During the depression, when membership declined drastically, no figures were published. Unfortunately, only a few branch membership rolls survive. Statements of income and members' voting in referendums only provide a very rough guide to membership, because of travelling between branches and some shearers' payment of subscriptions a season in advance, both of which may lead to double counting, and because less than the total membership voted in referendums. The union's apparent strength was also inflated because some pastoralists granted the men concessions in order to woo them from the union.\textsuperscript{45} Taking all these factors into consideration, an estimate of 20000 ASU members in 1890-1 would be extremely generous, and the real figure might have been as low as 13000. GLU membership, 4950 in 1891,\textsuperscript{46} and penetration, were much lower than the ASU's. This partly reflected the lower degree of cohesion amongst shed hands, particularly with so many urban dwellers amongst them. But it was also because of a lower organizing effort on the part of the leadership, which was largely provided by the ASU.

ASU membership was extremely volatile because of an itinerant, part-time workforce which included so many smallholders. Landless western bushworkers were highly unionized. Most were in the large Bourke branch.\textsuperscript{47} The GLU's Bourke branch also accounted for half that

\textsuperscript{45} Merritt, \textit{op.cit.}, p.597.
\textsuperscript{46} GLU submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.135. The following comments on the GLU are based on GLU and Bourke Branch Reports and Membership Rolls.
\textsuperscript{47} In 1890 the ASU claimed that only three out of 320 sheds in the Bourke district were non-union, the only case where they cited such precise figures. ASU 4th AR, February 1890, p.7. Apart from ASU Annual Reports and Branch Reports and Membership Rolls, the general observations of the next two pages are based upon the evidence of Spence and the pastoralists in \textit{RRCS}, 1891, \textit{Precis of Evidence}, pp.27, 48-9, 52, 55 and 62; and Merritt, \textit{op.cit.}, unless otherwise indicated.
union's total membership in 1891. But further east, where there were more shearing selectors, union strength varied more, and employer opposition to the ASU was strongest because pastoralists could more easily afford to postpone shearing. The second most western ASU branch, Cobar, was also large, although its membership fluctuated considerably.\(^{48}\) Most of the eastern branches had small, fluctuating membership levels, of between 600 and 1800 in the late 1880s.

The exception, Wagga, was the largest of all branches until 1894, claiming 3500 members in 1893. In part, this reflected its placement as a catchment area for Victorian selectors moving north-south, and its importance as a provincial centre of craft unionism and political radicalism.\(^{49}\) Its leadership reflected this radicalism. But the difference between a full-time branch leadership and a part-time rank and file requires wariness in generalizing from one to the other. The clearest indication of this was in the members' weak support for referendums over a number of radical proposals, for which the leadership blamed 'ring-ins' from other branches.\(^{50}\) Wagga's membership may also have been exaggerated. Even prior to the depression, one pastoralist claimed that there were several thousand non-unionists in the Riverina.\(^{51}\)

When they enrolled, eastern smallholders tended to be unreliable unionists, although in some areas pastoralists claimed that selectors had been the union backbone. As they approached home, and shearing opportunities dwindled towards the end of the season, smallholders'

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48. 1889: almost 2000 members; 1891: 723 members; and 1892: 2279 members. 49. See Swan, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.159, 163–4, who also qualifies the extent of this radicalism. 50. ASU Wagga 6th AR, 22 January 1893; ASU Wagga 7th AR, 31 December 1893; Hummer, 23 January 1895. 'Radical' proposals included amalgamation with the Queensland Shearers', and the ALF, and establishment of Co-operatives. Whilst voting on these issues was always close in eastern branches, Bourke consistently scored large affirmative majorities. 51. Wilson, \textit{RRCS}, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.49.
active union support often declined. Some made a convenience of the union, enrolling in the western stronghold and then accepting non-union work as they moved eastwards. District loyalties could also outweigh those to the union as selectors approached home. Relations between selectors and pastoralists seem to have been characterized by deference at times, reinforced by selectors' reliance on pastoralists for water rights, credit references, and off-season work. On the other hand, in areas such as the Riverina, intense selector/pastoralist conflict probably predisposed selectors to union support.

Smallholders were emerging as a more coherent group with their own solidarities and ethos. Ultimately, their class interests were not identical with those of the landless bushworker, but their distinction was unclear because of bushworkers' land aspirations and the smallholders' insecurities, which could drag him back down with the bushworker at any time. The increasing coherence of smallholders as a class led to a hardening of antagonism against large landholders, which was shared with bushworkers, but as it became more difficult to fulfil land aspirations in the 1880s, the distance between smallholder and bushworker widened. Selectors', or 'cockles', difficulties made them 'meaner' in bushworkers' eyes. Cockles' resistance to the bush tradition of free meals for itinerants was a major complaint, and cockles who ran sheep were probably harsher employers. Bushworkers' contempt for the selectors' scrounging existence had entered bush folklore by the 1880s, with phrases such as 'cockle's joy' (golden syrup).

52. For example, see Roberts, op.cit., p.240.
54. See Ward, op.cit., pp.195-9; Graham, op.cit., pp.15-17, 32, 38-9, 41-3. Western pastoralists had also opposed free accommodation to itinerants, but the tradition had been more successfully upheld in the west. Transcript of Proceedings Before Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, June 1907..., p.289.
The large number of eastern ASU branches, therefore, indicated organizational weakness. A greater organizational effort was required in the east. But because the ASU had to woo them to its folds, smallholders' significance in the union exceeded their actual numbers. Five of New South Wales's seven branches were selector dominated, although their leadership could not always be completely identified with this element. Head Office, at Creswick, Victoria, was also located in the heart of smallholding country. Only Bourke and Cobar's memberships were predominantly proletarianized, and the relocation of the Cobar branch at Coonamble in 1893 brought it under greater selector influence. Bourke had no greater influence for being by far the largest branch in the 1890s. Even as the eastern branches collapsed during the depression the union's leadership remained the same, and if anything, attempts to woo selector membership became more important. Furthermore, smallholders often only earned a little extra income shearing as the season approached their own district. Consequently, smallholders living near branch headquarters were more likely than landless itinerants to be present for branch meetings during most of the year.

Frequently, town shopkeepers and tradesmen also played a major role.

55. ASU organizers spent most of their time in the east. Note articles 'Selectors as Labourers', and 'The Farmer as a Labourer', in Hummer, 30 January, 6 February 1892.
56. Young, Moree, Scone, Goulburn, and Wagga Wagga.
57. Originally, branches were entitled to annual conference delegates according to the following formula: 1 for 1-500 members; 2 for 500-1000 members; 3 for 1000+ members, ASU Rules, 1887. But representation favoured smaller branches more as membership declined in the 1890s: 1 for 1-1000 members; 2 for 1000+ members. ASU Rules, 1894; ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.119. Whilst other branches may often have exceeded 1000 in the 1880s, few reached that figure in the 1890s, but Bourke's membership was always c.2-3000. Each branch also elected an Executive Councillor, whatever its size.
58. Halloran and Abbott (pastoralists), in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.61, 77.
They, too, were subject to district loyalties, but more importantly, reinforced the social strata of independent men in the ASU. It was this influence which made the ASU so extraordinary as a union, an institutional form which had been distinctively working class. It also explains many of the differences between the ASU and the separately organized Queensland Shearers' Union. The northern industry, with a small number of large holdings, and larger concentrations of labour, resembled the west of New South Wales, and to some extent the landless membership from these two areas overlapped.

However, despite its weaknesses, the ASU's organizational effort was impressive, and its influence extended beyond the pastoral industry, particularly given shearers' diverse origins. The most direct organizational influence was manifested in the country Carrier's Unions, which appeared over 1887-90, often in the same localities as ASU branches. Their membership, with many independent men, was similar to the ASU's. Both groups symbolized the manly independence of the outback in nationalist literary images, and indeed, many 'bullockies' shore in the season.

59. Although officially they could only be honorary members, a number of these are listed in Branch Membership Rolls. For example:
- ASU Moree List of Members Financial for 1892 (22); AWU Scone Members' Roll for 1896, (3). Also Abbott in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.66; Report of Special Commission Appointed by Annual Conference held in Melbourne, February 1893, on the Financial Position and General Management of Cobar Branch ASU, 1893.

60. See Spence, History of the AWU, p.110; Australia's Awakening, p.55. The AWU and QWU amalgamated in 1904. Unlike other branches, Bourke's membership strongly supported this amalgamation at an early stage in referendums, ASU 7th AR, February 1893; AWU 10th AR, February 1896, p.30.

61. See Appendix 2 for a list of these unions, most of whom made submissions to the RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, pp.137-8. See Chapter 3 for their position as independent men. Note the petition from western districts carriers seeking organizational aid, ASU Young Central Committee Minutes, 5 December 1894.
But the ASU also had strategic reasons for sponsoring Carrier's Unions. As Merritt shows, the union was under pressure from its staunchest membership to enforce a closed shop; its rationale depended on enforcing union rates. But the unreliability of its eastern membership, and the large number of employers, most of whom opposed the union, made strike action unattractive. Spence's attempts to overcome this impasse, by building an alliance with Sydney wharf labourers to prevent shipment of non-union wool, were important in the lead-up to the 1890 Maritime Strike. As the intermediaries between the stations and the wharves, the carriers themselves could 'be in a position to render... valuable assistance...' if they refused to carry non-union wool. However, pastoralists do not appear to have experienced difficulty in shipping wool to Sydney in 1890. As independent men, the carriers were unreliable union allies.

Paradoxically, the pervasiveness of ASU influence in the bush community may have proscribed further country organization. Outside the city, navvies for example, were weakly organized. In the city, which as a centre of unionism, provided considerable moral and material support for organization, their membership was high.

Membership densities amongst the urban skilled unions were usually high, and consolidated markedly over 1889-91. In the metal trades

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63. ASU Moree for 1890, p.1.
64. The Central Australian Carriers' had no objection to carrying non-union wool, nor the Riverina Carriers' with working alongside non-unionists, submissions to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, pp.137-8. In the 1891 Queensland shearers' strike, the Queensland Carriers' Union could not prevent its members from working, Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, p.1533.
65. Navvies' submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.149. See Appendix 2.
unions, and in some building trades unions, such as the Stonemasons', virtually all workers considered eligible for membership were enrolled. Such control of a workforce possessing a monopoly of scarce skills difficult to replace in strikes, had always been the source of organizational strength for the crafts.

However, some crafts were not so secure, and membership density fluctuated for many. The Bakers' Society, despite a fairly constant flow of new members over 1888-90, still did not enrol the entire workforce, and in 1889 and 1892 arrears in subscriptions were high. From 1886 the Coopers' Society also gained many new members, but this flow declined in 1892 and Toohey's coopers remained non-union. The Shipwrights' Union failed to establish union shops in a number of places. Vagueness of information given to the Strikes Commission over their attitude to non-union labour, or an admission that closed shops operated only 'where the rule can be enforced', suggested some difficulties in maintaining membership densities for a number of crafts.

Even in some building and metal trades, density fluctuated. In the early 1880s the Amalgamated Carpenters bought support by offering

66. The ASE allowed work alongside non-members, but this applied to few who were eligible. Similarly, the Ironmoulders' claimed only ten non-members were in the trade. The Boilermakers' were also very strong. Submissions to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, pp.138, 140, 146; Talbot (Ironmoulders' Secretary) and J. Johnston (Boilermakers' President), in ibid., Precis of Evidence, pp.214, and 242 respectively.
67. Bakers' Minutes, August 1888-1892; TLC Minutes, 21 August 1890. Note request to 'non-society' bakers to attend meeting, SMH, 22 May 1880. Also similar meeting with non-union plumbers, SMH, 6 March 1885.
68. Coopers' Minutes, 1886-93.
69. Unionists were allowed to work with non-members, but were expected to endeavour to enrol them; submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.142.
70. For example, the Farriers' and United Furniture Trade. On the other hand, the Saddlers', Confectioners' and Lithographers' stronger rules against working with non-unionists (ibid., pp.145-6, 148, 151) suggest more effective unions, although TLC Minutes, 16 July 1891, note a number of non-union lithographers.
strike benefits to non-members, and they continued to work alongside non-members throughout the 1880s. Bricklayers' problems with 'improvers' suggest a number of non-unionists, especially during building booms. In 1885 the Plasterers' dropped their closed shop rule, with disastrous effects: membership fell from 500 to 150. Membership rose to 600 in 1890, after restoration of the rule, but significant numbers of non-unionists remained. The Stonemasons' themselves, despite a flow of new members over 1889-90, had a large proportion of unfinancial members. In late 1890 and 1891 new members increased dramatically, but arrears of subscriptions grew markedly again over 1891-2. In the metal trades, the Tinsmiths' control of labour supply fluctuated considerably. The union grew quickly over 1881-3, from 39 to 100, but without achieving 100 per cent density, and in 1883-4 poor attendance at meetings indicates a low active membership. Then, in 1884-5 membership grew to 120-150. But from 1887 membership declined to 74 in 1889, out of at least 270 in the trade. The situation did not improve until late 1890, and by 1892 many members were unfinancial again.

In a period of productive re-organization, the craft unions' exclusive definition of eligible membership weakened their control of the labour supply. ASE exclusion of the growing semi-skilled metals

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71. SMH, 19, 21-22 June 1882; H. Wilkinson (Carpenters' Secretary), in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.280.
72. Bavister, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.216-7. However, members were officially prohibited from working alongside non-members, ibid., Literary Appendix, p.144.
73. W. Gillespie (plasterers' labourer) in ibid., Precis of Evidence, p.264; TLC Minutes, 21 August 1891.
74. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 1889-92. Central Committee Minutes 1881-2 also reveal a large inflow of new members. Only 20-30 attended meetings in late 1889, 50-60 by early 1892, when there were 79 in arrears, and then about 20 on average as the number in arrears grew further.
75. Tinsmiths' Minutes, 1881-92.
workforce, and the Printers' exclusion of a large and growing cheap, semi-skilled workforce outside metropolitan newspapers, were extreme examples. But both arose from the basic craft strategy: restriction of entry to the labour market through an apprenticeship system, with definite limits to apprentices' numbers. Entry was further restricted by some trades' custom of employing tradesmen's sons as apprentices, which was facilitated where tradesmen employed apprentices themselves; or where apprenticeship was weak, some trades (notably in building) were the exclusive preserve of British tradesmen. These patterns require consideration in a broader context of strategy and tactics.

New Unionism and Industrial Strategy and Tactics

The crafts' success in its 'restrictionist' strategy rested upon the establishment of 'customs and practices' considered integral to the 'mystique' of the trade, and the establishment of the union as the collective repository of the skills and 'mystique', which could be passed on to those who received 'the calling'. In this way, the union sought identification with 'the trade' itself, or at least its 'quality' section. Craft unions invariably listed 'protection of the trade' itself, amongst their objects, most claimed to represent the best workmen in a trade. For example, Talbot, of the Ironmoulders', claimed that 'those who are non-unionists are men we could not permit into the

76. See Chapter 1.
78. A. Oliver (Registrar of Trade Unions), in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.72; and many of the union Rules cited in Bibliography. The Building Trades Council and Lithographers' submissions to *ibid.*, Literary Appendix, pp.143, 146, clearly show their self-identification with the trade.
Society, because we do not think them skilled enough'. Established 'customs and practices' also entailed a limited amount of job control for craftsmen, by setting the boundaries of negotiations. Generally, the crafts' strategy had been successful prior to the 1880s, but the employers' response, in productive re-organization, undercut it (in some cases, even before the 1880s) by expanding the less skilled workforce. Clinging to a restrictive basis of membership then became potentially counter-productive in some cases, where it actually hindered union control of the workforce.

Labour historians have contrasted the traditional craft union strategy, and the tactics which supported it, with those of the newer unions of the semi and unskilled which appeared in the 1880s. In doing so, they have generally adopted a concept of 'new unionism' employed by British historians to analyze an upsurge in British union organization and militancy, which occurred at about the same time as in New South Wales. 'New unionism', in this sense, involved great qualitative, as well as quantitative, changes in the direction of the union movement, since it was allegedly characterized by:

(1) mass organization of the semi and unskilled in industrial or general unions, based on an 'open' membership policy, in contrast to the 'closed' unionism of the crafts;

(2) low membership dues because of comparatively low wages;

79. ibid., Procès of Evidence, p.214. Also Bavister (Bricklayers') and Johnston (Boilermakers'), ibid., pp.218 and 243 respectively. Numerous other examples occur in union Rules.


as a consequence of (2), an absence of the traditional
craft benefit policy (high accident and funeral benefits);
industrial militancy. As a consequence of (3) and low wages, new unions relied on industrial action;
political organization, partly because they lacked industrial strength, but also because of
a rise in class consciousness and the influence of socialism.

Some contemporaries also referred to 'new unionism' in a similar, if less systematic manner. In particular, the leadership of the ASU/AWU and AMA very self-consciously assumed the mantle of 'new unionism'.

It is noteworthy, therefore, that Australian historians have usually considered that the ASU and AMA were the paradigms of 'new unionism'. Recent studies of the British phenomenon have severely modified the traditional model. But Australian historians have rather uncritically accepted contemporary unionists' self-evaluation, even when it is not clear that they always refer to the same thing. For example, Spence of the ASU, tended to equate 'new unionism' with any of his current predilections, including 'the ideal of the lowly Nazarene'.

An examination of the nature and methods of 'new unionism' in New South Wales suggests that it actually departed from the traditional

83. See n.80, above.
85. W.G. Spence, The Ethics of New Unionism, text of a lecture at Leigh House, Sydney, 1892, pp.8-9. William Lane, a Queensland socialist, linked new unionism with 'mateship' and socialism, Hummer, 16 January 1892. Other unionists were very vague about the concept, for example: Hay (Marine Engineers') in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.240; and G. Garton (shoemaker), Ibid., p.256.
model in many respects. Mass organizations of semi and unskilled workers on the waterfront and in coal mines pre-dated the 1880s, where the rise of 'new unionism' is usually located. Although some historians implicitly classify these organizations as 'new unions', this would mean that the phenomenon was not indeed 'new' to the 1880s. Nor were the new organizations, strictly speaking, industrial or general unions at this time. Industrial unions theoretically enrol all employees in an industry, and general unions enrol all workers without distinction. But the AMA and coalminers' unions functioned separately, either formally or practically, for most of the 1880s and 1890s. Both co-existed with maintenance workers' craft unions and separate surface-hands' unions at the mines. The all-grades railway union also co-existed with separately organized engine-drivers and craft unions in the railway workshops. The ASU began as an occupational union, deliberately organizing non-shearing pastoral labour separately. Only in 1894 did it become an industrial union by amalgamating with the GLU.

But the ASU's motives for organizing the GLU, and then amalgamating with it, did not stem from a clear commitment to industrial unionism. The ASU feared that 'hothead' general labourers operating independently might disrupt its agreements with pastoralists. It controlled the GLU through a parallel branch structure and provision of much of the GLU

86. See n.80, above.
leadership. Amalgamation with the GLU in 1894 strengthened the ASU's policy of containment, when it was striving to accommodate pastoralists, if only shearers' wage rates could be maintained. Little wonder that general labourers' membership was low, as the union urged patience until shearers' conditions were consolidated. 89

The unions of semi and unskilled workers were not always 'open' organizations. As we saw in Chapters 1-3 labour hierarchies extended well beyond the crafts, and most unions were organized on the basis of these hierarchies. Where no formal apprenticeship existed, restrictions upon entry to an occupation might still be formidable. For example, entry to railway employment was subject to a number of Government conditions. 90 Occupational entry to the coal mines was usually limited to miners' sons, who served an 'apprenticeship' as their fathers' 'off-siders'. 91 The strength of miners' rather 'closed' communities reinforced this practice, but even where it was difficult to achieve, 'new' unions often sought to restrict entry to an occupation. In this respect the ASU behaved as a craft union. It attempted to restrict entry to the highly skilled shearing 'trade' to 'competent shearers', defined by a certain level of experience. 92 It also attempted to abolish 'barrowing', whereby learners practised shearing during 'smoko' breaks. Although some selector members resisted this because they wished to train their sons, union policy

89. ASU 4th AR, February 1890, pp.42-4; GLU 1st AR, February 1891, pp.12, 15-16; GLU 5th AR, February 1894, pp.8-9; GLU Inverell 2nd AR, 31 December 1892, pp.4, 6; GLU Bourke AR, 31 December 1893, pp.1, 3; AWU Scone 5th AR, 31 December 1894; AWU Scone 6th AR, 31 December 1895; Merritt, op.cit., pp.606-7.
90. Docherty, op.cit., p.37.
91. See Chapter 2.
92. That is, having shorn 3000 sheep. ASU 7th AR, February 1893, pp.30-1; AWU Rules, 1894.
was aided by employers' reluctance to risk damaged fleeces, and by the later introduction of shearing machines. Barrowing became impractical when the machines were turned-off during 'smokos'.

Benefit policies also appeared amongst the new unions. The ASU/ AWU experimented in this direction (unsuccesfully) during the depression, when membership fell drastically and the union had difficulty in maintaining wage rates. The Wharf Labourers' had high funeral benefits, and partly as a result, a very high entrance fee in 1890, a policy which proved disastrous in the 1890 Maritime Strike, and which was soon changed. Benefits policy was important for the railway unionists, who were constrained from striking by their position as public employees, and unable to resist cutbacks in the 1890s; so important that, as part of their anti-union strategy, the New South Wales Railway Commissioners established a rival benefit fund. As an indication of its priorities, the AMA prior to 1890 spent £6,600 on strike pay, and over £84,000 on accident and funeral benefits.

93. ASU Rules, 1887 (no.60); Shearers' Record, April 1888; Wilson and Abbott (pastoralists) in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.49, 61; Merritt, op.cit., pp.598-9.
94. With an Accident and Funeral Fund, ASU 6th AR, February 1892, pp.118-9. The membership was strongly in favour of the scheme in a referendum, ASU 7th AR, February 1893. Membership dues were doubled as a result (AWU Rules, 1894), but although a Funeral fund was established later, the scheme proved too great a financial liability under the circumstances of the 1890s. AWU 13th AR, February 1899, pp.8, 18; AWU 14th AR, January 1900, pp.8, 20.
95. McKillop in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.8. The Coal Lumpers' also had extensive accident benefits, Herbert in ibid., p.3. High entrance fees were partly designed to discourage desertion from ships. Note existence of Wharf Labourers' Accident Assurance Club, SMH, 5 April 1882.
The danger of miners' and railwaymen's occupations encouraged their unions' development of benefit policies. But, as with the craft unions, the existence of a benefit policy was part of the range of 'sanctions' available to a union in attempting to maintain the loyalty of membership and exert some discipline over it. In most unions, members who transgressed its rules, including working during strikes, were liable to lose their rights to benefits. The relationship between benefits and industrial militancy, therefore, was unlikely to be mutually exclusive.

It is certainly difficult to substantiate a claim that the 'new unions' were clearly more militant than the crafts, even when they were not in the unusual position of the railwaymen, who, as public employees, could not lightly consider strike action. The AMA as a whole was numerically dominated by its conservative Victorian members, who were relatively well-paid, and often shareholders in the mining companies. The Broken Hill AMA's militancy was an exception. But even this was late developing, and the achievement of recognition as a bargaining agent and of a closed shop in 1889 led to a period of industrial peace, until the purely defensive strike of 1892 against wage reductions and contract work.

The ASU participated in a series of localized strikes, some violent, in its early years. But it would be mistaken to attribute

99. The union Rules listed in the Bibliography, and their submissions to the RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, show this clearly.
100. See Schey, op.cit., pp.110, 112, for their 'respectful attitudes', and Docherty, op.cit., pp.23-6, 28, 31, 179.
this to a militant outlook on the part of the leadership, rather than pastoralists' reluctance to recognize the union as a bargaining agent. Furthermore, the vast majority of the 3180 strikes in which Spence claimed the union had been involved until 1890, were small, localized affairs, many of which lasted a matter of minutes, whilst shearers negotiated for union rates. In the west, the combination of more militant, landless shearers, and the greater difficulties for pastoralists who postponed shearing on schedule, produced a greater willingness than in the ASU as a whole, to threaten the strike weapon. But, in general, the unreliability of the ASU's itinerant membership, especially amongst eastern selectors, weakened its ability to embark upon general strikes. The major strikes of 1891 and 1894, both of which the ASU lost, were defensive, against employment of non-union labour and wage cuts. The leadership also hastened to disown the sporadic acts of violence which occurred in these struggles. Once the AWU had gained employer recognition, the leadership's emphasis on moderation and respectability could not be doubted. The AWU went on to become one of the strongest supporters of compulsory state arbitration.

On the other hand, the urban craft unions were not as reluctant

103. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.27.
104. Branch Reports in the 1880s indicate these trends. See Chapter 2.
105. Blaming pastoralists' agents provocateurs or unemployed urban 'riff-raff'. For example, AWU 9th AR, February 1895, p.23.
106. For example, Spence frequently warned of 'undue interference with the position and rights of employers', ASU 3rd AR, February 1889, p.4; and 'Labour and Its Sphere', Bourke lecture reprinted with ASU 4th AR, February 1890, p.4.
to use the strike as often supposed. If they rarely took out their entire membership, this was because they faced a larger number of employers than most new unions (excepting the AWU). Craft unions could take advantage of this situation by picking employers off one by one: the 'strike in detail'. No union utilized the strike for its own sake, but as a last resort, a threat in negotiations. If craft unions struck infrequently (which was probably not the case at the end of the 1880s), this indicated their strength, as does the usually short duration of their strikes. This strength was based on their strategic position in the labour process, due to their monopoly of skills and control of labour supply. In contrast, the majority of ASU strikes occurred in the east, where the union was weakest, and where employers were more willing to confront the union.

The relationship between strikes and industrial militancy, per se, is, therefore, unclear. Strikes represent a particularly organized, and even formalized, expression of industrial conflict. But there were other forms of 'direct action' in the 1880s and 1890s. For example, urban unions frequently employed secondary boycotts against supply of goods to employers, or even consumer boycotts against purchase of goods from particular employers. Although the latter do not appear to have achieved great success, both tactics had the advantage of not depriving members of normal wages in a strike. In the country, the

107. This is partly indicated by the fact that most had provision for strike allowances, and often, quite elaborate procedures for management of strike action, in their Rules. See Nairn, 'Role of the TLC', op.cit., pp.152, 154, 165-6. The following general comments on skilled unions' strike patterns are based upon a perusal of the Minutes listed in the Bibliography.

108. See n.104, above.

109. The Bakers' Minutes show that they widely employed these tactics. Also SMH, 4 August 1884, re the consumer boycott in Bakers' campaign for eight hours.
number of arrests for 'setting fire to crops' or grass, in the 1890s, 110 may also be an index of industrial unrest, at a time when the ASU was virtually inoperative as an industrial organization. It is interesting in this regard that the number of stoppages due to wet sheep seem to have increased markedly in the 1890s, despite the great drought. 111 Fleece damage also seems to have become more common in the 1890s. 112 None of these possibilities have been adequately explored by historians.

Concentration on strikes, as isolated events, may also distort a balanced view of the long-term processes of industrial relations in particular industries. For example, despite the militancy of outlook of the maritime unions, maritime industrial relations were characterized by well-established inter-colonial collective bargaining procedures during the 1880s, aided by employers' organization in the Steamship Owners' Association. 113 Yet, the two largest and most widespread strikes experienced in New South Wales prior to the 1890s, occurred in the maritime industry in 1878 and 1885. 114 Both involved broad political issues which, to a large extent, placed them outside normal bargaining procedures.

A broad survey of the issues involved in industrial disputes in the 1880s suggests a certain defensiveness in most strike action, and indeed, in the nature of unionism itself. The variety of union sources

110. See Chapter 4.
111. H. Lancock and R. Webb (pastoralists) in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.82, 102; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.38; AWU 9th AR, February 1895, pp.18, 21; AWU Scone 6th AR, 31 December 1895.
112. AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1894, p.3.
113. Examples of conferences are referred to in Chapter 3. Material concerning them, particularly procedure, is also in RRCS, 1891, Appendix to Evidence.
114. These are discussed in Chapter 11.
available indicate that the vast majority of disputes in the 1880s were directly related to union attempts to control labour supply: over recognition of the union as bargaining agent, the closed shop, apprenticeship, and the use of less skilled labour, particularly as productive re-organization made this more feasible in the late 1880s. Even in the case of the Broken Hill AMA, the most important of its exceptional gains in 1889 was the closed shop.\textsuperscript{115} Disputes over wages and hours were less frequent, and usually arose when unions attempted to defend existing conditions (in recessions) or recapture old ones (in economic upturns). Employers' assaults on wages and conditions frequently took the form of an increase in the number of apprentices or the introduction of less skilled labour. Most of the union's more significant gains, such as the eight hour day (for those who had it), had been achieved prior to the 1880s, and productive re-organization undercut some of these at the end of the decade.

Establishment of formal collective bargaining channels often stabilized wages, and hence, hampered manoeuvrability for increases. To offset this, other issues could become important, as we saw with the coalminers in Chapter 2. Union attempts to gain eight hours have tactical significance in this context, especially with the growing improbability of wage increases through head-on clashes in the late 1880s. Overtime payments effectively increased wages where working time was not easily reduced. But so often, reduced hours were gained at the expense of lower wages and/or an intensification of labour. The unions which achieved significant wage gains in the 1880s were few, and limited to those holding a very clear advantage in the labour market. As we have seen in Part I, many workers' material situation

\textsuperscript{115} Spence's breakdown of the causes of AMA strikes shows that they were overwhelmingly defensive, \textit{RRCS}, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.26.
deteriorated in the late 1880s, as many employers attempted to strengthen their own declining positions. Paradoxically, the unions as a whole maintained a high degree of confidence and assertiveness, fuelled by the earlier high expectations of the boom, the rare, but spectacular successes of some groups such as the Broken Hill miners and maritime labourers, and the largely defensive achievements of urban crafts and coalminers. Class conflict and consciousness heightened as the gap between these expectations and changed circumstances widened.

These changes were clearest amongst the urban skilled unions, perhaps because they had the highest expectations, and a lower level of class consciousness prior to the 1880s. Some, such as the Printers', responded to productive re-organization by retreating further into craft conservatism. But others, such as the Stonemasons', developed an extreme class bitterness, precisely because the basis of their elite position was so severely threatened. A militancy of mood became widespread. More closely than ever before, the organized labour movement began to represent a class, rather than an elite, especially after its rapid expansion in the 1880s. Even the cautious ASU leadership was pressured by the militancy of its western membership. The language of class developed more clearly: the 'working classes' or 'working class' replaced 'tradesmen and labourers' in the organizational vernacular. 'Capital versus Labour' increasingly

117. An indication is the evidence of J. Grant (Stonemasons' Secretary) in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp. 244-7. The whole tone of their Minutes in this period suggests that Grant's forthright class consciousness was representative of the membership. Numerous examples appear in succeeding chapters.
118. Merritt, <i>op. cit.</i>, pp. 600-2.
summarized the contemporary evaluation of industrial relations. 'Defence not Defiance' remained the watchwords for most unions, but under the economic circumstances, this aim itself could only lead to a broadening of class conflict. One manifestation of the unions' rising mood of class consciousness was their display of solidarity, in the form of massive financial aid, with the 1889 London dock strikers. Many other examples are examined in detail in succeeding chapters. But one of its clearest manifestations is in the extension of co-operation and joint organization amongst unions, and the emergence of a distinct class leadership.

Joint Organization and the Development of a Class Leadership

Co-operation between trade unions had always existed at certain levels. From at least the 1850s many unions maintained fraternal contact with each other, and striking unions commonly received financial aid from other unions. Direct supportive action was more unusual, and with the exception of the coalminers, usually limited to unions in one industry, such as occurred in the shipping industry in the major strike of 1878. But the annual eight hours demonstration, with its elaborate regalia, brought unions together, as a movement, around a unifying principle from the late 1860s, albeit, on a largely symbolic level. An Eight Hours Day Committee preceded the establishment of a central Labour Council.

Nevertheless, prior to the 1880s, sectional priorities largely

119. Markey, 'Trade Unionists and the Language of "Class"'.
120. 'Reform not Revolution', or 'United to Protest, not to Injure', were also common slogans appearing at the head of many union Rules.
123. See Chapter 1, n.s 114-5; and K.S. Inglis, The Australian Colonists: An Exploration of Social History, 1788-1870, Melbourne, 1974, pp.120-3.
restricted joint union organization to an industry level. The advantages of joint organization on this level were clearest when a relatively large number of unions faced a small number of employers (as they did in the shipping industry) or employers' associations, as they did with the Masters' Associations common to craft industry from an early stage. Building unions enjoyed very close ties from the 1850s, when they jointly campaigned for an eight hour day. In the 1870s they also mounted a joint campaign for a Saturday half holiday, and by 1882 a Building Trades Council existed. This became an effective co-ordinating body in the 1880s. From 1859-61 an Iron Trades Protective Association existed, and in 1872 the Australian Iron Workers' Association became the centre of the metal workers' eight hour campaign. Both Associations included the unorganized semi-skilled, since only general application of the eight hour day guaranteed it for the crafts. In 1884 a Maritime Labour Council was also established. Based on a relatively cohesive maritime community, the Council proved very effective in tying up ships during a major dispute in 1885.

124. The union/employer conferences referred to in Chapter 3 all involved joint bargaining on the part of the sea-going unions.
125. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 9 and 23 October 1856, 17 December 1873, 2 February 1874. Delegates were regularly exchanged for societies' dinners and eight hour celebrations, for example, ibid., 23 May and 19 December 1864, 20 November 1865. The Stonemasons' had particularly close relations with the Quarrymen's Society, Stonemasons' Central Committee Minutes, 21 July 1881.
126. The Council's submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.143, states that it was established in 1886, but it existed at least as early as 1882. Stonemasons' Central Committee Minutes, 10 August 1882.
127. Buckley, op.cit., pp.45-56. The Iron Workers' Association affiliated separately with the TLC and still functioned in the early 1890s, SMH, 9 April 1880, 7 July 1882.
However, even at this level, sectional tensions were often difficult to overcome. For example, the ASE dominated the Iron Workers' Association, as a necessary adjunct to its eight hour campaign. But after achievement of that aim, and after it lost control of the Association, the ASE became uneasy over a body which cut across craft lines and operated through mass meetings and shop delegates' committees, where the semi-skilled could gain majorities. Under strike pressure, the Ironmoulders' and Boilermakers' also acted independently in 1882. 129 Despite similar complaints under a common employer, the skilled Engine-drivers' Union remained aloof from the all-grades railway union, which it considered overly aggressive. In this regard, the newly skilled Engine-drivers' acquired exclusive habits of thought associated with the most traditional and conservative craft unions. 130 One of the other major new groups of skilled workers, the Marine Engineers', behaved similarly in being the only maritime union to refuse to join the Maritime Council in 1884, on the grounds that it was a 'professional body'. 131 Although the Maritime Labour Council intensified the union pressure which was becoming intolerable for employers in the late 1880s, it never developed into a strong body. In 1885, it temporarily broke down because the seamen failed to consult other members before striking, even though they were committed to support the seamen. 132 Even amongst

129. Buckley, op.cit., p.64.
130. Country branches, however, favoured amalgamation with the all-grades union because they would not have been so completely swamped by its membership. Engine-drivers' Minutes, 17 December 1883, 11 January 1884 (re Guards' and Shunters' Union in these cases), 28 June and 30 July 1888, 31 January and 12 March 1889, 2 May and 31 July 1890.
131. Marine Engineers' Sydney District Minutes, 6 October 1884.
132. See Norton, op.cit., pp.72-5; Mitchell, op.cit., pp.24-5. In 1890 the Wharf Labourers' also agreed to support the ASU over non-union wool, before placing the issue before a Maritime Council meeting. Herbert, McKillop and Spence in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.5, 12 and 32 respectively. Note, also, the Newcastle Wharf Labourers' complaint over the Seamen's poaching of members, TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 27 May 1890.
the building trades unity was incomplete. The Stonemasons' seceded from the Building Trades Council in the early 1880s, although this seems to have been because of a preference for affiliation to the Trades and Labour Council. 133

The formation of the Sydney Trades and Labour Council (TLC) in 1871 marked a significant step towards central union leadership. As Nairn shows, the TLC, which originally represented the crafts primarily, always supported unskilled organization. However, whilst the TLC's title and objects recognised common interests between crafts and unskilled, they also maintained a distinction. 134 Craft domination of the TLC possibly encouraged the separate organization of the Maritime Council, for the Maritime unions were the only large organizations of urban semi and unskilled workers at that time. But separate organization only reinforced the TLC's craft nature. Of the maritime unions, only the Wharf Labourers' was continuously affiliated with the TLC, but not always active in its deliberations. 135 Railway unions remained unaffiliated in the 1880s, because of their moderation and fear of the Railway Commissioners' reaction to affiliation (although the Engine-drivers' Sydney branch favoured joining from 1884). 136 The Newcastle coalminers' affiliation in 1881 revealed an awareness of common interests, for they had little to gain directly from the TLC. But distance and their strong independence minimised contact, for the miners did not regularly participate in TLC affairs, except over issues of specific interest to them.

133. Stonemasons' Central Committee Minutes, 5 December 1881, 10 August 1882.
135. See Appendix 2 for affiliation dates. The Seamen had been affiliated, but left in 1885. Except where otherwise indicated, all general comments concerning TLC affiliations and activities are based upon TLC Minutes.
136. Docherty, op.cit., pp.28-9; Engine-drivers' Minutes, 27 August 1884.
In fact, the TLC was not even representative of the urban crafts. Only six unions were closely committed to the TLC in 1871. TLC authority improved markedly over the next three years until it officially represented twenty-three of about thirty unions in the colony. But a number of unions seceded over 1874-6, possibly due to the TLC's political experimentation as well as their own difficulties. Not until 1883 did the TLC's influence begin to increase, gradually. In 1885 it claimed 9583 members. A year later it represented less than half (about twenty-one) the total number of New South Wales unions, most of which were urban crafts. Building unions, apart from the Stonemasons' and Bricklayers', were the TLC's weakest supporters, particularly after formation of the Building Trades Council. Unskilled unions formed from the mid-1880s also remained aloof initially. The TLC's strongest support came from the metal trades, Stonemasons', Bakers', Printers', and Shipwrights'. Many others were only intermittently affiliated.

Intercolonial organization between unions was even more limited, understandably perhaps, because of the distances involved, and the colonial basis of the various economies. The formation of an Australasian Typographical Union in 1880 offered advantages for a highly mobile craft, in attempting to establish uniform wages and terms of apprenticeship, within a very loose union federation. Nevertheless,

137. ASE, Stonemasons', Bakers', Boot Makers', Bricklayers', and Shipwrights'.
138. At least eight seceded, forcing the TLC to reduce its quorum, TLC Minutes, 17 May 1876. Nairn, 'Role of the TLC', op.cit., does not mention these secessions. Although based on the same source as Nairn's, my figures for affiliations are consistently lower than his. Nor was either the Amalgamated Carpenters' or the Progressive Carpenters' a regular affiliate in the early 1870s, as Nairn implies. I have not counted unions as affiliates if they ceased paying affiliation fees and sending delegates to meetings.
139. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 30 December 1885. But only 7-8000 a few months earlier, SMH, 4 August 1884.
the New South Wales Typographical Association remained aloof during the eighties. The mass railway unions established an intercolonial consultative federation in August 1890, but after a second conference in 1891, the difficulties of the depression forced the unions back upon themselves. By 1890 only the ASU and AMA were intercolonial unions, the latter more in name than practice, because of the independence of its colonial branches, and even in Queensland, shearers organized separately from the ASU.

The development of the Intercolonial Trades Union Congresses during 1879-91, whilst they remained a largely political forum rather than finding any firm organizational footing, nevertheless provided a broader basis for class organization. Craft unions played a leading role in them, but significantly, the Sixth (1889) Congress officially represented Trades and Labour unions. The most far-reaching initiative arising from the Congresses was the scheme for an Australasian Labour Federation (ALF), involving the total unification of working class organizations on the industrial and political levels. After individual unions' fear of loss of autonomy caused the scheme's rejection in 1889,

140. Australasian Typographical Union, Rules, Melbourne, 1886 and 1889; and submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.146.
141. Schey, op.cit., p.111; Docherty, op.cit., pp.166-71. The Engine-drivers' had strong links with their Victorian counterpart, for example, Engine-drivers' Minutes, 26 July and 26 August 1886, 22 September and 3 November 1887, 17 January 1889, 25 August 1890; and with their Queensland colleagues, 31 October 1890. But they declined links with the Barrier Ranges Engine-drivers' Association (mines), 12 January 1891; and nothing came of a formal proposal for intercolonial federation, 12 January and 5 March 1891.
it was finally accepted in 1891. Queensland had already instigated it in 1890, and in 1894 New South Wales unions organized along ALF lines, with the TLC becoming the Sydney District Council, and AWU branches, and later, district miners' unions, also becoming District Councils. By then, however, events had overtaken this development and lingering doubts prevented the ALF’s expansion to other colonies. Nevertheless, it was one of the greatest manifestations of heightened working class consciousness at the time, and of efforts to completely mobilize the working class.

But not all of the scheme’s implications were radical. Local initiatives were contained in a hierarchical structure through District Councils, to colonial Provincial Councils, to an intercolonial General Council meeting annually. Militancy would have been severely curtailed, since, under pain of severe penalty, individual unions could not strike without District Council approval. If the strike crossed district boundaries, Provincial or General Council approval was required. Spence (ASU) was quite specific about the curb on militancy. He


143. Unions' Federation Conference, 7 April 1894 (in TLC Minutes Book); AWU 9th AR, February 1895, p.25; Australasian Federation of Labor, Rules and Platform of the Riverina District Council, Political Section, Wagga Wagga, January 1894; AW, 12 June 1897 (Hunter River District Council established); Ross, op.cit., pp.94-5.


145. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.30-3.
envisaged a highly centralized collective bargaining procedure, whereby the ALF would annually negotiate agreements with a centralized employers' organization, to cover all industries. Strict discipline was required, therefore, on both sides, to prevent sectional disruptions. Under these circumstances, not only moderate unions harboured doubts over the scheme.

At a limited level, the ASU attempted to operate in precisely this fashion. It was more than an inevitable bureaucratic urge which attracted Spence and others to the ALF scheme. One of the ASU's greatest problems had been that the pastoralists' organizations with which it negotiated were never fully representative of sheep-owners. But the ALF scheme proposed central employers', as well as employees', organization, with one round of negotiations replacing the endless skirmishes to which the ASU had been subjected in the late 1880s.

Nor was it only the ASU which could benefit. Coalminers specifically encouraged employer unity for the Vend, because the alternative involved intensive competition with strong downwards pressure on wages. Maritime unions, faced with a small number of employers, already enjoyed the advantages of centralized collective bargaining, and they, too, had encouraged cartelisation. Even the urban skilled had an ambiguous relationship with employers' organizations, which had a long history in the crafts. The 'trade' ethos, with its implications for social mobility bridged the gap between union and 'Masters' Associations' to some extent, as both attempted to maintain standards. Through employer observance of apprenticeship, the craft unions could offer the 'best quality' workmanship. Even as this system was

disintegrating in the late 1880s, both groups shared common interests, outside wage-levels or apprentices' numbers. The greatest challenge to craft industry came from the 'cheap', backyard employers, outside the Masters' Associations, who pioneered productive re-organization, and whose less skilled employees were non-unionists. But as the cheaper businesses persisted and multiplied, older employers were also forced to become more competitive.

The development of centralized union leadership, therefore, was a contradictory process. On the one hand, it was a manifestation of working class mobilization. But on the other hand, it contained the seeds of a centralized bargaining system which would restrain this class mobilization. Some members of the TLC leadership expressed similar views to Spence concerning the role of the ALF. The TLC had aspired on occasions to supervising affiliates' industrial relations. Although this benefitted weaker unions, a greater level of centralized leadership was becoming discernible in the TLC. Leadership and policy were stable and unions' delegates fairly continuous. To some extent TLC business was filtered from everyday union organization, since it tended to foster a specialized expertise amongst delegates, who required a high level of commitment to unionism. On occasions, delegates' TLC role conflicted with individual

147. See Macarthy, *op.cit.*, pp.277, 283-5, 295; and P.G. Macarthy, 'Employers, The Tariff, and Legal Wage Determination in Australia 1890-1910', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol.12, no.2, pp.182-93; Hagan and Fisher, 'Piecework and Some of Its Consequences', *op.cit.*, p.28. As an example of these patterns, note Master Butchers' support for the eight hour day, SMH, 5 October, 18 November, and 4 December 1883.
union loyalties. However, this tension inevitably arose as the TLC bestrode sectional interests to develop as a class leadership. Within this role, bureaucratization was limited, unions' delegates could be, and often were, replaced, and the TLC could not enforce its policy on affiliates. Despite heavy unskilled reliance on the TLC, skilled unions jealously guarded their independence, especially in industrial disputes. 149

The TLC's position relied on its increasingly acknowledged authority, rather than bureaucratic powers. In the mid to late 1880s union expansion produced four regional leaderships. Apart from the TLC, the AMA dominated a Barrier Trades and Labour Council, including surface workers and local craft union branches, the Newcastle coalminers dominated a similar grouping, and the ASU claimed to speak for country labour. But from 1888-92 the TLC gained an unprecedented prestige and authority within the labour movement, so that it largely subsumed the regional leaderships, with the possible exception of that at Broken Hill. Northern coalminers and their associated unions actively participated in the TLC for the first time in years, and in 1889 ASU branches began affiliating. Although the ASU was motivated by its desired alliance with maritime unions to prevent shipment of non-union wool, its affiliation emphasized the TLC's authority if the ASU considered that a necessary step. 150 Even the maritime and most building unions, which had maintained their sectional Councils,

149. These comments are based on a perusal of TLC Minutes, but see ibid., pp.88, 93-5.
affiliated with the TLC. The newly organized urban unskilled joined en masse, and the TLC itself played an active role in their organization. Affiliations peaked in 1890-1. At the beginning of 1890 the TLC had thirty affiliates representing 20000 members. By June 1891 it represented over 40000 workers, or about two thirds of all unionists. By 1890-1 the TLC had clearly emerged as an unprecedented working class leadership in New South Wales, as its authority was extended over the largest and most rapid expansion of unionism ever experienced.

The challenge which this mobilization represented for employers provided the final motivation for their greater unity. We have already noted the beginnings of closer organization amongst pastoralists, the increased militancy of shipowners, and their links with the well-established coalowners' association. In 1888, a broadly-based New South Wales Employers' Federation was formed. In the context of the time, it clarified class alignments, although its unity was still weakly based. This was, indeed, the spectre conjured up by the ALF. But in the circumstances of the 1890s, even before an organization like the ALF could gain any real momentum, employers re-asserted their

151. The Maritime Council advised its members to affiliate with the TLC in 1889, and a joint conference was held prior to the Wharf Labourers' anticipated strike in October 1890. TLC Minutes, 5 June 1889, 24 October 1890. After a brief absence, the Stonemasons' re-joined the TLC in late 1889, then seceded from the Building Trades Council, and called on it to amalgamate with the TLC. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 6 November and 23 December 1889, 6 January 1890; Grant, PRC5, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.244. Even the Engine-drivers' affiliated, Engine-drivers' Minutes, 9 September 1890.

152. See Appendix 2. Cf. TLC claim of 60000 members, TLC Minutes, 21 May 1891. This was close to the figure for all unionists, but most of those at Broken Hill, numbering over 14000, remained unaffiliated. However, Brennan's figures seem fairly accurate, in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.88.

control over the workforce. As the existence of unionism itself became a major issue, Spence's dream of a centralized national collective bargaining structure disintegrated.

The Holocaust of the 1890s

The spectacular events of the mass strikes of the 1890s have attracted detailed attention from historians. Consequently, it is not necessary to relate the actual events of the strikes again. Nevertheless, the broad trends which they reveal in terms of class mobilization, and the implications for the nature of labour organization, require examination.

The 1890 Maritime Strike quickly developed into open class warfare. The detailed analysis to which historians have recently subjected the motivations of the strike's major participants, largely at the level of the leadership, has tended to dilute this broader class perspective. The initial spark involved marine officers' wage demands and affiliation with Labour Councils in Sydney and Melbourne. This was complicated by the Wharf Labourers' agreement with the ASU to refuse to load non-union shorn wool onto ships. But these issues were quickly subsumed in the unprecedented closing of ranks by unions and employers throughout industry and the colonies. Even though the specific tensions of the maritime industry, which were discussed in Chapter 3, made it the initial arena of conflict, the mobilization which had occurred on the part of unions and employers in the late 1880s, and the economic circumstances in which it occurred, made a major test of strength inevitable. The language of industrial relations, 'Capital versus Labour' presumed it.

On the union side, the maritime unions were not strongly motivated by sympathy for marine officers. But they responded immediately to a threat to the right of joint organization, with only one exception. Coalminers also responded immediately to the call for a shutdown in supply of coal to shipping. Ironically, after the catalyst provided by Spence's efforts to bypass confrontation with the pastoralists, the ASU was forced into a display of solidarity towards the end of the maritime strike. In the west, where closed shop was virtually enforced already, and in the far east, where anti-union organization and selector membership were strongest, the ASU does not appear to have seriously attempted to enforce the general call-out. But in the Central Division, where relative strengths were far less certain, a grim battle developed, with the ASU struggling to maintain unity, much as Spence might have predicted. Stalemate resulted, but the ASU's weakness was exposed.

These unions were the major actors in the 1890 confrontation, but the closing of workers' ranks extended much further. Most urban unions remained at work but only after strenuous efforts on the part of the joint unions' strike leadership. There is considerable evidence of rank and file urban unionists' desire to join the strike, and of their overwhelming financial support for the strikers, in the form of self-imposed levies. The TLC leadership's efforts to keep gas works

155. See Chapter 3. Paradoxically, despite some individual conflicts between engineers and officers, the Marine Engineers' had expressed sympathy with the officers in the early 1880s, but did not support the 1890 strike. SMH, 3 May 1881.
and other vital services in operation encountered widespread rank and file criticism. All unions whose records survive experienced a groundswell of internal support, evident in the virtual disappearance of unfinancial membership at this time. TLC affiliations and even new union organizations continued to grow until 1892.

The only union to remain aloof from the strike, a strategically important union as it turned out, was the Marine Engineers'. If it had struck, it could have effectively prevented any ship from leaving port. But, not wishing to jeopardize its negotiations with shipowners for improved wages, the Marine Engineers' continued to claim that it was a 'professional body' rather than a union, and continued to man the ships.

On the employers' side, an increasingly militant and more closely organized leadership, which was suffering economic hardship and increased pressure from trade unions, had emerged in the three industries where the unions acted most decisively. As with Labour, employers quickly closed ranks. For example, Broken Hill mine-owners rushed to lock-out their miners before they could strike. The specific issues which originally motivated employers' stand against the unions quickly broadened into the overriding principle of 'freedom of contract', that is, a pseudonym for the destruction of the unions by hiring non-union labour. As Rickard shows, the 'middle class' of small traders,

158. Brennan in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.84-6; Coopers' Minutes, 26 August 1890; Gas Stokers' Protective Association, Mortlake Branch Minutes, 20 and 28 August 1890. Engine-drivers' Minutes, 31 July, 31 October, and 1 December 1890, show even they unanimously voted a levy.


professionals and the like, was frightened from its frequent neutrality, and even dislike of large business interests, by the dimensions of the conflict. It largely sided with the employers, swelling the ranks of special constables to maintain 'law and order'.

Under this catch-cry the state itself responded in an unusually unambiguous manner in support of employers, as we saw in Chapter 4. Only a handful of colonial liberals, such as Cardinal Moran, and Justice Higginbotham, were conspicuous in their efforts to maintain the colonial dream of a balance of sectional interests in a fluid society.

In defeat, it was clear that the unions had overestimated their strength. The unions were not destroyed by the strike, but employers' confidence and resolve were strengthened, and unemployment was already weakening the unskilled unions. During the Maritime Strike waterfront employers experienced little difficulty in recruiting strikebreakers through their Free Labour Bureau. The Bureau operated for most of the 1890s when, despite several organizational drives by the TLC, the waterfront unions barely existed.

162. P. Ford, Cardinal Moran and the ALP, Melbourne, 1966, pp.67-74; Rickard, op.cit., p.34.
163. McKillop, Davis (Seamen), Burns, and T. Napier (stevedore), in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.12-13, 20, 23, 90, 126, 131, 203; Wharf Labourers' submission to ibid., Literary Appendix, p.168; Ferguson (Wharf Labourers' Secretary) submission to ibid., Appendix to Evidence, p.7; TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 22 July 1890; Worker, 1 November 1890.
164. TLC Minutes, 19 May, 5, 6, and 15 September, 6 October, 10 November 1892; 23 February, 6 July, 3 August, 21 and 28 September, 21 December 1893; 11 January, 17 May, 8 November 1894; 14 March 1895; 8 October 1896; 24 March 1898; Steamship Owners' Association of Australasia, Committee Minutes, 10 April and 22 November 1894, 7 February 1895, 6 February 1896 (when the Bureau was disbanded); Steamship Owners' Association 6th Report, for 1890, in RRCS, 1891, Appendix to Evidence.
After 1892 the combination of unemployment with a series of crushing industrial defeats decimated the unions. In 1891 Queensland pastoralists imposed freedom of contract and some wage cuts. The ASU maintained wages only by accepting non-unionists in New South Wales sheds.165 In 1892 Broken Hill employers reneged on their 1889 agreement with the union, reducing wages and re-introducing contract work, without negotiations. Notwithstanding the miners' bitter resistance, massive demonstrations in Sydney, and widespread financial support from other unions, the strike effectively crushed Barrier unionism until the late 1890s.166 In 1893 a Seamen's strike failed to prevent wage reductions.167 From 1894-5 after the coal Vend's breakdown, northern coalminers unsuccessfully resisted wage reductions as their union fell into disarray. A general call-out in 1896, to regain their losses, ended disastrously with further reductions and the employers' denial of recognition to the union.168

In 1894 New South Wales pastoralists reneged on their 1891 agreement, reducing wages and blacklisting union activists.169 The strike was marked by numerous violent episodes involving strikebreakers. Some shearers' groups lined rivers with wires to decapitate river boat captains who carried 'scabs', and the Rodney was burnt for carrying this cargo.170 The strike was lost, nevertheless. The ASU resolved

165. ASU 6th AR, February 1892, pp.5, 8-14.
166. See Dale, *op.cit.*, pp.20-60.
167. TLC Minutes, 6 July, 31 August, 7 September 1893; Fitzpatrick, 'History of the Seamen's Union', Chapter 2, pp.11-17, 22-6, and Chapter 3, pp.14-26.
169. AWU 9th AR, 1895; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1894, pp.3-4; AWU Young 7th AR, 31 December 1894; AWU Goulburn AR, 31 December 1894; AWU Coonamble AR, 31 December 1894; AWU Scone 5th AR, 31 December 1894.
to fight again in 1895, but quickly backed down, except in the west, where it was again defeated.\(^\text{171}\) The 1894 strike was the final blow in the destruction of the ASU's weakened eastern branches over the next three years. The loyalty of weak 'ticket' unionists proved impossible to maintain, and many of the more committed unionists left in disgust after the 1895 capitulation, and when the union attempted to re-enrol strikebreakers. Effective membership was limited to the west, where Bourke branch maintained about 2000 members. 6-7000 would be a generous estimate of total New South Wales ASU membership by 1897.\(^\text{172}\)

Throughout this period a series of smaller scale reverses occurred in urban unionism. The newer unskilled urban unions of 1888-91 rapidly disintegrated, but even the craft unions were severely affected, some disappearing. For example, in 1893 the Stonemasons' were crushed, never to recover, during a strike in defence of wages.\(^\text{173}\)

The state intervention described in Chapter 4 made employers' victory more certain in many of the major disputes. Despite greater security from unemployment, state employees' unionism, in the railways,
also declined. Beginning slowly in 1888, the new Chief Commissioner of Railways (Eddy) instigated an anti-union campaign, complementing his cost reduction programme. Sectional jealousies were fed, the unions were denied recognition, a system of informants was instituted, and union activists were dismissed. By the mid-nineties railway unions barely existed. By distancing his management from political interference (the intention of the 1888 Railways Act) Eddy also forestalled Labor Party aid for the unions. The 1888 Act rendered any employee expressing political opinions liable to dismissal, and Eddy interpreted this provision strictly. Precisely because railway employment was relatively secure in the depression, railwaymen would have feared the prospect of dismissal more than ever. Eddy's campaign also gained support from critics of public enterprise. 174

As its constituents collapsed around it, the TLC declined drastically after 1892. Partly to escape indebtedness, it re-organized as the Sydney District Council of the ALF (SDC) in July 1894 with sixteen affiliates representing 1300 workers. With only 400 members remaining of its former 2000, the Seamen's Union was by far the largest of these affiliates. 175 SDC organizing drives over the next few years, particularly for the Wharf Labourers', met little success. As only one of seven New South Wales District Councils, the TLC's class

174. See Docherty, op.cit., pp.90-115. Note references in Engine-drivers' Minutes to dismissals and threats over political action (12 January and 12 April 1891; 14 and 30 June, 5 July, 18 August, 29 September, 30 October, and 3 December 1893), expulsion from union of men acceding to individual interviews with the Commissioners (30 October 1893), large numbers of unfinancial members and lack of quorums for meetings (9 June 1893, 9 February 1894, 18 February and 6 March 1895, and Annual Delegates' Minutes, 31 May 1896).

175. Others were the United Labourers', Coachmakers', Lithographers', Plumbers', Furniture Trades', Farriers', Bookbinders', Balmain Labourers', Wharf Labourers' (which existed in name only), Tailors', Plasterers', Butchers', Tinsmiths', Tobacco Workers', and Confectioners'. TLC Minutes, 17 May 1894; SDC Minutes, 5 July 1894; SDC Secretary's Report, 31 January 1895.
leadership had disintegrated. Most other District Councils were virtually extensions of ASU branches. The ASU dominated the New South Wales Provincial Council of the ALF, even after coalminers formed District Councils and the eastern ASU branches collapsed.

The SDC soon declined into total insignificance, with only eight consistently financial affiliates, representing about 450 members in 1896–8. However, this slightly exaggerates the plight of urban unions, which were pre-occupied with a struggle for their own existence. Whilst some craft unions could not even afford SDC affiliation fees, or were alienated by ALF affiliation, or the TLC's political commitments, others such as the ASE, the printers and the building trades, retreated into sectionalism, or only paid affiliation dues for part of their membership. In the railways the limited co-operation between the Engine-drivers' and the all-grades union declined further, and sectional organizations of guards and signalmen reappeared.

Although the economy began to improve from 1896, organizational recovery did not begin in earnest until 1900–1, after which a series of strikes occurred as workers sought to re-gain pre-depression standards.

176. Even though some District Councils included small local groups, such as Carriers' Unions. For example: AWU Wagga AR, 31 December 1894, p.1; AWU Wagga AR, 31 December 1895, p.4.
177. Note the high AWU vote for urban unionists, J.C. Watson (formerly TLC) and S. Smith (Seamen), for Provincial Council positions, AWU Young 8th AR, 31 December 1895. Despite their urban origins, both men relied on an AWU power base for their ALF positions at this stage. See Chapter 6 for an elaboration of this argument.
179. ibid., 18 November 1897, 10 February, 15 March, 21 April, 19 May, 16 June 1898. The Printers' were particularly niggardly in only paying for 50 out of 500 members.
181. Especially amongst urban crafts, miners and wharf labourers. See Macarthy, op.cit., p.248.
Despite optimism over western improvements from 1897, overall ASU membership reached its lowest point then. Improvements for craft unionism in 1897-9 were marginal and temporary. As late as November 1899, SDC affiliated membership totalled 401. Even during 1900, as a number of unskilled urban unions re-appeared, re-building was hesitant. Most of these unions had tiny memberships.

By 1900 important changes had also occurred in the nature of trade unionism. The strongest lesson which the unions took from the 1890 strike and its aftermath was the necessity to organize amongst all workers, especially the unskilled. Brennan, of the TLC, considered in 1891 that 'the presence of a floating population of bona fide unemployed' represented such a serious obstacle to union organization, that he recommended the abolition of union entrance fees. However, the extension of union organization amongst all grades of workers confirmed the policy pursued by the TLC in the late 1880s, as it emerged as a class leadership. What was new, was the way in which this was now envisaged, particularly by some of the more traditional craft unions which faced a growing semi and unskilled workforce in their industries.

Most crafts had little opportunity to act on this during the depression, but the ASE and the Printers' accommodated the semi-skilled whilst maintaining an elite of skilled workers. From 1892-1901 several new grades of engineers were admitted to ASE membership, but new grades

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182. Three eastern branches closed in 1896, and two in 1899, to be replaced by one. AWU 10th AR, February 1896, pp.16, 19; AWU 11th AR, February 1897, pp.6, 9; AWU 13th AR, February 1899, pp.16, 18. Bourke's position however began to improve, AWU Bourke AR's, 31 December 1897, p.3; and 31 December 1898, p.3.

183. SDC Minutes, 23 November 1899.


186. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.97.
of subsidiary membership, paying reduced fees and receiving reduced benefits, were also established to include most machinists. The scheme had advantages over the earlier Iron Workers' Associations in that the semi-skilled came under direct ASE control. \textsuperscript{187} By 1896 the Australasian Typographical Union urged further organization amongst bookbinders, lithographers, stereotypers and machinists, who had already developed their own unions. But although 'our unskilled brothers would still be regarded as such, and we have no doubt that a bond of sympathy exists among all toilers...the absurdity is apparent of federating all classes of labour for the purpose of management or the discussion of technicalities within any one branch'. The ATU proposed a Grand Council of the 'kindred trades', but in the meantime they could be represented on its council only on questions directly affecting them. \textsuperscript{188} The ATU obviously meant to control this elaborate organization.

The absorption of the GLU by the ASU in 1894 bore marks of a similar strategy. \textsuperscript{189} These strategies represented a retreat from the class movement which the TLC was attempting to build in the late 1880s and early 1890s.

The union movement's leadership also changed. Early in 1900 the SDC re-formed as the Sydney Labour Council. But as affiliations grew again, it became dominated by the more traditional, conservative craft unions which retreated into sectionalism during the depression. \textsuperscript{190} These had ridden out the depression better than most other unions,

\textsuperscript{187} Buckley, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.133-6.
\textsuperscript{188} Australasian Typographical Union, \textit{Unionism is Dead}, pamphlet, Melbourne, June 1896. The NSW Printers' joined the ATU in 1890.
\textsuperscript{189} See n.89 above.
\textsuperscript{190} For example, the Printers', who had considered that the SDC was composed of 'firebrands', SDC Minutes, 18 November 1897, 10 February 1898. See n.s 179 and 184 above.
and recovered more quickly from it. Unskilled unionism re-appeared, but when it pursued militant policies, it conflicted with the new Labour Council leadership. In the railways there was a trend towards new sectional organizations, which formed an intercolonial 'grand council' in 1901, directed largely against the all-grades union, towards which the new Labour Council was also unsympathetic. More importantly, in significant cases unskilled unionism itself re-emerged with a new style of leadership. The most significant example was the re-organization of the Wharf Labourers' as a more centralized, intercolonial organization. This was spearheaded by W.M. Hughes, who entered the labour movement as a politician, rather than a unionist. Only one wharf labourer was amongst the Government Ministers and other dignitaries at the union's inaugural meeting. W.A. Holman, another politician, also became Secretary of the all-grades railway union in the 1890s, before moving on to the AWU. These changes indicated the beginnings of a more moderate, professional labour leadership. They also represented a significant change in the balance of power within the labour movement. How and why this occurred are examined in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 6

THE EMERGENCE OF THE LABOR PARTY
The TLC's formation of the New South Wales Labor Party in 1891 confirmed the high level of working class mobilization and class consciousness at that time, and the TLC's position as a class leadership. The remainder of the 1890s witnessed a rapid process of consolidation of the Labor Party, such that, by 1900 it was one of the major political forces in New South Wales. In the early 1900s it became a major political force in the Commonwealth of Australia, and soon formed Governments at State and Federal levels.

Such a remarkable achievement of growth and consolidation in a short time involved major changes in the nature of the Labor Party itself, and in the nature of the broader labour movement. This chapter examines the changing nature of the Party, from its inception in 1891. Its major focus is the relationship between the Party and the unions which originally established it, and between the Party leadership and its rank and file, rather than the Party's Parliamentary performance and leadership per se, upon which most historians have concentrated.¹

Although the formation of a distinct Labor Party represented a new departure in class organization, trade union political activity, in itself, was not new in the 1890s. The state's economic role, its regulation of some conditions of labour and of trade union organizations, and its importance as an employer, provided strong incentives for union political activity. For state employees, such as railwaymen, public meetings and lobbying of Members of Parliament

¹ For example, Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism; Rickard, op.cit.; D.J. Murphy (ed.), Labor in Politics. The State Labor Parties in Australia, 1880-1920, St. Lucia, 1975; Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics.
(MPs) over, for example, the 1888 Railways Act, were a central part of industrial relations. The extension of regulation of working conditions by legislation also overcame the organizational weakness of large sections of the workforce, and was an attractive alternative to potentially costly industrial campaigns for unions. The skilled unions had always been a politically articulate 'interest group' in this sense. The growth of the TLC as a central union body provided further impetus in this direction, and for a broadening of union political interests. In the 1880s, the Intercolonial Trades Union Congresses developed a political platform which became the basis for Labor Party policy in 1891.

Pre-1890 Labour political action was characterized by three main trends, which reflected the factional basis of New South Wales politics before the emergence of clearly defined parties. First, a small number of Parliamentary 'labour spokesmen', such as E.W. O'Sullivan, J. Garrard, W. Schey, and some coalfields members, most of whom were, or had been, union officials, emerged during the 1880s to support union interests over specific issues. Secondly, organized labour lobbied Parliament over issues of direct concern to it, such as

2. Engine-drivers' Minutes, 8 August 1886, 4 July, 27 August, 5 and 14 September 1887, 23 January 1888. See Docherty, op.cit., pp.16-17, 24-8, 55.
3. See Nairn, 'Role of the TLC', op.cit.
4. See Congress Reports, as in Chapter 5, n.142; Sutcliffe, op.cit., pp.66-70.
5. See Loveday and Martin, Parliament, Factions and Parties.
6. O'Sullivan had been a Printers' official, and President of the Coopers', Seamen, and TLC. Mansfield, Australian Democrat, pp.37-43, 46-59, 82-4, 105-6; Norton, op.cit., p.75. For Garrard, see Lynch, 'T.S. Mort, His Dock and Balmain Labour', op.cit., p.92. For Schey, Docherty, op.cit., p.56. The coalfields members were James Fletcher (early union leader, then colliery proprietor, and owner of the Newcastle Morning Herald), Ninian Melville, and James Curley (MP 1889-91 and miners' Secretary), Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.81-2.
technical education, mainly through the TLC, but coalminers, maritime unions and the building trades often acted independently as political pressure groups, and during recessions the unemployed were able to exert political pressure for relief works from the Government. Finally, Labour allied with other groups in populist political alliances. For example, the radical Democratic Alliance of 1884-5, led by O'Sullivan, attempted to build a mass movement based on the working class, the radical middle class, and manufacturers, around a political platform of Parliamentary and land reform, industrial legislation, and protection of local manufacturing. It was succeeded by the short-lived Land and Industrial Alliance, which also included selectors' organizations. The link between protection and reform, between worker and manufacturer, gained further substance in the Political Reform League and its successors, the Protection and Political Reform League of the 1880s, and the Protection Union in the later 1880s.

7. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 24 July, 27 August, 9 September, and 12 October 1880; 21-24 and 27 February, 10, 14 and 28 March 1882; 25 and 29 January, 12 February, 9 and 14 March, 1 June, 23 August and 29 November 1883; SMH, 1 and 19 February 1883. Also TLC lobbying for workmen's trains, Executive Committee Minutes, 29 May and 15 June 1882.

8. Fry, op.cit., pp.158, 361-2; Norton (ed.), op.cit., pp.81-5. They also gained union support, for example, TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 27-28 and 30-31 January 1880; 23 August 1887; SMH, 3 February 1880.

9. The SMH reports regular public meetings of the Democratic Alliance, for example, 30 January 1884 (inaugural meeting), 6 February 1884, and even over February-March 1885, but it seems to have been subsumed then in the Land and Industrial Alliance, formed in 1885. See Mansfield, op.cit., pp.51-8.

10. See Norton, op.cit., pp.48, 51, 78, 84, where it is declared that the 'cause of democracy and labour' was well-served in NSW, that protection was the most important issue for the working classes, and that the Protection Union was the 'foremost' promoter of 'the cause of democracy and labour'. For formation of the Protection Union, SMH, 12 November 1886.
Although O'Sullivan had been the only prominent unionist involved in the Democratic Alliance, a number of unionists, particularly in the metal trades, supported protection and became involved in protectionist organizations, on the grounds that the tariff would protect jobs and wages. As early as 1883 O'Sullivan had chaired a public meeting for local award of Government contracts, in his capacity as TLC President. Together with Talbot, of the Ironmoulders', he was a persistent advocate of protection on the TLC, and successfully persuaded it to attend the Protection and Political Reform League's 1885 Conference. Bootmakers', Coachmakers', Ironworkers' and Stonemasons' delegates attended the Land and Industrial League's 1885 conference. The TLC also attended the National Protection Union Conference and demonstration in 1886, as did the Coopers' and Tinsmiths'. The Stonemasons', Boot Trade Union, and all-grades railway union sent delegates to the 1889 Protection Conference. At the 1885 Intercolonial Union Congress a number of New South Wales delegates contributed to the large majority who voted for the tariff. All

11. For example, the Tinsmiths' sought 'encouragement of native industry' on the agenda for the 1885 Intercolonial Trades Union Congress, Tinsmiths' Minutes, 31 July 1885. In 1886 they claimed that the majority of members were in favour of protection, Tinsmiths' Minutes, 4 June 1886. Talbot (Ironmoulders') was also a strong protectionist, TLC Minutes, 21 May 1885. See Hargreaves, op.cit., pp.24-5, 29-30; Mansfield, op.cit., pp.80-1.
12. SMH, 7 May 1883.
13. SMH, 6 February 1884, 15 November 1886; TLC Minutes, 21 May 1885; Nairn, 'Role of the TLC', op.cit., pp.171-3; Mansfield, op.cit., pp. 47-8, 51-9, 80-2; Coopers' Minutes, 5 November 1886; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 5 and 19 November 1886; Loveday and Martin, op.cit., pp.134-5.
of the Parliamentary 'labour spokesmen' of the 1880s were also protectionists, who played a major role in the emergence of a Protectionist Party at the end of that decade.

However, the New South Wales unions' commitment to protection was never as complete as in Victoria. In part, this was because New South Wales manufacturing industry lagged behind that of Victoria until the late 1880s, and because New South Wales was a much bigger trader of primary products, which meant that it could more easily benefit from free trade. But many unions were also wary of close political contact with employers, The United Labourers', the Carpenters', and the Redfern branch of the ASE declined to participate in a TLC-organized anti-immigration demonstration in 1886 because of the Democratic Alliance's participation. For some, this represented a traditional conservative rejection of political associations. Others, such as the Printers', were also too divided internally over the fiscal issue to openly support protectionist organizations. But underlying the suspicion of alliances with these groups was a class-based distrust of non-working class allies, particularly when they were employers. One TLC delegate at a public meeting in 1884 stressed the need to support men for Parliament 'who have known what it is to have had to toil for bread'. Even the Tinsmiths', who supported protection, rejected participation in the Protection and Political Reform League's 1885 Conference, and some tinsmiths opposed co-operation with the Democratic Alliance in 1886 because it was 'only trying to gain their own ends [sic]'.

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16. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 14 and 21 December 1886.
18. P. Flowers, SMH, 6 February 1884.
19. Tinsmiths' Minutes, 22 May 1885, 30 July 1886 (quotation).
At the 1885 Intercolonial Unions' Congress, a United Labourers' delegate was reported as stating that

> everything resolved itself into competition; and it did not matter whether the policy adopted was free trade or protection, wages would always find their own level... There was an enormous surplus of wealth in the colony produced by the wage-earning classes, but remaining in the hands of the few, and that they must look for the remedy in the laws of distribution.\(^n\)

It is significant that, despite his union links, O'Sullivan failed to gain the waterfront seat of West Sydney in 1882, as well as the working class seat of South Sydney in 1885, before gaining the selector-based country seat of Queanbeyan in 1885.\(^{21}\)

The TLC jealously guarded its political independence in its dealings with other reform groups, restricting co-operation to specific issues, such as immigration policy, in the case of the Democratic Alliance.\(^{22}\) The TLC was piqued when the Political Reform League became too closely involved in the unions' anti-Chinese campaign in 1878.\(^{23}\) Its decision to attend the 1885 Protection and Political Reform League Conference was only made after vigorous debate, and a close vote.\(^{24}\) At the same time, it rejected radical Free Trade overtures.\(^{25}\) By the late 1880s, as radical Free Traders and Protectionists courted its support, the TLC led a movement amongst unions away from populist political alliances of this kind.\(^{26}\) In 1887 the TLC rejected representation on the Protection Union's

\(^{20}\) Intercolonial Trades Union Congress, Report, 1885, p. 23.
\(^{21}\) Mansfield, op.cit., pp. 43. 60-3.
\(^{22}\) TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 11 February 1885.
\(^{23}\) TLC Minutes, 27 December 1878.
\(^{24}\) ibid., 21 May 1885.
\(^{25}\) ibid., 27 August, 10 September, 1885.
\(^{26}\) Nairn, 'Role of the TLC', op.cit., pp. 172-3; Mansfield, op.cit. pp.90-1.
executive, its first step towards total severance of direct links, although it continued to support protection.\textsuperscript{27} The Coopers' and Tinsmiths' protectionist links seem to have ended at about the same time.\textsuperscript{28} Simultaneously, the TLC moved towards direct representation in Parliament.

The TLC had organized for Parliamentary representation twice before. In 1874 it supported four candidates for direct representation. In the event, only Angus Cameron stood for election, winning a seat in West Sydney. He received an allowance from the TLC, subject to supervision from its Parliamentary Committee.\textsuperscript{29} Despite its Rousseauist implications, this experiment did not depart radically from pluralist Parliamentary practice. Directed by the TLC on 'trade questions only', Cameron declared his opposition to 'merely class legislation'.\textsuperscript{30} After sixteen months the contradiction Cameron felt between his dual roles as TLC delegate and West Sydney representative was resolved by his declaration of independence from the TLC.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{27} TLC Minutes, 27 January 1887. Note also the TLC reply to urging from a protectionist that it should analyze import statistics for the effect on workers: it was 'outside the province of the Council', Executive Committee Minutes 31 December 1889.

\textsuperscript{28} In declining to send a delegate to the 1888 Protection Union Conference, the Tinsmiths' did so diplomatically: 'while sympathizing with their objects we find it impossible to obtain the services of a man who could make it convenient to attend in the day-time', Tinsmiths' Minutes, 10 August 1888. Also \textit{ibid.}, 29 July 1887, 20 April 1888.

\textsuperscript{29} TLC Minutes, 24 June 1874; 20 January, 8 and 24 April, 6 May, 12 August, 28 October and 2 December 1875; 13 January and 9 March 1876.

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{ibid.}, 24 June 1874, 23 March 1876.

\textsuperscript{31} The final break came over his support for an Agreements Validating Bill to which the unions were strongly opposed, \textit{ibid.}, 17 February, 9 and 23 March, 6, 13 and 20 April, 18 May 1876. Some co-operation persisted after this however, for example, \textit{ibid.}, 15 June 1876. For the details of this experiment, see Nairn, \textit{Civilizing Capitalism}, pp.10-19, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.68-9.
In 1880 the TLC revived its Parliamentary Committee which drew up a political platform, and selected Parliamentary candidates for one coalfields and five inner-city seats. But the 1880 scheme was never fulfilled. The central leadership was moving too far ahead of union rank and file at this time, in its efforts at political organization. In 1874 a number of attempts to postpone the scheme occurred, and unions were hesitant in providing necessary funds, many insisting that contributions could only be on a voluntary basis from membership. Even the Stonemasons', whose President, Dixon, was a prime mover of the scheme as TLC President, hesitated in its support. The schemes were badly timed given union difficulties over 1875-80. Some unions were also dissatisfied with Cameron’s performance before the final breach in 1876. But slowness to provide finance, and the secession

32. Candidates originally proposed were: N. Melville for Northumberland; W. Roylance (TLC Secretary, Stonemasons' and later Seamen's TLC delegate), and John Young (a builder) for West Sydney; Dr. Fortescue and F.B. Dixon (Stonemasons' delegate and former TLC President) for East Sydney; G. Kidman for South Sydney; and George Pigott for Canterbury. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 22 July, 11 and 18 August, and 1 September 1880; TLC Minutes, 4 March 1880. Garrard was also nominated for Balmain. At an earlier anti-immigration rally, he and James Dooley (TLC) emphasized the workers' potential voting power and suggested it should be used. SMH, 3 February 1880.

33. TLC Minutes, 22 October 1873; 10 and 24 June, 8 July, 18 August, 16 September, 14 and 28 October, 11 and 25 November 1874; 14 and 28 January, 11 February, 25 March, 22 April, 3 and 17 June, 1 July, 14 October, 2 December 1875; 20 January, 18 May 1876. As Norton, op. cit., p.68, notes, Cameron had reason to be displeased with the tardiness of his payment. Only fourteen unions contributed substantively, but even then, some of those were late in payments.

34. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge, Rough Minutes, 1 July, 24 September 1874; 11 January, 22 February, 31 May, 29 December 1875; 10 January 1876.

35. For example. Boilermakers' and Iron Trades Labourers', TLC Minutes, 8 April 1875.
of a number of unions from the TLC, owed much more to sectional disillusion with the TLC's political role, and the strength of a pluralist ideology which limited the role of unionism to the industrial sphere. On other occasions in the 1870s complaints arose, not only from the crafts, over TLC political flirtations. The 1880 scheme also prompted objections from a number of unions. The Stonemasons' actually seceded from the TLC, stressing 'the unwisdom of interfering in politics', and even some of the 1880 candidates seemed somewhat hesitant over the scheme.

Soon after enactment of legislation for payment of MPs in 1889, the TLC, in January 1890, overwhelmingly supported its Parliamentary Committee's proposal for entering labour candidates at the next election, and over the next two months drafted a Platform. Affiliated unions' response, however, remained weak. Most were primarily impressed with the scheme's financial problems; others re-iterated the traditional stance of unions as non-political bodies. After five weeks eleven,

36. Eight unions seceded from the TLC at this time, including the Plasterers', who were adamantly opposed to political action. There was only one new affiliation, ibid., October 1874-May 1876.
37. For example, the Coalminers', ibid., 1 May 1872, 18 September 1877; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 1 July 1887. Also n.s 24-5 above.
38. Dixon, Kidman and Fortescue declined candidature, TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 18 August and 1 September 1880; TLC Minutes, 19 August and 2 November 1880.
39. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 15 October 1889, 11 March and 8 April 1890; Minutes, 3 and 24 October, 7 November and 5 December 1889; 30 January and 3 April 1890. For a day-by-day account of these proceedings, and the organization preceding the 1891 elections, see Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.28-32, 35-61. Direct labour representation was discussed at the Intercolonial Union Congresses throughout the 1880s, and at the 1884 Congress the various colonial central union organizations agreed to establish Parliamentary Committees, but their reports to subsequent Congresses were essentially concerned with traditional lobbying activities. See Sutcliffe, op.cit., pp.70-5.
40. For example, Tinsmiths' Minutes, 2 May 1890; ASE, Buckley, op.cit., p.141; Engine-drivers', Docherty, op.cit., p.62.
out of only seventeen, union responses to the TLC proposal were negative. Nor did the semi and unskilled unions, or 'new unions', provide much impetus towards political organization at this time, as historians, and some contemporary 'new unionists', have often claimed. The Wharf Labourers', Trolley and Draymen and AMA opposed the TLC proposal. The ASU was more interested in political organization. Spence expressed dissatisfaction with those who had claimed to be 'labour representatives' in 1889. In 1888 the ASU lobbied amongst country election candidates, and encouraged members to enter the electoral rolls. However, this was well within the traditional bounds of pre-1890 union politics. Spence stressed that 'they had nothing to do with political questions, only so far as they affected labour'. The ASU would 'watch that legislation was not unduly pointed towards the power of capital', but did not wish to interfere with 'the equilibrium of capital'.

The TLC, therefore, provided the momentum for the direct political organization of labour in 1890-1. This action was consistent with its emergence as a class leader. It was also a product of labour's rising class consciousness, of the expansion of democratic experience in trade unionism, of the limited success of industrial action in achieving union objectives in the 1880s, and of the decline in the success of traditional political lobbying in the late 1880s.

41. TLC Secretary's Half-Yearly Report, SMH, 4 July 1890.
42. For example, Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics, pp.8-11; Spence, The Ethics of New Unionism, pp. 3-4; ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p. 6; ASU 7th AR, February 1893, p.13.
43. TLC Minutes, 24 April-5 June 1890.
44. President's Address, ASU 3rd AR, February 1889, pp.4-5; President's Address, ASU 4th AR, February 1890, p.5.
45. Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp. 22-3.
However, the 1890 Maritime Strike provided the immediate impetus for the rapidity with which unions embraced political organization in 1890-1, after the slow start of 1889-90. The strike represented a final clarification of the class alignments which had been developing for some years beforehand. The role of the state during the strike also increased the urgency for Labour's political organization, as the union leadership noted, in order to 'neutralize' the state.

During and after the 1890 strike, the rank and file response to the call for political organization was spectacular, even amongst conservative crafts such as the Printers' and Coopers'. Before the strike ended the Engine-drivers' Lithgow branch requested TLC aid to field a local candidate. In March 1891 firm financial commitments came from a number of unions as diverse as the Stonemasons' and Wharflabourers', and the TLC began to organize Labour Electoral Leagues (LELs) in anticipation of an early

46. NSW Labour Defence Committee, Report and Balance Sheet, August-November 1890, pp.15-18, (see extract in Ebbels, op.cit., pp. 150-2; and summary in RRCs, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.151); Australian Labour Conference Manifesto, 8 October 1890, in Spence, Australia's Awakening, pp.84-8 (the Labour Defence Committee was the executive of the Australian Labour Conference, which sat during the strike and represented virtually all east coast unions); ASU 5th AR, February 1891, p. 10, General Secretary's Report; TLC Secretary's Report for Half-Year ending 31 December 1890 (summary in RRCs 1891, Literary Appendix, p.157).
47. Coopers' Committee Minutes, 25 September 1890; Hagan, Printers and Politics, p. 113.
48. TLC Minutes, 2 October 1890.
election. Although the TLC generally overseered LEL formation, local groups often took the ini

cative. The Balmain Labourers' Union was largely responsible for formation of the first League early in April, and the North Sydney Navvies' branch re-formed as a League. Organization spread to Newcastle, where even the Shop Employees' placed a representative on the LEL. Leagues appeared soon afterwards in Scone, Wagga Wagga, Bourke, Goulburn and other country centres under ASU initiative. Public meetings took place throughout the

50. The Coal Lumpers' directly supported one candidate, (SMH, 10 June 1891; TLC Minutes, 11 June 1891; H. Wilkinson of the Carpenters' indicated their support (RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.279); as did the Tinsmiths' in congratulating their Melbourne brothers' later political success (Tinsmiths' Minutes 29 April 1892). Only the Painters' openly disapproved, TLC Minutes, 23 April 1891. TLC Minutes indicate a hive of activity from late 1890 to July 1891, amending the Platform (ibid., 13 November 1890, Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 27 October 1890), deciding to form LELs throughout the colony (Minutes 28 November 1890) finalising Platform and Rules in March (Minutes 17, 24 and 31 March, 1891; Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 10 March, and 3 April 1891), encouraging electoral enrolment (Minutes, 2 April 1891; SMH, 7 April 1891), forming the first Sydney Leagues (Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 6 April 1891; SMH, 7-8 April 1891), and then reaching a feverish peak during the actual election campaign from late May to mid June 1891. As an indication of rank and file support, note also the increase in TLC affiliations, in Appendix 2.

51. Balmain: SMH, 6 April 1891; TLC Minutes, 19 March 1891. The Navvies' action may have been encouraged by the union's organizational difficulties, TLC Minutes 2 and 9 April, 1891. Newcastle: ibid., 16 April 1891. According to LEL Rules, branches could select their own candidates so long as they accepted Platform and Rules. Branches also had to be ratified by the Central Committee.

52. TLC Minutes, 23 and 30 April 1891; AW, 30 May 1891. The TLC had asked the ASU to form country Leagues, Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 3 April 1891. In May, 1890 the Platform had been amended to include itinerant shearers in the electoral reform plank, TLC Parliamentary Committee Minutes 6 May 1890. ASU Reports for 1891 are surprisingly quiet about their organizing role, but they became involved in crucial negotiations with the Pastoralists' Union, at that time.
By August 1891, after general elections, thirty-five Labour members (out of 141) sat in Parliament. The speed of this electoral success took contemporaries by surprise. Support from Sir George Grey, the 'veteran colonial statesman', over the issue of 'one man one vote', added weight to the LEL campaign, but the overwhelming class nature of the vote can not be mistaken in the light of the mobilization which had preceded the election in the Maritime Strike. Labour organizers campaigned and interpreted the results in these terms. The sixteen urban Labour seats (out of twenty-two contested) were clearly working class. Most were also strong centres of working class industrial organization: Redfern and Newtown, principally of railwaymen; Balmain and West Sydney of urban crafts and waterside unions. Another six seats were in mining areas.

The class nature of the Party envisaged by the urban unions was also clear. John Grant's (Stonemasons') vision of total mobilization on industrial, political and ideological fronts may have been unusual in its breadth of class consciousness, but Bavister (Bricklayers') expressed a typical emphasis on the notion of representation of workingmen by workingmen, a view which broke sharply with the earlier

53. See Rickard, op.cit., pp.41-2 for summary of reactions to the Labour success and the importance for Labour of the election's timing. See also Roydhouse and Taperell, The Labour Party in NSW. A History of Its Formation and Legislative Career, Sydney, 1892, pp. 13-14, 18-22; and Reeves, op.cit., vol. 1, p.86, re the election campaign, and Grey, and post-election reactions. For TLC contacts with Grey, TLC Minutes, 30 April and 4 June 1891.

54. See Roydhouse and Taperell, op.cit., p. 23; Spence, Australia's Awakening, p. 150; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.61-2, for list of seats.

55. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.244-7.

56. SMH, 16 August 1892. The same theme was common to the union pronouncements at the end of the strike, see n. 46 above.
The Australian Workman (TLC journal) declared that

the class of men who receive what is generally termed a finished education are, as a rule, of the class who have always enjoyed the sunny side of life...We must send men in from the ranks of labour, who have made a study of modern political economy, and possess intelligence with a predominance of honesty of purpose who really feel the terrible and almost unbearable cruelty of our present iniquitous wage slave system.57

Or, as the 1891 Trades Union Congress declared, 'class questions require class knowledge to state them, and class sympathies to fight for them'.58

In Parliament Labour was to behave as a class party, with a clear programme for action in its Platform. For this purpose the TLC had attempted to 'sink' the fiscal issue, free trade versus protection, during the election campaign. Consequently, by directly supervising League formation, the TLC refused to be associated with Protectionist, Single Tax, or Free Trade radicals in joint election campaigns, despite some overtures from these groups.59 This policy also rejected any association with older 'labour spokesmen', such as O'Sullivan,60 and Garrard, unless they accepted the LEL Platform and Party discipline, and indeed, Garrard was defeated in Balmain by an LEL candidate. In Redfern, LEL candidates McGowen and Sharp requested withdrawal of their names from Protectionist election

57. AW, 3 January 1891. Also Spence, ASU 6th AR, February 1892, pp.6,12.
58. Preamble to the Report of the Intercolonial Trades Union Congress Committee on Political Reform, Ballarat, 1891.
59. For example, in by-elections before the major campaign, the TLC refused a joint campaign with the Protection and Political Reform League in East Sydney, and refused to support Frank Cotton, a Single Taxer and TLC delegate in Newcastle, where their own candidate almost won, TLC Minutes, 6 April 1891; Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 26 March 1891; Roydhouse and Taperell, op.cit., p.35.
material. In Parliament, holding the balance of power, it was intended that the Labour Party would sit on the cross-benches and offer 'support for concessions' from the other Parties.  

This strategy of independence required Party discipline and solidarity. The TLC had already acted on the principle of solidarity during the by-election for West Sydney in October 1890, prior to the formation of the LEL, when its candidate stood down in favour of the Maritime Council's. A joint selection procedure had broken down when the TLC's candidate, Brennan, was endorsed, but the Maritime Council insisted on proceeding with its own candidate, A. Taylor, the proprietor of The Truth. Although it had little sympathy for Taylor, the TLC decided not to split the Labour vote, and thus, enabled Taylor to win, although he failed to distinguish himself on Labour's behalf in Parliament. In 1891 endorsed LEL candidates were required to pledge support for the Platform, and to sit on the cross-benches. Parliamentary tactics were also to be determined by a vote of caucus, consisting of, and binding, all Parliamentary Party members. In these ways, the class discipline learned in industrial organization, or the 'principles of unionism', were intended to

61. SMH, 12 June 1891.  
62. Ibid., 5 June 1891; AW, 8 November 1890.  
63. The TLC vote to withdraw was won by only 30-27, TLC Minutes, 16, 20 and 23 October 1890; 7 May 1891; Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 14 and 17 October 1890; SMH, 27 October 1890; Manifesto of Labour Electoral League to the Electors of West Sydney, 1890 (in Ebbels, op.cit., pp.212-3).  
maintain the Party as an independent working class force, unable to be absorbed by existing party allegiances.

However, from the beginning the TLC's intentions for a working class party were qualified in practice. Thirteen Labour seats were rural, mainly in areas of ASU influence, but these did not represent a working class vote. Politically, selector influence in the ASU was intensified because itinerant rural workers were disenfranchised by a six months' residency requirement for the vote. The 1893 and 1895 Electoral Law Amendment Acts reduced the requirement to three months and then, one month, but many apparently remained disenfranchised. Toomey, of the AWU's Young branch, claimed to have lost several hundred votes in this way in 1894, and after his defeat by 127 votes in 1895, Arthur Rae claimed that 500 shearsers had been disenfranchised. Apart from increasing the political influence of smallholders in the ASU, the residency requirement for the vote also disenfranchised some seamen, and because of the seasonal nature of most colonial industry, many other working class voters, as well.

Nor were the Parliamentary Labour Party members clearly working class in origins in 1891. Whereas twelve out of sixteen urban representatives, and all of the mining representatives, were unionists, only three country members were. In fact, some of those who described

67. AWU Young, 7th AR, 31 December 1894; AWU 10th AR, February 1896, p.13. Also ASU Wagga, 7th AR, 31 December 1893, p.3; GLU Bourke, AR, 31 December 1893; AWU Bourke AR's, 31 December 1895, p.9, and 31 December 1896, p.3.
68. Fitzpatrick, 'History of the Seamen's Union', Chapter 1, p.6.
themselves as unionists had the most tenuous links with unionism. Frank Cotton (Newton) for example, was a Sydney journalist who represented the ASU on the TLC. Strikingly, many of the Labour members, including unionists, had an entrepreneurial adventurer's background. Some had engaged in business and failed, some had sought their fortune in South Africa, California or New Zealand, some in all three. There were three journalists, a doctor, a commercial traveller, a clerk, a mining speculator, and eight businessmen. This represented a significant bloc of intermediate social strata quite removed from the experience of class conflict in industrial organization in the late 1880s.

George Black, self-consciously representative of Labour's intelligentsia, led a section of the Parliamentary Party which was much more ambiguous over its class role than the class conscious elements of the urban union movement. He saw the situation in the populist terms of 'the masses' versus 'the classes':

We have been told that we have come into the House to represent a class. Well, that may be; but that class is the class of all classes. It is a class which is as wide as humanity - so wide that you may describe it as the class out of which all other classes are built up.

By 1892, Black's relations with the unions were uneasy, for they did not see the need for his enlightened leadership as clearly as he did himself.

By the end of 1891 it had also become obvious that class solidarity could not override the fiscal issue within the Parliamentary Party. After initially supporting Parkes' Free Trade Government on the

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69. See Roydhouse and Taperell, op.cit., pp.22-51, for biographical details.
basis of its reform programme, the Party split down the middle, eighteen members supporting Dibbs' new Protectionist Government. The other seventeen became known as the 'solidarity party', for their adherence to the caucus decision to oppose alteration to the tariff without a referendum. But of these, only McGowen clearly placed Labour ahead of the fiscal issue. The rest were free traders anyway.  

Even amongst the unions and the Leagues the fiscal issue had not been completely 'sunk'. Frank Cotton, a single taxer and free trader, had exerted considerable influence on the drafting of the LEL's 1891 Platform, but the union position was usually protectionist, and Cotton had become a centre of conflict on the TLC. During the 1891 election the Tobacco Operatives' and Boot Trade Union supported Protectionists, who also gained strong support in the Newcastle LEL, and in Redfern, where Schey and Howe were joint LEL/Protectionist candidates. In Bourke the LEL President, H. Langwell of the ASU, who was also a protectionist, was denied official candidature by the LEL's Central Committee. Intensive lobbying in late 1891 by protectionist unions probably strengthened the resolve of Labour protectionists in Parliament. Nevertheless, a number of MPs were

71. For these details, see Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.67-77; Roydhouse and Taperell, op.cit., pp.101-7; Childe, op.cit., pp.16-17.
72. Cotton was on the Single Tax League executive as well as the TLC Parliamentary Committee. He became the member for Newtown. See Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.43; Roydhouse and Taperell, op.cit., pp.29-30; Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.136; F. Picard, 'Henry George and the Labour Split of 1891', Historical Studies, vol.6, no.21. The LEL member for Goulburn, Dr. Hollis, had also been selected by the Single Tax League.
73. For Tobacco Operatives', Boot Trade Union, and Newcastle LEL, TLC Minutes, 9 and 18 June 1891. For Bourke, SMH, 27 June 1891. For Redfern, SMH, 12 June 1891. Langwell from Bourke was elected as Independent Labour.
74. Eskbank Ironworkers' and the ASE were active through the TLC for local award of Government contracts, TLC Minutes, 16 July 1891, 4 August 1891. Also Coopers, Coopers' Minutes, 17 September, 6 November 1891, re the tariff.
uninfluenced by holding seats in areas of strong rank and file support for protectionism; J. Cook (Hartley), G.D. Clarke, E. Darnley (Balmain), G. Black, T. Davis (West Sydney), J. Hindle, and F. Cotton (Newtown). This revealed a detachment of Labour MPs from the rank and file, which soon grew wider.

The unions adopted a policy of 'wait and see' over the Parliamentary Party's original support for Parkes as Premier, although this was clearly seen as 'support for concessions', and the TLC asserted its primary authority in refusing to re-schedule meetings for the convenience of MPs. Close contact was maintained with the Party over proposed industrial legislation, even after the fiscal split, and TLC relations with local Leagues were also harmonious. The ASU's Bourke Branch optimistically looked to the time when such side issues as the Dibbs Government were endeavouring to wreck the Labour Party on would be utterly swept away and practical legislation substituted in place thereof.

But signs of disillusion soon appeared with the delay of reform legislation and the Parliamentary Party's internal sectarian squabbling. Early criticism was expressed over MPs' acceptance of seats on Parliamentary Committees, action which seemed to some unions to compromise a cross-bench position. Late in August, after eight

75. TLC Minutes, 11 August 1891. A motion to congratulate the Ministry, as 'firm friends of labour' was struck out on the TLC Minutes, 27 October 1891; and the Tinsmiths' decided not to endorse support for Parkes, Tinsmiths' Minutes, 24 July 1891.

76. Consultations with the TLC were fairly close even as caucus split: TLC Minutes, 4 and 27 August, 17 September, 1, 8, 22 and 27 October 1891, 18 February 1892; Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 17 December 1891; ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.118. Leichhardt and East Sydney LELs directly supported the TLC's anti-immigration campaign at this stage, TLC Minutes, 8, 22 and 29 October, 5 and 12 November 1891.

77. TLC Minutes, 17 December 1891.

78. ibid., 27 October 1891.
protectionists had already been excluded from caucus, the Coachbuilders', United Labourers' and Stereotypers' protested over TLC discussion of 'business of a semi-political, sectarian and socialistic character...whilst Trade Union matters were delayed'. The timing of similar protests, over September 1891-January 1892, indicated growing disillusion as much as traditional anti-political attitudes.  

The fiscal split also reverberated amongst the unions. For example, free trade ASU elements condemned the protectionist MPs. Essentially, however, union criticism of MPs was directed at their placement of fiscal beliefs ahead of the interests of a class party. The protectionist *Australian Workman* attacked Kelly (a protectionist rebel) and Cotton as traitors. Although Cotton became a 'solidarity' man, he was strongly attached to Parkes, and had supported his postponement of mining legislation, which Labour supported. Unsuccessfully, the TLC attempted to override the fiscal split by declaring that any vote on the tariff contradicted the Labour Platform.  

The Leagues were much more divided. Original Parliamentary Party support for Parkes was unpopular with protectionist urban Leagues. League meetings held throughout the colony over December 1891-January 1892.

79. *ibid.*, 27 August 1891. Plasterers' (although a prominent member of their union had entered Parliament), Furniture Trade, 3 and 17 September 1891; Sawmill Employees', 22 October 1891; Plumbers', 14 January 1892. Also note Printers', with three new MPs, congratulated the Party on its success, then in August adjourned a motion of confidence in the Party, and did not mention it again for years, Hagan, *Printers and Politics*, p.113.  
80. Hummer, 30 January 1892.  
82. TLC Minutes, 3 December 1891.
1892 saw intensive factional struggles for control, sometimes leading to complete disruption of proceedings. After a disastrous attempt to arbitrate between the two wings of the Party, the Central Committee called a LEL Conference for 26 January 1892. However, this assertion of authority raised the issue of its relationship with the TLC.

The TLC had obviously intended to retain control of the LEL although little thought had been given to the means. The TLC's Parliamentary Committee of eleven, was envisaged as the core of the LEL's governing Central Committee, which also included a representative from each League. This was confirmed when, in answer to a TLC delegate's enquiry, the Central Committee Chairman stated that the Council having brought the Leagues into existence, the Committee as a whole are amenable to the Council... (which) while recognising the right of the Committee to deal with matters of detail... cannot sanction the alteration of the Platform of the League unless such alteration has the sanction and seal of the TLC.

By September, however, TLC representatives were out-numbered by those from eighteen Leagues. Some uneasiness developed over the composition of the coming LEL Conference. In October, the Central Committee laid charges against a TLC delegate and former Committee

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83. The urban press records a number of League meetings in this period, for example: SMH, 21 July 1891, AW, 19 December 1891, 9 and 23 January 1892. See Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp. 70, 78-9; Roydhouse and Taperell, op. cit., pp.99,101-7.
84. TLC Minutes, 13 August, 1891.
85. In reply to TLC enquiries, the Central Committee stated that there would be delegates from fifteen city and three country Leagues at the Conference, although this obviously underrepresented the country, ibid., 17 September 1891.
Secretary, J.T. Gannon. Although this issue appears to have been complicated by fiscal loyalties, the basis of the charges was that Gannon had organized Leagues in opposition to those of the Central Committee in the Illawarra in 1891, and had refused to surrender official correspondence after retiring from his position as Secretary. The TLC disowned Gannon, but some bitterness was becoming apparent over its emerging junior partnership with the Central Committee. Although they were not proceeded with, motions appeared in December suggesting that the TLC's Parliamentary Committee sever relationships with the Central Committee, since it had lost the power to amend the Platform, and stating that 'the Labour Electoral Leagues as at present constituted are considered out of touch with the workers of this Colony'.

Shortly before the first LEL Conference the Central Committee openly asserted its authority in declaring a TLC delegate, Keegan, ineligible for a Committee position until he formally joined the LEL. The Central Committee's stance clearly contradicted the original intention of the LEL, in that 1891 Labour candidates were expected to be a member of the LEL or a union, and through the TLC, all affiliated unionists were members of the LEL. The Committee also criticised the attendance record of TLC delegates. Whilst some fiscal undertones crept into the dispute, the major issue as TLC delegates saw it, was whether they would be told who could sit on their own Parliamentary Committee. J.C. Watson, who had status as a local LEL secretary, as well as a TLC delegate, took the conciliatory view that unionists could exert more control by joining

86. ibid., 15 and 22 October 1891.
87. ibid., 3 and 10 December 1891. The latter motion was moved by Hart of the Balmain Labourers'.
the Leagues as individuals. But this begged the question over the role of the unions in the Party. Another TLC delegate admitted that non-union men from the Leagues were as good as those from the TLC. But he came much closer to the crux of the problem when he suggested that the TLC had erred in taking direct political power from the unions. If, as Watson implied, unionists had not been forward in joining the Leagues as individuals, this was not surprising under the circumstances of union representation in the LEL, via the TLC. But if the unions had been represented in a less centralized manner, at the base of the LEL, they might have retained control of the Party.

The first LEL Conference was held without resolution of the dispute, and therefore, without a TLC delegation. Only twenty-two of forty Leagues were represented. W.G. Higgs, a socialist intellectual, was Chairman, and non-working class radicals, including some opponents of unionism, predominated amongst the delegates. The Rules were amended to strengthen the LEL's position in the Party. The Platform could now only be altered by Conference, and the TLC's Central Committee representation was reduced from eleven to three.

The TLC fought a rearguard action over the next few months, repudiating Conference, and attempting to re-unify the Parliamentary Party. Some local Leagues supported it, notably Glebe, which

88. ibid., 7 and 14 January 1892. Keegan was also accused of opposing Labour members in his own electorate, and Brennan claimed that if 'he had been a Single Taxer he would have been received with open arms'.
89. Daily Telegraph, 27 January 1892; SMH, 30 January 1892; AW, 5 March 1892.
90. TLC Minutes, 28 January, 2, 9 and 11 February, and 3 March 1892; Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 24 February 1892.
emphasized the Conference's unrepresentative composition and forced its own delegate to resign. However, the TLC could do little, especially as its own position began to deteriorate. Affiliations were already falling, finances were severely strained, particularly after a libel suit against its journal, the Australian Workman, and its attempts to unify the MPs failed dismally. Disillusion with the LEL fuelled further protests from member unions over factional free trade/protection squabbles. Some unions blamed these political pre-occupations for the loss of the Tailors' and Moonta miners' strikes. Finally, the TLC capitulated. Despite strong opposition within its own ranks, it accepted a 'compromise' allowing its President to be ex officio Central Committee Chairman, and giving it six representatives on the Committee. The TLC also retained a veto right over Platform alterations, but this was never used.

91. TLC Minutes, 9 February 1892. Skelton, the delegate concerned, was a single taxer, and Nairn (Civilizing Capitalism, p.81) implies that fiscalism was a strong motivation in Glebe's action when he notes that the League was 'strongly protectionist'. However, fiscalism does not seem to have been the major motivation at all. Glebe's Secretary was John Grant (Stonemasons'), who was associated with the single taxers also, but who was, at the same time, one of the strongest advocates of a class party.

92. As early as March 1891 there were clear signs of financial problems with the Workman, TLC Minutes, 5 and 9 March 1891. W. Higgs, a Socialist League member received two libel suits as editor and the TLC had great difficulty in finding funds for defence, and then the settlement, ibid., 6, 23, 28 and 30 April, 7 May, 9 and 25 June, 2, 16 and 27 July, 13 and 27 August 1891; Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 27 April 1891; AW, 11 and 13 August 1891.

93. Protests from Sydney and Newcastle United Labourers', Plasterers', Bakers', Letterpress Machinists', and Coal Lumpers', TLC Minutes, 25 February, 3, 10, 17 and 24 March 1892. The Coal Lumpers' had been enthusiastic supporters of political organization, and out of these unions, only the United Labourers' and Plasterers' had been against it.

94. ibid., 2 June, and 5 July 1892. Cf. L.F. Fitzhardinge, William Morris Hughes. A Political Biography. Vol.1. That Fiery Particle, 1862-1914, Sydney, 1964, p.41, who describes this TLC capitulation as 'victory'. Technically, the Central Committee did not have the power to make these arrangements without Conference approval. The following Conference did, however, ratify the agreement.
To make matters worse for the TLC, its other creation, the Workman, also became the Central Committee's official journal at the 1892 LEL Conference, soon after mounting debts had forced the TLC to sell it. As editor, George Black, MP, sided with the Central Committee during its dispute with the TLC. He was replaced in April 1892 by another journalist, Frank Fox, who was more sympathetic to the TLC. But the Workman's columns offered little indication of the TLC's growing disillusion with the LEL, and Fox stated that he did not feel obliged 'to support anything that the TLC does'.

Union relations with the Parliamentary Party also declined in 1892. Despite continuing co-operation over industrial issues, the Party could do little to aid the unions' increasingly embattled position, or even to implement much of the Platform, especially after the split. The United Labourers' complained that T. Houghton, one of the protectionist rebels, and still a TLC delegate, had facilitated employment of Labour Bureau registrants at below union rates and in competition with union members. The TLC accepted his denial, but the United Labourers' remained dissatisfied, and Houghton's haughty, insensitive self-defence added to the bitterness and distrust of Labour MPs which hung over the affair.

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96. Although Fox did criticise some MPs. See French, op.cit., pp.49-55.

97. TLC Minutes, 4 February and 5 May 1892.

98. Ibid., 28 April, 5 and 12 May, 9 June 1892. See Chapter 4 re the inquiry into the Government Labour Bureau.
The disillusion arising from the Parliamentary Party's role during the Broken Hill miners' strike was far greater. The strike immediately assumed political proportions with the Government's intervention, and the unions expected emergency action from the Parliamentary Party over such a clear-cut issue. Pressure was immediately applied on the MPs with the TLC's call to assemble a Parliamentary session, and thereafter with a series of deputations and public statements from the TLC and individual unions.99 The LEL, now with J.C. Watson (TLC President) as its Chairman, offered strong support, holding public meetings in Orange, Newcastle, Nymagee, Ashfield, Paddington, Rockdale and Parramatta over August-September, although most financial support for the miners came from other unions.100 Capitalizing on the situation, the Opposition leader, Reid, directed a censure motion against the Government. Debate began on 15 September, when the Government imprisoned the strike leaders, and Watson, on horseback, led a deputation to the Labour MPs seeking retaliation. Sydney unions then held a large demonstration, where some called for a general strike, and the Socialist League held two meetings culminating in a march on Parliament House by 20,000.101 The TLC unequivocally declared that the 'Labor Party would be false to the cause they were returned to represent if

99. ibid., 7 and 14 July, 15 September 1892; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 16 September 1892. For the Parliamentary Party's role in the whole affa'ir, see Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.84-7.

100. TLC Minutes, 4 and 8 August, 15 September 1892. The Parramatta meeting contributed £78, but this was unusual, from a League, and TLC Minutes show massive union aid.

101. ibid., 15 and 22 September 1892 (planning for the demonstration began early, ibid., 4 and 11 August 1892). Tinsmiths' and Saddlers' suggested the general strike, SMH, 16 September and 1 October 1892. For Socialist demonstrations, see P. Ford, Cardinal Moran and the ALP. A Study in the Encounter between Moran and Socialism, Melbourne, 1966, pp.121-2.
they did not use every endeavour to oust the present Government'.

Labour MPs attended country meetings, and fourteen called for an 'equitable and early settlement', implying Government action to force the employers to arbitration. But some had hesitated from the beginning of the strike. Fegan stated that he did not know what could be achieved after Government intervention. Early in September, the western miners and United Labourers' seceded from the TLC, because they considered that the 'Labour question' had actually been jeopardised by political involvement. The deputations to the Party indicate some uncertainty over its unity on the issue, despite re-assurances and strike donations from the MPs. On the eve of the censure vote a union deputation was again re-assured of the Parliamentary Party's support against the Government. But when put, the Opposition's censure motion lost 64-68, with eleven Labour MPs voting for the Government. Most of these had already become identified with the Protectionists, but four had not, and their performance was all the more disappointing because they had been prominent city unionists. The attempt by one of these, Kelly, to justify his action by distinguishing between the censure motion and a vote condemning the Government's intervention in the strike, was pedantic. The TLC viewed 'with contempt...[their] execrable conduct'. Labour's extra-Parliamentary ranks closed when the LEL

102. SMH, 30 September 1892; TLC Minutes, 29 September 1892.
103. TLC Minutes, 14 July 1892.
104. ibid., 6 September 1892.
105. ibid., 29 September 1892.
106. ibid., 6 October 1892; Coghlan; Labour and Industry in Australia, vol. 4 p.1863. The other three 'rats' were Fitzgerald, Johnston and Sharp.
Central Committee also announced that it would 'hound them down on every possible occasion'. As the ASU commented:

The inability of the Parliamentary Labor Party to successfully combine on a question such as this is anything but a comforting reflection for those who look to legislation for reform. Because it was proposed by one of the four 'Labour rats', many unions even refused support for an amendment to the Trade Union Act, which would have allowed compulsory calling up of subscriptions in arrears.

In October 1892 the unions' political campaign continued, centred now around the release of the strike prisoners. Meetings throughout the colony were addressed by loyal Labour MPs, a petition was circulated, funds continued to flow in for the destitute strikers, and some TLC delegates favoured a general strike. The Boot Trade Union called for the blocking of all legislation until strike prisoners were freed, and removal of the conspiracy laws as the major Labour issue for the next elections. But little could be retrieved when the employers and state were so determined, and when Labour's own political representatives were so unreliable. In mid-December a large Sydney demonstration, again led by Watson on horseback, presented the petition of 7,000 signatures for the prisoners' release. But the

107. SMH, 17 October 1892. Numerous censures were carried against the four, and Redfern LEL expelled Sharp, Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol. 4. pp.1864-5; Dale, op.cit., p.59. The Gas Stokers' condemned the TLC for being politically involved, TLC Minutes, 20 October 1892. Also AW, 15 October 1892.
108. ASU Wagga ftth AR, 21 January 1893.
109. TLC Minutes, 6 and 20 October, 10 November, 1 and 15 December 1892; 13 July, and 10 August 1893; Bakers' Minutes, 18 October 1892; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 14 October 1892. See Chapter 10.
110. Balmain and Paddington LELs held meetings. The general strike motion however, could not gain a seconder, TLC Minutes 3, 8 and 17 November 1892; SMH, 2 November 1892. See Dale op.cit., p.58 for Broken Hill and country meetings.
111. TLC Minutes, 10 November 1892.
strike was lost and its leaders remained in prison. When the prisoners were released to heroes' welcomes at the Sydney Domain and Broken Hill, in July 1893, it was for 'good behaviour' and in honour of the marriage of the Duke of York. Earlier release would have amounted to an admission of fault on the part of the Government.

The demonstration, of December 1892, also represented the unions' death-throes in a broader defeat, for it was their last major extra-Parliamentary action for the 1890s. A number of unions did not participate in the demonstration, it seems, because their membership had declined so drastically by then. As the Labour Party consolidated, political activity also became far more institutionalized and directly Parliamentary-oriented.

Now that TLC subservience to the Central Committee was established, the two co-operated to establish control over the Parliamentary Party. A second LEL Conference, even less representative of the Leagues than the first, was held in late January, 1893, with unity as its major theme. At the 1892 Conference the original TLC pledge had been strengthened to require adherence to caucus decisions of the Parliamentary Party. In 1893, Conference specified Party expulsion for MPs who did not abide by caucus. The Parliamentary Party's independence from other Parties was re-affirmed, and it was

112. SMH, 14 December 1892. TLC preparations for demonstration: Minutes, 7 November and 1 December 1892.
113. TLC officials visited the prisoners in Parramatta Gaol, and later at Maitland, TLC Minutes 8 December 1892, 23 February and 18 May 1893. One was released in March, the others in July, 1893, TLC Minutes, 6 April and 6 July 1893; Dale, op. cit., pp.65-7.
114. For example, the Coopers', Coopers' Minutes, 2 December 1892; and Butchers' and Bakers', for which, see n.112 above. The demonstration's major participants were the Trolley and Draymen, Wharf Labourers', Saddlers', United Labourers', ASE, Shipwrights', Boot Trade, and Coachmakers'.
directed to elect a leader. However, the Conference also adopted a conciliatory tone. Re-entry to the Party for those who had left its ranks in Parliament remained possible within these terms, and provided that MPs accepted that the fiscal question could only be settled by referendum. MPs' support for Dibbs received de facto approval, as long as he persisted with some reforms, and even the four 'Labour rats' were left alone for the time being.\textsuperscript{115}

The Conference achieved little. Soon afterwards, a South-Sydney by-election revealed the full infiltration of the fiscal dispute into union ranks. Talbot, of the Ironmoulders', split the Labour vote by standing as a Protectionist against the LEL candidate, Flowers, and both lost.\textsuperscript{116} Some co-operation with the Party continued over industrial issues,\textsuperscript{117} but union dissatisfaction grew. Six MPs voted for a measure contradicting the Platform's plank on Government contracts, and MPs' support over the sacking of a railway unionist was considered 'lukewarm', although, strangely, the Stonemasons' congratulated the Party at this time. On their part, the MPs were becoming resentful for being 'dictated to'.\textsuperscript{118}

At this point the ASU asserted itself. With its ability to maintain a strong bureaucratic structure despite the depression's inroads, together with the large minority of rural Labour seats, the large number of rural seats in the colony overall, and the

\textsuperscript{115} SMH, 27-8 January 1893. See Coghlan, \textit{Labour and Industry in Australia}, vol.4, pp.1864-6; Nairn, \textit{Civilizing Capitalism}, pp.87-8. Only twenty-two delegates attended this Conference, six of whom were from the TLC.
\textsuperscript{116} Flowers was a single taxer, TLC Minutes, 16 and 23 February 1893; SMH, 8 February 1893.
\textsuperscript{117} TLC Minutes, 2 March 1893.
\textsuperscript{118} ibid., 9 and 30 March, 6 April 1893; Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 24 April, 1893.
collapse of the urban unions, the ASU occupied a key strategic position politically. It had already called for unity, and by 1893 had begun to move towards re-formation in the ALF, which included political organization. Immediately after the 1893 Conference the ASU sought the MPs' aid in a country organizational drive, but on its own terms. ASU members would gain automatic LEL membership, the ASU would retain control of political funds it subscribed, and it would exercise 'equal voting power' with country Leagues in selection of Labour candidates.

In August 1893, Toomey (Young Branch) issued an ultimatum to the TLC. If, within a month, the TLC had not called a Conference 'to organize the entire Labor vote of the Colony', the ASU would organize a country Political Labor League. The TLC passed responsibility on to the LEL Central Committee.

Within two weeks, delegates met from the ASU, LEL and TLC to plan tighter organization for the 1894 elections. A full unity Conference was scheduled for November 1893, and Leagues, or branches, were advised to increase non-union membership. ASU delegates emphasized the value of the ALF scheme in organizing the country. Country Leagues were to come under ALF District Council control, that is, effectively, the control of the ASU branches. It seems likely that the political influence it allowed was a major motivation for ASU re-formation as ALF District Councils in 1894. Country organization proceeded rapidly, for even prior to the Conference the ASU had despatched travelling organizers. Young Branch took the lead, sending organizers as far afield as Grenfell, Forbes, Wellington, the

119. ASU Wagga, 6th AR, 22 January 1893.
120. ASU 7th AR, February 1893, pp.14-5, 27.
121. TLC Minutes, 3 August 1893; Worker, 22 July 1893.
122. TLC Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 14 August 1893; Worker, 19 August 1893; SMH, 17 August 1893.
Bogan, Carcoar, Burrowa, Orange and Molong electorates. Amongst them were two Sydney members of the Socialist League, Hughes and Holman, who were soon to assume prominence on the Central Committee. The urban unions organized less spectacularly, and the TLC worried over whether it would gain the Conference chair in November. However, the Central Committee engineered a fragile unity amongst about twenty-five Labour MPs, who elected Joseph Cook as leader.

Almost two hundred delegates made the November unity Conference of the LEL the most representative yet held. Fifty-five came from the Leagues, sixty-nine from the unions, the Central Committee was represented en bloc, and Cook represented the Parliamentary Party. Urban working class representation, however, was lower than these figures suggest. Fourteen union delegates were MPs, and twenty-four were from the ASU/ALF. Over fifty Central Committee delegates came from Leagues, compared with six from the TLC, although some of the former were also unionists. Unionists also probably predominated amongst the large number of delegates who had to return to work on the second day of the Conference. Under these circumstances, the Central Committee dominated proceedings. The Committee approached unity as a matter of discipline, and in this it had union support. The MPs' pledge to uphold Platform and caucus was strongly re-affirmed, although softened in wording, and the four 1892 'rats' were expelled despite Holman's (Central Committee) more conciliatory attitude.

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124. TLC Minutes, 14 September 1893. The Coopers' organized to send a delegate in November, Coopers' Minutes, 18 September 1893. For Parliamentary Party, SMH, 13 and 18 October 1893. The exact number of 'unified' MPs is uncertain. See Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, p.1867; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.91.
A new six point Fighting Platform, offering significant concessions to the country vote, was also devised for the coming elections. 125

Amidst claims of 'stacking' the Conference, opposition to the pledge unified the MPs as nothing else could. Black claimed that it imposed 'impractical' restrictions on their strategic flexibility. 126

Even former unionists displayed a strong feeling of unwarranted interference, barely differing from the traditionalist sentiments of Edmund Burke when he asserted the independence of MPs in 1774. 127

Union criticism of the Party intensified. Condemning it over its attitude to Conference, a TLC delegate considered that 'the Labor Party were getting too respectable for labour'. 128 The Brewery Employees' attempted to censure the Party for its support of brewers' subsidies, although the TLC recognised its weakness in noting that the Party was 'not its representative solely'. 129 Further complaints from affiliates arose over the TLC becoming a 'semi-political body'. 130 So disillusioned were the Stonemasons' with

125. AW, 14 November 1893; SMH, 10 November 1893. The numbers of delegates are rather vague in these reports, and the Central Committee held a number of proxies. Judging from pre-Conference arrangements, the TLC may only have sent four direct delegates. TLC Minutes, 14 September 1893. See Loveday, op.cit., pp.33-6; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.92-5; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.1868-79; Ford, op.cit., pp.192-4.


128. TLC Minutes, 23 November 1893. However, the TLC endorsed Conference decisions, (ibid.), as did the Tinsmiths', Tinsmiths' Minutes, 22 December 1893.

129. TLC Minutes, 19 October 1893.

130. From the Butchers', ibid., 11 January 1894.
Party performance that they gave up entirely, resolving 'that no political question be entertained by this Lodge from this date'.  

Initially, the ASU joined the urban unions and Leagues in approval of the Unity Conference. But it worried that the Platform's traditional union plank for an eight hour day would alienate farmers, and sections of the union became increasingly ambiguous, warning members against 'bogus political friends', even as they called for unity. As Toomey and the Young Branch enthusiastically co-operated with the Central Committee, the rest of the ASU (now AWU) then sided with the MPS, not so much out of sympathy over the pledge, as jealousy of the urban Central Committee's position, and a concern to maintain a populist alliance - 'wage earners and wealth producers' - which was essential to its own position in the country. Wagga Branch, whose Secretary (Rae) was one of the MPs, virulently condemned the Conference 'wire-pullers', and threatened independent organization.

A hostile reception was given the Central Committee delegation to the AWU's February 1894 Conference by most delegates, with Toomey (Young) leading only a small minority in favour of the Central Committee. Wagga's drafting of an independent Platform, minus the eight hours plank, but including female suffrage, exacerbated the situation. When the Central Committee pointed out that it lacked the power to alter

131. Sydney Lodge Minutes, 20 November 1893.
132. ASU Goulburn Branch, AR, 31 December 1893; GLU Bourke Branch, AR, 31 December 1893, p.3; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.55; TLC Minutes, 21 December 1893.
133. Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.97.
134. ASU Wagga, 7th AR, 31 December 1893, p.3; Preamble to Rules and Platform of Riverina District Council, Political Section, Australasian Federation of Labour, Wagga Wagga, January 1894. Years later, Spence continued to refer to the 'stacking' of the 1893 Conference by the city Committee, Australia's Awakening, p.152.
the Platform according to AWU wishes, AWU delegates were unreceptive to the idea of a further Conference to resolve the matter. 135

The LEL's Third Annual Conference, called by the Central Committee in March 1894, failed to resolve the stalemate. The eight hours plank was qualified, and the Parliamentary Party was allowed a representative on the Central Committee, but the pledge remained and the executive's control was tightened. Only three MPs accepted the Conference decisions. Open warfare followed, at public meetings and within the Leagues, for control of the movement. The press at this time is full of reports of factional battles for control of local Leagues. One example, which occurred even prior to Conference, was at Leichhardt, where Beeby (Central Committee) led intensive heckling of the sitting member, Clark, and narrowly carried a no-confidence motion against him. 136 To counter Worker and, less substantial, Workman, support for the MPs, the Central Committee established its own journal, New Order. 137

As the TLC re-formed within the ALF, the urban unions were becoming visibly irrelevant to political developments. The 1894 Conference had even considered a motion to exclude TLC representatives. 138

135. ASU 8th AR, February 1894, pp.13-18, 30, 36-7, 41-2, 45, 53-8. Moree's Secretary had been attacked even before the split for being too close to the LEL. (GLU Inverell, 2nd AR, 31 December 1892, pp.4-5), and he had been close with Toomey in LEL organization (ASU 6th AR, February 1892).
136. SMH, 7 February 1894. McGowen, Kirkpatrick and Davis were the three loyal MPs.
Although the TLC had wavered over the eight hours plank, realising that a strong stand without the power to enforce it might only harm its position, affiliates protested strongly over the plank's qualification, which was considered tantamount to removal. Conflict developed during attempts to gain Parliamentary Party action over working conditions on the Cook's River and Shea's Creek reclamation works. MPs were 'too busy' to see one TLC deputation, and requested that its case be put in writing. After suffering these indignities, the TLC sought to regain some influence by mediating between the Parliamentary Party and the Central Committee, offering a modified version of the pledge. It also hoped to maintain relationships with some MPs (especially Black and Houghton) with whom it was not totally disillusioned. For its trouble, it was attacked by both sides for meddling. The TLC played no further role in the Labour Party of any importance during the remainder of the 1890s. Watson's continuing influence on the LEL derived from his Central Committee, rather than his TLC, position.

Labour's 1894 election campaign was split between the MPs and the 'solidarity' candidates. Most LEL branches had been retained by the Executive, rival solidarity branches being established where necessary. The 'Independent Labour Party' therefore lacked an electoral machine, although the LEL was also weakened by local splits.

139. TLC Minutes, 8, 22 and 29 March 1894. The plank had 'where practicable' added to it. See Chapter 8.
140. Ibid., 5 and 12 April 1894.
141. Ibid., 26 April, 3, 10, 17 and 24 May, 7 June 1894; SMH, 16 and 24 May 1894. See Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.1875-9. The TLC's pledge did not differ greatly from that of Conference. Only Black and Houghton of the MPs were willing to sign it.
Many independents stood as 'ALF candidates', but they relied essentially on personal standing within their electorate. Outside its branch districts, the AWU could offer little substantive support. Indeed, ALF organization had not been smooth or consistent for the AWU. Young Branch's organizational enthusiasm was exceptional, but it supported the Central Committee, which led to some internal AWU conflict. Largely due to its efforts, as far afield as the north and south coasts, the LEL stood thirty-nine country candidates. Sleath and Ferguson of the AMA were also active for the LEL at Broken Hill, and even Coonamble had a strong LEL branch.

Labour's 1894 election results were notable in three respects: the reduction of its vote, the predominance of its country vote, and the minor role of the urban unions. Fifteen LEL men (out of seventy-four) were returned, and thirteen Independents (out of about sixty candidates). Taken together, this represented a marked reduction on the 1891 results. The Party splits, and the subsidence of the post-1890 excitement of class mobilization, often into bitter disillusion with Labour MPs, had undoubtedly affected the Party vote. However, the combined vote had only fallen 2.4 per cent, and as Nairn stresses,

143. For ALF candidates, AW, 23 and 30 June, 1894; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol. 4, pp.1879-80; Loveday, op.cit., pp.37-8. For AWU difficulties in re-organization into the ALF, ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p. 54. At that stage only Young, Wagga and Bourke had formed District Councils. Little would have changed in the few months afterwards, given it was the off-season for shearing.

144. AWU Young Central Committee Minutes, 5 December 1894. The AW lists LEL branches at Singleton, Gulgong, Newcastle, Condobolin, Namoi, Forbes, Broken Hill, Young, Boorowa, Coonamble, Dubbo, Gunnedah, Narrabri, and Tenterfield in the country. For Toomey's activities, see Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.109-12; and for the Broken Hill situation, Dale, op.cit., pp.69-70.
electoral reform makes comparison between 1891 and 1894 misleading. Multiple constituencies had been abolished and the number of seats reduced. It seems unlikely that many more seats could have been won by a unified Party. Double-sided Labour contests only occurred in exceptional, symbolic cases, such as Cook's seat of Hartley.\(^{145}\) Labour's Parliamentary strength had fallen drastically, for most Independents soon joined the other Parties. Nevertheless, what remained was a far more cohesive unit.

The results confirmed the ALF's weakness. Rae lost his seat, centre of one of its strongest District Councils. He and Toomey, who stood for Boorowa (adjoining Young), were defeated by Protectionists. Rae's incumbency for the Riverina over 1891-4 was the only break in Protectionist representation from 1885 to 1904.\(^{146}\) Throughout New South Wales smallholders, particularly wheat growers, were strongly protectionist, for they faced competition from South Australia and Victoria. Wheat growers' numbers were increasing in the 1890s, but the AWU leaned towards free trade. Protection meant higher prices for manufactured goods, whilst rural prices fluctuated. Smallholders were beginning to be affected by this uneven relationship in the 1890s, when agricultural expansion largely relied on new machinery. Some of the country Labour MPs had drifted towards the Free Trade and Land Reform League. But the swing towards free trade was slow and uneven

\(^{145}\) Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.113-5, and Spence, Australia's Awakening, pp.153-4, for list of seats and new members; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol. 4, p.1880; Loveday, op.cit., pp.38-9. Only Davis, Kirkpatrick (Gunnedah), McGowen and Cann (who had rejoined the 'solidarities') remained of the original Party.

\(^{146}\) Swan, op cit., p.164. AWU Wagga's 8th AR, 31 December 1894, expressed great disappointment in the country vote, criticising supporters, or the lack thereof.
until the 1900s when rural prices slumped more noticeably. Free Traders did well in the country in the 1894 elections, although they lost twelve country seats in 1898.\footnote{147}

More importantly, as they gained a class identity of their own, the farmers were moving towards political independence, as the existence of the Free Trade and Land Reform League indicated. During 1890-3 a permanent, widely-based Farmers' and Settlers' Association (FSA) appeared, with open political aspirations. The FSA was active in the 1894 election, and at least five Labour MPs had drifted towards it, to constitute an embryonic Parliamentary 'Country Party'. Toomey's organizational energy was partly directed against this drift, but after his electoral defeat in Young, he suggested a union/farmer alliance.\footnote{148}

Before the FSA was overrun by larger landholders in the 1900s, it was sympathetic to Labour, and in 1899 two Labor MPs attended the FSA Conference.\footnote{149} But the FSA's own grass-roots agrarian radicalism increased the threat to Labour's country flank. The MP's drift to the 'Country Party' was hastened by the 1893-4 split. Under these circumstances the AWU's show of independence against the city-dominated Central Committee, particularly over eight hours, had some strategic basis besides the leadership's personal ambitions.

\footnote{147}{See B.D.Graham, The Formation of the Australian Country Parties, Canberra, 1966, pp.32-4, 94-5; \textit{AW}, 14 and 21 July 1894 (for Free Trade and Land Reform League); \textit{Nairn}, Civilizing Capitalism, pp. 115, 131, 193. Note AWU Wagga 9th AR, 31 December 1895, p.4, complaint that Reid had done well in the country because he stole their policy on land taxation.}

\footnote{148}{Graham, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.52-3, 58-63, 94-5; \textit{Ford, op.cit.}, p.166. At least five country Labourites had so drifted. T. Williams (Goulburn ASU Secretary) also apparently supported the Protectionists in the 1894 elections, ASU 9th AR, February, 1894, p.29.}

\footnote{149}{Holman and Brown, AWU Central Branch Committee Minutes, 11 July 1899.}
Notwithstanding these weaknesses, rural seats provided one third of the LEL's fifteen seats (equal with urban and mining seats) and five Independent Labour seats. Through the AWU, the country also had the greatest potential for expansion, particularly since the AWU had a large, full-time professional leadership, travelling organizers who could easily adapt to political work, and its own journal, The Worker. Young Branch alone was responsible for most LEL country seats (Young, Grenfell, Tweed, Coonamble, and even to some extent Gunnedah, held by a sitting member), and aided Sleath in Wilcannia, and the three Broken Hill members. J.C. Watson, the leading urban unionist in the LEL, actually entered Parliament through the seat of Young. In comparison, the proportion of urban seats was falling. The LEL's clearest urban victory was with William Hughes in Sydney-Lang. Balmain South and Granville were their only other city gains. The urban Independents, Schey (Darlington), Bavister (Ashfield) and Black (Sydney-Gipps), would prove difficult for the LEL to unseat, particularly Schey, who attracted a strong railway vote. Mining electorates were overwhelmingly Labour, but limited in number, and their five Independents also had strong followings.

150. LEL: Young, Wilcannia, Coonamble, Gunnedah and The Tweed. The last was lost in a disputed return, but Grenfell was gained in the same way, by a farmer (M.J. Loughnane). Bar Kirkpatrick in Gunnedah, the other rural seats retained were all held by current or future AWU officials.

151. The AW, 21 July 1894, described it in this way because Hughes was actually opposed by an Independent, Fitzgerald, unlike the LEL men in the other two urban gains. Despite its doubts about Hughes, the AW was also pleased that Fitzgerald had been beaten. AWU Young was rather pleased with itself after the election, AWU Young 7th AR, 31 December 1894.

152. Of the five LEL - held mining seats, three were from the Barrier, including that of Cann, who had rejoined the Party. Edden soon rejoined the solidarity Party to increase the coalfields seats to three.
The decimation of urban unionism emphasized the AWU's importance. The three new urban LEL members were all non-unionists, a development over which the SDC expressed guarded concern. This partly explains SDC reluctance to discard some non-solidarity candidates, such as Bavister and Schey (although it was also sympathetic to Black), which led to some conflict between pro and anti-solidarity groups on the SDC. Some SDC delegates also rankled over urban unionists providing the bulk of LEL finances, and the fact that many unionists had to effectively pay twice for LEL membership, but most TLC delegates now realised their impotence as the Party sought a populist vote.

Speaking for the Central Committee, Holman left no doubt as to the urban unions' position. Stressing the electoral liability of too close a link, he stated that the LEL 'has officially nothing to do with unionism'.

Meanwhile, the AWU moved to strengthen its position in the labour movement. Prior to the elections its Conference had staked a claim as the colony's 'Labor Parliament', and the vanguard of a new unionism which looked beyond wages to the 'emancipation of mankind ["the people"] from capitalistic thraldom'. Defeat in the 1894 shearing strike, and subsequent membership decline, encouraged this emphasis.

In August 1894, the Riverina District Council (Wagga AWU) proposed

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153. In reply to a SDC enquiry, McGowen stated that only four MPs were non-unionists. SDC Minutes, 17 January and 14 March 1895. Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p. 115, contradicts himself, showing in his biographies that six Labor members were non-unionists, but stating that only three were.

154. SDC Minutes, 13 September and 22 November 1894, 17 January 1895; also (re Bavister) Tinsmiths' Minutes, 7 September 1894.

155. SDC Minutes, 30 August 1894.

156. Quoted in Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p. 121.

157. Temple, (Secretary's Report) ASU 8th AR, February, 1894.
another unity Conference to include delegates from the two Parliamentary Labour Parties, the unions, the LELs, Single Tax, Socialist and Women's Suffrage Leagues, and Democratic Clubs. Such a broad alliance underlined the AWU's populist strategy, but it clearly envisaged AWU dominance through the ALF. After a cool reception to the proposal from the SDC, the AWU initiated a Conference of the six ALF District Councils (all AWU bar the SDC) in Sydney in November, with Watson attending as a delegate of the Young District Council. It was resolved there to form an Eastern Provincial Council of the ALF, and to bring the LEL under it. At about this time AWU headquarters was also moved to Sydney.

At the LEL's January, 1895 Annual Conference, Watson, representing the ALF, and the Central Committee indicated a willingness to compromise, but the AWU was intent on negotiating from a position of strength to ensure the most favourable reconciliation possible. At its Conference, held soon afterwards - 'the unions represented hereon being practically the backbone of the political Labor movement' - some delegates emphasized independent organization, and Spence stressed the difficulty of settlement over the pledge. A modified pledge and five point plan of action for a separate Political Labor Federation were drafted. However, this seems to have been primarily intended as

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158. SDC Minutes, 16 and 30 August 1894. Note AWU Young's bitter comments re the Reid Government's role in the strike, AWU Young 7th AR, 31 December 1894. The SDC attempted to get Party aid for the AWU, SDC Minutes 8 November 1894. The AWU had also begun to build up a substantial fund for political organization, AWU Wagga 7th AR, 31 December 1893, p.5; AWU Coonamble AR, 31 December 1894; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1895, p.6.

159. AWU Wagga 8th AR, 31 December 1894, p.1; SDC Minutes, 30 August 1894. The Head Office move was first suggested in 1894, but not approved until 1895, ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.44; AWU 9th AR, February 1895, pp.6-7.
bargaining ploy to maximize AWU influence in a unified organization. The principle of a uniform Platform was agreed to, and the way left open for further negotiations with the LEL. 160 These continued over March to May, 1895, when a special LEL conference ratified amalgamation of the ALF and LEL as the Political Labor League (PLL). The terms closely followed those originally proposed at the January LEL Conference, except that the AWU's modified pledge was adopted. However, the new pledge confirmed that the issue had only been a face-saver for the AWU. 161 Caucus decisions in Parliament remained binding for MPs.

The AWU could be well satisfied with the settlement. Through the ALF it retained autonomy in the country, and its members automatically became PLL members (a privilege which the TLC had lost in 1892). Members of unions not affiliated to the ALF, which meant many urban unions at this stage, could only achieve PLL membership as individuals in the local branches. In accordance with the AWU's Conference plan, District Assemblies consisting of branch Leagues for each electorate, and paralleling the ALF District Councils, were established, with power to commission branches. Three or more branches could establish an Assembly, with the exception that only one Assembly was allowed for the entire metropolitan area. Their composition, one delegate from each local branch and three from the District Council, ensured direct

160. AWU 9th AR, February 1895, pp.10-12, 18; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.121-2. One further motivation for compromise on the AWU's part was the presence at this Conference of Hinchcliffe of the Queensland ALF/QWU. The AWU sought amalgamation with the Queensland union and Hinchcliffe argued strongly for a reconciliation.
Controlling the vast majority of Assemblies and Councils, the AWU had tremendous potential for control of the PLL Annual Conference, with each League branch entitled to one delegate, and each Assembly to one, with a vote for every constituent branch. It was also in a good position to control the new Central Executive of eleven, comprising the PLL President and Secretary, seven elected by Conference, and two direct ALF representatives. The first PLL Executive realised this potential: apart from Flowers (President), Routley (Secretary), Moroney (all from the old TLC), Hughes and two ALF representatives, Conference elected MacDonald, Watson, Rae and Spence from the AWU.  

For its part, the LEL really only recognised what was effectively the status quo in the country, whilst maintaining its urban hegemony and finally gaining acceptance of a pledge binding on the MPs. The remainder of the 1890s witnessed a process of consolidation and amalgamation of the Parliamentary Party, the old Central Committee, and the AWU. Soon after formation of the PLL, Black and two other Independents rejoined the Party, Black interpreting the 'modified' pledge as a personal vindication. Bourke branch's eruption against Sleath's AWU Presidency in 1896 revived some of the enmity of the 1894 split, when Sleath had been with the LEL. Old sores were further

162. These terms were almost identical to the form of independent organization sketched at the AWU's February Conference, but only detailed what had been virtually accepted by the LEL in January. See Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol. 4, pp.2184-7 for details of PLL structure.

163. Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.124. A Sydney District Assembly of the PLL was established by July, 1895, and its Secretary, L. Heydon, invited three SDC representatives, SDC Minutes, 4 July 1895.
inflamed when Toomey and Sleath criticised *Worker* editorial policy, but few AWU delegates were interested in these issues.\(^{164}\) Now that the AWU had gained political predominance in the Labor Party their efforts were directed towards maintaining unity.

Unification was too recent for Labor to fully benefit in the 1895 elections. A number of Free Trade, Protectionist and Independent Labor candidates re-emerged.\(^{165}\) Eighteen PLL men were returned, a slight improvement, despite the much lower number of seats contested. Four Independents were returned, and an 1898 by-election was won by a nineteenth PLL man.\(^{166}\) As federation began to dominate colonial politics, ten Labor candidates campaigned in 1897 for the New South Wales seats on the Federal Convention. Whilst the results revealed Labor's electoral weakness proportionally, they did not justify the Party's post-election depression. Labor had campaigned over specific issues, whereas the lawyers and politicians who won Convention seats had tapped an idealistic belief in the electorate that federation was above politics. Cardinal Moran's candidature, directed against the Party's 'leftwards' trend, also damaged its vote. But Labor's top candidate ran creditably as fifteenth, and the Party held its

\(^{164}\) Ostensibly, the Sleath/Bourke dispute was over money used in the 1894 campaign, AWU 10th AR, February 1896, pp.5-7, 16-19, 24-27; AWU 11th AR, February 1897, pp.6-7, 10-20; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1895; AWU Wagga AR, 31 December 1895, p.5.

\(^{165}\) For example, Percy Horden, running unofficially as Free Trade Labour, SDC Minutes, 18 July 1895. The *Worker*, 1 February 1896, refers to country organizing difficulties.

\(^{166}\) The probability of an early election, apparent from at least May, 1895, had no doubt encouraged the LEL/AWU reconciliation at that time. For the election background and results, see Loveday, *op.cit.*, pp.40-2; Nairn, *Civilizing Capitalism*, pp.124-35; Spence, *Australia's Awakening*, pp.154-5; Black, *Origin and Growth of Labour*, pp.23, 26. AWU optimism remained high after these results. For example: AWU Young 8th AR, 31 December 1895; AWU Goulburn AR, 31 December 1895, p.5.
percentage of the vote. In the 1898 ordinary elections nineteen PLL candidates were returned, to be joined by one more in an 1899 by-election.

The proportion of rural seats rose dramatically. In 1895 seven of Labor's eighteen seats were urban, and seven were in mining electorates, a gain of two for each, although one of each resulted from the re-entry of Independents to the Party. The rural seats of Grenfell and Gunnedah were lost, but Condobolin and Narrabri (1898 by-election) were gained, the former by the re-entry of another Independent. Both new country men were farmers, whereas three of the other four new MPs were unionists. In 1898 Labor lost two metropolitan seats, Gipps (Black) and Granville, but gained two in the country, Grenfell (Holman) and Cobar (Spence). Another country seat, Boorowa, was won in the 1899 by-election by Nielsen, the former AWU Young Branch Secretary. As Table 1 shows, this trend continued until 1907, when the rural vote stabilized. These figures actually underestimate AWU influence in the 1890s. After the AMA's disintegration the AWU provided the organizational backbone for the three Labor members at Broken Hill (Thomas, Cann and Ferguson, for Alma, Broken Hill and Sturt, respectively).

167. Labor's depression was highlighted at a meeting at the Labor Centre and in a number of AW articles (20 March, 8 and 22 May, and 24 July, 1897). Conservative solidarity, and sectarianism generated by Moran's candidature, were seen as the major causes of defeat, but considerable introspection also resulted, ending with an assault on the socialists. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9. See Ford, op.cit., pp.203-6, 208-18; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.162-7; Fitzhardinge, op.cit., pp.82-4. Spence, as a candidate, had been very active in the Convention campaign, AWU 11th AR, February 1897, p.9.


169. Note the AWU assumption of control for political organizing at the Barrier at its 1895 Conference, 9th AR, p.18. As noted, Sleath, of the old Barrier AMA had entered the AWU.
Table 1

Geographical Distribution of Labor Seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1895*</th>
<th>1898*</th>
<th>1901</th>
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<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Spence, Australia's Awakening, pp.154-8, 163-4; and references in n.s 166 and 168.

*The 1895 and 1898 totals include seats won at later by-elections.

By the late 1890s the AWU had largely absorbed the old urban union leadership and its former rivals on the Central Committee. When SDC men such as S. Smith (Seamen) were tolerated for high PLL position (he was 1898 President), they relied on support from the AWU-dominated ALF. Watson, the former TLC and LEL President, now had an AWU power base. Holman, a former Central Committee activist, was AWU Coonamble Branch Secretary when he won the seat of Grenfell, and even Hughes, another Central Committee man, had 'done time' as an AWU organizer. All three were central Parliamentary figures. In 1895, prior to entering Parliament himself, Spence joined the PLL Executive, whose Secretary in 1897 was H. Lamond, editor of The Worker and Spence's son-in-law. 170 The AWU and Labor leaderships had become virtually indistinguishable.

170. Spence re-joined the Executive at the 1897 Conference, and Lamond joined it later that year when Barlow, a socialist, resigned. See Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.157, 166, 173; Ford, op.cit., p.180. Holman was Coonamble delegate at the AWU's 1897 Conference. 11th AR, February 1897, pp.10, 20.
Indeed, during the 1890s, the AWU had become primarily a political rather than an industrial organization. The bush unionist who, in contrast to the 'apathetic city folk', would travel thirty miles on foot or up to 200 miles on horseback, to register a vote, had become a legend. The union journal, The Worker, was also described as the Parliamentary Party's Hansard. In 1899 the union asserted itself further by suggesting direct AWU supervision of the drafting of industrial legislation proposed by the Labor Party, and calling for direct representation of its New South Wales branches at PLL Conferences, 'as a step towards the better organization of country electorates'. It hardly needed these amendments for control, but Rae's justification of the proposals is revealing: the AWU had been the first union 'to take up the political question', it had a large and scattered membership, and as 'a continuous body of some financial strength' it was entitled to have more direct control than 'the many mushroom branch leagues composed of political adventurers'.

171. See Spence, Australia's Awakening, p.148. The Worker and Annual Reports indicate the AWU's primary political function at this stage. Members were exhorted to enrol to vote, and support Labor (AWU Young 8th AR, 31 December 1895; AWU Goulburn AR, 31 December 1895, p.5; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1895, p.9; AWU 11th AR, February 1897, p.3) and the Party's performance was consistently reviewed (AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1897, p.5; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1898, pp.4-5).

172. AWU 10th AR, February 1896, p.25. Union organizers in the late 1890s were also concerned essentially with political work.

173. AWU 13th AR, February 1899, pp.6, 13. The AWU had been consistently concerned over the control of its financial contribution to the Party, 10th AR, February 1896, pp.25-7; 12th AR, February 1898, pp.6, 9. In the latter case Toomey indicated how completely he too had been absorbed by the mainstream AWU. In the 1899 PLL Conference, each union which endorsed the Party was entitled to branch representation at Conference. (Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.200). The AWU was the obvious beneficiary.
In January 1900 an Intercolonial Labor Conference and the PLL Annual Conference were held concurrently to draft a Federal Platform. The AWU also held its Annual Conference concurrently, suffering only temporary adjournments as its delegates attended the other Conferences. It emerged with a powerful role in the Federal Party. It would control country political funds, have equal rights with country Leagues in selection of candidates, and could suspend PLL Rules 'inapplicable to the special conditions of the AWU', subject to the Platform and pledge.  

The Party which was consolidated under AWU and professional urban politicians' leadership was committed to a moderate Parliamentary strategy quite removed from the form of organization envisaged by the class conscious elements of the urban working class which initiated political organization. From 1894-9 Labor supported Reid's Free Trade Government in return for a limited reform programme which mostly had Reid's genuine commitment. From 1897 however, as Reid became pre-occupied with federation, reform stagnated. Late in 1899 Labor switched support to the Protectionists under Lyne, who had promised enactment of some Labor planks, although under the circumstances it is not clear that he needed Labor support to form a Ministry. Coghlan concludes of Labor in this period, that it had learnt the 'traditional

174. AWU 14th AR, January 1900, pp.10, 17, 19-20; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.226. Bourke also resolved that Federal candidates must sign a district pledge before receiving its support, AWU Central Branch Minutes, 19 March 1901. After so clearly staking out the country, the AWU then complained of the Party's lack of country organizing work, 15th AR, January 1901, p.11.
Parliamentary game'.\(^{175}\) However, George Black lauded this 'golden age':

against Eight Democratic measures during the thirty-five years which preceded the advent of the Walesian Labor Party, we can place thirty Democratic measures passed inside thirteen years after that Labor Party has become an active political force.

The Party had also

succeeded in purging Parliament by killing jobbery and corruption...to a great extent banished sectarianism from political contests; democratised Parliament...; succeeded in bringing about nine great Departmental Reforms...; greatly improved the tone of elections...\(^{176}\)

Modest achievements, indeed, for the Party which had commenced with such high hopes for a working class political mobilization. Black's view of the Labor Party had eventually won out against what he considered the more doctrinaire, class-based view of the early 1890s.

Urban working class opposition within the Party persisted. The SDC attempted, unsuccessfully, to bar MPs from holding ALF positions, which the AWU claimed 'would be acting against Labor Party solidarity'.\(^{177}\) The dissociation of Labor MPs from the urban unions


\(^{176}\) *Origin and Growth of Labour*, pp.30-1. Similar evaluations were expressed in AWU 15th AR, January 1901, p.5; Spence, *Australia's Awakening*, pp.167-72 (where Black is quoted); and by Hughes, quoted in Fitzhardinge, *op.cit.*, p.60. A Party Manifesto, distributed in 1898, made a similar evaluation also, *Civilizing Capitalism*, p.188.

\(^{177}\) AWU 14th AR, January 1900, p.20; SDC Minutes, 30 January 1896.
was commonly acknowledged, and criticised.\textsuperscript{178} Even after a relatively active period of Parliamentary reform, the 1896 PLL Conference was highly critical of the Party's performance. The Executive also suggested greater MP contact with the rank and file through attendance at District Assembly meetings. Although, with thirty-three delegates, it was hardly a representative Conference, it seems likely that urban rank and file pressure lay behind the criticism. Urban delegates were a large proportion of those present, for the AWU had not fully capitalized on its representative advantages at that stage. Furthermore, the AWU itself was critical of Parliamentary inertia over issues of importance to it.\textsuperscript{179}

Strong undercurrents of dissatisfaction also lurked beneath the symbolic unity of the joint PLL/ALF/SDC welcome for Ben Tillett in 1897. He was enthusiastically received by the colonial labour movements of Australia, which freely contributed to his tour expenses.\textsuperscript{180} But as a militant British new unionist, as well as a socialist, Tillett was an unlikely bedfellow for the moderate Labor leadership. A number of his statements reinforced union and rank and file dissatisfaction with Labor. In New Zealand he warned workers not to be satisfied with 'the political sops' of Parliamentary organization.\textsuperscript{181} In October 1897, at an SDC

\textsuperscript{178} When S. Smith entered Parliament in place of Davis (Sydney-Pyrmont) in 1898, Brennan hoped he would remain on the SDC because 'one reason why the Labor members appeared to be dissociated from the unions arose from the fact of having been alienated from the positions they formerly held as delegates'. He did remain on the SDC. SDC Minutes, 28 July 1898.

\textsuperscript{179} For example, AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1898, p.4. See Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.141-51; Ford, op.cit.,pp.191-2. See Chapters 8 and 9 for further details on these issues.

\textsuperscript{180} SDC Minutes, 17 June, 15 and 22 July, 5 and 19 August, 10 September, 1897; Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 26 July 1897; AW 20 March 1897.

\textsuperscript{181} SDC Minutes, 29 May 1897.
meeting, he also stated that 'the best way some people could serve the Labor movement was to lie flat on their stomachs and neither be seen nor heard'. He urged against too much dependence on leaders, and claimed that he had done more as a 'drudge' in the labour movement than now, as a 'platform man'. He advised delegates to rely on themselves and not on Parliament, for 'unionism was the most powerful weapon they had'. The SDC meeting declared that Tillett's visit had done 'a vast amount of good to the Labour Movement'.

Rank and file pressure from the SDC, and particularly from the coalfields on the large number of MPs from mining electorates, played some part in Labor's desertion of Reid in 1899, after a period of legislative quietism. However, as Weller has argued, the move was probably necessary for the Party's own survival as a distinctive Parliamentary unit. The decimation of working class organization in the 1890s, and its early defeat in the Party, precluded any major influence from that source. In 1897 little came from an SDC Conference to discuss the organizational state of Labour. As late as 1899, what Nairn has described as 'the return of the trade unions to the Labor Party', merely amounted to Conference representation for three urban unions, compared with four delegates from the AWU/ALF group.

Despite its dissatisfaction, therefore, the rank and file of the

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182. ibid., 7 and 21 October 1897.
183. Weller, ibid. For rank and file pressure, see Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.217. The SDC had been lobbying the Party over industrial issues previously, SDC Report for Half Year, 30 June 1899. The AWU also kept close contact with the Parliamentary Party at this stage, Central Branch Committee Minutes, 11 July and 27 September 1899.
184. SDC Minutes, 6 and 20 October 1898; SDC Report for Half Year, 30 June 1899.
185. Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.211.
unions and the PLL could not seriously retard the ascendancy of the AWU/moderate Parliamentary leadership in the Party. Even in 1896 the PLL Executive qualified its criticism of the MPs after their vigorous self-defence. After 1896 the Parliamentary Party was not again subjected to criticism of this magnitude. Whilst urban working class representation at the 1897 Conference expanded considerably, largely because of the socialists' organizational efforts in the branches, the struggle which then occurred over the Platform (described in Chapter 9) resulted in the emasculation of the socialists, and their base in the urban Leagues. By 1898 the AWU/moderate Parliamentary leadership was completely secure. 186

Precisely because of organized working class weakness, a populist electoral strategy had become necessary for the Labor Party, once Parliamentary achievement became the yardstick of success. In response to urban working class disillusion with the Party, the Workman, under moderate control by then, simply emphasized the populist strategy, the need to join with 'workers who are not wage-earners, i.e. those who work for the consumer without the intervention of an employer'. 187 Labor's reliance on the AWU confirmed this strategy, for its membership itself represented a populist alliance. Nor was it only in the absence of strong urban industrial organization that working class support was weak. By the late 1890s there were few strong urban Labor Leagues, and their association with the socialists led the Executive to further

187. 20 March 1897. The Workman at this stage was owned and edited by T. Houghton, a former TLC delegate and Independent Labourite. See French, op.cit., pp.83ff.
weaken their position in the PLL. Country branches were weaker, but the number of urban Leagues actually declined from the early 1890s, with only a brief resurgence in 1897. It was a source of constant complaint in the PLL and AWU that branches surfaced at election time only to disappear between elections. The picture which emerges is one of a skeleton branch structure with a strong and active Executive. More importantly, it is not always clear that all of the strong urban Leagues which did exist were overwhelmingly working class in membership.

For what began as a 'working class' Party, Labor attracted a surprisingly small working class vote. As its number of urban seats declined in the late 1890s, even those it retained were relatively insecure. The proportion of the vote gained by country Labor MPs was far higher than in the city seats. Partly, this indicates the persistence of populism amongst the urban working class, which continued to support 'radical' demagogues such as Norton and Taylor. But Labor obviously did not offer enough to induce stronger working class support, or to distinguish itself from those older populists. MPs such as Norton relied on strong personal contacts within the electorate, in comparison with Labor's rather centralized structure. To some extent Labor's weak urban position suggests a passive working class opposition to the nature of the Party. Significantly, Black,
who epitomised the non-working class influence on the Party, lost his seat in 1898, when he refused to campaign in the field.\footnote{191} Amongst the remnants of urban industrial organization in the late 1890s, there is a paucity of political references but for the occasional criticism of Labor. As late as 1900 when the re-formed Sydney Labour Council gained direct representation at PLL Conferences, as did individual unions, few unions took advantage of the opportunity immediately, and many opposed the Labour Council's affiliation to the PLL.\footnote{192}

In the late 1890s, therefore, the Labor Party was consolidated in the absence of a significant, organized working class presence. From 1900 as the urban unions re-formed and re-entered the Labor Party, they were harnessed to a structure which had been consolidated in their absence, and over which they had little direct influence. The irony was that in the process of Party consolidation, the very elements which had been partially responsible for de-mobilizing working class political organization had taken over the 'principles of unionism', in the pledge and caucus, to maintain Party unity.

\footnote{191}{Note also the weakness of Black's organizational support, \textit{ibid.}, pp.189-90. However, the SDC did express sympathy for Black's defeat, \textit{Minutes}, 28 July 1898.}
\footnote{192}{SDC Report for Half Year, 30 June 1899; Sydney Labour Council Report for Half Year, 30 December 1900; Sydney Labour Council Minutes, 5 July 1900. Tinsmiths' ignored correspondence over the PLL Conference in 1899 (Tinsmiths' Minutes, 14 July and 20 October 1899), and whilst the Boot Trade Union sent delegates to PLL Conference, it opposed Labour Council affiliation (Boot Trade Union Minutes, 16 April, 14 May, and 25 June 1901). See also Buckley, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.146-7; Loveday, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.46-7.
CHAPTER 7

COLLECTIVISM FROM BELOW:

UNION DEMOCRACY, CO-OPERATION, AND MUNICIPAL POLITICS
Just as the extension of unionism in the 1880s relied on the consolidation of working communities, the initial success of Labor's rapid political organization in the 1890s rested largely upon more broadly based working class collectivism. The spread of unionism in the 1880s extended the democratic and organizational experience of the working class at the rank and file level. From the early 1890s, the mushrooming of local labour newspapers, the growth in worker co-operatives, and the development of municipal labour organization, further extended this experience, and indicated the consolidation of class organization and the heightening of class consciousness.

This chapter examines the nature and effect of these organizational propensities, and their relationship with the development of a centralized structure and leadership in the Labor Party.

**Trade Unions and Democratic Experience**

The political experience of trade unionism was, by nature, democratic, but it nevertheless varied between unions. A body of sociological literature, largely derived from Robert Michels, has been addressed to the nature of union democracy. Michels hypothesized an 'iron law of oligarchy', inherent in popular institutions, especially trade unions and mass political parties. According to this hypothesis, the need for specialized knowledge and skills in leadership, the

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advantages of incumbency for officials, and mass apathy amongst rank and file members, allow union leaderships a virtually entrenched position, despite democratic structures, and the larger the union, the stronger is the tendency towards bureaucratization. Under all these circumstances, institutional needs, with which the union leadership identifies itself, become policy determinants.\(^3\)

Historically, Michels' law is difficult to sustain. It has been characterized as the 'pathos of pessimism' by Gouldner:

...if oligarchical waves repeatedly wash away the bridges of democracy this...can happen only because men doggedly rebuild them after each inundation....There can not be an iron law of oligarchy unless there is an iron law of democracy.\(^4\)

Although Australian historians have rarely examined union government,\(^5\) trade unions in New South Wales at the turn of the century do not confirm Michels' law.

Trade union, especially craft union, rules reveal a remarkable concern for democratic procedure,\(^6\) similar to their British counterparts. These 'rituals of mutuality'\(^7\) were important in the development of the

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6. The union Rules consulted are too numerous to mention here, but are listed separately in the bibliography. The RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix contains a wide selection of union Rules. See also, Ebbels, op.cit., pp.76-80.

working class self-discipline necessary for effective political organization: commonly, doors had to be locked during meetings, a union 'box' was kept for official documents and monies, doorkeepers (or, sometimes, 'tilers') kept order, and 'proper' conduct and sobriety were emphasized, often under threat of fines or disentitlement to benefits. An entire language of mutuality was also associated with these procedures. In practice, of course, democratic procedures do not guarantee members' democratic participation in the affairs of any organization. But a perusal of craft union Minute Books reveals widespread and effective democratic practice, which justifies the depiction of craft unions as 'exclusive democracies'.

Democratic participation in craft unions was partly a function of their small, localized nature. None were inter-colonial bodies. Their members, who were relatively well educated, could, and were often expected to, attend regular general meetings where union policy was determined. Amongst printers the 'chapels' were strong centres of workplace organization, which pre-dated the union's formation. Outside Sydney, many skilled unions had branches in Newcastle, Broken Hill, and other provincial centres, virtually

8. See Markey, 'Trade Unions and the Language of Class'.
9. The following summary of craft union government in practice is primarily based upon the Minute Books listed in the Bibliography.
10. See Buckley, op.cit., p.94, re ASE members.
11. Bakers', for example, had formal roll calls, Minutes, 4 June 1892.
functioning as independent unions. Some had even more localized structures, within Sydney. For example, the ASE and Stonemasons' had separate Sydney and Balmain branches. In the Stonemasons' case, these functioned with a high degree of independence from the Central Committee, to the extent that in 1881, the Central Committee lapsed altogether because the Balmain Lodge refused to acknowledge its control over finances. The central control over finances, which was characteristic of British 'New Model Unionism', was not widespread amongst Australian craft unions. Even in the ASE, which consisted of branches of the British ASE, a classical new model union, a high level of branch independence existed, because the central leadership was so far away in Britain. The establishment of an Australasian Council in 1885 only partially altered this situation. Although, as with the Stonemasons', major decisions affecting the entire union's welfare (for example, strikes) required ratification by all branches, district committees were primarily responsible for working standards.

Union bureaucracies had generally not emerged by 1900. Elected officials were part-time. Even the TLC did not employ a full-time secretary until the late 1890s. The commitment required of officials, and their accumulated expertise, encouraged stability of leadership.

13. For example, the NSW Typographical Association, Rules and Scale of Charges, 1885, specifically gave country branches the option of operating independently or not, and even of retaining their own funds. Some indication of provincial organization may be gained from Appendix 2, although the list there is by no means complete.
14. Stonemasons' Central Committee Minutes, 6 January, 21 April, 9 May, and 10 June, 1881.
16. See Buckley, op.cit., pp.34-5, 39, and Chapter 7. The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners was also a branch of the British union. See Ebbels, op.cit., pp.79-82.
but it was not uncommon for leaderships to change. Union minutes also reveal the possibility of wide-ranging debate, and censure of officials. Consensus, arising from established traditions in the working community, rather than bureaucracy, was responsible for stability of leadership. Paradoxically, the weakness of an intermediate union strata of shop stewards, indicated the close contact between leadership and rank and file. Most unskilled urban unions functioned similarly to the crafts in these respects, for their membership was usually small and occupationally homogeneous, and their organizational procedure was modelled on that of the craft unions.

Michels' thesis might expect confirmation in the larger 'new unions'. However, size in itself did not generate bureaucracy. The Navvies' five urban branches, for example, operated with virtual autonomy. A closer examination of the other 'new unions' suggests not only that membership participation could be compatible with 'largeness', but more importantly, that union structure derived from the nature of the industry and workforce, rather than any 'iron law'.

The maritime community, with its concentration of labour and residence in the same vicinity, provided a strong basis for participatory democracy. Waterfront organization was localized, even within Sydney during the 1870s. The Newcastle Wharf Labourers' Union

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17. Note, for example, that Dixon, a leading TLC official, and Central Committee member of the Stonemasons' in the 1870s and 1880s, experienced frequent difficulty in maintaining his position because of strong opposition to him in the Sydney Lodge. Stonemasons' Central Committee Minutes, 29 September 1871, 4 October 1883. P.J. Brennan, then TLC Secretary, summarizes the state of trade union officialdom, at RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.88.
18. Some unskilled urban unions' rules are listed in the Bibliography. Many made submissions on rules to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix.
19. For example, they affiliated separately to the TLC.
20. With the existence of the Sydney Labouring Men's Association, and the West End (or Number Two) Labouring Men's Association.
functioned autonomously, and a degree of organizational specialization occurred on the Sydney wharves with the formation of two separate bodies, the small Coal Lumpers' and Balmain Labourers' Unions.\textsuperscript{21} Wharf Labourers' union headquarters were situated on the wharves, which made them readily accessible to members. Large attendances at meetings indicate a high level of rank and file participation in all the Sydney Wharf Labourers' major actions: notably, the 1878 and 1885 anti-Chinese campaigns, the 1889 campaign in support of the London dock strikers, the campaign for improved working conditions in 1890, the decision not to handle non-union wool, and in the Maritime Strike.\textsuperscript{22} Wharf labourers' officials were part-time, except occasionally for the Vigilance Officer (organizer) and the TLC's financing of a full-time Secretary for a time in the early 1890s, when the Union barely existed.\textsuperscript{23}

Seagoing unions quickly became inter-colonial bodies because of the nature of shipping. The Federated Seamen's Union became the first national union in 1876. Negotiations with shipowners could hardly

\textsuperscript{21} The Balmain Labourers' enrolled men in ship maintenance and repair. The Coal Lumpers' membership probably overlapped with the Wharf Labourers'. For an example of independent Newcastle Wharf Labourers' action, see Henning, \textit{op.cit.}, p.587. Coal Lumpers' and Newcastle Wharf Labourers' Rules are in \textit{RRCS}, 1891, Literary Appendix, pp.150-1. Note also the existence of a Newcastle Crane Employees' Union, on the wharves, \textit{ibid.}, p.137.


1890: SMH, 27 February, 20 March, 18 July, 13 September, 1890. Note also the regular 2,000 strong Wharf Labourers' contingent in Eight Hour Day processions, which represented at least 80 per cent of their membership. Norton, \textit{op.cit.}, p.74.

\textsuperscript{23} TLC Minutes, 18 August 1892; Wharf Labourers' 'Amended Rules', 1890, in \textit{RRCS}, 1891, Appendix to Evidence.
have been conducted on anything but an intercolonial basis, but the role of federal officials was limited, and federal union conferences were irregular. However, seamen had initially organized on a colonial basis and even after federation, the colonial bodies remained the basis of seamen's organization, with considerable scope for independent initiatives. For example, in 1878 and 1885, New South Wales seamen initiated major industrial action without federal consultation, although intercolonial support quickly followed.

Seamen's absence at sea reduced participatory opportunities in their union, and necessitated the appointment of a full-time Secretary earlier than most unions, from at least the mid-1890s. The Stewards' and Cooks' also had a full-time Secretary. However, his tenure was subject to the approval of each general meeting of the union.

Absence at sea, and consequent lack of contact with union headquarters, actually increased the importance of seamen's workplace representative, the ship delegate. Disputes were required to be referred to the union executive, but if unresolved, the executive had to refer them to a general meeting. Strikes at sea were, in any case, illegal under the

24. Since they were drawn from different colonies, federal officers would not often have been together. The Seamen's 1884 Conference specifically resolved that each colony have its own by-laws, SMH, 6 August 1884; NSW Seamen's Union Rules, 1884 (especially number 23). The Stewards' & Cooks' functioned similarly, Federated Stewards' & Cooks' Union of Australasia, NSW Branch, Rules, 1887. See Fitzpatrick & Cahill, op.cit., pp.8-9; and for examples of Intercolonial Conferences, Chapter 3.


26. Stewards' & Cooks' NSW Branch, Rules, 1887. Sam Smith was the Seamen's Secretary, and very active on the TLC from 1892, including a term as President from 1894-1900. He was also a Labor MP for Pyrmont from 1898, and Labor Party President in 1898.

27. The 1884 Conference specified delegates' duties, SMH, 30 July, and 6 August 1884. Chief Stewards acted as ship delegates for stewards and cooks, Stewards' & Cooks' NSW Branch, Rules, 1887. One employer, J. Burns, claimed that ship delegates had acquired virtual control of ships, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.130.
Merchant Shipping Act. But voyages were usually short, and a number of seamen were always land-bound between engagements, which enabled attendance at union meetings. A high level of rank and file participation characterized the Seamen's major industrial actions of 1878, 1885, 1890, and 1893.

Marine Engineers were more centralized in organization than other maritime unions. The union was small enough to allow a high degree of membership participation, but a high level of arrears in membership dues in the early 1880s indicates that this did not always occur. The Sydney branch operated as a strong federal headquarters for an Australasian body, with a full-time Secretary. Nevertheless, colonial branches were allowed some leeway for local conditions, they sometimes displayed independence from the centre in industrial action, and were sometimes slow to surrender funds to head office.

28. See Chapter 3 for the operation of this Act in industrial relations. For disputes procedure: Seamen's Rules, 1884 (no.24); Stewards' & Cooks' NSW Branch, Rules, 1887 (nos. 23 & 40).
1890: Fitzpatrick, 'History of Seamen's Union', Chapter 3, p.8, describes a meeting of 500 seamen which endorsed their executive's decision to strike.
1893: TLC Minutes, 6 and 20 July, 3 and 31 August 1893. Seamen's Rules, 1884, required compulsory attendance at general meetings of one or two delegates from each ship in berth.
30. Marine Engineers' Sydney District Minutes, 20 November 1882, 4 June 1883, 4 August 1884. The Marine Engineers' Minutes during 1881-4 show the high level of arrears.
31. Branches existed at Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and in New Zealand. Brisbane especially was allowed leeway for local conditions, Marine Engineers' Committee Minutes, 15 October 1884, 9 February 1885.
Melbourne was the branch most prone to independent industrial action, ibid., 29 January, 7 May, and 17 December 1883; 17 May 1884. Re slowness of branches to surrender funds to head office, for example, Marine Engineers' Minutes, 17 January 1884. Of course, as Chapter 5 shows, the initial organizational momentum was localized for marine engineers.
In the railways, the size and hierarchical organization of the workforce, the location of senior officers in Sydney, and the fact that Parliament was the men's ultimate master, fostered strong, central executives in the unions. The all-grades railway union's initial organizational drive, amongst metropolitan locomotive and traffic employees, spread outwards to the country. Sectional tensions between different grades in the workforce required a strong union centre to maintain unity. Schey could also become practically a full-time Secretary for the all-grades union after entering Parliament in 1887 (although, officially, a full time official was not appointed until 1902). Holman tended to confirm this tendency when he replaced Schey in 1892.32

However, sectionalism also produced countervailing tendencies to centralization, which facilitated membership participation in union affairs. Apart from the sectional unions which appeared in the 1880s and 1890s, the all-grades union spawned almost thirty regional branches.33 The separately organized Engine-drivers' Union was also highly regionalized. Strong regional branches were often slow to part with members' fees, and branch conflict with head office was not uncommon.34 The Engine-drivers' early part-time Secretaries found the time and energy necessary to exert effective central control beyond them. This

33. It had twenty-four branches in 1887. Apart from Sydney (1468 members), the major ones were: Newcastle (372), Goulburn (447), Harden (197?), Junee (206), Penrith (169), Eskbank (136), Bathurst (226), Dubbo (172), and Armidale (127). W. Schey, 'The NSW Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association', in Norton, op.cit., pp.111-2.
34. Engine-drivers' Branches generally paralleled those of the mass railway union. Others were established at Murrurundi, Singleton, and Picton, Engine-drivers' Committee Minutes, 27 August 1884, 26 July 1886. Penrith and Bathurst were very slow paying contributions, Engine-drivers' Minutes, 21 May 1884, 15 April 1889. Dissatisfaction with the central leadership was especially prevalent in 1889-90, ibid., 10 October 1889, 27 March 1890.
state of affairs was responsible for the appointment of a full-time official (Robert Hollis) as early as 1893.  

Despite similar conditions, and complaints, tramway drivers organized independently of the railway engine-drivers, although at about the same time. Amalgamation of the two was considered, but not acted upon. The tramway drivers' union actually collapsed in 1886, after internal conflict between the two shifts of drivers had virtually produced two unions. It reappeared in 1891, to amalgamate with the railway Engine-drivers' in March 1892, but it retained some independence as the Engine-drivers' Randwick Branch. Rivalries persisted even after its absorption into the Engine-drivers' Sydney Branch in 1902. 

The coalfields' workforce had strong centrifugal tendencies. Surface workers organized separately from the coal miners in a number of smaller unions, as we have seen. Coal miners' district unions were really federations of the pit lodges, which pre-dated them and were

35. See Docherty, op.cit., pp.19-20, 113. Hollis had been secretary since 1886. In 1884 an Annual Delegate Meeting decided that Sydney Branch and General officers should be separately elected, but both executives remained identical, Engine-drivers' Minutes, 20 March 1884. 

36. The Tramway Drivers', Firemen, and Cleaners' Association Minutes are deposited with ANU Archives as the Randwick Branch of the Locomotive Engine-drivers' Association. The Tramway Drivers' first recorded meeting was for 27 February 1883, but its business suggests an earlier existence. Grievances included hours (for example, Tramway Drivers' Minutes, 27 February 1883), wage cuts (ibid., and 11 March 1884), holiday entitlements (ibid., 11 March 1884) and promotion (ibid., 13 November 1885). 

37. ibid., 18 January, 20 August 1885; 3 September 1886. Attendance at meetings was very low throughout 1885-6, and the union was formally dissolved on 10 December 1886. Amalgamation proposals with Locomotive Engine-drivers': ibid., 9 September 1885, 5 March, and 25 June 1886. The Locomotive Engine-drivers' responses however, were not particularly friendly, Locomotive Engine-drivers' Minutes, 20 August 1886, 13 July 1887. 

38. Tramway Drivers' Minutes, 28 July, 1 October 1891; 10 February, 20 November, 6 December 1892; Locomotive Engine-drivers' Annual Delegate Minutes, 1892.
more tenacious at times of union decline. Although strikes had to be approved by district general meetings, and although the Hunter coal-miners had a full-time President by 1890, the union executive consisted of lodge delegates, lodges could call delegate meetings, and had their own officers, seals, and other regalia. Inseparable from the small pit community, the lodges epitomised participatory democracy (for the men at least). Attendance at meetings was a matter of course, and a majority of lodges was required to approve union executive initiatives. Familiarity with the great variety of pit conditions was impossible for union officers, such that within the broad district agreements over hewing rates, lodges retained a wide negotiating role over local variations. 39

Consequently, much of the history of mining unionism consists of a struggle between lodge and district hegemony. Under circumstances of under-employment, the lodge's interests might even be identified with the local employers', in breaking the Vend by price-cutting or over-production. Lambton men aroused great enmity in the late 1870s by co-operating with their employer in this way, albeit under the threat of a lock-out. They were expelled from the northern union. 40

As Vend-policeman, the union devoted much of its attention to its own constituents. But the unions' problem lay in disciplining recalcitrant lodges without losing them altogether, and compromising, without other

39. Hunter River Coal Miners' Mutual Protective Association, Rules, 1870; Illawarra Coal Miners' Mutual Protective Association, Rules, 1886; AMA No.2 Colonial District NSW - Hunter River, Rules, 1887; HRDDM Minutes, 11 July 1878, re pit agreements. Lodges held their own funds until they were centralized in the northern union in 1877, ibid., 5 July 1877.

40. Lambton Lodge was first suspended from union benefits, and then expelled, HRDDM Minutes, 21 January, 18 February, 7 March 1879; Minutes of Conference of Miners' Representatives, Hunter River District, 19 April and 3 May 1879. See Chapter 3 re the Vend; and Hagan & Fisher, op.cit., pp.36-8, for examples of similar disunity on the southern coalfields.
lodges leaving the union in disgust. New Lambton Lodge also blatantly breached the Vend, but moves to expel it were rejected, and the union went to extraordinary lengths to forgive past breaches, if only New Lambton would honour the Vend in the future. 41 Both lodge and union also needed to discipline the individualism implicit in miners' job control — in work allocation, and determination of work targets, hours and methods — which might interfere with others' work, as well as provide a source of militancy against managerial discipline. 42 Ultimately, the coal mining unions' strength and persistence derived from a community basis of disciplined participation.

Inter-community links, however, remained weak in the nineteenth century, despite periodic negotiations over unification of the district unions. Hunter miners played an important role in southern and western organization, and during strikes financial support often came from other districts. But in the short-term, southern miners benefitted from market losses suffered in the north, and from their employers' undercutting of northern prices. On at least one occasion southerners

41. HRDDM Minutes, 3, 15 and 26 July, 7, 18 and 19 August, 25 September, 11 November 1879. Waratah Lodge's allowable vend was increased at the same time that Lambton was expelled. Lambton men performed the most blatant and persistent breaches of the Vend, but a number of other lodges also broke ranks, Minutes of Conference of Miners' Representatives, 9 May 1878; HRDDM Minutes, 18 February 1879.

42. For example, note the $1 fine for taking another miner's tools, Lithgow Lodge Committee Minutes, 29 May 1886. Note also, censure of South Waratah Lodge for a private agreement on the hewing rate, and fines for working at less than the agreed rate, HRDDM Minutes, 4 January 1877, 3 January 1878. See Hagan and Fisher, op.cit., pp.23-4, 28-30, 36.
even "scabbed" in a northern strike. In this context, northern
miners' organizational efforts outside the Hunter were in their own
interests.

Not surprisingly, three years of negotiations were necessary
before coalminers joined metal miners in the Amalgamated Miners'
Association (as its Number Two Colonial District), beginning with the
northern men in late 1885. But even then, autonomy was retained in
industrial relations. The AMA structure, superimposed on a number of
local mining communities, was relatively loose, although strikes were
theoretically monitored centrally, and the large, central benefit fund
was intended to reinforce central supervision. New South Wales branches
especially enjoyed considerable independence from the Victorian
headquarters.

This applied equally to the large Broken Hill AMA, which, in its

43. See Hagan & Fisher, op.cit., p.36; and Ross, op.cit., pp.46-7, re
north/south conflict. Northern miners provided organizational
assistance to those in the south as early as 1874, HRDDM Minutes,
1 July 1874, 11 February 1875. The northern miners' Secretary's
visits to the south became more frequent as the Vend broke up in
the north, for example, ibid., 4 January 1877, 7 August 1879 (to
inform southern miners of the reasons for a South Waratah lock-out),
15 May 1880. Northern and western miners' relations were quite
fraternal, and the west relied on northern organizational aid to an extent: ibid., 4 September 1878; Vale of Clwydd Lodge Minutes,
21 and 26 August, 7 September, and 28 October 1878; 11, 19, 20
and 24 February, 1 and 10 March 1879. Western miners also aided the
north during strikes, ibid., 19 May 1880; Vale of Clwydd Lodge Committee
Minutes, 3 June 1880; Minutes of the General Meeting of Lithgow
Collieries, February 1886. Western and southern miners' relations
were also fraternal: Vale of Clwydd Lodge Minutes, January,
13 February, 12 and 23 March, and 27 September 1879; Vale of Clwydd
Lodge Committee Minutes, 7 October 1880.

44. Spence (who was still an AMA official then) referred to the "little
prejudices as between coal and gold", RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence,
pp.25-6. See Ross, op.cit., pp.50-1, 84, 95.

45. Spence at RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.25, 41; AMA NSW No.2
Colonial District, Rules, as submitted to ibid., Literary Appendix,
p.136. AMA Lewis Ponds (near Orange), By-Laws, 1890; AMA Wrightville
Branch, Rules, May 1900; AMA Hillgrove, Rules, 1905; AMA General
Rules, Ballarat, 1884.
desert isolation, functioned as an independent union. Unlike many of the Victorian AMA branches, it originally organized miners without the direct involvement of the professional intercolonial leadership. Stewards (one per twenty-five men) kept a popular local leadership in contact with a large membership. But whilst the Barrier AMA was one of the first New South Wales unions to develop a system of workplace representation, strike action required executive approval. Branch officials were also separated from the rank and file, in that, unlike most of them, officials were long-term rather than transitory residents at the Barrier. In fact, until 1889 they were often small local businessmen, as they were in AWU branches. The size and nature of the workforce, together with geographical isolation, membership of an intercolonial union, and a small number of large employers, fostered a full-time, relatively centralized leadership.

Superficially, the other paradigm of the 'new unionism', the ASU, confirms Michels' thesis. More than anything else, the ASU was distinguished from old unionism by its centralized, bureaucratic structure. No other union had anything like the ASU's expenditure (at least 50 per cent of income) on officials' salaries, office rent and equipment, even less, an investment in their own buildings to which

46. Barrier Branch of AMA of Broken Hill, Rules, 1903; Kennedy, op.cit., pp.30-3, 51-60, 68ff; Dale, op.cit., pp.9-10, 15, 24, 66-9 (re rank and file participation in the 1892 strike). The Broken Hill AMA became the No.3 Colonial District.
the AWU aspired in the late 1890s. Nor did any other union leader articulate such definite views on the importance of strong, central leadership, as W.G. Spence. These tendencies were not effectively countered by the somewhat legalistic elaboration of democratic procedure in AWU Rules.

The original organizational impetus amongst shearers had been localized, as shown by a number of short-lived efforts from 1868. But none of these achieved cohesion amongst a transitory workforce in which a working community was slow to develop. Even in 1886, despite the emergence of a wider shearing community by then, local groups were spontaneously organized in Bourke, the Young district, Condobolin, Moree and Wagga Wagga. Yet, within two seasons, all were absorbed into the

47. Of course, the AWU had a much larger income than most other unions. Head office and branches published fairly detailed annual accounts of income and expenditure in Annual Reports or Balance Sheets. In any one year, administrative expenditure was usually higher than 50 per cent, and anything up to 90 per cent, of total income. Strike expenditure in the exceptional circumstances of 1894 vastly inflated the total proportion of income spent on strikes in Spence's summary of expenditure to 1909, History of the AWU, p.119. Branch Secretaries received up to £300 p.a. salary, until the 1890s when this was halved. Spence received £250 p.a. in the 1890s, until 1897, when he became an honorary official (he entered Parliament in 1898). Re investment in buildings, note AWU Rules, 1901, 'Property' section. One branch 'owns a very fine Hall in Ballarat', and The Worker owned five storey premises in Bathurst Street, Sydney; Spence, History of the AWU, pp.117-8. Also AWU Young, 7th AR, 31 December 1894.

48. He frequently spoke of 'educating the rearguard of the people'; for example: ASU 6th AR, February 1892, Presidential Address, p.7; History of the AWU, p.120. Also in GLU 1st AR, February 1891, p.6. On the other hand, Spence also complained that the 'great fault of the working man' is his unwillingness to participate in union affairs, ASU 3rd AR, February 1889, Presidential Address, p.5.

49. ASU, Rules, 1887; AWU, Rules, 1894. These are bulky booklets. Numerous amended versions are referred to below.
The parallel with Spence's unification of the AMA in Victoria is striking. Spence, and his deputy, Temple's sheer energy and organizational skill fell on very fertile ground after changes in the industry and workforce. But the method of consolidation with professional organizers emanating from the centre, immediately cast a centralized mould for the union. The central executive was powerful, and effectively very small, for only the President and Secretary were full-time, and Vice-Presidents, usually branch officials, from all colonies, were only irregularly present at Head Office. This structure was confirmed, not by any 'iron law', but by the itinerant nature of the workforce, which could usually only be active union members for a maximum of four months in the year, the intercolonial spread of the industry, and the large number of employers.

A strong branch structure was also nurtured in the AWU by these factors, together with local variation in working conditions, and the removal of Head Office from the bulk of the membership, originally at Creswick (Victoria), and from 1894, in Sydney. By 1890, New South

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50. The Wagga and Bourke organizations amalgamated in January 1887 with a Ballarat (Victoria) body. Young and Moree were absorbed by 1888. All became branches of the ASU. Burrangong Argus, 22 May 1886; A Member (anonymous), 'History of the ASU', in Shearers' Record, 15 April 1890; ASU Wagga Branch submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.135; Spence, History of the AWU, pp.15-18; and at RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.27-8.

51. See Spence, History of the AWU, pp.16, 20-1, 26ff; Australia's Awakening, pp.47-9; General Meeting of ASU, Ballarat, 16 April 1887, Presidential Report, pp.3-4; and references in n.50. Head Office established further branches at Cobar (March 1887), Scone (March 1890), and Goulburn (1891).

52. The union's Rules cited in this section outline executive powers. The executive even had power to draft by-laws itself, ASU 3rd AR, February 1889, p.17.

53. The Head Office shift occurred without the plebiscite that some NSW branches desired, but was largely in response to pressure from them. NSW provided the bulk of AWU membership, and Wagga Branch felt that it should be the site for Head Office. AWU 9th AR, February 1895, pp.6-7; AWU 10th AR, February 1896, p.9.
Wales had seven of the ASU's eleven branches: Wagga Wagga, Bourke, Young, Moree, Scone, Cobar and Goulburn. They handled recruiting and employed their own organizers, whose influence sometimes extended well beyond branch boundaries. Within the limits of the ASU's constitution, they could initiate special projects, such as Wagga's production of its own newspaper, The Hummer, in 1891-2. In practice, branches sometimes varied policy to suit local conditions. Nor were branch leaderships completely identifiable with Head Office. Conflict frequently developed with Head Office, and between different branch leaderships.  

However, the branches themselves were centralized bureaucracies, operated in the absence of an itinerant membership by full time officials, whom Spence described as 'managers rather than mere clerks'. Conflict usually took the form of inter-branch rivalry, with Head Office joining some branches against others. A radical bloc of some consistency developed for a time between Bourke, Wagga and Cobar leaderships, and New South Wales branches, which accounted for the bulk of AWU membership, generally became more assertive in the 1890s, but alliances constantly shifted and Arthur Rae's (Wagga) bumptious ambition often seems to have been the root of conflict as much as anything else.

54. ASU and AWU Rules, for example, 1887 and 1894, outline branch powers and specify some special projects, such as co-operative enterprises and political organization. Note Wagga versus Young, and Wagga versus Head Office conflicts, with Temple defeating a Wagga candidate for Secretary, 18-4, ASU 6th AR, February 1892, pp.15-16. Toomey (Young Branch Secretary) initiated the 1891 AI-TU agreement with the Pastoralists' Union, conceding 'freedom of contract', which, the central executive claimed, undercut its bargaining position, ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.11, 15-16. Membership 'poaching' between branches often occurred. Note the wide range of Scone Branch organizers (AWU Scone 6th AR, 31 December 1895), and of Young Branch political organization (Chapter 6).

55. History of the AWU, p.121.

56. For example, Wagga's press project was attacked as unconstitutional by other branches at the 1892 Conference. Amidst tumultuous scenes and Wagga's threats of secession, Bourke strongly supported Wagga. ASU 6th AR, February 1892, pp.30-4, 39-48. See n.53 above. For an example of the insecurity of branch alliances, see reference to Percy (Cobar Secretary) and Temple (General Secretary) in n.61 below.
Wagga memberships actually characterized the two extremes of the union, the proletarianized shearer and the smallholder, despite their leaders' affinity.

Head Office also possessed ultimate authority in the union. Branches could not negotiate separate wage agreements, and special projects could incur Head Office displeasure, reinforced by branch jealousies. In 1893 the Cobar leadership was removed amidst charges of drunkenness, poor or fraudulent financial management, and lack of quorums at Branch meetings. Cobar had been one of Head Office's most trenchant critics, and many of the charges could have been laid against other branches. Head Office claimed membership support for a 'more central' location of branch headquarters at Coonamble, but this also removed it from the old leadership's supporters. 57

Stability of leadership characterized the union centre and branches. Close voting for executive positions indicated a constant internal division of interests, but the individual composition of leadership did

57. Report of Special Commission Appointed by Annual Conference held in Melbourne, February 1893, on the Financial Position and General Management of Cobar Branch ASU, 1893; ASU 8th AR, 1894, p.35. Expressions of local support for the deposed leadership were dismissed as cases of bribery. C. Poynton, South Australian Vice-President and a supporter of the central executive, became Coonamble President. The original decision for this action aroused little discussion, ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.62. Nor was it without warning. A similar motion had been withdrawn earlier, but Percy had been briefly removed because of discrepancies in branch accounts, ASU 3rd AR, February 1889, p.34; ASU Cobar AR, 31 January 1889, bound with ibid., p.84. Similar action had been threatened against Toomey (Young Branch) for negotiating separately with the Pastoralists' Union in 1894. Wagga supported the central executive in this case. AWU Young 7th AR, 31 December 1894; AWU Young Central Committee Minutes, 5 December 1894; letter from N. Nielsen, AWU Young secretary, to Spence, 14 December 1894 (AWU collection, ANU Archives); AWU 9th AR, February 1895, p.26. As a result of Toomey's action a specific rule was adopted to prevent branch negotiation of settlements of strikes, breach of which rendered a branch liable to Head Office takeover, ibid., p.10.
not affect the bureaucracy. Arthur Rae was quickly absorbed by the
centre in 1895, despite his independence of earlier years. Richard
Sleath's election to the executive in 1896 generated conflict with
Bourke Branch, but notwithstanding the militancy of his AMA days,
Sleath was also absorbed. Spence became a vice-regal authority in
the 1890s, remaining aloof from internal conflicts, and difficult to
challenge directly because of his status as 'founding father'.
Dissatisfaction with the AWU's conservative style, on the part of its
radical wing, was directed against Temple. He was forced to resign as
General Secretary in 1894, after the enactment of new rules prevented
officers from retaining their position indefinitely, and prevented dual
office at central and branch level, and in other unions. Temple was
Creswick, as well as federal, Secretary in the AWU, and still Secretary

58. Rae was President in 1895, and Secretary, 1898-9, unopposed, AWU
13th AR, February 1899, p.6. He had been beaten for the Presidency
in 1894 by T. Williams (Scone Branch, and MP), by 11-10 Conference
votes. ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.53. See Spence, History of
the AWU, pp.123-4, for a list of executive members in the 1880s and
1890s.
59. Sleath was President in 1896-7, and Labor MP from 1898. The conflict
with Bourke Branch had its origins in the Labor Party split of 1894.
Rae supported Bourke Branch. AWU 10th AR, February 1896, pp.5-7,
16-17, 27; AWU 11th AR, February 1897, pp.6-7; AWU Bourke AR,
31 December 1895, AWU Wagga AR, 31 December 1895, p.5. Sleath was
a popular figure in the AWU. In the voting for the 1896 President,
held in 1895, he easily defeated Rae, the incumbent, who had been
appointed by Conference, rather than vote of the membership. Voting
for the 1897 President, held in 1896, was closer partly because he
had three opponents. But Sleath managed to defeat the most
prominent of these, Temple, even in his own branch of Creswick.
However, Sleath polled poorly against Spence in 1897, and against
MacDonnell for Secretary in 1899. As Secretary of the only large
branch in the 1890s (Bourke), MacDonnell was assured of success.
AWU 12th AR, February 1898; AWU 14th AR, January 1900.
60. In 1895, when Nielsen (Young Branch Secretary) challenged Spence for
General Secretary, he could not even gain a majority in his own
branch, AWU 10th AR, February 1896. Spence was President 1886-93,
and 1898-1916, and General Secretary 1894-8. From 1895 the President
only had a casting vote at Conferences. Spence, History of the AWU,
of the AMA. \(^{61}\) Spence resigned from the AMA and simply replaced Temple as General Secretary.\(^{62}\)

Annual Conference, the AWU's ultimate policy-making body, was essentially a gathering of branch and central bureaucracies, despite democratic formalities. Delegates' numbers grew from six to thirty-four over 1887-91, but thereafter steadily declined to seven in 1898.\(^{63}\) The timing of Conference, immediately after the shearing season (January-February) allowed the leadership to assess and plan policy well in advance of the new season. Later policy modifications the executive felt necessary were usually ratified by subsequent conferences.

None of the rank and file's direct contacts with the bureaucracy amounted to participation in decision-making. Travelling organizers from Head Office and the branches represented the leadership going to

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\(^{61}\) ASU 4th AR, February 1890, pp.51-2; ASU 6th AR, February 1892, pp.35-6; ASU 7th AR, February 1893, p.24; ASU Wagga 7th AR, 31 December 1893, p.4; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, pp.4, 25-6; ASU 9th AR, February 1895, p.33. Temple was General Secretary 1886-93, and Treasurer, 1896, Spence, History of the AWU, pp.123-4. Temple was later forced to resign as Creswick Branch Secretary after an inquiry into its affairs, AWU 14th AR, January 1900, p.19. Much of the anti-Temple campaign was part of the NSW branches' assertion within the union, although it was not uniform, for even Percy (Cobar) defended Temple. Temple easily defeated W. Head (Bourke) for General Secretary, ASU 7th AR, February 1893, p.32.

\(^{62}\) Spence was eased out of his AMA position in the early 1890s, presumably because he was so pre-occupied with the ASU, but there were also ASU pressures over his dual office. He left an ASU Conference early for an AMA meeting on at least one occasion, ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.42. Some dissatisfaction was also expressed over his dual office, ASU Moree AR, 30 December 1894, p.4. Bourke Branch's motion, later withdrawn, to apply a new rule barring non-shearers from office to incumbent office holders, seems to have been directed against Spence, ASU 3rd AR, February 1889, p.33.

\(^{63}\) See Spence, History of the AWU, p.12; ASU Rules, 1887, and 1892. Fifteen union members constituted a general meeting, entitled to forward resolutions to Conference, but there was little use of this power. Bourke and Wagga Branch motions to exclude Branch Secretaries as Conference delegates, possibly directed against Temple, were unsuccessful, ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.37; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.35.
the rank and file. They were not part of a two-way process. In fact, only a small number of organizers were employed, so that contact with individual shearer's groups was brief. Financial shortages restricted organizing in the 1890s, and as the AWU became more closely involved with the Labor Party, organizers increasingly assumed a primary role of political evangelizing. Recruiting agents were necessary because organizers could not reach the entire workforce at the beginning of the season. Based in townships as shopkeepers, tradesmen or businessmen, the agents merely collected shearer's subscriptions as they passed through, in return for a commission. AWU Rules described the branch general meeting as 'the highest branch authority', but these were only held annually, and even then, itinerant shearers experienced difficulty in attendance. In 1888-9, the executive was concerned enough over lack of rank and file involvement in union affairs to introduce district vigilance committees, but quorums for these were difficult to achieve, their function was unclear, and so, they had little practical effect.

64. Spence blamed more restricted organizing work for falling membership, ASU Scone AR, 31 December 1892, p.2; ASU Moree AR, 30 December 1892, p.4. A renewed organizational effort began in 1897, AWU 11th AR, February 1897, p.7; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1897, pp.6-8; and AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1898, pp.6-8; AWU Bourke AR, 31 May 1900, pp.7-8; AWU Central Committee Minutes, June 1899-March 1901. For an idea of the distances covered by organizers, and the increasingly political nature of their work in the 1890s, see W.M. Hughes, Crusts and Crusades. Tales of Bygone Days, Sydney, 1947, pp.101-10. Rae covered 10,000 miles in 1895, AWU 10th AR, February 1896, p.13; also Spence, AWU 12th AR, February 1898, General Secretary's Report.

65. Agents normally received 10 per cent, or more in 'new country', of fees collected, but the union had trouble with some who absconded with all collections, ASU 4th AR, February 1890, p.50; ASU 7th AR, February 1893, p.23; AWU 10th AR, February 1896, pp.21-2, 24; AWU 11th AR, February 1897, pp.6, 17-18; AWU Rules, 1894, and 1901. Young and Wagga Branches unsuccessfully moved to abolish commissions, ASU 3rd AR, February 1889, p.35; ASU 4th AR, February 1890, pp.41, 53; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.48. Branch Reports usually list agents, their address, and occupation.

66. For example, AWU Young Central Committee Minutes, 5-6 December 1894; AWU Rules, 1895.

and file contact, but unless a dispute arose, his contact with the union was minimal. Even the published minutes of Annual Conference and branch general meetings were subject to executive editing.

Referendums were required for major policy decisions apart from industrial relations (political commitments, special projects, the level of subscriptions), but the leadership defined the parameters of the question and had the union's resources to present its case. Nor were the results always heeded. When the proposal for amalgamation with the General Labourers' Union was twice rejected (by a small majority), New South Wales branches, where it had gained a small affirmative majority, were allowed to proceed with amalgamation, which then spread to other colonies.

Referendums were also required for general strikes, such as those in 1890-1 and 1894, except that in 'extreme emergency' a two thirds majority of the Executive Council could call a strike. Referendums were never held for strikes. The time factor made them impractical for such a diversified membership.

Indeed, even the executive, composed of representatives from each colony, 68 ASU Rules, 1887; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.30. See Bean, op. cit., pp.85-8, for a glorification of the 'tribune of the people'. Shed representatives often received commissions too.

69. For example, ASU Young Central Committee Minutes, 5-6 December 1894. This was taken to the extreme in 1893, when only copies of resolutions, and voting, were published, ASU 7th AR, February 1893, p.6.

70. Spence justified the amalgamation on the grounds that most GLU members were in NSW where the majority of ASU members favoured it, and that the small Victorian vote, in the only two branches to oppose it, was unrepresentative. But the small NSW affirmative majority was well short of the required two-thirds majority, even for that colony, and in the second plebiscite the NSW affirmative majority actually fell. Only Bourke Branch had a large affirmative majority. ASU 7th AR, February 1893, p.30; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, pp.31-2, 39-41; ASU 9th AR, February 1895, p.6; ASU Bourke AR, 31 December 1894, pp.1-2; Spence, History of the AWU, p.63. Referendums reveal a fairly consistent pattern on issues such as this. Note complaint that the 'plebiscite idea...[is]...done to death', AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1895, p.9.
was too unwieldy for strict adherence to this rule. In the heady circumstances of 1890, Spence alone called the shearers out, on instructions from the Intercolonial Conference of Unions.  

During the 1890s the AWU became more highly centralized. General election of officers was suspended in 1894, 1895 and 1898 after only being introduced in 1892, in favour of appointment by Conference. By the late 1890s New South Wales had only two and a half branches: Bourke, Central (Orange) and Victoria-Riverina. Together with the need to reduce costs under the stringent circumstances of the depression, this accounted for the greatly reduced number of Conference delegates, which the leadership tortuously justified as more democratic. Head Office simultaneously expanded.

The AWU warrants this detailed attention because it provides such a great contrast with previous unionism, and because it had such a significant impact on labour organization from the 1890s. It is on this structural level more than anything else that Australian 'new unionism', as represented by the AWU, and to a lesser extent, the AMA, could be distinguished from older forms. Its significance lay in the

72. ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.25; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.53; AWU 9th AR, February 1895, p.26; AWU 12th AR, February 1898, p.10. The 1894 strike and amalgamation with the GLU made full-scale plebiscites difficult, although these are insufficient explanation for the lack of an election in 1893, for 1894 officers. Other plebiscites, over policy matters, were held in that year.
fact that it was the AWU form of organization which was the more important from the turn of the century; because of its role in the Labor Party, because of the decimation of the unionism which had been built on a high level of membership participation, and, from 1901, because of the impact of the arbitration system on union structure and modus operandi. From the late 1890s it was a centralized form of working class industrial organization which was absorbed into the Labor Party. This structural form also became more common in all unions, partly because compulsory state arbitration largely removed the union rank and file from direct involvement in the bargaining process, and channelled industrial issues through a more centralized, bureaucratic form of dispute resolution.

An examination of the other aspects of working class community organization reveals a similar trend of extension, of participative industrial and political practices, followed by decline. Union democratic experience was an important basis for these other forms of organization, co-operation and local political organization.

Co-operation

'Co-operation' was a vague term. Although commonly referred to amongst unionists, it had a variety of meanings, ranging from the replacement of capitalist relations of production, to schemes for 'industrial partnership', involving profit-sharing by employees, or even just amicable industrial relations.74 Prior to the 1890s the latter meanings were more common amongst unionists, although as early as 1861, as the result of a strike, Hunter River coalminers established a co-operative colliery which struggled on for seven years.75

At the 1891 Strikes Commission a number of unionists displayed the ambiguity inherent in the usage of the term 'co-operation'. Garton, a bootmaker who had organized a short-lived bootmaking co-operative twenty years earlier, believed that co-operation would help workers to understand more about business, and hence, be able to sympathize with employers. This view was similar to that of some progressive employers who supported co-operation. Brennan, of the TLC, defined co-operation as the elimination of the extraction of the 'profit of work' from employees, but he also spoke of a 'due allowance of profit' for capital. McKillop, of the Wharf Labourers', considered that co-operation would benefit both employer and employee because of the elimination of the 'middleman', and even described piecework as a form of co-operation. Possibly because of this ambiguity, a radical unionist such as Grant, of the Stonemasons', condemned co-operation as the 'solution of superficial thinkers'. Another unionist described co-operation as the means by which 'workmen become little masters themselves and oppressed labourers nearly as much as capitalists'.

Nevertheless, during the 1890s unionists' interpretation of co-operation shifted away from 'industrial partnership'. Despite the ambiguity of some unionists at the Strikes Commission, this was already

76. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.256-7.
77. For example, Andrew Garran, a director of Newcastle Wallsend Coal Company, quoted in R.B. Walker, 'The Ambiguous Experiment: Agricultural Co-operatives in New South Wales, 1893-96', Labour History, no.18, May 1970, p.28. Less progressive employers, however, maintained that if men were honestly paid, they were not entitled to profits; for example, P. Dow, President of Master Builders' Association, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.226.
78. ibid., p.96.
79. ibid., pp.9-11.
80. Although he was also influenced by orthodox Single Taxism. ibid., p.246.
81. Proceedings of the Fifth Intercolonial Trades Union Congress, Brisbane, 1888, p.90.
evident in the views of a number of other union witnesses, such as W. Gillespie (Plasterers'), H. Wilkinson (Carpenters') and T. Bavister (Bricklayers'). They spoke in favour of co-operation as a means of replacing employers. Gillespie had already been involved in a co-operative brick making enterprise. 82 This shift in emphasis coincided with a heightening of union interest in the notion of co-operation.

The change in attitude which this represented was quite marked in some cases. For example, early in 1890 the Tinsmiths' ignored approaches from the Federal Co-operative Association, an organization of middle-class reformers and some unionists, which sought to promote the co-operative principle in production and land settlement. A few months later, at a large general meeting of the Tinsmiths', three members of the union's executive, who had established a co-operative venture, were called upon to resign under a rule forbidding business activities. But the three survived, and a motion declaring that co-operatives were against the spirit of the society was narrowly defeated. Later that year, the Tinsmiths' actually expressed support for a co-operative store scheme proposed by J.D. Fitzgerald, who became a Labor MP soon afterwards. 83 Similar changes in attitude occurred amongst the Bakers'. In 1891 one member's scheme for the establishment of co-operative bakeries was rejected by a vote of two to one. However, after six months' persistence, this member was successful in persuading the union to establish a committee to examine his proposal. 84

82. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.219, 264, 280.
83. Tinsmiths' Minutes, 10 January, 24 April, 18 August 1890. For the Federal Co-operative Association, see Walker, op.cit., and n.104 below.
84. Bakers' Minutes, 20 May, and 4 August 1891, 30 January 1892.
The residual suspicion towards co-operation which these examples illustrate, reflected the continued ambiguity of the concept of co-operation. In fact, during the 1890s the term embraced three distinct forms of social experimentation: worker-owned productive enterprise, co-operative land settlement, and the organization of workers as consumers, through co-operative stores. The AWU's interest in co-operative land settlement was a special case, which is examined in a different context in Chapter 11. But co-operative land settlement was clearly subsidiary to other co-operative interests for most unions, even though the TLC supported Schey's scheme and the Pitt Town settlement which eventually grew out of it. 85 Co-operative land settlement was also the most ambiguous form of co-operation in terms of the social relations which it engendered, for the dividing line between it and small farming became very blurred in the 1890s, as we shall see in Chapter 11. Co-operative stores were less ambiguous in this sense, perhaps. Apart from the Tinsmiths', only the Coalminers', the Stonemasons' 86 and a section of the AWU favoured the concept. The AWU's 1894 Conference rejected Bourke and Wagga Branches' proposal for establishment of co-operative stores, on the grounds that they were not a practical concern for shearers. 87 Co-operative stores seem only to have taken strong hold in areas such as the coalfields, 88 where working class organization had a particularly strong community basis, and where the

85. TLC Minutes, 27 August 1891 (re Schey's proposed Esperanza Co-operative Settlement). See Chapter 11 re Pitt Town.
86. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 14 October 1890 (Fitzgerald's scheme).
87. ASU Wagga 7th AR, 31 December 1893, p.5; ASU Bourke AR, 31 December 1893, p.2; GLU Bourke AR, 31 December 1893, pp.2-3; ASU 8th AR, February '89, pp.23-5, 42-3, 51. A plebiscite of Bourke ASU and GLU members showed very strong support for co-operative stores.
working community was large and homogeneous enough for co-operative stores to be self supporting.

Workers' co-operative enterprises represented the least ambiguous of all forms of co-operation, in that they sought to replace capitalist relations of production, at the workplace level. The clearest indication of this is in the large number of co-operative ventures which grew out of strikes in the 1890s. 89 During the 1890 strike wharf labourers unloaded three ships 'on the co-operative basis', with such good results that the men received 3d. more per hour, and the shipowner still made 'a handsome profit'. Inspired by this success, McKillop proposed that the union could operate as a co-operative company, with elected overseers. When the wharves were idle, the men could manufacture sails and perform repair work. In this way it was hoped to eliminate unemployment on the wharves. McKillop claimed that most of the men favoured the scheme, and the union established a committee to plan for the introduction of the scheme. 90 Over 1891-2 the TLC aided the Female Employees' Union in establishing a co-operative laundry, as the result of a strike in a Pyrmont laundry. 91 In 1892 the Coopers' operated a co-operative cooperage during a strike, and afterwards considered the purchase of land to continue it. 92 A Bakers' co-operative arose out of an 1893 strike, 93 and during a strike from mid-1893 to mid-1894 the Boot Trade Union received financial donations from other unions to aid in the establishment of a co-operative factory. 94 In 1894-5 the

89. Bavister noted this trend even in 1891, RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.219.
90. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.9-10 (McKillop), 96 (Brennan).
91. TLC Minutes, September 1891 - February 1892.
92. Coopers' Minutes, 16 December 1892, 8 February 1895.
93. TLC Minutes, 20 April, 4 and 25 May, 1893.
94. ibid., 9 March, 27 July, 7 December 1893, 17 and 31 May 1894; Worker, 28 November 1894.
the AWU supported co-operative laundries in Bourke and Newtown, arising out of laundry women's strikes. In 1897 the Tailors' also established a Co-operative Tailoring Company in Bathurst Street, Sydney, as a result of a strike. A more overtly political motivation for co-operation was evident in the Broken Hill unions' establishment of a co-operative newspaper in 1893.

Workers' enterprises were also the most common form of co-operation in the 1890s. Quite independently of strikes, a number of unions experimented in this direction from the beginning of the decade. For example, in 1890 quarrymen leased the Bombo quarries from the railways, to operate themselves. Despite Grant's comments at the Strikes Commission, the Stonemasons' favoured workers' co-operative ventures. Early in 1890 they sent delegates to a 'Co-operation Australia' Conference. In 1891 the Stonemasons' recommended that the TLC formulate a scheme of co-operation amongst the various branches of the Building Trades with the object of forming an Associated Building Trades Co-operative Society to take contracts in all branches of the Trades and all construction works that it may be expedient to tender for in the interests of the associated trades. The whole of the profits to be distributed in the True Co-operative Principle.

In 1892, after this proposal came to nothing on the TLC, the Stonemasons', apparently unsuccessfully, submitted a tender as a co-operative company to the Mayor for the construction of the new Sydney markets. Yet, they were hostile to the notion of co-operation as a form of industrial relations. Commenting on a Conference of Settlements of Labour Disputes they declared that

95. GLU 5th AR, February 1894, p.5; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1894, p.5; and 31 December 1895, p.6.
96. AW, 15 May 1897; The Co-operator, 22 October 1897.
97. TLC Minutes, 23 February 1893.
98. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.10 (McKillop).
while the Stonemasons' Society fully recognise and deplore the extreme and increasing difficulty of obtaining leave to produce wealth, we are nevertheless of the opinion that co-operation on the lines indicated is not only impracticable and even if put into operation would absolutely fail to permanently better the condition of the worker and under the circumstances we must respectfully decline to take part in the proposed Conference.\textsuperscript{99}

The union momentum for co-operative ventures was obviously a response to unemployment,\textsuperscript{100} but the momentum persisted even after the worst years of the depression, in 1892-4. In 1895 the Furniture Trades Union considered establishing a co-operative for unemployed members to tender for Government contracts for railway carriages.\textsuperscript{101} At about this time a co-operative saddlery functioned at Goulburn.\textsuperscript{102} Even the Tinsmiths', who had been hostile to the idea, were only prevented by lack of capital from establishing their own co-operative works in 1898.\textsuperscript{103}

The TLC generally supported co-operative enterprises, despite its failure to act on the Stonemasons' proposal. In 1891 it was approached to take control of a coal deposit at Penrith, owned by the Federal Co-operative Association. The TLC supported the proposal in principle, although by no means unanimously. But the method of finance became an obstacle. Some delegates preferred to use union funds, rather than the proposed issue of shares, for capital.\textsuperscript{104} This was an important issue, central to the nature of co-operation, but in the financial

\textsuperscript{99} Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 17 March 1890, 31 August 1891, 4 April 1892, 27 February 1893. Their (unsuccessful) deputation to the Government, seeking a 5,000 acre land grant at Randwick, seems also to have been connected with a co-operative building scheme, ibid., 26 October 1891.

\textsuperscript{100} SDC Secretary's Report for half year ending 30 June 1895, explicitly acknowledges this motivation. Also ASU Wagga 7th AR, 31 December 1893, p.5.

\textsuperscript{101} AW, 23 March 1895.

\textsuperscript{102} Walker, \textit{op.cit.}, p.27.

\textsuperscript{103} Tinsmiths' Minutes, 8 July, 1 August 1898.

\textsuperscript{104} TLC Minutes, 12 January, 9 February, and 16 April 1891.
circumstances in which the TLC found itself in the early 1890s, the issue could not be resolved satisfactorily. Nevertheless, in 1893 the TLC supported the Fellmongers' approach to the Government for grant of a site to establish a co-operative wool scouring works. In doing so, the TLC considered that the old method of redressing grievances by means of 'strikes' was exhausted and that attention would have to be directed in future to the establishment of co-operative works.\textsuperscript{105}

In 1895 the TLC (now SDC) embarked on a more widespread venture when it formed the Co-operative Federal Association to tender for Government contract work.\textsuperscript{106} At one stage the Association offered tenders for £6,000 worth of contracts. On the biggest, successful tender, for construction of a storm water channel in Newcastle, it expected to make £200 profit, and to employ nineteen men at £2/2/- per week, for up to five months. The Seamen, Coach and Car Builders', Bookbinders', United Labourers', and Tinsmiths' voted funds to commence the work. However, through no fault of the SDC's, this contract collapsed when the AA Company refused to allow the Government to resume the necessary land.\textsuperscript{107}

Little more success attended the AWU's attempts to co-operatively tender for Government contracts. After the GLU's establishment of a 'Commonweal Company' in 1891, which attempted to organize co-operative irrigation schemes, the ASU's 1892 Conference decided to conduct a plebiscite regarding commencement of co-operative works. The plebiscite

\textsuperscript{105} ibid., 13 April 1893.
\textsuperscript{106} SDC Minutes, 20 June, 26 September 1895.
\textsuperscript{107} ibid., 15 and 22 October, 7 and 21 November, 9 December 1895; 13 January 1895; SDC Secretary's Report, for half year ending 30 June 1895. It had considered tendering for the Narrabri-Moree railway contract before realising the job was beyond its resources. SDC Minutes, 23 May 1895.
favoured the proposal, although mainly on New South Wales votes, and even there, Wagga and Goulburn Branches opposed it by small majorities. Bourke, the largest branch, also had the largest affirmative majority, which may have reflected its full-time itinerant membership, who were likely to have suffered most from unemployment. Each branch was to establish a Works Committee, with district sub-committees to supervise contracts for fencing, well-sinking, railway construction and other labour-intensive rural work. Men employed on such works elected their own overseer. 108

But only Wagga Branch availed itself of these opportunities. It sought a number of Government contracts for roadwork in the Monaro district in 1893, of which one was received, and in 1894 it gained three Government contracts. Otherwise, only the GLU worked on some small Government contracts during 1893-4. None were a success, and all were very small-scale. ASU Wagga blamed bad weather, 'excessive competition', and a lack of experience for a loss in 1893, and floods for further losses in 1894. The GLU blamed lack of co-operation on the part of Government officers and the long distances involved, for its limited success. 109 By the end of 1895 Wagga Branch still believed 'that in the vigorous extension of this principle [co-operation] in every direction lies the chief hope of the Labor movement', but a shortage of funds prevented it from persisting with co-operative works. 110

108. GLU 1st AR, February 1891, p.21; ASU 6th AR, February 1892, pp.19-22; ASU 7th AR, February 1893, pp.19, 33-4; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.8; ASU Wagga 6th AR, 22 January 1893; AWU Rules, 1894, contain an elaborate 'Co-operative Section'.
110. AWU Wagga AR, 31 December 1895, p.5.
The failure of the AWU's and SDC's efforts in this direction was a typical experience for co-operation in the 1890s. Most of the examples referred to earlier were shortlived, and on such a small scale that they could not be seriously regarded as an alternative to capitalism. Although the circumstances of the depression provided a major incentive, they were not propitious for the success of co-operative ventures, especially those based on unions, for the unions themselves hardly survived the depression. For example, McKillop's scheme with the wharf labourers was stillborn because of the rapid decline of the Wharf Labourers' Union after the 1890 strike. The TLC and AWU attempts at tendering for Government contracts were doomed to failure at a time when public works were so drastically reduced, and hence tenders became so competitive.

Lack of capital was a major problem. Finance lay at the root of the conflict between the TLC and the Female Employees' Union over control of their joint laundry. Especially at a time when it suffered acute financial embarrassment, the TLC desired ultimate control over its investment, which the FEU resisted. The only SDC public works tender which proceeded was for a small job in Balmain, which only employed four men. It was a financial failure and ended in conflict between affiliates over repayment of funds invested.

111. TLC Minutes, 29 December 1891, 28 January, 4 and 25 February, 3 March 1892. These minutes also show that the laundry had been poorly managed by the FEU, and that in the TLC the FEU was subject to male prejudice to some extent, as implied by W. Nicol, 'Women and the Trade Union Movement in NSW, 1890-1900', Labour History, no.36, May 1979, pp.25-7. However, Nicol seems unaware of the TLC's extreme touchiness over financial affairs at this time, because of its near bankruptcy, arising from expenses connected with the Workman, particularly a libel case. The Workman was sold in July,1891. TLC Minutes, 28 April, 9 June, 2 and 30 July, 11 August 1891; AW, 13 August 1891. For the general comments on co-operative ventures' weaknesses, refer notes above.

112. TLC Minutes, 13 and 30 January, 21 May, 18 June, 20 August, 5 November 1896.
such as this was no doubt influential in the SDC's reversal of its original decision to be represented at a Social Co-operative Congress in late 1895, despite pleas from Spence. The wide range of interests at the Congress, from agriculture and mining, to technical education, may have been a factor in the SDC's decision. But after 1895, disillusionment, coupled with the struggle merely to survive, dampened any further SDC interest in co-operative schemes.

It is significant that the strongest momentum for co-operative ventures occurred amongst urban, especially craft, unions. Craft industry was more susceptible to re-organization on a small-scale co-operative basis, and required little capital to do so. Yet, craft co-operatives were no more successful in overcoming organizational problems during the depression than any other. The productive re-organization which occurred in many crafts from the mid-1880s undercut the competitiveness of co-operative ventures based on traditional craft lines. In this sense, the momentum towards co-operative ventures amongst some craft unions represented an attempt to preserve traditional craft organization of industry.

Nevertheless, the co-operative tendency amongst unions in the 1890s confirms the democratic and collectivist nature of working class organization, and the heightened class consciousness of that period. Co-operation was collectivist because it sought to replace capitalist relations of production, albeit at a limited, local level. It was democratic because it was usually based on small-scale participative union structures. It is not surprising therefore, that the urban craft unions most commonly established co-operative works, for they had the

113. ibid., 26 September, 7 November, 5 December 1895.
114. For example, the Boot Trade Union's organizational problems, see n.94 above.
greatest experience of participative democracy, as well as an
experience of limited job-control in their work. But even the TLC and
AWU ventures maximised job-control by those employed. As a more political
response to capitalism emerged in the 1890s, it was also characterised
by democratic and collectivist tendencies at a local level.

Municipal Labor Organization

The greatest confirmation of the emergence of the Labor Party as
class mobilization, and the greatest opportunity for Labour's democratic
ideals to receive confirmation, came with Labour's widespread
spontaneous political organization at a local level from 1890.
Chapter 6 has already outlined one dimension of this excitement of
organization, and its implications. But it can also be seen in the
momentum towards municipal politics.

At the outset, municipal organization was conceived of as an
integral part of Labour's efforts to establish a working class political
party. At the Strikes Commission, Grant (Stonemasons') stressed the
need for municipal as well as Parliamentary political organization in
his blueprint for working class mobilization.\textsuperscript{115} The TLC's 1891 Platform
included planks for the extension of local government, and an adult
municipal suffrage.\textsuperscript{116} During the Maritime Strike Colebrook, from the
TLC executive, was elected as a Leichhardt alderman, and from early in
1891 a number of labour candidates stood in local elections, including,
in November, those for the Sydney City Council.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{115} RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.246.
\textsuperscript{116} TLC Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 3 April 1891.
\textsuperscript{117} Colebrook was elected to an extraordinary vacancy in West Ward,
TLC Minutes, 4 September 1890; NSW Government Gazette (hereafter
Gazette), September 1890, p.6936. There was talk of Labour
contesting all City Council wards, but in the event, only Cook
and Gipps were contested. SMH, 7 November 1891.
Labor's local organization in 1891 moved the SMH to claim that the municipal franchise was property's right alone, that local government should function only to raise revenue for local improvement, and that workers were a class 'which although the most numerous, relatively contributes least to the municipal revenue'. The Workman, which exhorted workers to organize locally in early 1891, replied that workers paid local taxes through rent, and on democratic grounds deserved a voice in framing local by-laws to which they were subject. Municipal administration was a 'swindle' allowing a

small propertied class...to extort as much rent out of their unfortunate tenants as they can. We trust that the Labor question will be introduced into the municipal administration for its reform is as much a part of the Labor movement as any other [sic].

A specific Municipal Labour Platform was 'discussed at many meetings of Leagues' in 1891. One such Platform included:

- local electoral reform;
- elective mayors;
- referendum;
- abolition of contracts;
- protection of labour standards;
- raising of revenue from a tax on the unimproved value of land and usage assessment of utilities;
- establishment of district banks;
- Council control of land use;
- provision of public libraries and other facilities, such as theatres;
- establishment of local Labour Bureaux.

118. SMH, quoted in AW, 17 October 1891. Also AW, 24 January 1891.
119. Roydhouse and Taperell, op.cit., pp.114-6; AW, 19 September 1891 (Newtown); SMH, 28 November 1891 (Rockdale).
This ambitious programme indicates the basis of Labour's interest in municipal politics. First, plural voting and a property-holders' franchise were obvious targets for democratic reform, which was necessary if Labour was to be politically effective at this level. Secondly, municipal works were of vital interest to the unions, which were attempting to gain Governmental recognition of standard wages. Their campaign for union rates in Government contracting was equally directed towards municipal councils, with some early successes, although gains were insecure, for municipal finance was especially hard-pressed in the 1890s. Thirdly, state socialists saw great potential in municipal utilities. The Socialist League's 1890 Platform included 'municipal control of gas and similar works and municipal construction of dwellings', and Labor's 1891 local government plank indicated democratic socialist, as well as union, influence: 'expansion of the Government as employer through the medium of local self-governing bodies'. Socialist influence at the Labor Conferences

120. Only ratepayers, i.e. in practice, property-owners, could vote in council elections. They had from one to four votes, depending on the rateable value of their property, and votes in each ward in which property was held. See F.A. Larcombe, The Stabilization of Local Government in NSW, 1858-1906. A History of Local Government in NSW, vol.2, Sydney, 1976, pp.29, 39, 158; Austin, op.cit., pp.29, 33.

121. H. Wilkinson (Carpenters') noted the success of the London building trades' deputations to the London County Council in preventing the subletting of contracts. He argued that similar success could be gained in NSW if Labour was represented on Councils. RRCS, 1891, Precis cf Evidence, p.279. The 1892 Labor Platform included a plank for standard wages in all Government and municipal contracts (my emphasis), Ebbels, op.cit., p.216. In 1892 the Quarrymen were also disturbed that the Sydney City Council used imported stone for paving, when they were suffering unemployment. In 1894 the Council decided to abolish sub-contracting for its contracts, and to pay union wage rates, but quickly rescinded the decision. It did, however, decide to employ day labour on the new markets site, after union pressure. TLC Minutes, 14 April 1892; 8 February, 15 March, and 12 April 1894. See Chapters 4 and 9 for the general question of contract work in Government works programmes.
of 1895 and 1896 led to a plank for councils to 'establish and
directly conduct any industry or institution they may deem advisable',
including railways. 122 Fourthly, for single taxers, local government
was important because its income was derived from property-owners, and
directly affected rent. Labour's 1891 local government plank also
advocated a tax on the unimproved value of land. 123 Fifthly, councils
controlled access to halls and meeting places which unions had often
encountered difficulty in gaining use of for political meetings. 124

Local government could also be an important political base. Local
politicians frequently campaigned on labour platforms in working class
electorates. Local politicians and unions often perceived mutual
advantage in courting each others' affections. For example,
intercolonial Wharf Labourers' delegates in 1890 were received at a
mayoral reception in Sydney, 125 and the AWU made a point of inviting
local politicians to its Annual Conferences. 126 Held in a different
town each year, these Conferences represented an extended goodwill tour

122. AW, 1 February 1896. 1891: TLC Parliamentary Committee Minutes,
3 April 1891. ASL 1890: AW, 18 October 1890. 1895: SMH,
29 January 1895. Note also that the ASL's 1896 Platform included
'direct employment of day labour on all State and Municipal works'
and 'democratic local government', Ford, op.cit., p.298. See
Chapter 9 for the influence of the socialists in this area,
123. TLC Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 3 April 1891. See Chapter 11,
for influence of single taxers on Labour.
124. The 'labour candidate' in the 1892 Sydney City Council elections
included permission for night meetings on Council premises in
his policy. SMH, 1 December 1892.
125. Mitchell, op.cit., p.32.
126. For example, in 1890, when delegates made a point of thanking the
Mayor of Bourke for his 'courtesy and kind attention', ASU 4th AR,
February 1890, p.54; and in 1895, when the Mayor of Albury
officially received delegates, AWU 9th AR, February 1895, p.32.
Note also that in 1898, when the AWU despatched organizers
throughout the country, only one mayor did not take the chair for
public meetings at Narrabri, Moree, Glen Innes, Walcha, Tamworth,
and Gunnedah, AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1898, p.7.
of the countryside by the AWU, no doubt aiding its political organization for Labor in the 1890s. About one quarter of Labor's 1891 MP's had been prominent in local politics, as Table I shows. Most of these were non-unionists, and about two-thirds from rural areas, suggesting the importance of a municipal base in the absence of a union base.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.M. Clark</td>
<td>St. Leonards</td>
<td>Alderman &amp; Mayor, North Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Donnelly</td>
<td>Carcoar</td>
<td>Mayor, Cowra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Edden</td>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>twice Mayor, Adamstown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Hutchinson</td>
<td>Forbes</td>
<td>five times Mayor, Forbes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Kirkpatrick</td>
<td>Gunnedah</td>
<td>Alderman, Gunnedah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Newton</td>
<td>Balranald</td>
<td>Alderman &amp; Mayor, Hay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Scott</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Alderman &amp; Mayor, Carrington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Sheldon</td>
<td>Namoi</td>
<td>&quot;he had taken a prominent part in local affairs&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Williams</td>
<td>Upper Hunter</td>
<td>Alderman, Scone (ASU)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: Compiled from the biographies of the 1891 Labor Party members of Parliament, in Roydhouse & Taperell, op.cit.

In Sydney municipal labour candidates were fielded throughout the 1890s in the inner city or new working class suburbs on the rail line. The term "labour candidate" embraced three types: LEL candidates, union candidates, and independents. The informality of spontaneous local organization often blurred these distinctions, particularly between the first two categories, for some unions dominated local LEL's in the early 1890s, for example, the Navvies' in North Sydney. Local union organization clearly provided a basis for much of this municipal organization, which occurred in areas of union strength. Petersham LEL stood council candidates in 1892, unsuccessfully, but by 1895 had one alderman. Newtown-Erskineville, St. Leonards, and Rockdale LEL's supported
candidates in 1892, the latter in every ward. In 1893 P.J. Brennan (Butchers' Union and TLC) and three other labour candidates were soundly beaten in Rockdale, but it is unclear whether they had official LEL support, as it is with two successful labour candidates in MacDonaldtown. Two Waterloo LEL officials became aldermen in 1893. Even at Waverley, an 1893 candidate promised abolition of municipal contracting, but it is likely that he was an independent. A number of labour candidates stood in 1894, including one from Botany LEL. In 1896 Annandale LEL supported two candidates. From 1898 reports of Labor moving into municipal politics are more common.

Clear-cut union candidates were less common, and declined after 1892. In 1891 Richard Grills, TLC delegate for the Ironworkers' Assistants', contested south ward in Alexandria, and George Waite, the local Navvies' President, ran for North Sydney Council. John Brown, an official of the ASE, also sought re-election in Hurstville, and in 1894 a prominent Balmain ASE member stood for the local council, although union policy probably denied both official support.

127. SMH, 16 January 1892; 8 February 1895; Australian Star, 11 January 1892; AW, 13 August 1892. Aldermen held office for three years, but one third (i.e. one from each ward) retired by rotation annually, Larcombe, op.cit., pp.29, 158. General municipal elections were normally held in February. Sydney City Council elections were held on 1 December. However, there was a large number of extraordinary elections to fill casual vacancies.
128. SMH, 4 and 13 February 1893. The successful MacDonaldtown candidates were W. Barlow and W. Melvin.
129. Ibid., 5 January 1894.
130. Ibid., 30 January 1893.
131. Ibid., 5 February 1894.
132. Ibid., 10 January 1896.
133. Macarthy, op.cit., p.354.
134. AW, 24 and 31 January 1891; Gazette, December 1891, pp.1279-81. At one stage Waite considered standing for Parliamentary honours in St. Leonards, as an LEL candidate, SMH, 6-7 June 1891.
135. AW, 31 January 1891; SMH, 30 January 1894 (Nicol Allardice); Gazette, December 1891, p.1280; and May 1894, p.3242.
of these candidates were unsuccessful.

Surprisingly, the LEL does not appear responsible for the labour candidates which consistently contested Sydney City Council elections, with the exception of East Sydney LEL's 1891 candidates. Less surprisingly, however, given the Council's large waterfront constituency, the Coal Lumpers' sponsored candidates in 1891 (George Herbert, Secretary) and in 1893. T. Riddell, TLC Secretary, also stood in 1891, followed by an independent labour candidate in 1892. All fared badly, but one of three labour candidates was elected in 1893. In 1894 the TLC endorsed S.E. Lees, a sitting alderman, for City Council office. By 1895 Sydney's Mayor was a compositor, the first working man to hold that position, although he does not appear to have had any direct union or LEL links. In 1896 another independent labour candidate, W.A. Williams, MLC, unsuccessfully stood for City Council.

Even in the country, labour candidates appeared from 1891. A shearer claimed that in one 1891 election 'the candidates who were put forward by, or received the support of the working class of ratepayers, achieved a decided victory over the "upper ten".' In the Wagga municipal elections of 1892, a plasterer, Jim McDarra, received ASU support against a lawyer in one ward. Of the lawyer, The Hummer wrote:

If he didn't wink so loudly when speaking in public he would have a better show at the poll. Strangers get hold of the idea that as George

137. He retained his position. TLC Minutes, 27 September 1894; Gazette, December 1894, p.7581.
138. AW, 19 January 1895.
139. SMH, 1 and 2 December 1896.
140. James R. Canning, Letter to the Editor, ibid., 28 November 1891.
shuts both eyes when making a promise, he doesn't mean all he says. Jim McDarra is a solid, straight goer, and he has a big store of political knowledge of municipal matters, which should make him worth electing. Coleman is being backed by the silvertails and is (like all lawyers) dead against the raising of municipal revenue from land values instead of improvements. McDarra will win on Monday next if Newtown people know anything.\footnote{Hummer, 6 February 1892.}

These seem to have been unofficial candidates, but the AWU's interest in municipal politics was aroused from 1894, when its Secretary included 'local institutions' as a goal for representation of 'the people'.\footnote{ASU 8th AR, February 1894, Secretary's Report, p.10.} The Riverina District Council of the ALF (Wagga ASU) devoted a considerable part of its independent platform to municipal reform, elaborating on the LEL version to include direct election of mayors and the referendum for all proposals for financial loans.\footnote{AF of L Rules and Platform of Riverina District Council, January 1894.} In 1899, Arthur Rae proudly referred to recent country successes which, he felt, were sufficient to show that even with our present imperfect and out-of-date municipal system a very large amount of good could be effected by organization.

He saw the minimum wage and abolition of municipal contracting as immediate reforms Labor could achieve by 'capture' of the municipalities, while the training it would give us for a more complete measure of local government in the future would be invaluable.\footnote{AWU 13th AR, February 1899, General Secretary's Report, p.6.}

Nevertheless, despite its official policy, the AWU's municipal organization was very limited.

Outside Sydney, it was only the highly-unionised mining areas which displayed a strong tendency to elect Labour men to municipal
office. In the Newcastle district union officials frequently received aldermanic or mayoral honours, from as early as the 1870s, although it is not clear that they necessarily stood as specific 'labour candidates'. In 1896, Jabez Wright, who had played a prominent role in the 1892 strike, became Broken Hill's first Labor alderman, and in 1900, its first Labor Mayor. But these cases were unusual, based on an exceptional strength of working class community, and perhaps, in the coal mining districts, a higher than average level of home ownership, which expanded the working class municipal electorate.

Even in Sydney, where local organization had been most spontaneous in 1891-2, Labour failed to consolidate its initial momentum. The level of organization was surprisingly low throughout the 1890s, and where it did occur, success was limited. Even in 1891, the SMH reported small interest in the City Council election, although it may have been partially motivated to do so out of spite, given its distaste for Labour's organized appearance at the municipal level. In the excitement of political organization for Parliament in that year, municipal organization may have appeared relatively mundane, but the excitement of organization, at either level, does not seem to have persisted long after 1892. Despite TLC involvement in the 1894 City Council elections, the SMH claimed that no great issues were involved, political division being on a personal basis. Little changed in 1895, except that the Workman bemoaned the loss of a number of sympathetic aldermen.

146. Jack Long was also a Broken Hill Labor alderman, and Labor Mayor in 1909-10. He and Wright were veterans of the 1892 strike. Dale, op.cit., captions to portraits opposite pp.30, 64.
147. SMH, 14 November 1891.
148. Ibid., 30 November 1894.
149. AW, 16 February 1895 (general municipal elections); SMH, 2 December 1895 (City Council election).
organization also seemed to be at a very low ebb over 1896-8, and organization afterwards spread fitfully.

Despite a relatively high level of home ownership amongst Australian workers, a propertyholders' franchise operated against Labour in municipal representation. Partly because of this, and Labour's general inability to organize effectively at a municipal level, local Leagues and unions sometimes supported progressive non-Labor candidates for municipal honours. For example, in 1891, Leichhardt LEL offered 'moral support' to candidates if they favoured the LEL Platform, and in Sydney's Fitzroy Ward, the Workman and the Butchers' openly supported Fred Chaney, JP, when he supported the Platform.\(^{150}\) Some of the independent labour men mentioned earlier were no doubt candidates of this kind, and the South Balmain LEL's circulation of questionnaires to candidates in 1895, indicates a similar policy.\(^{151}\) But even this level of organization was limited. The municipal franchise therefore is insufficient explanation for Labour's failure to consolidate municipal organization, which actually declined after 1892.

In 1897 the SMH commented that:

> It has sometimes been said that under the working of representative institutions the municipal Council should become an excellent training ground for future members of Parliament. So far our experience does not entitle the public to expect this...\(^{152}\)

This was an ambiguous statement, but since 1891 the proportion of Labor MPs with municipal political experience had undoubtedly fallen.

Dacey, who gained the seat of Botany in 1895, was a small businessman

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150. AW, 24 October, and 19 December 1891. Chaney was unsuccessful. Gazette, December 1891, p.9533. The TLC's support for Lees in 1894 was a similar case; see above, n.138.  
151. AW, 9 February 1895.  
152. SMH, 8 February 1897.
who had been Mayor of Alexandria. Jabez Wright, in Broken Hill, eventually became a Labor MP. But the newer Labor MPs of this period, such as Hughes and Holman, and the rural AWU members, who dominated the Labor Party by the late 1890s, did not have this experience.

Much of the responsibility for the sluggishness of Labour's municipal organization rested with the Labor Party leadership. The spontaneity of local political action in 1891-2 posed a threat to the Central Committee's assertion of control over the Party. As this assertion caused conflict with the urban unions in 1892, the prospect of independent local union political organization must have concerned the Central Committee. Furthermore, local endorsement of non-Labor candidates threatened the LEL attempt to build an independent, disciplined party, through insistance on LEL membership, and the pledge, for Parliamentary candidates. For the sake of uniformity, the Central Committee recommended an interim official municipal platform in September 1891. When the South Sydney League supported John Davies, MLC, for Sydney's Cook Ward in late 1891, after he had pledged to carry out the LEL Platform, the Central Committee finally acted, expressing its disapproval, and advising branches against municipal action, pending a Conference which could clarify the issue. But in the excitement of class mobilization this advice was ignored by some branches. From that time, the major proponents of municipal action

154. For Willyama (Broken Hill).
155. This was much the same as the one quoted earlier (see n.119) with an emphasis on municipal control of local utilities, development, and certain funds, such as licensing fees. AW, 19 September 1891.
156. ibid., 14 and 21 November 1891; SMH, 12 November 1891.
157. Examples are referred to above.
came from the urban unions, the inner city working class LEL branches (mentioned earlier), and the socialists, who increasingly linked municipal organization with the potential for state socialism. These groups overlapped considerably, as described in Chapter 9.

The 1892 LEL Conference failed to clarify the situation over support for non-LEL municipal candidates, although the general rule over pledge and LEL membership for Parliamentary candidates was clear enough. A specification that standard wages be paid in municipal as well as Government contracts was added to the Platform. The LEL also committed itself to municipal organization by application of funds 'to secure seats on the municipal councils as well as in Parliament'. But this commitment was seriously weakened by the narrow defeat of a motion for the drafting of a municipal platform, and for inter-branch co-operation during municipal elections.

As local organization persisted however, the second, 1893, LEL Conference agreed on the necessity for a distinct municipal Platform. Conference described the Government's draft local government Bill as 'most unsatisfactory', and considered that it should be 'moulded more in conformity with the popular will'. A deputation to the Premier urged acceptance of Labor's policy for abolition of plural voting, and a municipal tax on unimproved land values. Conference analysed municipal taxation on buildings as well as land, in orthodox single tax terms, as 'taxation on industry'. Such trespass into the propertyholders' domain again evoked stern criticism from the SMH. Nevertheless, no systematic implementation for Labor's municipal policy was organized.

158. This was moved by a Newtown delegate. SMH, 30 January and 8 February 1892; Australian Star, 29 January 1892. For 1892 Platform, see Ebbels, op.cit., p.216.
159. SMH, 27-8, and 30 January; 2 February 1893.
It was left to the TLC to optimistically call for the establishment of a Municipal Labor Party, through its own Parliamentary Committee, rather than the LEL. 160

At the November 1893 LEL Conference 'local government on a democratic basis' entered the Fighting Platform. 161 Yet this policy was still not associated with an organizational programme. Nor was the 1896 policy to extend the role of Councils in utilities and industry. 162 This strengthening of the link between socialism and municipal organization actually coincided with Labor's loss of momentum in municipal organization. The urban unions and inner-city LEL branches were foundering by the mid-1890s. Although the socialists revived the inner-city branches for a time in 1895–7, an increasingly centralized PLL leadership failed to take any initiative in municipal organization. The Labor Party was forced to oppose Reid's local government reform Bill in 1894, because although it extended the franchise to occupiers of houses, it still allowed plural voting for propertyholders. The Bill did not proceed. 163

In early 1896 Waterloo LEL organized a meeting, chaired by the Mayor of Alexandria, to consider municipal organization, and agitate for local government reform. At the meeting, McGowen supported a Bill based on that which had established the London County Council, with wide powers regarding public utilities, and revenue, far exceeding those held by local government in New South Wales. 164 But it was

160. TLC Minutes, 27 April 1893.
161. SMH, 10 November 1893.
162. See n.122 above.
164. AW, 14 March 1896. See Austin, op.cit., pp.29-31, for the Webbs' very critical views regarding the primitive state of NSW local government, implicitly, in comparison with the London County Council.
largely rhetorical. McGowen offered no organizational suggestions, and even if Premier Reid had supported the proposal, it would never have passed the Upper House.

From 1897 the socialist connection became a liability for municipal organization within the Labor Party, as the leadership moved to reduce growing socialist influence. The liability was exacerbated because the strengthened socialist presence at the 1897 Conference was based on those inner-city areas where the urge towards municipal organization had been strongest. As the anti-socialist drive within Labor gathered momentum in 1897, this internal Party power base was emasculated. The 1897 Labor Conference added unification of metropolitan councils into larger bodies to the Platform. This was a necessary step if councils were to take on a role analogous to that of the London County Council. But the proposal of the St. Peters' delegates, for the extension of local government to supply food, clothing, and all local requirements, was far too openly socialist for Conference. A majority decided that this was already covered by existing policy. Under the circumstances of a socialist purge in the Party in 1898, and of the Party leadership's concern to maintain centralized control, municipal organization continued to proceed slowly despite some re-appearance in 1898. In 1900, it was left to the Sydney Labor Council to recommend its own municipal policy: resumption of private wharves and harbour foreshores; one man, one vote for the City Council; payment of Councillors; and direct election of the Mayor.

165. AW, 30 January 1897.
166. Macarthy, op.cit., p.354. See Chapter 9 for the anti-socialist drive at this time.
'One man, one vote' was still to be achieved at the local level in 1900. Despite the AWU's enthusiasm for the Sydney Corporation Act Amendment Act of that year, which extended the franchise for City Council elections to non-ratepaying lodgers, it still allowed plural voting for propertyholders. Other municipal elections also retained a propertyholder franchise. More importantly, the opportunity to build a 'grass roots' working class political movement, based on democratic socialism, had been lost, as Labor's leadership consolidated its position and committed the Party to a moderate, Parliamentary strategy.

By the late 1890s therefore, the three main expressions of working class rank and file collectivism had declined. Working class community as a basis of collective organization persisted. But it was absorbed into, and subjugated to, the more centralized mode of organization which characterized the Labor Party in 1900, and which increasingly characterized working class industrial organization thereafter. The impact which this had on the nature of Labor ideology and policy is examined next, in Part III.

PART III

IDEOLOGY AND POLICY: THE EMERGENCE OF LABORISM

INTRODUCTION
By 1900 a distinctive ideology dominated the Labor Party, largely as a product of the type of leadership which emerged in the late 1890s. That ideology may be called 'Laborism'. The term has been commonly used in Australia, and Britain, to delineate the ideology of labour movements which act on the principle that the capitalist state could be managed to the advantage of the working class by a combination of a strong trade union movement with a Parliamentary Labor Party.

In this way, at the turn of the century, Labourism held that fair dealing was available and obtainable in a capitalist society. Its vision was still that of a nation built by Labour about to enter the Paradise of the Working Man.¹ Despite frequent criticisms of the role of the state in the 1890s, few, if any, Labour men saw the state in the terms defined in Chapter 4 of this thesis. Mainstream Labor thought depicted the undesirable characteristics of the role of the state at that time as aberrations, not inherent in the institution, and, therefore, capable of correction by political intervention. Working class organization was important in this regard, but not as an oppositional force to the existence of capitalism itself. Consequently, Laborism embodied a pluralist and populist, rather than a class, view of capitalist society.

Historians have offered varied explanations for the emergence of Laborism in Australia and Britain. Saville argues that the mobilization of a pre-industrial working class inevitably results in its acceptance of liberal ideology.² Rawson suggests that Laborism is a result of labour intellectuals' persuasion of trade unions that power can be

better attained in the Parliamentary, than the industrial, arena. This interpretation relates the phenomenon of Laborism more closely with that of European social democracy. Usually, nineteenth century Social Democratic Parties were led by socialist intellectuals, but, unlike the New South Wales Labor Party, preceded and initiated widespread trade union organization. Both Rawson's and Saville's interpretations are informative in the Australian context, but neither explain adequately the specifics of the emergence of Laborism in the late nineteenth century.

The most common explanation for the emergence of Laborism, either implicitly or explicitly, has been that it was a natural outgrowth of the trade union influence in the establishment of Labor Parties, tempered by other influences such as socialism and liberalism. This view may be traced back to Lenin, who considered that, without the intervention of socialist intellectuals, trade unions were incapable of developing policies which seriously challenged the existence of capitalism. The reason for this, he argued, was that trade unions' very nature forced them into an acceptance of capitalist relations of production, in order to protect their members' interests.

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4. For example, see S. Macintyre, who sees little difference between the Australian and British varieties. 'Early Socialism and Labor', Intervention, No.8, March 1977, pp.81-7. See also his 'Socialism, the Unions and the Labour Party after 1918', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History (Britain), No.31, 1975, pp.101-11. See also R. Gollan, 'The Ideology of the Labour Movement', in Wheelwright and Buckley, Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism, vol.1, pp.206-7, where he implies that trade unions were the primary contributor to Labor ideology; and Rawson, Labor in Vain?, pp.10-11.

another way, trade unions can only protect or improve their members' wages and conditions if they are accepted as a bargaining agent by employers, whereupon they themselves must accept certain rules and existing productive relationships, in order to function effectively. Craft unions in particular, have usually been considered by historians to have limited, reformist political objectives.

However, the next four chapters argue that Australian Laborism at the end of the 1890s was the specific product of the professional politician/agrarian Party leadership which emerged at that time, rather than of the trade unions. As we saw in Part II, this leadership wrested control of the Party from the urban trade unions. Its professional politician element was dominated by utopian socialist intellectuals who originated outside the union movement. Its other main force, the AWU, was also atypical of unionism because of its agrarian smallholding base.

The Party envisaged by the urban unions when they established the LEL in 1891 was to be a class-based organization, pursuing class political strategies in Parliament, in much the same way as the early German Social Democratic Party. Although its relationship with the unions was different to that of the German Social Democrats, the 1891 New South Wales Labour Party's Platform was typically social democratic, in the sense that it concentrated on two major areas: political reform and industrial legislation. Chapter 8 shows that, in the context of New South Wales politics, these were strategies

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7. See Chapter 5, n.s80-1. for examples.
8. Hence, my spelling of 'Laborism', without the 'u', to denote the primacy of the political leadership in the development of this ideology and policy.
of class politics, and traces the decline in the priority Labor attached to these policies as its new leadership assumed control of the Party.

European-style social democracy and Laborism, therefore, were discrete phenomena in New South Wales in the late nineteenth century, even though the moderate Parliamentary strategy which characterized the New South Wales Labor Party at an early stage, also eventually characterized European social democracy. In New South Wales the two political phenomena had different social bases: social democracy was based on the working class, especially in the city; Laborism was based largely on intermediate social strata, especially small rural landowners, that is, it represented a populist social base. This populist influence also distinguished Australian Laborism from the British variety. A populist social base was necessary for the Labor Party to achieve Parliamentary success in a society which was in the early stages of transition to industrial capitalism, and which, consequently, had a relatively large population of intermediate social strata, or wage earners who aspired to that position.

The influence of populism on Labor was largely responsible for the nature of the Party's ideology and policy at the end of the 1890s. After the early decline of a social democratic policy, it was gradually replaced with state arbitration, White Australia, agrarian reform, and political reform as an ideal in itself, rather than as a class strategy, especially in the form of republican nationalism. Most of these policies involved an extension of the role of the state. The populist and utopian socialist elements of Labor's leadership viewed the state as neutral, capable of being wielded in the interests of 'the people'. The utopian socialists,
who had not been involved in the unions' industrial struggles of the
late 1880s and early 1890s, also believed it desirable, and possible,
to avoid class conflict. However, even the opponents of this view,
largely the left socialists and union militants, were distinguished more
by an instinctual, and often inconsistent, distrust of the state,
rather than a full appreciation of its function as an instrument of
class domination.

The Parliamentary Labor Party's association with Premier Reid's
reform administration of 1894-9 typified the shift in Labor's
priorities. In the most reform-oriented session of this Government,
1894-5, the major issues were the Upper House and the land and income
tax, with emphasis on the latter's rural implications. Selector
relief was also an important issue, together with reform of the public
service, and coloured migration. However, out of these issues, only
the Upper House was an important one for the working class, despite
the Labor Party's strong support for all of them. Only in mining
was industrial legislation achieved. Afterwards, in 1896, a Factory
Act was gained. But generally, industrial legislation was edged aside
for new legislative issues: public health and the referendum during
1896-7, and later, fisheries, pensions, friendly societies, and
arbitration, mostly with Labor support. Selector relief and the
Upper House remained Labor priorities, but from 1897 federation
overshadowed all else. 9

Labor was constrained as Reid's junior partner, for its policies
were not identical with his. Nevertheless, Labor's Platform
demonstrates a shift after 1895, when the AWU and Labor intelligentsia
merged in the Party leadership. Whilst the number of planks for
industrial legislation and political reform remained constant, the

9. For the general Parliamentary background, see Nairn, Civilizing
Capitalism, pp.137-49, 193-8, 201-2, 204-5; and Coghlan, Labour
former were increasingly pushed towards the end of the Platform, and the latter were broadened in their range of components. Rural planks increased, a state welfare section emerged, and arbitration became the major industrial concern.\textsuperscript{10} The Fighting Platform, over which Labor essentially campaigned in elections, shows its immediate interests more clearly. Even in 1893 its first two planks were rural-oriented: tax on the unimproved values of land; and mining on private property. Its third and fourth planks were concerned with the Upper House and democratic reform, and eight hours, the only industrial plank, appeared second last before a national bank.\textsuperscript{11} By 1896 the democratic planks and the national bank had moved to the fore in an extended Fighting Platform, and rural planks were subsumed under 'encouragement of agriculture'. Eight hours remained the only plank for direct industrial legislation, although abolition of unemployment and of public works contracting were included. But all of these were absent in the 1898 shortened Fighting Platform, which only had planks for the Upper House and referendum, a national bank, pensions and local government.

The following four chapters examine the process by which these policy changes occurred in the Labor Party, and their ideological implications.

\textsuperscript{11} SMH, 10 November, 1893.
CHAPTER 8

THE DECLINE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY
The 1891 Labour Platform concentrated on two major policy areas, democratic political reform and industrial legislation. These policies were typically social democratic. In the late nineteenth century European Social Democratic Parties were working class organizations, as the early New South Wales Labor Party was. For all their revolutionary theory, these parties, notably in Germany, essentially pursued policies for the extension of democracy and industrial legislation by Parliamentary means.\(^1\) In their context, these policies were strategies of class politics, as they also were in New South Wales. However, during the 1890s the emphasis in Labor's Platform altered, as the Party's commitment to social democratic policy declined.

**Political Reform**

In 1873 hundreds of Sydney workingmen enthusiastically greeted the families of Paris Communards *en route* to joining their husbands and fathers at the French penal colony in New Caledonia.\(^2\) Their own convict origins may have encouraged Sydney-siders' sympathy, but the demonstration symbolised much more: a universal working class commitment to the democratic ideals which the Paris Commune symbolised. Democracy was the earliest and most unambiguous of working class political commitments

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in all countries, preceding independent political organization and evident amongst the most conservative craft unions.³

The extension of democracy lay at the heart of class politics, for just as ruling classes had ruled by its restriction, its extension was necessary for working class political organization. This was no less the case in Australia, despite the relatively early gain of male suffrage.⁴ Payment of MP's from 1889 immediately inspired the TLC's political organization.⁵ The reforms sought in Labour's 1891 Platform, which had appeared on radical platforms since at least the 1870s, indicate some of the restrictions upon a popular franchise: abolition of plural voting for propertyholders, and of candidates' deposits for elections; extension of the franchise to seamen, shearsers and others; equal single-member electorates; and a public holiday for elections. 'One man, one vote' was Labour's rallying cry in the 1891 elections. Other planks on local government, elective magistrates, and elective

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³. A clear indication of this is the common union language of 'Democracy', 'Liberty' and 'Reform', particularly in union Rules, which followed British precedents so closely. See Markey, 'Trade Unionists and the Language of "Class"'. For this tradition of the 'Englishman's birthright', see E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, pp.19-27, 84-203.

⁴. 1858. See P. Loveday, 'The Legislative Council in NSW, 1856-70', Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand, vol.11, no.44, April 1965, p.483. J. Grant was fully conscious of this perspective, in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.246.

⁵. That is, in a practical, widespread sense. The 1880s Trades Union Congresses bracketed Labour's direct representation with payment of MP's, although, without inspiring political organization earlier, Victoria in 1870, Queensland in 1875, and South Australia in 1887, had introduced the measure. See Sutcliffe, op.cit., pp.81-2; and Rickard, op.cit., p.45. The TLC had lobbied for payment of MP's in 1887-8 especially. Norton, op.cit., pp.48, 68; Sixth Intercolonial Trade Union Congress, Official Report, February 1889, p.35.
School Boards, extended the democratic ideal. Some unions also sought representation on state instrumentalities.

Despite basic gains under the 1893 and 1896 Electoral Reform Acts, propertyholders retained plural votes in municipal elections, and seamen and shearsers remained effectively disenfranchised even after reduction in the residency qualification, from six to three months, and then to one month. Expansion of political reform, therefore, remained important for Labour. However, two other issues crucial to the balance of class political power dominated Labor reform policy in the 1890s: the Legislative Council, and federation.

An undemocratic institution, with members appointed by the Governor, the Council, or Upper House, represented a formidable conservative bloc. It included significant groupings of coal and ship owners, and squatters.

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6. TLC Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 3 April 1891. For the 1891 elections, see Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.55; and Roydhouse and Taperell, op.cit., p.14. For early platforms: Democratic Alliance, SMH, 6 February 1884; and see Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, pp.42-3, 83; and Ebbels, op.cit., pp.74-5. Sutcliffe, op.cit., pp.68-9, 81-2, lists the 1880s Trades Union Congress Platforms.

7. With very limited success. The Engine-drivers' accepted an invitation for a representative on the Provincial Committee of the Railways Institute (Engine-drivers' Minutes, 27 March 1890). A meeting of licensed plumbers advocated election of a 'practical plumber' to the Board of Water Supply and Sewerage. Many were probably small employers, and the Master Plumbers' Association President was finally appointed (SMH, 17 November 1893). The licensed drivers elected a representative on the Metropolitan Board of Transit Commissioners in the 1890s (TLC Minutes, 12 February 1891, 30 November 1893, 12 April 1894). In 1900 the Sydney Labour Council's Treasurer, F. Brennan, was appointed a Labour Commissioner (Sydney Labour Council Half-Yearly Report, 30 June 1900).

8. Note Planks 4 and 6, in 1896 Platform, AW, 1 February 1896. Note TLC support for an earlier Reform Bill, TLC Minutes, 23 February 1892. For the 1893, and 1896 Acts, which reduced residency requirements to one month and extended the vote to police, see Loveday, 'NSW', op.cit., p.44; and Coghan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.1849, 2192, 2197. Re residency requirements and effect on shearsers, see Chapter 6.

precisely those employers who had organized most effectively and militantly against unions in the industrial sphere. In the 1880s the Council blocked Factories, Employers' Liability, and Trade Union legislation. The TLC sought an elective chamber and, in the short term, appointment of Labour Members, but after further resistance to reform legislation in 1891-2, 'abolition of the Upper House' entered Labor's 1892 Platform and the 1893 Fighting Platform. A socialist demonstration for abolition received TLC blessings in October 1894.

The Upper House consistently blocked or mauled all legislation sought by Labor in alliance with Reid's Government during 1894-9, such that its reform became a pre-requisite for any reform programme. In mid-1895 Reid sought a mandate for his blocked land and income tax, and for reform of the Council itself. His resounding electoral victory forced partial compliance over the tax, but the Council duly rejected Reid's Bill for limitation of its powers. By 1896 Upper House abolition headed Labor's Fighting Platform. But Council power remained basically unchallenged, despite Reid's stated determination to reform the Council.

10. TLC Minutes, 26 April 1883, 22 October 1891, 18 February 1892; Norton, op.cit., pp.83-4. Strangely, an elective house was pared from the original draft of the 1891 Platform. For earlier intransigence of Council to Government measures, see Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1255-6.


12. TLC Minutes, 11 October 1894.

13. AW, 1 February 1896. Note increasing reference by Labor to a 'guided Upper Chamber', for example: AWU Wagga, 9th AR, 31 December 1894, p.4. See Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.1946-7, 2196-7; and Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.125-8, 136-9, for Parliamentary background and elections; and Fitzhardinge, op.cit., p.65, for Hughes on the Upper House. In 1895 Reid gained ten new appointees to the Upper House to aid passage of the Land and Income Tax Bill. One was very sympathetic to Labor, and Reid would have appointed a couple from Labor if it had not been opposed to the Council's very existence, according to Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, p.2194.
by reducing its numbers and abolishing life tenure, and his proposal for a referendum to resolve inter-House disputes. In 1899 Reid gained twelve new Upper House appointments. Labor received four of these, and another one under Lyne, but this fell far short of adequate Labor representation. Optimistically, the Labour Council hoped that Labor might eventually gain the numbers in the Upper House for it to approve self-extinction.

Although it supported federation, Labour's policy was consistent with its democratic programme. The TLC declined an invitation for its President to the 1891 Federation Convention banquet, because of its unrepresentative nature (as well as bitterness over the Government's role in the Maritime Strike). The Workman asked: 'What is there in this federation of the colonies...that is likely to benefit the toilers of Australia?' Whilst the Convention's draft Constitution allowed plural voting, the 1893 Labor Conference resolved that federation could only be acceptable on the principle of 'one man one vote'. In 1896 the SDC again declined representation at the misnamed 'People's Federal Convention' because of its non-elective nature. Labor criticism of

16. Apart from examples appearing below, note the toast to a 'United Australia', at an 1890 ASU banquet (ASU 4th AR, 1890, p.56). Also AW, 23 March 1895.
17. Although the vote was close: 29-23, TLC Minutes, 26 February 1891.
18. 7 March 1891. As editor, Black included a subsequent series of articles on 'A New Constitution' by C.A. Hoeming. See French, op.cit., p.44.
19. Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.133. This was The Hummer's position when it attacked the 1891 Convention, 'elected [by] themselves', 18 March 1892.
20. SDC Minutes, 22 October 1896. Re the Convention, see Ford, op. cit., p.201.
federation mounted as it overshadowed Reid's reform programme. 21

In 1897 Labor's ten candidates for the elective Federal Convention ran on the specific platform of a unicameral Federal Parliament, adult suffrage, payment of members, elective ministries, and the referendum. Following Labor's failure at these elections, the Convention drafted a Constitution flatly contradicting 'one man, one vote', in proposing an equal number of Senators from all States regardless of population, and in granting the Senate powers virtually equal to those of the popularly elected House of Representatives. These included powers to reject money Bills, and thus, overturn the Government. 22 Labor's experience with the Legislative Council was unlikely to dispose it favourably towards such a federal Upper House. States' rights aside, some conservatives explicitly perceived the Senate as a check on radical legislation, given Labor's slight following in smaller, rural-based States. 23

Rather than delay federation, Premier Reid overcame his own misgivings over the draft Constitution. In the referendum of June 1898 he and the Protectionists campaigned for it, but the combined opposition of Labor, liberal Free Traders and 'provincialists' denied federation the majority necessary to proceed in New South Wales. In Parliament

22. Labor's federation Platform was established at the 1896 Conference and issued in a Manifesto, Worker, 1 February 1896. Note AW criticism of the draft constitution, 24 April, and 29 May 1897. Moroney's motion to decline an invitation for the SDC President to a Convention delegates' picnic was lost, but the SDC remained opposed to the draft constitution's 'ultra-conservative' nature. SDC Minutes, 10 September 1897, 8 May 1898. For political background, see Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.146-7, 162-3, 176-8; and Fitzhardinge, op.cit., pp.85-90.
23. See Ford, op.cit., pp.203-6; and Evatt, op.cit., pp.97, 115. The Hummer, 18 March 1892, had claimed that if they did not get electoral reform prior to federation, they would not get it after.
Labor supported Reid's subsequent amendments in the 1899 Federal Enabling Bill, which left Labor's major objections untouched, but nevertheless, aroused conservative opposition, and this was the context for Reid seeking new Legislative Council appointments. Labor's continued opposition to the re-drafted Constitution in the second, 1899, referendum, was weakened when Sleath and Ferguson, representing pro-federationist border constituencies, campaigned for 'yes', as did the Trade Union Federal Committee. Although led by two former TLC officials, the Committee's rank and file support seemed slight, but the referendum was carried. Despite Evatt and Nairn's emphasis on Labor's role in making the constitution more democratic than it would otherwise have been, the failure of Labor policy over the Upper House and federation had enormous significance for the long-term political balance of power in Australia.

Extension of the suffrage to women also appears consistent with Labor's democratic programme. This plank reached the 1896 Platform,

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25. J. West and J. Dwyer (a socialist) were the officials. At the Committee's inaugural meeting on 19 May at Trades Hall (of which West was President), the SMH reported 'a large meeting of trade unionists' (20 May 1899) but this estimation may have been coloured by its support for a 'yes' vote. Most unions rejected association with the Committee (SDC Minutes, 1 June 1899; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 2 June 1899), and at one Committee-organized meeting, West and Ferguson lost control of the platform to 'no' voters. (Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.210.) West had also opposed Labor's Convention candidates in 1897, on the grounds that they were unrepresentative of country Leagues and city unions, Fitzhardinge, op.cit., p.82.

and in 1900 Labor sponsored a Women's Suffrage Bill which was blocked by the Upper House. However, unlike Labor's other policies, the female suffrage was eventually gained, in the Commonwealth in 1902, and New South Wales in 1903. Labor's relationship with this issue also differed. Women organized independently, largely under the middle class leadership of Rose Scott and the Womanhood Suffrage League. Working class, as distinct from Party leadership, support for female suffrage was uncertain.

In the 1880s, the Democratic Alliance supported female suffrage, and in 1892 J. Fitzgerald, a prominent Labor MP, exhorted Rose Scott to organize amongst working women. But significantly, the Alliance had a populist social base, Fitzgerald belonged to Labor's intelligentsia, and Scott ignored his advice. A request from the Womanhood Suffrage League for inclusion of female suffrage on Labour's 1891 Platform was referred by the TLC to its Parliamentary Committee, from whence it did not emerge. Many unionists, especially on the left, argued that women would form a conservative electoral bloc, and distrusted a bourgeois-led women's movement: 'not one per cent of females had identified themselves with the labour movement', declared an 1896 Conference delegate. But Labor's non-commitment to female suffrage perpetuated this, even if a motion to exclude females from

29. SMH, 6 February 1844.
31. TLC Minutes, 19 November 1891. See Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.179.
32. R.P. Thompson. Moroney, a socialist, was also strongly opposed to female suffrage on the Platform. SMH, 28 January 1896. Re opposition to female suffrage at the 1894 Conference, see Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.133.
Party membership was rejected at the first LEL Conference.33

Louisa Lawson's emphasis on equal economic as well as political rights, in the Dawn Club in Sydney from 1889, was more working class-oriented than the mainstream women's movement:

The cause of women's enfranchisement is a movement closely allied to that of labour reform, and should have the sympathies and assistance of all true friends of labour. It is impossible to raise labour as a whole without securing justice to working women. The low wages paid for female labour, which are a disgrace to our civilization, continually tend to keep down the rate of pay for all classes of labour.34

The Tailors', in organizing the Tailoresses', and the TLC in supporting the Female Employees' Union (FEU), and female organization generally, recognized this.35 But with high unemployment in the 1890s and weak female unionization, some unions, such as the Hotel and Caterers' Employees, attempted to restrict female employment.36 Under the industrial circumstances they faced, the conservative Printers' boycotted The Dawn, when Lawson employed female typesetters at sub-

33. Women's membership fee was also half men's, at 1/-.
35. The Tailors' provided most of the Tailoresses' leadership. P. Strong (President of Tailors' and Tailoresses') had opposed females in the trade prior to the 1880s, RRCs, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.259-62. For the FEU, and TLC support in a Pyrmont laundry strike, TLC Minutes, 13 August, 3 and 24 September, and 27 October 1891; TLC Organizing Committee Minutes, 1 June and 20 July 1891. The TLC had also encouraged the Tailoresses' and female membership of the Boot Trade Union in 1889, and organized a Barmaids' and Waitresses' Union, and a Laundresses' Union, in 1891. TLC Minutes, 13 June 1889; Organizing Committee Minutes, 10 April 1890, 2 January, 9 March, 19 May, 30 June, and 20 July 1891. Much of the TLC's anti-sweating campaign at this time was concerned with women. See W. Nicol, 'Women and the Trade Union Movement in New South Wales, 1890-1900', Labour History, no.36, May 1979, pp.21-25; and R. Markey, 'Women and Labour, 1880-1900', op.cit., pp.92-4.
36. Although their moral justification failed to impress the TLC, by 37-41 votes, TLC Minutes, 27 August 1891.
union rates, although The Dawn's financial stringencies were common to most radical journals of the time. The TLC's indebtedness even brought it into conflict with the FEU over control of a joint co-operative laundry.

However, the ASU championed female rights, despite (or perhaps, because of) the bushworkers' masculine domain. Wagga ASU's independent Platform during the 1894 Labor split included female suffrage and the appointment of female factory inspectors. In 1895 the AWU assured the Womanhood Suffrage Leagues that it 'fully recognises the equal rights of women with men in all matters, whether social, political or industrial'. Invoking the mantle of 'new unionism', the ASU/GLU employed a female organizer, Rose Summerfield, in 1892-4, although it had little opportunity to enrol women. When Bourke laundry women were dismissed for attending one of Summerfield's lectures, the union subsidized a co-operative laundry. The Hummer included 'Our Sister's Column', often written by William Lane, who had supported women's

38. The co-operative laundry arose out of the Pyrmont strike in 1891. A TLC investigation into FEU management arose from complaints of women not employed by the co-operative. TLC Minutes, 1 and 8 October 1891, 28 January, 4 and 25 February, and 3 March 1891. See Chapter 7, n.111.
40. AWU 9th AR, February 1895, p.34.
41. One of new unionism's characteristics, according to Spence, was no distinction on the grounds of sex. Ethics of New Unionism, p.7. Note quote from Rae, in Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.179.
42. Mrs. Summerfield was unsuccessful in establishing a Women's Division in Sydney, however. Hummer, 6 August 1892; ASU 7th AR, February 1893, p.19; address by Summerfield to Third Annual Conference of GLU, reprinted in Shearers' and General Laborers' Record, 5 March 1893; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1894, p.5.
43. 'Rose Hummer' and 'Sewing Girl' were common pseudonyms. Hummer, for example, 18 June and 10 September 1892. It also included 'equality of the sexes, equal pay for equal work' on its Platform.
rights under the pseudonym of 'Lucinda Sharpe' in the Boomerang (Brisbane). Whilst Lucinda remained essentially 'manager of the home' despite her opposition to 'tight-lacing', the AWU's stance crucially affected Labor Party policy. Only after its merger with the professional politicians of the LEL Central Committee did female suffrage enter the Labor Platform. Support for female suffrage, therefore, had a populist social base in the Labor Party.

Labor's closest links were with the middle-class Suffrage Leagues, rather than Louisa Lawson's Dawn Club. From 1902-3, Labor hastened to claim credit for female suffrage, absorbing women into the Party structure, as it had the unions. But by the 1890s Rose Scott and the Womanhood Suffrage Leagues also enjoyed strong liberal support amongst Free Traders and Protectionists. Although this political alliance ensured the achievement of female suffrage, Louisa Lawson's grander vision had been edged aside. To confirm the nature of this political settlement, the 1904 Federal elections, when women voted for the first time, returned a Parliament split along almost identical lines to its predecessor. Conservatives' and socialists' fears could subside.

The political form of Labor's commitment to women's rights, and the populist alliance which gained female suffrage, indicate Labor's

44. See Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.178. Similarly, an article by Lane in Hummer, 20 February 1892. For the broader links between nationalism, racism and 'women's role', implicit in Lane and the AWU's position, see Markey, 'Women and Labour, 1880-1900', op.cit., pp.100-102.
45. Each branch was allowed one woman representative at Conference for a minimum female membership of 25, and in 1904 a women's central organizing Committee was established, with direct representation at Conference and on the executive. Loveday, 'NSW', op.cit., pp.47, 57, 60.
46. See Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, pp.177-8.
47. Labor did, however, gain eight seats at the expense of Free Trade and Protection. Note Fitzhardinge's rather spurious estimation of women's effect on the electoral 'tone', op.cit., p.155.
retreat from class politics. The 1895 Labor pledge omitted all reference to class. Gradually, the democratic reforms in Labor's policy became ends in themselves, rather than part of a broader social democratic strategy for working class political power, as had been implied at the beginning of the Labor Party.

The class dimensions of democratic reform were inherently ambiguous. Commitment to democracy as an ideal in itself was inseparable from democracy as a class strategy: it was the basis for working class industrial organization, as well as a pre-requisite for political organization. But as an ideal, it potentially subsumed class strategies through concentration on Governmental forms, rather than content, the hallmark of nineteenth century liberal, constitutional democracy. Through its commitment to constitutional democracy, Liberalism absorbed the British working class movement for much of the nineteenth century (particularly the conservative crafts which led working class political organization). Similarly, a Victorian Labor Party failed to develop independently of protectionist Liberalism in the 1890s.

In New South Wales, 'one man, one vote' in 1891 provided Labor

48. This had been part of a clause liberalizing the discipline of the Central Committee's original proposal in 1893, Loveday, 'NSW', op.cit., p.35. The November 1893, and 1894 pledges had specified Party unity against conferring 'further privileges on the already privileged classes', Ebbels, op.cit., pp.220-221.
with a useful ally, Sir George Grey, in attracting middle class votes. But the Reidite liberals also supported reform, if less enthusiastically than Labor. Reid allowed Upper House reform to subside in 1895, after gaining his tax legislation. When the Council again blocked legislation, Reid could easily offer his 1895 Bill for its reform to cement Labor support, knowing that the Council would reject it. His 1899 'assault' on the Council was to ensure passage of Reid's overriding priority, the Federal Enabling Bill. Reid could accept philosophically Council amendments to legislation considered essential by Labor. But opposition to democracy by militant sections of the ruling class in the Council confirmed Labor's attachment to it as an ideal, and drove it into Reid's arms, notwithstanding occasional eruptions of dissatisfaction with the alliance, such as that which occurred at the 1896 Labor Conference.

Even Labor's Upper House policy indicated a shift in emphasis to political forms, rather than content, when bracketed with 'introduction of the referendum' on the Fighting Platform from 1893, and at its head from 1896, after the AWU's re-entry to the Party. The referendum had tactical importance, as a means of overcoming the

51. Touring Australia after representing New Zealand at the Federal Convention (1891), Grey spoke for 'one man, one vote' at a number of public meetings, notably the TLC's 'monster meeting' of 26 May, two days prior to the Government's resignation, TLC Minutes, 30 April and 30 May 1891. See Roydhouse and Taperell, op.cit., p.14; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.55-6.

52. Hughes, especially, attacked Reid's 1899 appointments as an attempt to 'nobble' Labor. See above, n.s 13-14, for references to the Parliamentary background. Nairn tends to overestimate Reid's reforming zeal, whereas Fitzhardinge is more critical from Labor's point of view. Coghlan considers that an almost equally conservative Assembly had always left the 'dirty work' of rejection to the Council, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, p.1251. Note also his similar estimation of Reid, ibid., vol.4,pp.2201-2.

53. SMH, 10 November 1893. The 1896 Fighting Platform is in Ebbels, op. cit., p.217. The referendum had been in the General Platform since 1892 (plank 18), ibid.
fiscal issue without Party division, and as a means of overcoming Upper House legislative blockades. But Labor's, especially the AWU's, commitment went deeper. The 1891 Trades Union Congress included the referendum generically in its Platform, as did The Hummer: 'The Referendum, the people its own Upper House'. From 1897 Labor's Platform included the 'initiative', which was so important to the American Populists, and later middle-class Progressives, but which lacked any effect on the political structure in those American States where it was introduced. Labor had ample opportunity to give content to a democratic ideal when the unions expressed interest in representation on Government instrumentalities, and when the urban working class spontaneously organized at a municipal level in 1891. But it displayed minimum interest in both, actively discouraging municipal organization as a potential threat to the Party's moderate central leadership.

Nor was federation on a democratic basis exclusive to Labor. Prior to the unions' interest in the issue, the Democratic Alliance's Platform included this plank in the early 1880s. More importantly, the Alliance anticipated the political form with which Labor nationalism became identified: republicanism. At the 1888 Trades Union Congress

54. That is, the first Labor caucus in 1891, in danger of dividing over the fiscal issue, decided not to support any change to fiscal policy until a referendum, Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p. 67. See Chapter 6.
55. Hummer, for example, 6 February 1892; also the Workman's 1890 Platform, plank 3, AW, 22 September 1890; Sutcliffe, op.cit., p. 70.
56. Worker, 30 January 1897. The 1891 Trades Union Congress had also bracketed the initiative with the referendum, Sutcliffe, op.cit., p. 70. Note that the AF of L Rules and Platform of Riverina District Council, January 1894, also included 'Non-Party Government' (plank 6), i.e. 'the Ministry to be simply an Executive Committee elected by the Assembly'.
58. See Chapter 7.
59. SMH, 30 January and 6 February 1884.
the 'Federated Republic of Australia' replaced the loyal toast as the object of three cheers, and the 1891 LEL Platform included 'federation upon a national as opposed to an imperialistic basis'.

Labor's identification with Australian nationalism has been well-documented by historians, but its ideological ambiguities have not been thoroughly examined. Gollan argues that republicanism gave Australian nationalism a perspective of class conflict, because of the close links between the Australian and British ruling classes, and, as Fitzpatrick would add, because of the colonial role of British capital, particularly in the pastoral industry. The Workman's claim, that British capital lay behind the 1894 shearers' strike over wage cuts, had considerable validity given the banks' foreclosures and direct management of properties in the 1890s, for British capital had provided a large proportion of local banks' resources. The AWU's press condemned 'British bondholders' and 'English merchants and paupers who worship trade and money bags'.

The AWU's nationalism, however, became an end in itself. 'In spirit', Spence claimed, Labour was already federating in 1890, and 'socially such organizations as the AWU and AMA were doing even more than the politicians to extend the federal feeling and to help on the great movement which will eventually make Australia one great nation'.

60. Plank 12, which was retained throughout the 1890s. For 1888 Congress, see Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.119.
61. For example, Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, especially Chapter 7; McQueen, A New Britannia, especially Chapter 1.
63. AW, 5 and 12 June 1897. See Chapter 2.
64. Hummer, 'For the Honor of the Flag', 13 February 1892; 5 December 1891; Worker, 22 February 1898.
65. Since the AWU was 'a federal union due principally to the nomadic lives of their members' [sic], AWU 9th AR, February 1895, p.32; 'President's Address', ASU 4th AR, February 1890, pp.5-6. Also 'President's Address', ASU 3rd AR, February 1889, p.5.
As Ward has shown, the bushworker became the symbol of Australian nationalism. \footnote{66} Correspondingly, the AWU, led by its Wagga Branch, was committed to a republican political form as an ideal surpassing any immediate class perspective: 'the complete political independence of the United Australian Commonwealth on a basis of pure democratic Republicanism'. \footnote{67} In language similar to The Bulletin's, which also idealized the bushworker as a nationalist symbol, The Hummer railed against the young Australian nation being 'chained to a corrupt and decaying corpse'. \footnote{68} In 1892 Arthur Rae, Wagga ASU's secretary, and MP for the Riverina, distinguished himself as the only MP to oppose Parliament's condolences to Queen Victoria on the death of the Duke of Clarence. \footnote{69}

Idealization of the national character, and of Labour's contribution to it, was common in radical literature. Norton wrote in the History of Capital and Labour that:

Labour from the first marked Australia for its own. It is the country upon which the old European systems have had the least influence; as it is the country where the new institutions of modern democracy have taken the firmest hold in the national character and life of the people. It is moreover, a country the foundations and structures of whose constitutions were laid and built by labour, and it is the country where the whole fabric of society is being perfected by the same agency. \footnote{70}

This perspective rested upon a traditional radical theme, on the

\footnote{66} R. Ward, The Australian Legend, Chapters 7-8.
\footnote{67} 'Our Platform', in Hummer at any time in its existence over 1891-2. This became the 'Confederation of the Australian colonies as Independent Social Democratic Republics', in plank 15 of the AF of L Rules and Platform of Riverina District Council, January 1894.
\footnote{68} 'For the Honor of the Flag', Hummer, 13 February 1892. Examples from The Bulletin include 'Australia for the Australians', 2 July 1887; and 'The British Imperial Heathen', 2 August 1888. Cartoons regularly personified 'Labour' as a bushworker.
\footnote{69} Swan, op.cit., pp.161, 163.
\footnote{70} Norton, op.cit., 'Introduction', p.ix.
possibility in Australia of excluding the class distinctions and conflict of the Old World. The Eureka Stockade was its symbol, and republican nationalism its political form.  

Significantly, the Labor Party took the Eureka Flag's blue and white as its colours.

However, republicanism was weak in the urban working class. At the Democratic Alliance's foundation meeting in 1884 one speaker 'refused to cheer the Queen, and avowed himself a republican, earning for his pains "a volley of groans and hisses" from the honest working men present and...barely escaping physical injury'. Many unions (including even the AWU) persisted in toasting the Queen at gatherings in the 1880s and 1890s. Even in Wagga, Rae's action over the Duke of Clarence earned condemnation from a rowdy public meeting. The Republican Union, formed in 1887, seems to have been largely a middle class affair, indicating that republicanism was somewhat tangential to the class mobilization which occurred in the late 1880s.

The AWU became the centre-point of Labor's republican nationalism,

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71. Note AW, 'Australia's Mission' article, 24 April 1897. See Ebbels, op.cit., pp.36-8 and 42-51 (especially O'Sullivan's article on the foundation of Australian democracy at Eureka, pp.46-7); O'Sullivan's 1885 maiden Parliamentary speech in Mansfield, Australian Democrat, p.70; Black, Origins and Growth of Labour, pp.8-9; R.D. Walshe, 'The Significance of Eureka in Australian History', Historical Studies ANZ Eureka Centenary Supplement, December 1954, pp.62-80; and Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, pp.112, 114. See also Chapter 11.

72. Mansfield, op.cit., p.163 ('...if the Herald's reporter is to be believed...').

73. For example, ASU 4th AR, February 1890, Conference Banquet, pp.55-60. See Buckley, op.cit., pp.89 and 114.

74. Swan, op.cit., p.163.

75. Ironically, it was also inspired by the British Republican movement. See Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.118; Black, Origin and Growth of Labour, p.11; Evatt, op.cit., p.19, claims the Union was formed in 1884.
and quite self-consciously inherited the Eureka tradition. As a consequence of the nature of AWU membership, a populist social base was imparted to Labor's republican nationalism. Populism was inherent throughout the political expressions of republican nationalism: in the Eureka Stockade, with its social basis of miners seeking social and economic independence; in the Democratic Alliance's attempted linking of workers, selectors, and manufacturers; in the republican Bulletin's small producer radicalism, indistinguishable from the AWU ideal of 'Liberty and Justice to all, without respect to classes'; and in Norton's claim that 'it is the working classes who are making history ...pre-eminenty in Australia', which diluted class, as the 'working classes' became synonymous with 'the people'.

Although it persisted to some extent, the populist vernacular of 'the masses' versus 'the classes', or 'monopolists', and the social perspective it embraced, had declined amongst the urban working class as its class consciousness heightened. The AWU was its bearer in the 1890s. Significantly, Norton's TLC links dissipated under the strain

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76. Obvious, not in this or that declaration, but in the whole tenor of AWU literature. Note the union plan to lay a wreath in memory of 'the heroes of the Eureka Stockade who died in defence of liberty' at the obelisk erected in their memory, AWU 10th AR, February 1896, p.16. Note also a re-living of the tradition in the expression of solidarity 'with the democrats of the West Australian goldfields in their efforts to obtain self-government', 14th AR, January 1900, p.17.

77. See references in n.71; McQueen, A New Britannia, pp.141-6.

78. AWU Goulburn AR, 31 December 1895. Such statements are common fare in official AWU parlance, alongside the more apocalyptic references to class war; for example Temple's claim that the 'rights and privileges of all classes must be respected', ASU 6th AR, 1892, p.13. For Democratic Alliance, see Chapter 6. Note references to 'the people' at an Alliance meeting, SMH, 6 February 1884.


80. Spence's and Temple's addresses at Annual Conferences, Branch Reports, and the ASU/AWU press are full of references to 'the people' or 'the masses' versus 'monopolists' or 'plutocrats'. The Workman was atypical of urban Labour, in that it frequently used this language also, but much less frequently than the AWU leaders. See Markey, 'The Language of "Class"', op.cit.
of class mobilization. But others of his ilk consolidated themselves in the Labor Party, allied with the AWU. Under this leadership, the replacement of a class enemy by 'imported governors', 'titles of rank', or 'Royalty, Priestcraft, Aristocracy and Capitalism', encouraged the elevation of political forms into ideals in their own right. Labor's Fighting Platform of the late 1890s bore striking resemblance to that of the Republican Union in 1888, where George Black began his political career.

Industriall Legislation

By the 1880s New South Wales unions were committed to a moderate, but expanding, programme of industrial legislation, culminating in six planks in the 1891 Labour Platform. Although relatively slow to become an issue in New South Wales, industrial legislation became a reference point for class politics. Labor Party commitment to the programme, however, declined, and for all the mythology of the 1890s as a period of legislative experimentation and a basis for Australia's emergence as a social laboratory in the early twentieth century, achievements in New South Wales in the 1890s were very limited in this

81. For example, Hummer, 7 November 1891 (editorial), and 13 February 1892 ('For the Honor of the Flag').
82. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, pp.118-9, where the Republican Union, later League, Platform is listed. 'Abolition of the Upper House', 'nationalisation of the land', and 'federation of the Australian colonies under republican rule', were League planks near-identical with Labor's Fighting Platform. The other four planks were in the spirit of Labor's except that one, 'payment of members', was obsolete by the 1890s. See Chapter 6.
83. All of these planks are discussed in detail below, except for repeal of the Master and Servants' and Agreements Validating Acts (the former is mentioned in Chapter 4, the latter is mentioned in Chapter 11), and amendment of the Trades Union Act (mentioned in Chapters 4 and 10).
Britain provided many of the political precedents for colonial industrial legislation, and its prior experience always figured prominently in 1890s debates over industrial legislation in New South Wales. Achievement of the 1833 and 1844 Factory Acts, which limited women's and children's hours and fenced-off dangerous machinery, and the 1847 Ten Hours Act, involved large-scale working class organization. However, the legislation also relied upon support from middle class humanitarians and from Tories and protectionists anxious to check manufacturing's ascendancy. After the mid-1800s, Liberalism gradually abandoned laissez-faire for an interventionist state, to combat the working class shift to radicalism and Toryism. By the late nineteenth century the political economy debate was settled in favour of industrial legislation, after it became clear that productivity depended on labour intensity rather than hours of labour. The range of legislation was, in any case, restricted by the humanitarian emphasis on women and children, and by poor provision for inspection, allowing widespread evasion, such that the Ten Hours Act, and its 1850 revision, the 'Ten and a Half Hours Act', were totally ineffective. By simply following British precedent, colonial legislators reproduced these limitations.

The 1880s New South Wales union programme for industrial legislation

fell into two categories: legislation for specific groups of workers facing special dangers or hardships, and general legislation affecting a broader range of workers. Specific legislation was predominantly initiated by individual unions or industry groups, whereas general legislative campaigns relied on the development of a central union body, the TLC, which did, however, also support specific legislation.

Their early industrial organization, the dangers they faced, and their links with British mining, which had seen some of the first industrial legislation, led coalminers into the earliest legislative campaigns. Their gains were limited, nevertheless. Based on British legislation, the 1862 Coal Fields Regulation Act rewarded two years' agitation with some safety improvements, after initial rejection by the Upper House. In public meetings in 1862 and 1869-70 miners' attention then shifted to eight hours. But over 1874-5 they again lobbied over safety and ventilation, their objectives broadening to include recognition of union checkweighmen, and limitation of juveniles' hours. An 1876 Act, based on amended British legislation (1872), only partially met these demands, although it recognised union-paid checkweighmen. Its inadequacy was confirmed in the 1880s by a rising accident rate, and in official inquiries. In the 1880s the

87. The first, 1854 NSW Act for mines regulation 'gave little protection for mineworkers'. Ross, op.cit., pp.17, 20-1, 23. 59; Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.35, 49.
88. TLC Minutes, 3 and 5 February 1874; HRDDM Minutes, 17 September, 25 October, 6 December 1875; Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, p.56. Re checkweighmen's importance, see Chapter 2.
89. See Chapter 2, n.143 re accidents, and official inquiries. Over 1876-7 three attempts were made to amend the 1876 Act more favourably for miners, unsuccessfully.
AMA's objects specifically included improved safety legislation, and support broadened to the 1884 Trades Union Congress, and, in 1889, to the TLC, which held a public meeting over the issue during the peak of mining accidents.\textsuperscript{90} However, a Government amending Bill of 1889 was stopped in the Upper House.\textsuperscript{91}

Seamen also suffered special occupational dangers and disadvantages, including some existing legislative regulations. In 1880 the TLC and Seamen's Union lobbied unsuccessfully for an amended Seamen's Laws Consolidation Act. The Marine Engineers' also sought reform of navigation laws.\textsuperscript{92} O'Sullivan encouraged the TLC's publicity of ships' unseaworthiness, claiming in 1882 (when he unsuccessfully stood for the harbourside electorate of West Sydney) that shipowners frequently tampered with the Plimsoll line. An 1883 amending Act failed to ease union concern, and O'Sullivan still urged reforms when he entered Parliament in 1885.\textsuperscript{93} However, his initiation of a Parliamentary Select Committee of Inquiry, which confirmed the dangerous nature of safety standards in shipping, failed to have any effect.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{90} TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 27 and 29 August 1889. The AMA's 1885 objects (when the Hunter miners joined it) are in Ross, \textit{op. cit.}, p.51. For the 1884 Trades Union Congress discussion, see Norton, \textit{op.cit.}, p.66. O'Sullivan also campaigned for legislation as he entered Parliament in 1885, Mansfield, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.60, 69.

\textsuperscript{91} Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, p.97.

\textsuperscript{92} Only by a small majority, however, did the Marine Engineers decide to lobby jointly with the Maritime Board, Marine Engineers Sydney District, Minutes, 16 October 1882; TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 11 February and 1 July 1880. For the disadvantages of Government regulation, see Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{93} TLC Minutes, 10 and 17 August 1882. O'Sullivan was the Printers' President and TLC delegate in 1882. See Mansfield, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.40-1, 43-4, 69. Intercolonial Trades Union Congresses throughout the 1880s included reform of mercantile laws on their platforms, Sutcliffe, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.68-70.

\textsuperscript{94} An 1887 Navigation Amendment Bill did not reach a second reading. Note that repairs also meant work for unemployed shipwrights, as the unions clearly understood. Norton, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.73 and 75.
The unions' other major legislative demands in the 1870s and 1880s had general industrial application. In 1876 the TLC lobbied against extension of apprenticeship periods because it would make 'sons dependent on their fathers when they ought to be a help rather than a burden'. In the 1880s the TLC sought land boilers inspection, and the 1879 Trades Union Congress called for an Employers' Liability Act (prior to the 1880 British Act). Workers could not claim damages from employers for injuries caused by fellow workers' negligence, which accounted for most accidents, and which placed employees in a worse position than members of the public proceeding under common law. Despite intensive TLC lobbying, an 1882 Act only partially remedied this situation, after Upper House amendments, so that its extension remained on the Trades Union Congress Platform. The Act only gave compensation for accidents due to negligence, and the Courts' interpretation often restricted application further. A slightly improved 1886 Act still excluded miners and seamen.

Eight hours was the unions' earliest and most persistent general

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95. With the possible exception of scaffolding inspection, for which the TLC and Trades Union Congresses lobbied during the 1880s building boom. Nairn, 'Role of the TLC', op.cit., pp.169-70.

96. A public meeting was called to protest the provisions over which the ASE was particularly concerned. TLC Minutes, 29 June, 11 and 13 July 1876. Note TLC discussion of an Apprentices Bill in 1889, Executive Committee Minutes, 1 and 29 October 1889. See Norton, op.cit., p.68.

97. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 5 October 1882. A Land Boilers Inspection Bill was introduced in Parliament in 1883, but did not receive a second reading. The provision appeared on the First Trades Union Congress Platform, Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.68.

98. NSWPD, 1885-6, vol.19, p.1968. Rather than lose all, the TLC decided to support the mutilated Bill and work for improvements. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 1, 6 and 16 September, 1 October 1882; SMH, 6 September 1882; Norton, op.cit., pp.67, 83; Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.68-70. After 1882 some employers covered their liability by insurance, with premiums deducted from employees' wages. See Fry, op.cit., pp.119, 201-2, 310, for the legal situation pre- and post-1882. An 1887 Bill to extend the legislation failed.
legislative demand. Sydney unionists campaigned simultaneously with the miners over 1869-71, forming an Eight Hour System Extension and General Short Hour League, which was a major impetus for the establishment of a TLC. After failure of an 1870 Bill and a miners' petition, building tradesmen also petitioned for an Act in 1871, and in 1872 the TLC campaigned against re-election of Sydney's Mayor, who opposed eight hours for Council employees. In 1873 the TLC lobbied for eight hours for railwaymen, and later, its Parliamentary delegate, Cameron, introduced another unsuccessful Eight Hours Bill. The campaign intensified in the 1880s, after the 1879 Intercolonial Trades Union Congress unanimously proposed legislation, but Cameron's 1881 Bill again failed. In 1887 the TLC and Building Trades Council organized a public meeting to support Schey's new Bill, but it and its successors in 1889, 1890 and 1891, were also defeated.

A Factory Act, including safety regulations, minimum space and ventilation, eight hours, restriction of juvenile labour, and prohibition of outwork, was the most extensive legislation sought. But despite recommendation by a Parliamentary Select Committee for protection of women and children as early as 1877, little support emerged. Parkes described Dr. Renwick's 1886 Factory Bill as over-legislation, even though it was far less extensive than earlier British legislation. The

100. Ebbels, op.cit., p.97; SMH, 9 February 1881; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 16 December 1887 (although the Tinsmiths themselves did not support the 1887 Bill, because it was 'inconsistent and contradictory'); Norton, op.cit., p.69; Fry, op.cit., p.246; Hagan, Printers and Politics, p.80 for Printers' support; and for Trades Union Congresses, Stcliffe, op.cit., pp.66-70.
Bill was rejected by the Upper House, after passing the Legislative Assembly. In 1889 O'Sullivan did not even introduce a Bill which he had promised.

Industrial legislation, therefore, was depressingly limited. Although more successful than anyone else, coalminers' piecemeal gains highlighted these limitations, particularly in the area of enforcement. Miners obviously entertained early suspicions over administration of the 1876 Act, in forming a sub-committee 'to see that the provisions of the Coal Field Bill be carried out'. A new Government soon afterwards confirmed these suspicions in its accessibility to mineowners and reinterpretation of the Mine Inspector's powers. But failures were educative. By the 1880s inspectors themselves were subject to the Hunter miners' 'vigilant eye'. Miners claimed that inspectors merely 'made a show' of enforcement. Told to report dangers themselves, miners replied that, if not ignored, reporters were victimized by employers, as were some witnesses at the 1887 Royal Commission on mining. Such blatant failures of the state to enforce regulations against employer resistance, together with limited legislative achievements, intensified the momentum for independent working class political organization.

Legislation was attractive because union gains from industrial action had also been limited in the 1880s, even for the crafts. Safety standards would have been especially difficult for unions to enforce against the large number of small employers in manufacturing.

103. O'Sullivan was a keen supporter of factory legislation, TLC Minutes, 15 February 1883; Mansfield, op.cit., pp.34, 48, 60.
104. HRDDM Minutes, 13 July 1876, 19 July and 1 August 1877. In 1879, Hunter River miners lobbied 'to get the Coal Fields Act carried out better', HRDDM Minutes, 18 February 1879. Note also, the western miners' similar attempts, Vale of Clwydd Lodge Minutes, 6 December 1878.
Miners' early political action was particularly attractive because of coalowners' well organized resistance to union demands. In 1862 when a regulatory Act was passed and when miners organized public meetings for eight hours, the union was crushed in a strike. Strikes could be costly even for strong unions, and for the unskilled, legislation bypassed weakness in industrial organization.

However, legislation was more than a policy of default. Its aims were complementary to those of industrial action. Cameron's 1874 Eight Hour Bill, for example, was part of a broader TLC campaign which included the ASE's industrial struggle for the 'boon'. For coalminers, political action (especially the petition which they used more frequently than other groups) was an outgrowth of the organic links between union and community. Miners' political and industrial organization occurred simultaneously at the union's formation in 1860, and in 1870 political action preceded the union's re-formation by only a few months.

Legislation often had broad implications for industrial strategy. For example, the 1876 Mines Act effectively reduced all miners' hours by limiting juveniles (the miners' assistants) to nine hours. This in turn aided the miners' strategy of limiting production and sharing work. Apprenticeship legislation obviously strengthened craft industrial strategy, but, in generally regulating working hours and minimum wages,

106. Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.40-44.
107. Note the TLC-organized demonstration in support of the ASE's eight hour campaign in 1874, Buckley, op.cit., p.55.
109. Fry, op.cit., p.241. These considerations were undoubtedly important in the miners seeking a clause in the Act to provide that all boys between thirteen and eighteen years working in the mines should attend school three nights per week, HRDDM Minutes, 6 December 1875.
also affected most juvenile labour. Limitation of women and children's hours might similarly be expected to have wider effect, and, as we saw in Chapter 5, shorter hours could increase wages. The crafts could also benefit from general factory legislation. Eight hours, if gained by a craft, was insecure unless applied to all of the workforce in an industry. Factory legislation could regulate the productive re-organization which threatened craft union strategies. Legislation over safety and ventilation affected workforce size and labour intensity, could slow the introduction of machinery, and offset the low-overhead, competitive advantages enjoyed by cheap, backyard employers. For example, their problems with new technology, and a cheap section of their industry, helped Printers' to overcome their objections to political action, to the extent of lobbying independently for a Factory Act (even when it was associated with eight hours, which, as pieceworkers, they opposed).

Tactically, the emphasis in industrial legislation on women and children, and workers suffering special hardships, broadened political support for state regulation, and once this was established in principle, slight legislative gains might later be extended. The liberal middle class humanitarian conscience was pricked most by the position of women and children working in some of the most sweated areas of industry. Liberals could support state intervention here on the grounds that it helped those least able to help themselves. As more straightforward trade union issues, a general eight hour day and apprenticeship could not gain such support so easily. Therefore, whilst the unions did seek to include these demands in legislation for factories

110. See below, re 1894 legislation, for example; and Walsh, 'Factories and Factory Workers', op. cit., p.15.
111. Hagan, Printers and Politics, pp.76, 80, 120-1.
and specific industries, they maximised the humanitarian content of this legislation by campaigning for separate eight hours and apprenticeship legislation.

This humanitarian political potential was realized in Victoria in the 1880s and 1890s. Although weakly enforced, and limited in application, the 1885 Victorian Factory Act improved on a 'virtually inoperative' 1873 Act, in health and safety regulations, protection of child and female labour, and inspection. The 1896 Victorian Factory Act made further improvements on the 1885 version.\(^{112}\) Despite its limitations, Victoria's record of industrial legislation in the eighties and nineties contrasted starkly with that of New South Wales, where humanitarian middle class support was never fully realized. Victoria, of course, led New South Wales in manufacturing development and had a larger female workforce.\(^{113}\) Once early legislation was gained, humanitarian concern was perpetuated by Factory Inspectors' Reports publicising poor working conditions. However, 'sweating' in New South Wales had been officially documented from the late 1870s, and gained widespread union publicity.\(^{114}\) Humanitarian support may have been alienated by New South Wales unions' attempts to include eight hours and apprenticeship in general legislation, offsetting their tactical

\(^{112}\) The 1885 Act defined a 'factory' as employing six or more hands, and smaller establishments were not, therefore, liable for inspection. See Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, pp.88-92 (from whence the quotation); Fry, op.cit., pp.93-5; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1484-6; J. Hagan, 'Employers, Trade Unions and the First Victorian Factory Acts', Labour History, no.7, November 1964, pp.3-10. For the 1890s, see Rickard, op.cit., Chapter 4.

\(^{113}\) See Macarthy, 'The Harvester Judgment', p.93.

\(^{114}\) For example: Tinsmiths' Minutes, 18 October 1889, 6 November 1894; TLC Minutes 19 and 26 November 1891; G. Garton (shoemaker) and P. Strong (Tailors' and Tailoresses' President), RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.254 and 258-9. See below re the major union anti-sweating campaign, and n.101 above, re 1870s documentation, and Chapter 1.
separation, but Victorian unions had also sought their inclusion, and Dr. Renwick's unsuccessful 1886 Bill actually diluted the Victorian Act.

More importantly, the issue of factory legislation divided Victorian employers. Some opposed it, but many supported it because of its close links with protection, acknowledging that rejection of laissez-faire for the tariff opened the door for state intervention elsewhere. Convinced that its prosperity was dependent upon manufacturers, the Victorian working class was strongly protectionist. As an example of what manufacturers could offer under protection, industrial reform was an inducement for continued working class commitment to protection. David Symes' Age typified the protection/reform linkage. Established employers could also benefit from regulation of cheap competition by factory legislation. The form of the 1885 Victorian Act actually owed more to employers than unions, the Manufacturers' Association co-operating with the Government in fear of more extensive legislation. Middle class assumption of the campaign's leadership then perpetuated a humanitarian emphasis and middle class support.

In New South Wales the political alliance sought by the Protection and Political Reform League met less success, and declined from the late 1880s as unions organized independently. Although significant working class groups were protectionist, the importance of the pastoral and commercial economic sectors weakened protection's mass base, and Free Traders also had a reformist wing. Of the major organized employers,

115. See Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, pp.88-92; Hagan, 'Employ rs, Trade Unions, etc.', op.cit., pp.8-10; Rickard, op.cit., pp.89-91.
pastoralists, coalowners and shipowners, none had protectionist interests. 117 New South Wales also had fewer large manufacturers who would support state regulation for competitive reasons. Non-regulation even allowed some competitive advantage over better-established Victorian manufacturers. In the metals industry, where New South Wales had developed larger-scale enterprise committed to protection, the absence of women and children from the workforce denied any humanitarian perspective. Coalowners' support for the 1876 Mines Act was exceptional, occurring in a period of unusually good relations with miners. 118 The Act's regulation of machinery and the extent of mine workings (through ventilation requirements) reinforced the Veid's containment of competition. But in the light of their subsequent lobbying, coalowners clearly intended avoiding the Act's strictest safety requirements. They merely endeavoured to contain union pressures and re-direct dissatisfaction towards the state, which took responsibility for the Act's enforcement.

In New South Wales, therefore, the campaign for industrial reform was more clearly a working class movement than in Victoria. This perpetuated the absence of middle class support, which was largely responsible for the campaign's limited success, which, in turn, contributed to the heightening of working class consciousness and independent political organization in the late 1880s, which further perpetuated absence of middle class support. Industrial legislation itself became a point of class division in New South Wales politics, after it had become an area of class alliance in Victoria. This

117. Although shipowners did desire exclusion of foreign competitors from the shipping trade. See Chapter 3.
118. Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.55-6.
distinction was crucial for the different nature of Labour's political organization in these colonies: in Victoria, unlike New South Wales, the Labor Party was barely distinguishable from the protectionist Liberals during the 1890s. 119

The growing emphasis on generalized industrial legislation by the 1880s manifested the TLC's development as a class leader. Although unskilled unions mushroomed, the TLC remained largely dominated by the craft unions as it led the industrial reform campaign in the 1880s. Despite their greater ability to rely on industrial strength, the crafts could certainly benefit from legislation, although it is remarkable given their importance in the labour movement and the threats they faced from productive re-organization, that apprenticeship legislation was not a much more important issue than it ever became. But the major, immediate beneficiaries of general legislation were undoubtedly the weakly-organized unskilled, particularly women and children, for whom the high incidence of piecework and outwork would always counteract unionism and tend to increase working hours. The crafts' identification of their interests with those of the unskilled was part of the process of transformation of sectional interests into a class political programme.

This perspective is confirmed by the coincidence of the peak of agitation for factory legislation with the peak of class mobilization and the peak of the TLC's status as a class leadership: 1890-2. The campaign was much more than a strategy of default after industrial defeat in 1890, although after the middle class had been more clearly alienated from Labour than ever before, the tactical humanitarian

119. See H. McQueen, 'Victoria', in D. Murphy (ed.), Labor in Politics, pp.291-308; Rickard, op.cit., Chapter 4.
emphasis on women and children increased. Prior to the 1890 strike, the TLC and the Building Trades Council (whose members would have least benefitted from a Factory Act) held a public meeting for a Factory Act amidst great publicity, inviting MP's, distributing handbills, and placing newspaper advertisements. The TLC resolved to 'expose and put down the sweating system...by every constitutional means', proceeded accordingly through the Workman, and complained to the Government of some employers' evasion of the Education Act by employment of children under fourteen. In February 1891, the Socialist League joined the campaign with a public meeting. A year later, an unemployed meeting called for an end to sweating and the establishment of a regulative Department of Industry. Later in 1892, the Furniture Trade Union urged a close watch on proposed legislation, emphasizing that concessions could not be expected from employers of their own accord. Early in 1893 the TLC's Surplus Labour Committee again urged enactment of factory legislation, but by this time the unions' mobilization had begun to wane.

The 1896 New South Wales Factory Act came well after the disintegration of the unions' mobilization. Legislative Council amendments severely limited an Act modelled on much earlier British legislation, and the 1885 Victorian Act, which was itself extended in 1896. Minimum provisions for safety, ventilation and limitation of

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120. TLC Minutes, 24 February and 4 March 1890; SMH, 11 March 1890.
121. TLC Minutes, 28 November 1890; AW, 17, 24 and 31 January 1891.
122. The Textile Workers' Union brought this to the attention of the TLC, and had two of its officers dismissed by employers as a result. TLC Minutes, 29 January, 5 and 19 February 1891.
123. The TLC joined the unemployed's deputation to the Premier in 1892, TLC Minutes, 28 January 1892.
124. TLC Minutes, 15 December 1892, 13 April 1893. Some further exposures of 'sweating', on government contracts and in laundries, did occur, TLC Minutes, 30 November and 7 December 1893.
women's and children's hours, were restricted to Sydney, provision for inspection was inadequate, and as the unions soon discovered, Government employees were exempted. The restrictive definition of a factory as an establishment employing four or more people (or any Chinese), also excluded most small workshops and outwork from regulation, although these were the areas that most needed it. A contemporary New Zealand Liberal, Reeves, described the Act as 'not very interesting or venturesome'.

Yet, it was the greatest general legislative achievement of the 1890s. Only two other general Acts were gained. The 1894 Apprentices Act (which appeared on Labour's 1891 Platform) amended earlier legislation to prevent employment of trade or factory apprentices under fourteen, and limited their weekly hours to forty-eight. The 1896 Factory Act subsumed it, but neither regulated youths' numbers or job function, which were the main union concerns. The 1900 Truck Act contained 'little that would seem novel in England'. Because of difficulties posed by country isolation, bushworkers remained largely outside its provisions, and whilst it technically prevented obligatory renting of employers' cottages, employers could still recover house rent. Coalminers had bitter experience of the advantage this gave

127. Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, pp.206-7. See Chapter 2 for the incidence of truck
128. AW, 3 July 1897, had called for an Act, emphasizing the need to prevent obligatory renting.
employers during strikes. Neither of these limited Acts was easily gained. The Apprenticeship Bill was introduced consistently from 1891 until its eventual passage in 1894, twice suffering Legislative Council rejection. The Truck Bill suffered Council rejection, or lapsed, five times from 1894 to 1900. After two failures in 1890 and 1891 Labour did gain partial extension of the Employers' Liability Act to seamen in 1892, but a Bill for more general extensions of its scope failed in 1893. From 1892 three Bills for land boilers inspection were rejected by the Legislative Council, and one in 1897 lapsed.

Some gains were made in specific legislation in the 1890s, mainly because of the special political position occupied by the groups concerned. A dozen mining electorates and the cohesiveness of miners', and coalowners' Parliamentary representatives made mines legislation a major Parliamentary issue. Inclusion of an eight hours' working day, for example, fell short of the British Act in 1898, while South Australia's Act was only a partial success by comparison. See Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, p.211; and Metin, op.cit., pp.164-5. Garrard sponsored Bills in 1887 and 1891.

129. The TLC worked closely with Houghton, of the Labor Party, over this especially with his 1892 and 1893 Bills, TLC Minutes, 7 July 1892, 25 May 1893.

130. As sought in the 1891 Labour Platform, and still in the 1896 Platform, NSW did not gain an Act comparable with the 1897 British Workers' Compensation Act, until 1910. Even the more enlightened 1898 Victorian Act created difficulties in establishing employers' liability, and fell far short of the British Act, although South Australia's Act did not. See Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, p.211; and Métin, op.cit., pp.164-5. Garrard sponsored Bills in 1887 and 1891.

131. Land Boilers Inspection was included in the Platform under a Factory Act from 1891.

132. From 1894 distributed in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Coalfields</th>
<th>Southern Coalfields</th>
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<tr>
<td>Newcastle West</td>
<td>Illawarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>Woronora</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waratah</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend</td>
<td>Alma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kahibah</td>
<td>Broken Hill</td>
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Western Coalfields

| Hartley             | Sturt               |

Newcastle East was mixed but still predominantly a miners' electorate, and the following, all in the Hunter bar the last, included significant mining populations: Durham, East Maitland, West Maitland, and Cobar. In 1891 Newcastle, Northumberland, Illawarra and Hartley were the only, multi-member, mining electorates.
clause in the 1891 Mines Bill, originally sponsored by the Government, was instrumental in Premier Parkes' resignation. Although less liberal over ventilation, Dibbs' 1893 Bill retained eight hours, thus honouring his promise to Labour, but rejection by the Upper House was predictable. The 1894 Labor split reduced its coalfields representation from five to three, but then, as Free Traders, the former Labor MP's, Cook and Fegan, influenced Reid's Bill, which was modelled on the 1893 British Act. Its inevitable rejection by the Upper House centred upon eight hours, ventilation requirements, 'small coal' payment, and weighing of all skips rather than averaging from random skips.

In 1895 Reid's strong electoral support, and the recommendation of the 1894 Bill by a Royal Commission which included union and employer representatives, persuaded the Legislative Council to approve the 1896 Coal Mines Regulation Act, minus the eight hours and ventilation clauses. Appointment of more inspectors tightened regulations, but coalowners challenged the weighing clauses in court, and in 1898 when this failed, attempted to provoke a strike. Trading political against

134. 1891 Labour Coalfields representation: J. Cook (Hartley), J. Fegan (Newcastle), A. Edden (Northumberland), D. Scott (Newcastle), and J.B. Nicholson (Illawarra); 1894: D. Watkins (Wallsend), and A. Griffith (Waratah), joined in 1895 by J. Thompson (Newcastle West) and Edden again. Labour's Barrier mining representation also increased from one to three: R. Sleath (Wilcannia), J. Thomas (Alma), W. Ferguson (Sturt). See C.A. Hughes and B.D. Graham, Voting for the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, 1890-1964, Canberra, 1975.
135. This, and the rejection of the 1893 Bill, provided good examples of the coalowners' group cohesiveness in the Upper House, led by Alexander Brown, W.H. Pigott and H.C. Dangar. This and the following account of 1890s mining legislation relies largely upon Gollan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.97-107; and Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.1946, 2043-4, 2191-2, 2199 and 2214.
industrial strategies, the miners agreed to postpone the weighing clauses until mid-1899, in return for wage increases. The Government, however, rejected a compromise of its legislation and proposed further amendments to the Act, although the Council rejected them. By 1899 Labor's four coalfields MP's formed the major Labor Party bloc favouring desertion of the Reid Government in favour of Lyne, who promised a Miners' Accident Relief Bill. Another Newcastle MP, and Free Trader, Fegan, also deserted Reid. In 1900 he initiated legislation for accident relief, although he was unsuccessful in gaining eight hours and stricter mines inspection.

Shearers' poor accommodation had been an inducement for the ASU's formation, according to Spence, but the union's weakness made improvement through industrial action unlikely. The pastoral industry was also exempted from general industrial legislation. Consequently, the 1891 Trades Union Congress supported special legislation, and in 1892 the ASU requested health and humane societies to lobby for a Shearers' Accommodation Act, which was a plank in the Riverina District Council's 1894 Platform. However, despite the AWU's position in the Labor Party, the campaign developed slowly until the late 1890s. Shed accommodation was only a temporary circumstance for shearsers, capital improvements were difficult under the circumstances pastoralists faced, and may have led to further wage cuts if enforced by legislation.

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136. Note also Fegan's role in having a Parliamentary Select Committee (including four of Labor's mining MP's) inquire into mining accidents in 1897. Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.197, 215-24.  
137. Spence, Australia's Awakening, pp.45-6.  
138. AF of L Rules and Platform of Riverina District Council, January 1894 (in plank 14); ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.118; Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.70. Re the state of shearers' accommodation, see Chapter 2. 
139. The AWU's 14th AR, January 1900, p.23, claimed that if the men were constantly employed in shearing, the results for shearers' health would have been disastrous.
Bourke Branch, whose landless members shore for longer periods than others, finally initiated intensive AWU lobbying for an Act from 1899. After initial expressions of surprise at the AWU's description of shed conditions, Reid's and Lyne's Labour Ministers (Hogue and Perry respectively) gave sympathetic hearings to union deputations. Together with the pressure on the Labor Party, this ensured minimum sanitary conditions in a Shearers' Hut Accommodation Act, although it was delayed until 1901.\textsuperscript{140}

Seamen's political position was weaker. Amendment of the Merchant Shipping Act failed even to reach Labour's 1891 Platform, possibly because maritime unions' co-operation with the TLC was only recent (although the Platform did include extension of Employers' Liability to seamen). However, in 1893-4 amendment of the Merchant Shipping Act was attempted three times, and rejected twice by the Legislative Council. Following union lobbying, a fourth Bill was passed in 1896, but severely pruned by the Council, which rejected a further 1898 Bill. Despite Council opposition, Lyne finally honoured another of his promises to Labor, with a 1900 Act easing seamen's disciplinary conditions, although strikers remained liable for fines and gaol for disobeying the lawful command of their master.\textsuperscript{141}

Although limited, these specific gains were exceptional in comparison with general legislation.\textsuperscript{142} Furthermore, the most substantial of them

\textsuperscript{140} AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1898, p.4; AWU 13th AR, February 1899, pp.9, 16; AWU 14th AR, January 1900, pp.8, 20, 22-5; AWU 15th AR, January 1901, p.11; AWU 16th AR, January 1902, pp.5-6.


\textsuperscript{142} Hence the prominent place which the miners' and seamen's gains took in the AWU's account of Labor's political successes, AWU 15th AR, January 1901, p.5; AWU 16th AR, January 1902, p.6; AWU Bourke AR, 31 May 1901.
came after Reid's 'reform administration'. The New South Wales record in the 1890s clearly revealed the limitations of industrial legislation as a working class strategy, despite the consolidation of the Labor Party. Reid, in fact, earned Labor Party support cheaply, conforming to its wishes with reform Bills, knowing that the Council would reject or emasculate them, and then justifying limited legislation on the grounds that anything was better than nothing.

Urban working class dissatisfaction with the Parliamentary Party peaked during the most reform-oriented Parliament of the era, 1896-7. This corresponded with the decline of industrial legislation as a high priority for the Parliamentary Party. In October 1896, when defending the MP's at the opening of the Labor Centre and Solidarity Club, McGowen's list of achievements referred predominantly to land tax, and to only one industrial issue. 143 By 1898 even Bourke AWU complained that industrial legislation had 'been swallowed up in the late Federation frenzy'. 144 This dissatisfaction was a consideration in Labor's transfer of its support to Lyne in 1899, for the Party's identification with Reid's reform policy made the change important simply to maintain a separate identity. Of Lyne's four major promises to Labor, however, only mines and navigation legislation represented Labor's old industrial legislation commitments. 145

Labor faced a dilemma, for as Coghlan described the situation,

143. That is, replacement of contractors with direct Government employment on public works, which is discussed in a broader context in Chapters 4 and 9. See Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.151 for the speech, and Chapter 6 for the background of dissatisfaction with MP's over 1896-7.
144. AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1898, p.4.
145. Although early closing legislation for shop assistants, and compulsory arbitration were obviously related, these issues actually confirmed Labor's policy shift, as becomes clear later in this chapter, and in Chapter 10. Cf. Weller, op.cit., pp.14-18. See Chapter 6 for the Parliamentary background.
if every reform proposed during Reid's administration had been carried out, New South Wales would still have been amongst the more backward countries in regard to industrial legislation. As one of the Labour Party said, there was very much to be done before anything approaching a 'fourth-rate millenium' could be brought about.  

McGowen emphasized that Labor only considered the Factory Act a 'first instalment', but as the Upper House whittled away at Reid's Bill, the Party could not contain its disappointment. In its final form, Labor actually opposed the Bill, but without endangering it for, as a bulwark against stronger legislation, it enjoyed strong Parliamentary support. This was Labor's strongest expression of dissatisfaction with limited industrial legislation, for the Factory Act was its major industrial goal, but the unions were also strongly committed to other issues where the Parliamentary Party was more accepting of emasculating amendments. Coghlan praised its 'sensible' consideration of the 'crumbs', rather than losing all by insistence on its full demands, but this was more than a question of mere tactics. The Workman actually criticized Labor MP's who complained about the 1896 legislation. Black's listing of Labor's proud record held even these limited industrial gains of the 1890s up as great achievements in themselves, and AWU political comment in the late 1890s was expressed in similarly inappropriate language. The limitations of Parliament were allowed to mould Labor expectations, rather than Labor affecting greatly the Parliamentary momentum for reform. Whilst industrial legislation had been a focus for working

149. For example, AWU 11th AR, February 1897, p.3; AWU 15th AR, January 1901, p.5; AWU 16th AR, January 1902, p.6; AWU Bourke AR, 31 May 1901. Re Black's claims, see Chapter 6.
class mobilization, it now became a mechanism for emasculation of a class party by absorption into Parliament.

Yet, even in the legislation proposed, the Parliamentary Labor Party's initiative was less than Black claimed when he began building a Labor mythology. From 1892 Premier Dibbs introduced three Land Boilers Inspection Bills. Assuming Labor Party pressure here, it only came after TLC pressure on it. \(^{150}\) Garrard, a Free Trader and 1880s 'labour spokesman', introduced the 1897 Bill, and the unsuccessful 1887, 1890 and 1891 amendments to the Employers' Liability Act. \(^{151}\) Houghton, one of Labor's earliest protectionist rebels, sponsored the 1891-4 Apprenticeship Bills, working closely with the TLC, which explains its reluctance to reject him in the 1894 Labor split. The Reid Government sponsored the Truck Bills, and Merchant Shipping Bills of 1894, 1896 and 1898, although Labor also sponsored Merchant Shipping Bills in 1893 and 1894. \(^{152}\) Whilst Labor's coalfields bloc motivated stronger action over mines legislation, Dibbs, Reid and Lyne also sponsored Bills. Lyne admittedly sought Labor support, but Reid's commitment to mines legislation was strengthened by former Labor coalfields Free Traders, Fegan and Cook, who took major legislative initiatives themselves. Coghlan only slightly exaggerated when he claimed that 'the first steps in factory and shop legislation in Australia owed nothing to the advocacy of the Labour leaders, or to the presence in Parliament of direct Labour representatives'. Victoria and South Australia initiated much of Labor's Platform prior to the

\(^{150}\) TLC Minutes, 4 February 1892.
\(^{151}\) Garrard worked closely with the TLC over the 1890 Bill, TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 12 May 1890.
\(^{152}\) W.A. Murphy, ship's officer and an 1891 Labour member for Balmain, introduced the 1893 and 1894 Bills, but by then he had virtually completed his slide towards the Free Traders. See Nairn, *Civilizing Capitalism*, pp.59, and 240n. re Murphy.
Party's formation, and continued to lead New South Wales in industrial legislation in the 1890s, although they lagged in the consolidation of a Labor Party.  

Disillusioned, especially with the Factory Act over which the Parliamentary Party did little after 1896, the SDC led the agitation for legislative improvements, despite its own decline. It exposed the 1896 Act's limitations, in its exemption of Government employees in the railway workshops and Government Printing Office from its provisions, and in its initial exemption of Newcastle, where the SDC claimed that 'children of tender years' worked in the clothing industry. Given laxness of inspection under the 1896 Act, the SDC also acted as its policeman in the late 1890s. Somewhat rudely, the SDC suggested that inspectors not be accompanied by factory foremen during their inspections. In 1898 it joined the Bakers' in a deputation to the Government over infringements whereby some bakers worked twenty hour shifts, and it supplied the names of 'sweating' laundry employers to the Department of Labour and Industry.  

153. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.2095 (quote), 2197. For the Labor Party in South Australia and Victoria, see articles by Brian Dickey and H. McQueen in Murphy, Labor in Politics, pp.229-52, 293-308. See also Rickard, op.cit., Chapter 4 for Victoria in the 1890s.  


155. Exposure of this situation arose from the SDC's complaint over workers' proximity to unprotected machinery at the Eveleigh workshops, SDC Minutes, 2 and 30 December 1897. The SDC also joined McGowen in a deputation complaining to the Government of poor wages and conditions under the Bogan River scrub cutters' contract, ibid., 8 April 1897.  

156. Deputations to the Labour Minister were promised extension of the Act to Newcastle when funds were voted in the next budget, ibid., 21 April and 14 July 1898.  

157. Ibid., 28 July 1898.  

158. Ibid., 10 and 24 March, 28 July 1898.
pressure on Reid for the Act's extension in 1899 came after SDC pressure on it,\footnote{159} and the increase in anti-sweating agitation in 1899-1901 clearly arose from the re-emergence of urban unionism. However, little came of Reid's promises for extension of the Factory Act in 1898-9. In 1900 the SDC still invited the Department of Labour and Industry 'to evince greater vigilance in safeguarding the Shops and Factories Act from infringement'.\footnote{160}

Labor's commitment to industrial legislation, then, fell far behind the unions', in Parliamentary practice, as well as in the Platform. Despite building unions' agitation in the early nineties for better supervision of scaffolding, Labor ignored the issue.\footnote{161} In early 1900, a building unions' conference extracted a Government promise for improved legislation, but the Labour Council still awaited its fulfilment at the end of 1900.\footnote{162} Dilution of the eight hours' plank on behalf of the rural AWU in 1894, was one of the urban unions' greatest disappointments. The eight hours' campaign had revived in the early 1890s, beginning with the TLC's 1890 circular to all MP's urging support.\footnote{163} But an early wavering of Parliamentary Party support was indicated in 1891 when its Secretary, Houghton, enquired of the TLC's

\footnote{159} See n.s 155-8. Note the SDC's direct approach to the Labour Minister, late in 1898, for amendments to the Act, SDC Report for Half-Year ending 30 June 1899. Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.214, notes Reid's 1899 promise for extension, in response to Party pressure.


\footnote{161} TLC Minutes, 17 December 1891, 17 March 1892. Its absence from the 1891 Platform was perhaps because most building unions had only recently re-affiliated with the TLC.

\footnote{162} The United Labourers' sponsored the conference. Sydney Labour Council (SLC) Minutes, 19 April 1900; Sydney Labour Council Half-Yearly Report, 30 June 1900; Sydney Labour Council Secretary's Half-Yearly Report, 31 December 1900.

\footnote{163} TLC Minutes, 27 November 1890. (This was actually for a Bill before the House.) For the fate of the eight hours' plank in 1894, see Chapter 6.
interpretation of the plank, in the light of 'complexities' involved in its general application. Schey, outside the Party from 1892, presented seven Bills from 1890-7, which explains TLC loyalty to him also in the 1894 Labor split. All Bills failed in the face of strong Upper House opposition, and weak liberal support in the Lower House. In 1896 the PLL urged inclusion of eight hours in the Factory Bill, although by then, even some unions feared losing all if it was included, and the Stonemasons' emphasized the uselessness of legislation without penal provisions. But after 1896 the Party took no interest in the issue.

This contrasted sharply with support for early closing legislation for shop assistants, which was a major issue in Labor's transfer of its Parliamentary support to Lyne. By 1898 Hughes was the Early Closing Association's (ECA) Parliamentary spokesman, and in that year the Government presented a Bill, which Council rejected. Reid, however, preferred limitation of shop assistants' hours, which would have been difficult to enforce, to prescribing shopping hours, and withdrew a further Bill in 1899. An Act was subsequently passed under Lyne in 1899, and fully extended to country towns in 1900, following agitation from the Labour Council and Newcastle ECA.

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164. TLC Minutes, 5 November 1891.
165. Prominently, the Furniture Trade Union, SDC Minutes, 16 and 29 July 1896. Note the SDC's close watch of Schey's 1895 Bill, ibid., 14 March 1895. By then, the Printers' also sought an eight hours' clause, disguised as a safety measure, Hagan, Printers and Politics, p.121. Schey presented Bills in 1890, 1891, 1892, 1895 (twice), 1896 and 1897. See Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.103, re his relationship with the TLC.
166. In reference to Schey's 1891 Bill, from which they recommended withdrawal of support. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 7 December 1891.
167. SLC Minutes, 1 June 1899; AWU 15th AR, January 1901, p.5; AWU Bourke AR, 31 May 1901. Early closing was one of Lyne's major promises for Labor support in 1899. See Fitzhardinge, op.cit., pp.73-4, 76; and for the Act itself, Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, pp.194-6.
Superficially, early closing extended Labour principles of reducing work hours and protecting specially disadvantaged work groups. Shop assistants worked very long hours. Industrial organization was difficult for them, with numerous employers, many small suburban family stores, and a plentiful labour supply attracted by white collar status. ECA's existed intermittently from the 1860s, but had been confined largely to skilled drapers, and only in rare cases, such as in Wagga Wagga, had they achieved much success. In 1888 Schey ranked early closing in importance with eight hours and a Factory Act for Labour. Shop assistants held a mass meeting and circulated a petition in 1892, and the TLC supported early closing Bills in 1890 and 1891, and the Labor Party supported one in 1894.

Nevertheless, early closing did not appear on Labor's Platform then, and ECA's sat uneasily with the labour movement. As their name indicates, ECA's organized exclusively over hours, as political pressure groups, rather than unions. Notwithstanding organizational difficulties, their 'shabby gentility' pre-disposed shop assistants against unionism, and helped them gain bourgeois patronage. Some employers joined the ECA's, for reduction of hours by legislation would remove suburban retailers' competitive advantages over city department stores, which

168. A Wagga ECA gained a Wednesday half-holiday as early as 1878, with support from the Wagga Wagga Advertiser, which opposed the general eight hour day. However, even in 1889 the local ECA required vigilance against shopkeepers' encroachments. Swan, op.cit., pp.127, 159. Sydney drapers had also gained an eight hour day circa 1880. For the history of ECA's generally, see Fry, op.cit., pp.264-86. Note that Goulburn had a Saturday Half-Holiday Association in 1873, and by 1885, a Friday Half-Holiday Association, Wyatt, op.cit., p.164.

169. TLC Minutes, 4 December 1890; 17 September (where the Balmain Labourers' strongly supported an Act), and 8 October 1891; 7 January 1892. Smailes, Labor MP for Granville, introduced the 1894 Bill. The earlier Bills were introduced by A. Allen, a Free Trade MP for Paddington. For Schey, Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.27.
often worked shorter hours already. In 1883, after the failure of a widely based campaign of 'moral suasion', the EGA altered its strategy and joined the TLC, although this alienated proprietor members. In 1889 a Shop Employees' Union was formed, and it was at that stage that the other unions began to support them. However, shop assistants' organization and the early closing issue receded from 1894.

Labor's revived interest in 1898 coincided with the re-formation of an ECA which reverted to the pressure group strategy, remaining aloof from the SDC and gaining support from upper middle class patrons and other political parties. Labor's role, therefore, was similar to that over women's suffrage, typifying its policy shift under a non-working class leadership. Hughes and Black encountered strong opposition to inclusion of early closing on the Platform. Opponents claimed that shop assistants were anti-Labor, which Hughes and Black did not dispute, but as they made clear, support for early closing was designed to attract white collar votes. This was an essential step in building Labor's populist electoral alliance, particularly given weak working class support in the city. Small shopkeepers also

170. Fry's comments in this regard are based on Victoria, but he argues that it was similar in NSW, op.cit., pp.265-73. See also Fitzhardinge, op.cit., p.76, re shop assistants 'gentility'.
171. The SMH, 1 March 1882, had announced the revitalised 'moral suasion' campaign. See Fry, op.cit., p.280.
172. A Shop Employees' delegate announced the new push for legislation soon after the Union's formation. TLC Minutes, 11 September 1890. Note however that the Secretary claimed his Union still regarded early closing as its 'primary business'. Submission to RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.151.
174. Fitzhardinge, op.cit., p.63; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.174. However, cf. the condemnation of police prosecution of Sunday shop-openers, who presumably increased shop assistants' hours, in the Australian Workman, 17 July 1897. Hughes, of course, had been a shopkeeper himself.
eventually supported the Act, although some organized electorally against Hughes in 1901. However, despite Labour Council support, the greatest opposition to the Act's enforcement persisted in working class areas.\(^{175}\)

Two further industrial planks concerned Labor, although neither involved legislation. Abolition of public works contracting achieved considerable success in the 1890s, but it had broader implications for state socialism discussed in Chapter Nine. 'Abolition of the unemployed' appeared, rather late, on the 1896 Fighting Platform,\(^{176}\) as a statement of principle rather than a programmatic commitment. Labour really did not know what to do. Traditional demands, public works and relief for the needy, remained Labour's major responses, but they were hardly adequate for the crisis, especially since cessation of loan funds curtailed public works. Labour policy for establishment of a Government Labour Bureau did little to help the unemployed when it was gained, and the Party even whitewashed the Bureau's strike-breaking role. Village settlement or state farms, discussed more fully in Chapter 11, could never have been a solution to massive unemployment, and the right to mine on private property, which the Party also supported, could at

\(^{175}\) Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, p.197; and for complaints over evasion of the Act, Sydney Labour Council Secretary's Half-Yearly Report, 31 December 1900. Fitzhardinge, op.cit., p.115, refers to Hughes' 1901 shopkeeper opponent. Note that soon after legislation removed the ECA's restricted rationale, a Shop Assistants' Union re-appeared in March 1902, Shop Assistants' Union of NSW, Rules, Sydney, 1907.

\(^{176}\) Number 7 of eight planks. AW, 1 February 1896. This remained until 1898, Worker, 5 March 1898.
best provide a subsistence income for most prospectors. Essentially, the Party only made occasional gestures to the unemployed, often under union pressure.

The unions, however, were also ill-equipped to deal with unemployment, which struck at their very existence. Their financial base was weakened even if they allowed the unemployed to retain non-paying membership. In 1893 the Stonemasons, hard-hit by unemployment, formed a Committee to draft a 'surplus labour' scheme, but without result. The TLC even had difficulty collecting unemployment statistics from affiliates, who were reluctant to reveal their weakness. In 1893 its Surplus Labour Committee widely distributed a Report which added nothing to Labor's general industrial policy except union wages and a vague call for 'co-operation', which the Workman's theoretical meanderings extended into 'abolition of money'. An Intercolonial Labour Conference in Sydney in 1894 only added

177. This summarises organized Labour's total response to unemployment, although most of the planks would have appeared in any one unemployed policy. Apart from examples below, calls for public works are legion, for example: TLC Minutes, 9 October 1890, 11 August 1891, 28 January 1892, 12 October 1893; Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 9 June 1890, 19 December 1892, 16 January and 16 May 1893, 11 February 1895; ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.42; AW, 23 March 1895. Spence, predictably, added land reform to these remedies, TLC Minutes, 17 November 1892. For Government responses, and the Labour Bureau, see Chapter 4.

178. For example: when its language prompted the Government's return of an SDC letter protesting against the 'inhuman conduct' of closing the unemployed shelter shed at Woolloomooloo, so that the woolclip could be protected against the weather, the Party pursued the matter, TLC Minutes, 21 September and 5 October 1893. Also, lobbying unsuccessfully, over the level of relief wages at Botany Bay, ibid., 29 March, 5 and 12 April 1894. And, the joint SDC Surplus Labour Committee/Parliamentary Party deputations to Reid for relief works, AW, 8 May and 12 June 1897.

179. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 30 January 1893.

180. For example, TLC Minutes, 23 February 1892.
collection of unemployed statistics to this policy. The TLC's attempt at co-operative tendering for Government contracts was on such a small scale that, even if it had been successful, it offered no hope for the unemployed. Otherwise, the TLC concentrated on instances of severe hardship, expressions of indignation at Government inaction, and the level of relief work wages.

Party and union helplessness reinforced the unemployed's tradition of independent organization, in which socialists developed a strong base. Although under moderate editorship, the Workman praised the unemployed's organization 'whilst Parliament debated and Trade Unions and Political Labor League Conferences discussed', and dismissed Schey's proposal for a Royal Commission as mere tinkering. Even prior to the Maritime Strike, unemployed deputations requested Government relief works. Union action was largely a response to this independent organization. A deputation from the 'Executive Committee

181. The Surplus Labour Committee also called for a National Bank, which was only remotely connected with unemployment, and is discussed in Chapter 9. TLC Minutes, 13 April 1893. AU ran a series of articles discussing 'co-operation' in the vaguest of utopian terms, 20 March, 1 and 15 May 1897. For the 1894 Labour Conference, see Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.2019-20. Note that the Surplus Labour Committee Report was promoted strongly by the TLC President when he gave evidence before the Select Committee of Inquiry into the operations of the Labour Bureau, TLC Minutes, 25 May 1893.

182. For example: request to the Government to use part of its stables as an unemployed shelter, TLC Minutes, 17 March 1892; organization of a public meeting to protest against the Government's method of dealing with the unemployed, ibid., 7 April 1892; drawing 'the attention of the workers to the ostentatious reception accorded Lord Hampden by the Ministry in marked contrast to the treatment meted out to the unemployed of this country', SDC Minutes, 7 November 1895. See also n.178.

183. See Chapter 9.

184. AU, 8 February 1896, 19 June 1897.

185. Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.93.
of the Unemployed' in January 1892 inspired the TLC's first involvement in the agitation, in a joint deputation to the Premier. As unemployment worsened in 1893-4, and disaffection with the Labor Party grew, demonstrations and rallies at Queen's Square became regular occurrences.

Early in 1895, LEL, socialist and miners' delegates met in Sydney, urging the Government to negotiate a large loan for public works, and after the elections, Labor made support for Reid conditional upon this programme. But despite its enthusiasm for Labor's action, the Workman was cynical over Reid's promises. He responded with a gesture: an increase in relief works, and upgrading of some railway lines. After a brief lull during the 1896 upturn in the labour market, unemployed agitation revived in 1897. The SDC's Surplus Labour Committee, working with some Labor MP's, gained a further small expansion of relief works. But in 1898 unemployment was not even an election issue, although it persisted at high levels.

More than anything else, its failure to develop a policy over unemployment, the most immediate working class concern of the 1890s,

186. TLC Minutes, 28 January 1892. Also note its allowing five delegates from the 'Executive Committee of the Unemployed' to address a General Meeting soon afterwards, ibid., 23 February 1892; and TLC delegates' attendance at an unemployment conference organized by Christian Socialist, the Reverence P. Moses, ibid., 31 January 1895. The Stonemasons' also attended this Conference, Sydney Lodge Minutes, 11 February 1895.

187. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.139. For disaffection with the Labor Party, including over Houghton's role in Government employment of unemployed at low wages, see Chapter 6.

188. AW, 23 March 1895; 30 May 1896 (where the editor was more optimistic over Reid's promises); 1 and 22 May 1897; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.2029-30, 2035, 2038-9, 2041.

189. A Manly sewerage scheme, and swamp draining at Moree promised by Reid, seem to have been slow getting under way. AW, 8 May 1897, 12 June 1897; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.2041-2, 2045.
revealed Labor's fatal weaknesses. Whilst the unions, by their very nature, were also unable to cope with unemployment, their commitment to industrial legislation had acted as a catalyst for class mobilization which forced reforms, limited as they were. But, allowing itself to be absorbed into Parliament, the Labor Party acquiesced in a liberal response to working class demands, a holding operation, paradoxically dismantling the working class policy and movement to which the Party owed its existence, after unemployment had disintegrated its industrial organization. After jettisoning the industrial legislation programme, republican nationalism, largely at a rhetorical level, became important to distinguish Labor from Liberalism, and to attract non-working class support for a populist electoral base, which was so essential after working class demobilization. Under these circumstances it became imperative that Labor develop a more positive social policy in new areas. This attempt is what distinguished Laborism. It is the subject of the next three chapters.
CHAPTER 9

LABOR AND SOCIALISM
Prior to its full retreat from a traditional social democratic policy the New South Wales Labor Party was influenced by socialism, among a number of radical 'isms' which it attracted. This is evident from various planks in its Platform during the 1890s. Socialist influence in the Labor Party was almost exclusively of a 'state socialist' variety, although more libertarian socialist currents did exist.¹ State socialists sought to displace capitalism by an extension of the state.

Historians have disagreed over the nature and extent of socialist influence on the early Labor Party. Confusion stems from the tendency of most historians to discuss socialism on an abstract, ideological level, divorced from the social and economic context in which it took root. This applies equally to the two major interpretations concerning early Labor socialism.

The most recent of these has depreciated the genuine socialist content of state socialism,² especially since the colonies had a long tradition of state intervention in the economy. After almost eighty years of the welfare state, it is now clear that a mere extension of the state's role need not produce socialism. However, historical perspective is important. Hobsbawm argues,³ in the British context, that since laissez-faire was the dominant nineteenth century political

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2. See McQueen, A New Britannia, Chapter 15.
ideology of capitalism, it should not be surprising that extension of the state was the major political alternative offered by socialism.

Laissez-faire was also the dominant political ideology of colonial capitalism, even if, in practice, capital sought state intervention to support and supplement, rather than displace, private enterprise. It depended on the nature and direction of the state's intervention as to whether capital supported it, or cried 'encroachment upon free enterprise'. Similarly, in the labour movement it is the nature and trajectory of state intervention sought, which distinguishes between socialists and non-socialists. All Labor men supported state intervention of some kind, but only some thought in terms of the displacement of capital, in the short or long term.

The older historiographical school blurs this distinction. As a result, it exaggerates the socialist influence in early Labor, often labelling union militants, and all supporters of particular state socialist, or even radical democratic, policies, as socialists, without reference to their overall aim: the displacement, or not, of capitalism. Ford's book is the most extreme example of this approach. For example, J.C. Watson is identified with the socialists on the basis of a contemporary's description of him as a 'circumspect socialist', and his siding with the socialists on some issues, such as Party unity, and 'elective magistrates': socialist by association. But there is no evidence of his desire to displace capitalism.

These themes are developed in the remainder of this chapter by an examination of socialist planks in the Labor Platform, and by an examination of the socialist groupings in the labour movement. The

ambit of socialist influence in the early Labor Party is defined by relating it to the social formation outlined in earlier chapters.

Socialism in Labor's Platform

Labor's clearest commitment to socialism was announced at the 1897 Conference, which added 'nationalization of the land and the whole means of production distribution and exchange' to the Platform. This plank remained until 1905, when the socialists' attempt to commit Labor to a socialist objective was defeated in favour of a much more moderate objective: 'the collective ownership of monopolies'. Thereafter, the struggle over Party commitment to socialism was largely conducted at Federal level.

The 1897 commitment was weak. Despite the efforts of its supporters to have it as the first plank of the Fighting Platform, the plank was buried in the General Platform, as a mere 'statement of principle'. At the 1898 Conference it was deliberately pushed even further into the background, to the extent that some commentators thought that the plank had been rejected outright.

Nevertheless, the 1897 plank rested upon a consistent Labor principle of 'extension of the state as an employer'. This was a plank from 1891 in one form or another, including 'through the medium of local self-governing bodies'. Although the 1892 Conference rejected a plank that 'the State should be the only employer of labour', by 11-7, the 1895 Conference favoured ownership by the State or local governing bodies of such works as railways, tramways,

6. AN, 30 January 1897; Worker, 30 January 1897.
8. SMH, 28 January 1898. See below re 1898 Conference.
water supply, public lighting or other works
for the good of the community.

After the branches failed to ratify this plank, it was amended to become

extensions of the principle of the Government
acting as an employer by empowering local
bodies to establish industries and
institutions. 10

This principle had a broad basis of support amongst the unions. 11

It merely extended traditional union demands for local award of
Government contracts (a plank since 1891), and for 'standard' wages
and conditions from Government contractors. 12

Originally, the unions
had sought Government regulation of contractors in order to ensure
standard wages. But during the 1890s their emphasis changed to
abolition of sub-letting of Government contracts, and eventually, to
abolition of contracting. In 1896 'all Government work to be executed
in the colony without the intervention of Contractors' entered the
Fighting Platform. 13 This demand suited the circumstances of the 1890s.

Government regulation of contractors was less likely to succeed because
of the intensified pressure on contractors to reduce costs, when they
competed for greatly reduced public works funds. The unions were
industrially weakened, but the Labor Party might gain


11. The TLC, of course, was responsible for the 1891 plank. Note also, J. Grant's (Stonemasons') successful motion (38-27) in support of the extension of tram lines to 'extend the principle of the Government as an employer', as well as to improve travelling facilities. TLC Minutes, 11 September 1890. Grant was also a single-taxer.


concessions in this area when it held the balance of Parliamentary power. The issue involved Government administrative policy rather than legislation, and hence did not have to face a hostile Upper House. When the labour market improved again the Government might even become a wage leader.

The link between union strategy and state socialism was explicit at the 1895 and 1898 Labor Conferences. In 1895 an anti-contractor plank was moved with the socialist plank, which was amended by the branches. In 1898, when Conference effectively disarmed the Platform's socialist content, it also dropped the 1896 anti-contractor plank from the Fighting Platform, although it remained in the General Platform.\(^{14}\)

This link with a traditional union demand was both a strength and a weakness. Whereas the union demand provided a base on which to build support for the state socialist plank, the two were not interchangeable. To the extent that the state socialist plank became clear-cut socialist policy and distanced itself from a simple union strategy, support waned.

In practice, the connection between extension of state activity and municipal government also weakened Labor's socialism. At the November 1893 Labor Conference, where 'local government on a democratic basis' entered the Fighting Platform, socialist influence was explicit in the Central Committee's preamble to this plank: 'whereas...the gradual substitution of public co-operation for private enterprise can best be effected on a municipal scale...'.\(^{15}\) In Britain a similar connection had emerged in the nineteenth century, but there the role of local government was far more significant than in Australia.\(^{16}\)

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14. SMH, 29 January 1895; Worker, 15 June 1895; 5 March 1898.
15. SMH, 10 November 1893.
we saw in Chapter 7, Labor's leadership successfully discouraged the spontaneous political organization which occurred at a municipal level from the early 1890s. The connection with socialism was perhaps an added motivation for the leadership's suspicions of municipal Labor organization. Yet, even in Britain, where the municipal socialist momentum met with more success, the result was not a threat to capitalism, but the development of public utilities at a municipal level: 'gas and water socialism'. In Australia these utilities were usually provided by a higher level of government, without endangering capitalism.

Many of the more specific socialist-inspired planks which appeared in Labor's Platform fall into the category of 'gas and water', or 'welfare' socialism, or within the tradition of the colonial state's developmental role. Together with the policies already discussed, the following planks represented the full extent of socialist influence.

1891
1) A national system of water conservation and irrigation;
2) All iron required for State use to be produced from State mines;
3) Nationalization of all coal, silver, copper and iron mines;
4) Absorption of the unemployed by the establishment of State farms and labour colonies;
5) The establishment of State mills for sugar, grains and other produce;
6) The establishment of a State Export Department;

17. CF ASL 1890 plank, no.8: 'Municipal control of gas and similar works and municipal construction of dwellings'. AW, 18 October 1890.
1897 7) Division of the country into medical districts, in charge of competent Government medical officers, whose services shall be free; 
8) The establishment of State woollen mills and clothing factories.

The high point of socialist influence in Labor's Platform was reached over 1896-7. After 1897 the most explicit socialist planks (3, 4, 8) suffered a fate similar to that for full nationalization. But whilst all socialists supported these planks, one did not need to be a socialist to do so in most cases. Some planks, such as 5 and 6 could even attract rural support from the AWU, which was usually not an ally of socialism.

Socialist influence in the Labor Party, therefore, was most significant when it was based upon an amalgam of interests, rural and traditional union, which tended to weaken the socialist content of socialist-inspired policies. One of the most consistent and important examples of this was the policy for a National Bank. Its support rested upon strong populist, as well as socialist, influences.

A National Bank

The socialists had advocated bank nationalization since 1890, and a national bank was included on Labor's 1891 Platform. But at the beginning of the 1890s the banks were not a major issue for the labour movement. In 1890 the TLC displayed little interest in the Federal Co-operative Association's scheme for a 'people's bank'. The main momentum for Labor's national bank policy came from the financial crisis.

20. TLC Minutes, 23 and 30 December 1890; 15 January and 9 February 1891; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 10 January 1890.
of mid-1891 to mid-1893, which provided fertile ground for socialist influence.

The financial crisis marked the beginning of the 1890s depression, and was its most spectacular event, if not the immediate cause of the wider crisis. It began with the collapse of the Sydney and Melbourne land boom, which had begun in 1887. The Sydney boom ended in 1888, but because of the intercolonial structure of finance capital, the more spectacular Melbourne collapse in 1889 affected all colonies. As land prices rose, land and mortgage companies had increasingly replaced the sounder banks and building societies in land speculation. When prices fell, these companies were unable to meet loan and deposit liabilities. This panicked a run on building societies' deposits from early 1891. From mid-1891 to February 1892, over twenty societies and companies failed in New South Wales alone. The banks also began to feel the pressure because of the state of public confidence, because of their association with building societies, and because the Associated Banks of Victoria refused to guarantee substantial aid to competitors. In a second wave of collapses between late 1891 and mid-1893, only ten out of sixty-four colonial banks avoided temporary closure.

The effect was disastrous: 'at least half of all bank deposits in the country were frozen, and at least half the note circulation ceased to be freely negotiable'. Business was paralyzed, unemployment increased, and hardship was compounded by the freezing of savings. All

banks adopted reconstruction schemes, which enabled most to re-open soon afterwards, although those with the greatest losses should have liquidated. In most cases a new bank was established, retaining the original name. One third of depositors' claims were paid in shares, with payment of the remainder deferred for up to five years. Legislation facilitated reconstruction. The New South Wales Government's declaration of bank-notes as legal tender in May 1893 marked the end of the crisis, although Coghlan felt that such action was 'violating the elementary principles of sound finance'.

Criticism of the banks was widespread. In Victoria, where the worst of the crisis had occurred, public meetings and letters to the press complained of the unfair burden which reconstruction placed on small depositors. The Bulletin suggested connections between some Government members and shady bank dealings, concluding that 'the only remedy...seems to be revolution'. But the establishment press was milder in its criticism. The Sydney Morning Herald did not consider a national bank seriously because it relied on federation, which it saw as far off in the future. It criticized the banks for their lack of mutual support, blaming the Victorian land boom, public panic, and the British press for the crisis. The Melbourne Age and Argus took a similar stance. None found serious fault in the financial structure which spawned the crisis and allowed near-fraudulent practices on the part of some institutions. Instead, the establishment press attempted to restore confidence in the banking system. Consequently, it applauded the reconstruction schemes.

23. 26 August 1893. For Victoria, see Gollan, Commonwealth Bank, pp.34-40.
24. ibid., pp.34-6. Note ASU Bourke AR, 31 December 1893, p.1: 'a subsidized press has striven to restore confidence in the busted banks'.
Labour's criticism was understandably stronger given the hardship caused to small depositors, and the fact that the working class bore the brunt of the wider crisis, in terms of unemployment. Even Seamen's Union funds had been frozen by one bank's suspension of payments during the 1893 Seamen's strike. The banks were accused of 'gross mismanagement' and the 'locking up of a people's money against their will'. The Workman referred to the 'bankers' strike' of 1893.

However, Labour's criticism of the banks went much further than this. Many blamed the banks for the depression, and believed that they controlled Government. It was remembered that one banker, McMillan, had been overtly hostile to the unions when he was Acting Premier in 1890. The Worker described bank reconstruction as a fraud against small depositors: 'as a means of robbery it is much simpler than burglary...especially when the reconstructers run the Government'. At a public meeting, Holman claimed that the country's real Government resided in 'the parlours of our financial institutions', and the ASU's Bourke Branch noted that the 'vultures who masquerade under the guise of bank directors could get a Bank Issue Bill through [Parliament] in a single night', whilst reform legislation was continually delayed.

Criticism persisted after the bank crash. In 1897 the Solidarity Club discussed co-operative and people's banks, and the Workman's critique extended to the new Government savings banks, through which 'the worker funds the capitalists' capital'. The banks had become the bête noire

27. 29 April, 6 May 1893.
28. ibid., 3 June 1893.
30. 1 May 1897; and 22 May 1897, re Solidarity Club.
Labour's policy response to the bank crash was immediate. In February 1892 the ASU's Wagga Branch proposed the establishment of a Labor Bank, which did not proceed because the ASU lacked the necessary finance. By 1893 the TLC supported a national bank, and in 1894 the Stonemasons' helped organize a conference on the establishment of a people's bank. From 1896 a national bank occupied second position in Labor's Fighting Platform. Socialists supported this policy as a first step towards nationalization. But the elevation of this policy to the Fighting Platform coincided with the AWU's rise to power in the Labor Party. Despite strong support for the policy throughout the labour movement, the AWU's role was central to its form and prominence.

The AWU had a special interest in banks for two reasons. First, it saw a national bank as a source of cheap credit for farmers. As an MP representing a farming electorate, Edward O'Sullivan had advocated a national bank to aid selectors in 1885. After the bank crash, rural credit was a major topic at the New South Wales and Victorian Government inquiries into banking, where rural interests were well-represented. In 1892 the conference which established the Farmers' & Settlers' Association adopted a state bank on its Platform, clearly with easy rural credit in mind. As we saw in Chapter 6, the FSA

31. ASU 6th AR, February 1892, p.66.
32. TLC Minutes, 13 April 1893; Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 27 August 1894.
33. AW, 1 February 1896.
34. A National Bank was no.8 of the ASL's 'Preparatory Measures' for full nationalization in its 1896 Platform. Ford, op.cit., Appendix E, p.298.
35. Mansfield, op.cit., p.69.
represented a political threat to Labor's large rural flank, the AWU.
In its attempts to woo the selector, the AWU emphasized his vulnerability to 'the banks, the land sharks, the lawyers, and the monopolists' and storekeeper-cum-'wheat ringer', who 'step in and reap the fruit of other men's toil'. Even before the FSA's 1892 Conference, Arthur Rae, of the AWU, suggested that 'by a strong combination of the Farmers' and the Labor Unions, we could succeed in establishing a State Bank to make advances on reasonable terms to those requiring a little working capital'.

Secondly, finance capital played a central role in the pastoral industry. The AWU noted that banks (a generic term, including pastoral companies in this case) 'more or less directly' had land ownership in the 1890s, because they had increasingly foreclosed on defaulting pastoral mortgages, and directly supervised stations. The AWU's Bourke Branch hoped in 1893 and 1896 that a strike against shearing rate reductions would bring the banks themselves to their knees. The AWU recognised that the banks were largely responsible for the employers' hardened policy against the rural unions in the 1890s.

However, the AWU's response was to idealise the squatter. For example, William Lane, the Queensland socialist and bushworkers' organizer, wrote in The Hummer in 1892:

...some squatters try to act fairly...some of these would even like to see everybody on their runs happy, intelligent and prosperous, only they have got to meet their liabilities to the bank, and so can't do what they would if they

38. Hummer, 30 January and 6 February 1892.
39. Ibid., 30 January 1892.
40. GLU 5th AR, February 1894, Secretary's Report, p.4.
41. AWU 9th AR, February 1895, p.24; ASU Wagga 7th AR, 31 December 1893, p.5; ASU Bourke AR, 31 December 1893, p.1; AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1896, p.8. See also Spence, Australia's Awakening, pp.72, 96; and History of the AWU, p.45.
could. The squatter is just as much the slave of circumstances as the bush worker. It is notorious that the old-time squatter, who wasn't under the thumb of the banks, was a better man than the present squatter who is mortgaged to the eyebrows. At any rate the old-time squatter showed up better. This was because he was more free to be what he liked to be.  

This outlook produced populism rather than socialism.

The 'middleman', rather than a capitalist class, became the enemy:

...the man who stands between the worker and natural opportunities on the one hand, and between the worker and the results of his labour on the other hand.

Bankers were likened to pawnbrokers. Apart from the 'interest-monger', or financier,

a variety of artificial aids are called into existence - the commercial traveller, the shopkeeper, the agent etc. The cost of production is enormously increased as it must where six men do the work of one, and the consumer gets no advantage.

The Worker criticized socialists for not recognizing financial sweaters as the real taskmasters. The country was being run for the benefit of a few over-fed monopolists...and a host of British bank shareholders, who draw their dividends from the produce of our labour.

Even the capitalists were victims of this system, and 'of course to keep their profits up the companies have to reduce wages - thus "Labor pays for all"'.

This is the language of much of the contemporary popular radical
literature. Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, a widely read socialist utopia, describes banks as 'the heart of the business system', the 'life-blood' of capitalism.  

Gollan notes the importance of overseas populist influences of this type, particularly the futuristic *Caesar's Column*. Its author, Ignatius Donnelly, was a leader of the United States Populist Party, which blamed a conspiracy of 'the Money Power' for farmers' trade and financial difficulties. *The Worker*, which placed Donnelly high on its recommended reading list, and *The Bulletin*, which praised his book, regularly employed Donnelly's language and symbolism. Henry Lawson even prophesized for Australia the apocalyptic social upheaval which Donnelly depicted engulfing the evil plutocracy.

This tradition persisted long afterwards in the Labor Party. In 1917, Frank Anstey, prominent in Labor's left, stated in his *Kingdom of Shylock*, that:

> The 'Money Power' is something more than Capitalism. It is its product, and yet its master. 'Capitalism', in its control of the great agencies of production, is observable and understandable. The other lurks in vaults and banking chambers, masquerading its operations in language that mystifies and dazzles.

Jack Lang's rhetoric against the British bondholders in the 1930s, and the momentum for Labor's attempted nationalization of the banks in 1949, were derived largely from this tradition.

But until the 1940s, Labor's national bank policy stopped well short of a socialist policy for nationalization. Even Holman, as the

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Socialist League's representative before the 1892 New South Wales Parliamentary Select Committee of Inquiry into banking, spoke of banks as 'middlemen', and avoided nationalization in his recommendations. Instead, he envisaged a national bank as a source of cheap credit, and hoped that it would eventually displace private banks because of the public's greater confidence in state enterprise, and the state bank's ability to offer a salary high enough to attract the best management. In 1902 the ALP adopted a plank for a 'Commonwealth Bank of Deposit and Issue'. The New South Wales Branch of the Party was unsuccessful in extending this to bank nationalization in 1905. At the ALP's 1908 Conference, King O'Malley successfully advocated that the plank become a high priority. He relied strongly on socialist support. Senator Arthur Rae, for example, spoke of the proposed Bank as a first step towards socialism. But the proposal was perfectly consistent with a much more conservative economic tradition, dating back to Ricardo, which saw the need for a national bank to regulate a modern financial system, to ensure the stability of a capitalist economy.

In order to understand the weakness of the socialist impact on a policy which one might have expected would be particularly susceptible to socialist influence in the circumstances of the 1890s, it is necessary to examine the nature of the socialists themselves.

Socialists and Labor

The Australian Socialist League (ASL) was the major organized socialist force in New South Wales. It was formed in 1887, against a background of intensified class conflict and radical intellectual

ferment. But it functioned essentially as a debating society at first, with no more than seventy members during the 1880s, many of whom had a British or Continental background. During the 1890 Maritime Strike the ASL burst into activity. Membership increased, with branches even appearing in some country towns. But ASL membership consisted predominantly of small independent men, or members of the 'salariat', such as W. Holman (master cabinetmaker), E.J. Brady (clerk/poet), G. Beeby (journalist), Thomas Batho (printer/journalist), Hughes (shopkeeper), and George Black (journalist), who joined during, or soon after, the 1890 strike. Many were also Republicans or Single Taxers, but few had experience in the organized labour movement. Indeed, some ASLers considered the unions of little value in building socialism.

Prior to 1890, therefore, the ASL was not influential in the labour movement. W.G. Higgs, a journalist ASL member, became editor of the TLC's new journal, The Trades and Labour Advocate, in 1889, but this did not significantly increase ASL influence. 'Extension of the government as an employer', and 'land nationalization', were included in the TLC Advocate's platform, but these showed, respectively, trade union and single tax, as much as socialist, inspiration. The TLC followed a policy of neutrality between the ASL and the Single Tax League. Early in 1890 it declined an invitation to an ASL rally over

53. Except where otherwise indicated, the following summary of the early ASL, over the next two pages, is based largely upon O'Farrell, 'The ASL and the Labour Movement', op.cit., pp.152-5, 158-62; and Ford, op.cit., pp.37-8, 54-8, 77-81.
54. For example, Goulburn, in 1891, Wyatt, op.cit., p.164.
55. See W.M. Hughes, Crusts and Crusades. Tales of Bygone Days, Sydney, 1947, pp.51-76; Fitzhardinge, op.cit., pp.13-27, 29-33; Evatt, op.cit., pp.6-7, 18-21, 23, although this is rather coy about the ASL.
Russian treatment of political prisoners, surprisingly, since the TLC had a liberal tradition of support for such issues.

Nevertheless, the ASL gained credibility in the labour movement because of its practical co-operation with the unions during the Maritime Strike, its radical appeal at a time of such social upheaval, and its advocacy of a labour party and the 'sinking' of the fiscal issue. Early in the strike the ASL organized public meetings. Gradually, it integrated these efforts with the TLC, providing organizers and speakers for meetings. ASL prestige was enhanced by its support for Brennan, the official TLC candidate in the October 1890 by-election for West Sydney. Higgs became editor of the TLC's new journal, the Australian Workman, in October 1890. Under the next two editors, Brady and Black, the Workman remained under direct socialist influence until April 1892. From late 1890 a number of socialist delegates appeared on the TLC, some of whom were, or became, ASL members. These are shown in Table 1. Although a small group, they were energetic, and influential delegates, judging by the high proportion of Executive positions held amongst them.

56. Although only by a majority of one, TLC Minutes, 1 May 1890; SMH, 2 May 1890. TLC Advocate business may be traced in TLC Minutes, 2 and 29 May, and 27 June 1890.
57. AW, 24 and 26 September, and 25 October 1890.
58. Although Ford (op.cit., p.59) claims that Fox, Black's successor as Workman editor, was also a socialist, there is no evidence for this, 'particularly in the light of his later objections to the Australian Socialist League'. French, op.cit., p.112.
Table 1

Socialist Delegates to the TLC, 1890-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Other Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Hepher</td>
<td>Tailors'</td>
<td>TLC Parliamentary Committee and Executive, early 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.V. Downey</td>
<td>Licensed Drivers'</td>
<td>TLC Executive, 1890-1; and Parliamentary Committee, late 1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Coll</td>
<td>Furniture Trade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.H. McNamara</td>
<td>Navvies'</td>
<td>ASL Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Healey</td>
<td>Navvies'</td>
<td>Future ASL Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Thompson*</td>
<td>Stonemasons'</td>
<td>TLC Parliamentary Committee, early 1891; Executive, late 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Hart†</td>
<td>Balmain Labourers'</td>
<td>TLC Vice-President, early 1890; Executive, early 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.O. Moroney</td>
<td>Tobacco Workers'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(from 1891)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Bassford (1891)</td>
<td>Boot Trade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Lindsay</td>
<td>Boot Trade</td>
<td>ASL President, 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Holman (1892)</td>
<td>Furniture Trade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A. Thompson is not to be confused with J. Thomson, a PLL Executive member in 1898 and Labor member for Newcastle from 1895. Historians have often confused the two. Confusion has been exacerbated by the various insertions or deletions of 'p' in both names, to the extent that one might be excused for thinking there were four individuals involved.

†Hart had been a delegate for some time but did not appear to become aligned with the ASL until 1891-2.

Source: TLC Minutes, August 1890-January 1892.

The TLC/ASL connection was strengthened in 1891-2. Three ASLers were 'introduced as visitors' to the TLC in February 1891. At a joint TLC/ASL function, J.D. Fitzgerald was welcomed home from Britain, whence the TLC had sent him to gather support during the 1890 strike.

59. Most remained delegates for some time after this, except Bassford, and Holman, who became, briefly, a delegate in January 1892.
Two ASLers joined a maritime unions' deputation to the Premier over the franchise, ASL speakers participated in a union rally at the Domain in support of striking Queensland shearers, and the TLC decided to assist in the sale of Mrs. Bredt's pamphlet, 'Home Talks on Socialism'. The ASL's anti-sweating demonstration in February 1891 complemented the TLC's campaign over this issue. From April 1891 the ASL was also active in the formation of LELs. Some ASLers gained Executive positions in the inner-city Leagues, which gave the ASL a significant conference presence in 1892. In that year its prestige was further enhanced by its organization of large demonstrations against Government intervention in the Broken Hill strike. In November 1892 the TLC accepted an ASL invitation to a lecture on socialism by Holman. This was repeated the following year.

However, ASL infiltration of the TLC remained limited. Early in 1891 Hart was beaten into third place for the TLC's Presidency, and the ASL lost one Executive position in 1892. A motion from Bassford that

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\text{the only means of permanently preventing strikes and lock-outs is by the nation taking control of the means of production and distribution for the benefit of the people}
\]

was not even discussed on Council, and the TLC declined participation

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60. TLC Minutes, 26 February, 12 and 17 March, 27 July, and 4 August 1891.
61. See Chapter 8.
63. Thompson and Downey both lost their executive positions but Hepher gained one. ibid., 4 and 5 February, 4 August 1891. Ford's claim that Sam Smith, another Executive member, was an ASLer (op.cit., p.115) cannot be taken seriously. See comments on Smith in Chapter 10, n.100.
in Sydney's first, second and third May Day celebrations of 1892-4, which failed to attract much support. Even the decision to welcome Fitzgerald jointly with the ASL was opposed by some unions, and some of the complaints over the TLC's political action, albeit from conservative crafts, seem to have been motivated by distaste for the TLC's socialist connections. Brady actually left the ASL soon after becoming Workman editor. Only four ASLers were Labor candidates in 1891; only Black and Fitzgerald were successful. The single taxers were as well represented. By 1892, Fitzgerald led the breakaway protectionist Labor MPs, and distinguished himself as one of the four 'Labor rats' who saved the Dibbs Government over the Broken Hill strike. Although the ASL provided the Chairman (Higgs) at the 1892 LEL Conference, the TLC and many branches did not send delegates, and the single taxers had as many representatives as the ASL. On the TLC, the Stonemasons' and Boot Trade Union sent single tax as well as socialist delegates. Although single tax opposition to 'the government as employer' curtailed its long term influence on the labour movement, single taxers competed fiercely with the ASL for influence in the TLC, LEL and Labor Platform, until 1893, when the ASL gained the

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65. TLC Minutes, 28 May and 11 August 1891; 14 April 1892; 5 January and 16 March 1893; 5 April 1894.
66. For example, from the Coachbuilders', United Labourers' and Stereotypers', ibid., 27 August 1891. Other examples are mentioned in Chapter 6. Re Fitzgerald: ibid., 12 March 1891.
67. A few weeks after a row with S.A. Rosa, of the ASL left, over editorial policy. AW, 7 October, 21 November 1891.
68. See n.62 above. For single tax influence at this time see Chapter 11. For the 1892 Conference, and Fitzgerald's role in 1892: Chapter 6. Ford, op.cit., p.95, lists more socialist Labor candidates in 1891, such as Arthur Rae, who were not socialists, at least at this time.
69. Grant and Harris, respectively. TLC Minutes, 7 August 1890, and 24 March 1891 (Grant); 19 February, and 13 August 1891 (Harris). Another single taxer, Cotton, also played a major role on the TLC's Parliamentary Committee at this time, e.g. ibid., 5 February, and 6 August 1891.
upper hand.

The Labor Platform did not vary greatly from the ASL's, but many of the ASL's policies were radical democratic rather than distinctively socialist, or simply shared Labor's vague egalitarianism: 'the elevation of mankind'; 'justice to all and privilege to none'; 'the right to a fairer share of the wealth'. Otherwise, the ASL Platform extended Labor's state socialist policies, rather than providing a radically different programme. This may have broadened the ASL's potential base of support, but it also weakened a distinctive socialist influence.

This weakness stemmed from the ASL's ideological base. Lacking familiarity with working class organization, most ASLers' socialist commitment was intellectually-derived, as with the British middle class socialists of this period. But unlike some of them, Australian socialists had little familiarity with Marxism. An English translation of *Capital* was not available until 1886, probably much later in Australia, and Australian socialists were isolated from Continental Marxist influences. Colonial socialism's intellectual forebears were extremely diverse, even contradictory: Lasalle, Rodbertus, Hyndman, Bax, Morris, Marx, Kropotkin, George, Darwin, Spencer, Ruskin, Carlyle, Mill, and above all, Bellamy and Gronlund, were lumped together by ASLers as personal influences. Higgs, one of the ASL's major theorists, emphasized Marx, George Bernard Shaw, the Webbs, and even Bismarck, with no apparent embarrassment. This indicated not merely ideological confusion and lack of familiarity with political theory, but also an attempt to expropriate all reform and anti-industrial currents, including Liberalism and High Toryism,

under the banner of socialism.

Such diversity makes nonsense of Ford's attempts to show a direct lineage from British Marxists and the Second International to Australian socialism. 72 H.H. Champion, a visiting former associate of Hyndman's in the major British Marxist organization, the Social Democratic Federation, was quickly repudiated by the unions and the ASL when he suggested in 1890, for tactical reasons, that the strikers return to work. 73 Admittedly, Sceusa represented the ASL at the Second International's 1892 Zurich Congress. 74 But this does not necessarily indicate total ideological convergence. The decidedly non-socialist Democratic Association of Victoria became a member of the First International in 1872. As Mayer writes of it, 'small bodies, far from England, [could] be accepted as members on their own say-so'. 75 Even John Norton fraternized with the Second Internationalists in the 1880s, 76 without becoming noticeably socialist.

There were three consequences of the ASL's diverse ideological background. Firstly, the combination of a strong radical liberalism, the predominance of Bellamy's utopia, Looking Backwards, as an intellectual influence, and the absence of experience in working class industrial struggles, produced utopian socialism in the ASL. It was utopian in its commitment to evolutionary social change, the desire to

72. op.cit., pp.92, 124, 133, 166, 289.
74. He was also invited to a TLC meeting to give an account of the International. TLC Minutes, 8 November 1893.
75. H. Mayer, Marx, Engels and Australia, Melbourne, 1964, pp.5, 64.
76. When he was sent by the TLC to London as an anti-immigration agent. Norton, op.cit., pp.86-7.
avoid class conflict, and the belief that this was possible because of socialism's 'rationality'. 77 Looking Backwards is saturated with spurious rationalism and a belief in the inevitability of socialism. The political outcome of utopianism was a belief in the neutrality of the state; a belief that it could be captured by Parliamentary means and wielded against the 'monopolists' for 'the people'. Higgs', and others', references to 'revolution' 78 amounted to exasperation, or theatre addressed to specific audiences, even if the minor anarchist wing of the ASL believed in it.

Secondly, the lack of theoretically-informed political experience led many colonial socialists, in practice, to fall back on more traditional Australian political tendencies: radical democracy and an interventionist state. Lacking a distinctive ideology or mass social base, the ASL was incapable of becoming an independent political force. ASLers attached themselves to the political party established by the unions. Thereupon, they were distinguished by organizational skills and energy, more than by ideological input. Hughes and Holman, therefore, extended the 'principle of unionism' most rigorously into

77. This is evident throughout the references to the ASL, and in the statements of its leading members, mentioned above. For example: W.M. Hughes, The Case for Labor, Sydney (1910), 1970, pp.85-91. See also, Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, pp.121-6; and S. Macintyre, 'Early Socialism and Labor', Intervention, No.8, March 1977, pp.82-4.

78. Higgs in RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.233. Also Spence, ibid., pp.36-7, 45; Toomey of the AWU Young, who spoke of a Toilers' Sacrifice League which would enact revolution by overfilling the gaols, basically to gain the right of mining on private property, TLC Minutes, 24 March 1892, 27 July and 7 December 1893; Sleath and Ferguson, the Broken Hill miners' leaders, during the 1892 strike, Ford, op.cit., p.121. Also note The Bulletin's language of the late 1880s in an article, 'The Coming Revolution', 11 August 1888; and letter to Worker, 22 October 1892.
Labor politics, through the pledge and caucus, and by 1893 they controlled the LEL's Central Committee. 79

Thirdly, as the AWU became a major force in the Labor Party, the dominant section of the ASL made a rapprochement with its populism. In Chapter 6 we saw this at an organizational level within the Labor Party. Ideologically, utopian socialism and populism were comfortable together because they shared the desire to avoid class conflict, and the belief in a neutral state. The ASL's tendency to revert to the radical Australian tradition also naturally led to an alliance with the self-proclaimed guardian of that tradition, the AWU. The result, in ideological terms, was summarized by the Worker, which described socialism as 'more of a spirit and temper than a system. It means the spirit of companionship and mateship..., the cultivation of the highest aspirations'. Nor were socialism and individualism contrary:

Men who have no individualism cannot be true socialists; that is true companions...True socialism is not some magic self-working conjuring machine which, if you can only get it into working order, will regenerate society. The real reformer does not pretend to undertake too large a contract. He is content to regard himself as one of a long line of workers. 80

This merging of populism with utopian socialism was also evident in William Lane's New Australia Movement, which attempted to establish an agrarian communist utopia in Paraguay in 1893. Despite occasional exasperated ejaculations of revolutionary rhetoric, Lane was an evolutionary, utopian socialist, with a wide streak of agrarian idealism.

79. See Chapter 6.
80. Worker, 31 March 1894. For the AWU as heir of the radical tradition, see Chapter 8.
For Lane, socialism was 'being mates', which he believed was the basis of unionism, particularly amongst the bushworkers. But when the unions seemed no longer capable of providing a base for socialism after their defeats of 1890-1, Lane left for Paraguay. Although Lane was based in Queensland, as a key labour organizer and journalist, his influence was felt in New South Wales, especially through his articles in the AWU's *Hummer* and *Worker*, and the ASL fondly farewelled him in 1893.

But for the mainstream ASL, the merging of utopian socialism and AWU populism involved a shift to the right within the Labor Party. ASLers' growing prominence in the Party related inversely to their socialism: in 1898 Hughes, Holman and Black joined the AWU in emasculating the socialist content of the Labor Platform. The rightwards shift characterized the official ASL, as well as its most prominent members. Only after this shift did Spence, the AWU's leader, become associated with the majority 'Leigh House' group in the ASL.

Consequently, Ford's argument that Spence was a socialist is weakly based. Spence certainly claimed to be a socialist, on occasions. But he also claimed many other '-isms', including nationalism, new unionism, spiritualism, and single taxism. Spence cut his ideological suit to complement the taste of his audience. But he was not simply opportunist. He seems to have sincerely believed in all these '-isms', as essentially about the same thing: the promotion of the good of


82. See n.136 below.

83. *op.cit.*, pp.90, 180, 193, 196.
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mankind. Christianity, which he saw as the ultimate basis of new unionism, provided the underlying unity for Spence's beliefs. Gradual social evolution would occur through education. 84 In the meantime, Spence was a pragmatic Labor politician and business-unionist.

Spence also had connections with the Reverend Phillip Moses, who attempted to build a Christian Socialist movement in New South Wales. The Workman pamphlet from 1890, reproduced on the foregoing page, describes Moses' appeal. 85 Moses had friendly links with the AWU, with which he attempted to organize urban 'brainworkers' in 1894. 86 The TLC also supported some of Moses' public meetings. 87 But Christian Socialism never gained a substantial following in New South Wales, despite the fact that a small number of labour leaders were committed Christians, 88 despite the central importance of Christianity in Bellamy's work, 89 and despite the fact that the Protestant clergy in the 1890s was engaged in soul searching and social critique to an

84. Spence, The Ethics of New Unionism; 'Labor and Its Sphere', lecture at Bourke, reprinted in ASU 4th AR, 1890, pp.61-4; Australia's Awakening, p.8 and Chapters 27-8 entitled 'Eighteen Years of Social Evolution', and 'Socialistic Enterprises', pp.288-304; RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.36-7, 45-6; C. Lansbury, 'William Guthrie Spence', Labour History, No.13, November 1967, pp.3-10. Spence's views also liberally adorn his various reports and preambles in ASU Annual Reports.
87. TLC Minutes, 30 August 1894; 31 January 1895.
88. For example, J.C. Watson.
89. Looking Backward, pp.161, 166. Note also the centrality of religious mysticism in Lane's thought, and the reaction against it amongst other New Australia settlers. See Souter, op.cit., pp.29, 31-2, 100-1, 121, 125.
Working class radicalism was essentially secular. Otherwise, the anti-socialist influence of Irish Catholicism militated against the influence of Christian Socialism in a large proportion of the working class, and the radical tradition of Primitive Methodism amongst the coal miners fostered a more hard-headed socialism. More importantly, the ASL itself absorbed the Christian Socialist unionists, Fitzgerald & C. Jones (Printers), and the middle class social base upon which British Christian Socialism rested. The ASL's rightwards shift undercut the basis of support for other right-wing socialism.

However, the ASL was more substantially rivalled on the left for the leadership of New South Wales socialism. Initially, the 'left' was contained within the ASL, but after a number of factional squabbles over 1891-2, the ascendancy of the ASL right led to the purge of an 'anarchist' wing and the formation of breakaway leftist groups. The membership of the Active Service Brigade (ASB) and the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) overlapped with each other and the ASL left.

90. See J.D. Bollen, Protestantism and Social Reform in New South Wales, 1890-1910, Melbourne, 1972, p.44.
91. Ford, op.cit., pp.149-224.
92. See McEwen, 'Newcastle Coal-Mining District', pp. 262, 268, 271; and E.P. Thompson, Making of the English Working Class, pp.436-9, for the radical influence of Primitive Methodism in Britain, from whence most NSW coalminers were derived.
93. Ford, op.cit., pp.90, 102-3; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.34. Fitzgerald's intellectual influences are similar to those of other ASLers, except that he included Kingsley and Dickens.
These were the 'Domain Socialists', as opposed to the right wing 'Leigh House' socialists.

The urban unemployed provided the mass base for the left during 1892-4. The unemployed had a tradition of independent agitation prior to the 1890s depression. This produced an uneasy relationship with the unions, which, whilst sympathetic, were unable to offer much practical aid to the unemployed, who were predominantly from the poorly-unionized unskilled. The unemployed, therefore, provided fertile ground for socialism in the drastic circumstances of the 1890s. In 1892 the 'Executive Committee of the Unemployed', which gained some TLC and Workman support, was established, largely under ASL auspices. Moderate Labor MPs Kelly and Houghton were concerned enough to attempt to exclude socialists from unemployed meetings, and McNamara, of the ASL, actually resigned as Secretary of the Unemployed Committee. Nevertheless, socialism retained its unemployed base, and as the ASL shifted rightwards, the ASB replaced it as an influence among the unemployed.

The ASB's appeal to the unemployed rested largely upon its style, but it also provided material aid. Its 'barracks', strategically located opposite a popular venue for public meetings, the Protestant

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96. TLC Minutes, 28 January and 23 February 1892; AW, 2 April 1892. A forerunner of this Committee was the still-born Labour Defence Force, TLC Minutes, 30 June 1891. The AW's support for unemployed organization continued throughout the 1890s. For example: 8 February 1896; 19 June 1897. For the unemployed's traditional organization, and their relations with unions and Labor, see Chapter 6, and Chapter 8.

97. AW, 2 April 1892. See Ford, op.cit., pp.113-6. Houghton himself however was unpopular with the unemployed and some unions. See Chapter 6.

98. This summary of the ASB is based upon O'Farrell, Harry Holland, pp.6-8, 13.
Hall in the centre of the city, doubled as unemployed refuge and political headquarters. Its leaders excelled in street oratory at the Queen's Statue and the Domain (the traditional unemployed meeting places), and in disruption of rival meetings. Their rhetorical radicalism, their emphasis on militant action in demonstrations, and their eye for the symbolic act, were also evident in the ASB's scurrilous news-sheet, The Standard-Bearer, which proclaimed the need for a Socialist Labor Party. From 1894, however, as its leadership was imprisoned for libel, and as unemployment eased somewhat, the ASB declined. Most of its remaining membership was attracted to the SDF. But the SDF was never more than a tiny group. The left's theatrical radicalism tended to make the TLC more sympathetic to the ASL.

It was essentially the ASL right which maintained a socialist presence at the second, 1893, LEL Conference. In the ensuing organizational drive of 1893, and the 1894 Labor split, the ASL socialists played a major role through their domination of the LEL Central Committee, although Black was temporarily lost to the independent Labor MPs. Nevertheless, the socialist impact on Labor was slight, as shown by the Platform. Only two socialists joined Black in Parliament at the 1894 elections: Hughes and Griffith (Waratah). Ten other socialist candidates stood, but all in unwinnable electorates.

The left's response was demoralized and divided. In late 1893 the SDF was so disappointed with Labor's direction that it called for the establishment of a 'distinct Social Democratic Party' after the 1894 elections. At the 1894 Labor Conference the left's representation was weakened, such that it could not prevent a weakening of the eight hours' plank as a gesture to the agrarians. Many leftists were active in the Central Committee's organizational drive during the Labor split.
But the ASB campaigned against the Central Committee, more out of distaste for the ASL, than support for the MPs' position. Operating as a subsidiary of either the ASL or the MPs, the left's impact was minimal.

In 1895 the ASL right consolidated with the AWU in the new PLL. The 1895 Labor Conference, immediately prior to the AWU's re-entry to the Party, was dominated by the ASL right, although the left gained three Executive positions (including Moroney and Harry Holland). This dropped to one position (Moroney) on the first PLL Executive, where Spence and Rae, from the AWU, joined the moderates. In the 1895 elections Moroney was the only left candidate. He was unsuccessful, whereas the ASL right was represented in Parliament by Black, Hughes, Griffith, Watkins and Thompson. 99

However, from late 1894 the left redoubled its organizational efforts within the Labor Party and the ASL. After the 1894 elections it issued a circular critical of the moderate Party leadership. 100

In October, an ASL Manifesto stated that the cause of social evils is the steady concentration of Land and Capital in the hands of the few...The only cure will...be the socializing of Land and Capital; that is to let the State, as the representative of all, to be the only employer. Every citizen must have a share in the ownership of all the Land and the Capital in the country. 101

99. See Ford, op.cit., pp.134, 138, 142, 144-5, 155-6, 158, 161, 163, 165, 175-7, 180-1; Evatt, op.cit., pp.49-56, 58-68, 72-83, 92-5; Hughes, Customs and Crusades, pp.101-17; Fitzhardinge, op.cit., pp.43-5, 50-2, 56-7, 59, 61. See Chapter 6 for the details of Labor's Conferences and organization during 1893-5. Typical of ASL activities in 1894, was the SMH report (7 February 1894) of Beeby's disruptions in the Leichhardt Branch in support of the Central Committee. Ford, of course, exaggerates the ASL presence in this period, including such dubious candidates for socialism as Schey (railwaymen), J. Wilson (TLC), Hollis and W. Head (AWU, Single Tax).

100. AW, 28 July 1894.
101. Ibid., 13 October 1894.
The Manifesto also called for the formation of a Parliamentary Socialist Party, although it was vague as to whether this was to be achieved through the Labor Party, or separately. Soon afterwards the ASL began publication of its own organ, *The Socialist*, with leftist Harry Holland as editor, calling for a 'distinct socialist party'.

Early in 1895 a revised ASL Platform appeared with two planks: full nationalization of industry; and as a preliminary step, abolition of Government sub-contracting. Although Leigh House remained synonymous with the ASL right, the left was gaining momentum within the ASL. Nevertheless, early in 1895 the SDF was revived. Separate SDF and ASL May Days were celebrated, but both called for a 'distinct socialist party'.

One SDF member, Yewens, stated that the present Labor party, from whom he, in conjunction with many other socialists, expected radical reforms, had proved a complete failure, and he was convinced that nothing short of a militant Social Democratic party would be worth fighting for in future.

The compromise of the ASL's 1896 Platform reflected the internal struggle between left and right. The Preamble advocated 'the immediate formation of a distinct and united Socialist Party', and committed the ASL to 'Socialism in our time'. But the list of 'Preparatory Measures', or immediate political objectives, barely differed from Labor's Platform. This represented a retreat from the 1895 Platform. Separate SDF and ASL May Day rallies in 1896 again emphasized the left/right divergence. The SDF rally again advocated a distinct socialist party, whilst the ASL rally, with Spence, as well as Hughes and Moroney, present, merely endorsed the eight hours' principle. The SDF then gained control of

103. *AW*, 30 November 1895.
The Socialist, but prior to its closure some time afterwards, the left moved into the ASL to strengthen it.\(^{104}\)

The left's organization began to have some effect within the Labor Party from 1896, as the Platform indicates. Although few delegates at the 1896 Labor Conference were committed to the left, and although the new Executive remained dominated by moderates, the left made two gains: Riley as Vice-President, and Barlow as Minutes Secretary. The Executive was also keenly critical of Labor's languid Parliamentary performance. In October 1896 Moroney, a major figure of the socialist left, played a leading role in the formation of the Solidarity Club at the new Labor Centre in *The Worker* office. The Club achieved some success in attempting to unify Labor, and the left, for the 1897 Conference, and received warm approval from the *Workman*.\(^{105}\)

The 1897 PLL Conference represented the culmination of the left's organizational efforts. The left had one fifth of the delegates, and retained two Executive positions. Although clearly outnumbered, and although defeated in its major thrust for a socialist commitment in the Platform, the left had sufficient momentum to carry some wavering moderates, such as the PLL President, Flowers, with it in support of some socialist measures.\(^{106}\) These gains were real enough, and pointed to possible future gains.

The socialist left's basis of support at this point was twofold. It rested partly upon the northern coalfields, where there appears to

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105. AW, 17 October 1896; 17 and 24 April, 8, 22 and 29 May 1897, for Solidarity Club meetings and Moroney's activities. 1896 Conference: *Worker*, 1 February 1896. For Executive criticism of the Parliamentary Labor Party, see Chapter 6.
have been a strong rank and file socialism amongst the miners during the 1890s, allowing traditional May Day festivities to merge easily with one of the earliest regional socialist celebrations in Australia. In 1896, when nationalization of mines entered Labor's Platform, the northern coalminers petitioned the Government to establish its own mines.\textsuperscript{107} Coalfields MPs and delegates to Labor Conferences were frequently socialist supporters, even if of the moderate variety. From 1896-8, when the left press underwent financial difficulties, The Socialist and its successor, The Northern People, were published in Newcastle.\textsuperscript{108}

However, the major base for the resurgence of the left in 1896-7 was the urban working class. During 1896-7 the left was active in the re-organization of urban PLL branches, which Moroney had intimated at the Solidarity Club.\textsuperscript{109} Their attempts at co-operative and local political organization, which had strong socialist overtones from 1891, made urban workers receptive to the left's organizational drive. Disappointed with the Parliamentary Labor Party's (PLP) performance, and deserted by many of the more conservative crafts, the TLC also gradually became a centre of socialist left support from 1894, when it became the Sydney District Council of the ALF. It has been noted that union demands for abolition of Government contracting merged easily with state socialist measures. The 1897 socialist plank for state clothing factories found strong support amongst clothing unions.\textsuperscript{110} The socialist

\textsuperscript{107} Ross, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.81-2, 93-4. \\
\textsuperscript{108} O'Farrell, \textit{Harry Holland}, pp.14-15; Ford, \textit{op.cit.}, p.292, names A. Griffith and D. Watkins, northern coalfields MPs, as socialists. \\
\textsuperscript{109} See n.s 105-6 above. \\
\textsuperscript{110} P. Strong, President of Tailors' and Tailoresses' Unions, at RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.262; SDC Minutes, 1 December 1898 (Hatters'); Boot Trade Union Minutes, 15 October 1901.
left's acceptance of class conflict, unlike the ASL right, also correlated with unionists' industrial experience in the 1890s. Indeed, many of the left socialists were unionists, including the following SDC delegates: Moroney, Hepher (1893), A. Thompson (1893-4), Dwyer (ex-ASB, Stewards' and Cooks' from late 1897), Hunt (Brewery Employees, 1895-7), Maine, and Davis.

The left's momentum on the SDC carried with it some delegates who were sympathetic, but not committed to the left. For example, Flowers, who was on the TLC Executive during 1893-4, and the Labor Party's Executive from 1894-8, as President during 1896-8, led the attack on the Parliamentary Party at the 1896 Conference. At the 1897 Conference he supported the nationalization plank, and, chairing the 1898 Conference, attempted to blunt the anti-socialist offensive. In 1894 the SDC participated in an ASL rally against the Upper House. In 1895, although the Tinsmiths' refused invitations to ASL and ASB meetings, the SDC accepted an invitation from the Reverend P. Moses to a conference of labour and socialist bodies on unemployment and agreed to support The Socialist.

With SDC support and the re-organization of urban PLL branches, the Sydney District Assembly (SDA) of the PLL emerged as the major centre of the socialist left within the Labor Party during 1896-7. In April 1897 a motion of censure against the PLP was only defeated on

111. TLC Minutes, January 1893 - June 1894; SDC Minutes, July 1894 - January 1900; SLC Minutes, 19 July 1900. Maine and Davis only appear once on Council, strongly supporting a socialist motion, SDC Minutes, 1 July 1897. Downey, a left socialist, was also on the SDC's Surplus Labour League Executive in 1897. AW, 8 May 1897.
113. SDC Minutes, 11 October 1894.
114. ibid., 13 January, and 14 February 1895. Tinsmiths' Minutes, 1 November 1895.
the Chairman's casting vote. In July, the SDA did censure the PLL Executive for its failure to publicise the 1897 Platform and circulate it amongst branches. 115

Ben Tillett's visit to the colonies came in the midst of these developments. Despite the use of his tour to promote Labour unity, Tillett's own socialist predilections placed him on the side of the left. Although he normally avoided sectarianism, Tillett's criticisms of Labor's leadership supported the left's critique at this time. This brought an inevitable reaction. As his lecture audiences fell off, Moroney accused even the SDC, which had been a strong supporter of Tillett, of treating him in 'a cold and cheerless manner'. 116 After praising him initially, the Workman attempted to damn him with faint praise: 117

even if they do not agree with his opinions [his audiences] will go away convinced of the necessity of giving more study to these matters for the future.

At Tillett's farewell, Ferguson (Labor MP, and former leader of the Broken Hill miners) was more forthright:

It's not a bit of use you cheering a man like friend Tillett when he says he's an extremist. Actions speak louder than words. It's votes that count...Two thirds of the Sydney workers are not prepared to go to the lengths of Trades Unionism and Socialism is a step beyond [that]... 118

Tillett had, in fact, become embroiled in an anti-socialist counter-

115. AW, 8 May and 24 July 1897.
116. SDC Minutes, 14 July 1897. The SDC, however, had initially been enthusiastic over Tillett and his scarcely-veiled criticisms of Labor leadership. SDC Minutes, 5 August and 21 October 1897. See Chapter 6, for details of Tillett's visit. Note that Tom Mann, a British associate of Tillett's, who also came to Australir. to play a major role in Labour and socialist politics at the turn of the century, deprecated continuous criticism of Labor's Parliamentary leaders by the left. T. Mann, The Labour Movement in Both Hemispheres, Melbourne, 1903, p.7.
117. AW, 31 July 1897.
118. Worker, 2 October 1897.
attack, which began in 1895. The Workman, which had long since divested itself of socialist influence led the initial counter-attack.

It commented on the ASL's 1894 Manifesto:

We do not think that the result will be any great gain to the League; the manifesto throughout is vague and unsatisfactory, and where it condescends to details arouses more opposition than sympathy on the part of the reformer.\(^{119}\)

In words similar to those of Watson, and the ASL right at the 1897 Conference, the Workman did not consider that the Labor Party could be improved upon.\(^{120}\) In mid-1896 the Workman stopped reporting ASL or SDF meetings, although it still reported Leigh House activities, and ran a series of articles on Christian Socialism.\(^{121}\)

The counter-attack gathered momentum in 1897 in response to the socialists' Conference gains. The Worker commented drily on Conference:

About the details of the platform the really earnest Labor leaguer does not trouble much. He knows that many of those are not worth the labor spent in discussing them. But they satisfy some who in time will learn better than to exhaust the patience of their fellows in discussion about words.\(^{122}\)

The Workman called for the re-organization of Labor, and argued that it could not move too far ahead of 'the public' until it had 'educated them up'. PLL branches were often hunting grounds for political careerists, it claimed, when they should be educators.\(^{123}\)

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119. AW, 20 October 1894. Black had been the last socialist editor, in early 1892. Houghton was editor from 1894. As an indication of the paper's rightwards shift, it actually lists Black ('an uncompromising Marxist'), Hughes, Schey, Sleath, and Ferguson, as socialist MPs - all unlikely candidates for socialism at this time.

120. ibid; Watson in Worker, 14 November 1896; Hughes and Holman, in opposition to socialist objective at 1897 Conference: ibid., 30 January 1897.

121. AW, 6 June - 25 July, 1896; 31 July 1897. The socialist left was forced to pay to advertise its activities; for example, May Day, ibid., 17 April 1897.

122. Worker, 30 January 1897.

123. AW, 20 March 1897.
Throughout 1897 it ran a series of articles, directed against the left, which emphasized evolutionary change, AWU-style populism, co-operative ventures which would abolish money, and the avoidance of class conflict:

> It was a silly idea which used to be much identified with socialist propaganda a few years ago - the idea that a party can capture the machinery of the state and proceed to drill and coerce society into a certain order irrespective of the development of public thought.  

Instead, the Workman detected

> a tendency for the people of all occupations to move towards better conditions. This tendency, of course, favours the peaceful solution of social difficulties...the destiny of leading evolution along the path of peace.

It declared that the 'alteration' of the social system must be in the interests 'not of a class, but of all people'. In May the Workman suggested that the socialists should form their own Party outside Labor.

By mid-1897 the moderates dominated the Solidarity Club, where socialists came in for increasing criticism. Outside criticism of Labor's 'socialistic and Communistic tendencies' also mounted in the establishment, Catholic, and right wing press. This criticism was associated with Labor's poor showing in the 1897 Federal Convention elections, for which the socialists received much of the blame. The significant vote for Cardinal Moran was identified as largely an

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124. ibid., 29 May 1897. Also 6 March, 17 and 24 April, 1, 8, and 15 May, 9, 12, and 19 June, 1897. Note that Black's celebration of moderate parliamentarianism, The History of the Labor Party, was serialized from 1 May.

125. ibid., 24 April 1897.

126. ibid., 10 July 1897.

127. ibid., 8 May and 24 July 1897. In the first of these articles, the Workman associated Hughes with 'barrack-room socialism', but following his protestation, retracted, ibid., 15 May 1897.

128. ibid., 22 and 29 May 1897.
anti-socialist vote, as he had intended.  

The post-mortem on the Convention elections, held at the Solidarity Club, set the tone for the mobilization against socialism within the Labor Party. Moroney's argument, that sectarianism - religious, pro or anti - Federation, and anti-socialist - had been a cause of Labor's poor showing, was accurate enough. But he swam against the tide. One after the other, speakers such as Black, Holman, and even Flowers, stressed that the Labor Platform was 'advanced enough' for years to come, and that further identification with socialism was 'politically unattainable' and electorally damaging. Donald MacDonnell, an AWU leader, also added his voice to the anti-socialist campaign at this stage.  

On the SDC and SDA the left maintained some support. Even as the left's position in the PLL declined, the SDC advocated nationalization of the coal industry. On the Hatters' request, it also urged the Government to establish a state clothing factory. However, the SDC rejected a socialist critique of the PMG's introduction of day labour. Support on the SDC was also becoming unstable for the left.  

The anti-socialist drive began to take effect in the PLL. In the branches the socialists came under strong attack. The Executive simply ignored the SDA's criticism over failure to act on the 1897 Platform, accepting accountability to Conference only. Barlow, Keniry and Moroncy thereupon resigned from the Executive. Lamond, from the AWU,  

129. See Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.147, 150, 162-7; Ford, op. cit., pp.192-4, 203-6, 208-18; Chapter 6.  
130. AW, 13 and 20 March, 27 March (letter), and 15 May (letter by MacDonnell), 1897.  
131. SDC Minutes, 2 June 1898.  
132. ibid., 1 December 1898. See n.110 above.  
133. ibid., 1 July 1897.
became the new PLL Secretary, to oversee 'a thorough re-organization of the leagues [which]...resulted in a desirable reduction of the number of delegates'. PLL rules were also altered to include all of the PLP on the Executive. Despite the left's resistance, the SDC approved this change, and Holman gloatingly announced that the AWU's Coonamble Branch had unanimously approved it. Moroney conceded defeat. He announced that he intended to sever his connection with the PLL to 'devote his leisure time to the study of socialism'. From September 1897, as the PLL's direction became clear, many socialists left the Party.

The 1898 Conference, dominated by the PLP and the AWU as a united bloc, formally concluded the socialist purge. Apart from the burial of the socialist objective in the General Platform, previous rule changes were ratified, and new ones introduced to reduce the importance of the left's power centres. The Executive assumed the power of branch authorization from the District Assemblies, thus removing the SDA's main function for the left. Moroney's letter to Conference bitterly summarized the left's disillusionment:

...the PLL has degenerated into a mere vote-catching machine, doing no educational work, and generally following a policy of compromise and supineness...defined as 'Practical Politics'.

It was ignored.

The socialists then regrouped outside the Labor Party. The ASL and SDF amalgamated to form the Socialist Labor Party (SLP). But the

134. Worker, 15 February 1898. Much of the re-organization had been planned at a PLL Executive Meeting, in camera, AW, 22 May 1897. See Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.166, 171; Ford, op.cit., pp.220-5.
135. SDC Minutes, 18 November, 2 December, 1897.
SLP's membership was tiny, and the new socialist journal, The People and the Collectivist, was plagued with financial difficulties. In 1901 the SLP contested its first ordinary election, and the first Senate elections. It did poorly. Its highest Senate vote was 6,000, whereas 70,000 was needed for a seat. Similar results attended other electoral efforts in the early 1900s.137

A handful of militants maintained SDC positions. Holland became involved in the re-formation of the Tailoresses' Union in mid-1901. But the re-formed Sydney Labor Council (SLC) was dominated by moderates and conservative crafts in the early 1900s.138 Holland's efforts received a setback when the SLC withdrew support for a Tailoresses' strike late in 1901. A number of affiliates censured the SLC, but the strike soon collapsed. The conservative crafts' suspicions over socialist leadership of a union were possibly intensified when that union consisted of unskilled women. But even the ASL was critical of Holland's organizational efforts being directed outside the ASL.139

Such amnesia concerning the social base and purpose of socialism emphasized the disarray into which Australian socialism had fallen by 1900, within and without the Labor Party. With a Victorian Labor Party which did not organize independently of Lib-Lab alliances until the 1900s, and a Queensland Party from which the socialists were purged in 1903,140 the Australian Labor Party in the 1900s basically reflected

138. Moroney was the only one of the original left socialists' remaining on the Labor Council when it was re-formed, SLC Minutes, 19 July 1900.
the New South Wales situation, in terms of Platform and leadership. But the socialist defeat was not permanent. From 1906, the union movement, disillusioned with Labor, became more militant, and in 1905 the drive for a socialist objective again took a prominent place in Labor's agenda.141

Nevertheless, the 1890s revealed certain weaknesses of socialism, some of which grew out of its very strengths. Coalminers' social and geographical isolation, which no doubt contributed to the incorruptibility of their radicalism, also hindered a role for them as a base from which socialism might spread through the labour movement. The rank and file urge towards socialism in the urban working class, reflected in co-operative efforts, the spontaneous outgrowth of municipal Labor socialism in the early 1890s, and the strength of the left in urban PLL branches, proved remarkably susceptible to control and absorption by the Party's moderate leadership. The unemployed were also a weak organizational base because of their transience. Their radical style also led the ASB into predominantly self-defence activity: defence of free speech at public meetings against official intimidation, and defence of libel suits over some of their more scurrilous journal articles.142 The urban union movement provided the strongest organizational base for socialism, but during the 1890s it was decimated by the depression.

Of course, the unions' plight was only temporary, but socialism also displayed a more fundamental, long-term weakness. Politically, the socialists failed to develop a clear socialist theory or strategy,

despite their consistent support for state socialism. As a result, the socialist programme was not clearly distinguished from Labor's. In 1900 the Socialist Labor Party forbade dual membership with the Labor Party. Yet, its 1901 Platform was barely distinguishable from Labor's\(^{143}\) - why, therefore, vote for it? The ASB merely built on traditional unemployed forms of protest, confusing radical rhetoric or the grand gesture, with radicalism *per se*. Union leftists were distinguished more by a militancy of mood than by programmatic socialist politics. This partly explains why militant unionists such as Sleath and Ferguson, who moved towards the political right in the late 1890s, could be described as socialists by some historians.\(^{144}\) In itself, union militancy could not provide a stable basis for programmatic socialism.

The decline of socialist influence in the late 1890s had wide-ranging implications for Labor policy. One of the most important of these concerned the relationship between Labor and the state. This is examined in Chapter 10.

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144. For example, Ford, *op.cit.*, pp.156, 158.
State socialism shorn of socialism left 'statism', a commitment to a socially and economically interventionist state. As Labor's commitment to socialism, and even industrial legislation, declined, 'statism' became one of the three major components of Labor policy, around which a distinctive 'Laborist' ideology was built. This policy continued to attract some socialists. But in contrast to appearances, its direction was quite distinct from gradualist socialism, in that it strengthened capitalism by containing the oppositional forces of Labour which had mobilized during the 1890s.

The major components of 'statism'; state welfare and state regulation of industrial relations, were relatively advanced in Western social thought at this time. Indeed, at the turn of the century Australia gained a reputation as a social laboratory, more for its 'statist' initiatives than anything else. The reputation was not fully deserved. Nevertheless, the significance of statism in the emergence of a national social, political, and economic fabric cannot be overestimated. Despite the clumsiness of a federal political structure which historical circumstances forced on the colonies, the 1901 Commonwealth represented a streamlining of the modern Australian state apparatus. Labor's 'statism' was a central element in this development.

State Welfare

Labor's major contribution to state welfare policy was the old age pension. It appeared on the 1896 Fighting Platform, and from

that time became an important political issue. In 1897 the Workman congratulated the *Daily Telegraph* for discovering that it was impossible for a worker to save enough for old age.³ In the 1898 elections the pension figured prominently in Hughes' campaign.⁴ By the end of the decade some unions joined the PLL in pressuring Lyne for the pension, which was one of his promises to Labor in 1899.⁵ An Old Age Pension Act was passed in 1900, with only limited Upper House opposition, but the measure remained high on Labor's Federal Platform until the passage of a Commonwealth Act in 1908.⁶

The New South Wales Act represented a remarkable success for such a short campaign. The AWU hailed it as 'one of the most humanitarian measures ever placed upon any Statute Book'.⁷ But its enthusiasm was not entirely warranted. The pension provided 10/- per week for men and women over 65 years, who had been resident in New South Wales for twenty-five years. Married pensioners received less. Compared with the unskilled union standard of 7/- per day, the pension was not generous.

Despite its preamble, which characterized the pension as 'just reward' for a life of 'useful work', rather than as charity, the Act maintained a distinction between deserving and undeserving poor. The distinction functioned as a means of social discipline. A Board

⁴ Fitzhardinge, *op.cit.*, p.72.
⁵ Tinsmiths' Minutes, 13 July 1900; Boot Trade Union of NSW, Minutes, 10 July 1900; AWU Central Branch, Committee Minutes, 13 July 1900.
⁷ *AWU* 15th AR, January 1901, General Secretary's Report, p.5. Also *AWU Bourke AR*, 31 May 1901.
examined applicants' good conduct and poverty (the means test). Claimants were required to prove that they had been sober and 'respectable' for five years, and free of convictions for twelve years. 'Misbehaviour' could lead to forfeiture of the pension.\(^8\)

The Act had other advantages. Although it proved over-optimistic, the Government expected to save on its aid bill for private benevolent organizations.\(^9\) It also seems to have been motivated by the effects of factory legislation and Government adoption of the minimum wage in contracts, which often led to the discharge of older, slower hands.\(^10\) This may have strengthened union support for the measure, since discharged hands were likely to establish or work in cheap, backyard operations.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Act encountered such little opposition in Parliament. In the Commonwealth, early legislation was also guaranteed by the Deakinite Liberals' support. Protectionist support for the pension, amongst other measures in the early Commonwealth, also helped ensure Labor support for protection: a tariff for manufacturers in return for minimum living standards for the working class.\(^11\)

However, in this area of legislation Australia's reputation as a social laboratory was ill-deserved. British state welfare since at least the 1832 Poor Law had functioned as a means of social discipline. British liberal thought, influenced especially by J.S. Mill and T.H. Green, had already led to the enactment of state welfare measures,

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which were considerably extended at the same time as they appeared in the early Commonwealth. Less liberal thought had led Bismarck to establish an extensive social insurance scheme in Germany during the 1880s, specifically to counter the influence of socialism. It is noteworthy that both Mill and, less often, Bismarck, were influences in colonial utopian socialism. However, unlike the contributory German scheme, the Australian pension was at least notionally redistributive, even if recent research has qualified the redistributive effects of state welfare, and even if more extensive social insurance schemes considered after World War I were contributory.

Yet, little else was initiated in state welfare at this time. Nor was Labour particularly interested. In 1897 the Workman congratulated Reid on his abolition of school fees, which it presumed would aid in the education of working class children. But the unions' major interest in education, as in the 1880s when they were politically active over a system of technical education, remained

14. For example, the evidence of W.G. Higgs, official spokesman of the ASL, in BPCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.233-6.
16. AW, 21 August 1897.
control of entry to crafts. Otherwise, the crafts were active in mutual improvement societies, rather than formal education. The AWU's interest in local democratic control of schools was unusual. It was also concerned with democratisation of local Hospital Committees (by the lowering of the contributory entitlement for a vote or seat, from 20/- to 5/-). Many unions contributed directly to hospital income, potentially gaining seats on hospital governing committees, as well as treatment for members. But this was essentially an extension of traditional working class self-help.

The ethos of self-help was strongly ingrained in the Australian working class, such that the AWU's object of securing 'social justice' by political action was exceptional. Self-help was nurtured by the traditions of independence associated with the land, gold mining and urban crafts, and encouraged by legislation. Of course, those whose well-being was least secure, the unskilled, were less likely to be able to afford self-help. But flourishing Friendly Societies attracted considerable working class savings (especially after the 1873 Act for their incorporation), as did private insurance organizations, to provide for distress due to sickness, disablement or unemployment and, above all, to provide for a dignified departure from a worldly existence.

17. TLC Minutes, 16 February 1882; Executive Committee Minutes, 21, 24 and 27 February, 10, 14 and 28 March, 1882, 29 January, 14 March, 1 June 1883. Bakers' Minutes, 18 October 1892.
18. For example, see Buckley, The Amalgamated Engineers in Australia, p.139
19. AF of L Rules and Platform of Riverina District Council, January 1894, p.64.
20. AWU 13th AR, February 1899, p.17. The AWU was referring to private hospitals. Public hospitals were mainly reserved for the destitute.
21. AWU Rules, 1895.
which so often lacked dignity for the working class. Miners and maritime workers, whose occupations were particularly hazardous, showed a strong concern for these provisions. The benefit function was also important for craft unions. In Australia and Britain, Friendly Societies had also been a convenient smokescreen for unionism when unions lacked legal status, and an important training ground for the development of organizational abilities which could be used in unions. However, self-help formed part of a broader working class tradition of distrust of the state.

Working Class Distrust of the State

Distrust of the state persisted despite the unions' traditional support for industrial legislation. In large part, the objections of

22. The Register of Friendly Societies (NSW Archives, 7/6367) and the NSW Statistical Register (for example, 1901, pp.960-1) list Friendly Societies in operation and the date at which they were established. The Statistical Register also lists their assets, and those for the insurance companies (1901, pp.965ff.). Roe estimates that 20 per cent of the population could not afford self-help, op.cit., p.17.

23. United Watermen's Benefit Society, Rules, Sydney, 1860; Sydney Marine Benefit Society, Rules, Sydney, 1873. Miners' unions always placed considerable emphasis on benefits (for example, Coal Miners' Mutual Protective Association, Rules, Newcastle, 1870), and sometimes even included benefits in their objects (for example, AMA, By-Laws of Lewis Ponds Branch, 1890). This concern extended to the surface hands employed by mines, as shown by the Barrier Ranges Smelters, Concentrators, and Surface Hands' Union and Consolidated Accident Fund submission to the RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, p.136. Other examples abound in the Literary Appendix and the union Rules listed in the Bibliography.

24. As shown by the Rules listed in the Bibliography and the RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix. See Chapter 5.

some unions to Labour's political organization in the early 1890s rested upon this distrust, as did the Labor Party's planks for elective magistrates and employment of 'representative working men' as factory inspectors. Industrial legislation was interpreted as one means of redressing the balance of state economic intervention, which was seen by unions to overwhelmingly favour employers. Industrial legislation also set fairly distinct boundaries for state intervention, outside which, the unions often viewed state intervention far less favourably. Distrust of the state heightened as state intervention came closer to the unions themselves, and their relations with employers.

When the unions were able to take advantage of legal recognition by registration under the 1881 Trade Union Act, they did so very hesitantly, despite the legal disadvantages of non-registration: namely, liability for prosecution for restraint of trade, and the inability to sue defaulting officials for embezzlement of funds. Table 1 shows this quite clearly.

Table 1

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</table>

Source: Register of Trade Unions under 1881 Act, NSW Archives, 7/6367. Union registrations are also included in the Annual Reports of the Registrar of Friendly Societies in VFLA NSW, and in the Statistical Register in the 1890s.

These figures are inflated somewhat because of the inclusion of some separately registered union branches and some friendly societies. During the 1890s many unions also remained on the Register well after they had founder. But the major reason for the inflation of figures in Table 1 was that many 'new' registrations were actually renewals of long-lapsed earlier registrations. Most unions failed to keep their registration current by provision of annual returns on accounts, officers, and rule amendments. Only thirty-eight unions (or union branches) were continuously registered in the 1880s.

In 1881, Labour's Parliamentary spokesman, Cameron, opposed the Trade Union Act. He argued that it went much further than the union desire for protection from misappropriation of funds, and restricted union activities. The AWU later provided a good example of this. Its registration was postponed until 1899 because its Rules failed to satisfy the Registrar's (Coghlan's) criteria. The AWU's co-operative scheme, whereby it held title to land and improvements thereon, was a major obstacle, although this was overcome in 1899 without legislative amendment, when a new Registrar interpreted the Act more sympathetically. In 1891 the Registrar of Friendly Societies and

27. Where easily identifiable, these have been eliminated from the figures in Table 1. Employers' Associations (including the NSW Employers' Union, the Steamship Owners' Association of Australasia, the Pastoralists' Union, Master Carriers, Master Slaters, Master Butchers, and Licensed Victuallers) and peak union councils (including the TLC, the Building Trades Council, the Barrier District Council of the ALF, and the Eight Hours Demonstration Committee) also registered, but they have not been included in the figures.

28. Register of Trade Unions under 1881 Act, NSW Archives, 7/6367.

29. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.82; Sutcliffe, op. cit., p.78; Fry, op.cit., p.489. The 1881 Bill was introduced by a leading opponent of an earlier (1876) Bill introduced by Cameron and supported by the TLC and the northern coalminers. TLC Minutes, 15 and 22 June 1876; HRDDM Minutes, 23 November 1876.

30. AWU 10th AR, February 1896, Ex-President Rae's Report, pp.13-14; AWU 13th AR, February 1899, p.16; AWU Central Branch Committee Minutes, 10 June 1899. The ASU however, did register in Victoria in 1887, President's Report to General Meeting of ASU, 16 April 1887, p.4; Spence, Australia's Awakening, p.37.
Trade Unions himself considered that unions gained no clear advantage from registration, which gave them 'a rather uncertain recognition by the statute'.\(^{31}\) Trades Union Congresses in the 1880s sought amendment of the Act; as did the Labor Platform from 1891.\(^{32}\) McGowen noted that intercolonial union amalgamations could attract conspiracy charges, \(^{33}\) but the main union concern was that, despite the stated intent of the Act, it was doubtful whether unions had adequate protection from misappropriation of funds. They also sought the right to sue members for arrears of subscriptions.

In late 1891 Fitzgerald introduced an amending Bill to overcome these shortcomings, after the TLC's earlier lobbying of MPs.\(^{34}\) But because of the Seamen's opposition to the Bill, the TLC was forced to propose a plebiscite of affiliates to determine the level of support for it.\(^{35}\) The Bill lapsed, only to be re-introduced by Fitzgerald a year later. By then, opposition to the Bill was confused with personal hostility towards Fitzgerald, who had been one of the four Labor 'rats' who had saved the Dibbs Government during the 1892 Broken Hill strike.\(^{36}\) But the leaders of this opposition, the Seamen, opposed the Bill on the grounds that it was 'contradictory to the fundamental basis of Trade Unionism, viz. voluntaryism [sic]'.\(^{37}\) The TLC plebiscite showed that the union movement was evenly divided over the issue; even ASU branches were divided amongst themselves.\(^{38}\) Consequently, when prorogation of

\(^{31}\) A. Oliver p. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.71.
\(^{33}\) Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.97.
\(^{34}\) TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 6 May 1890.
\(^{35}\) TLC Minutes, 1 October 1891.
\(^{36}\) For example, both the Bakers' and the Wharf Labourers' declared no confidence in any Bill with which Fitzgerald was associated, Bakers' Minutes, 18 October 1892; TLC Minutes, 6 October 1892.
\(^{37}\) TLC Minutes, 6 October 1892.
\(^{38}\) Of the 29 unions which responded, thirteen favoured the Bill, and 16 opposed it. TLC Minutes, October-December 1892.
Parliament prevented Fitzgerald's Bill from proceeding, the TLC and Fitzgerald let the matter drop. Although it remained on Labor's Platform, the issue did not arise again in the 1890s.

During the 1890s the level of union compliance with the 1881 Act fell, as the class nature of the state was more clearly revealed than ever before. The decimation of the unions in the depression is insufficient explanation for the fact that, by 1901, only nine unions had been continuously registered, although most had been registered for a short period. In 1895, when the Registrar (Coghlan) enquired whether the SDC could furnish information for a number of unions from which he had received no returns for some time, the SDC refused to co-operate. Some delegates feared that the information might be used against the unions in some way by the Government.

As class conflict intensified from the late 1880s, other examples of union distrust of the state became common. Unions were often reluctant to provide statistics for official purposes. In 1887 the Tinsmiths' objected to the TLC providing nominations for Justices of the Peace to the Colonial Secretary. In 1891 a number of unions opposed participation in the Strikes Commission, and the TLC registered 'an emphatic protest against the expenditure of public money'.

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39. The TLC's decision to do so ignored advice to the contrary from its own Parliamentary Committee. TLC Minutes, 13 July, and 3 August 1893. In the 1900 Session of Parliament, McGowen introduced an amending Bill for recovery of arrears in subscriptions, but it was stopped by prorogation of Parliament.
40. SDC Minutes, 1 August 1895.
41. Tinsmiths' Minutes, 29 July 1887.
42. TLC Minutes, 27 November 1890. Provision of 'confidential information' was also opposed.
One of the greatest expressions of distrust of the state occurred immediately after the despatch of a large contingent of police to Broken Hill in 1892, when the Government publicly rumination over a military expedition. The TLC enquired of the number of Defence Force (militia) members amongst its affiliates. Only sixteen responded. Some lacked the information and were presumably reluctant to canvass their membership. Four declined the information, although one of these, the United Labourers', rather ambiguously stated that it was a good idea to join the Forces and learn how to use a gun. Nevertheless, as shown by Table 2, those who replied indicated that unionists provided only a small proportion of the militia.

Table 2

<table>
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<th>Unions</th>
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<td>Furniture Trade</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bookbinders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lithographers</td>
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<td>Farriers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coal Lumpers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle Crane Employees</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunny Corner Smelters</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASU Scone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Australian Carriers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: TLC Minutes, 22 September; 6, 18 and 10 October; 10 and 17 November; and 15 December 1892.

A small sample, but it was a fairly representative cross-section of the union movement, including many urban crafts, some urban unskilled, and some bush unionists. There is no reason to expect that a wider sample would have yielded different results. Bush unionists, the largest grouping of union members in New South Wales, were

43. See Chapter 6.
especially unlikely militia-members, if for no other reason, because so many were itinerant. The only significant group absent in the sample, coalminers, were also unlikely militia-members because of their frequent confrontation with the militia during strikes.

The TLC's concern with the issue was motivated by the immediate threat of 1892. The low number of union militiamen indicated by Table 2 may have been influenced by a number of contingent factors, such as the amount of remuneration offered. However, such considerations would presumably have weighed equally with non-unionists. In the context of the 1890s especially, the union response to the TLC query indicates working class distrust of the state, and perhaps, anti-militarism. This was expressed more forthrightly by the Stonemasons', when they called on militia members to lay down their arms, and thanked Premier Dibbs 'for wiping out the annual Easter encampment [for budgetary reasons] and further we think the men who own the country should fight for the country'. Anti-militarism later reached larger political proportions in working class opposition to involvement in the Boer War and to conscription for the First World War.

Nevertheless, unionists' relations with the state were ambiguous. Unions often did co-operate with state agencies in provision of statistics. In 1889 the TLC, typically, accepted a Government invitation for its President to attend the opening of the Hawkesbury bridge. Even the vote over the TLC's refusal to send a representative

44. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 4 May 1891, 14 March 1892.
46. For example, TLC's provision of wage statistics for the Australian Year Book, TLC Minutes, 24 September 1891; and 21 September 1893; and Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 30 May, and 13 June 1892; and Bakers' to Registrar of Trade Unions, Bakers' Committee Minutes, 8 October 1892; and Minutes, 27 May 1893.
to the 1891 Federal Convention banquet was close. Although exaggerated, Nairn's theme of the TLC, as a constituted colonial institution, does capture a real dimension of the TLC's self-perception, not necessarily contradicting its role as a class leadership.

Certain advantages were gained from mutual recognition. Union officials regularly received railway concessions, which they came to expect as a right. In 1895 AWU President Rae travelled 10,000 miles on a concession pass, organizing for union and Labor Party. To ignore the potential political impact of official inquiries would also have been senseless, especially when legislation might result from them; hence, the TLC President's critical evidence before the Select Committee of Inquiry into the Labour Bureau. Miners were particularly adept at this, participating in, for example, the 1880 Select Committee of Inquiry on the 'state of the trade' in Lithgow, and the 1893 Royal Commission into lead poisoning at the Barrier, with considerable effect in the latter case.

At some levels, the unions even displayed a faith in the neutrality of the state or its personnel. Some of Labor's industrial planks bear witness to this. Ironically, the unions themselves had called for the establishment of a State Labour Bureau, prior to their disappointment with the one that was established. Waterfront unions

47. 29-23, TLC Minutes, 26 February 1891; 30 April 1889.
49. AWU 10th AR, February 1896, p.13. The ASU received concessions for its Annual Conference delegates from the NSW and Victorian railways. ASU 4th AR, February 1890, p.54. The Victorian railways gave free passes, and the NSW railways, concessions, to delegates to the 1891 Intercolonyal Trades Union Congress (TLC Minutes, 2 and 9 April 1891), although no concession was allowed a NSW delegate to the 1890 Melbourne Eight Hours Demonstration, when he clearly expected it. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 29 April 1890.
50. TLC Minutes, 25 May 1893.
51. Vale of Clwydd Lodge Minutes, 22 April 1880; see Chapter 2.
In Britain, the 'New Model Unions' had also been adept in this form of influencing Government and public opinion.
saw it as a counter to the Steamship Owners' Association bureau for 'free labour', which operated from 1890, but even the ASU originally supported it as a means of gaining off-season employment for shearers. Rickard also notes Labour's faith in the even-handedness of colonial liberals, such as Cardinal Moran, and Justice Higginbotham, although clearly they had earned this by their support of labour at crucial points. The ASU suffered 'great loss' on the death of Higginbotham: 'a staunch and generous friend to the working classes and ever ready to defend the rights and privileges of the oppressed'.

It was against the background of the class conflict of the 1890s, together with Labour's ambiguous distrust of the state, and faith in prominent, especially legal, liberals, that New South Wales groped towards the 1901 Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

Arbitration

The Labor Party's support for the Conciliation and Arbitration Act was decisive. In 1899 compulsory arbitration appeared on the Fighting Platform, and an arbitration Bill was one of Lyne's promises which encouraged Labor to support him against Reid for Premier. On the face of it, this represented a remarkable change in Labour's attitude to state arbitration, and a remarkable success for a Labor policy, when an Act was gained two years later.

Prior to the 1890s, the unions did not support arbitration. Talk of conciliation or 'co-operation' between employers and employees

52. TLC Minutes, 22 January, and 13 August 1891; ASU Young, A.R., December 1888, bound with ASU Young, AR, December 1889, p.92.
54. ASU 7th AR, February 1893, p.21. Note also the donation to the Sir George Grey Memorial Fund because of his 'services to the cause of democracy', AWU 13th AR, February 1899, p.16.
55. Worker, 8 April 1899; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.223; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.2109, 2217.
was not uncommon, but far removed from compulsory, let alone, state, arbitration. In 1873 northern miners and coalowners negotiated an arbitral procedure similar to schemes in the British coalfields, as did the Building Trades Council in 1878, but these were purely voluntary, and limited in application.\textsuperscript{56} In 1889 most Sydney unions opposed a limited conciliation scheme drawn up by the TLC and Employers' Union.\textsuperscript{57} By 1891 only four unions had rules for conciliation and / or arbitration: the northern coalminers, the Ironmoulders', the Confectioners', and the Sydney Lithographers', whilst the Gas-stokers' supported the principle.\textsuperscript{58} But the rules themselves were also vague statements of principle, rather than indications of practice. The unions opposed the non-compulsory arbitration Bills of 1882 and 1888, which failed to generate much interest in any quarter. The architects of these Bills, Dibbs and Carruthers, had strong links with employers, some of whom favoured arbitration in an economic climate which strengthened the unions' bargaining position.\textsuperscript{59} But there is little evidence of widespread employer support for state regulation of industrial relations.

The 1891 Royal Commission on Strikes provided the first indication

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\textsuperscript{56} RRCS, 1891, pp.33-4; J. Philipp, '1890 - The Turning Point in Labour History?', Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand. Selected Articles, Second Series, Melbourne, 1967, pp.130-1; Collan, Coalminers of NSW, pp.52-3, 55, 68-9, 78; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, p.1834.

\textsuperscript{57} RRCS, 1891, p.33, and Conciliation Appendix, p.78; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, p.1840.

\textsuperscript{58} RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, pp.138, 146, 148 and 151. The NSW coalminers (then organized as the AMA No.2 Colonial District of NSW), did not mention any rule in their submission to the RRCS (p.136), but their 1887 Rules did specify that an employer should be offered conciliation/arbitration in any dispute before a strike was called. AMA No.2 Colonial District of NSW, Rules, February 1887, Newcastle.

\textsuperscript{59} RRCS, 1891, p.33, and Conciliation Appendix, p.77; Rickard, \textit{op. cit.}, p.71; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.2098-9.
of a shift in attitudes. It was established after the 1890 strike, when unions had accepted Cardinal Moran's offer of arbitration. Twenty-one unionists, fifteen employers, and some 'independent' witnesses, such as journalists (including Higgs from the ASL) and politicians (including Kingston, who became the South Australian Premier in 1893), gave evidence. Although urban manufacturing was poorly represented amongst the employers (one master builder), the three largest, best organized and most militant employers' groups were well represented: seven witnesses were from shipping (three representing shipowners, and four stevedores), three represented coalowners, and four were squatters. Despite their initial hostility to the Commission, the unions were also well-represented. Their witnesses included most of the prominent Labour leaders, and a reasonable cross-section of craft and 'new' unions. Fifty-four unions eventually filed returns on rules and membership, the only prominent unions refusing to co-operate being the AMA, Seamen, and Tinsmiths'. It was, therefore, a unique sample for determining union and employer attitudes towards conciliation and arbitration. And many witnesses, unionist and employer, agreed with the Commission's Report that, if a Board of Conciliation had existed in 1890, the Maritime Strike could have been averted.

Some caution is required in evaluating the witnesses' evidence. Most were hazy on the question of arbitration, as shown by the number of non-explicit answers in Table 3. Kingston was unusual in having

61. RRCS, 1891, p.35. The following analysis of the Commission is based upon its Conciliation Appendix, pp.79-81; its Literary Appendix V(2), 'Proposed Remedies for Strikes', p.171; and its Precis of Evidence from the witnesses.
clearly defined notions, even of the distinction between conciliation and arbitration. As many union returns to the Commission showed, conciliation and/or arbitration was commonly seen simply as a disputes procedure. Appearance at the Commission was partly also a public relations exercise, where most witnesses wished to resemble reasonable men. Consequently, whilst most witnesses expressed support for conciliation and/or arbitration in principle, many were vague, or even hostile, over details.

Nevertheless, some trends do emerge, as shown by Table 3. Six of the eleven employers favouring some system, favoured conciliation only, and the most severe restrictions on it. Four favoured arbitration, but three specifically opposed it. Almost half the unionists, on the other hand, favoured arbitration as well as conciliation. Only Bavister, Grant and Jones specifically opposed it, the latter two opposing any system of conciliation. They represented two persistent union traditions: Grant, the class conscious militant, and Jones, the strong craft unionist, both of which opposed any interference in union/employer relations.

The employer/unionist gap widens as we move rightwards across Table 3. Three quarters of the unionists (fifteen) supported some form of state intervention; but only half of these (seven, or a third of all unionists) desired state arbitration. On the other hand, only half of the employers favouring some system (i.e. one third of all employers), favoured state intervention. Only Gregson specifically favoured state arbitration. By 1891 then, a slight reversal of opinion had occurred between employers and unionists: some unionists were

62. This is amply shown in his evidence, ibid., Precis of Evidence, pp.244-7.
### Table 3

Union/Employer Attitudes on Conciliation/Arbitration at 1891 Strikes Commission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conciliation/Arbitration in general</th>
<th>Conciliation only</th>
<th>Conciliation and Arbitration</th>
<th>State Intervention in general</th>
<th>State Conciliation only</th>
<th>State Conciliation and Arbitration</th>
<th>Local or Non-permanent Boards†</th>
<th>Compulsory Conciliation/Arbitration</th>
<th>Enforced Awards</th>
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**Unionists**

- J. Armstrong (ex-Tobacco Workers' steward)
- T. Bavister (Secretary, Building Trades' Union)
- G.R. Bradley (Secretary, Marine Officers' Assoc.)
- P.J. Brennan (Secretary, Slaughtermen's Union)
- J. Cook (Secretary, Western Miners')
- T.M. Davis (Secretary, Seamen's Union & Commission Member)

* indicates a change in position or attitude.
Table 3 (cont'd)

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S. Smith
(Seamen's Union)

W.G. Spence
(President, ASU)

J.R. Talbot
(ex-President, TLC
& Commission member)

J. Thompson
(Secretary, AMA)
Table 3 (cont'd)

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Sources: see footnote 61.

*Indicates where the answer is only implicit in the witness's evidence.

#But not for wages, a considerable weakening.

†There were a number of union suggestions here, all of which would decentralize the institutional framework somewhat. Spence and Bavister favoured agreement amongst Board members on selection of their Chairman. Armstrong and Smith favoured elective representatives from both sides, with a Government-appointed Chairman.

N.B. One of the stevedores, P. O'Connor, and four unionists, were not asked about Conciliation/Arbitration.
moving towards conciliation and/or arbitration, and even state intervention; whereas employers had retreated from their earlier support for conciliation and/or arbitration. These trends must be related to the change in the union/employer balance of power in the employers' favour, as demonstrated in the 1890-1 strikes.

But the shift in attitudes was not a reflex response to the change in the balance of power. The change had not been fully confirmed for contemporaries, and opinions on both sides were not fully formed. Differences within employer and union groups of witnesses were often as significant as the differences between them. Support for arbitration declined in both camps as the system proposed became more binding. Even Spence, a moderate unionist, whose union, the AWU, was not in a strong position for independent collective bargaining, could not abdicate the union right to undertake industrial action, if arbitration encroached upon basic union principles. Union leaders involved in peak union councils, such as the TLC, usually favour regularized disputes procedures, but it is not clear that they were in close contact with rank and file unionists over the views expressed at the Commission. On the other hand, Abbott and Gregson's support for arbitration tends to offset the employers' trend away from this solution, for they were key leaders of organized employers; of the squatters and coalowners respectively. They possibly saw beyond the temporary industrial advantage enjoyed by employers in the depression.

Despite any other trends, a large majority of unionists opposed state arbitration and enforcement of awards (including two who favoured full conciliation and arbitration). Of those unionists who did favour state intervention, many desired decentralization and strict limitation of the state's role. In comparison, three employers favoured enforcement
of awards, and none who favoured a system of some kind, specifically opposed it.

In 1892, Dibbs' Trades Disputes, Conciliation and Arbitration Act essentially left intact legislation based on the Commission's recommendations, which Parkes had introduced prior to his resignation as Premier. Councils of Conciliation were to consist of two representatives each from employers and unions. Failing settlement at this level, a dispute could go before a Government-appointed Council of Arbitration, composed of one representative each from employer and union, and an impartial President. The one major recommendation of the Commission not enacted, was that for compulsory reference of a dispute to a Council, on the application of one party.  

Labour's response was unenthusiastic. In Parliament, Rae and Dr. Hollis opposed details such as the President's salary, and doubted the possibility of finding an impartial President. Other Labor members, such as Kelly, were more enthusiastic, and the Party supported the Bill. But the unions held back, awaiting some indication of the Act in operation. The TLC canvassed affiliates' opinions before committing itself. The Gardeners' opposed the Bill, but once it was enacted, the Coopers', Bakers', and Engine-drivers' quickly nominated representatives for the Councils. As more followed suit, the President, Dr. Garran (former President of the Strikes Commission), called a meeting of the Councils in October 1892, to explain the Act's objectives. Further conferences were held later that year.

65. TLC Minutes, 25 February, 17 March 1892.
66. Coopers' Minutes, 19 July 1892; Bakers' Minutes, 27 August 1892; Engine-drivers' Minutes, 14 July 1892.
67. Cooper's Minutes, 18 November 1892; Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.148.
However, the Act was negated almost immediately by the employers' refusal to submit the 1892 Broken Hill dispute to its machinery. In fact, the 1889 agreement between the AMA and Broken Hill mine owners, which the latter broke in 1892, had already provided for voluntary arbitration as a means of dispute settlement. The Strikes Commission had thought that 'public opinion would be adverse to those...who refused to avail themselves' of the Act. But this hope was dashed when the employers found themselves in such a strong position for independently enforcing their desires in the 1890s. Some foretaste of this had occurred in 1891, when the TLC aided the Female Employees' Union in placing a dispute before a voluntary arbitration board. Despite prior commitments, the employers simply refused to abide by the board's decision when it favoured the women. One TLC delegate stated:

We could kiss goodbye to Arbitration as the first time it had been tried by the Council the employer acted in a dishonourable manner.

Only a couple of minor disputes were settled by the Councils during their two year life. Major disputes in the railways and printing trade failed to come before Councils because of employer intransigence, including that of the Railway Commissioners, who denied the Act's jurisdiction in Government employment. Reeves described the Act as 'a not inexpensive piece of waste paper'.

Some unions attempted to make the Act work. The Tinsmiths', Coopers', Bakers', Engine-drivers', and the TLC continued to nominate representatives to the Councils. With Garran's co-operation, the TLC

69. TLC Minutes, 24 September 1891.
70. Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, p.99; Rickard, op.cit., p.75; Sutcliffe, op.cit., p.149; Docherty, op.cit., p.114.
convened a meeting of delegates to explain the system's operation, and urged unions and the Employers' Association to refer disputes to conciliation/arbitration. Pressuring the Labor Party for action, the TLC stressed the futility of an arbitration system which did not enforce attendance of the parties to a dispute. This was the first sign of union support for compulsion.

But it fell far short of a firm commitment. At the end of 1892, opponents of arbitration successfully postponed further TLC discussion of the issue for two months. Much of the TLC's activity in support of the Act at this time might be interpreted as an indication of the need to convince rank and file unionists of its validity. By the end of 1892 even the Coopers' commented sourly on a paper by Garran on strikes, that it contained 'nothing new'. Seven months later they refused the Clerk of Awards information concerning strikes, wages and unemployment. Early in 1893 Grant, who had been scathing in his denunciation of arbitration at the Strikes Commission, was unsuccessful in persuading the Stonemasons' to declare arbitration a failure, and to reject Garran and the TLC's requests for co-operation. But within two weeks Grant's view prevailed in the Stonemasons'. The following statement was sent to the Clerk of Awards:

In the opinion of this Society, the existing Court of Conciliation and board of arbitration together with the whole of the rules and by-laws of the Trades Disputes Act are entirely and absolutely worthless so far as securing to the toiler a greater proportion of the

71. TLC Minutes, 7 and 14 July, 6 September, 22 and 24 November, 15 December 1892; 30 August 1894 (the last Council nominations); Tinsmiths' Minutes, 12 May 1893; Bakers' Minutes, 26 November 1892, 27 May 1893; Coopers' Minutes, 18 November 1892; Engine-drivers' Minutes, 2 August 1894.
72. TLC Minutes, 15 December 1892.
73. Coopers' Minutes, 2 December 1892, 14 July 1893; Committee Minutes, 12 September 1893.
productions of their labour and can only be regarded by reasonable and reflecting men as another of the already numerous monopolistic measures to permanently foist upon heavily burdened slaves a further contingent of highly-paid and utterly useless uncalled for salary receivers; and we further request you to assist the government in their stationery economising performances, by not forwarding any further communication on the subject to the Masons. 74

ASU opinion was divided. The Hummer identified the essential contradiction of the 1892 Act:

...as these boards [of conciliation] are to be purely voluntary in their action, the state has only told these two rival parties [capital and labour] how to do what they always could have done at their own will and leisure without waiting for any legal permission.

Based in Wagga, the ASU's radical populist stronghold, the Hummer considered that the 1892 Act revealed an unhealthy reliance on the state, which had been bred by a long subjection to the outside pressure of the laws made by a privileged minority, until we have by training and hereditary influence for generations come to look at the 'State' as some all-powerful body quite apart from ourselves. 75

It opposed 'professional middlemen' becoming involved in industrial relations, preferring elective conciliation boards under local government. However, Toomey, who was closest to the urban LEL leadership, openly advocated compulsory arbitration in 1893. 76

By 1894, when it was enmeshed in a hopeless dispute with pastoralists, the AWU urged Premier Reid to introduce compulsory

74. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 16 and 30 January 1893. They later refused to comply with a request for information from the Clerk of Awards, ibid., 9 October 1893.
75. Hummer, 16 April 1892. See also 26 March 1892.
76. TLC Minutes, 20 July 1893.
arbitration. A large protest meeting in Sydney supported this demand. Reid's reply to the AWU merely emphasized the need for restraint of the 'disorder' occurring in the countryside. But he had already committed his Government to compulsory state arbitration.

In so doing, Reid sought the Parliamentary support of the Labor Party, which was moving towards compulsion. In the 1892-3 Parliamentary session, Cann had presented a compulsory Bill, although he later withdrew it. In 1894 Labor and the Protectionists combined to refuse Supply for the operation of the 1892 Act, effectively killing it, in an expression of disgust with its futility. But in 1895 Labor supported Reid's amendment to that Act, providing for compulsory arbitration. Invoking the community's desire for industrial peace, McGowen blamed the employers' consistent refusal to conciliate for the failure of the 1892 Act.

However, opposition to the amendment was strong. The Sydney Morning Herald claimed that it would 'take the control of a man's business out of his hands whenever a critical stage is reached'. The Legislative Council overwhelmingly rejected the Bill. Yet, the Bill had only provided for compulsory attendance at conciliation and/or arbitration during a dispute, not enforcement of awards which, in the employers' current frame of mind, would also be necessary to make arbitration a reality.

Although Reid did not favour enforcement, support for it was growing in the Labor Party, particularly from McGowen, Hughes and

78. ibid., pp.2106-8; Fitzpatrick, Short History of the Australian Labor Movement, p.154.
This support was fuelled by an 1894 New Zealand Act which provided for enforcement, and by the establishment of Wages Boards, with power to enforce minimum wage rates, in Victoria in 1896.

R. Hollis of the Engine-drivers' Union advocated full compulsory arbitration in 1897. Following their strikes in 1894 and 1896, the Newcastle miners, and Watkins, a Newcastle Labor MP, also called for compulsory arbitration. In mid-1898 mining unionists, in association with Post Master General Cook (ex-miners' official and ex-Labor MP), urged the Government to re-introduce the 1895 Bill, and Labour Minister Garrard admitted that the New Zealand Act had been the only successful one. Finally, as a special conference at the end of 1898, the SDC decided to advocate compulsory arbitration along the lines of the New Zealand Act.

As pressure intensified within his own Government, Reid promised legislation from 1896. But with his major interest in federation, he pleaded Upper House intransigence in postponing a new Bill until the end of 1898, after which a weaker version of the 1895 Bill was passed by both Houses. The SDC repeated its demand for a New Zealand-style

82. AW, 29 April 1897.
84. SDC Minutes, 6 and 20 October 1898; SDC Report for Half Year ending 30 June 1899; SMH, 26-29 November, 3 December 1898.
85. The 1899 Act only gave the Minister for Labour power to initiate conciliation/arbitration proceedings, but established no continuous arbitration agency. Rickard, op.cit., p.146; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.4, pp.2038, 2108, 2192, 2209; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.194.
Act, with four differences: that decisions of the Conciliation, as well as Arbitration Boards be binding; that state employees be covered; that penalties be introduced for non-compliance; and that compulsory preference in employment be awarded to unionists. In 1900 the re-formed Sydney Labor Council presented two petitions to Parliament for such an Act. The 1901 Act eventually passed did indeed go further than its New Zealand counterpart in partially meeting the Labor Council's demands, and in providing for compulsory attendance at arbitration, as well as enforcement of awards. The 1904 Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act essentially followed the principles of the New South Wales Act.

What role Labour? The traditional interpretation is that, thoroughly weakened and demoralised in the depression, the unions overcame their distrust of the state, especially with the presence of a Labor Party in Parliament, to pragmatically support a system which at least guaranteed their existence. Their reward came quickly in the early 1900s, when unionism flowered under the auspices of registration under the Arbitration Courts. Gollan, Macarthy and Rickard have taken this view, although Macarthy notes that union support for arbitration did not imply abandonment of direct negotiation, and Rickard also notes some

86. SDC Report for Half Year ending 30 June 1899; Sydney Labor Council, Half Yearly Report, 30 June 1900, and 31 December 1900.
87. The Act installed the union as the basic workers' unit in the system; allowed the Court to grant preference to unionists in awards; and established the 'common rule', whereby all employers were bound by an award. See Reeves, op.cit., pp.153-62; NSWPD, 1900 Session, vol.103, pp.641ff.
88. It did not, however, apply the 'common rule'. Hence, only parties to a dispute were bound by an award.
89. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.183; Macarthy, op.cit., pp.244-6, 309-10; Rickard, op.cit., pp.407, 411. Rickard's argument, implicitly or explicitly, is contained throughout the references to him above.
ambiguity on the unions' part. Gollan's interpretation contained a further element of co-option: arbitration was a means of 'disarming and controlling militant trade unionism', 90 but he is unclear as to who, precisely, did this.

Fitzpatrick, on the other hand, argued that whilst Labor supported arbitration in the 1890s, it was essentially an employers' creation. 'Expediency' dictated the tactics of a labour movement which 'had been brought to a standstill by a combination of employers and the state', but 'if any party was resolved to banish the strike... it was the employers' party. They had won the battles of the nineties, but at a huge cost'. 91 These views are apparently difficult to sustain against the evidence marshalled by Rickard and Macarthy. However, the situation was a good deal more complex than either interpretation allows.

Rickard's and Macarthy's arguments rely disproportionately on Victorian evidence. As we saw in Chapter 8, the nature of Labor politics, the nature of political blocs in general, and of their policies, were somewhat different in Victoria to those in New South Wales. In fact, the evidence that New South Wales Labour shifted its attitude towards arbitration is extremely weak. Support for arbitration came from limited, clearly identifiable sections of the New South Wales labour movement.

The most important of these was the Parliamentary Labor Party, which largely 'initiated the shift in attitude. The PLP had supported Reid's compulsory legislation before it was Party policy. In 1901,

90. Radical and Working Class Politics, p.152.
Holman claimed that arbitration substituted 'the methods of reason, arbitration, common sense and judgment for the methods of brute force'. Hughes spoke similarly. Spence stated that

...we are willing to sacrifice a good deal in order to avoid conflict, in the hope that improved conditions will be brought about by these methods.

Eventually he hoped that the work of the Courts would decrease, because 'the people will trouble the Courts less and less as they become more intelligent'. The PLP's initiative clearly coincided with the post-1895 utopian socialist/AWU ascendancy within the Party. Arbitration was the paradigm of the utopian socialist belief in a neutral state and desire to avoid class conflict. By apparently offering industrial peace, it might also aid the Party's populist electoral strategy, by attracting non-working class votes. At election time in particular, union industrial action might be a liability to the Party.

Those unions which actively supported arbitration had quite specific motives, which usually fell short of the PLP's commitment to arbitration as an article of faith. Coalminers had a tradition of voluntary conciliation and arbitration with coal-owners, and had been repressed with particular savagery during the depression. The Engine-drivers' consistently supported arbitration during the 1890s. As public employees, railwaymen could not easily resort to direct industrial action, yet the Railway Commissioners had refused arbitration under the 1892 Act, as they attacked the union's very existence. The mass

93. Quoted in McQueen, op.cit., p.218.
95. Quoted in Lansbury, op.cit., p.8. See also Spence, Australia's Awakening, pp.308-9.
96. See Childe, op.cit., pp.56,58.
railway union had also had Holman as Secretary during 1892-4. The AWU had faced an impossible task in the 1890s, to attempt to establish itself as a bargaining agent with a part-time, itinerant, membership, and a vast number of hostile employers. Even if the Pastoralists' Association became less hostile to the AWU, its authority over all pastoralists was limited. Arbitration, therefore, ended the AWU's search for a stable bargaining framework.  

Most of the supporters of compulsory arbitration at the 1898 SDC conference were conservative craft unions which disliked militant strike action. The Printers', for example, had been aloof from the SDC and the Labor Party for most of the 1890s. Arbitration was the issue which finally motivated their commitment to the Party. Printers faced widespread productive re-organization in the 1890s, which weakened their industrial position, and suffered their employers' refusal to negotiate under the 1892 Act.

Otherwise, active support for compulsory arbitration was limited to the central union leadership on the SDC, although it was far from unanimous here. One strong arbitration supporter from this group, Sam Smith of the Seamen's Union, had become closely identified with the AWU/PLP leadership through his position on the ALF executive, which was controlled by the AWU. It may also have been relevant

97. See footnotes 66 and 71. Docherty, op.cit., pp.110-14. The Engine-drivers' moved the motion for support of a full compulsory system at the 1898 SDC Conference. See n.56 re coalminers.

98. AWU support for the 1900 Bill was strongly expressed: AWU Central Branch Minutes, 11 December 1900; AWU Bourke AR, 31 May 1900, p.6; AWU 15th AR, January 1901, p.11. For its industrial position, see Chapter 5 above.

99. Even George Jones, who had opposed arbitration at the Strikes Commission, became a strong supporter at the end of the 1890s. Hagan, Printers and Politics, pp.122-4. The Tinsmiths' were a less conservative craft union which signed the Labor Council petition in 1900, Tinsmiths' Minutes, 9 March 1900.

100. Fitzpatrick, 'History of the Seamen's Union', chapter 4, p.11. Smith was SDC President, 1894-1900; PLL President, 1898-9; and MP from 1898.
that the Seamen had been refused negotiations in 1893 when they fought wage cuts, after enjoying a formal framework of bargaining with employers for some years previously. But there is little evidence of rank and file seamen's support for arbitration. Nor is there amongst the Wharf-Labourers', whose new leader in the revitalized union of 1899, Hughes, was particularly committed to arbitration. None of this amounts to a Labour groundswell for compulsory arbitration.

Indeed, there was strong opposition to acceptance of this policy, led by the socialists. At the Strikes Commission, Higgs stated:

...there will never be any cessation of labour struggles until labourers get the whole of the product of their labour and, as this Board of Conciliation would have to settle these matters in a spirit of compromise, the workers would not get all they asked for.\textsuperscript{103}

E.J. Brady, editor of the \textit{Workman}, described the 1892 legislation as 'a dastardly attempt on the part of the employer to starve the hands into submission by agreeing to the appointment of a Board of Arbitration in order to waste time...'.\textsuperscript{104} Socialist unionists, such as Moroney and Dwyer, fought arbitration to the end on the SDC.\textsuperscript{105} Even when arbitration became inevitable the \textit{People} and \textit{Collectivist} persisted in terms which became traditionally associated with the socialist position thereafter:

\begin{quote}
Labor must be absolutely free to fight for its own emancipation. For it must be remembered that even when this knock-kneed thing has become law, the class war will still go on; the worker will still be robbed of the major portion of the wealth he creates; and his great concern
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{101} See Fitzpatrick and Cahill, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.22-6; and Chapter 5 above.
\textsuperscript{102} See Mitchell, \textit{op.cit.}, Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{103} RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.234.
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{AW}, 3 October 1891.
\textsuperscript{105} See n. 84.
\end{flushright}
is not how he might temporise with the robber, not how he might persuade the robber to take a little less of what he produces; his great concern is rather how to get rid of the robber. This he can only do by effective industrial and political organization on clear class lines; and our own contention is that such a measure as this evolved out of Mr Bernard Ringnose Wise — capitalist-lawyer-politician — will hamper the workers and handicap them whenever they array themselves honestly and intelligently against the exploiters. 106

Not all of the opposition to arbitration was radical. Some craft unions seem to have resented state interference in industrial relations, which they felt capable of managing themselves. For example, the conservative ASE, which finally did support the 1901 Act, was displeased with its compulsory aspects, and did not use the Arbitration Court for years. 107

However, the socialist position also tapped a widespread aversion in the labour movement towards the lawyers and judges who would play a prominent role in an arbitration system administered by a Court. Labour's admiration for judges such as Higgins and Higinbotham, in other colonies, was exceptional, and based on these men's democratic views, which were considered so unusual amongst their kind. 108

Norton's estimation at the Third (1885) Intercolonial Trades Union Congress, that lawyers were the 'natural allies' of 'squatters, importers, capitalists, and monopolists of every kind', 109 was remarkably similar to that of the socialists:

Every judge comes from the lawyer class — therefore his instincts are almost always with capitalism and for the maintenance of society and its institutions". 110

106. In Ebbels, op.cit., pp.169-70. The People and the Collectivist was the main socialist journal at the time.
110. See n.106.
During the 1890s, the unions' regard for lawyers and courts could only have diminished. Chapter 4 has already noted the repressive role of the courts during the great strikes of 1890-4. Lawyers also formed one of the largest occupational groups in Parliament,\textsuperscript{111} where reform had been so difficult to achieve in the 1890s. They formed a larger group in the Federal Convention which was responsible for the Commonwealth Constitution considered so undemocratic by Labor.\textsuperscript{112}

Even in the AWU a considerable aversion to lawyers existed, especially as they began to dominate the federation movement. In 1898 Spence warned that the workers' enemies, that is capitalists and lawyers 'working for the longest purse', sought to foist a federal constitution on the people designed to perpetuate minority rule.\textsuperscript{113}

Commenting on the first federal election, The Worker lamented that:

\begin{quote}

The whole Federal show is now in the hands of these bounders the lawyers. If the Federal Parliament is composed of them in the same proportion as the so-called Ministry, then God help us....Every position of any importance in all the States is held by these rotten sharks or by their deputies....Most of the Acts passed by the various Parliaments are framed by these artists in fraud; more especially does this apply to the Commonwealth Constitution. If carefully read it is found to be shaped for the special benefit of the few - the lawyers, the promoters, directors and general managers, of course all in the name of the stupid people. How could it be otherwise when these smooth-faced frauds are allowed to represent the people in Parliament? Among all classes of men this side of eternity there are no greater rogues than lawyers, who prey and exist at the expense and to the detriment of their fellow-men. They belong to that class to which thieves and burglars belong - men who never produced one atom of real wealth, but are able to wrest it from those who by their industry have produced it. How do the real wealth-producers of this fair land under any circumstances vote for these foul birds of prey?'\textsuperscript{114}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item 111. Hawker, \textit{op.cit.}, p.16.
\item 112. See Ryan, \textit{''B.R. Wise''}, p.102.
\item 113. Worker, 25 June 1898.
\item 114. Quoted in Ryan, \textit{''B.R. Wise''}, p.103.
\end{footnotes}
AWU attitudes of this kind were closely related to its inheritance of the radical democratic Australian tradition. The Bulletin reflected the estimation of lawyers in this tradition, describing them as parasites, brigands, vultures, sharks, and 'the natural enemy of the people'. When B.R. Wise was elected to Parliament for the Free Traders in 1887, The Bulletin commented:

the return of one more addition to the ranks of the vultures and cormorants who already muster so strongly in the NSW legislature is not a victory to be grateful for.\textsuperscript{115}

Wise, the lawyer, was ultimately responsible for introducing the NSW Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Even though many lawyers were opposed to the Act, they were seen as one of its major beneficiaries.\textsuperscript{116}

Under all of these circumstances, positive support for arbitration within the labour movement was generally weak, even if arbitration's most committed opponents, the socialists, represented a minority. The timing of Labour's shift towards support for arbitration, 1898-9, weakens the traditional argument. Indeed, it suggests a dogged rank and file resistance to Parliamentary leaders' promotion of arbitration. If the unions had embraced compulsory arbitration as a reflex response to industrial disadvantage, one should expect an earlier commitment. By 1898 the economy, and the unions' position, were already improving, and they had enjoyed two years of relative industrial tranquillity. In 1894 the new Federated Building Trades Council listed conciliation and/or arbitration amongst its objects, but did not include compulsion.\textsuperscript{117}

In 1895, when the SDC requested the government to compulsorily refer

\textsuperscript{115} The Bulletin, 11 June 1887. Also, for example, 19 August 1894, 30 March 1895. See Ryan, 'B.R. Wise', pp.100ff.
\textsuperscript{116} Ryan, 'B.R. Wise', p.176.
the miners' dispute to arbitration, the Workman found this

...somewhat amusing, as the Council looked
upon with approval, if it did not actually
to a degree, incite the abolition of the
N.S.W. Conciliation and Arbitration Board
which was killed by the Labor Party in the
House.

Some SDC delegates objected to this interpretation, but others approved.

Whilst Moroney unsuccessfully moved to expunge from the Minutes,
an expression of 'regret' over the 1892 Board's demise, the SDC was
clearly divided over support for arbitration. It declined, therefore,
to express a definite judgment on the 1892 Act or the proposed 1895
amendment. 118

The 1898 SDC conference which finally committed the unions to
compulsory arbitration was an extremely unrepresentative working class
body. The thirty unions represented were only a small proportion of
the one hundred-odd represented by the 1891 TLC when it emerged as a
class leadership. Some unions represented in 1898, such as the Wharf
Labourers', existed in name only. The 1898 Conference was dominated
by conservative craft unions, some of which had only recently re-
affiliated with the SDC, after an independent existence during the
depression. These unions continued to dominate the re-vamped Sydney
Labour Council.

Even in the Labor Party and the AWU, support for compulsory
arbitration was far from unanimous. Arthur Rae led an opposition
group in the AWU, and the PLP's support was strengthened by Rae's
loss of his seat in the 1894 elections. 119  Despite Hughes' and
Holman's strength in the Party by 1895, they failed to have compulsory

118. TLC Minutes, 30 August, 15 December 1894 (re proposed amendment);
17 and 31 January 1895 (AW quoted).
119. Evatt, Australian Labor Leader, p.71. See n.64.
arbitration placed on the Platform. It was not even discussed at the
1896 or 1898 Conferences, prior to its acceptance in 1899.\footnote{Worker, 2 February 1895; 1 February, 1896; 5 February and 26
March 1898. (Labor Conferences). See Coghlan, Labour and
Industry in Australia, vol.4, p.2108; and Rickard, \textit{op.cit.},
pp.78, 144.}

Furthermore, if, as some historians have suggested, arbitration was a
major issue in the PLP's dissatisfaction with Reid during 1898-9,\footnote{For example, Rickard, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.149-51. See n. 55.}
it is important to note that Reid maintained strong support in the
PLP until the last moment, when Labor switched to Lyne.

In the final analysis, only the utopian socialist/AWU leadership
of the Labor Party embraced the grand vision which Hughes had, of
arbitration as 'a recognition by the people that a blow struck at any
component part of the organism of society, is a blow struck at
society itself'.\footnote{Quoted in McQueen, \textit{op.cit.}, p.218.}
This corporate outlook, which Labor shared with
Wise,\footnote{Ryan, 'B.R. Wise', pp.167-9.} was the result of a merger between utopian socialism and
populism. It sought to guarantee trade unions' existence, but subject
to regulation by the state. It also provided the basis for the
uniqueness of the Australian industrial relations system, which took
as its central aim the 'prevention and settlement of industrial
disputes'.\footnote{Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1904, Objects
1 and 2.}

Higgins, the second President of the Commonwealth
Arbitration Court, summarized the attitude of Labor, and Free Trade
and Protectionist, parliamentarians when he described arbitration as
'A New Province for Law and Order'.\footnote{H. B. Higgins, \textit{A New Province for Law and Order}, London, 1922.}

Compulsory state arbitration was one of the most distinctive
policy strands of Laborism. The other two major policy strands of
Laborism were racism and land policy. These are examined in Chapter 11.
CHAPTER 11

THE POPULIST PARADIGM:

RACISM AND THE LAND
In 1901 the White Australia policy became the lynch-pin of the new Federal Australian Labor Party. White Australia built on well-established colonial attitudes towards immigration in general, and immigration of non-European races, in particular. However, although Labour's racism has recently been well-documented, historians have generally failed to recognise the centrality of White Australia to the nature of the Labor Party which emerged at the end of the 1890s. In order to appreciate its importance to Labor, it is necessary to examine the relationship between racism and the Party's populist social base. In doing so, this chapter locates the White Australia policy within the broader policy and ideology which the Labor Party developed as it prepared to play a political role in the federated Commonwealth of Australia, which emerged in 1901.

Labour and Immigration

Opposition to immigration, particularly Government-assisted immigration, was one of the earliest and most sustained issues around which working class political organization occurred. From the 1840s, workers linked immigration with unemployment and employers' assaults on wages. They had some justification in doing so. Employers and legislators were sometimes quite explicit about the relationship between wages and immigration. Coalowners regularly sought to break strikes or weaken the miners' union by increasing the supply of labour

3. For example, see Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.2, pp.874, 913-6, 1020, 1029.
with British or intercolonial miners. In 1875 the Agreements Validating Act, which the TLC strongly opposed, enforced agreements reached in Britain between colonial employers and emigrants, whereby the emigrants agreed to accept wage levels far below those current in New South Wales. More generally, employers' complaints over labour shortages, exacerbated by state enterprise, were equally complaints about wage levels. Whilst assisted immigration never sufficed to reverse labour's overall market advantage, there were really a number of labour markets, occupationally and regionally divided, whose narrowness often rendered them susceptible to 'flooding' by small numbers. Assisted immigration seemed particularly onerous to the working class, 'being a direct subsidy to capital', which 'compels a large proportion of the people to contribute towards the importation of competition for their employment'.

Agitation against immigration peaked in periods of high unemployment, or when the Government re-introduced or increased the level of assistance schemes, as in 1877 and 1883. For example, from 1876-9, as

4. For example, in 1861, when it was intended to utilize a Government assistance scheme. Gollan, Coalminers of New South Wales, pp.38-9. K. Buckley also notes that the ASE's warnings to London became more urgent as disputes developed, 'Emigration and the Engineers, 1851-87', Labour History, no.15, November 1968, pp.34-5.

5. This had been the issue leading to the breach between the TLC and its representative, Cameron, who supported the Bill. TLC Minutes, 30 December 1875, 3 and 10 February, 23 March, 13 and 20 April, and 18 May 1876.

6. For example, note the higher proportion of skilled workers amongst immigrants in the late 1870s. Buckley, 'Emigration and the Engineers', op.cit., pp.35-6.

7. TLC Executive Committee Minutes, 11 February 1885; and 1 December, 1883.

coalfields underemployment grew, miners ceased their earlier encouragement of immigrants, and organized a strong campaign against assisted immigration, involving mass meetings, petitioning of Parliament, and despatch of circulars to British unions. The level of immigration also peaked in the late 1870s and early 1880s, after virtually ceasing in 1870. Agitation spread to other unions, such as the ASE, in the general recession of 1879-80. Throughout the 1870s the TLC regularly gathered statistics on the 'state of the trades' for communication to British unions to discourage immigration. Its Parliamentary delegate at this time, Cameron, consistently opposed assisted immigration.

From about 1880, the TLC assumed leadership of the unions' anti-immigration campaign. In that year it organized a large public meeting, with three MPs in attendance, against the Government's budget allocations for assisted immigration. In 1883, when Government assistance to immigrants was increased, large public meetings were organized in Sydney, with some MPs attending. A petition was circulated, and withdrawal of support threatened to Parliamentary

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9. HRDDM Minutes, 10 April 1876, 6 and 26 July 1876, 23 November 1876, 4 January 1877, 22 February 1878, 20 March 1879, 3 April 1879.
10. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.77; Hargreaves, op.cit., p.15; Buckley, 'Emigration and the Engineers', op.cit., pp.36-7. The ASE, being a branch of a British union, was able to exert special influences to attempt to stem the flow of immigrants.
11. For example, TLC Minutes, 30 April, 14 May, 3 June and 18 June 1873, 8 July 1874, 16 December 1875. Often, as in the first of these instances, statistics were specifically collected to refute more favourable statements in the press. See also, Norton, op.cit., p.68.
12. For example, TLC Minutes, 17 June 1875, 23 March 1876. Cameron actually justified his support of the Agreements Validating Bill by claiming that it would help restrict assisted immigration, ibid., 17 February 1876.
13. SMH, 3 February 1880; TLC Executive Minutes, 27-8 and 30-1 January, 1880.
candidates who supported the scheme. Sydney Morning Herald denials that immigrants were imported 'for the benefit of one class at the expense of another', since they were essential for developmental works, failed to allay union fears when it was reported that the Contractors' Association intended using the assistance scheme to import 10,000 unskilled workers. In January 1884, a public meeting launched the Democratic Alliance with a petition, signed by 7,000. During the 1885-7 recession the TLC joined with the Democratic Alliance against Government assistance to immigrants. In 1886 it sent John Norton to London to warn British unions against 'false statements' concerning New South Wales employment opportunities, after a British Commission was established to inquire into workers' emigration, and New South Wales had opened a London immigration agency. In Sydney, the TLC organized a mass demonstration early in 1887, followed by an enthusiastic homecoming for Norton. The ASE at this time repeatedly warned its London Head Office against members' emigration.

Even during the brief economic upturn in 1889, and during the 1890s when immigration virtually ceased, the TLC remained vigilant,

14. MPs Melville, Curley and Abigail attended the first and last meetings. TLC Executive Minutes, 3, 6, 8, 10 and 14 March 1883, 27 November and 1 December 1883; SMH, 9 and 14 March and 5 December 1883.
15. 15 March 1883.
17. TLC Executive Minutes, 11 February 1885, 7, 14 and 21 December 1886, 4, 7, 11, 14 and 21 January 1887, 3 May 1887; TLC Minutes 16 December 1886; Norton, op.cit., pp.81, 86-7; Coopers' Minutes, 3 June 1886. Norton, a colonial adventurer who sat as a TLC delegate at this time, although he did not have close connections with any union, later became an MP and moved away from the labour movement. See Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.26, and C. Pearl, Wild Men of Sydney (London, 1958), 1970, passim.
and sought the repeal of the Agreements Validating Act. In 1890, when unemployment was already high, the unions automatically condemned a proposal by General Booth, of the Salvation Army, for pauper emigration to the colonies, claiming that it would deposit the 'rakings and scrapings of the social garbage heap of Great Britain' in Australia. The LEL and socialists sponsored demonstrations in Sydney and Newcastle, but Booth's scheme failed to attract much support from any quarter.

As the 1883 episode showed, the unskilled were most vulnerable to immigrant labour competition, often from 'farmers' who remained in Sydney. Tradesmen were also more amenable to unionization, and some crafts, notably in building, relied on immigration rather than local apprenticeship for expansion of manpower resources. Yet, the craft-dominated TLC led the anti-immigration campaign, with strong rank and file support from its affiliates. Anti-immigration, therefore, became one of the earliest vehicles for the TLC's development as a class leadership.

19. TLC Executive Minutes, 12 November 1889; TLC Minutes, 25 January 1893. Repeal of the Agreements Validating Act was in the Labor Platform from 1891. The TLC supported Sheldon's attempt to repeal the Act in 1893 (TLC Minutes, 2 March 1893), but in 1900 the AWU still sought Labor Party initiative in this area (14th AR, January 1900, p.16).

20. TLC Minutes, 28 November 1890, 8, 22 and 29 October 1891, 12 November 1891. Quotation from AR, 3 October 1891, which also saw the scheme as designed to combat 'proletarian revolution' in Britain.

21. The SMH was always quick to point to the low numbers of tradesmen (mainly builders) and the high numbers of 'farmers' and children on the immigrant ships, for example, 4 February 1880.

22. See Chapter 1. Building unions were largely absent from the anti-immigration campaign. For example, the Painters' and Carpenters' declined participation in the TLC's mass demonstration of January, 1887 (TLC Executive Minutes, 14 and 21 December 1886). TLC pre-occupation with this issue may have encouraged separate organization in the Building Trades Council.
The campaign's success record also confirmed the value of political organization. It must take some responsibility for the insufficiency of assisted immigration to alter labour market conditions, despite employers' efforts and Governments' frequent sympathy towards them. In 1877 Parkes lost his East Sydney seat after proposing Government assistance, and in the 1880s Parliamentary candidates seeking working class support committed themselves to anti-immigration. After agitation, the immigration budget halved in 1859, and quietly dropped in 1870. From 1867-72 no new assistance was passed by Parliament. Then, a new assistance scheme only slowly began operation, with care taken to minimize labour competition in the choice of immigrants. Few, in fact, were assisted. A further vote in 1876 had little effect until 1877, when the new Robertson ministry halved it. Funds were increased in 1878, but reduced in 1879. The unions failed to prevent large increases in assistance in 1880 and 1883, but a harsher Agreements Validating Bill was defeated in 1883, the Government closed its London immigration office in 1886, and in 1887 assistance ceased, as Government spending and economic prosperity began to decline.

Labour Racism

Labour's attitude towards non-European immigration was consistent with its political stance on immigration in general. However, Labour's

24. For example, O'Sullivan in 1882 when he stood for West Sydney, Mansfield, op.cit., pp.44-5. A small number of MPs regularly attended the public meetings (as indicated in references above), and Melville and Curley from the northern coalfields were especially prominent amongst these.
26. SMH, 19 November 1883. The TLC does not appear however, to have played any major role in the defeat of this legislation. Repeal of the Act did appear in the Labor Platform in the 1890s.
campaigns against non-Europeans developed a separate political momentum to its general anti-immigration campaign, and aroused much more intensive political feeling. The working class basis of political campaigns for exclusion of non-Europeans was also less distinct than that for Labour's general anti-immigration policy. Labour's racism was shared by most of colonial society, where the concepts of Social Darwinism, a 'civilizing mission', and a mission to rationally develop natural resources, played as important a role in subjugating non-European races as in any of the other 'regions of recent settlement'. Nevertheless, the political function of racism was quite specific for Labour.

The political expression of colonial racism was established in the agitation against Chinese gold-miners in the 1850s and 1860s. It was characterized by a populist alliance of diggers, urban artisans, small businessmen, and bourgeois liberals. The end of the goldrushes and restrictive legislation saw a significant reduction in Chinese population, but from 1876 Chinese immigration rose. Whilst many were en route to new Queensland rushes, and whilst they remained a small proportion of New South Wales' total population, the Chinese were concentrated, geographically, in community groups, and occupationally, and some had moved towards towns, to become more conspicuous to urban dwellers. 28


In 1878, the Chinese issue flared into prominence again with the Sydney Seamen's strike against the ASN Company's employment of non-union Chinese crew on three ships, for sub-union wages. Support gathered quickly in the union movement. Wharf labourers also struck, and miners refused to supply coal to the company. The strike soon assumed broad political proportions, with large public meetings in Sydney and Newcastle demanding restrictions on Chinese immigration. Popular victory was ensured by the Queensland Government's threat to cancel its mail contract with the Company, although in the strike settlement it was agreed that the Company could gradually phase out its Chinese labour over three years, and almost half of the striking seamen were not re-employed. Thereafter, the union movement was committed to restrictions on Chinese immigration. The First (1879) Intercolonial Trades Union Congress unanimously called for a heavy poll tax on Chinese residents and immigration restrictions, a policy which was reiterated at the succeeding Congresses of the 1880s.

Premier Parkes supported restrictions, as his 1861 legislation had revealed. However, in 1879 the revival of this legislation was blocked by the Legislative Council. To be effective, legislation also required uniformity between the colonies. Early in 1881 an intercolonial Governmental conference agreed on restriction, but since New South Wales and Victoria supported far harsher measures than the other colonies would agree to, no uniform policy resulted from the conference.

In 1880 the TLC and the Seamen commenced a campaign of public meetings and deputations to the Government. A TLC conference, held to coincide with the inter-Governmental meeting, called for restrictions far harsher than those suggested by any Government representatives. The conference failed to attract more than one MP, but in April 1881, the campaign intensified, as the rate of Chinese immigration rose. 'One of the largest assemblies ever gathered in the Masonic Hall', chaired by Sydney's Mayor, attracted five MPs and three city aldermen. A repeat meeting a week later was followed by gatherings in May in Newcastle, Yass, the suburbs of Botany and Camperdown, and a TLC demonstration of at least 10,000.

In July 1881 the Government introduced restrictive legislation which had an immediate effect in lowering Chinese immigration, but this soon rose again as the Chinese became accustomed to the regulations, and circumvented them. Attempts to revive the issue on the TLC failed in 1883, as much because of personal rivalries, as anything else. However, the Seamen took the initiative again in April 1885, over the employment of Chinese on the Zealandia and Australia. The 1878 strike had ended the use of Chinese in domestic crews, but these ships were operated between Australia and the United States by

33. TLC Executive Minutes, 21 April 1880, 4,8,11 and 13 January, 1881; SMH, 27 April and 6 May 1880.
34. SMH, 29 April 1881. See Markus, Fear and Hatred, p.95.
35. SMH, 7,12,19,24,25 and 27 May, and 30 June 1881; TLC Executive Minutes, 5,14,18,20-24 May 1881; Norton, op.cit., p.49, who estimated the demonstration at 30,000 compared with the SMH's more conservative figure.
37. TLC Minutes, 25 October 1883. The personal rivalry was between F.B. Dixon, a rising Council star, and O'Sullivan, who favoured a strong anti-Chinese stance, but who fuelled opposition to himself because of his attempts to link the TLC with other organizations, such as the Radical Association and Democratic Alliance.
a Glasgow group. To blockade the ships, Wharf Labourers' and Coal Lumpers' joined the strike, as did even the 'professional' Marine Engineers' (officially because replacement crews were 'incompetent'). The issue was complicated by the Seamen's extra demands for higher wages and a 'closed shop', the company conceding all bar the last demand. After a week the Zealandia managed to sail, but the company did not employ coloured labour again. 38

Political agitation revived over the next few years, as the increase in immigration coincided with a Chinese protest that restrictive legislation breached Anglo-Chinese treaties. The Bulletin intensified its established anti-Chinese campaign from 1886. Anti-Chinese Leagues sprang up throughout the colonies over 1886-8, some urban Chinese were physically maltreated, and Queensland shearers were involved in a number of strikes over Chinese employment (peaking in 1889). New South Wales agitation peaked in mid-1888 when the S.S. Afghan arrived with Chinese passengers. In response, the Government tightened entry restrictions, virtually fulfilling the unions' objectives. 39

This represented an unequalled level of success for working class political action at the time, far in excess of that for the general anti-immigration campaign. The campaign's success rested upon a distinctive pattern of agitation. Two parallel movements occurred and re-occurred: first, a broadening from the industrial front into a

38. Although other overseas lines did. SMH, 27 April 1885; Marine Engineers' Sydney District Minutes, 11 May 1885; Fitzpatrick, 'History of the Seamen's Union', Chapter 2, p.6.
39. TLC Executive Minutes, 8 November 1887; The Bulletin, for example, 2 August 1882 (other examples are legion); G. Black, Origin and Growth of Labour, p.10; Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, pp.335-8; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, pp.1339, 1341-5, 1523; Price, op.cit., pp.186-8; Markus, Fear and Hatred, pp.124-48.
full-scale political movement; and secondly, a broadening from a working class movement into a populist alliance, in contrast to the working class-based general anti-immigration campaign.

Strikes marked the beginning of the two waves of agitation, in 1878, and 1885. In 1885, when the Seamen capitalized on public sympathy to introduce their further demands, the Chinese were obviously only one aspect of strained industrial relations on the waterfront, as shipowners sought to reduce costs and the unions consolidated joint organization. The Company involved was, after all, an international operator, and the union took a particularly hard line in insisting, not only on replacement of the Chinese, but that their return to San Francisco should be as passengers.

The Chinese issue was important to the labour movement organizationally. To a large extent, the Seamen's Union had been consolidated upon it. The AMA was also established during a dual struggle against a wage reduction and the introduction of Chinese labour in 1878. Politically, the anti-Chinese campaign had been the most sustained organizational experience for the working class in the 1880s. Quite apart from demonstrations directly sponsored by the TLC, working class participation at most meetings was high, and MPs from working class electorates played a prominent role.

40. See Chapter 3.
41. Queensland branch, Federated Seamen's Union of Australasia, Executive's Address to Members, 17 September 1892 (in Ebbels, op.cit., pp.155-6).
42. Spence, History of the AMA, pp.4-7.
43. See sources above, especially in notes 30,34-5, and 38-9, for these and other general observations of the campaign in this section. Markus emphasises the campaign's lack of continuity, implying a lack of strong feeling over the issue, without 'evanescent external stimuli' usually absent because of the small numbers of Chinese (Fear and Hatred, p.103 and passim). But the pattern of agitation, with discernable peaks and troughs rather than a high plateau, was no different for any other ongoing political issue in this period.
Consistent with this working class base, the notion of economic threat was a constant theme in anti-Chinese agitation. Allegedly, the Chinese competed for jobs, worked for sub-standard wages under poor conditions, and were unwilling to embrace unionism. The threat was intensified by 'the proximity of reservoirs of humanity in China, India, Java and the Pacific Isles'. In this sense, the campaign was an extension of unions' general immigration policy. Agitation in 1878-9 and 1886-8, the beginning and end of the campaign, coincided with peaks in the general anti-immigration campaign, and with economic recessions, when fear of unemployment may have lent strong credence to the notion of the Chinese as an 'economic threat'.

However, the 'economic threat' thesis was not entirely justified. Apart from shipping, only in the furniture trade was there a clear case of competition, but where evidence is available, Chinese wages were on a par with Europeans', although they were often paid by the piece, to which the unions strongly objected. The other major Chinese occupations - storekeeping, hawking, laundering, market gardening and cooking - were unimportant areas of white employment, and often provided as services for other Chinese. The Gardeners' complaints in the early 1890s seem exaggerated (even though that was the largest single area of Chinese employment), and laundering was a women's preserve, where low wages and appalling conditions were normal. Chinese and other coloured labour had also shown a propensity

44. Norton, op.cit., p.49.
46. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.3, p.1510, exaggerates the economic threat in these areas, although his own evidence suggests it was minimal.
47. TLC Minutes, 1 and 27 October 1891.
48. See Chapter 1. Chinese launderers made a more marked impact in Melbourne in the 1890s, Markus, Fear and Hatred, p.163.
for industrial organization. Even if unwarranted, economic fears could be genuinely held. Union evaluations of capitalists' 'ulterior motives' had some basis. From the 1830s pastoralists and merchants had favoured cheap and servile convict, Chinese or Indian labour, and Queensland planters had successfully introduced Melanesian coolie labour in the sugar industry, although white labour was difficult to attract into country and tropical areas. Pastoralists remained the largest occupational group in the conservative Upper House which rejected Parkes' 1879 restrictive legislation. Non-white labour had also been used to break strikes on a number of occasions. When employers or the conservative press defended coloured labour for its 'docility', 'industriousness' or 'sobriety', union fears were only confirmed. Nevertheless, an overt racism ran throughout the anti-Chinese campaign, which aroused much greater enthusiasm than anti-immigration generally. At meetings, the same speakers who located the issue in a class perspective of economic threat always returned to outright racial antagonism. The Chinese were linked with corruption, disease, opium smoking and the desecration of white women. If they were wayward or criminal in any way, these fears were confirmed; if well-behaved, they were probably being cunning. Prevented from bringing their womenfolk to Australia by restrictive legislation, the absence of Chinese women became proof of Chinese workers'
immorality and temporary use of Australia. Strike-breaking against
non-whites was quite acceptable behaviour for otherwise good unionists.
Banned from membership of the unions, non-Europeans were accused
of not understanding union solidarity, and when they organized
separately they were shunned. William Lane and *The Bulletin* peddled
a particularly strenuous racism. For Australia, claimed *The Bulletin*,
'the problem is one of life or living death, and her sons have to
choose between the establishment of a great nation and a new life,
or the founding of a mongrel community...'.

Overt racism, which was shared even by liberal humanitarians
such as Reeves and Coghlan, gave the anti-Chinese movement a broad
social base which the 'economic threat' argument could not.
Descriptions of the public meetings in 1878 show clearly that many
besides workers participated. For example, one typical meeting
consisted 'of citizens representing nearly every class of the
community', chaired by the Mayor, who was 'surrounded on the stage
by many of the best known public men and leading citizens'. The
TLC vied for campaign leadership with the protectionist Political
Reform Union, and colonial Governments were obviously sympathetic.

54. 2 August 1888. Despite frequently violent undertones however,
the Australian agitation was considerably more peaceful than
55. Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, pp.354-5. Coghlan is less forthright,
but his economic objections to the Chinese (Labour and Industry
in Australia, vol.4, pp.2318-9) were clearly based on prejudicial
stereotypes and contradicted his own findings in *RCIRA*, p.10,
pp.1116-7. Even the establishment press eventually gave
lukewarm support to the campaign. For this, and the spread of
Social Darwinist ideas from the 1880s, see Markus, *Fear and
Hatred*, pp.105,140-2,256-60. See also the description of
Chinese in N. Gould, *Town and Bush*, chapter on 'The Dark Side of
Sydney Life', pp.106-12.
56. The Age, 16 December 1878. See Curthoys, 'Conflict and Consensus',
op.cit.
This pattern continued in the 1880s. The TLC's unsuccessful meeting during the 1880 Intercolonial Conference was followed by large country and city meetings organized independently of the TLC. The Yass meeting probably included many farmers. Even in the TLC's assertion of political independence, in May 1880, it is unlikely that all participants in the demonstration were working class. Only eleven unions directly participated, along with the City Fire Escape Company, brass bands, the Sydney Maritime Benefit Society, and some MPs from non-working class areas. The Anti-Chinese Leagues were also broadly-based. They included the Australian Natives Association, an eminently respectable organization, but only a few unions directly participated in the Leagues, some hesitantly. 57 Even in 1880, when the Political Reform Union established an Anti-Chinese League, the TLC's similar attempt failed to attract much union support. 58 Later in the 1880s, the Seamen was one of the few unions strongly committed to the Leagues in Sydney, but union commitment was higher in other colonies. This variation affected the campaign nature. In Sydney, where The Bulletin was also based, there was much more emphasis on the Chinese as a social evil, rather than an economic threat. 59

The 1880s campaign, therefore, was the paradigm of populist politics. For the unions, it was a contradictory involvement. It was the political issue around which they had organized most successfully, but its very success had depended on the most widespread populist alliance in which they had ever participated, at a time when they were increasingly drawing away from alliances with bourgeois political groupings.

57. Coopers' Minutes, 11 July 1888; Tinsmiths' Minutes, 15, 26, and 29 June, 13 July and 10 August 1888; Price, op.cit., p.187.
58. TLC Minutes, 1 and 15 April 1880; Markus, Fear and Hatred, pp.93-4.
Anti-Chinese feeling persisted in the early 1890s, culminating in a major union gain in the 1896 Factory Act, which defined any workplace employing Chinese as a factory subject to inspection, no matter what its size. The Furniture Trade, Gardeners' and Seamen's Unions were the major exponents of anti-Chinese feeling in the early 1890s. The first two of these unions were very small organizations. The Gardeners' Union seems to have been formed in 1890 around the issue of opposition to Chinese market gardeners, but was unsuccessful in limiting their employment in this area, and disbanded soon afterwards. The Furniture Trade Union, which had temporarily disbanded in 1887 because of its weakness, was hard-hit by the depression and increases in piece-work, although the proportion of whites to Chinese in the trade actually rose in the 1890s. It successfully had the stamping of Chinese-made furniture included on Labor's Platform in 1892.

In 1890 the TLC was prepared to reject Wagga ASU's affiliation until assured that its eight Chinese members had only been admitted under 'exceptional circumstances', that is, prior to a rule being drafted to prohibit their membership. The number of Chinese shearers in New South Wales was infinitesimal (23) by the 1880s, although there were 435 working as general labourers in 1891. These numbers were almost halved by 1901. There could be little doubt over ASU loyalty.

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60. This was a two-edged victory. Regulation actually encouraged backyard operations to avoid inspection, AW, 22 May, 1897.
61. TLC Executive Minutes, 24 February 1890; TLC Minutes, 4 August 1891, 1 and 27 October 1891, 25 May 1893; AW, 24 October 1891, 16 January 1892.
63. Plank no.15, 1892, and Plank no.10, 1896, Ebbels, op.cit., pp.216,218. In 1896 Reid included this in his Factory Bill, but it was rejected by the Upper House.
64. ASU 4th AR, February 1890, p.46; Shearers' Record, 15 April 1890; TLC Executive Minutes, 4 March 1890; ASU Rules, 1887, no.62, and as amended 1890; By-Laws, 1890-2, no.1; AWU Rules, 1894, nos. 52 and 56.
65. Markus, Fear and Hatred, pp.170, 172, 176.
to the anti-Chinese cause, although Aborigines, and in 1895, Maoris and American Negroes, were specifically exempted from the colour bar.

However, largely because of the 1888 legislation's effectiveness, the focus of Labour racism shifted in the 1890s. The Queensland 'Kanaka' became an intercolonial concern because of the probability of federation, intercolonial links in the labour movement, and the movement's identification with Australian nationalism. Indentured Melanesian, or 'Kanaka', labour serviced Queensland's sugar plantations in the style almost of feudal serfdom. Sugar was an important earner of export income. The plantations were large holdings, requiring a much larger workforce than the beef and wool industries. Kanakas were used because of a shortage of labour, especially docile labour, because they could be paid lower wages, and because of the blacks' supposedly greater capacity for hard work under severe, tropical conditions. The unions had every reason to object morally to the Kanaka system, which they likened to slavery. Despite Government regulation, abuses continued, conditions were poor, and the Kanaka death rate was three times higher than that for whites.

Whilst Kanakas may not have competed with white labour to any great extent, the unions feared that the system could spread, especially in the depression. Nevertheless, overt racism lurked beneath these considerations. Labour men and Liberals saw the blacks as 'inferior' and 'uncivilized', and often treated them as such. As with the Chinese, it was assumed that Kanakas would not appreciate union organization.

66. AWU Rules, 1895.
67. For this and the preceding paragraph, see Reeves, op. cit., vol.2, pp.344-52; ASU, 9th AR, February 1892, p.12; Fitzpatrick, British Empire in Australia, pp.186-8; Markus, Fear and Hatred, pp.187-94, and 207-22 for the Queensland campaign.
Labour's agitation against the Kanaka trade became intercolonial in 1892, after Queensland Premier Griffith's reversal of his own 1885 legislation for an early end to the Kanaka traffic. Sugar production in the intervening period had stagnated, and a more gradual ending was now to be allowed. The Sydney TLC organized public meetings in which the Seamen were prominent, and supported an unsuccessful anti-alien Bill. 68

Labour also lengthened its list of undesirable races. In 1891 the TLC panicked over a rumoured colonization of Pacific Islands by exiled Russian Jews. 69 Japanese, Afghans and Indians also began to immigrate in the 1880s. Their numbers were small, and the Afghans, for example, were confined to camel driving. But in the far west they exacerbated the competitive crisis facing bullockies. 70 Whilst Chinese numbers decreased, total Asian immigration to Australia increased by 5,500 from 1895-1901. 71

Southern Europeans also acquired Asian status. 72 Partly due to Queensland Government assistance, almost 4,000 Italians were in Australia by 1891. In that year the Gardeners' Union initiated a TLC inquiry into Italian, 'Assyrian, Armenian and other aliens' who worked for 'starvation wages' as hawkers and farmhands. Concerned

68. TLC Minutes, 25 February, 24 March, 7 April, and 16 June 1892, 2 March, 31 August 1893; Hummer, 26 March, 2 April 1892; AWU, Bourke AR, 31 December 1896, p.7.
69. TLC Minutes, 30 April 1891, 2 March 1893.
71. These numbers are for Australia as a whole, and were concentrated in Queensland. Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, pp.330-2; Markus, Fear and Hatred, p.160.
72. For example, TLC Minutes, 31 August 1893; Report of Conference Between Queensland Labourers' Union and GLU, 1891, p.6.
that 'the Italian name will be brought down to the level of the Chinese', the Italian Workingmen's Benefit Society carefully distanced itself from 'undesirable colonists', supporting prohibition, and claiming that the itinerants mentioned were really Egyptians and Assyrians. For good measure, it condemned capitalism and the Queensland and Italian governments for traffic in indentured labour, claiming that its attempts to publicise the situation in Italy had been stigmatized as the work of 'unpatriotic anarchists at the service of the Australian Labour Unions'.

In 1897 the Workman declared that

we have no down upon the alien as such... We know that the Asiatic races are not what the capitalistic frauds who agitate against aliens, to divert attentions from their own peculations from the workers would make them out to be [sic].

But 'as a matter of expediency', because of cultural differences, popular prejudices, and the way these 'can play into the hands of the plutocracy', the Workman considered that,

pending the solution of social questions, ... the population should be restricted to the white, and as far as possible, the British-speaking element, for the time being."

Socialists had also expressed some uneasiness over the unions' racial policies, and capitalist use of them. However, those sections of the labour movement were weak, and very ambiguous in their attitude towards race. Neither the socialists nor the Workman were always

73. TLC Minutes, 23 and 27 July, 27 August, 17 December 1891. The Italian Government's estimation of the Society was not very inaccurate. Sceusa, its Secretary, was on the left of the Socialist League. For Italians in Australia at this time, see W.D. Borrie, Italians and Germans in Australia, Melbourne, 1954, pp.33-51; C.A. Price, Southern Europeans in Australia, Melbourne, 1963, p.98.

74. AW, 24 July 1897. Also note sympathy for Chinese furniture makers' strike in Melbourne, and Chinese coolie strike overseas, 22 May, 1897.
sympathetic to Asians.  

It was a reflection of the widespread support for a racist policy that the 1895 Intercolonial Premiers' Conference agreed to extend entry restrictions to all coloured races. New South Wales legislated accordingly in 1896, but Royal Assent for the Act was refused.Appearances were important. Because of treaty considerations with Japan, and concern for coloured British subjects, Britain preferred the Natal Act's (1897) restriction of undesirable persons, rather than entire races. That Act prohibited 'any person who when asked fails to write in some European language an application for admission to the colony'. After the federation of the Australian colonies in 1901, this became the model for the Commonwealth Immigration Restriction (White Australia) Act of that year. Barton's Commonwealth Government, Liberals such as Deakin and Higgins, Protectionists and Free Traders generally, had little quarrel with the federal Labor leader's definition of the issue, in which the 'economic threat' was barely mentioned:

the objection I have to the mixing of these coloured people with the white people of Australia - although I admit it is to a large extent tinged by considerations of an industrial nature - lies in the main in the probability of racial contamination ... The question is whether we would desire that our sisters or our brothers should be married into any of these races to which we object. 

75. For example, AW, 17 October 1896. For the socialists' ambiguity over racism, see A. Markus, 'White Australia? Socialists and Anarchists', Arena, 32/3, 1973, pp.80-9.
76. Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, pp.340-1. It seems that the Anglo-Japanese treaty itself, by allowing reciprocal residency rights, was a motivation for the 1896 NSW Act, A.T. Yarwood, Asian Migration to Australia, Melbourne, 1964, pp.5-9.
77. Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, 1901-2, vol.4, pp.4633-6; for Barton's speech, see Reeves, op.cit., vol.2, pp.352-3; Markus, Fear and Hatred, pp.220-1. The only opponents of White Australia were Queensland plantation owners and sections of the establishment press which considered Asian labour necessary in the tropics, ibid., pp.229-33.
Nevertheless, it was Labor which had taken White Australia as its foremost policy. 'The cultivation of an Australian sentiment based upon the maintenance of racial purity...' became its first Federal Objective, before any consideration of social justice for the worker. White Australia provided the major source of unity in the first Federal Caucus, which was otherwise split along Free Trade/Protectionist lines. The Party campaigned vigorously over the issue in the first federal elections in 1901, and it was the first unambivalent legislative success it achieved in the early years of the Commonwealth. Even as Labor established its own political organization, therefore, the ambiguity of the 1880s populist alliance persisted.

The development of Australian nationalism was clearly a strong basis for this populism, as The Bulletin's interweaving of staunch nationalism and virulent racism revealed. Labor itself had interwoven the two strands as it became the torchbearer of Australian nationalism in the 1890s. This was evident in its First Objective. Spence saw in the exclusion of non-whites 'a chance for the development of the Australian island continent of a great nation of the white race'. Anti-imperialism and republicanism were also important elements of this nationalism, as we saw in Chapter 8, with The Bulletin and the AWU. The Hummer even condemned Britain's seizing of 'the native land of the savage', and the exploitation of India, without any sense of hypocrisy. But racial considerations underlay much of this republican feeling. Resentment grew especially over Britain's Japanese

80. For example, 2 July 1887.
82. 13 February 1892; also 7 and 28 November 1891. Similarly, The Bulletin, 2 August 1888.
treaty, and her formal determination to treat all Imperial subjects equally. It seemed as if monarchical and merchant-ridden Britain would place legalistic and commercial considerations ahead of protection of her white brothers in Australia. Yet, these connections were largely established by the late 1880s. Republican nationalism alone is insufficient explanation of the political importance to the Labor Party of racism in the late 1890s.

The primary importance of Labor's racial policy must be traced to changes within the labour movement itself. The decline of strong rank and file working class organization, traced in Chapters 5-7, raises the question of racism's importance as a popular issue by the 1890s, as distinct from a concern of the AWU and Labor Party's fairly centralized leaderships. Nothing like the mass participation of the 1880s anti-Chinese campaign occurred in the 1890s, when political action generally underwent an institutionalization as the Party consolidated. Conference debates and policy committees replaced mass meetings, but even then, mass agitation did occasionally erupt over issues other than racial policy (such as the 1892 miners' strike).

The labour press actually paid little attention to the 1896 restrictive

83. See McQueen, A New Britannia, pp.25-7, 31-4. Japan's rise as a Pacific power caused special concern at this time, for example, AW, 5 June 1897.
84. Cf. similar estimations in Markus, Fear and Hatred, pp.176-9, 207, 219-20. As he notes, on the local colonial level, prior to federation, a racial plank did not appear on New South Wales Labor's Fighting Platform. Nevertheless, Markus underestimates racism's importance to Labor here, and he is much more ambivalent later, in Chapter 12.
The success of Parkes' 1888 legislation had largely removed the Chinese as an issue in terms of economic threat. Hence, the more exclusive emphasis on overt racism in the 1890s. The approach of federation and the immigration of new racial groups reinforced this tendency. Most importantly, by peddling racism more strongly than anyone else, and by integrating it with other policies, the Labor Party could hope to appeal to a broad populist base in the electorate, given widespread racial beliefs across all classes. Paradoxically, Labor's leadership in this area gives the impression that racism had become more confined to the working class in the 1890s.

Despite this manufactured aspect of the racial issue however, the popular audience was receptive. Young miners in the 1860s would only have been in late middle-age by the 1890s. On those occasions where the 'danger' seemed more immediate, such as the presence of Afghans in the west, or with the Kanakas, the strong popular response indicated racism's persistence in the popular political consciousness.

As it came to dominate the Party, the AWU became the main exponent for Labor racism in the 1890s. The *Hummer* spoke in terms which only *The Bulletin* could match:

> the camels must go; the chows must also leave; and Indian hawkers must hawk their wares in some other country. This country was built expressly for Australians, and Australians are going to run the show.86

85. The AW's comments of 24 July 1897 seem to be the only ones. Cf. the Queensland labour press which concentrated far more on the racial issue than its southern counterparts. Markus, *Fear and Hatred*, pp.203-9. Nevertheless, Markus overemphasizes the extent to which this represented a conscious rejection of racism in the south. Note also, that much of Lane's writings, and the Queensland Worker did have a readership in the ASU, and that the New South Wales *Worker* over September 1892 to July 1893 was only a New South Wales edition of the Queensland *Worker*, with common news and editorial, and a separate local section. *Worker*, 9 September 1893. Lane had also written regularly for ASU Wagga's *Hummer*.

86. *Hummer*, 31 October, 1891.
AWU Platforms called for total exclusion of all non-whites well before the Labor Party, and inclusion of this plank in Labor's 1896 Platform, coincided with the AWU's re-entry into the Party after the 1894 split. When restrictive legislation was passed in 1896 and 1901, it was criticized in AWU circles for not being forthright enough.

A strong racial policy was attractive to the AWU for organizational reasons. The Queensland AWU insisted upon such a policy as a pre-condition for the amalgamation with his own union that Spence was attempting to negotiate. Because of the greater influx of coloureds into the north, the Queensland unions had a particularly strong racial stance, although there were even fewer Chinese in the pastoral industry there than in New South Wales. Because of the position of the planters and the tropical labour argument, politics also polarized around the racial issue in Queensland. The Chinese were also used, at times, as an explanation for the shearers' industrial defeat in 1891. Furthermore, even New South Wales bushworkers had more contact with Chinese and Afghans than most. Nonetheless, the

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87. Plank 10, AW, 1 February 1896. For early ASU/AWU Platforms: The Hummer's, 1891-2; AF of L, Rules and Platform of Riverina District Council, Political Section, January 1894; that of the unofficial Bourke Labour League in 1891, in Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.145-6; and AWU Bourke AR, 31 December 1896, p.7. In 1892 Bourke Labour League gained a plank for outlawing of 'the use of camels as beasts of burden, as being inimical to the health and well-being of the residents where such beasts are used'. Note also the influence of North Coast sugar farmers and labourers on Labor policy at this time, as they agitated against Indian labour. See Markus, Fear and Hatred, pp.183-4, 206-7.

88. AWU Bourke, AR, 31 December 1898; Spence, Australia's Awakening, pp.243 and 246.

89. Report of Conference Between Queensland Labourers' Union and GLU, 16 February 1891, p.6. I owe this insight to Dr. J. Merritt of the Australian National University.

90. Markus, Fear and Hatred, pp.170-6, 207-22, 244-7.

virulence of AWU racism was out of all proportion to organizational
considerations or the extent of job competition its members faced.

AWU racism was fundamental to its entire rationale, its populist
ideology and social base. The union was the most nationalistic wing
of the labour movement, largely deriving this position from its
self-conscious inheritance of the radical Australian tradition born on
the goldfields. Two of the most important elements of that
tradition were racism and the ideal of the yeoman, or small independent
man, whom the AWU still largely represented. In fact, racism and the
ideal of a yeomanry on the land were organically linked in AWU, and
through it, Labor ideology.

Land and Labour

In the mid-nineteenth century colonial radicalism revolved
around the 'land question'. Land in pre-industrial societies is the
most obvious form of economic ownership, and a symbol of wealth. In
Australia it held special significance because its vast quantities
held the promise of independence from wage labour, yet (even more so
than in the United States, which aroused similar hopes) it remained
essentially in the hands of a small group, 'the squattocracy', whose
right of ownership was 'morally' and, for a time, legally, uncertain.
The gold rushes inflamed the hope of independence. In 1861 Robertson's
Land Act was passed, but its failure in settling large numbers of small
farmers meant that the land question became a recurring political
theme, strengthened by Irish peasant immigration, and revived during

92. See Chapter 8.
bouts of unemployment. 93

The persistence of land radicalism as the colonies underwent the early stages of industrialization, displayed a messianic faith, common to transitional societies, in the regenerative properties of the land, a backwards glance at an idealized human state free of the city's physical and social diseases, which became synonymous with industrialism. Colonial radicalism was influenced by British currents of this kind, High Tory and Chartist. Idealization of the land was emphasized by the early urban concentration of settlement, but despite the reluctance of immigrants, or even the rural ideologues such as Henry Lawson, to leave the city for the harsh realities of small farming, the land maintained its political importance by symbolising an egalitarian ideal. By the development of a yeomanry, with no man as another's master, Australia could escape the Old World social disease of class exploitation. 94 The republicanism inherent in this ideal 95 was reinforced by the role of pastoral land-use in servicing Britain's economic requirements, with the consequent identification of the squatters with the British ruling class.

93. For early land agitation, see Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, pp.42-8; T. Irving, '1850-70', in F. Crowley, A New History of Australia, Melbourne, 1974, pp.156-9; Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, vol.2, p.651. See also Roberts, op.cit., pp.236-46. For the land's importance as a recurring radical theme see McQueen, A New Britannia, pp.147-70.


95. For example, see Ebbels, op.cit., pp.48-51; and Chapter 8, esp. n.70.
Early agitation over the land question involved a populist alliance similar to that which developed against the Chinese. During the 1880s this alliance was maintained in the Democratic Alliance and its successor, the Land and Industrial League, both strongly committed to land reform, and including selectors, urban protectionists and workers. Unionists sometimes identified the 'land monopolist' as labour's enemy. Nevertheless, union concern over the land issue was limited in the 1870s and 1880s. Edward O'Sullivan failed to win urban working class seats in 1882 and 1885 when he emphasized the issue, finally entering Parliament from Queanbeyan, which had a strong selector presence.

The influence of the Single Tax theory revived the land issue in the late 1880s. Published in the United States in 1879, Henry George's Progress and Poverty traced social inequality to land rent which, he claimed, rose with material progress without any effort from the landlord. This 'unearned increment' absorbed productivity increases, for which labour and capital were responsible, at the expense of wages and interest. Hence, for George 'social evils do not arise from any conflict between labour and capital', but between labour and capital on the one hand and land ownership on the other. George had little sympathy therefore, for trade unions. George's panacea was as simplistic as his analysis: all

98. For example, a speaker at a TLC anti-immigration meeting, SMH, 3 February 1880. See Markey, 'Trade Unionists and the Language of "Class"'. Norton, op.cit., p.48, considered land reform a major issue. Norton's Introduction to the book reified the egalitarian ideals of the radical tradition.
land should be taken by the state by means of a graduated tax making private ownership, without use of the land's full capacity, unprofitable; hence, the single tax. 100

Historians have usually emphasized George's influence on Australian working class thought, particularly over 1889-94. 101 A Single Tax League (STL) appeared in 1887, and by 1889, when George toured Australia, it had fifteen branches. One each existed in Newtown and Redfern, the base of railway unionism, and in Balmain, another centre of unionism. The 1888 Intercolonial Trades Union Congress unanimously endorsed single taxism, whose adherents gained some important positions on the TLC and early LEL. 102 John Grant, the Stonemasons' and Clebe LEL Secretary, and Frank Cotton, the Wagga ASU's TLC delegate, led the drive for a Labour Platform commitment to the single tax over 1890-1. Grant's motion for a municipal tax on unimproved land values lost by only one vote, and another for the single tax on all land was also defeated narrowly, 22-28. 103 Later Labor celebrities, Hughes, Holman, Black and Beeby, were also single taxers at this stage. 104

101. For example, Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.105.
103. Stonemasons' Sydney Lodge Minutes, 19 January 1890; TLC Minutes, 11 September 1890; 22 January and 24 March 1891. After the early Party split, Arthur Rae also unsuccessfully attempted to have official policy on the tariff interpreted as the single tax, TLC Minutes, 13 December 1891. See Ford, op.cit., pp.75-7, 85. For Cotton's biographical details, see Roydhouse and Taperell, op.cit., pp.29-30.
104. Fitzhardinge, op.cit., pp.25-6, 30-1; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.34-5, 92, 171; Ford, op.cit., pp.75-6, 90; Evatt, op.cit., p.21.
However, many of these supporters came from outside the union movement. Single tax never achieved much urban working class support. At the peak of its influence, in 1891, only three single taxers, Cotton, Hindle (both from Newtown) and Hollis (Goulburn) entered Parliament for Labour, and none survived in the Party. The single tax plank in the early Platform was vaguely lodged in a general plank on land reform, although it occupied first place in the Fighting Platform from 1893-5. However, this was opposed by many unionists, particularly socialists, who felt that the single tax did not address the basic issue of working class poverty versus capitalist riches and protectionists (for single taxers supported Free Trade). The socialists, in early 1891, led an attempt to drive single taxers from the TLC. Their major target, Cotton, was saved mainly by the TLC's unwillingness to risk ASU support.

In 1889 the TLC declined to welcome George, declaring that it could not entertain his theory. A number of individual unions followed suit, and even in the Stonemasons', George's visit aroused dissension. Protectionism possibly influenced the Tinsmiths', and some unions feared internal schism. However, whilst political involvement may also have repulsed some crafts, such as the Printers, urban unions generally

105. Ford, op.cit., pp.87, 93-5; Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, p.43. For Hollis, see Roydhouse and Taperell, op.cit., pp.38-9. For the 1891 Platform, see Ebbels, op.cit., p.212. Arthur Rae might also have been counted as a single tax Labour MP but he also lost his seat (Murrumbidgee) in 1894. Ford describes him as an ASL member. See Daily Telegraph, 11 March 1890, for a typical socialist view of single tax.

106. If the TLC did not seek enlightenment from George, it was willing to offer it to him. It eventually instructed its Secretary to 'acquaint' George 'with local trade matters'. TLC Executive Minutes, 9 October 1889, 11 February 1890.

107. Tinsmiths' Minutes, 7 February 1890; Bakers' Committee Minutes, 8 February 1890; and the Printers', Hagan, Printers and Politics, p.83.

108. Sydney Lodge Minutes, 3 and 7 March 1890.

109. Hagan (Printers and Politics, p.83) however, suggests that the Printers' decision was based mainly on the wish to avoid internal fiscal disputes, given George's association with Free Trade.
were moving towards political organization at this time, but independently, unwilling to be harnessed to political forces outside their own ranks. They also tended to find single taxism irrelevant to their class experience. Writing in the (protectionist) *Australian Star*, J.C. Watson agreed that 'land monopoly is a curse', but saw George's writing as 'more theoretical than practical'. He objected to attempts to draw unions into the George campaign on the grounds that he is coming here on a special mission which will not in any way assist the wage earner in the eight hours and a fair rate of pay. Moreover, Henry George, though an honorary member of a typographical union states that trades unions are stupid and brutal, though if he were in the ranks he would probably belong to one ... To claim that a land tax would be the panacea for all poverty is extremely absurd. It would not stop the capitalist from grinding his workmen down to starvation wages ... for we cannot all live by tilling the soil, and as trades unions are brutal and stupid they should not exist.110

George confirmed unions' suspicions when he spent much of his visit with Free Trade politicians, Protestant clergy, and even large landowners.111 But despite his opposition to strikes and socialism, George also repelled the other major social elements of the populist alliance which his theory implied: small landholders and manufacturers. Both were protectionist, whereas George was ardently free trade. Although O'Sullivan, who represented a selector electorate, claimed to support the land tax in principle, he argued that, without protection, a land tax would ruin selectors already made 'semi-solvent' by Free

110. 4 March 1890.
Trade.\(^{112}\)

However, whilst workers' experience did not relate to the theory, it could imbue single tax with a political content quite unintended by George. Single tax was often interpreted as land nationalization, or a simple tax on land. As even Watson indicated, both had support in the labour movement.\(^{113}\) The Socialist League also favoured land nationalization.\(^{114}\) But this was only one part of a broader policy for socialists and unionists, or even for some nominal single taxers,\(^{115}\) whereas single tax orthodoxy was monoideist. Even for the Stonemasons', support grew from a generalized class militancy. There was, indeed, some pragmatism in their commitment. Grant predicted that if the land was 'opened-up' by the single tax, wages competition would decrease, and by lowering land prices, a tax on unimproved value would boost the declining building industry.\(^{116}\) Ambiguity and pragmatism were single

\(^{112}\) Mansfield, op.cit., p.93.

\(^{113}\) Nairn, Civilizing Capitalism, pp.32, 43-4. The Democratic Alliance had also advocated land nationalization, SMH, 6 February 1884. SeeWiecek, op.cit., p.38. George's reception in British radical and working class circles was similar to that in Australia. See J. Saville, 'Henry George and the British Labour Movement', Science and Society, vol.24, 1960.

\(^{114}\) See Manifesto of the Australian Socialist League, 1887, plank 3 (in Ford, op.cit., pp.287-8); and Constitution of the ASL (in Ebbels, op.cit., pp.185-6). The ASL's 1890 Platform also opposed any further alienation of public lands (Ford, op.cit., p.76). Collan notes that the formation of Land Nationalization Leagues in the 1880s preceded strong single tax influence, and these were influenced by the English Land Tenure Association, representing an older tradition. Radical and Working Class Politics, pp.105, 121. See also Wiecek, op.cit., pp.18 ff.

\(^{115}\) For example, The Boomerang (Lane's early Queensland paper) was quite explicit about this, 28 September 1888, 9 April and 17 May 1890 (in Ebbels, op.cit., p.176). Note Holman's commitment to the panacea: 'I have the honour of being a single-taxer myself, as well as a socialist', quoted in D.W. Rawson, Labor in Vain?, Melbourne, 1966, p.62. See Fitzhardinge, op.cit., pp.30-1 for Hughes' similar position, even when President of the Balmain STL.

\(^{116}\) TLC Minutes, 11 September 1890; Grant at RRC5, 1891, Precis of Evidence, pp.244-7. Note that Grant confessed to not having read Bellamy, 'yet', the major utopian socialist influence in the colonies.
taxers' greatest political strengths within the labour movement. They were always beaten over a full commitment to the panacea, and lost support as their division with the socialists widened.\(^{117}\) In 1894 even the Stonemasons' severed their STL connections.\(^{118}\) By 1897 the Workman could simultaneously support land nationalization and reject single taxism.\(^{119}\) Eventually, municipal rating in New South Wales was based on the land's unimproved value, but in financing an extended local Governmental role, this was closely related to Labor's policy of extension of the state as an employer.

Country support for single taxism was more widespread, although Spence exaggerated this in 1890.\(^{120}\) Twenty-five of the thirty STL branches were in the country, sometimes coinciding with ASU branch headquarters.\(^{121}\) Whilst George's prominence in ASU reading lists\(^{122}\) is no guide to members' reading habits, even protectionist selectors, or especially, aspiring selectors, in the ASU could be attracted by single tax's association with 'opening-up' the land, and the ASU was already free trade inclined. Although Bourke was a strong protectionist centre, the audience cheered when Spence mentioned George in a lecture there in 1890.\(^{123}\) Wagga was the ASU's single tax stronghold, as well

117. See Ford, \textit{op.cit.}, p.61; Picard, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.51-5.
118. Sydney Lodge Minutes, 7 May 1894.
119. Editorial, 17 April 1897. The editor, Houghton, had been a TLC delegate and Labor MP. He was protectionist, but a member of the single tax Glebe LEL. See French, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.113-4. The Bulletin, which had been a single tax supporter in the early 1880s, similarly opposed it by the 1890s, although it supported land nationalization. See Wieck, \textit{op.cit.}, p.17.
120. 'Labor and Its Sphere', lecture given at Bourke in 1890, and reprinted in ASU 4th AR, February 1890, pp.61-4; RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.45.
121. For example, at Goulburn, Wyatt, \textit{op.cit.}, p.169. Goulburn also returned one of the few single tax Labor MPs in 1891, Dr. Hollis. See Wieck, \textit{op.cit.}, p.40.
122. For example, \textit{I'ummer}, 9 January 1892.
123. 'Labor and Its Sphere', \textit{op.cit.} Spence lectured in Sydney and a number of other centres on the single tax in 1892, ASU Wagga, 6th AR, 22 January 1893. Note The Worker's single tax policy, 9 and 16 September 1893.
as a centre of selector membership. The Branch's 'Land for the People' programme declared that

by taxing the lands now held in an entirely unproductive state [by 'rich landowners'] these lands will be forced into use, and will thus provide employment for thousands of idle hands, besides making land cheaper for those who desire it for legitimate purposes.\(^{124}\)

Walter Head, Wagga's Branch Secretary, was also Secretary for the Murrumbidgee Land Tax Association in 1888.\(^{125}\)

Yet, even ASU support was not monoideist. Single tax was simply absorbed into an existing commitment to agrarian reform, as the 'Land for the People' programme indicated.\(^{126}\) In 1895, despite their fraternization with the Albury STL, Conference delegates refrained from total commitment, expressing the 'earnest desire amongst real reformers to find out the points upon which they agree, and to emphasize them rather than to magnify the points of difference'.\(^{127}\) Young Branch expressed outright hostility to single taxism.\(^{128}\) In 1891, Spence lamented that most unionists had not yet grasped the importance of rent, but was certain that most favoured land nationalization, and the extension of state employment, which he claimed was, 'in effect', part of the single tax programme.\(^{129}\) Henry George would have blanched.

\(^{124}\) ASU Wagga, 7th AR, 31 December 1893, p.5. Also ASU Wagga, 6th AR, 22 January 1893; and first plank in AF of L Rules and Platform of Riverina District Council, January 1894; Swan, op.cit., p.160.

\(^{125}\) Swan, op.cit., p.160.

\(^{126}\) Note, that a tax on unimproved land values to finance alteration of land policy, was considered the most important reform issue for the 1894 elections, according to ASU Bourke, AR, 31 December 1893, p.1.

\(^{127}\) AWU 9th AR, February 1895, pp.20–1.

\(^{128}\) Single taxism was one of its complaints over Worker policy, ASU Young Central Committee Minutes, 5 December 1894.

\(^{129}\) RRCS, 1891. Precis of Evidence, p.45.
In response to the depression and the country migration of urban unemployed, the land issue experienced a further revival in the 1890s. Throughout the colonies, a number of schemes emerged for village or co-operative settlement, with state encouragement through special legislation and some financial aid. None survived. In 1896 the largest of the three settlements established in New South Wales in 1893, at Pitt Town, was converted into an unemployed workhouse. Few of the settlements were genuinely co-operative, although employers and clergy valued their 'educational' role. Individualist conflicts arose amongst settlers, and Pitt Town suffered a Board of Control including bureaucrats inexperienced in agriculture, and farmers hostile to co-operation. Drought, unsuitable or insufficient land, and insufficient capital 'foredoomed the experiments to failure', confirming their naivety to co-operation's opponents.\(^{130}\) Government assistance varied in inverse proportion to the extent of co-operation in these ventures, which were only a small part of the move to closer settlement encouraged by Governments. In New South Wales Reid won the 1894 elections largely on the issue of land reform, and the Legislative Council's rejection of land taxation was the major issue over which Reid so successfully went to the electorate again in 1895. The complementary Land and Income Assessment and Crown Lands Acts of 1895 were intended to reduce large estates by a land tax, and to encourage homestead selection.\(^{131}\)

\(^{130}\) See Walker, 'The Ambiguous Experiment', \textit{op.cit.}, pp.19-31; Reeves, \textit{op.cit.}, vol.1, pp.299-321; Roberts, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.350-5, from whence comes the quotation (p.350); Gollan, \textit{Radical and Working Class Politics}, pp.160-1, 190-1. Note ASU/AWU criticism of the 'half-heartedness' of this legislation, ASU Bourke, AR, 31 December 1893, p.1. Spence claimed that the land settlements had been 'purposely started under the worst possible conditions ...', AWU 9th AR, February 1895, pp.16-17.

\(^{131}\) Nairn, \textit{Civilizing Capitalism}, pp.115-6, 125-30, 139; Gollan, \textit{Radical and Working Class Politics}, p.191. Despite appearances, there was little joy for single taxers in the association of land and income tax, and as Reeves shows (\textit{op.cit.}, vol.1, pp.252-3, 298, 326-8) land tax made only a minor contribution to state revenue after 1895. In their accounts of the 1890s, neither Reeves nor Roberts distinguish greatly between co-operative and general closer settlement.
Together with Arthur Rae (ASU), J.C. Watson and the TLC had been prominent in the public campaign preceding Pitt Town's establishment. However, by late 1893 TLC contact with the settlement had cooled, possibly because it fell so far short of expectations. The TLC had also been absent from the 1892 LEL Conference which enthusiastically supported village settlement. Urban union support for co-operative settlements was only part of a broader commitment to co-operative organization in the 1890s, as we saw in Chapter 7.

In contrast, the AWU was committed to village settlement in its own right, although it also dabbled in a number of co-operative schemes. The AWU's 1895 Conference decided overwhelmingly to take up land under Reid's new legislation. But this commitment was as much to agrarian idealism as to co-operation:

as one of the best methods of drawing our members away from their hopelessly nomadic life, and by assisting them to make a start for themselves, help to build up the homely life necessary to the perpetuation of a healthy race.

William Lane's agrarian socialist New Australia Movement strengthened the connection between co-operation and this yeoman ideal, prior to the settlement's disintegration in Paraguay. Lane considered a rural base

132. J.C. Watson held a seat on the original Board of Control for a time. Walker, op.cit., pp.19-22, 29-30. The TLC's Surplus Labour Committee had also recommended co-operative settlements as part of its programme to aid the unemployed, TLC Minutes, 13 May 1893. The Bulletin, 19 May 1894, considered the TLC's 'egoism' a force behind establishment of the Pitt Town Settlement.

133. For example, it failed to reply to correspondence from the settlement, TLC Minutes, 16 November 1893.

134. For Conference resolution, see Ford, op.cit., p.129. See Chapter 6.

135. These were Secretary Temple's words, but Spence and other delegates all spoke in similar tones, AWU 9th AR, February 1895, pp.16-17. Interestingly, Reeves spoke of the 'homeless vagabond' shearer in terms almost identical to AWU officials, op.cit., vol.1, pp.300-1.
necessary, as a source of purity and strength, to provide a practical example of co-operation's merits to the world. His socialism was simply an extension of the idealized bushman: bushmen held the highest stock of co-operative qualities.\(^{136}\)

Although the TLC gave fraternal best wishes to the emigrants,\(^{137}\) urban workers showed little interest in New Australia. In 1898, the TLC ignored advice from Paraguay that 'while you remain in New South Wales you will all be slaves'.\(^{138}\) But the AWU offered enthusiastic encouragement. Indeed, the loss of many of its most committed members, including Wagga's Secretary and Chairman, was a serious blow at this time. As Bourke GLU complained, New Australia 'tended in a measure to distract attention from the unions'.\(^{139}\) Whilst Lane had considered a settlement in 1887, organization of the New Australia Movement from the end of 1890 was motivated by his loss of faith in unions as a basis

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\(^{136}\) 'Invitation to join the New Australia Scheme', in Hummer, 13 August 1892. See G. Hannan, 'William Lane - Mateship and Utopia', in Murphy, Joyce and Hughes, op.cit., p.183; Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, pp.173-5. For greater detail about New Australia itself, see G. Souter, A Peculiar People, Sydney, 1968.

\(^{137}\) TLC Minutes, 22 June and 6 July 1893. Also note ASL support. Ford, op.cit., p.127.

\(^{138}\) Although, a little earlier it had responded with 'fraternal greetings' to correspondence from Paraguay. TLC Minutes, 16 December 1897, 2 June 1898. The Workman was critical of New Australia for being founded in Paraguay rather than Australia, 23 March and 11 August 1896.

\(^{139}\) But it joined the general chorus of praise for the venture in the bush unions, GLU Bourke AR, 31 December 1893, p.2: ASU Wagga 6th AR, 22 January 1893, ASU Wagga 7th AR, February 1893, pp.17 and 23. Spence and Temple could not resist claiming credit for New Australia for the teachings of Christ and the ASU, ASU 8th AR, February 1894, pp.5, 7, 25 and 27. Bourke also lost its Secretary, W. Wood, to New Australia, ASU Bourke, AR, 31 December 1893, p.2. Souter confirms ASU claims that the settlers were mainly bushworkers, op.cit., p.23.
for socialism. However, his faith in the yeoman never wavered.

The AWU's yeoman ideal also remained intact, despite the difficulty it encountered in holding legal title to land as a trade union. In an 1898 plebiscite, AWU members strongly supported the union's 1895 plans for land ownership. Although legal and financial problems prevented the fulfilment of these plans, the AWU's primary political commitments in the 1890s were to the issues of land allocation and aid for selectors. Throughout his lectures to public meetings and labour groups in the 1890s, Spence repeated the claim he first made at Bourke in 1890, that 'land is at the bottom of the whole social question'. The AWU's equation of selectors with labourers, and its definition of the class struggle in terms of large landholders versus small producers, blurred the distinction between co-operation and small settlement as a means to the 'new social order'. The Worker even described its ideal of the family unit on the land as true socialism, because all work was performed by the family, with no intervention of middlemen and no capitalist/wage-earner relationship, and the family consumed its own product.

The AWU, the agrarian theorists and literati, such as Lane and

140. Hannan, _op.cit._, pp.181-2; Gollan, _Radical and Working Class Politics_, p.174.
142. See Chapter 10, as well as sources in n.141.
143. 'Labour and Its Sphere', _op.cit._; and, for example, TLC Minutes, 17 November 1892; ASU Wagga 5th AR, 22 January 1893; ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.6.
144. For example, articles 'Selectors and Labourers', and 'The Farmer as Labourer', _Hummer_, 30 January, and 6 February 1892; and labourers as 'all who contributed in any way to the production of anything which ministered to the common wants', Spence, ASU 4th AR, February 1890, p.5.
145. Worker, 19 February 1898.
Henry Lawson, and The Bulletin, had inherited the radical populist vision of a proud new nation which had shaken off the Old World's yoke of class division. The vision's backbone was the strong, self-reliant, manly, and morally upright bushworker/selector, who would 'conserve those rights which in the old country they have allowed to fade out of existence'. In The Worker, The Bulletin, and often the urban Workman, cartoons depicting the class struggle regularly symbolised the worker in this way. Only the 'monopolists' and the 'money power' blocked 'the people' from the vision's fulfilment. Inheritance of the radical tradition was a natural outgrowth of AWU membership - smallholders, shearers aspiring to smallholding, and shearers who in the off-season were miners, successors to the original diggers - which had been the social base for the tradition's foundation earlier in the century.

Achievements fell far short of the agrarian ideal, but the AWU's political effect in this direction was nevertheless significant, given its dominance in the Labor Party. The corporate view of the nation implicit in the yeoman ideal easily complemented the utopian socialists' aversion to class conflict, and was manifested in arbitration, and the concept of mutual interests between small manufacturers and workers in the 'New Protection' policy which began to emerge in colonial politics.

146. Temple, ASU 4th AR, February 1890, p.8. Also, for example, note Spence's reference to bushmen's 'advanced ideas', ASU 8th AR, February 1894, p.5; and to the ASU as 'part of a great moral and social force', ASU 4th AR, February 1890, p.5. This vision is implicit in most of the earlier references in this chapter to The Bulletin, which was known as 'The Bushmen's Bible': for example, 2 July 1887. See Lawson's 'The Shearers', in R. Ward (ed.) Australian Ballads, pp.140-1, for a typical example of the genre. Ward's Australian Legend celebrates this tradition, in Chapters 7-9. See also Bean, op.cit., pp.29-32, 79-80, 113-4.

in the late 1890s. Labor's 1893 Fighting Platform acknowledged the importance of the small man on the land with its first plank for a tax on the unimproved value of land. Its second plank, for the right to mine on private property, which also appeared on the Platform of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association, was intended to aid the small digger. In 1892, Toomey, of the ASU's Young Branch, campaigned strongly over miners' prospecting rights on private property, threatening to fill the galeys, if necessary, with unemployed prospectors. Bourke Branch also placed emphasis on this issue, equally with the land tax and exclusion of coloured races. Both of the 1893 planks were almost identical with those in the Riverina District Council's independent Platform of 1894. In 1896, after the AWU's return in strength to the Party, the fifth plank of Labor's Fighting Platform replaced the first of 1893, and simply read: 'encouragement of agriculture'. The first plank of the 1896 General Platform read: 'a) Abolition of further sales of State lands; b) absolute tenant rights in improvements'. The thirteenth plank was also concerned largely with mining on private property.

AWU re-entry to the Party in 1895 coincided with Labor's enthusiastic support for Reid's land legislation. The legislation's inclusion of an income tax may also have broadened working class support, but Labor's enthusiasm was openly based on the potential for establishing a yeomanry. From this period, as Labor's commitment

148. SMH, 10 November 1893. For Farmers' and Settlers', see Ford, op.cit., p.143.
149. TLC Minutes, 24 March 1892.
150. AWU Bourke AR's, 31 December 1895, p.10; and 31 December 1896, p.7.
151. AW, 1 February 1896. Surprisingly however, the 1898 Fighting Platform had no land plank. Worker, 5 March 1898.
152. For example, Hughes, as quoted in Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p.192; ASU Bourke AR, 31 December 1896, p.7. The AW, 23 March 1895, suggests the importance of the income tax link for working class support.
to industrial legislation waned, land legislation, relief for selectors, and mining rights on private property, became primary Parliamentary issues for Labor.\(^{153}\) As late as 1902, the AWU congratulated the New South Wales Labor Party for its role in promoting the Blockholders' Bill, which would 'enable city toilers to rear families away from the noise and grime of the city'.\(^{154}\)

The Populist Paradigm

According to the agrarian vision, the maintenance of a yeoman race untainted by the Old World, was incomplete without racial purity. Racial contamination was also a disease which could sap the strength of the corporate nation. Lane, whose emigration was influenced as much as anything by his fear that Australia would be swamped by inferior races, articulated the links between nationalism, racism and the yeoman ideal in his theorizing on the 'laws of nation building' and the 'race vigour' of the bushmen.\(^{155}\) Throughout the utterances of the AWU leadership these same links are implicit. They had been integrated at the birth of the radical tradition on the goldfields.

Racial antagonism sometimes became confused with class struggle in this vision. For example, Lane discovered a capitalist plot to breed a 'piebald' race which would be enslaved by the 'pure-blooded'. *White or Yellow? A Story of Race War in A.D. 1908* represented the epitome of the populist conspiracy syndrome, with wealthy Queensland Chinese and Europeans establishing a dictatorship which is eventually

\(^{153}\) See Nairn, *Civilizing Capitalism*, pp.142-6, 194. Note the AWU/Labor deputation to the Government over sale of Crown Lands in 1899, AWU, 14th AR, January 1900, p.17.

\(^{154}\) AWU 16th AR, January 1902, p.6.

challenged in a 'revolutionary race war for Australian democracy'.

As the colonies moved towards federation, the yeoman ideal was extended into an ideal of a 'united people' consisting of small men, in industry, as well as on the land. Coloured races were seen as the main obstacle to this vision, as The Bulletin illustrated:

... should the capitalist party in the North succeed in making Queensland a plantation state, with servile labour for its corner-stone, alas for the cause of Australian union! ... Let white Australia pause and think over this:- ... If this party succeed in their designs, what will Queensland be ten years hence? The whole middle-class - small traders, artisans, white servants - will be crushed out or reduced to the condition of mean whites, and Queensland, glorious Queensland! teeming with wealth ... - will become a paradise of the Devil, inhabited by two classes, the Mcllwraithian capitalist and the savage with a weak constitution.

The Labor Party became the political manifestation of the small man ideal, at a time when the opportunities for independent small men were rapidly receding. White Australia became the symbol of this ideal.

156. ibid., p.83.
157. 26 March 1892.
EPILOGUE

THE NATIONAL SETTLEMENT OF THE EARLY 1900s
In 1901 the Australian colonies federated to form the Commonwealth of Australia. The political programme which emerged in the early Commonwealth represented a National Settlement between the classes. This Settlement apparently offered benefits to manufacturers, workers and small farmers alike. At its heart was 'New Protection', an elaboration of the protectionist alliance between manufacturers and Labour, which had characterized Victorian politics for the past two decades or more.¹ The New Protection policy developed in the early Commonwealth committed it to a tariff on cheap overseas goods to protect domestic manufacturers, in return for explicit benefits to the working class. The major benefits consisted of: a White Australia policy, which was designed to protect the working class from its own 'cheap competition', Asian labour; a federal (dual Commonwealth and State) arbitration system, which nurtured trade unionism and potentially offered a 'living wage'; and, a little later, the old age pension, which New South Wales and Victoria had already enacted. For small farmers, the Commonwealth embarked on some land reform programmes, which had been initiated by individual colonies in the 1890s.

The Labor Party was instrumental in delivering the working class to the National Settlement. In the Commonwealth Parliament Labor strongly supported all of the policies of apparent benefit to workers and farmers. At the end of the 1890s all of these policies were at the fore of the Platform of the New South Wales Labor Party, which provided a large proportion of the early Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, two of the Federal Party's first three leaders,³ and a strong

1. See references in Chapters 6 and 8. For an elaboration of the issues in this Epilogue, see Markey, 'The ALP and the Emergence of a National Social Policy', in Kennedy (ed.), op.cit., pp.103-37.
3. The first, J.C. Watson (1901-7), and the third, W.M. Hughes (1915-17).
influence on the early Federal Labor Platforms. 4

Protection was the major political issue of the early Commonwealth Parliament, which was divided evenly between Labor, Protectionists and Free Traders, who actually supported a low tariff. Initially, in 1902, a compromise tariff was adopted. The Protectionists, under Barton until 1903, and then under Deakin, formed the Commonwealth Government from 1901-4, and 1905-8. When Deakin increased the tariff level in 1908, protection became the settled policy in Australia. 5

The apparent benefits to the working class under the National Settlement were enacted early in the legislative programme of the Commonwealth Parliament. This was partly a result of Australian Labor Party (ALP) support for the Protectionist Governments, but there was little disagreement between any of the parties over the numbers involved, although Labor usually favoured more extensive legislation than the other Parties. The first major legislation in Commonwealth Parliament was the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, which established the White Australia policy. The 1904 Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act established the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, and Commonwealth old age pensions were enacted in 1908. Several Acts passed in 1905-8 also applied the principle of protection for manufacturers, conditional upon fair wages and conditions for employees: the 1906 Customs Tariff Act (which ensured double protection for employers who complied with fair employment conditions, by imposing import duties equal to twice the excise duty), the 1906 Excise Tariff Act (which exempted an employer

from excise duties if he could show he paid 'fair and reasonable wages' to his employees), the 1906 Australian Industries' Preservation Act, the 1907 Bounties Act, and the 1908 Manufactures Encouragement Act. This policy ensured ALP support for the Protectionists, after New South Wales Labor had previously stood aloof from protection.

For farmers the ALP fulfilled its promise of a land tax in 1910, when it formed its first majority Government at the Commonwealth level. The progressive tax was intended to facilitate the reduction of large estates and the redistribution of land to smallholders. Its limited effect in this regard must have been disappointing for the Labor agrarians. Nevertheless, the tax emphasized the continuing importance of land reform for Labor. The Senate's rejection of the tax in 1909 provided the catalyst for the minority Labor Government's appeal to the electorate in 1910, and one of the main election issues. The elections resulted in an overwhelming victory for the ALP. 6

A case study of the Queensland sugar industry clarifies the links between White Australia, New Protection and the yeoman ideal. The phasing out of Kanaka labour was part of a wider strategy to break up the large sugar estates, and replace them with smallholdings. This process had begun in the 1880s, and the colonial Government's role had been important in it. An 1893 Act had provided Government assistance in establishing large central mills for the small farmers. But it was the Commonwealth legislation which completed the restructuring. The 1906 Pacific Islanders Labourers' Act led to the repatriation of most

Kanakas. At the same time the Commonwealth imposed a heavy tariff on imported sugar, and offered a bounty on sugar produced by more expensive white labour. Even if gradual, the changes were clearly discernible: 'Instead of about fifty planters in a district, 800 small farmers took their place. The overseer of a gang of, say, 60 Kanakas, was replaced by half a dozen farmers employing four Kanakas each'. It amounted to the most extensive experiment in social planning attempted in Australia in the early twentieth century.

The National Settlement had even more widespread implications for the nature of the Labor Party. The racist underpinning of ALP nationalism led it to develop a defence policy at an early stage. After their defeat of the Russians in 1905, the Japanese became a particular concern. The ALP strongly advocated the creation of an Australian Navy at this time. In 1908, Labor's Federal leader, Watson, moved at Conference that the Party support the establishment of a Citizen Defence Force to expand the military capabilities of the general population. Foremost in his considerations were 'a people who were clever and warlike' (the Japanese), and the 'prospect of the awakening of the sleeping giant - China'. That same year the United States Navy's 'Great White Fleet' was enthusiastically welcomed in Australia, not the least by the ALP. An ALP Government in 1909 ordered the first three destroyers for the Australian Navy, and in

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8. Ebbels, op.cit., p.239.
9. For example, see Spence, Australia's Awakening, p.149.
1911 established the military academy at Duntroon and introduced compulsory military training for all males aged 12 to 25 years.\(^\text{10}\) Racism became so overriding a concern for Labor that it began to displace nationalism. In Spence's words, 'a feeling of loyalty to race rather than governments ... abolished any talk of either republicanism or independence'.\(^\text{11}\)

Under these circumstances, the Labor Party was incorporated into the state institution and the Parliamentary political status quo. This was the case in the two senses in which the concept of incorporation is usually applied to the relationship between labour movements and the state. First, there was a process of 'drawing closely to and growing together with the state power', which was greatly expanded in the National Settlement. Secondly, a Labor leadership developed, which, 'having acquired authority over the labour movement as a whole, facilitated the control of the working class by the capitalist state'.\(^\text{12}\)

The state arbitration system highlighted these trends. Arbitration subjected the unions to regulation of their industrial behaviour. An industrial relations system based on a legal framework, with a full court-room environment, automatically made strikes during the duration of an award 'illegal', subject to a fine of £500 in the early Commonwealth Court. De-registration, with consequent loss of legal recognition, became the ultimate weapon against union militancy. All States in the early 1900s legislated to declare strikes and lockouts illegal, and

\(^{10}\) Crowley, '1901-14', in Crowley (ed.), op.cit., pp.291-6.
imposed heavy penalties on unions refusing to abide by Court decisions. Despite the fact that this body of legislation theoretically applied to employers as well as unions for breach of awards, it was rarely implemented against defaulting employers. Nor has it achieved industrial peace. But in the sense that the arbitration system has attempted to discipline the unions, Fitzpatrick's analysis of it as, objectively, an employers' policy, has been confirmed historically.

Despite the stated aims of the Acts, the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes, arbitration became the mechanism for the development of a centralized wage fixation system well in advance of other countries. This development resulted from the declaration of a 'basic wage', as a minimum living wage, in the 1907 Harvester Judgment. The basic wage did not cover most workers until the 1920s. But the institutional framework was established over 1901-4, and a 'living wage' concept was gradually gaining credence amongst unions in the 1890s, as a defensive refinement of the concept of the union minimum rate for unskilled labourers. This mainly occurred in Victoria, where the 1896 Wages Board system was a result. But it required the arbitration framework, particularly at Commonwealth level, for full fruition.

However, the incorporation of the labour movement was achieved quite cheaply. The benefits of the National Settlement were more apparent than real for the working class. In essentially following

14. See Chapter 10, n.91.
15. The Harvester Judgment was made under the auspices of the Excise Tariff Act. On appeal by the employer concerned, the High Court ruled that the Act was unconstitutional. However, this did not affect the application of the 'basic wage' through the normal award-making process of the Arbitration Court. See P. Macarthy, 'Justice Higgins and the Harvester Judgment', in J. Roe (ed.), Social Policy in Australia. Some Perspectives, 1901-75, Stanmore, 1976, pp.41-59; J. Hutson, Six Wage Concepts, Sydney, 1971, pp.36-7; and Hutson, From Penal Colony to Penal Powers, pp.47-9.
the New South Wales example, the Commonwealth old age pension was of restricted generosity, perpetuated a distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor, and extended the role of the state into the function of social discipline. The White Australia policy was of dubious benefit to the working class, if, as argued in Chapter 11, Asian labour did not pose a serious economic threat to wages and conditions. The tariff encouraged labour intensity in manufacturing, where exposure to overseas competition may have forced it to develop more productive technologies. Perpetuation of labour intensity in manufacturing also encouraged the continued use of cheap, especially female, labour. The arbitration system later obliged by fixing the female 'basic wage' at 54% of that for the male, on the assumption that the family breadwinner, which was the basis of calculations for the 'needs principle' of the basic wage, would always be male.

It is also dubious that arbitration was any more significant than economic improvement in the recovery of unions from 1900. Employers managed to clog up a system already disposed towards costly legalism, with endless appeals against decisions which they lost. Failing that, some employers, notably the coalowners, simply ignored unfavourable decisions. Despite the promise of arbitration's association with a 'living wage', Macarthy estimates that the working class share of national income declined in the early 1900s.

Despite the elaborate legislative programme of the

early Commonwealth, and the role of the Labor Party, the National Settlement did not endure a decade. As a 'new province for law and order', state arbitration failed at the outset. True, the unions quickly moved to register under the Commonwealth and various State Acts in the early 1900s, to use them to their best advantage. But few, if any, did so out of the principled conviction which characterised their Parliamentary colleagues. Even the unions which most ardently embraced the system did not renounce the right to strike, as a last resort. The proof of this came in the early 1900s when, as the unions recovered from the depression, a spate of strikes occurred. In 1908-9 a record number of strikes reflected disillusion with arbitration itself on the part of the unions, as well as attempts to keep up with a rising cost of living. The anti-strike legislation of the period was directed against this trend. By 1909 arbitration's strongest union supporters were leading the upsurge in militancy. The miners, amongst the first to register under the Act, were amongst the first to experience total disillusion, to the point of withdrawing their registration. Within the labour movement itself, the Labor Party's leadership was challenged by a new militant, syndicalist movement, which had become disillusioned with political organization after the role of the Labor Party in the National Settlement.

CONCLUSION
On Saturday, 5 January 1901, as part of the official federation celebrations, the labour movement symbolically displayed its allegiance to the new Commonwealth of Australia with a 'procession of the trades' in Sydney. Prominent amongst the participants were the Wharf Labourers', whose new leader, Hughes, had been primarily responsible for organizing the procession, the Tinsmiths', and the AWU, whose large contingent took the place of honour, with a triumphal car and twenty-four men on horseback. W.A. Trenwith, a Victorian Labor leader, declared that as an instrument of government the Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth is the best in the world for the purpose of rendering true democratic government possible.¹

The procession was symbolic of much more than Labour's allegiance to the Commonwealth. Ten years before Spence had conjured up the vision of shearsers on horseback as an instrument of class war.² The back of the Wharf Labourers' had been broken in the class antagonism of the Maritime Strike, and the Tinsmiths' had been one of a number of urban craft unions which had responded to the traumas of productive re-organization with an increasing class consciousness. Only four years previously the Labor Party had denounced the Constitution, which

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1. SMH, 7 January 1901.
2. During the Maritime Strike, although he later tried to laugh the comment off. RRCS, 1891, Precis of Evidence, p.35.
Trenwith now praised, as an instrument of class rule, because of the wide powers given the Governor-General, the Senate's basis of equal States', rather than equal electors', representation, and the difficulty of changing the Constitution. Under these circumstances, the trades procession of 1901 symbolised the incorporation of the official labour movement into the new political structure of the Commonwealth, after a period of the most intense class conflict ever experienced in the colonies.

It was appropriate that the AWU and Wharf Labourers' assumed prominent positions in the procession. The AWU might well drive a triumphal car after its overwhelming impact on the Labor Party's leadership and policy. Hughes, who had played the major role in resurrecting the Wharf Labourers', was also representative of the Labor Party's new professional political leadership, which had such close associations with the AWU, and which extended its control over the labour movement's industrial wing from the late 1890s. In assuming the leadership of the Labor Party, the AWU and the professional politicians became the main architects of the labour movement's temporary incorporation into the new Commonwealth.

Incorporation took the political form of a National Settlement between classes. The working class was offered a 'stake' in the new nation with the political programme of New Protection. Manufacturers received state subsidies and a protective tariff in return for payment of 'fair and reasonable wages' to workers. Apart from some specific legislation, the primary mechanism for this exchange became the arbitration system at State and Federal levels. Workers also received the old age pension, and protection from 'cheap' Asian labour through the White Australia policy. The settlement extended to small farmers
as well, who gained Government subsidies, and theoretically, assistance in land settlement because of a land tax designed to encourage sub­division of large estates.

This programme greatly expanded the role of the state. The old age pension and the apparently benevolent aspects of arbitration, in regard to wages, extended the legitimizing and integrative functions of the state. Because of the conditions attached to it, the pension also extended the state's powers of social discipline, as did arbitration. The arbitration system guaranteed trade unions' existence, but subject to state regulation designed to limit strike action for the good of 'the community'. In the latter role, arbitration extended the repressive agency of the state. Finally, White Australia and the umbrella policy of New Protection marked the early development of a national social policy administered directly by the state.

The enabling legislation for the New Protection programme was quickly enacted in the early 1900s. This was possible because the programme had been politically synthesized in the 1890s. The Labor Party played a central role in this process. In so doing, the Party reconciled a rebellious working class to the National Settlement.

The New South Wales Labor Party was the primary influence in the Australian Labor Party's (ALP) role in the process of incorporation. The nature of the ALP was largely determined in New South Wales in the 1890s. The only other colony to produce an independent Labor Party prior to 1900 was Queensland. Apart from the strength of its presence in the early Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, the New South Wales Party developed the system of discipline which characterized the ALP, in the members' pledge and the caucus system. Most importantly, the New South Wales Party synthesized most of the policies which became
part of the National Settlement. State arbitration, White Australia, the old age pension, and assistance to smallholders became the most prominent planks in New South Wales Labor's Platform in the 1890s. True, it was in Victoria that the alliance between liberal protectionist manufacturers and workers originally produced the concept of conditional protection, or 'fair wages' for Labor in return for support of the tariff. State arbitration was also enacted by liberals in other colonies prior to New South Wales, and White Australia was a major plank of the Queensland Labor Party. However, the New South Wales Labor Party first brought the working class to the full range of policies which were offered in exchange for support of protection in the early Commonwealth. The New South Wales Labor Party first developed these policies into a unified programme.

New South Wales Labor policy at the end of the 1890s was the product of the ideology of Laborism. Laborism was based on the assumption that the state could be 'captured' by Parliamentary means and wielded in an impartial manner, to the benefit of the working class, in association with a strong trade union movement which restricted its operations to the industrial sphere. This ideology dominated the Labor Party at the end of the 1890s as a result of the Party leadership which emerged at that time. There were two major elements in this leadership: first, the urban professional politicians, such as Hughes, Holman and Black, who had a utopian socialist background; and secondly, the populist AWU, in which the major social base was smallholders who shore part-time, and shearsers who aspired to land ownership. Both utopian socialists and populists viewed the state as a neutral institution. The utopian socialists, in particular, believed it possible to avoid the class conflict which they abhorred, by use of the state.
The political developments which produced a Labor Party of this kind were based on quite distinct social and economic trends. One of the most important was the continued social significance of the traditional radical Australian dream of the small, economically independent man, especially on the land. This tradition envisaged in Australia the possibility of eliminating the social distinctions between master and man, which had characterized the 'Old World'. The AWU was the major bearer of this political vision at the end of the nineteenth century. Largely through its influence, the Labor Party also inherited the vision. However, the radical tradition also retained a base amongst some urban craft workers, who were not too old to remember the days when it seemed that the distance between master and journeyman was not so great, and when it was only a matter of time before a diligent, skilled man could become his own master.

Through the Labor Party, this utopian, populist radicalism became, paradoxically, the major political response to social and economic trends which were eroding the basis of independence for small men, and turning New South Wales into an industrial capitalist society. The two traditional areas of social advancement, small landholding and independent mining, had never really fulfilled their promise for most of those who strove to achieve independence. By the end of the century opportunities in these areas were declining rapidly and irretrievably. Metal mining gradually moved into larger scale company operations in the 1870s. It moved more decisively in this direction in the 1880s, with the development of the large Broken Hill mines. Miners became predominantly wage earners. On the land, the failure of legislation designed to 'unlock the lands' to smallholders was clear by the 1880s, if not earlier. The major rural industry, pastoralism, became crisis-ridden in the 1880s because of falling wool
prices and expansion into marginal lands. Rabbit plagues and droughts also undermined landholders' security at this time. The collapse of wool prices, the great drought, and the lack of available credit in the depression of the 1890s, were disastrous for many landholders. In urban industry, productive re-organization and increased capital requirements restricted the opportunities for fulfilment of the skilled workers' traditional expectation of advancement to small master. Similar trends restricted opportunities for economic independence in the transport industry.

Working and living conditions for workers in the 1880s rarely matched the expectations of prosperity, which were fuelled by the great boom from the 1850s to 1891. Historians have tended to exaggerate the extent of colonial prosperity during the boom, and the achievements of trade unions in this regard. By the end of the 1880s, the eight hour working day, for example, remained confined to a small section of the workforce. Underemployment was common in many colonial industries. Working and living conditions in general remained primitive or harsh for many urban workers, particularly the unskilled, and in the pastoral and coal and metal mining industries.

From the mid-1880s many workers were also experiencing a decline in working and living conditions, prior to the massive unemployment and widespread wage reductions of the 1890s depression. The crisis in the pastoral industry subjected shearers' wages to downwards pressure in the mid-1880s, although the formation of the ASU temporarily reversed this pressure. In coalmining, irregularity of employment and fluctuations in wage rates were much more common than in the 1870s, the 'golden age' of coalminers' prosperity. The new mines at Broken Hill were particularly hazardous, and often under American management,
were subject to a much greater degree of direct supervision than 
Australian workers were accustomed to. Nor could the relatively high 
wages in Broken Hill mines completely compensate for the harshness 
of life in the desert, or the dangers to health associated with water 
shortages and the high lead content in the atmosphere. In the 1890s 
miners and shearers suffered significant wage reductions. Miners 
experienced a very high level of unemployment, and the drastic 
reduction of flocks meant a long-term loss of employment opportunities 
for shearers.

In urban industry, productive re-organization, in the context of 
a structural economic shift towards manufacturing, involved a growth 
in the low wage, unskilled workforce, often at the expense of the 
skilled workforce. The relatively prosperous position of many skilled 
workers was eroded from the 1880s, often by technological change. 
This process quickened in the 1890s. As manufacturing recovered from 
the depression in the mid-1890s, the position of those workers who 
were newly-skilled as a result of technological change, and the older 
skilled who survived productive re-organization, improved, but their 
numbers were smaller. The position of semi and unskilled workers 
deteriorated, despite an expansion of manufacturing jobs. This 
occurred because of the decline in other areas of unskilled employment, 
in construction work and rural industry, and because of the increase 
in the size of the workforce due to the rapid growth of female 
employment at very low wages. Productive re-organization and 
technological change also reduced wage-earners' material well-being 
in other industrial areas, such as transport, even before the depression.

From the mid-1880s the working class mobilized in response to 
these social and economic developments. Trade union organization
expanded dramatically, accompanied by an intensification of militancy and class consciousness in the labour movement. Organized labour began to represent a class, rather than a craft elite, at the end of the 1880s, quantitatively, and in terms of outlook and policy. The TLC emerged with class leadership, which it had never approximated previously. The unions' role in the 1890 mass Maritime Strike, and the TLC's subsequent formation of the Labor Party in 1891, with overwhelming rank and file support, were the greatest manifestations of working class mobilization. Its original creators envisaged the Labor Party as a class Party, as shown by their emphasis on representation of workers by workers in Parliament, and by the social democratic nature of the Party's 1891 Platform, which represented a strategy of class politics. The new unionism of semi and unskilled workers was an important contributor to these developments. However, the urban skilled unions played a leading role in class mobilization. The erosion of their members' elite position often meant that they felt the greatest impact of social and economic change.

Class conflict intensified under these circumstances, particularly since important groups of employers were also affected adversely by economic developments in the 1880s. The major groups affected, pastoralists, coalminers and shipowners, led employers' organized counter-attack against the unions in the 1890s, when the depression aided their telling defeat of the union movement. This occurred in a series of major strikes in which the unions were decimated, and the existence of unionism itself became an issue.

Yet, the Labor Party was able to consolidate itself as a political force in the same period. In the process, it expanded upon its original working class base to seek a populist electoral base, including small
landholders and urban white collar workers. This was necessary, if the Party was to seek achievements in the Parliamentary arena, because of the decimation of the organized working class during the 1890s, especially in the city. The AWU was particularly important in this regard, for it delivered a large number of country seats to Labor. As part of this process of Labor Party consolidation, the leadership was assumed by the AWU agrarians, and utopian socialists who had been quite divorced from the class conflict and mobilization which occurred at the industrial level in the 1880s and 1890s. This populist and utopian leadership, which was largely responsible for the development of 'Laborism' as a distinctive ideology with a distinctive policy at the end of the 1890s, dismantled the Party's early social democratic policy, and restrained the more specifically working class radicalism which had briefly flowered in the late 1880s and early 1890s.

One of the clearest indications of this was in Labor's major contribution to the refurbished role of the state as an arbiter and regulator of social divisions in the early 1900s. The state's legitimacy in this regard received a severe setback in the large strikes of the 1890s, when it intervened so blatantly on the behalf of employers. Its role in the 1890 Maritime Strike was a major motivation for Labour's political organization at that time. Labour's disgust with the role of the state also built upon a much older and deeper working class distrust of the state. Ironically, however, the Labor Party eventually became the strongest advocate of an expanded role for the state. Urban working class distrust of the state lacked consistency, and was ambiguous enough not to seriously hinder this development. But it would be a mistake to interpret Laborism as an inevitable outcome of the trade union influence on the Labor Party, rather than of the
peculiarities of the Labor leadership which assumed control of the Party from the unions.

The policy and leadership of the Labor Party were the outcome of intensive internal struggles. Initially, this occurred between the TLC, representing a class conscious working class movement, and the utopian socialist intellectuals who quickly assumed prominence on the Party's Central Committee. The TLC was defeated at an early stage in its attempt to maintain control of the Party it had established. A further struggle for control then took place between the utopian socialists and the AWU. This ended in a rapprochement between the two groups, and a joint consolidation of authority within the Party. The new populist/utopian hegemony was challenged once more by union militants and 'left' socialists, whose base was largely amongst the urban working class and coalminers. However, the challenge failed because of the decimation of this base in the 1890s, and because of the militants' inability to develop a distinctive, programmatic alternative to Laborism. Defeat within the Party, therefore, denied the radical, class conscious elements of the working class a direct role in shaping the National Settlement of the early 1900s. Instead, they were temporarily subjugated and absorbed into a populist Labor Party under a moderate, Parliamentary-oriented leadership.

Nevertheless, the nature of the National Settlement of the early 1900s, which Labor's policy facilitated, was also the result of widespread class conflict, which challenged the utopian populist vision of the New World in Australia. Although the working class mobilization of the late 1880s was crushed in the great strikes of the 1890s, the National Settlement recognized the need to create some form of rapprochement with working class organization.
There are a number of problems to be encountered in the use of official New South Wales statistics in the nineteenth century. The least problematical are those from the New South Wales Census of 1891 and 1901 which are the basis for Tables 1-2, 4, and 7-9. In 1901 the statistician slightly altered the distribution between industrial classifications for 1881 and 1891. I have used these corrected figures to maintain the greatest comparability between the different years, but the differences do not greatly alter trends in the composition of the workforce. The only other major comparative problem between these two Censuses is that in 1901 the basis of classification for females engaged in agricultural and dairying pursuits was altered, to exclude many of those who were so engaged as part of a family unit from inclusion amongst breadwinners. This accounts for the rather marked drop in the proportion of female breadwinners in these occupations, shown in Table 1.

Unfortunately, however, pre-1891 Censuses are of little use for comparison with those from 1891, because of an entirely different method of industrial classification which reflected the earlier pre-industrial nature of society. Occupational groupings emphasized pastoral and other rural pursuits, some more modern manufacturing occupations were not distinguished or were 'placed with workers to whom they were in no sense allied', and classifications were generally vague, particularly between makers and dealers of products. To accentuate these problems for the historian, all but a few pages of summary tables from the 1881 Census were destroyed by fire prior to publication. It is, therefore, impossible to accurately redistribute

1. NSW Census, 1891, p.283.
individuals between various classifications in the Censuses prior to 1891. Coghlan, the Government Statistician, attempted to do just that for 1881, on the basis of the 1891 Census classifications, but he warned against placing any faith in the accuracy of these efforts. The 1901 Census report slightly altered the 1891 reclassification of the 1881 Census results, and extended the reclassification to the 1871 Census. The 1901 figures have therefore been used in Table 2 for the purposes of consistency in comparison. Finally, although the 1881 Census did distinguish grades of occupation, that is employers, self-employed, etc., the details of these findings were also destroyed by fire.

Use of the annual New South Wales Statistical Register (SR), which is the source for Tables 3 and 5 in this Appendix, and numerous others in the text of the thesis, generates further statistical difficulties. Classifications of manufacturing establishments, according to industry, size, and machinery used, were inconsistent for the period 1880-1900, and excluded many manufacturing employees. For these reasons figures from the SR and the Census frequently diverge greatly. Employers were the primary source of SR manufacturing figures, but they were not compelled to complete statistical returns. If they did not, the collector completed the returns as best he could. The statistical year was 1 April - 31 March until 1892, whence it followed the calendar year. Consequently, there are no SR figures for the period April - December 1891.

SR statistics for some industries were only collected for part of the period, with a consequent distortion of statistical trends. For example, bakeries were only included in 1892 (although from 1893 the SR included them in estimates for earlier years). Butter and cheese factories were also excluded until 1886, after which they boosted overall figures for

2. ibid.
food and drink.

The minimum size necessary for a manufactory not employing machinery to be included in the SR was changed twice in the period examined by this thesis: from four to five hands in 1886-7, and back again to four in 1896. These changes are no doubt partially responsible for the slight reduction in the number of establishments and in employment between 1886-7 and 1887-8, and for the increase in these categories between 1895 and 1896. In both cases, however, the changes are consistent with long-term trends. More seriously, in 1887-8, and possibly in earlier years, clothing factories employing less than ten, and boot factories, less than six, employees were excluded from the SR figures. So, too, was the large number of outworkers, usually female, associated with the clothing trades. After a brief inclusion in 1892, which was adjusted in subsequent years to exclude them again, outworkers were explicitly included from 1896, if 'regularly' employed in connection with factories. But this definition still served to underestimate female and clothing trade employment. SR figures are also for average, not total, annual employment usually, and therefore exclude consideration of a wide range of casual employees.

More generally, there are a number of vagaries and inconsistencies between different SR's, together with acknowledged errors, particularly in the 1880s, which are corrected in later editions. I have used the adjusted 1892 summary wherever possible for the 1880s, and the 1901 summary for the 1890s, with one exception. Because of the magnitude of changes in the method of collection in 1896, I have included figures on the old and new bases, where available, in Table 3. The 1898 SR provides these two sets of figures, but unfortunately they are not broken down geographically, between metropolitan and country employment.
A number of changes in industry classifications in relation to geographical details also make a strict, continuous division between metropolitan and colonial employment difficult. In general, 'metropolitan' includes all Sydney suburbs except Parramatta, Hunters Hill and Ryde, i.e. the electoral districts of East, West and South Sydney, Redfern, Glebe, Balmain, Paddington, St. Leonards, Newtown and Canterbury. The exclusion of Parramatta and Ryde from metropolitan statistics is of some significance because both suburbs were sites for some important industrial establishments.

The effect of all these qualifications for SR statistics is to underestimate manufacturing employment, particularly amongst females, and particularly in Sydney. The only exception to this trend is the possible inclusion of some retail employees in the statistics, because of the dual retail/industrial nature of some establishments. In Table 3 I have included the estimates of Linge and Fisher,^3^ who attempt to overcome the deficiencies mentioned. Linge's figures are the more complete, although Fisher's treatment of 'metropolitan' employment is more satisfactory for including Parramatta, Hunters Hill and Ryde. But none of the figures provided should be treated as absolutely accurate. Their usefulness is in indicating broad trends.

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### Table A1.1

**Percentage Grades of Occupation by Industrial Classification**

**Grades - 1891**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Classification</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Self-employed</th>
<th>Assisting Without Wages</th>
<th>Wage-earners</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Communication</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M: Male  
F: Female  
P: Persons

Table Al.1 (cont'd)

Grades - 1901

| Industrial Classification | Employers | | Self-employed | | Assisting Without Wages | | Wage-earners | | Unemployed | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                           | M | F | P | M | F | P | M | F | P | M | F | P | M | F | P | M | F | P | M | F | P | M | F | P |
| Professional              | 6.7 | 1.4 | 5.0 | 12.5 | 35.4 | 20.1 | 0.3 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 78.4 | 59.7 | 72.2 | 2.2 | 2.8 | 2.3 |
| Domestic                  | 14.2 | 2.2 | 5.5 | 7.6 | 8.0 | 7.9 | 1.9 | 5.2 | 4.2 | 71.3 | 81.5 | 78.7 | 5.1 | 3.2 | 3.7 |
| Commercial                | 12.6 | 5.8 | 11.8 | 19.6 | 25.5 | 20.3 | 1.7 | 14.6 | 3.3 | 62.3 | 51.7 | 61.0 | 3.8 | 2.5 | 3.7 |
| Transport and Communication | 3.3 | 5.2 | 3.4 | 8.5 | 0.3 | 8.4 | 0.9 | 0.2 | 0.9 | 83.0 | 93.7 | 83.2 | 4.3 | 0.7 | 4.2 |
| Industrial                | 8.6 | 3.6 | 7.8 | 7.2 | 21.5 | 9.6 | 1.0 | 1.9 | 1.2 | 76.1 | 67.4 | 74.7 | 7.1 | 5.6 | 6.8 |
| Primary                   | 14.4 | 47.2 | 15.3 | 21.3 | 17.3 | 21.2 | 8.6 | 32.9 | 9.3 | 51.9 | 2.7 | 50.6 | 3.7 | 0   | 3.6 |
| Indefinite                | 0   | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |

M: Male  
F: Female  
P: Persons  

Source: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1901, pp.650-1.
Table A1.2
Percentage Proportion of Male, Female and Total Breadwinners in Industrial Classifications,
New South Wales Census, 1871-1901

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<th>1871 Females</th>
<th>1871 Persons</th>
<th>1881 Males</th>
<th>1881 Females</th>
<th>1881 Persons</th>
<th>1891 Males</th>
<th>1891 Females</th>
<th>1891 Persons</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>1901 Females</th>
<th>1901 Persons</th>
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<td>6.70</td>
<td>5.95</td>
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<td>2. Domestic</td>
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<td>45.38</td>
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<td>45.49</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>42.74</td>
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<td>12.89</td>
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<td>9.33</td>
<td>13.75</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>21.03</td>
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\(^a\)The 1871 and 1881 Censuses did not provide details of these sub-classifications.

Source: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1891, pp.283-4, and 1901, p.630.
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## Table A1.4

### Employment According to Censuses in Industrial Class

**New South Wales, 1891-1901**

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<th>1891 Females</th>
<th>1891 Persons</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>1901 Females</th>
<th>1901 Persons</th>
<th>% increase/decrease</th>
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<td>Books and publications</td>
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<td>3804</td>
<td>7608</td>
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<td>5435</td>
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<td>3375</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>2031</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>2326</td>
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<td>Building materials etc.</td>
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<td>Others¹</td>
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<td>26346</td>
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<td>27503</td>
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| Textiles                     |            |              |              |            |              |              |                   |
| Textile fabrics              | 143        | 74           | 217          | 236        | 114          | 350          | 61.29             |
| Dress                       | 7361       | 16803        | 24164        | 8954       | 21490        | 30444        | 25.99             |
| Fibrous materials           | 205        | 15           | 220          | 261        | 40           | 301          | 36.82             |
| Sub-total                   | 7709       | 16892        | 24601        | 9451       | 21644        | 31095        | 26.40             |

| Food, Drink, Tobacco        |            |              |              |            |              |              |                   |
| Animal food                 | 492        | 5            | 497          | 2099       | 14           | 2113         | 325.15            |
| Vegetable food              | 5003       | 157          | 5160         | 6669       | 600          | 7269         | 40.87             |
| Groceries, drinks, narcotics and stimulants | 2204 | 78 | 2282 | 2870 | 261 | 3131 | 37.20 |
| Sub-total                   | 7699       | 240          | 7939         | 11638      | 875          | 12513        | 57.61             |
Table A1.4 (cont'd)

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<th>1901 Females</th>
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<th>% increase/decrease</th>
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<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>561.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper manufacture</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>86.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>5193</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5200</td>
<td>5546</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5596</td>
<td>7.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minerals and Metals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conversion of coal and other substances to heat/light etc.</td>
<td>1639</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1639</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>23.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufactures/processes with stone, earthenware, clay, glass, etc.</td>
<td>2955</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2959</td>
<td>3643</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3685</td>
<td>24.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precious metals and stones</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>104.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other metals (not classified elsewhere)</td>
<td>8875</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8878</td>
<td>11282</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11295</td>
<td>27.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>13671</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13679</td>
<td>17348</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>17412</td>
<td>27.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Houses and building</td>
<td>23710</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23711</td>
<td>23253</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23259</td>
<td>-1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads, railways, earth-works etc.</td>
<td>13880</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13881</td>
<td>13645</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13650</td>
<td>-1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>37590</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37592</td>
<td>36898</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36909</td>
<td>-1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposal of dead and refuse</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>1278</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1293</td>
<td>230.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undefined</td>
<td>23642</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23684</td>
<td>14187</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>14367</td>
<td>-39.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table Al.4 (cont'd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1891 Males</th>
<th>1891 Females</th>
<th>1891 Persons</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>1901 Females</th>
<th>1901 Persons</th>
<th>% increase/decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Manufacturing</td>
<td>81408</td>
<td>17819</td>
<td>99227</td>
<td>85794</td>
<td>23985</td>
<td>109779</td>
<td>M: 5.39 F: 3.46 P: 10.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Manufacturing and Building and Construction</td>
<td>118998</td>
<td>17821</td>
<td>136819</td>
<td>122692</td>
<td>23996</td>
<td>146688</td>
<td>M: 3.10 F: 3.46 P: 7.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Includes musical instruments; prints, pictures and art materials; ornaments, sports and games requisites; designs, dies; watches, clocks, scientific instruments; surgical instruments; arms, explosives; chemicals.

Sources: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1891, pp.285-6; and 1901, pp.630, 634-5.

Some adjustments were made to 1891 figures in 1901, mainly in being more specific about wood and metals, much of the wood going into building materials which were unclassified in the 1891 Census. I have used the 1901 figures.

The table is of limited value because of the vague classifications. For example, 'undefined' is a large group, and many classifications combine quite distinct industries.
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Boiling-down was a much larger component of this classification than usual during 1893-7. I have also included soaps and candles, and oils and grease here. The 1901 SR gives slightly lower estimates for boiling-down in 1892-4 than previously.

Glassworks not included before 1892, and accounting for 101 in that year and 476 in 1901.

No return for lime and plaster was included in 1893.

Included under building materials until late 1890s.

No separate returns for these were included in 1892. Nor is the separation before then directly comparable with that afterwards.

Includes sailmaking, which accounts for only a small number, and included an even smaller number for tents and tarpaulins (139 in 1901, when it was separated for the first time).

In 1886-93 only the larger repair shops were included in this category, although post-1893 SRs provided total figures back to 1886. Prior to then no repair shops were included, but I have used Fisher's estimates ('Life and Work in Sydney', p.314) to make pre-1886 figures comparable with later ones.

Prior to 1896 small establishments and outworkers were excluded.

Prior to 1896 the figures for gasworks sometimes included those connected with the distribution of gas. The higher figures are given in brackets where the two sets are available.
Table A1.6
Comparison of New South Wales and Victorian Factory Employment
and Size of Establishments
Classed according to number of hands employed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factories employing on average</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th></th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Factories</td>
<td>Hands</td>
<td>Factories</td>
<td>Hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 4 hands</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>1368</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 hands</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1280</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>1496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 hands</td>
<td>1055</td>
<td>7442</td>
<td>1148</td>
<td>7733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 hands</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>6273</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>6825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-50 hands</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>10077</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>9379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100 hands</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>8155</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>6837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101+ hands</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>15501</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>15405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2765</td>
<td>50096</td>
<td>2944</td>
<td>49609</td>
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</table>

Source: Comparative Statement by Victorian Statist Respecting the Average Number of Hands Employed in Manufacturing, of Victoria and New South Wales, VPLANSW, 1897, vol.7, pp.3-4.

a including establishments using machinery only.
| Art and Mechanic Productions | Employer M | F | P | Self-employed M | F | P | Assisting but unpaid M | F | P | Wage-earner M | F | P | Unemployed M | F | P |
|-----------------------------|------------|---|---|-----------------|---|---|------------------------|---|---|-----------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|
| 10.6                        | 3.1        | 10.3| 7.6 | 3.2 | 7.4 | 0.4 | 1.3 | 0.4 | 75.7 | 88.5 | 76.1 | 5.7 | 3.9 | 5.6 |
| Textile fabrics, dress, and fibrous materials | 12.8 | 4.0 | 6.7 | 14.7 | 24.3 | 21.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 67.4 | 64.9 | 65.6 | 4.7 | 6.5 | 5.9 |
| Food, drink, stimulants     | 14.8       | 17.9 | 14.9 | 5.2 | 2.5 | 5.1 | 0.7 | 7.9 | 0.9 | 74.9 | 70.0 | 74.7 | 4.4 | 1.7 | 4.3 |
| Animal and vegetable substances | 8.8 | 41.7 | 8.8 | 5.6 | 0 | 5.6 | 0.7 | 0 | 0.7 | 81.7 | 58.3 | 81.7 | 3.2 | 0 | 3.2 |
| Minerals and metals         | 10.7       | 50.0 | 10.7 | 6.3 | 0 | 6.3 | 0.6 | 12.5 | 0.6 | 78.0 | 37.5 | 78.0 | 4.4 | 0 | 4.4 |
| Building and construction   | 9.9        | 75.0 | 9.9 | 5.8 | 0 | 5.8 | 0.3 | 0 | 0.3 | 77.2 | 25.0 | 77.2 | 6.8 | 0 | 6.8 |
| Undefined                   | 4.0        | 8.3 | 4.0 | 3.3 | 0 | 3.3 | 0.3 | 0 | 0.3 | 76.8 | 87.5 | 76.5 | 15.6 | 4.2 | 15.6 |
Table A1.7 (cont'd)

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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Assisting but</td>
<td>Wage-earner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Mechanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productions</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<td>Textile fabrics, dress,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and fibrous materials</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, drink, stimulants</td>
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<td>6.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal and vegetable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>substances</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minerals and metals</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and construction</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undefined</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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Source: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1891, pp.293, 298; and 1901, pp.650-1.
Table A1.8
Membership of Principal Crafts, New South Wales, 1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Craft</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butchers (comm. class)</td>
<td>5992</td>
<td>(90 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaughtermen</td>
<td>386</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compositors</td>
<td>2711</td>
<td>(40 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypists and machinists</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>(96 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookbinders</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>(446 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithographers</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmiths</td>
<td>6435</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engine-maker, fitter, mechanical</td>
<td>3788</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engineer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boilermakers</td>
<td>1381</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage Builders</td>
<td>2465</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelwrights</td>
<td>687</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipbuilders, shipwrights</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinsmiths, smelters, galvanized</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iron worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron founder, moulder, labourer</td>
<td>2115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saddlery and harness makers</td>
<td>2162</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellmongers, woolwashers</td>
<td>897</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanners and curriers</td>
<td>1132</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture Trade</td>
<td>2510</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coopers</td>
<td>338</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joiners</td>
<td>729</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bootmakers</td>
<td>5934</td>
<td>(797 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakers</td>
<td>4911</td>
<td>(377 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confectioners</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>(90 F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brickmakers</td>
<td>2298</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monumental masons</td>
<td>333</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonemasons, labourers</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricklayers, labourers</td>
<td>2583</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Carpenters, labourers</td>
<td>9039</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasterers</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
<td>4027</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plumbers, gasfitters</td>
<td>2597</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: New South Wales Census, 1901, pp. 666-86.

F: Female
### Table A1.9

**Juveniles in Employment in Industrial Class, 1891-1901**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1891 Males</th>
<th>% work</th>
<th>1891 Females</th>
<th>% work</th>
<th>1891 Persons</th>
<th>% work</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>% work</th>
<th>1901 Females</th>
<th>% work</th>
<th>1901 Persons</th>
<th>% work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Art and mechanic productions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td>18.92</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>52.98</td>
<td>3829</td>
<td>20.03</td>
<td>4264</td>
<td>16.18</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>45.81</td>
<td>4794</td>
<td>17.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engines, machines, tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Implements</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>14.05</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>14.05</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td>19.86</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>19.87</td>
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<td>Carriages and vehicles</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harness, saddlery, leather</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>17.41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>17.40</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>18.49</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36.36</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>18.55</td>
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<td>Ships and boats</td>
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<td>5.67</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>7.16</td>
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<td>Furniture</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>15.51</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36.67</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>16.72</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>17.39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>18.09</td>
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<td>Books and publications</td>
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<td>31.17</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>34.80</td>
<td>1435</td>
<td>32.92</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td>25.27</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>49.84</td>
<td>1485</td>
<td>28.19</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>110</td>
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<td>419</td>
<td>21.18</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>18.76</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>46.46</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>22.37</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Textiles etc. Total</strong></td>
<td>1467</td>
<td>19.03</td>
<td>6223</td>
<td>36.84</td>
<td>7690</td>
<td>31.26</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>20.27</td>
<td>7896</td>
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<td>31.55</td>
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<td>15.38</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36.49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22.58</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>26.27</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32.46</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>28.29</td>
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<td>Dress</td>
<td>1371</td>
<td>18.63</td>
<td>6189</td>
<td>36.83</td>
<td>7560</td>
<td>31.29</td>
<td>1755</td>
<td>19.60</td>
<td>7836</td>
<td>36.46</td>
<td>9591</td>
<td>31.50</td>
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<td>Fibrous Materials</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>46.67</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>36.82</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>37.93</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57.50</td>
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<td>462</td>
<td>52.80</td>
<td>3032</td>
<td>24.23</td>
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<td><strong>Animal and Vegetable Substances</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>1683</td>
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<td>56.00</td>
<td>1711</td>
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<td>180</td>
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<td>490</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56.82</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>19.63</td>
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<td>1293</td>
<td>16.08</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>17.29</td>
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<td>1191</td>
<td>17.28</td>
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Table A1.9 (cont'd)

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<th>1891 Females</th>
<th>1891 Persons</th>
<th>1901 Males</th>
<th>1901 Females</th>
<th>1901 Persons</th>
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<td>%work force</td>
<td>%work force</td>
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<td>%work force</td>
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<td></td>
<td>214</td>
<td>13.10</td>
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<td>Manufactures/processes with stone,</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>315</td>
<td>17.43</td>
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<td>earthenware, clay, glass, etc.</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>16.34</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>Precious metals and stones</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>22.26</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>20.42</td>
<td>759</td>
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<td>Other metals</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Building &amp; Construction Total</td>
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<td>3423</td>
<td>3808</td>
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<td>9.70</td>
<td>2364</td>
<td>2764</td>
<td>11.89</td>
<td>2767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads, railways, earth-works etc. (mainly navvies)</td>
<td>1059</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>1059</td>
<td>1044</td>
<td>7.65</td>
<td>1044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposal of Dead and Refuse</td>
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<td>4.52</td>
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<td>113</td>
<td>8.84</td>
<td>114</td>
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<td>2264</td>
<td>15.96</td>
<td>2375</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Manufacturing</td>
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<td>20956</td>
<td>21.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Industrial Class</td>
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<td>14.44</td>
<td>6669</td>
<td>24379</td>
<td>17.36</td>
<td>20417</td>
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Source: Calculated from New South Wales Census, 1891, p.286; and 1901, pp.674-86.
APPENDIX 2

TRADE UNION FORMATION, MEMBERSHIP, AND AFFILIATION TO TRADES AND LABOUR COUNCIL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Established*</th>
<th>TLC Affiliation†</th>
<th>Collapse‡</th>
<th>Reformation</th>
<th>Membership 1890-19</th>
<th>Peak membership</th>
<th>Comments and Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food, drink, tobacco, Operative Bakers' Society</td>
<td>Oct.1869</td>
<td>1871-94</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td>Earlier references to a union as early as 1853. Bakers' Minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewery Employees' Union</td>
<td>March 1891</td>
<td>1891-3</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>425</td>
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<td>AW, 23 March 1895, 5 June 1897.</td>
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<td>NSW Journeymen Confectioners' Society</td>
<td>Oct.1889</td>
<td>1891-5; 1897</td>
<td>1896; 1898</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>70 100(1890)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Confectioners' Minutes.</td>
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<td>Cordial Employees' Union</td>
<td>Aug.1890</td>
<td>1890-2</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Amalgamated Slaughtermen &amp; Journeymen Butchers' Union</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>1883-94</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>1073</td>
<td></td>
<td>Barely existed 1898-1902.</td>
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<td>Mill Employees' Union</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>May not have existed continuously after 1886.</td>
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<td>Amalgamated Tobacco Workers' Union</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1891-1901</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seems to have absorbed union immediately below in 1895.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobacco Operatives' Union</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>1890-4</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td></td>
<td>80 100(1890)</td>
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<td>Seems to have amalgamated with above union in 1895.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cigarmakers' Industrial League</td>
<td>Jan.1899</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>Clothing</td>
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<td>Amalgamated Boot Trade Union</td>
<td>1860s</td>
<td>1871-94</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1357</td>
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<td>RCIRA.</td>
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<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Clickers' Association of NSW (boot trade)</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>Cutters' and Trimmers' Union of NSW</td>
<td>Dec.1889</td>
<td>1890-2</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Clothing Machinists' and Fitters' Union</td>
<td>May 1891</td>
<td>1891-2</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>Pressers' Eight Hour Society of NSW</td>
<td>Sept.1885</td>
<td>1890-3</td>
<td>1893,1894</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>84, 100(1890)</td>
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<td>Journeymen Silk Hatters' Society</td>
<td>early 1870s</td>
<td>mid-1890s</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Tinsmiths' Minutes.</td>
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<td>Amalgamated Journeymen Tailors' Assn of NSW</td>
<td>early 1870s</td>
<td>early</td>
<td>1890,1896</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Very uncertain existence throughout 1890s.</td>
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<td>Tailoresses' Union</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1891,1900</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>1900</td>
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<td>General Textile Workers' Union of NSW</td>
<td>Jan.1891</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>Building Trades</td>
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<td>Amalgamated Society of Carpenters &amp; Joiners</td>
<td>June 1860</td>
<td>1871-80</td>
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<td>284</td>
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<td>Progressive Carpenters' &amp; Joiners' Society</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1880-85</td>
<td>continuous</td>
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<td>United Operative Bricklayers' Trade Society of NS</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>1873-5,</td>
<td>$1894-1900</td>
<td>590</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1890-6,</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1900</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>United Labourers' Protective Society of NSW</td>
<td>Dec.1861</td>
<td>1890-6,</td>
<td>$1893-5</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>660</td>
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<td>1899</td>
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Various references in union records, and Clickers' documents 1892-3 and 1902-3.

Rules 1900.
Table A2.1 (cont'd)

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Members</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Operative Painters' Society</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1874-6, 1891-2,1900</td>
<td>continuous 350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australasian Association of Operative Plasterers, NSW Section</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1873-5, 1890-4, 1896,1900</td>
<td>S 1894-1900 60 100(1890)</td>
<td>Rules 1862.</td>
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<td>Operative Plumbers' Trade Society, which became Plumbers' &amp; Gasfitters' Union</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>1871-6, 1891-4, 1898 1900</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Slaters' Union</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>1892 1893 1901</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>Friendly Society of Operative Stonemasons of NSW</td>
<td>May 1853</td>
<td>1871-92 S</td>
<td>440 600(1892) Stonemasons' Minutes</td>
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<td>Construction Workers</td>
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<td>Amalgamated Navvies' &amp; General Labourers' Union of NSW</td>
<td>Oct.1890</td>
<td>1890-1 1892 1902</td>
<td>1400</td>
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<td>- Granville Branch</td>
<td>Nov.1890</td>
<td>1890-1 1892</td>
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<td>- North Sydney Branch</td>
<td>Nov.1890</td>
<td>1890-1 1892</td>
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<td>- Rockwood Branch</td>
<td>Nov.1890</td>
<td>1890-1 1892</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Katoomba Branch</td>
<td>May 1890</td>
<td>1890-1 1892</td>
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<td>- Kiama Branch</td>
<td>Dec.1890</td>
<td>1890-1 1892</td>
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<td>Quarrymen's Eight Hour Protective Society of NSW</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1874-92 1896</td>
<td>150 200</td>
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<td>Sewerage Miners' Union</td>
<td>Aug.1892</td>
<td>1892 1893</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>Metal Trades</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operative Blacksmiths' Society</td>
<td>1860s</td>
<td>1874-5 n.a. (probably continuous)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<th>Organization</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<th>Members 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>United Society of Boilermakers &amp; Iron Shipbuilders of NSW</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>1873-80</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amalgamated Society of Engineers (Sydney)</td>
<td>Oct.1852</td>
<td>1871-3, 1881-93</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>744</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Australasian Society of Engineers</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eskbank Ironworkers' Association of Mill &amp; Forge Workers</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>1890-2, 1892, 1888, 1892, 1890, 1892</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sydney Iron Dressers' Union</td>
<td>April 1890</td>
<td>1890-2, 1892</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendly Trade Society of Iron Moulders of NSW</td>
<td>Oct.1872</td>
<td>1872-93</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>246</td>
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<td>Australian Ironworkers' Association</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1872, 1873</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>succeeded by</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ironworkers' Assistants' Association June 1890</td>
<td>1890-2, 1900</td>
<td>1897, 1900</td>
<td></td>
<td>425</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tinsmiths' &amp; Sheet Ironworkers' Trade Society</td>
<td>1871-6, 1884-1900</td>
<td>1876, 1881 then continuous</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Printing Trades</td>
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<td>Amalgamated Bookbinders' Aug.1878 Consolidated Trades Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>became</td>
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<td>Amalgamated Bookbinders' May 1889 &amp; Paper Rulers' Society of NSW</td>
<td>1889-1900</td>
<td>S 1895-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>130</td>
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Additional notes:
- Membership Card 1878, Rules 1889.
- Tinsmiths' Minutes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Arts Society</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1891-2</td>
<td>1892?</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letterpress Machinists' &amp; Stereotypers' Union (became NSW Pressmen &amp; Stereotypers' Union No.1, a branch of the Typographical Assoc.)</td>
<td>March 1888</td>
<td>1890-4</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>80 Constitution 1888.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sydney Lithographic Society</td>
<td>Oct.1886</td>
<td>1886-1900</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Typographical Society</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1871-94,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW Typographical Assoc. April 1880</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>1000</td>
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<td>Other Urban, Manufacturing &amp; Miscellaneous Unions</td>
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<td>Coachmakers' Society</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>1875-1900</td>
<td>S</td>
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<td>Coach and Car Builders' Society</td>
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<td>Cabinet and Chairmakers' Society</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1873-4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>United Furniture Trade Society of NSW</td>
<td>Aug.1888</td>
<td>1890-3,</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>180 United Furniture Trade Society of NSW 1894-6, 1899</td>
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<td>Brickmakers' Union</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>1886,1890-2</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>n.a. SMH, 18 March 1882.</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Protective Society of Journeymen Coopers of Sydney and Vicinity</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1880-95,</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>80 Coopers' Minutes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1899</td>
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Table A2.1 (cont'd)

Journeymen Coopers' Society of NSW

| NSW Journeymen | Oct.1882 | 1891-4 | 1894? | 87 |
| Farriers' Association | | | | |

Fellmongers' and Leatherworkers' Union

| 1890? | 1890-5 | S | absorbed by 411 AWU, 1894 |
| became |

Wool and Leatherworkers' Association

| Female Employees' Union | Aug.1891 | 1891-2 | 1892 | n.a. |
| NSW Fishermen's Union | Sept.1891 | 1891-2 | 1892 | n.a. |
| Gardeners' Union | 1891? | 1891-2 | S | n.a. |
| Gardeners' Assistants' Union | 1891? | 1891 | 1891 | n.a. |

Gas Stokers' Protective Association

| June 1885 | 1890-3 | S | 300 | 450 |
| Gas Stokers' Minutes. |

Amalgamated Glass Bottle Makers' Trade Society of Australia - Sydney Branch

| Oct.1894 | 1895,1900 | 1896 | 1899 | n.a. |
| Glass Bottle Makers' Minutes. |

Hairdressers' Union


Hotel Caterers', Waiters' and Barmen's Assoc.

| Dec.1890 | 1890-3,1900 | 1894 | 1899 | n.a. |

Saddle, Harness, Collar- makers' & Bridlecutters' Union of NSW

| 1871? | 1872,1890-1 | late 1870s? | 1890 | 249 |
| 1894 |

Sawmill Employees' Union

| 1886 | 1890-1 | 1891 | 1902 | n.a. |

...
Table A2.1 (cont'd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Closing Association of NSW</th>
<th>1860s</th>
<th>1874,1883</th>
<th>early 1870s, 1889</th>
<th>1874,1897</th>
<th>Various Rules, Fry, op.cit., pp.264-6, 279-86.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW Shop Employees' Union</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1889-92</td>
<td>early 1890s</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shipwrights' Provident Union of Port Jackson</td>
<td>Oct.1862</td>
<td>1871-93</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storemen's Mutual Provident Society</td>
<td>1890?</td>
<td>1891-2</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>Broken Hill Unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amalgamated Miners' Association</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>7000</td>
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<td>Barrier Ranges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operative Bakers' Society</td>
<td>Sept.1892</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Bakers' Minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boilermakers' Society</td>
<td>late 1880s</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>AW, 1 October 1890.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bricklayers' &amp; Stonemasons' Societies</td>
<td>late 1880s</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>300</td>
<td>AW, 1 October 1890.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrier Rangers</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Builders' Labourers' Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carpenters' Society</td>
<td>late 1880s</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>AW, 1 October 1890.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broken Hill Carriers' Union</td>
<td>late 1880s</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>AW, 1 October 1890.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broken Hill Mechanics' Association</td>
<td>late 1880s</td>
<td>1890</td>
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<td>250</td>
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<th>Membership</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>Mine Officers' Association</td>
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<td>Barrier Ranges</td>
<td>April 1888</td>
<td>320</td>
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<td>Amalgamated Engine-drivers' &amp; Firemen's Association</td>
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<td>Shop Assistants' Union</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>AW, 1 October 1890.</td>
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<td>Barrier Ranges Smelters', Concentrators' &amp; Surface Hands' Union</td>
<td>April 1890</td>
<td>250</td>
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<tr>
<td>&amp; Consolidated Accident Fund</td>
<td>1889-92</td>
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<td>Albert Teamsters' Union</td>
<td>late 1880s</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>AW, 1 October 1890.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barrier Typographical Society</td>
<td>March 1888</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>Rules 1899.</td>
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<td>Others</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>AW, 1 October 1890.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Provincial Unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bakers' Newcastle Branch</td>
<td>March 1890</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Virtually collapsed 1891. Bakers' Minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathurst District Federated Labour League</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulburn Boot Trade Union</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1891-4</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle Labour League</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>1873-80</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Labourers' Newcastle Branch</td>
<td>Feb.1886</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

.../
Table A2.1 (cont'd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Early Years</th>
<th>Late Years</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lithgow Potters' Union</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1890-1</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast Trades &amp; General Labourers' Union</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1891-2</td>
<td>1892?</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowral Quarrymen's Association</td>
<td>Aug.1893</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle Shop Employees' Union</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>100    150(1890)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagga Wagga Tailors' Union</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maritime Unions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balmain Labourers' Union</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>1889-97</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>1899    350</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>became</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters' &amp; Dockers' Union, Balmain</td>
<td>Nov.1900</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Coal Lumpers' Union</td>
<td>Oct.1881</td>
<td>1891-3</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>555    600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasian Institute of Marine Engineers</td>
<td>June 1880</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>973    Marine Engineers' Minutes, Fisher, op. cit., p.30.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercantile Marine Officers' Association</td>
<td>Oct.1889</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>183    (NSW only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters &amp; Engineers of Harbour &amp; River Steamers Association of NSW</td>
<td>Jan.1882</td>
<td>1889-92</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamen's Union of NSW</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>1875-81,</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>2000   Rules 1884.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1891-1900</td>
<td></td>
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### Table A2.1 (cont'd)

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<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federated Stewards' &amp; Cocks' Union of Australasia</td>
<td>April 1884</td>
<td>1891-2, 1897-1900</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1200(1884) SMH, 2 August 1884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1873-92</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>2500 Rules 1900, SMH, 6 February 1890.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle Wharf Labourers' Union</td>
<td>Feb. 1888</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150 Rules 1901.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle Crane Employees' Union</td>
<td>June 1889</td>
<td>1891-4</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal Mining Unions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal Miners' Mutual Protective Association</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1881-93</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the Hunter River District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra Coal Miners' Mutual Protective Association</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1886-92</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartley District Miners' Mutual Protective Association</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>1891-2</td>
<td>1892?</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Protective Society of Colliery Engine-drivers - Hunter River</td>
<td>Nov. 1889</td>
<td>1891-3</td>
<td></td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter River District Smelters' &amp; Employees' Union</td>
<td>Jan. 1890</td>
<td>1890-2</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100(1890)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western District Smelters &amp; Surface Employees' Union</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1891-2</td>
<td>1892?</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
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Table A2.1 (cont'd)

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colliery Surfacemen's</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Protective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of NSW,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter River District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metal Miners Other than at Broken Hill</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamated Miners'</td>
<td>c.1890</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association - various sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sunny Corner Smelters & Surface Employees' Union | Aug.1891 | 1891-2| 1892| n.a.
| **Road Transport Unions** |            |    |    |    |
| Amalgamated Carriers'  | Jan.1889   | 1890|    |  70|
| Union of Australasia   |            |    |    |    |
| Bogan River Carriers'  | June 1890  | 1890-3| 1893| 148|
| Union Forwarding Agency Society |        |    |    |    |
| Central Australian & Queensland Carriers' Union | July 1890 | 1890-1| 1894| 420|
| Lachlan Carriers' Union | May 1890   |    |  250|    |
| Narrabri Carriers'     | 1890?      | 1891| n.a.|    |
| Union                   |            |    |    |    |
| Northumberland Carriers' | July 1889  | 1891-2| 1892| 37 |
| Union                   |            |    |    |    |
| Riverine Carriers'     | Sept.1887  | 1890-1|    | 287|
| Union Co-operative      |            |    |    |    |
| Forwarding Agency      |            |    |    |    |
| Society Ltd.           |            |    |    |    |

.../
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A2.1 (cont'd)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young Carriers' Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Peters' Carters' Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Drivers' Union (or Sydney &amp; Suburban Cabmen's Union)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnibus Employees' Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Trolley &amp; Draymen's Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Vanmen's Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Locomotive Engine-drivers' &amp; Firemen's Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamated Railway &amp; Tramway Service Association of NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Signalmen's Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamated Shearers' Union (ASU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-affiliation &amp; membership by branches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Cobar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Bourke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Goulburn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Moree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Scone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Wagga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A2.1 (cont'd)

General 'Labourers' Union (GLU)  
Feb.1890  
- affiliation & membership by branches  
- Bourke  
- Cobar  
- Wagga  
- Moree  
- Young  

amalgamated with ASU to form  

Australian Workers' Union  
1894  

Sources: for union formation, TLC Minutes and RRCS, 1891 Literary Appendix; for TLC affiliation, TLC Minutes; for membership, RRCS, 1891, Literary Appendix, TLC Minutes. The Australian Star, 6 October 1890 (AS) provides a list of union membership, which is used where membership is unavailable from the other sources mentioned. Where both are available, frequently, but not always, the AS figure is higher than that from the RRCS. Where there is a marked difference, I have entered it in the column 'Peak Membership'. Additional sources are noted in the column 'Comments and Sources'.

*Date refers to beginning of continuous existence. In some cases there were earlier examples of organization.  
†Date given is first clear indication. Affiliation may have occurred slightly earlier in some cases.  
§I have taken the latest likely date. In many cases the union virtually collapsed earlier. I have used the symbol 'S' where unions seem to have survived in the 1890s, but with great difficulty. In some cases there is simply no evidence available.  
¶n.a. means not available, and no clear basis for estimate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General 'Labourers'</th>
<th>Feb.1890</th>
<th>—</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union (GLU)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- affiliation &amp; membership by branches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bourke</td>
<td></td>
<td>2100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cobar</td>
<td></td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wagga</td>
<td></td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Moree</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Young</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>4950</td>
</tr>
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</table>

are estimates based on Branch Reports and some Membership Rolls. See Chapter 5.
### Table A2.2

**New South Wales Total Union Membership, 1891**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Sector</th>
<th>Number Unionists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food, drink and tobacco</td>
<td>2258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>2243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Trades</td>
<td>2661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Workers</td>
<td>1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Trades</td>
<td>2127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing Trades</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Urban, Manufacturing, and Miscellaneous Unions</td>
<td>3792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken Hill Unions</td>
<td>9440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maritime Unions</td>
<td>5781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal Mining Unions</td>
<td>7112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Metal Mining Unions outside Broken Hill</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Transport Unions</td>
<td>3083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway Unions</td>
<td>4928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Unions</td>
<td>18250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>64632</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total New South Wales wage earners</strong></td>
<td><strong>300421</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total union density</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: as in A2.1.

Note: These total figures are only approximate because individual union membership figures are taken from different periods during 1890-1, when membership actually varied. In many cases membership declined at the end of this period, although new unions also continued to be formed and to affiliate to the TLC. Consequently, to the extent that I have relied on figures from 1890 or early 1891, this Table may tend to exaggerate total membership. However, this is to some extent balanced by the absence of any membership figures for some unions.

*I have calculated union density in the standard manner, by expressing union membership as a percentage of potential membership, i.e. in this case, as a percentage of all wage earners. See G.S. Bain, The Growth of White-Collar Unionism, Oxford, 1970, p.3.
### Table A2.3
**TLC Affiliation, 1871-99**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Year</th>
<th>No. Unions Affiliated§</th>
<th>Affiliated Membership*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>n.a.†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>n.a.†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>n.a.†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1890</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1890</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 1890</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>n.a.†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1891</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>41267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1894‡</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1895</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>n.a.†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 1899</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number unions 1891 125 64632

Percentage unionists affiliated to TLC in 1891 63.85%

Sources: TLC Minutes, and Tables A2.1-2.

‡Date of TLC's re-formation as Sydney District Council of ALF.
§Although based on the same sources, my figures in this column are consistently lower than those in Nairn, 'Role of the TLC', op.cit. I have not counted unions as TLC affiliates if they ceased paying affiliation fees and sending delegates to meetings.

*All figures in this column are TLC estimates except May 1891, which is my own. In May 1891 the TLC claimed 60,000 affiliated members, i.e. virtually all union membership. The TLC may well have exaggerated its affiliated membership in earlier years as well. If so, its growth is even more remarkable.

†Not available
Bibliography Summary

1. Trade Union Records

1.1 Trade Union and Friendly Society Rules

1.1.1 Australasian Labour Federation.
1.1.2 Amalgamated Shearers' Union/Australian Workers' Union.
1.1.3 Building Trades.
1.1.4 Maritime Unions.
1.1.5 Miners' Unions.
1.1.6 Printing Trades.
1.1.7 Shop Assistants.
1.1.8 Other.

1.2 Official Reports

1.2.1 Amalgamated Shearers' Union/Australian Workers' Union.
1.2.2 Trades and Labour Council.
1.2.3 Intercolonial Trades Union Congresses.
1.2.4 Other.

1.3 Minutes etc.

1.3.1 Amalgamated Shearers' Union/Australian Workers' Union.
1.3.2 Miners' Unions.
1.3.3 Railway Unions.
1.3.4 Trades and Labour Council.
1.3.5 Other Unions.

1.4 Other Trade Union Records, Publications, etc.

1.4.1 Amalgamated Shearers' Union/Australian Workers' Union.
1.4.2 Miners' Unions.
1.4.3 Other
2. Other Archival and Manuscript Sources

2.1 State Archives of New South Wales.

2.2 Employers' Records.

2.3 Other Organizational Records.

2.4 Papers.

3. Government Sources

3.1 Votes and Proceedings of New South Wales Legislative Assembly

3.1.1 Relating to Immigration.
3.1.2 Relating to Mining.
3.1.3 Relating to Public Works.
3.1.4 Relating to Railway Employment.
3.1.5 Relating to Unemployment and Relief Works.
3.1.6 Relating to Working Conditions in the Colony.
3.1.7 Miscellaneous.

3.2 Other Government Sources

3.2.1 New South Wales.
3.2.2 Commonwealth of Australia.

4. Newspapers and Journals

5. Contemporary and Early Works: books, articles, pamphlets
6. Later Works: books, articles, theses, etc.

6.1 Books and Pamphlets

6.2 Articles

6.3 Unpublished Theses

6.4 Unpublished Papers
1. TRADE UNION RECORDS

Most of these records are deposited with the Archives of Business and Labour, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University (hereafter abbreviated to ANU) and/or the Mitchell Library in Sydney (hereafter abbreviated to ML). A small number are deposited with the Labour History and Industrial Relations Archive, University of New South Wales (hereafter abbreviated to UNSW) and the National Library in Canberra (hereafter abbreviated to NL).

1.1 Trade Union and Friendly Society Rules

1.1.1 Australasian Labour Federation

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1.1.2 Amalgamated Shearers' Union/Australian Workers' Union

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1.1.3 Building Trades

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1.1.4 Maritime Unions

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Federated Stewards' and Cooks' Union of Australasia, NSW Branch, Rules, Sydney, 1887 and 1906 (ML).

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1.1.5 Miners' Unions

Amalgamated Miners' Association of Australia, General Rules, Ballarat, 1884 (NL).
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Coal Miners' Mutual Protective Association, Rules, Newcastle, 1870 (ML).
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Illawarra Coal Miners' Mutual Protective Association, Rules, Wollongong, 1886 (ML).

1.1.6 Printing Trades

Australasian Typographical Union, Rules, Melbourne, 1886 and 1889 (ANU - T39/6 and P24/1/1).
Barrier Typographical Society, Rules, Broken Hill, 1899 (ANU - T/39/6).
NSW Pressmen and Stereotypers' Union no.1, Constitution and By-Laws, Sydney, 1888 (ANU - T39/6).
Sydney Lithographic Society, Rules, Sydney, 1890 (ANU - T39/7).
Sydney Typographical Association, Rules, Sydney, 1880 (ANU - T39/6).
Sydney Typographical Society, Rules, Sydney, 1853 (ANU - T39/6).

1.1.7 Shop Assistants

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1.1.8 Other Unions

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and December 1891 (ML and ANU - E154).
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6.4 Unpublished Papers


